CAPACITY BUILDING GRANT – APPLICATION GUIDELINES

OSHKI WUPOOWANE | THE BLANKET FUND

OVERVIEW OF THE CAPACITY BUILDING GRANT

The Capacity Building Grant supports Indigenous-led organizations that are ready to take the next step in their growth and strengthen their sustainability and impact. This grant stream is designed to invest in organizational development, rather than one-time events or activities. It reflects a commitment to Indigenous self-determination and long-term sustainability by supporting the structures, leadership, and systems that enable Indigenous organizations to thrive.

The Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund (DWF) recognizes the tremendous potential Indigenous-led projects have to drive change. This potential is nearly impossible to achieve through one-year funding cycles and typical government programming streams. We aim to support the sustainable growth of Indigenous-led organizations which ultimately benefit Indigenous Peoples.

The Blanket Fund was developed through consultation with Indigenous leaders and community members, and is supported through the sale of the Hudson's Bay Point Blankets. In October 2025, Canadian Tire Corporation announced that 100% of the Corporation's net proceeds from the Point Blankets will support The Blanket Fund, with a guaranteed minimum of $1M annually.

ELIGIBILITY – WHO CAN APPLY

The Capacity Building Grant welcomes applications from Indigenous-led organizations, including both registered non-profits and charities, as well as community-based organizations.

As a general guideline, organizations must demonstrate Indigenous leadership and decision-making authority at the governance and/or senior leadership levels. They must also directly serve or support Indigenous people and communities through their mandate, programming, or organizational purpose. For this grant, Indigenous organizations must have a majority (at least 50%) Indigenous Board of Directors, executive staff, and/or membership.

As this grant stream is designed for smaller Indigenous-led organizations seeking to build their internal capacity, an eligible organization would typically have fewer than six (6) or seven (7) full-time staff and operate with an annual budget of under $1,000,000.

These thresholds are flexible and are intended to reflect The Blanket Fund's focus on supporting organizations in their growth and development.

INELIGIBLE GROUPS

- Individuals
- For-profit businesses
- Organizations that are not Indigenous-led
- Organizations whose mandates does not align with serving Indigenous Peoples and communities
- Municipal, Provincial, or Territorial governments or entities
- Government of Canada and federal entities
- Political parties or partisan organizations
- Organizations not legally recognized in Canada

FUNDING

The Capacity Building Grant is designed as a multi-year investment. Initiatives may be supported for up to four (4) years, with funding of up to $175,000 annually. There is no minimum funding amount.

Recipients will engage in an ongoing partnership with DWF throughout the funding term. Continued funding beyond the first year is contingent upon responsible financial stewardship and continued alignment with the grant's purpose. DWF reserves the right to adjust or discontinue funding if conditions are not met.

In addition to financial support, DWF may work with recipients to identify pro-bono professional services that complement and strengthen the capacity-building plan. Participation in pro-bono opportunities will be determined in partnership with the organization and based on need and availability.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

The Capacity Building Grant supports initiatives that aim to strengthen an organization's long-term sustainability and impact. Funding is intended to build internal capacity, not one-time events or activities.

This stream is meant to be collaborative and flexible, allowing each applicant to identify what they require to reach the next phase in their development. Eligible activities may include, but are not limited to:

- Governance and leadership development
- Organizational systems and processes
- Human resources and staffing capacity
- Sustainability and long-term planning
- Program enhancements

- Marketing, communications, and branding
- Networking

DWF is seeking applicants who want to build their core capacity, create new programs, expand to new geographic locations, or grow their team. Successful Capacity Building Grant recipients will demonstrate the following in their applications:

- A readiness to engage in a multi-year capacity-building process
- Clarity of the capacity building plan
- Alignment with the grant's purpose
- Strength of Indigenous leadership
- Overall feasibility and coherence

INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The Capacity Building Grant is not intended to support:

- One-time events or program delivery unrelated to organizational growth and capacity building
- Capital construction or major infrastructure projects
- Fundraising events or activities
- Political or partisan activities

APPLICATION TIMELINES

The Capacity Building Grant is offered once annually. Deadlines and key dates are available on the DWF website. Applicants are encouraged to check the website regularly for the most current information.

Expressions of Interest must be received through the online portal before the deadline to be considered for funding. Late and/or incomplete applications will not be considered.

REPORTING

Successful applicants will be required to submit quarterly updates and semi-annual reports, including a financial breakdown of how the grant has been spent. DWF will work with the grantees to address any challenges in submitting the report to ensure there are no barriers to meeting the requirements of the grant.

APPLICATION SUPPORT & ACCESSIBILITY

DWF recognizes the importance of accessibility and is committed to ensuring that the Oshki Wupoowane | The Blanket Fund application process is inclusive for all applicants. Applicants who have questions about eligibility, funding, or application requirements are encouraged to contact DWF for

guidance. DWF staff can provide clarification and general advice to help applicants understand the process.

Applicants with accessibility needs are encouraged to contact DWF in advance of the application deadline. Reasonable accommodations will be made to ensure that all applicants can fully participate in the process.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information provided in the application will be treated with the utmost discretion. DWF will not disclose any application details to external parties without the applicant's explicit consent or as required by law. Applicants can feel confident sharing their ideas, plans, and organizational information knowing that their data will be handled with respect for their privacy rights.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For questions or support, applicants may reach out to:
Email: fund@downiewenjack.ca
Phone: 1-833-666-2414 ext. 13

APPLICATION PROCESS

As the Capacity Building Grant stream is a major commitment of both time and resources, the process to identify successful applicants has a three-stage approach. It is designed to identify applicants who will benefit most from our support, while also respecting the time and effort of ineligible groups. Applicants who do not meet the criteria will be notified after the Expression of Interest phase. Subsequent phases focus on co-developing partnerships between successful applicants and The Blanket Fund staff. Applicants will then participate in prioritizing and directing available funding through a participatory review process

Timeline:

April - May	**Phase A | Expression of Interest**
August - September	Applicants are notified. Those who meet the criteria will proceed to Phase B.
September – November	**Phase B | Scoping of Collaboration**
November – December	**Phase C | Participatory Review**

February	Successful applicants are announced.

Phase A | Expression of Interest

The Expression of Interest stage is intended to ensure your organization fits the criteria and would benefit from the support of the grant.

The online application can be accessed here: Gord Downie & Chanie Wenjack Fund Reconciliation Action Grant Application. Applicants will complete the following questions within the online portal:

1. Project Name
2. Timelines
    a. Start Date
    b. End Date
3. Organization Type
    a. What type of group are you?
        i. Registered charity/qualified donee
            1. Please provide registered charitable #
        ii. Registered non-profit/non-qualified donee
        iii. Other ("Other" might be a community group, collective, etc. Applicants must have a bank account in their organization's name.)
4. Project Description – Describe the details of the project
5. Explain how Indigenous people play a role in your organization
6. Connection to Indigenous communities or people – Explain how this grant will benefit your organization
7. Explain what capacity you will build through this grant
8. Explain how this new capacity will be sustained
9. Explain the impact this new capacity will have
10. Describe how this project will support Indigenous people and communities
11. Describe the expected outcomes

The Expression of Interest is meant to ensure that shortlisted applicants meet the following criteria:

- Your organization is Indigenous-led and has real, meaningful connections to Indigenous peoples and communities.
- The work you do directly impacts Indigenous people and communities.
- The opportunity to unlock growth, either through supporting programs or capacity development for your organization.
- The growth is sustainable after the funding ends.

Shortlisted organizations will be invited to Phase B and asked to submit a more detailed Scope of Collaboration, which builds on the criteria above. This will include a meeting with The Blanket Fund staff so you can verbally explain your organization and impact before moving on to Phase B.

Phase B | Scoping of Collaboration

The Scoping of Collaboration phase will be an opportunity to establish your capacity-building goals, articulate how you intend to achieve them, and discuss what role our partnership will play. The result will be the completion of Scope of Collaboration documents that break down your needs by financial and operational requirements.

The Scope of Collaboration documents will also clearly outline your organization's Indigenous leadership or how you are connected to Indigenous communities, what impact you will have, what the opportunity for growth is, and how this growth can be sustained.

DWF will provide templates to support your Scope of Collaboration.

Phase C | Participatory Review

The final documents created in Phase B will be reviewed by other potential grant recipients through a participatory review process. Each component of the document will be commented on by the other potential grant recipients. We want to ensure applicants take leadership roles throughout this process, which includes using their lived experience to reflect on and make final decisions on impacts and resourcing needs amongst applicants.

The Blanket Fund will take the direction provided by the review group and will allocate available resources to best meet these recommendations based on the funds available.

The Blanket Fund will work to provide potential recipients who the review committee does not feel meet the funding criteria with support to continue with a portion of their proposal. This monetary support will not exceed $10,000.