

Finding the Path: Becoming an Aboriginal Midwife



Midwives from Nunavik, Québec
Kimberly Morehouse, Brenda Epoo, Lizzie Sakiagak (student)

There are many paths to becoming a midwife.

A midwife is a primary care provider for a woman during normal pregnancy, childbirth and for six weeks after birth for both the mother and newborn. Education is an essential part of restoring midwifery to Aboriginal peoples across Canada. This knowledge must be brought home to our communities.



NACM
NATIONAL ABORIGINAL
COUNCIL OF MIDWIVES

The National Aboriginal Council of Midwives

supports midwifery education that is connected to practicing in our communities and financially accessible for Aboriginal women. We see midwifery education as an opportunity to rebuild and grow the tradition of compassionate continuity of care for women and families. This includes the restoration of midwifery services and choice of birthplace for all Aboriginal communities consistent with the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

“I think that as more Aboriginal women enter the field of midwifery and are able to grow in their practice and experience, they are going to awaken and become alive to this incredible dimension of **knowledge, power** and **intelligence** that will heal our generations.”

— Katsi Cook, Aboriginal Midwife



ELEMENTS OF MIDWIFERY EDUCATION

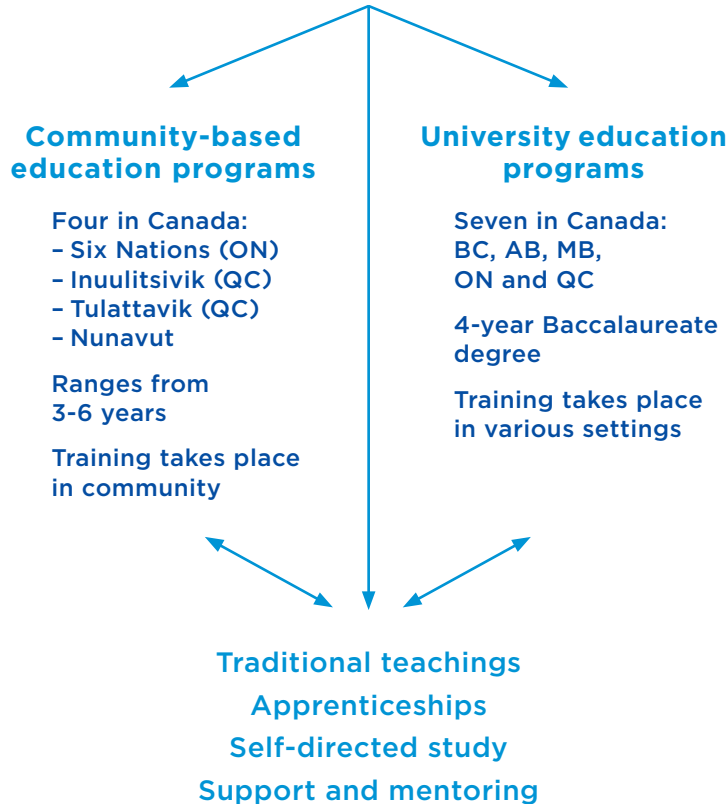
All midwifery education programs provide a combination of classroom-based or academic learning and clinical placements or apprenticeship in midwifery clinics. Midwifery education includes courses from the social sciences, humanities, and sciences. Teaching methods combine lectures, seminars, laboratories, distance learning and mentorship. Regardless of the program you enter, midwifery education takes place in many settings, including a university or college campus, midwifery clinics, hospitals, and birth centres. Most midwifery programs expect that you will be willing to relocate for parts of your education program.

Midwifery education gives students the opportunity to develop both the hands on clinical skills and theoretical knowledge necessary to be primary caregivers for women, babies, and their families throughout pregnancy and the first six weeks postpartum.

“Even though we come to the program as students, as individuals... a lot of us enter the program with a strong community connection. We go so we can learn, so that we can go back to our communities and help.”

— Diane Simon,
Ryerson University graduate

PATHWAYS TO BECOMING A MIDWIFE



Kerry Bebee, Aboriginal Midwife, with mom and baby,
Karyn and Gracie Recollet



CONSIDERING MIDWIFERY EDUCATION

Before you choose to apply for a midwifery education program, you may want to consider the following questions:

- Does the program require you to relocate for courses or placements? How often?
- Will the program you choose meet the requirements for registration as a practicing midwife in your province or territory once you are graduated?
- What kind of clinical placements does the program have?
- What birth settings will you be able to experience?
- How much will the program cost, including tuition and living expenses? Will you be eligible for financial support?
- What Aboriginal student support resources are available at the university or college?
- Do you have a strong support system to help you along the way?



Melissa Brown, KOBP graduate
in Winnipeg, Manitoba



OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS

There are currently four Community-based programs, offered in four Aboriginal communities in Canada. For more information, please contact the programs directly.

ONTARIO

Tsi Non:we Ionnakeratstha Ona: grahsta' Aboriginal Midwifery Training Program

www.snhs.ca/BirthingCentre.htm

The Tsi Non:we Ionnakeratstha Ona: grahsta' Aboriginal Midwifery Training Program is four years in length, and consists of tutorials that address Aboriginal women's unique health issues. The program combines western obstetrical with traditional Aboriginal practices and standards. All training components are completed at the Maternal and Child Centre with Aboriginal midwife instructors.

NUNAVUT

Nunavut Midwifery Education Program, Arctic College www.arcticcollege.ca

The Midwifery Diploma Program is offered in partnership with the Department of Health and Social Services, and prepares graduates to enter into midwifery practice in Nunavut. Prior to the Midwifery Diploma Program, students complete the Maternity Care Certificate Program. The program introduces students to the cultural, spiritual and traditional practices of Inuit midwives. It is expected that graduates from the program will be able to meet standards set by the Canadian Midwifery Regulatory Committee (CMRC) and provide care that is culturally appropriate for and acceptable to the residents of Nunavut.

QUEBEC

Inuulitsivik Community Midwifery Education Program www.inuulitsivik.ca

The program is an academic and clinical education program for Inuit women on the Hudson Bay Coast of Nunavik (Northern Quebec). The program uses a modular, competency-based curriculum. The program emphasizes learning in ways appropriate to Inuit culture, including learning in the Inuktitut language. It is offered through maternity programs in health centres on the Hudson Bay coast.

Tulattavik Community Midwifery Education Program, Nunavik

www.ungava.info/images/doc_1216957652_5105.pdf

This new program started in August 2013. It is an academic and clinical education program for Inuit women living on the Ungava Bay Coast of Nunavik (Northern Quebec). Like the Inuulitsivik program, it uses a modular, competency-based curriculum and emphasizes learning in ways appropriate to Inuit culture. This program is offered in Kuujuaq on the Ungava Bay coast.

OVERVIEW OF UNIVERSITY-BASED PROGRAMS

The midwifery education program is a direct entry (no previous degree or health care training required), four year baccalaureate program. There are seven university-based midwifery education programs available in Canada. Each program administers exams recognized by their respective provincial regulatory bodies. There also exist bridging programs for midwives who have been trained in other countries and other jurisdictions to become registered within Canadian provinces and territories.

ONTARIO

LAURENTIAN UNIVERSITY

935 Ramsey Lake Road, Sudbury, ON P3E 2C6
705 675-4822

* This program is offered in both English and French.
laurentian.ca/program/midwifery

McMASTER UNIVERSITY

Michael G. DeGroote Centre for Learning & Discovery (MDCL), Third Fl., 3103-1200 Main Street West, Hamilton, ON L8N 3Z5 905 525-9140, ext. 26654
* This program is offered in English only
fhs.mcmaster.ca/midwifery/

RYERSON UNIVERSITY

350 Victoria Street, Toronto, ON M5B 2L4
416 979-5104 or 416 979-5271
* This program is offered in English only.
www.ryerson.ca/midwife

QUEBEC

UNIVERSITÉ DU QUÉBEC À TROIS RIVIÈRES

Casier postal 500, Trois Rivières, QC G9A 5H7
Midwifery Program: 819 376-5045 or 1-800-365-0922
* This program is offered in French only.
www.uqtr.ca/sage-femme

BRITISH COLUMBIA

UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

B54-2194 Health Services Mall, Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z3
604-822-0352 * This program is offered in English only.
www.midwifery.ubc.ca

MANITOBA

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF THE NORTH

Kanaci Otinawawasowin
Bachelor of Midwifery (KOB) Program
Unit 4-471 Portage Ave. Winnipeg, MB, R3B 2E4
204-946-0440
* This program is offered in English only.
www.ucn.ca/sites/academics/midwifery/Pages/Midwifery.aspx

ALBERTA

MOUNT ROYAL UNIVERSITY

Bachelor of Midwifery
4825 Mount Royal Gate SW, Calgary, AB T3E 6K6
* This program is offered in English only.
www.mtroyal.ca/midwifery



Aboriginal Midwife Laurie Jacobs
showing traditional medicines used in pregnancy.

