
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Agriculture and Food

New funding expands support for Indigenous food sovereignty

VICTORIA – More Indigenous communities will benefit from increased funding for food sovereignty, food security and Indigenous-led agriculture.

“Indigenous food sovereignty is important to the health of Indigenous Peoples and the province as a whole,” said Pam Alexis, Minister of Agriculture and Food. “By strengthening traditional Indigenous food systems, we are building a more resilient and equitable food ecosystem and reducing barriers so communities can have access to a more sustainable, secure and affordable food supply now and for future generations.”

The Indigenous Food Sovereignty Program will support more sustainable food production, community food security, and enhance participation in the agriculture and food sectors for Indigenous communities and businesses. Funding will support infrastructure such as greenhouses, irrigation systems, community gardens and food storage.

Funding is also available to support a range of activities, such as boosting Indigenous-owned food and agriculture operations, community food security planning and projects, and climate change adaptation projects.

“We acknowledge the Province’s commitment to indigenous food sovereignty,” said Kukpi7 Rosanne Casimir, Tk’emlúps te Secwépemc. “Raising and collecting food in a sustainable manner has always been extremely important to First Nations people. Our ancestors had a complex and well-developed system of gathering and preserving. Building capacity around food sovereignty will support the well-being of our community and with the impacts of climate change, it is critical to have sufficient access to local, quality food.”

The new \$30-million program will help Indigenous communities build and strengthen distinct local food systems, including the revitalization of traditional production, harvest and preservation practices. The use of traditional knowledge will support Indigenous farming in a changing climate, while offering more equitable participation in B.C.’s agriculture economy and reducing the disproportionate amount of food insecurity within Indigenous communities.

The program will be delivered by the New Relationship Trust (NRT), an independent non-profit dedicated to empowering First Nations communities.

“As an Indigenous-led organization, NRT has designed this program to be flexible and responsive to applicants’ unique needs and priorities—to support Indigenous food sovereignty and food security goals while respecting distinct approaches to traditional food harvesting, processing and production,” said Wade Grant, chair of the board of directors, New Relationship Trust. “This collaborative model will empower Indigenous Peoples to fully participate in B.C.’s food and agriculture economy in a way that honours their continued stewardship of the

interconnected food, land and water systems on which they depend.”

Quotes:

Murray Rankin, Minister for Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation –

“Supporting Indigenous-led food programs and systems is beneficial to all of us. We are fortunate to be able to tap into the vast knowledge of those who know these lands best. We can learn from these voices as we continue to adapt to the challenges brought on by climate change and other factors impacting our food security.”

Dawn Morrison, founder, Working Group on Indigenous Food Sovereignty –

“This funding is a timely and meaningful response to the critical issues impacting the ability of Indigenous communities to respond to their unique food needs. The funding will play an important role in addressing food security, mitigating climate change and expanding existing conservation methods. We look forward to its assistance in the success of Indigenous food sovereignty initiatives.”

Patrick Harry, Stswecem'c Xget'tem First Nation, and Indigenous Advisory Council on Agriculture and Food –

“We are grateful for the opportunity to work with the ministry and the New Relationship Trust on this new initiative to lower barriers and increase food support to Indigenous communities in B.C. We are excited to see communities move forward with implementing food security and food-sovereignty projects and we are confident this funding will assist in their respective endeavours. IACAF will continue to advocate for and assist communities to build capacity and extend the reach of food to all Indigenous communities.”

Learn More:

Applications and more details on the program are available here:

<https://newrelationshiptrust.ca/apply-for-funding/sustainability-development-goals-sdg-initiatives/food-security-grants/>

BC Indigenous Advisory Council on Agriculture and

Food: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/business-market-development/agricultural-trusts-and-councils/bc-indigenous-advisory-council-on-agriculture-and-food>

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