

## Application Summary: 2026 - 3380 - Community Impact Grant - Community Programs and Projects

### Application ID

2026 - 3380 - Community Impact Grant - Community Programs and Projects

### Applicant Information

#### Organization Information

2420254 ALBERTA LTD.

s.20(1)

Fort McMurray, AB, T9k2b9

#### Primary Contact

Madelaine Amyotte

s.20(1)

Fort McMurray, AB, T9K 0R8

Phone: s.20(1)

Email: maddie@ihkapaskwacollective.com

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### Is the organization a registered non-profit?

Applicants must be a registered non-profit organization or a community group in partnership with a registered non-profit organization. If you have any questions regarding grant eligibility, please contact [cip@rmwb.ca](mailto:cip@rmwb.ca) to book a pre-application meeting.

Yes

### Has the organization operated within the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo for at least one year?

Applicants must have resided or operated within the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo for at least one year prior to applying. If you have any questions regarding grant eligibility, please contact [cip@rmwb.ca](mailto:cip@rmwb.ca) to book a pre-application meeting.

Yes

### In the last year, have there been any significant changes to your organization or program?

Yes

#### If yes; please select the change.

- Organizational Change (e.g. governance, policies, strategic plan)
- Leadership Change (e.g. staff or board)
- Financial Change (e.g. funding, loss/gain of sponsors)
- Demographics (e.g. changes in the community you serve)
- Other

### What is your organization's Mission Statement?

Bridging the gap between westernised health and wellness services and traditional ways of healing for Indigenous Families through the reclamation of traditions and culture.

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### **Brief Summary of the Proposed Program(s) and/or Project(s).**

Aunties Within Reach (AWR) is an award-winning Indigenous-led program that enhances access to culturally rooted reproductive, perinatal, and family supports for Indigenous women and expectant parents in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB).

AWR uses a wrap-around, multi-service delivery model designed to remove barriers to reproductive health care and strengthen pathways to wellness. The program is delivered by a multidisciplinary Indigenous health team, including registered midwives, a nurse practitioner, birth workers, and community resource navigators ("Aunties"). Together, they provide holistic and accessible care through:

A dedicated support line and coordinated referral network

Access to midwifery and home-based perinatal care

Mental health and crisis support

Cultural mentorship and family education during pregnancy and postpartum

Advocacy, navigation, and connection to community resources

Grounded in Indigenous kinship systems, the role of the Auntie embodies cultural continuity—offering guidance, emotional support, and mentorship to younger generations. Through this model, AWR fosters trust, belonging, and safety in health care spaces, while advancing reconciliation and equity in maternal-child health.

In recognition of its impact, AWR received the 2024 Patient Experience Award from the Health Quality Council of Alberta for its leadership in improving Indigenous families' access to compassionate, culturally safe reproductive and maternal health services.

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**Please note any restrictions on participating in your organization's programs, projects, services or events.**

There are no restrictions on participation in our programs, projects, or services. Aunties Within Reach (AWR) programs are open to all individuals and families seeking perinatal, reproductive, and family wellness support, with priority given to Indigenous women, birthing people, and families in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo.

Our approach is inclusive, barrier-free, and trauma-informed, ensuring that anyone in need of culturally safe care, advocacy, or community support can access services regardless of income, residency status, or background.

**Minimum number of board members according to the organization's bylaws:**

3

**Please list your current Board of Directors in the table:**

### Board of Directors

Name	Board Position	Years on Board
Nicolas Vardy	Vice President	3
Kyla Cardinal	President	1
Monica Viel	Secretary/treasurer	1
Harley Johnson	youth representative	1
Ashton Janvier	director	1
Stephanie Minlay	director	1

**Do one or more board representatives or program staff have lived experience or expertise reflective of the demographics your organization serves?**

Yes

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### **If Yes; please briefly explain the lived experience or expertise.**

Yes. Aunties Within Reach (AWR) is an Indigenous-led program, developed and delivered by team members whose lived experience and professional expertise reflect the communities we serve.

Our board of directors is all Indigenous, ensuring that governance and decision-making are guided by Indigenous knowledge, values, and community priorities. Program staff include Indigenous midwives, birth workers, and community resource navigators (Aunties) from the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo and surrounding rural and remote Indigenous communities.

Our Auntie Support Worker is a band member who was raised in one of the rural Indigenous communities we serve, bringing firsthand knowledge of local realities, cultural practices, and community strengths.

This lived experience grounds the AWR program in cultural safety, kinship-based care, and traditional teachings, ensuring that every service is responsive, inclusive, and rooted in the experiences of Indigenous women, families, and communities.

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### Program/Projects Details

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#### Are you applying for more than one program or project?

If you are unsure, please contact CIP@rmwb.ca for clarification.

No

### Program/Projects

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**Step 1:** Click on the button below to enter the name of your program(s) or project(s).

**Step 2:** Click on the Save Draft button at the bottom of the screen.

**Step 3: Click on the "Program/Project Details" button below to complete the details of each Program/Project. Please be sure to submit the current program/project information form before moving onto the next project information form.**

**Program/Project:** Aunties Within Reach   **Status:** Completed

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### Finances

#### Organization's most recent Fiscal Year End date

Please click Save Draft to update the following two questions with this date.

03/30/2025

#### Unrestricted Net Assets

Unrestricted Net Assets (accumulated net assets/surplus that the organization has not set aside for a particular purpose or earmarked by a donor for a specific program or project) from your Financial Statements ending: 03/30/2025

\$0.00

#### Total Operating Expenses

Total Expenses from your Financial Statements Ending: 03/30/2025

\$503,469.52

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### What efforts have been made in the past fiscal year to increase the financial support for your organization?

Over the past fiscal year, Ihkapekwa Collective has taken a proactive approach to increasing financial sustainability and diversifying revenue sources to support our Indigenous-led health and community programs. Key efforts have included:

**Grant Development and Strategic Funding Applications:** Submitted multiple proposals to provincial and federal funding streams, including the Alberta Midwifery Strategy Grant, the Community Initiatives Program (CIP), and Indigenous Primary Care funding opportunities, with a focus on sustaining the Aunties Within Reach and Fireweed Midwifery initiatives.

**Partnership Building:** Strengthened collaborations with Alberta Health Services, the University of Alberta CARE Lab, and local Indigenous organizations to enhance joint funding eligibility and access shared research and program resources.

**Community and Corporate Engagement:** Initiated outreach to local businesses, industry partners, and community donors (including regional companies such as Cenovus Energy) for sponsorships and in-kind contributions toward community health programming, transportation supports, and youth wellness activities.

**Operational Infrastructure Development:** Enhanced administrative and financial systems to support transparent reporting and strengthen the organization's capacity to manage multi-stream funding.

These collective efforts have improved organizational readiness for long-term funding and created new opportunities for partnerships and grants aligned with Indigenous health equity and community wellness priorities.

**Please complete the following budget table: If there are multiple programs, projects, services or events included in this application, please provide the total budget for all requests in the budget table. Additionally, attach a detailed breakdown of the budget by program, project, service or event on the Attachment tab.**

### Secured Revenue

Revenue Sources	Description	Revenue (Jan-Dec)
Government of Alberta Grant	New Horizons For Seniors Grant	\$20,000.00

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Other	Patient Navigator	\$117,961.00
Other	Repayment for services rendered (CIHR Funding)	\$216,000.00
Other	Alberta Blue Cross grant	\$1,000.00
		<b>\$354,961.00</b>

### Revenue in Progress

Revenue Sources	Description	Revenue (Jan-Dec)
Government of Alberta Grant	Community Support	\$200,000.00
Grant	Midwifery Strategy grant	\$750,000.00
		<b>\$950,000.00</b>

### Expenses

Type of Expense	Description	Total Expenses	Requested RMWB Grant
Rent - Venue/Facility/Room/Equipment		\$56,784.00	\$0.00
Insurance - Program, Project, Service or Event	Insurance	\$1,163.00	\$0.00
Transportation and Delivery	Mobile clinic	\$38,000.00	\$0.00
Food Costs		\$12,000.00	\$0.00
Advertising/Marketing		\$5,000.00	\$0.00
Gifts for Elders / Honorariums		\$3,000.00	\$0.00
Administration Costs 15% Maximum		\$80,000.00	\$0.00
Program Materials & Supplies		\$10,000.00	\$0.00
Program Staff wages & Benefits		\$375,153.00	\$100,000.00
Training		\$20,000.00	\$0.00
Other (Provide Detail)	subcontractors	\$20,000.00	\$0.00
		<b>\$621,100.00</b>	<b>\$100,000.00</b>

### Shortfall

Total
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(Total Secured Revenue - Total Expenses) -\$266,139.00

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### Total RMWB Grant Request

	<b>Amount</b>
Total	\$100,000.00

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### Total Cost of Program, Project, or Service

Total cost includes all costs of the entire program, project or service.

\$621,100.00

### Total Grant Amount Request

Up to 75% of total program, project cost up to maximum of \$100,000.

\$100,000.00

### Grant request as percentage of total cost of program, project or service

Click on the Save Draft button to calculate the percentage.

16%

### Outline any expected non-financial resources being leveraged for this program, project, service or event to demonstrate community support.

This project leverages a range of community resources that demonstrate strong local support and shared commitment to Indigenous-led health and wellness initiatives:

**In-Kind Contributions:** Community partners and local organizations provide access to meeting spaces, transportation support, donated food, baby supplies, and cultural materials for gatherings and outreach activities.

**Collaborative Partnerships:** Continued support from the University of Alberta CARE Lab, and local Indigenous-serving agencies provides shared research capacity, training opportunities, and program referrals. We have also received an in-kind donation of a mobile outreach clinic valued at 140,000.

**Professional Support:** Midwives, Nurse Practitioner, and psychologist funded outside of our program

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### Attachments

**Please attach a budget breakdown for each program, project, service or event if there are multiple requests included in this application.**

**Please attach a Partnership Letter(s) of Support for the proposed program, project, service or event to demonstrate authentic partnership and collaboration.**

Applicants may use the [Partnership Letter of Support Template](#) or submit a customized letter.

Each letter should include the following five key elements:

1. Commitment to the partnership and shared initiatives
2. Confirmation of the community need
3. History of prior collaboration or rationale for a new partnership
4. Defined roles, responsibilities, and resource commitments
5. Contact information for the partner organization

Each letter must be signed by an authorized representative of the partner organization.

Please note: The partnership letter is a mandatory requirement for Community Sustaining applicants and optional for Community Impact Grant application.

[Keyano-Letterhead-Primary-Letter\\_of\\_Support\\_for\\_Ihkapaskwa\\_docx.pdf](#)

316.3 KB - 10/07/2025 2:54 PM

[Letters\\_of\\_Support\\_-\\_MSG.pdf](#)

4.3 MB - 10/07/2025 2:58 PM

[Support\\_Letter.pdf](#)

1.7 MB - 10/07/2025 2:51 PM

Total Files: 3



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**Please attach signed Financial Statements for the most recent fiscal year end.**

Year-end date must fall between July 1, 2024 of last year and June 30, 2025.

[financial\\_doc.pdf](#)

92.7 KB - 10/14/2025 7:29 AM

Total Files: 1

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### Declaration

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Declaration: In making this application, I, the undersigned, confirm:

- that I have read the appropriate Grant Guidelines;
- that I understand that this application form and all required attachments must be completed in full and received before 2025-10-14 4:30 p.m. MT;
- that I understand that this application form and any attachments shall be part of the Community Investment Program Approval Committee (CIPAC, Council Appointed) meeting agenda and accessible through all methods that the public meeting agenda is available;
- that I understand the term of the Grant is January 1 to December 31, 2026 and that all expenditures must happen during this term; and
- that I am authorized by the applicant organization to complete the application and hereby represent to the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo's Community Investment Program and declare that to the best of our knowledge and belief, the information provided is truthful and accurate, and the application is made on behalf of the above-named organization and with the Board of Directors' full knowledge and consent.
- that I understand the personal information collected in this application is collected under the authority of Section 4(c) of the Protection of Privacy Act and is managed in accordance with the Act. It will be used to process your application and contact you if needed during the review of this application. If you have questions about the collection or use of your personal information, you may contact the Manager, Community Partnerships and Initiatives, at 9909 Franklin Avenue, Fort McMurray, AB T9H 2K4 or at 587-919-5522.

### Acknowledgement

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I do hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge, this application contains a full and correct account of all matters stated herein.

### Applicant Name

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Madelaine Amyotte

### Position/Title

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Executive Health Director

**Date:** 10/14/2025

### Program, Project or Service Name

Aunties Within Reach

### Beginning Date

2026-01-01

### Completion Date

Note: The term of the grant is January 1 - December 31, 2026. The program, project, service or event and all expenditures must occur during this term.

2026-12-31

### Location program, project or service will be provided:

Note: If the grant is approved, the communities served will be included in the Grant Agreement and data collection from all communities will be required.

Do not select the rural community if the service is provided to the clients from rural communities through the urban service area.

Anzac, Conklin, Fort Chipewyan, Fort McKay, Fort McMurray, Janvier

### Please complete the following Program/Project or Event Delivery Details.

### Program, Project, or Event Delivery Information

Program/Project/ or Event Location	In Person (Yes/No)	Virtually (Yes/No)	Travel Budget Required (Yes/No)
Cultural Perinatal Support Program	yes	yes	yes
Community Resource Navigation	yes	yes	yes
Parenting and Family Circles	yes	no	yes
Healing and Wellness Circles	yes	no	yes
On-the-Land Gatherings	yes	no	yes
Training and Mentorship for Birthworkers and Students	yes	yes	yes

**How does your organization plan to address barriers related to delivering virtual services in rural areas. This may include limited internet access, lack of devices, and limited technical support. If applicable.**

We recognize that many of the rural and remote Indigenous communities we serve face significant barriers to virtual care, including unreliable internet access, limited access to devices, and minimal technical support. To address these challenges, our organization has adopted several strategies:

**Mobile Outreach and In-Person Alternatives:** we bring services directly to communities, ensuring that care continues even when virtual options are not feasible.

**Hybrid Service Model:** When connectivity allows, appointments and educational sessions are offered via phone or low-bandwidth platforms (e.g., Zoom audio, FaceTime, or telephone check-ins) rather than requiring high-speed video.

**Device and Technology Access:** We provide access to shared tablets and mobile hotspots during outreach visits and are building partnerships to expand device lending programs for families without reliable technology.

**Community Navigation Support:** Our Auntie Resource Navigators offer one-on-one in person visits and virtual appointments

**Collaboration with Local Partners:** We coordinate with band offices, schools, and community centres to utilize spaces with stable internet connections for clients who need a private, supported environment to attend virtual appointments or workshops.

**How does your organization plan to address transportation barriers to provide the program, project, service or event? If applicable.**

**-Mobile Service Delivery:** We operate a mobile outreach team that travels to rural and remote communities across the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, reducing the need for clients to travel long distances for support.

**-Transportation Assistance:** Through the Aunties Within Reach program, clients can access taxi and bus vouchers to attend medical appointments, counseling sessions, or community programming.

**-Auntie Resource Navigators** provide in-home visits for prenatal, postpartum, and wellness care, ensuring that those without reliable transportation are not excluded from services.

**-Community Partnerships:** We collaborate with local Indigenous organizations, band offices, and social service partners to coordinate shared transportation when families need to travel for support.

**Council approved seven funding priorities. Please indicate which funding priority/priorities are applicable to this application.**

Please select at least 3 funding priorities for the Community Sustaining and Subsidiary Grant applications.  
Please select at least 1 funding priority for the Community Impact Grant (Community Programs and Projects or Community Events) application.

- Community support services and wellness
- Accessibility, inclusion and belonging
- Hosting events/new business and visitors
- Partnership and collaboration
- Rural and Indigenous Communities and Relationships
- Social participation
- Value of culture, heritage and regional pride

**Describe how the proposed program, project, service or event align with these priorities.**

This Indigenous-led program promotes wellness, inclusion, and cultural connection across the RMWB. It provides wrap-around perinatal and family care that integrates traditional teachings with holistic health supports. Through mobile outreach, home visits, and partnerships with AHS, the CARE Lab, and local Indigenous organizations, services are accessible to rural families. Land-based gatherings, family circles, and mentorship opportunities foster belonging, intergenerational connection, and regional pride while celebrating culture, collaboration, and the strength of Indigenous communities.

**In the table below, please identify the total number of unique participants that you anticipate will access the funded program, project, service or event.**

#### Target Population

Age	Target Population
Children (0-12 years)	50
Youth (13-18 years)	50
Adults	150
Seniors (65+)	20
Families	50
Community	5
Total	325

## Project Summary

### Aunties Within Reach

**Please identify the equity deserving population the program, project, service or event will serve.**

Youth, Seniors, 2SLGBTQIA+, First Nations, Métis, and/or Inuit Peoples, Youth, Seniors, Women and/or girls, People experiencing poverty and/or homelessness, People living with disabilities, People living in rural communities

## Project Summary

### Aunties Within Reach

**How does your organization ensure that its programs, projects, services or events are accessible and inclusive for anyone who has an interest? Please share examples and success stories of accessibility and inclusivity.**

Our programs are designed to meet people where they are, geographically, culturally, and socially. Through initiatives like Aunties Within Reach and the Fireweed Mobile Reproductive Health Clinic, we bring care directly into rural and remote Indigenous communities, removing barriers such as transportation, cost, and institutional mistrust. Services are offered in-home, on the land, and in community spaces where families feel safe and connected.

We prioritize cultural safety, offering both Western and traditional supports such as access to Elders, Aunties, herbalists, and midwives. Our staff and board reflect the communities we serve. Our board is majority Indigenous, and our Auntie Support Worker is a band member who was raised in one of the rural communities we serve.

An example of success is the increased engagement of young parents who previously declined care due to travel and cultural barriers. By offering mobile, culturally grounded services, we have seen improved continuity of care, stronger community trust, and decreased need for medical travel. Our approach ensures that everyone, regardless of income, location, or background, can access care that honours their identity and values.

**If applicable, please explain how your program, project, service or event celebrates Indigenous culture, serves Indigenous communities and/or promotes Indigenous healing, language, cultural restoration, or reconciliation.**

Our programs are grounded in Indigenous worldviews, ceremony, and the teachings of local Elders and Knowledge Keepers. We celebrate Indigenous culture by integrating traditional practices, medicines, and language into every aspect of care. Through the guidance of our Grandmothers' Circle, we ensure that services reflect community values and cultural continuity.

The Aunties Within Reach program provides wrap-around support that honours traditional roles of Aunties, Grandmothers, and extended kinship systems. This approach strengthens connection to culture and supports self-determination in health care.

Our gatherings often begin with prayer, song, and sharing circles, creating space for cultural restoration and intergenerational healing. Participants are encouraged to use and revitalize Indigenous languages through conversation, naming ceremonies, and storytelling.

By centering Indigenous leadership and knowledge, our work contributes to reconciliation in practice. We are restoring traditional pathways of care that were disrupted by colonization and creating spaces where Indigenous families can access support that is safe, empowering, and reflective of who they are.

## Logic Model

## Project Summary

### Aunties Within Reach

#### **Statement of Need: What social problem or gap do you hope to address by delivering the program, project, service or event? What evidence do you have that this problem or gap exists?**

Indigenous families in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo continue to experience significant barriers to culturally safe, accessible, and community-based supports during pregnancy, birth, and parenting. Many rural and remote families must travel long distances to access care, leading to isolation from family and community supports. These disruptions increase stress, negatively affect perinatal outcomes, and perpetuate mistrust in mainstream health systems.

Research and community feedback highlight that Indigenous families want holistic and culturally grounded care that recognizes the importance of ceremony, kinship, and land-based practices. Data from northern Alberta show higher rates of medical travel, separation during birth, and poorer maternal and infant outcomes compared to provincial averages. Local families have identified the lack of accessible, culturally appropriate supports as a key contributor to these disparities.

Aunties Within Reach is an award-winning program with a proven track record for improving health and wellness among Indigenous families. The program restores traditional models of care by connecting families with Aunties, Elders, and Knowledge Keepers who provide wrap-around, culturally informed support. This model directly addresses social isolation, promotes healing and cultural continuity, and bridges the gap between Western health services and traditional systems of care.

## Project Summary

### Aunties Within Reach

#### **Broad Strategy: How will the program, project, service or event address the social problem? (e.g., What approach are you taking that you hope will lead your program, project, service or event to support the social problem?)**

Aunties Within Reach addresses social and health inequities by restoring community-based, culturally grounded systems of support for Indigenous families. Our strategy is to strengthen the circle of care around expectant parents and families by reconnecting them with traditional roles of Aunties, Grandmothers, and Knowledge Keepers, while also bridging access to health and social services.

The program offers wrap-around care through culturally safe resource navigation, peer and elder mentorship, and one-on-one family support. This approach recognizes that health and wellness are influenced by culture, community connection, and belonging. By offering care in community spaces and homes rather than institutions, families are met in places where they feel safe, respected, and seen.

We use a strengths-based, trauma-informed framework that centres Indigenous self-determination and the principle of “nothing about us, without us.” Our Auntie Support Worker and network of Elders work alongside families to promote wellness, parenting confidence, and cultural pride.

Through relationship-building, ceremony, and culturally grounded education, Aunties Within Reach helps to heal the disconnection caused by colonization and fosters long-term community capacity. The model has demonstrated success in improving access to care, enhancing family wellbeing, and rebuilding trust in health systems.

**Rationale: What evidence or research do we have that this strategy will work? To demonstrate for example, "If [my organization] does 'x' program, project, service or event, then [this] change will happen for the target population."**

Evidence shows that culturally grounded, community-led programs improve health outcomes, strengthen trust in care systems, and promote long-term wellness among Indigenous families. Studies from the First Nations Health Authority, the National Aboriginal Health Organization, and the University of Alberta's CARE Lab confirm that when Indigenous families receive support that honours language, ceremony, and traditional knowledge, there are measurable reductions in medical travel, stress, and perinatal complications, as well as improvements in family wellbeing and engagement.

Aunties Within Reach applies these proven principles through an Indigenous-led, wrap-around model of care. If families are supported by Aunties, Elders, and cultural mentors who understand their experiences and values, then they are more likely to access prenatal and parenting support, maintain continuity of care, and experience improved physical, emotional, and cultural wellness.

Our own program evaluation and community feedback demonstrate these outcomes in practice. Families consistently report increased confidence, stronger cultural identity, and deeper community connection. These results confirm what research already tells us—when care is delivered in a culturally safe, community-driven way, health outcomes and family wellbeing improve for Indigenous families.

#### **Inputs: What resources will be invested to achieve your goal? (e.g., staff labour, venue space, volunteers, computers, etc.)**

To achieve our goals, Aunties Within Reach invests in both human and cultural resources that ensure the program remains community-led and culturally grounded. Our primary input is the time, skill, and lived experience of our staff and volunteers, including our Auntie Support Worker, program coordinator, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Grandmothers' Circle, who guide the program's design and delivery.

We dedicate staff labour to one-on-one family support, cultural programming, outreach coordination, and evaluation activities. Volunteer support from community members, including parents who have previously participated, strengthens peer mentorship and helps sustain ongoing circles and gatherings.

Physical resources include access to community venues and spaces where programming, sharing circles, and workshops can be held in a welcoming, culturally safe environment. Additional inputs include computers, phones, and online tools used for communication, data tracking, and coordination with partner organizations.

We also rely on strong partnerships with local agencies and the University of Alberta CARE Lab, which contribute expertise in community-based research and program evaluation. Together, these human, cultural, and material resources create a strong foundation for a program that promotes connection, healing, and long-term community wellness.

## Project Summary

### Aunties Within Reach

#### **Activities: What activities make up the program, project, service or event? (e.g., workshops, mentorship sessions, etc.)**

Aunties Within Reach offers a series of ongoing, relationship-based activities that strengthen cultural connection, promote wellness, and provide practical support to Indigenous families. Core activities include one-on-one family support and home visits led by our Auntie Support Worker, where families receive guidance, advocacy, and referrals tailored to their needs.

Regular sharing circles, parenting groups, and community gatherings are held to encourage connection, peer support, and cultural restoration. These gatherings often include ceremony, song, language use, and teachings from Elders and Knowledge Keepers. Workshops focus on topics such as pregnancy and postpartum wellness, infant feeding, family relationships, and navigating health and social services.

We also coordinate cultural mentorship opportunities, linking families with Aunties, Grandmothers, and traditional practitioners who provide guidance rooted in Indigenous knowledge and kinship values.

In collaboration with the CARE Lab, program activities include ongoing evaluation, data collection, and storytelling that highlight the positive impacts of culturally grounded care. All activities are designed to be trauma-informed, strengths-based, and responsive to community priorities, ensuring that every family feels supported, valued, and connected to culture and community.

**Outputs: What do you deliver? (e.g., # of total participants trained, # of organizations, # of sessions, # of events, etc.). Note, each activity should have outputs.**

Note: If the program, project, service or event is approved, your outputs may be included in the Grant Agreement and data collection on the outputs is required.

**Family Support and Outreach:** Provide individualized support to approximately 80–100 families each year through home visits, advocacy, and resource navigation. Each family receives culturally safe care planning and connection to both traditional and community-based services.

**Sharing Circles and Gatherings:** Host monthly community circles and seasonal gatherings guided by Elders and Knowledge Keepers. These events create safe spaces for cultural learning, ceremony, and mutual support.

**Workshops and Education:** Deliver 10–12 workshops annually focused on prenatal and postpartum wellness, infant feeding, family relationships, and traditional teachings.

**Cultural Mentorship:** Facilitate ongoing mentorship between families and Aunties, Grandmothers, and traditional healers to restore kinship-based systems of support.

**Community Partnerships and Referrals:** Maintain collaboration with 10+ local partner agencies and service providers to ensure coordinated care and improved access to resources.

**Program Evaluation:** Collect data and community feedback through quarterly reports and annual summaries in partnership with the University of Alberta CARE Lab to demonstrate impact and guide continuous improvement.

**Outcomes: What change do you want to see for the participants by running your program, project, service or event? Organizations are required to identify at least one outcome, that will be measured through the grant period, should the application be approved.**

Note: If the program, project, service or event is approved, your outcomes will be included in the Grant Agreement and data collection on the outcomes is required.

Short-term outcomes (within the grant period):

Increased connection to cultural supports, Elders, and Aunties.

Improved knowledge and confidence in pregnancy, parenting, and family wellness.

Increased access to health, social, and cultural resources through coordinated navigation and advocacy.

Strengthened trust between Indigenous families and service providers.

Long-term outcomes:

Improved perinatal and family health outcomes.

Enhanced cultural continuity and intergenerational healing.

Reduced isolation and medical travel for families in rural and remote communities.

Greater community capacity to deliver Indigenous-led supports.

These outcomes will be measured through pre- and post-participation surveys, participant feedback forms, and ongoing evaluation in partnership with the University of Alberta CARE Lab. Qualitative stories, attendance records, and referral tracking will further demonstrate change. Collectively, these measures will show how Aunties Within Reach contributes to stronger, healthier, and more connected Indigenous families and communities.

#### What tools will you use to measure the outcomes of the program, project, service or event?

Note: If your organization is approved for funding, copies of the measurement tools selected will be requested.

Surveys, Focus Groups, Interviews, Observation

#### Please provide details of how your program, project, service or event differs from other services being offered in the community.

Aunties Within Reach is unlike any other service currently offered in the region. While some programs provide clinical care or social supports, Aunties Within Reach integrates both cultural and practical assistance through an Indigenous-led, community-based approach that restores traditional family and kinship roles.

The program is guided by Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and a Grandmothers' Circle, ensuring that Indigenous values and teachings shape every aspect of service delivery. Our Auntie Support Worker provides hands-on, culturally safe care in homes and community spaces rather than institutional settings, meeting families where they feel most comfortable.

Unlike conventional programs that focus on short-term outcomes, Aunties Within Reach prioritizes long-term relationship building, cultural continuity, and intergenerational healing. It bridges gaps between health care, social services, and cultural supports—creating a wrap-around model that reconnects families to traditional networks of care.

This award-winning program has a proven record of improving health and wellness among Indigenous families, increasing engagement in prenatal and parenting support, and reducing the need for medical travel. Its foundation in Indigenous knowledge and leadership makes it both unique and deeply responsive to community priorities and strengths.

## Project Summary

### Aunties Within Reach

**This grant is intended to promote an allied social profit sector within the Municipality. List the community groups or organizations that will be actively involved in the program, project, service or event delivery.**

Community Organization or Group	Role
ATC	partner
McMurray Metis	partner
Wood Buffalo Wellness	partner
Metis Nation of Alberta	partner
Care Lab - University of Alberta	partner
Alberta Health Services	partner



## School of Health & Human Services

**Date: July 3, 2025**

**To Whom It May Concern:**

Heather.pelley@keyano.ca

I am writing in full support of Ihkapaskwa Collective's application to the Community Investment Program. As an Instructor at Keyano College in the School of Health & Human Services, teaching primarily within the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program, including Indigenous Health Studies, I have seen firsthand the critical need for culturally grounded, community-led education and engagement within the healthcare sector-particularly for Indigenous learners.

C 780.881.6385

8115 Franklin Avenue  
Fort McMurray, AB T9H 2H7

**Keyano.ca**

The proposed initiative by Ihkapaskwa Collective aligns directly with our goals at Keyano College to provide inclusive, equity-oriented education that addresses systemic racism in healthcare and uplifts Indigenous students. Our mission statement at the College reads as; In partnership with industry and community, develop a relevant workforce and leaders of tomorrow, in a safe learning environment that embraces equity, diversity, and inclusivity (EDI). The College's Strategic Plan prioritizes EDI as stated within Pillar One: Access and Affordability, Outcome One: To provide a robust student experience; Through the lens of EDI, and the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action, provide support for diverse, vulnerable and underrepresented learners.

Through our existing partnership, Ihkapaskwa has already contributed meaningful anti-racism outreach to our classrooms, providing ongoing presentations, engaging students in culturally rooted teachings, and inspiring them to envision community roles such as midwives, herbalists, and Aunties as respected careers in health.

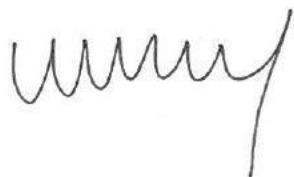
This proposal's commitment to mentoring youth into roles such as traditional medicine apprentices and birthworkers is not only innovative, it's essential. These pathways acknowledge and build upon traditional knowledge systems that have supported Indigenous wellness for generations. Moreover, the integration of this knowledge into

post-secondary education settings, like Keyano, creates opportunities for reciprocal learning and sustainable change.

I am particularly enthusiastic about the continued collaboration proposed in this funding application. Ihkapaskwa's presence in our classrooms challenges bias, sparks curiosity, and builds confidence in Indigenous learners. Their leadership in decolonizing health education is both timely and transformative.

I fully support this application and urge you to fund this important work.

Sincerely,



**Heather Pelley BScN, RN**  
She/Her  
Nursing Instructor  
School of Health & Human Services

## Letters of Support



To Whom It May Concern,

I am pleased to offer our strong and unwavering support for the Ihkapaskwa Collective on behalf of McMurray Métis. Ihkapaskwa Collective is an inspiring, Indigenous organization that is transforming how wellness and care are delivered in our region. Rooted in Indigenous knowledge systems, Ihkapaskwa offers culturally safe, community-driven programs that are essential to the health and healing of our Members. Their presence fills longstanding gaps in reproductive, mental, and spiritual care while uplifting traditions that are central to our way of life.

At McMurray Métis, we are guided by a mission to advance the cultural, economic, social, and environmental well-being of our Members. Ihkapaskwa's work directly supports this mission. Through offerings such as the Fireweed Wellness Lodge and Aunties Within Reach, the Collective ensures that Indigenous families, especially women, children, and Two-Spirit people, have access to safe, culturally informed care. Their efforts reflect the strength and resilience of Métis knowledge systems and directly improve the quality of life for many of our Members.

Two of the Collective's co-founders are proud McMurray Métis Members. Their leadership, grounded in lived experience and cultural expertise, ensures the programming reflects our community's needs and values. Whether through birthwork, mental wellness support, or ceremony, Ihkapaskwa creates vital spaces for intergenerational healing, connection, and empowerment.

As our McMurray Métis transitions into the Otipemisiwak Métis Government, partnerships like this are essential. Ihkapaskwa helps us realize our vision of a thriving, self-determined Métis Nation rooted in culture, community, and care. We wholeheartedly support any funding, collaborations, or initiatives that will allow the Collective to grow, reach more families, and train the next generation of Indigenous wellness providers.

McMurray Métis is proud to stand alongside Ihkapaskwa Collective. Their work is not only valuable, but also vital.

Sincerely,

Kelly Myers,  
District Captain. McMurray Métis

---

**District Council of Fort McMurray Métis District**

441 Sakitawaw Trail, Fort McMurray, AB, T9H 4P3

P: 780-743-2659 | F: 780-743-2654

[www.McMurrayMetis.org](http://www.McMurrayMetis.org)

Page 1 of 1

## Letters of Support



To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of McMurray Métis, I am writing to express our full support for Ihkapaskwa Collective, a Métis-and Indigenous women-led organization rooted in community and culture, providing critical health and wellness services throughout the Wood Buffalo region.

Two of the Collective's co-founders are proud members of our Nation, and their work through programs like Aunties Within Reach and the Fireweed Wellness Lodge reflects a deep commitment to serving families with compassion, cultural knowledge, and a strong sense of community responsibility.

Ihkapaskwa Collective plays a unique and essential role in addressing the gaps Indigenous families face when trying to access safe, culturally grounded reproductive and wellness care. Their work reaches across urban and rural areas, bringing care directly to those who need it most. They uplift our traditions, mentor the next generation of Indigenous birthworkers, and create space for ceremony, healing, and intergenerational knowledge-sharing.

McMurray Métis strongly supports their ongoing efforts and any future funding proposals that would allow them to grow their programming, train more Indigenous care providers, and continue making culturally safe healthcare more accessible in our region.

We are proud to stand with the Ihkapaskwa Collective and fully endorse their continued work to support Métis, First Nations, and Inuit families.

Sincerely,

Don Scott,  
Executive Director, McMurray Métis

---

**District Council of Fort McMurray Métis District**

441 Sakitawaw Trail, Fort McMurray, AB, T9H 4P3

P: 780-743-2659 | F: 780-743-2654

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Page 1 of 1

## Letters of Support



### Otipemisiwak Métis Government

780-455-2200 · 1-877-454-0684  
mna@metis.org · albertametis.com  
Delia Gray Building · 11738 Kingsway Avenue · Edmonton, AB · T5G 0X5

### Office of the President

August 20, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of Otipemisiwak Métis Government, we are proud to offer our full support for the Ihkapaskwa Collective's application to the Alberta Midwifery Funding Program.

The Ihkapaskwa Collective is a Métis and First Nations-led organization committed to transforming reproductive health care in our region. Two of its founding members are citizens of McMurray Métis Local 1935 and Otipemisiwak Métis Government. Their work is rooted in the values of our Nation; family, community, connection to land, and the reclamation of traditional knowledge. Their leadership represents a vital step forward in restoring culturally safe, accessible care to our people.

Through programs like **Fireweed Wellness Lodge** and **Aunties Within Reach**, the Collective provides barrier-free, wraparound midwifery care that meets the unique needs of Métis families in Fort McMurray and beyond. They support families through all stages of the reproductive journey, from fertility and pregnancy to birth and postpartum, integrating both contemporary clinical care and traditional Métis teachings.

This care model is especially important for urban and rural Métis citizens who often face systemic barriers to care, long wait times, medical travel, and culturally unsafe experiences within mainstream health services. The Ihkapaskwa Collective offers a trusted, Indigenous-led alternative — one that affirms the identities of Métis families, creates a sense of belonging, and empowers the next generation of Métis parents and birth workers.

Their work is not only improving health outcomes, it is helping to **reawaken Métis midwifery practices**, reconnect families to traditional knowledge, and build the foundations of long-term wellness for our Nation. In doing so, the Ihkapaskwa Collective is playing a critical role in advancing Métis health sovereignty in Alberta.

The Otipemisiwak Métis Government stands in full support of this application. We see the impacts of the Collective's work in our community every day and believe this funding is both timely and essential to the ongoing success and sustainability of Indigenous midwifery in the North.

We urge Alberta Health to invest in this critical work and ensure that Indigenous-led midwifery remains accessible to Métis families for generations to come.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sandmaier".

Andrea Sandmaier  
President  
Otipemisiwak Métis Government

## Letters of Support



July 4, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

As the Director of Child and Family Services for Mikisew Awasis Kisiwatsowin Society-Mikisew Cree First Nation, I am writing in strong support of the Ihkapaskwa Collective and their continued work supporting families in Fort McMurray and surrounding communities.

Ihapaskwa Collective has been a consistent and valued partner to our Nation, showing up for families with culturally safe, community-led care during pregnancy, postpartum, and through times of healing. Their team includes Indigenous midwives, traditional birthworkers, mental health providers, and clinical herbalists who understand the realities of remote and northern living, and who meet families with compassion, cultural integrity, and care.

Their Aunties Within Reach program and Fireweed Wellness Lodge have provided critical services to our families, including outreach care, postpartum support, traditional medicines, and wellness bundles—all grounded in the knowledge systems of our people. This is the kind of care our families have long asked for, and the Collective has built relationships in our community with trust, respect, and consistency.

Importantly, Ihkapaskwa Collective is also leading the way in promoting Indigenous health careers, especially roles rooted in our own communities and knowledge systems. They are creating pathways for Indigenous women and youth to become midwives, birthworkers, traditional medicine practitioners, and wellness leaders. By recognizing community roles-like Aunties, doulas, and land-based mentors-as legitimate and vital careers, they are helping to reclaim and revitalize our ways of caring for each other while strengthening local capacity.

We fully support their continued efforts to secure funding for training, mentorship, and the delivery of culturally grounded care within the region, especially in Fort Chipewyan. Their work has made a real difference in the lives of our members, and we are proud to walk alongside them.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charlene McGrath". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "Charlene" on the top line and "McGrath" on the line below it.

## Letters of Support



August 19, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of the Athabasca Tribal Council (ATC), which serves five First Nations in the Wood Buffalo region, we are pleased to offer our full support for **Ihkapaskwa Collective's** application to the **Government of Alberta's Midwifery Funding Program**, which generously aligns with the objectives of the Alberta Midwifery Strategy (2024–27).

Ihkapaskwa Collective is the only Indigenous-led midwifery initiative serving ATC Nations, and it plays a vital role in expanding equitable, culturally safe care in Treaty 8 territory. Their team includes registered Indigenous midwives, Auntie navigators, traditional practitioners, and Indigenous primary care providers, ensuring clients experience a direct hand-off from midwifery care to primary health care. This integrated model bridges a long-standing gap between perinatal and primary care, advancing continuity, safety, and trust in healthcare services for our families.

### **Alignment with the Alberta Midwifery Strategy**

#### **1. Bringing Maternal Care Closer to Home**

Ihkapaskwa Collective delivers comprehensive, low-risk pregnancy care—spanning preconception, birth, and the six-week postpartum period, that brings vital services to families in Fort McMurray and directly in remote First Nations communities. This directly supports the strategy's aim to extend maternal care access across the province

#### **2. Community-Focused, Culturally Safe Care**

By centering Indigenous knowledge, ceremony, and kinship, and integrating trauma-informed and western clinical practices, Ihkapaskwa's model aligns with the strategy's objective to deliver physically and culturally safe models of care. At ATC, we cannot stress in importance of this component of care. Our region is in a local state of emergency as it relates to addiction and mental health, and we know that it is programs like the Ihkapaskwa's model that support the healing of our communities.

#### **3. Supporting Indigenous and Remote Workforce Development**

Ihkapaskwa builds capacity through its team of registered Indigenous midwives, Auntie navigators,



and traditional practitioners-supporting retention and attraction of Indigenous and local midwifery professionals, a key strategic focus

#### **4. Innovative Community-Driven Programs**

Initiatives like *Aunties Within Reach* and *Fireweed Wellness Lodge* embody the strategy's call to **innovate and evolve care models**, by mobilizing Indigenous birth workers and piloting community-led care pathways

#### **5. Strengthening the Midwifery Workforce**

As the only Indigenous-led midwifery initiative in our region, Ihkapaskwa not only fills critical gaps but also aligns with the strategy's short-term goal to **engage communities and birth workers**-promoting service sustainability and culturally grounded care

### **Measurable Impact**

Through our partnership with Ihkapaskwa Collective, we have witnessed firsthand:

- **Improved maternal and infant health outcomes**
- **Renewed trust in the healthcare system**
- **Revitalization of traditional birth knowledge among youth**

These outcomes contribute to several **success indicators** outlined in the strategy, such as improved access in underserved areas, workforce retention, and increased midwife distribution across rural and remote regions

### **Conclusion & Call to Action**

ATC strongly urges Alberta Health to invest in the **Ihkapaskwa Collective** through this funding stream. Doing so will:

- Propel the Alberta Midwifery Strategy forward in Treaty 8 territory
- Support equitable, culturally safe maternal care in the north
- Strengthen Indigenous health sovereignty and workforce sustainability

## Letters of Support



This investment will ensure that vulnerable families across our Nations receive **consistent, high-quality midwifery care**-in alignment with Alberta Health's goals of equity, rural access, and community-based primary care.

In partnership,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Best".

**Jennifer Best**  
Director of Health  
Athabasca Tribal Council  
9206 McCormick Drive  
Fort McMurray, AB  
T9H 1C7  
780-714-4796 (cell)

## Letters of Support



Wood Buffalo Wellness Society  
PO Box 5748  
Fort McMurray, Alberta  
T9H 4V9  
  
Phone (780) 334 – 2398  
Fax (780) 334 – 2352  
[www.woodbuffalowellnesssociety.com](http://www.woodbuffalowellnesssociety.com)

Sept 5, 2025

To whom it may concern,

I am writing on behalf of the Wood Buffalo Wellness Society to express strong support for Ihkapaskwa Collective's innovative proposal to expand perinatal and primary health care access across northeastern Alberta. Our partnership with Ihkapaskwa Collective has proven invaluable in providing primary care and specialized women's health services to clients at our Tawâw Permanent Supportive Housing program and Mark Amy Treatment Centre, as well as in supporting their Traditional Parenting program. The Collective's plan to establish a multidisciplinary perinatal health clinic and broaden outreach services, led by Indigenous Aunties, midwives and culturally knowledgeable care providers, represents a transformative approach to health care in our region, addressing a significant gap in services for Indigenous residents within the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo.

The dedication of Ihkapaskwa Collective to improving health outcomes for Indigenous women, children, and families is evident in their work, and their wraparound model of care demonstrates an effective response to longstanding healthcare disparities in the Wood Buffalo Region.

Their approach is culturally appropriate, sensitive to community needs, and rooted in a holistic model of care that fosters belonging and inclusion within the community. I am confident that the proposed project will substantially enhance the health and well-being of Indigenous women and their families.

Investing in research and healthcare models like the one proposed by Ihkapaskwa Collective and Dr. Montesanti is vital for addressing the systemic barriers Indigenous communities face in accessing equitable, quality healthcare services. This project not only responds to immediate needs but also establishes a foundation for long-term, culturally sensitive systemic change.



Wood Buffalo Wellness Society  
PO Box 5748  
Fort McMurray, Alberta

## Letters of Support

T9H 4V9

Phone (780) 334 – 2398  
Fax (780) 334 – 2352  
[www.woodbuffalowellnesssociety.com](http://www.woodbuffalowellnesssociety.com)

I urge you to give full consideration to this impactful grant application, which prioritizes the health and wellness of Indigenous women, families, and communities. The Fireweed Wellness Lodge Mobile RV and expanded outreach services have the potential to create lasting, positive impacts for generations to come.

Thank you for considering this letter of support. Please do not hesitate to reach out if further information is needed regarding this important initiative.

Sincerely,



Jo-Anne Packham  
Executive Director  
Wood Buffalo Wellness Society  
[ed@woodbuffalowellnesssociety.com](mailto:ed@woodbuffalowellnesssociety.com)

## Letters of Support



Karen M. Lawford, PhD, RSC  
Anishinaabeg midwife, Namegosibiing  
Registered midwife (Ontario)  
Associate Professor and CRC (Tier II) - Indigenous Midwifery,  
Midwifery Education Program  
Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology  
McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario

September 10, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in strong support of the Midwifery Strategy Grant Program application submitted by the Ihkapaskwa Collective and Fireweed Health, with Madeleine Amyotte, RM, MSc, as the primary applicant. Their application seeks funding to sustain and expand the *Fireweed Wellness Lodge Mobile Outreach* initiative.

As the donee of the RV, I have seen firsthand the dedication, vision, and innovation that Ihkapaskwa Collective and Fireweed Health bring to ensuring accessible, culturally safe, and community-centered maternity care. The *Fireweed Wellness Lodge Mobile Outreach* RV is not just a vehicle; rather, it is a mobile clinic and gathering place that delivers vital maternal, midwifery, and healthcare services to communities that would otherwise remain underserved.

Their project addresses a pressing gap in maternity care during a time of a national maternity care crisis. Indeed, families in Alberta face increasing challenges in accessing timely, safe, and equitable maternity services. The mobile RV initiative responds directly to this need by bringing together a skilled team of healthcare providers to deliver comprehensive, collaborative care in regions without consistent access to services. Importantly, this work also includes primary care through the additional support of an Indigenous nurse practitioner, ensuring wraparound and culturally safe services for families.

Equally important, their initiative is committed to building the midwifery workforce for the future. Ms. Amyotte will provide mentorship to newly registered midwives and student midwives who are placement, ensuring that another generation of providers are well supported and equipped to continue this vital work. In doing so, the Ihkapaskwa Collective and Fireweed Health will be augmenting their already essential contributions to recruitment, retention, and the long-term sustainability of midwifery care in Alberta.

## Letters of Support



I wholeheartedly endorse this initiative. The *Fireweed Wellness Lodge Mobile Outreach* represents a groundbreaking model of care delivery that not only reaches underserved families and communities, but also embodies the principles of equity, innovation, and community partnership. Supporting this initiative will strengthen Alberta's maternity care system and ensure that families can access the care they need and deserve.

I urge you to give full consideration to their application. Funding this initiative will ensure that the *Fireweed Wellness Lodge Mobile Outreach* RV continues to serve as a vital lifeline, advancing midwifery care and growing an important health workforce in the Province of Alberta.

Should you have additional questions or would like to discuss any point in more detail, please email so I can set up a meeting for us.

Kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karen M. Lawford".

Karen M. Lawford  
Indspire Laureate 2020 - Health



10 September, 2025

**Re: NCIM Letter of Support for Ihkapaskwa Collective for Alberta Midwifery Strategy**

Dear Alberta Midwifery Strategy Selection Committee,

On behalf of the National Council of Indigenous Midwives (NCIM), we express our strongest support for the Ihkapaskwa Collective for Alberta Midwifery Strategy. This essential project will improve access to culturally safe perinatal and family health services in remote northern Alberta communities and as a result, will strengthen maternal-child health outcomes, and uphold Indigenous health sovereignty. Moreover, this project will help the Government of Alberta meet its goals to strengthen the local Indigenous midwifery workforce to enhance access to midwifery services and address gaps in care within rural, remote, and Indigenous communities.

Systemic barriers have forced Indigenous families away from their communities for perinatal care, disrupting traditional birthing knowledge and causing health disparities for Indigenous peoples. The Ihkapaskwa Collective has been working to reduce the number of medical evacuations, thereby safeguarding the physical, emotional, and financial well-being of Indigenous families. This initiative would expand and build on the strength of their program Aunties Within Reach for Indigenous Families across Wood Buffalo. Services they offer include perinatal services, STI screening, mental health supports, cultural teachings—providing wholistic wrap around care to Indigenous families. The expansion of this using a mobile clinic is innovative and follows other successful initiatives across Canada when space is limited and travel within and between remote communities is a barrier to accessing care.

The National Council of Indigenous Midwives (NCIM) exists to promote excellence in reproductive health care for Inuit, First Nations, and Métis women. We advocate for the restoration of midwifery education, the provision of midwifery services, and choice of birthplace for all Indigenous communities consistent with the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. As active members of the Canadian Association of Midwives, we represent the professional development and practice needs of Indigenous midwives to the responsible health authorities in Canada and the global community.

This initiative represents an opportunity for the Alberta government to meet the deliverables in

## Letters of Support



the Alberta Midwifery Strategy. It will address gaps in care within Indigenous communities living in remote Northern Alberta and build the capacity of Indigenous midwives and integrated care teams to deliver perinatal services. It will empower Indigenous families, enhance access to culturally safe perinatal care, and recruit and retain Indigenous care providers in the North.

Ihkapaskwa Collective' project aligns with UNDRIP (Article 24: right to traditional health practices) and TRC Calls to Action 22–23 (increase Indigenous health providers and integrate Indigenous healing practices).

This project is urgent. It will directly result in improved access to care in rural Northern Alberta and empower Indigenous families to birth their babies in ceremony, surrounded by Aunties, Elders, and traditional medicines.

We urge you to fully support the **Ihkapaskwa Collective's** Fireweed Wellness Lodge.

In solidarity,

Laura Mayer,  
Executive Director, National Council of Indigenous Midwives

## Letters of Support



September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Health Workforce Division  
Primary and Preventative Health Services  
Government of Alberta

To whom it may concern:

It is my pleasure to provide this strong letter of support for the Ihkapaskwa Collective's application to the Alberta Midwifery Strategy Grant for the *Fireweed Mobile Perinatal Health Clinic*. I am a Professor and Director of the CARE Lab situated in the University of Alberta's School of Public Health. Since 2021, Ihkapaskwa Collective and the CARE Lab have worked together to develop a common vision to reclaim traditional birth knowledge and restore healthy family systems in Indigenous communities in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB). Our community-academic partnership is built on mutual respect, accountability and recognition of the complementary and distinct expertise and values of those involved.

Together, we have advanced Indigenous-led, community-embedded health innovations in the RMWB, including the award-winning *Aunties Within Reach* (AWR) program. This collaboration has demonstrated the profound impact of Indigenous-led midwifery and support services in improving access, cultural safety, and health outcomes for families who face systemic inequities and geographic isolation. My team provides research and evaluation support for the AWR program. The program was developed using best practice knowledge and evidence, and grounded in the values, preferences, and priorities of Indigenous communities in the region. Our community-academic partnership for the AWR program is supported with funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)-funded Indigenous Healthy Life Trajectory Initiative. A \$3M investment over 6-years will support the sustainment of the AWR program.

The AWR program has seen tremendous growth since it was first implemented in 2022. The program's success is owed to the dedication and commitment of the Indigenous-led team of support workers, birthworkers, and midwife who work tirelessly to meet the needs of Indigenous families, and the passionate leadership of Maddie Amyotte and Sheena Bradley (co-founders of Ihkapaskwa Collective). Over the past three years, the AWR program has built a strong reputation in the region as a trusted, responsive, and culturally safe service for Indigenous families. Its growth and recognition demonstrate the power of Indigenous-led models to fill gaps in care and to restore confidence in health services for families who have historically been underserved.

College of Health Sciences  
School of Public Health

3-081 Edmonton Clinic Health Academy  
11405 87 Avenue  
Edmonton, AB, Canada T6G 1C9

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care  
[careresearchlab.ca](http://careresearchlab.ca)

## Letters of Support



The proposed *Fireweed Mobile Perinatal Health Clinic* builds directly on this strong foundation. By transforming a donated 44 ft RV into a fully equipped, culturally safe clinical and gathering space, the Fireweed Clinic represents an innovative, scalable model of Indigenous midwifery care. It will:

- **Expand access** to trauma-informed, culturally grounded prenatal, postpartum, and reproductive health services for rural and remote Indigenous families in the RMWB;
- **Reduce reliance on costly and disruptive medical travel**, enabling families to receive care in their home communities;
- **Strengthen Indigenous workforce capacity** by mentoring midwives, birthworkers, and Auntie support workers, while creating pathways for internationally educated midwives to serve in Alberta;
- **Embed cultural knowledge approaches** alongside Western midwifery practice, ensuring that care affirms Indigenous identity, culture, and resilience; and
- **Generate robust evidence** through an Indigenous- and community-led evaluation framework co-developed with the CARE Lab and supported by CIHR funding, ensuring accountability, sustainability, and impact.

This project directly addresses Alberta's strategic priority to expand midwifery services and meet the needs of underserved populations in rural, remote and northern communities. It also answers the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action* by advancing Indigenous-led health service innovations that restore dignity, choice, and trust in perinatal care.

I am proud to serve as a research and evaluation partner on this initiative. The Fireweed Mobile Perinatal Health Clinic has the potential not only to transform perinatal care in Wood Buffalo, but also to provide a replicable model of Indigenous-led health system innovation for other regions of Alberta and beyond. I strongly endorse Ihkapekwa Collective's application and urge your full support of this important and timely initiative.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

*Smontesanti*

Dr. Stephanie Montesanti  
Professor and Canada Research Chair in Health System Integration  
Scientist and Research Thematic Lead, Supporting Healthy Indigenous Communities, Centre for Healthy Communities  
School of Public Health, University of Alberta  
Member, Women and Children's Health Research Institute

College of Health Sciences  
School of Public Health

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Edmonton, AB, Canada T6G 1C9

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care

[careresearchlab.ca](http://careresearchlab.ca)



July 4, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

As the Director of Child and Family Services for Mikisew Awasis Kisiwatsowin Society-Mikisew Cree First Nation, I am writing in strong support of the Ihkapaskwa Collective and their continued work supporting families in Fort McMurray and surrounding communities.

Ihkapaskwa Collective has been a consistent and valued partner to our Nation, showing up for families with culturally safe, community-led care during pregnancy, postpartum, and through times of healing. Their team includes Indigenous midwives, traditional birthworkers, mental health providers, and clinical herbalists who understand the realities of remote and northern living, and who meet families with compassion, cultural integrity, and care.

Their Aunties Within Reach program and Fireweed Wellness Lodge have provided critical services to our families, including outreach care, postpartum support, traditional medicines, and wellness bundles-all grounded in the knowledge systems of our people. This is the kind of care our families have long asked for, and the Collective has built relationships in our community with trust, respect, and consistency.

Importantly, Ihkapaskwa Collective is also leading the way in promoting Indigenous health careers, especially roles rooted in our own communities and knowledge systems. They are creating pathways for Indigenous women and youth to become midwives, birthworkers, traditional medicine practitioners, and wellness leaders. By recognizing community roles-like Aunties, doulas, and land-based mentors-as legitimate and vital careers, they are helping to reclaim and revitalize our ways of caring for each other while strengthening local capacity.

We fully support their continued efforts to secure funding for training, mentorship, and the delivery of culturally grounded care within the region, especially in Fort Chipewyan. Their work has made a real difference in the lives of our members, and we are proud to walk alongside them.

Sincerely,

# Profit and Loss by Month

2420254 Alberta Inc

April 1, 2024–March 31, 2025

DISTRIBUTION ACCOUNT	APR 2024 - MAR 2025	TOTAL
<b>Income</b>		
CPP RMWB Grant	80,000.00	80,000.00
Donation	7,677.86	7,677.86
Misc. Grant Income	10,000.00	10,000.00
Patient Navigator Grant	117,961.00	117,961.00
Refunds-Allowances	103.55	103.55
Sales	21,395.00	21,395.00
Summer Student Grant	9,117.00	9,117.00
UofA Invoice Payment	229,820.30	229,820.30
UofA Reimbursement for Services	2,095.58	2,095.58
<b>Total for Income</b>	<b>478,170.29</b>	<b>\$478,170.29</b>
<b>Cost of Goods Sold</b>		
<b>Gross Profit</b>	<b>478,170.29</b>	<b>\$478,170.29</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Advertising	4,464.75	4,464.75
Bank charges	358.00	358.00
Charitable Contributions	794.55	794.55
Christmas Staff Party	1,314.52	1,314.52
Client direct costs	3,876.36	3,876.36
Dues and Subscriptions	732.59	732.59
Education or Training	1,960.73	1,960.73
Employee Gifts	132.30	132.30
Fuel	359.41	359.41
Gratuity/Tips	109.40	109.40
Honoraria	2,381.59	2,381.59
Insurance	1,172.68	1,172.68
Job Materials	3,659.73	3,659.73
Legal and professional fees	11,163.41	11,163.41
Meals and entertainment	2,991.47	2,991.47
Midwifery Conference	14,586.73	14,586.73
Office expenses	6,604.39	6,604.39
Parking Expense	410.29	410.29
Payroll Expenses	-0.03	-\$0.03
Company Contributions		
Health Insurance	4,014.24	4,014.24
<b>Total for Company Contributions</b>	<b>4,014.24</b>	<b>\$4,014.24</b>
Taxes	39,768.56	39,768.56
Wages	336,370.93	336,370.93
<b>Total for Payroll Expenses</b>	<b>380,153.70</b>	<b>\$380,153.70</b>
Promotional	412.22	412.22
QuickBooks Payments Fees	5.34	5.34
Refund	-122.79	-122.79
Reimbursements	685.92	685.92
Rent or lease payments	15,078.07	15,078.07
Repair and maintenance	229.64	229.64

# Profit and Loss by Month

2420254 Alberta Inc

April 1, 2024-March 31, 2025

DISTRIBUTION ACCOUNT	APR 2024 - MAR 2025	TOTAL
Shipping and delivery expense	38.36	38.36
Software Expense	4,561.23	4,561.23
Stationery and printing	325.65	325.65
Subcontractors	33,445.00	33,445.00
Taxes and Licenses	40.00	40.00
Team Building	543.10	543.10
Travel	4,136.25	4,136.25
Travel meals	759.47	759.47
Utilities	781.11	781.11
WCB	0.00	0.00
<b>Total for Expenses</b>	<b>498,145.17</b>	<b>\$498,145.17</b>
Other Income		
Interest earned	1,392.76	1,392.76
Other Ordinary Income	3,931.76	3,931.76
<b>Total for Other Income</b>	<b>5,324.52</b>	<b>\$5,324.52</b>
Other Expenses		
Other Expenses		
Event Expense	617.43	617.43
Health & Wellness	2,316.34	2,316.34
<b>Total for Other Expenses</b>	<b>2,933.77</b>	<b>\$2,933.77</b>
<b>Total for Other Expenses</b>	<b>2,933.77</b>	<b>\$2,933.77</b>
<b>Profit</b>	<b>-17,584.13</b>	<b>-\$17,584.13</b>



Madelaine Amyotte,  
Executive Health Director  
October 9 2025