



NIIGAN GDIZHAAMI FUND

2025-2026

GUIDELINES

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund (the Fund) Guidelines is to provide information on the submission of proposals and the administration of the Fund.

1.2 Context

The Master Education Agreement (MEA) was signed on August 16, 2017, at the Chippewas of Rama First Nation. Twenty-three Anishinabek First Nations, the Kinoomaadziwin Education Body (KEB), and Ontario are Parties to the MEA (“the Parties”).

The vision for the MEA is a new relationship between the Anishinabek First Nations (Participating First Nations) and Ontario that supports Anishinabek student success and well-being in both the Anishinabek Education System (AES) and the Provincially-Funded Education System.

The MEA includes a commitment by the Parties to support targeted initiatives and investments that advance the objectives of the MEA. Targeted initiatives may include:

- (a) community and school-based activities; and
- (b) joint Anishinabek Education System and Provincially-Funded Education System initiatives;

The Parties have established the Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund to support targeted initiatives and projects.

The Parties have also established the Joint Master Education Agreement Committee (JMEAC) to oversee the implementation of the MEA. This Committee is responsible for reviewing and approving project proposals submitted to the Fund, among other things.

2.0 FUND DESCRIPTION

2.1 Fund Objectives

The objective of the Fund is to support and invest in community and joint projects and initiatives, that are locally-developed and that advance the objectives of the MEA.

The objectives of the MEA are to:

- (a) realize the shared vision for student success and well-being that addresses body, mind, emotional, and spiritual well-being;
- (b) enhance the collaboration among the Participating First Nations, the

KEB, Ontario and School Boards;

- (c) enhance opportunities for the engagement and participation of students, families, and communities to support student success and well-being;
- (d) increase knowledge and understanding of Bimaadziwin, Kendaaswin and Anishinaabe languages in Participating First Nations' schools and schools in the Provincially-Funded Education System;
- (e) facilitate the transition of students between Participating First Nations' schools and schools in the Provincially-Funded Education System; and
- (f) establish a process to collaborate on and monitor the ongoing alignment of standards between Participating First Nations' schools and the Provincially-Funded Education System.

The Fund investments are not intended to support ongoing delivery of education programs and services. Proposals that have been successful and advance the MEA will be considered as pilot or permanent programs to service the Participating First Nations.

Each year there will be a call for proposals based on priorities established by the JMEAC that advance the objectives of the MEA. The 2025-2026 priority areas for funding are identified in Section 2.4.

2.2 Eligible Applicants

Proposals must be submitted by an eligible Participating First Nation or by a group of eligible Participating First Nations, using the accompanying Proposal Submission Template. *Note: the proposal submission cannot come from a partnering organization. It must come directly from a Participating First Nation. Should a partnering organization have a proposal idea, the partnering organization must reach out to a First Nation, and the First Nation must complete the proposal template and submit the proposal.*

Participating First Nations eligible to submit a proposal are listed in [Appendix A](#) of these Guidelines.

Proposals may be submitted under one of the following application streams:

1. Proposals submitted by an eligible Participating First Nation for individual initiatives;
2. Proposals submitted by a group of eligible Participating First Nations;
3. Joint proposals submitted by one or more eligible Participating First Nations and one or more School Boards with Education Service Agreements with those First Nations; and,
4. Proposals submitted by one or more eligible Participating First Nations and one or more affiliated third-party organizations (for example, a tribal council, an education organization, or a health and social services

organization).

5. Proposals submitted by an eligible Participating First Nation for individual initiatives that will produce a shareable resource.

A Participating First Nation may submit an individual proposal and may also be a participant in a group of Participating First Nations submitting a proposal.

There is no limit on the number of proposals an eligible Participating First Nation may submit. However, the project approval process requires that funded projects be split among the four Regional Education Councils of the Anishinabek Education System, and among the 23 Participating First Nations.

2.3 Eligible Projects

To be eligible for funding, projects must:

- be directly linked to the 2025-2026 priority funding areas as identified in Section 2.4, below; and,
- be undertaken and completed between September 2025 and August 2026 (please keep in mind that final reports are due on August 31, 2026)

2.4 2025-2026 Niigaan Gdizhaami Funding Priorities

For the 2025-2026 year, proposals to the Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund will need to support projects and initiatives that fall within one or more of the following areas:

Funding Priority	Examples of Projects
i. Increasing knowledge and understanding of Anishinabek histories, cultures, perspectives, languages, and contributions (“Bimaadziwin”) and traditional Anishinaabe knowledge passed down from one generation to the next through ceremonial teachings (“Kendaaswin”);	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of language resources such as language games, software, etc.• Land-based learning• Elders in schools to support the students and to support increasing the knowledge base of teachers
ii. Enhanced opportunities for the engagement and participation of Anishinabek students, families, and communities to support Anishinabek student success and well-being;	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Classroom dedicated to Indigenous students with supports• Formal and informal student leadership programs; building leadership skills and relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students
iii. Facilitating the successful	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Graduation coach/Student liaison with personal transition plans for

Funding Priority	Examples of Projects
transition of students between Participating First Nations' schools and schools in the Provincially-Funded Education System;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students • Secondary school well-being programs
iv. Innovation and introduction of leading practices in Indigenous education;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land-based curriculum • Focus on improving student achievement in literacy and numeracy, specifically, utilizing inclusive design strategies and culturally-relevant Indigenous ways of knowing and learning • New programs that look at students as a “whole student” and introduce programming that supports students mentally, spiritually, physically and emotionally
v. Supporting collaboration between the AES and School Boards, including data and information sharing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular AES/PFN and DSB/school meetings to support access to student supports provided/funded by First Nations, within the schools that Anishinabek students attend
vi. Production of a resource which will be shared with the Participating First Nation communities within the Anishinabek Education System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of land-based learning curriculum • Development of language curriculum • Development of First Nation history curriculum • Curriculum guides • Language resources

2.5 Project Funding Streams

Applicants are expected to contribute to the cost of projects. These contributions may be in-kind and could include allocation of staff time, space, and equipment.

Individual Participating First Nation Projects Stream

The Fund will support up to 75% of the total costs of a project, to a maximum of \$25,000. The applicants are expected to provide a contribution equal to at least 25% of the total cost of the project. This contribution will be documented through an attestation form signed by the First Nation. Applicants may provide a larger contribution, but that will not increase the project funding beyond the maximum of

\$25,000.

Please note that although the maximum for individual projects is \$25,000, project budgets can be submitted for any amount up to the maximum allocation. For example, a smaller project with a smaller work plan may require a budget of \$10,000. In this situation, the PFN will request \$10,000 under the Individual Participating First Nation Projects Stream.

Individual Participating First Nation Projects – Production of Shareable Resource Stream

The Fund will support up to 75% of the total costs of a project, to a maximum of \$50,000. The applicants are expected to provide a contribution equal to at least 25% of the total cost of the project. This contribution will be documented through an attestation form signed by the First Nation. Applicants may provide a larger contribution, but that will not increase the project funding beyond the maximum of \$50,000.00. To qualify for this stream of funding, the Participating First Nation must produce a resource that may be shared with other Participating First Nations in the Anishinabek Education System. Some examples of resources are: curriculum, curriculum guide, teaching resources, language resources, lesson plans, unit plans, etc.

Please note that although the maximum for the shareable resource stream is \$50,000, project budgets can be submitted for any amount up to the maximum allocation. For example, a smaller shareable resource project with a smaller work plan may require a budget of \$30,000. In this situation, PFN will request \$30,000 under the Individual Participating First Nation Projects-Shareable Resource Stream.

Group Projects Stream

The Fund will support up to 75% of the total costs of a project, to a maximum of \$50,000. The applicants are expected to provide a contribution equal to at least 25% of the total cost of the project. This contribution will be documented through an attestation form signed by the First Nation. Applicants may provide a larger contribution, but that will not increase the project funding beyond the maximum of \$50,000. *A person in the partnering organization must be identified. A section will be dedicated to partnering organization's contact information within the proposal template.*

Please note that although the maximum for the group projects stream is \$50,000, group project budgets can be submitted for any amount up to the maximum allocation. For example, a smaller group project with a smaller work plan may require a budget of \$35,000. In this situation, the PFN will request \$35,000 under the Group Projects Stream.

2.6 Eligible Costs

The Fund will support costs that are clearly associated with developing and delivering

the approved project. These costs may include:

- Wages and benefits for staff, including contract staff;
- Training, including professional and leadership development;
- Cultural workshops and activities;
- Translation and interpretation;
- Honoraria for Elders, knowledge keepers, and other cultural resource people;
- Rental costs for facilities and equipment that are directly related to proposed project(s);
- Supplies and resource materials;
- Travel expenses;
- Minor capital or renovations*; and
- Administrative fees and costs**, such as legal and accounting fees, dues, postage costs, photocopying and printing, insurance costs, telephone costs, and internet and wireless communication costs.

* The maximum amount of funding for minor capital or renovations cannot exceed 30 per cent of the total funding request and must be detailed in the accompanying Proposal Submission Template.

** The maximum amount of funding for administration costs cannot exceed 10 per cent of the total funding request and must be detailed in the accompanying Proposal Submission Template.

2.7 Ineligible Costs

The Fund will not cover costs including but not limited to, costs related to:

- Core business or operations;
- Consulting services;
- Infrastructure, major renovations or construction;
- Software or licenses not directly associated with the funded project;
- Furniture or equipment not directly associated with the funded project;
- Grants or bursaries; and
- International travel.

2.8 Duration

All funding provided to an applicant must be expended between September 1, 2025 and August 31, 2026.

PROGRAM DELIVERY

3.0 Roles and Responsibilities

Applicants

Each project proposal must be submitted by an eligible Participating First Nation or by a

group of eligible Participating First Nations represented by the First Nation Chief(s) and Council(s). The applicant(s) must:

- Submit a detailed written project proposal, using the accompanying Proposal Submission Template.
- If the project is approved:
 - Complete an attestation form confirming the applicant's in-kind/financial contributions, as per the Fund requirements;
 - Sign a funding agreement with the KEB for the purposes of the project;
 - Be accountable for all funding and project requirements;
 - Meet reporting deadlines. An interim and final report will be required.
 - Failure to submit an interim and final report as outlined in Funding Agreements, may affect eligibility to receive funds from the Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund in the future;
 - Submit a shareable resource, if applying through the Individual Participating First Nation Projects – Production of Shareable Resource stream;
 - Assume full responsibility for protecting the privacy of any personal information that is collected, used, or disclosed in the course of project activities, in accordance with any applicable laws and standards regarding personal privacy and disclosure or sharing of personal information;
 - Assume full responsibility for all financial and project reporting; and
 - Consider the affect COVID-19 or other pandemics may have on the ability to complete the project (i.e., if the work plan is flexible enough to be completed remotely if required);
 - If submitting a joint proposal under the Group Projects Stream, a person in the partnering organization must be identified. A section will be dedicated to partnering organization's contact information within the proposal template.

In addition to the roles and responsibilities outlined above, applicants that deliver a project in partnership with a group of Participating First Nations, School Boards or third-party organizations must identify a lead partner that will be solely responsible for:

- applying on behalf of all partners;
- financial administration, including receiving, administering, and allocating funds to any partner organizations; and
- meeting all project and reporting requirements.

Partnering organizations (including partnering First Nations) must provide a letter of support as part of the written project proposal. The letter must be signed by a person with the authority to legally bind the organization as a participant in the project. A contact person in the partnering organization must be identified in this letter. Interim and final reports are the responsibility of the First Nation and the partnering organization.

The Kinoomaadziwin Education Body

The Kinoomaadziwin Education Body will:

- issue the call for proposals developed and approved by the JMEAC;

- collect all submitted project proposals and conduct a preliminary review of proposals to ensure their eligibility and completeness;
- provide the eligible project proposals to the JMEAC for their decision on approval;
- inform all applicants of the result of their project proposal submission(s);
- prepare, negotiate and oversee all funding agreements for approved projects;
- receive and review Interim and Final Reports on approved projects;
- release funding to approved projects as outlined in the signed funding agreement; and
- regularly monitor project implementation and report to the JMEAC on progress.

The Joint Master Education Agreement Committee

The JMEAC will:

- establish criteria for the purposes of reviewing, prioritizing, and funding of projects;
- review and approve proposed projects, including project funding amounts;
- review implementation progress reports submitted by the KEB, including any project extension requests; and
- report and make recommendations on the results of the projects to the Parties including current practices, lessons learned, and opportunities for expansion.

The Parties

The Parties will:

- establish and update the Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund Guidelines; and
- review recommendations from the JMEAC and decide whether to approve any changes to the Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund Guidelines.

3.1 Application Process

Eligible applicants are invited to submit proposals through a call for proposals issued by the KEB. Applicants will submit written project proposals to the KEB, using the accompanying Proposal Submission Template.

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION	
Applications submitted by electronic mail must be sent to:	ngfund@a-e-s.ca
Applications submitted by regular mail must be sent to:	Kinoomaadziwin Education Body 100-132 Osprey Miikan North Bay, ON P1B 8G5

The deadline for proposal submissions is: **Friday, May 16, 2025**

For the purposes of funding, approved projects may start in September 2025 or later and must be completed by August 31, 2026.

4.0 ACCOUNTABILITY

4.1 Funding Agreements

Once the JMEAC has reviewed proposals and approved projects for funding, the KEB will notify applicants through e-mail.

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a funding agreement with the KEB prior to receiving any funding or commencing any part of their project. All applicants must adhere to the funding agreement.

4.2 Privacy and Conflict of Interest

The JMEAC will ensure that conflicts of interest and issues related to privacy are appropriately addressed through the application review, decision-making, and contracting processes.

4.3 Monitoring & Reporting

A key mechanism for ensuring accountability is the ongoing monitoring of activities.

Projects will be monitored by the KEB on a regular basis to ensure that activities and timelines are met in accordance with the terms in each funding agreement.

Monitoring activities conducted by the KEB may include:

- Discussions via telephone;
- Correspondence by mail or e-mail; and
- On-site meetings/visits.

The funding agreements will include financial and project implementation reporting requirements. **Successful applicants will be expected to submit Interim and Final Reports.** Reporting templates will be shared with successful applicants during the establishment of the funding agreement.

4.4 Project Completion

A project is considered complete once the KEB receives:

- Electronic copies of products and/or materials developed during the project (e.g. survey questions and results, presentation and/or training materials, Interim Reports); and
- The Final Report, including the project evaluation.

As appropriate, the KEB will:

- Review Final Reports; and,
- Confirm that project objectives were achieved, and deliverables completed.

A project must be completed within the timelines specified within the funding agreement. Extensions to project completion dates are not permitted, except under exceptional circumstances, and if approved by the JMEAC.

4.5 Intellectual Property Rights

All rights, title, and interest in and to intellectual property produced by the First Nation, its employees, and its contractors under the Niigaan Gdizhaami Project Funding Agreement belongs to the First Nation. No party, including the KEB, will acquire any right, title, or interest in or to any intellectual property of the First Nation. The First Nation will ensure any employee or contractor who creates intellectual property under the project signs an agreement waiving their moral rights to the intellectual property, where appropriate.

The KEB expects that the applicants will agree in writing on the ownership of intellectual property created under projects submitted by a group of Participating First Nations, School Boards or third-party organizations or Group Project Streams.

ADMINISTRATION

5.0 Additional Considerations

These Guidelines may be amended or cancelled at any time at the discretion of the Parties.

6.0 CONTACT INFORMATION

For any questions or further clarification, please contact:

Tammy Desmoulin
Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund Coordinator
Kinoomaadziwin Education Body
Cell: 705-303-7845
Fax: 705-845-3637
Email: ngfund@a-e-s.ca

Appendix A: Eligible Applicants

Anishinabek First Nations party to the Master Education Agreement, and eligible to apply for the 2025-2026 Niigaan Gdizhaami Fund are:

Regional Education Council #1	
1	Biigtigong Nishnaabeg
2	Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek
3	Long Lake #58 First Nation
4	Netmizaaggamig Nishnaabeg (Pic Moberg First Nation)
Regional Education Council #2	
5	Atikameksheng Anishnawbek
6	Aundeck Omni Kaning First Nation
7	Michipicoten First Nation
8	Sheshegwaning First Nation
9	Zhiibaahaasing First Nation
10	Whitefish River First Nation
Regional Education Council #3	
11	Dokis First Nation
12	Henvey Inlet First Nation
13	Magnetawan First Nation
14	Moose Deer Point First Nation
15	Nipissing First Nation
16	Wahnapiatae First Nation
17	Wasauksing First Nation
Regional Education Council #4	
18	Aamjiwnaang First Nation
19	Beausoleil First Nation
20	Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation
21	Chippewas of Rama First Nation
22	Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation
23	Munsee Delaware Nation