



Indigenous Midwifery Programs

Introduction to Indigenous Midwifery Programs

Indigenous Midwifery Programs (IMPs) provide culturally safe and community-centered reproductive, perinatal, sexual and infant health care to First Nations, Inuit, Métis (FNMI) families. Indigenous Midwifery Programs offer community-based and culturally centered midwifery care for First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities, including:

- provide primary clinical care services
- restore and revitalize traditional midwifery practices that were disrupted by colonization.
- offer care rooted in FNMI knowledge systems and cultural frameworks.
- improve health outcomes for FNMI families and communities

Indigenous Midwifery Program Funding

Indigenous Midwifery Programs are funded through the Ontario Ministry of Health (MOH) and are based on negotiations between the Association of Ontario Midwives and the Ministry of Health as part of the global contract for midwives.

Midwives as Primary Care Providers

Registered Midwives complete their midwifery education at university. Their training is focused on the development of clinical skills and does not officially include training in traditional Indigenous midwifery knowledge and practices. They are licensed and regulated by the College of Midwives of Ontario. Registered midwives can work in Indigenous Midwifery Programs (IMPs), Midwifery Practice Groups (MPGs), and Expanded Midwifery Care Model (EMCM). Some Registered Midwives are First Nations, Métis or Inuit.



Application Approval

When an IMP application is approved, the funds will flow from the MOH directly to a Transfer Payment Agency (TPA) which can be a band council, Aboriginal Health Access Centre (AHAC), or other organization that has the ability to receive and administer IMP funding. IMPs can apply for expanded funding in subsequent years to hire more midwives, professional providers, traditional service providers and to expand their program offerings.

First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities interested in an IMP but not yet ready to develop a Program, can apply for a Community Readiness Grant that will fund the work required to prepare an IMP application, including community engagement, research and partnership building.



The Funding Application Allows Organizations to Budget for:

- ✓ Midwife salaries, overtime or on-call stipend, and benefits
- ✓ Overhead such as rent and utilities
- ✓ Administrative support and program management
- ✓ Minor and major leasehold improvements
- ✓ Professional and traditional services, including apprentices, lactation consultants, aunts, doula/birth workers, Elders, social workers, fire keepers, etc.
- ✓ Clinical supplies, equipment, home birth kits
- ✓ Community engagement and program development
- ✓ Midwife travel
- ✓ EMR and other IT requirements

Resourcing an Indigenous Midwifery Program

Midwives lead the work of an Indigenous Midwifery Program. Depending on the structure of the Program, they are hired as independent contractors or as employees. Thriving Indigenous Midwifery Programs feature midwifery leadership, midwife-led decision-making, midwife autonomy and strong governance by the First Nations, Métis and Inuit community(ies) they serve. IMPs may be a stand-alone clinic or be housed within an existing health or community organization. An Indigenous Midwifery Program is led by midwives, and they may be:

- Indigenous Midwives working within the exemption clause
- Indigenous Registered Midwives
- Non-Indigenous Registered Midwives