

September 21, 2018

## Royal BC Museum awards grants to 21 Indigenous communities for repatriation projects

**VICTORIA, BC**—After reviewing numerous strong submissions for its repatriation grant program, the **Royal BC Museum's** First Nations Advisory and Advocacy Committee (FNAAC) is pleased to announce that funding will be granted to 21 First Nations communities from across BC to support their work in repatriation.

The successful applicants will use the grants to support a host of repatriation activities, ranging from establishing planning committees to facilitating the return of ancestral remains to home communities.

**"Museums around the world, including the Royal BC Museum, have a moral obligation to support Indigenous communities engaged in repatriation," said Prof. Jack Lohman, CEO of the Royal BC Museum. "Providing this financial support for repatriation projects across the province is one way for this museum to put its full institutional weight behind reconciliation efforts."**

**"Our government is committed to reconciliation with First Nations, and repatriation is an essential part of that commitment," said Lisa Beare, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture. "This funding is an important part of the work being done to advance cultural reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in communities throughout our province."**

A total of \$586,160 will be distributed among the successful applicants, which are First Nations communities, cultural societies and associations, and museum societies.

The **K'òmoks** First Nation, for example, will employ the funding to build a community grave house, build a database for repatriated items, construct cedar burial boxes, establish a repatriation committee and conduct cultural ceremonies. And the Tsleil-Waututh Nation will use the funds to develop a Repatriation Policy and repatriate Ancestral remains (the "Little Lady" from Simon Fraser University).

The repatriation grant program is the first of its kind in Canada and is an important part of the ongoing collaboration between the Royal BC Museum and Indigenous communities throughout BC to address the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the direction provided by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Although all 25 application submissions were compelling, only those that met the strict criteria of the program terms were awarded funding. The FNAAC referred unsuccessful applicants to other potential funding sources.



The repatriation grant program was made possible through the Province of BC's investment of \$2M to the Royal BC Museum in 2016 to develop a First Nations department and repatriation program.

More information about the program, including a list of recipients and their project goals, is available in table format, below, and at [royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/first-nations/first-nations-repatriation/grant](http://royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/first-nations/first-nations-repatriation/grant).

#### About the Royal BC Museum

The Royal BC Museum explores the province's human history and natural history, advances new knowledge and understanding of BC, and provides a dynamic forum for discussion and a place for reflection. The museum and archives celebrate culture and history, telling the stories of BC in ways that enlighten, stimulate and inspire. Located in Victoria on the traditional territory of the Lekwungen (Songhees and Xwsepsum Nations), we are a hub of community connections in BC—onsite, offsite and online—taking pride in our collective histories.

- 30 -

#### Media contact:

Royal BC Museum Media Inquiries  
250-387-5051  
[news@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca](mailto:news@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca)

 @RoyalBCMuseum  [royalbcmuseum](https://www.instagram.com/royalbcmuseum)  [RoyalBCMuseum](https://www.facebook.com/RoyalBCMuseum)

#### Grant recipients

	Applicant	Amount awarded	Project Summary
1	Ahousaht First Nation	\$30,000.00	Ahousaht, after recently discovering there are ancestral remains of Ahousaht members at the Royal BC Museum, will begin a wider search, build capacity and repatriate members back to Ahousaht territories.
2	Cowichan Tribes	\$30,000.00	Cowichan Tribes will conduct research to identify all museums and institutions that hold Cowichan ancestors and cultural property, send initial inquiries to each to confirm their holdings and develop an inventory of same.
3	Gitxaala First Nation	\$30,000.00	Gitxaala First Nation will establish a Repatriation Working Committee and initiate community-based research on Gitxaala materials at the Royal BC Museum. The Gitxaala First Nation will develop and implement an inventory and plan.
4	Haida Gwaii Museum Society	\$30,000.00	The Haida Gwaii Museum will work with the Haida Repatriation Committee and the Haida Heritage & Repatriation Society to further its nation's repatriation work with institutions in BC, Canada and the UK.

5	Heiltsuk Tribal Council	\$30,000.00	Heiltsuk First Nation will initiate repatriation of Heiltsuk ancestral remains, seeking to identify and compile an inventory of holding institutions, their policies and contact info; initiate negotiations, and re-establish a Repatriation Committee.
6	K'òmoks First Nation	\$30,000.00	K'òmoks First Nation will build a community grave house; develop a database for repatriated items; construct cedar burial boxes; establish a repatriation committee; and conduct cultural ceremonies / community celebration on IR #1.
7	Kwantlen First Nation	\$30,000.00	Kwantlen First Nation will document cultural items from the Township of Langley's archives, then transcribe this information to GIS format for future exhibition planning in a new Indigenous space to be opened in 2021.
8	Lower Nicola Indian Band	\$30,000.00	Lower Nicola Indian Band will establish a Repatriation Committee. They will identify priorities, protocols and procedures, build relationships, facilitate knowledge repatriation visit and work with select repositories, and <b>promote the use of the Nle?kepmxcin language.</b>
9	Metlakatla First Nation	\$30,000.00	Metlakatla First Nation will start a community repatriation committee managed by the Culture, Language & Heritage Dept. in Metlakatla, BC.
10	Musqueam First Nation	\$28,150.00	Musqueam First Nation is starting engagement with its community members and external partners on the desire, scope, and feasibility of repatriation and to develop appropriate repatriation heritage policies and procedures.
11	Nadleh Whut'en First Nation	\$20,000.00	Nadleh Whut'en First Nation will arrange a long-term loan of Bear Clan regalia from the Canadian Museum of History to the Nadleh Whut'en Administrative Building for long-term display.
12	Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council	\$30,000.00	Nuu-chah-nulth have just become aware of ancestral remains of Nuu-chah-nulth members in the Field Museum in Chicago and at the Royal BC Museum. They will research other museums and work on repatriation of these remains.
13	Okanagan Alliance	\$30,000.00	It is crucial to Syilx (Okanagan) people that decision-making related to ancient ancestors recognizes and respects Indigenous customs, practice and laws. The Okanagan Alliance will develop a policy and guidelines for the repatriation, reburial and protection of ancestral remains.
14	Stk'emlupsemc te Secwepemc Nation	\$30,000.00	Stk'emlupsemc First Nation will engage in a variety of planning and implementation activities for a repatriation framework / committee, including lists of ancestral remains and plans for repatriating.
15	Sto:lo Nation	\$30,000.00	The Sto:lo House of Respect Committee will repatriate the remains of seven ancestors held at UBC and complete the journey home for 22 individuals resting in the Sto:lo Resource Centre.

16	Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation	\$30,000.00	Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation will create a repatriation committee to develop a repatriation strategic plan for Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation, including repatriation of ancestors, research and mentorship with other nations.
17	Treaty 8 Tribal Association	\$21,883.00	Treaty 8 Tribal Association will create a Repatriation Registry that will enable member First Nations to develop repatriation plans and carry out necessary research.
18	Tsleil-Waututh First Nation	\$14,290.00	Tsleil-Waututh will proceed with the repatriation of human remains, the "Little Lady" from Simon Fraser University, to Tsleil-Waututh Nation, and will develop a Tsleil-Waututh Nation Repatriation Policy.
19	Tseycum First Nation	\$30,000.00	Tseycum First Nation will proceed with the return of ancestral remains from the Royal BC Museum to its community for reburial.
20	Ucluelet First Nation	\$21,837.00	Ucluelet First Nation will create bentwood boxes and acquire appropriate storage for the nation's artifacts and remains at its offices; Ucluelet First Nation will continue work to repatriate remains and artifacts.
21	Yuquot-Mowachaht Muchalaht First Nation	\$30,000.00	The Mowachaht Muchalaht First Nation will initiate an advisory committee to work on the repatriation of the Whaler's Shrine, which is in the Museum of Natural History in New York.