



Call for Interest:
Expanding Community-based Indigenous Midwifery Education

Midwifery Education in your Community

Introduction

NACM is seeking communities interested in participating in a project that aims to expand opportunities to community-based Indigenous midwifery education. The project aims to bring midwifery education opportunities as close to home as possible to aspiring Indigenous midwifery students.

Applications for the enrollment in this project are for 2021/2022. The program, which is currently funded by Johnson & Johnson Foundation aims to lay the groundwork for expanding community-based education programs for Indigenous midwifery that is tailored to the community.

A **competency-based education** is defined as an “approach [that] allows students to advance **based** on their ability to master a skill or **competency** at their own pace regardless of environment. This method is tailored to meet different **learning** abilities and can lead to more efficient student outcomes.

For this first phase, NACM will work with 2-3 communities over an initial period of 12 months. We are able to support a total of 6-8 aspiring Indigenous midwives in this project.

Growing your own midwife: Considerations for initiating community-based education.

Midwifery education equips future midwives with scientific knowledge, hand skills and caregiving skills. They learn to provide care through the reproductive years, pregnancy, labour, birth and after. Some midwifery students will learn areas of practice that extend to other areas of the reproductive life cycle. They may also learn to care for babies beyond the initial six weeks.

To learn more about Indigenous midwifery knowledges and skills, see: [Indigenous Midwifery Knowledge and Skills: A Framework of Competencies](#).

Indigenous midwives are diverse. Their practice can be culturally rooted, and individual Indigenous midwives have varying skills and knowledges surrounding culture, protocol, and ceremony.

Our Approach:

Indigenous midwifery education is a partnership with:

- Indigenous midwives presently working in their own communities represented by NACM.
- A midwifery student that is hired to learn.
- Communities that will support students through their education journey.

There are broader groups of stakeholders implicated in the work of restoring midwifery and birth in Indigenous communities. NACM works closely with key stakeholder groups to advocate for funding, recognition, integration, and reconciliation.

At this phase in the journey, NACM plans to work with communities first then choose the students. This approach has been very successful in growing and sustaining community-based midwifery education

programs. A mentoring, traveling midwife is in place to support students and their sponsoring communities along the education pathway.

The project will involve three interrelated spheres of learning.

Sphere 1: An Introductory Midwifery Education course will be offered with different modules for the students to begin taking. These modules will be based on community and learner needs and interests.

Sphere 2: Indigenous knowledges on topics such as local birth knowledges and histories, ceremony, rites of passage, and land-based knowledge.

Sphere 3: Clinical skills laddering. This will be completed under the direction of an Indigenous Midwife Mentor along with doulas, lactation consultants or prenatal support workers who will train the student in their first employable skill set.

What is Laddering?

When an education program provides credentials at various points along the way, versus only at the end, this is called a ladder approach to education. A ladder approach to midwifery education might include credentials for roles such as lactation consultant, birth support person or doula. This provides various exit points for students who need to pause or leave the program early. It ensures the employability of the midwifery student who takes an earlier exit point, and it also ensures that the knowledge and skills they gain in school benefit the community.

Qualifications

The following are the first level Community Readiness Criteria that must be met by interested communities:

Step 1 – Commitment: To participate in this program, there must be a clear commitment from the community and community leadership to re-establish midwifery. This is needed to support the success of the midwifery student(s).

Step 2 – Resources: Supporting the education of a midwife is an investment in the long-term health of your community. To qualify for this project, communities must be able to fund a student under an employment or contract agreement as a student. A budget will be determined for the cost of learning materials and equipment in case these exceed our current funding. There may be different pockets of funding available in each community to support this. NACM can help identify these.

Our goal is to keep health resources, knowledge, and funding within Indigenous communities and to support a framework for Indigenous midwifery education that centers Indigenous health providers and other community members to grow alongside and within their communities towards self-determined health and wellbeing.

Application procedure

Phase 1: Express your interest!

Write to us at nacm@indgenousmidwifery.ca. Tell us about your community and where you are on the pathway to restoring or growing midwifery?

1. Does anyone in your community want to become a midwife?
2. What kind of support is available in your community? Consider physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual supports.
3. Resources: Are there budgets or funding envelopes that the community could have access to support the student?

Phase 2: Readiness assessment (May)

After Phase 1, communities will respond to a Readiness Questionnaire. Communities can respond by completing an online survey or by phone (oral interview)

Next Steps:

We plan identify and begin working with Communities by end of spring 2021. Students will begin learning in late Summer/Fall.

We anticipate that most learners will accomplish the first phase of our program within 2 years. During this time, NACM will also work with community partners, government, and other supporters to move into a more clinical phase of the education.

NACM is a small organization, but we are committed to Indigenous midwifery. We believe that Indigenous midwifery services and education pathways should be accessible to all communities. Our relationships are our strength, and we are excited to work with you to support your journey to restoring midwifery services and birth! Learn more about us by visiting our website.

NACM aims to respond to each interested community to see where they fall in their midwifery readiness for this program. The goal is to help as many communities as we have resources for. For those communities that might not be as far along in their Midwifery readiness, we will work together to help them find the path forward.

Express your Interest by [May 5th, 2021](#).

NACM resources on Midwifery Education:

[Becoming a Midwife](#)

[Finding the Path](#)