



Indigenous Intellectual Property Program Accepting Applications

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On June 28th, 2021, the Government of Canada announced that it is again, offering [Indigenous Intellectual Property Program \(IIPP\) grants](#). IIPP grants were first made available in 2019 as part of Canada's 5-year [Intellectual Property Strategy](#). For the 2021-2022 fiscal year, a total of \$125,000 is available.

The purpose of the IIPP grants is to promote a more inclusive IP system. The IIPP grants also aim to provide Indigenous peoples opportunities to advocate their interests and participate in discussions on IP, traditional knowledge (TK), and traditional cultural expressions (TCE) and to explore ways to make the IP system more accessible to Indigenous people.

Three funding streams are available. The small-scale initiative stream is directed to activities having a more limited scale and scope (e.g., not exceeding \$15,000) while the project stream is directed to more complex or comprehensive activities (e.g., not exceeding \$50,000). Eligible activities under both the small-scale initiative and project streams include research, development, commercialization, and/or protection of IP; contracting or conducting research on subjects related to IP and the protection of TK and TCEs; obtaining expert advice on issues related to IP, TK and TCEs; development of guidelines, protocols, and pilot projects relating to IP and TK and TCEs; and IP education, capacity building and awareness-raising activities. Finally, the travel stream can be used for travel to domestic and international discussions relating to IP, TK, and TCE

The implementation of the grant is guided by several principles that respect and encourage First Nations, Inuit, and Métis self-determination; increase use of the IP system by Indigenous Peoples in Canada; recognize Indigenous creative and innovative practices and communities; and enable Indigenous economic, social, and cultural development. The selection process is further guided by commitments to the principles of reconciliation, the recognition of Indigenous rights, and the implementation of the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#).

The opportunity for the IP system to be more inclusive cannot be understated. A recent [survey](#) released by the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business found that only two in ten Indigenous businesses own IP in Canada and very few Indigenous businesses filed for or registered IP protection in the past few years. Meanwhile, 80% of these businesses that own IP indicated that IP contributed to their business performance. The survey also reported that six in ten Indigenous businesses use TK and/or TCEs but only one in five of these businesses have IP protection for it and only one in four of these businesses use other non-IP protections such as community/customary rules.

Organizations eligible for the IIPP are encouraged to apply before applications close next month, on September 8, 2021. Funding decisions will be announced in October 2021 and funds must be used by March 31, 2022. For more information, see <https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/108.nsf/eng/00011.html>.

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