



## BCFNJC Community-Based Justice Fund

### Investment Overview

In partnership with the BC Ministry of the Attorney General, the BC First Nations Justice Council is pleased to support First Nations in advancing [Strategies 15](#) and [24](#) of the [BC First Nations Justice Strategy](#), through the creation of the Community-based Justice Fund.

[Strategy 15](#) calls for support for community-based justice programming, with the goal that every community that seeks it has a justice plan.

[Strategy 24](#) calls for the establishment of a sustainable set of supports to increase the numbers of First Nations justice workers, to support and implement community-based justice programs, new protocols, and understandings to help First Nations have strategic plans and initiatives to move their internal work forward.

The Community-based Justice Fund has two streams of funding available to First Nations in the amount of \$42,000 per individual community. If communities choose to apply together either at a multi-community or a Nation-level, the funding will reflect the number of communities that apply (e.g., 7 communities x \$42,000 = \$294,000). First Nations may only apply to one stream.

The focus of the Fund is the **presumption of diversion** for Indigenous people. This includes considering and applying culturally appropriate and least restrictive approaches at every point in time of an individual's journey through the justice system with the presumption that, whenever appropriate, these alternative responses should be the first option pursued.

#### **Stream One: Development of Community or Nation-based Justice Plans with a focus on Diversion**

This stream supports First Nations to develop community or Nation-based justice plans. These plans should reflect practical ways in which diversion can be applied at a local level. This funding is also expected to support

communities in engaging with key justice partners, such as Crown, police, Native Courtworkers, and restorative justice programs to understand and build upon opportunities for diversion in their territory.

### **What are the goals of this funding stream?**

- To support communities in hosting local conversations with Elders and Knowledge Keepers, justice partners and community members.
- To build local and provincial networks of Nation-based diversion options and justice programming.
- To support advocacy for sustainable funding based on findings from completed plans.
- To facilitate the creation/strengthening of wraparound services in communities for inclusion in Gladue healing plans and consideration by courts.

### **How will BCFNJC support the outcomes of this stream?**

BCFNJC will support communities in the development of their justice plans with accompanying planning toolkits, dedicated planning staff, and support with in-community engagements (when possible).

### **Stream Two: Funding to Support First Nations Justice Programming**

This stream supports new or existing justice programming. First Nations applying to this fund should outline the goals of their project/program and how this will advance diversion at a local level. For example, this funding can support start-up costs, salary for a Nation-based justice worker, and training.

### **What are the goals of this funding stream?**

To support Nations in advancing self-determination and their community-defined justice goals.

### **How will BCFNJC support the outcomes of this stream?**

BCFNJC can support communities through relationship-building and justice system advocacy.

## Eligibility

The funding is available to all 204 First Nations in BC to advance justice in their territory. Communities may apply individually or together at multi-community or multi-Nation levels. First Nations justice organizations (e.g., Indigenous Justice Programs) may also apply on behalf of a community or Nation with proof of community support in the form of Community Support Letters or Band/Tribal Council Resolutions.

## Timeframe

The Community-based Justice Fund became available in May 2024 and will remain open until at least May 2026. The goal is for all 204 First Nations in BC to apply and receive this funding. It is expected that most communities will implement their vision for the funding within one year. Multi-community or multi-Nation applications might take longer to spend their full amount.

## Reporting Requirements

In the spirit of keeping reporting to a minimum, a BCFNJC Diversion team member will reach out to the successful applicant one year after the grant is awarded to discuss the implementation of the fund, successes, challenges, and ways in which BCFNJC could further support their justice goals. From this meeting, BCFNJC will create a short report based on the discussion and send it back to the applicant for their records. A summary of these reports will be used to advocate for sustainable funding. Information about individual communities will not be shared without explicit consent. We ask that communities keep track of important data, share photos where appropriate, and provide their completed Justice Plans (Stream 1).

## Questions?

If you have any questions or would like to discuss the fund before applying, please contact Christianne Kearns, Director of Diversion and Community Justice Programming at [christianne.kearns@bcfnjc.com](mailto:christianne.kearns@bcfnjc.com) or (778) 795-0577.

**BC First Nations Justice Council**