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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2022IRR0028-000951  
June 14, 2022

Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation  
Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training  
First Peoples' Cultural Foundation  
First Peoples' Cultural Council

### **B.C. invests in First Nations language, arts, culture and heritage revitalization**

VICTORIA – New provincial funding will support and strengthen the reclamation and revitalization of First Nations languages, arts, culture and heritage across B.C.

“Together with our partners, we are taking action to reverse the disruption to Indigenous languages from the history of colonization. We want a province where Indigenous languages and cultures are living, used, taught and celebrated throughout their respective territories,” said Murray Rankin, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation. “Together with the First Peoples’ Cultural Council and First Peoples’ Cultural Foundation, we are supporting Indigenous communities’ work to restore the vitality of First Nations languages, arts, and cultural practices and investing in the future of Indigenous communities.”

The Province is providing close to \$35 million in new funding to the First Peoples’ Cultural Council (FPCC) and the First Peoples’ Cultural Foundation (FPCF) to support First Nations languages, arts, and cultural heritage revitalization programming and operations. This investment builds upon a landmark \$50-million grant provided to FPCC in 2018 to address the language crisis and help revitalize Indigenous languages in British Columbia.

“This new funding is an important step forward in fulfilling FPCC’s mandate to strengthen and revitalize our First Nations languages, arts, culture and heritage,” said Tracey Herbert, CEO, First Peoples’ Cultural Council. “We are excited to respond to the needs identified by our Knowledge Keepers by creating more opportunities to share their Indigenous knowledge with the next generation. FPCC will continue to build technology, resources, programs and employment opportunities to ensure that our living cultural spaces, practices and knowledge are thriving into the future.”

FPCC and FPCF are revitalizing Indigenous languages, arts, and heritage in British Columbia. Together, their expertise, strong relationships and decades of experience working alongside First Nations across B.C. on cultural revitalization has translated into measurable progress.

“Languages, arts, cultures and heritage are the lifeblood of our communities and integral to our well-being, individually and collectively,” said Lorna Wánosts’a7 Williams, board chair, First Peoples’ Cultural Foundation. “Funding like this contributes to innovative tools and programs needed for the critical work of documenting, safeguarding and rebuilding our cultural systems so we can pass them on to future generations.”

Of this new funding, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training is providing \$2.6 million to FPCC to boost the Youth Empowered Speakers (YES) Program. The program provides

B.C. First Nations students who are studying education and early childhood education with one-on-one mentor-apprentice language learning and funding to support their post-secondary studies. The program addresses the need to develop new First Nations language speakers to become immersion teachers who will work in First Nations communities to deliver community immersion programming across the province.

“Investing in future generations of language learners not only benefits today’s First Nations youth by providing them with a comprehensive skill set for life in the workforce, but it also nurtures the development of language-immersion skills through relationships across generations that last a lifetime,” said Anne Kang, Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Training.

FPCC, the Province and Canada are committed to working together over the long term to advance the reclamation, revitalization and maintenance of First Nations languages, heritage and arts in B.C.

#### **Quotes:**

##### **Autumn Cooper, Youth Empowered Speakers Program, Stz'uminus First Nation –**

“The power you feel learning your language, there are no words for it, you feel so much more connected to your culture in so many ways because of your language. Receiving support from the First Peoples’ Cultural Council’s Youth Empowered Speakers Program has been a life-changing journey and I am so thankful that I have this opportunity. As a teacher, I envision creating a fully immersive classroom experience where culture and language are connected.”

##### **Rande Cook, K’alapa of the Kwakwaka’wakw –**

“Indigenous artists tell a story, an authentic relationship from the land that others can celebrate in. It’s with the support of the First Peoples’ Cultural Foundation that dreams come true, and where stories and connections can reach a broader audience.”

##### **Laura Webb, Elder, West Moberly First Nation and Tse’k’wa Heritage Society board member –**

“This new funding from the Province is important to strengthen protections for sacred areas like Tse’k’wa. The long-term goal is to have Tse’k’wa become an educational place that establishes our footprints here, shares knowledge of how our people have been here a long time and educates everyone about our culture so they can have a deeper understanding of our people.”

#### **Quick Facts:**

- British Columbia has incredible language diversity and is home to 34 First Nations languages and more than 90 dialects, making up more than half of all First Nations languages in Canada.
- The levels of young learners are increasing. As of the 2018 Report on the Status of B.C. First Nations Languages, there were 13,997 new learners and 4,132 speakers and 78% of new learners were younger than 25.
- These investments are making a difference on the ground, providing FPCC with the ability to offer more supports to communities.
- In 2020-21, FPCC delivered more than \$20.4 million in grants to individuals and

communities, supported more than 4,150 language-immersion opportunities, documented 182 cultural practices and involved 940 people in arts projects.

- FPCC also receives funding from the federal government and non-governmental organizations.
- FPCC is accepting applications for the Youth Empowered Speakers Program until July 11, 2022, and more information on this and other grant opportunities is available on the FPCC website.

**Learn More:**

The First Peoples' Cultural Council: [www.fpcc.ca](http://www.fpcc.ca)

The First Peoples' Cultural Foundation: <https://fpcf.ca>

First Peoples' map of B.C.: <https://fpcc.ca/stories/first-peoples-map>

FirstVoices: <https://www.firstvoices.com>

A backgrounder follows.

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## BACKGROUND

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### **Supports for language, arts, culture and heritage revitalization**

- The First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC) is a First Nations-governed Crown corporation mandated to support the revitalization of First Nations languages, arts, cultures and heritage in B.C.
- The First Peoples' Cultural Foundation (FPCF) is an Indigenous-led registered charity that works closely with FPCC to provide grant funding and resources to First Nations organizations and communities, and supports the vitality of First Nations languages, arts, culture and heritage in B.C.
- Funding from the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation includes:
  - \$25 million over three fiscal years to FPCF for arts and cultural heritage programming; and
  - \$7.15 million to FPCC in new 2022-2023 operational funding for staffing, research, reporting, technology and direct supports for communities such as coaching, training and resources.
- Funding from the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training:
  - \$2.6 million to support the Youth Empowered Speakers (YES) Program, which combines mentor-apprentice immersion learning, internships, and post-secondary education funding to develop fluent language teachers and early childhood educators.
- FPCC, FPCF, the Province and the federal government are working together with First Nations throughout B.C. on many fronts to reclaim and revitalize First Nations languages and knowledge systems.
- In 2021-22 the YES Program received funding from the First Peoples' Cultural Foundation, the federal Department of Canadian Heritage, and Tamalpais Trust through RSF Social Finance.
- In 2021-22, the First Peoples' Cultural Council received \$1.75 million from the BC Arts Council to support Indigenous arts and culture across the province through a partnership that has developed and grown over 25 years.
- This funding aligns with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls for Justice, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and B.C.'s Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples' Act (DRIPA). It also helps achieve the commitments expressed in Action 4.30 of the Declaration Act Action Plan 2022-27 to support Indigenous language revitalization through sustainable funding.

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