



POLICY: INDIGENOUS CITIZENSHIP VERIFICATION PROCESS

Date Approved: 7 December 2022
Last Review: May 2023

Preamble

The MABC acknowledges the ongoing efforts by Indigenous midwives to ensure safe care for Indigenous and non-Indigenous birthing people, newborns, families, and communities in British Columbia (BC). As per the 2021 Arbitration award, the Indigenous Midwives Advisory Council (IMAC) has been formed to provide strategic direction for Indigenous midwifery in BC, provide recommendations for enhancing culturally appropriate sexual and reproductive healthcare for Indigenous people across the lifespan, support the recruitment and retention of Indigenous Midwives and provide oversight for the disbursement of funds intended for Indigenous Midwifery. To fulfill this mandate the IMAC has released the *MABC Indigenous Citizenship Statement and Verification Process* (Appendix A). Legal counsel was consulted in the configuration of this policy.

Purpose

The MABC Indigenous Citizenship Verification Process Policy provides a transparent process to ensure that it is Indigenous midwives who are accessing the opportunities and/or assistance intended for Indigenous Midwives. It will also provide a mechanism to ensure those presenting themselves as Indigenous Midwives are indeed Indigenous through their identity, allowing for increased safety for Indigenous communities and appropriate representation with key stakeholders.

Verification Process

The application process will verify an individual's claim to identity by confirming citizenship to Nation and community.

There are two avenues to support midwives through the verification process:

One step approach:

A midwife has a status card or is a card holding member of a historic rights bearing Métis Nation, or Beneficiary of either the Nunavut, Inuvialuit (Northwest Territories), Nunatsiavut (Labrador Inuit), or Nunavik (James Bay Northern Quebec) Agreement.

The midwife will:

1. email a copy of the document(s) to both of the IMAC Co-Chairs.

Note: If there are any questions regarding the validity of a Métis Nation, an interview process consisting of 2+ members of the IMAC to discuss identity, community accountability and reciprocity, as well as contributions to Indigenous midwifery may be scheduled. The IMAC may ask an applicant to provide further documentation. Please see resource below regarding federally recognized historic rights bearing Métis Nations.

Two step approach:

A midwife who does not have card verification.

The midwife will:

1. Provide two letters of support from their identified Nation, who can claim them as a citizen of their Nation.

❖ *Letters cannot be from immediate family*

- Email the documents to the IMAC Co-Chairs.
2. Participate in an interview with the 2+ members of the IMAC
 - The interview will discuss identity, community accountability and reciprocity, as well as contributions to Indigenous midwifery

If at any point the IMAC does not feel they have sufficient information they may ask an applicant to provide further documentation.

Within 30 days of receipt of required document, and completion of interview (if Two Step Approach), the midwife will receive an email that confirms the status of verification approval.

Once an Indigenous midwife's citizenship is verified, they do not have to repeat this process. If there are substantive allegations of fraud, however, citizenship claims will be reviewed as needed.

Information Storage and Dissemination

Personal documentation, such as status cards, provided to IMAC for the purpose of citizenship verification will be kept confidential and secured within our internal data management platform. This information will only be accessed by the appropriate MABC staff and IMAC members.

In submitting the application, the midwife consents for any organization in possession of personal information relevant to verifying citizenship in any Indigenous nation, to release any and all information relevant for this purpose to MABC's Indigenous Midwifery Advisory Council (IMAC). This may include the release of documentary records as well as consent to engage in any discussions or interviews to provide such information orally to any representative of IMAC.

Once an Indigenous Midwife is verified by IMAC, MABC may list information about their midwifery practice, including the Midwife's name and practice contact information, on its website. Further, MABC may share this information with other organizations for the purposes of promoting access to Indigenous midwifery for Indigenous families and communities and promoting connection and collaboration among service providers.

Métis Rights – Government of Canada

<https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100014413/1535468629182>

Métis National Council

<https://www.metisnation.ca/about/about-us>



MABC Indigenous Citizenship Statement and Verification Process

At the MABC, the Indigenous Midwives Advisory Council (IMAC) acknowledges the ongoing efforts by Indigenous midwives to ensure safe care for Indigenous and non-Indigenous birthing people, newborns, families and communities in British Columbia (BC). Our council is committed to the restoration of Indigenous midwifery including reclaiming well-person care throughout the reproductive/sexual life cycle, supporting rites of passage, community leadership, returning birth back to community, and increasing the education of Indigenous midwives. Our advocacy calls on the commitments made by British Columbia's Declaration Action Plan and our Province's responsibility to meeting the recommendations of the In Plain Sight Report, Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Calls for Justice from National Inquiry to Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The MABC Reconciliation fund is a first step towards this vital work.

Why is the IMAC asking Indigenous identifying midwives to verify their citizenship?

The IMAC citizenship verification will be able to confirm that equitable supports and funds are directed to the appropriate and well-informed means for advancing Indigenous midwifery through reconciliation. Given the ongoing colonial violence of non-Indigenous peoples claiming Indigenous identity as a means to enhance personal gains such as education, career opportunities, and/or financial gains, the IMAC has created this verification process. This behavior of appropriating Indigenous identity is unacceptable and will not be promoted, nor tolerated. The practice of transparency will ensure families and communities throughout BC are being cared by midwives who are indeed Indigenous through their identity. Indigenous ancestry does not equate to Indigenous identity, that further extends into community relationships and lived-experience. The practice of identifying our connection to Nation, family, and ancestors is common to Indigenous cultures across Turtle Island.

The IMAC acknowledges the significant historical and ongoing impacts of colonization on Indigenous identity, culture, and connection to community. A shared relationship between the *community they claim and who claims them* is essential to identity, accountability and support for Indigenous midwives and their communities. This shared relationship is especially essential prior to claiming opportunities and or assistance intended to reconcile the many injustices and inequities caused by historical and ongoing colonial policies and practices.



What will the process entail?

An Indigenous midwife who chooses to apply to the verification process will be responsible to upholding standards and practices of respect, honesty, and integrity. The application will request permission to verify claim to identity by confirming citizenship to Nation and community.

One step approach - where an Indigenous midwife has a status card or is a card holding member of a *historic rights bearing* Métis Nation, or Beneficiary of either the Nunavut, Inuvialuit (Northwest Territories), Nunatsiavut (Labrador Inuit), Nunavik (James Bay Northern Quebec) Agreement will require one step to link documentation to verify citizenship. If there are any questions regarding the validity of a Métis Nation, an interview process consisting of 2+ members of the IMAC to discuss identity, community accountability and reciprocity, as well as contributions to Indigenous midwifery may be scheduled. The IMAC may ask an applicant to provide further documentation. Please see resource below regarding federally recognized *historic rights bearing* Métis Nations.

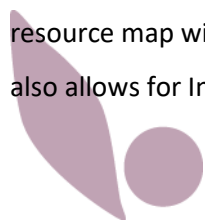
Two step approach - where an Indigenous midwife, who does not have card verification. They will be required to provide two letters of support and participate in an interview with the IMAC. The process requires two written support letters from their identified Nation, who can claim them as a citizen of their Nation. The letters provided cannot be from immediate family. The second part includes an interview process consisting of 2+ members of the IMAC to discuss identity, community accountability and reciprocity, as well as contributions to Indigenous midwifery. The IMAC may ask an applicant to provide further documentation.

Once an Indigenous midwife's citizenship is verified, they do not have to repeat this process. If there are substantive allegations of fraud, citizenship claim will be reviewed as needed.

What will be done with this information?

The IMAC access to identity information will remain confidential and secured within our internal data management platform.

We intend to create a resource map that will identify where Indigenous midwives are currently practicing and provide the list of verified Indigenous midwives to health authorities, the college and other professional resources to decrease and hopefully eliminate the colonial violence of appropriating Indigenous identity. The resource map will serve as a tool to be shared amongst Indigenous and non-Indigenous health care providers. It also allows for Indigenous families and communities to advocate, promote and find care that is suitable to their



needs. Above all, IMAC wants to ensure Indigenous clients and communities know who they can connect with for care.

Resources:

Métis Rights – Government of Canada

<https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100014413/1535468629182>

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