

An invitation to co-create water initiatives with Indigenous Nations in Alberta

Our Vision

At One Drop, we believe that access to clean drinking water is not only a human right, but also a foundation for community well-being, cultural continuity, and resilience. Our vision is to join efforts with Indigenous Nations and communities in Alberta – including First Nations, Métis, and others – to support community-driven pathways for clean drinking water access, stewardship, and capacity building, always grounded in respect for local knowledge systems and ways of life.

We see our role not as prescribing solutions, but as walking together to strengthen community-led initiatives that make access to clean drinking water more secure, rooted in cultural values, and lasting for future generations. Intergenerational engagement and youth leadership are central to this approach.

Why co-create with Indigenous Partners?

Indigenous Peoples hold deep knowledge, traditions, and values that are vital to shaping community pathways for protecting and caring for water. By combining this knowledge with innovative tools, participatory methods, and shared learning, we can strengthen both community-led and youth-led water initiatives. Working together ensures initiatives reflect local priorities, create space for intergenerational learning and remain strong for generations to come.

Why work with One Drop?

We walk alongside communities in designing water security and protection strategies, sharing technical, artistic, and creative tools that strengthen local leadership and implementation.

- **Proven experience in collaboration.** For over 15 years, One Drop has partnered with Indigenous, rural, and urban communities worldwide to strengthen water access, with proven experience in clean drinking water projects.
- **Holistic approach.** Our model is holistic and flexible, extending where needed to support locally defined priorities. We combine technical support, capacity building and stewardship to ensure solutions are not only functional, but also socially, and culturally applicable and sustainable.
- **Partnership with Indigenous Nations and Communities.** We honor First Nations' and Métis Nations' knowledge, traditions, and priorities. Our partnerships start with listening, building trust, and co-defining initiatives.
- **Share cocreation processes and tools.** Through our approach of Art for Social Change, we bring creative tools and approaches to strengthen community voices and advance community-led design of impactful initiatives.
- **Community leadership and stewardship.** By focusing on local leadership and stewardship, we aim to ensure communities remain the drivers of water initiatives.

If you'd like to explore past initiatives with First Nations, see: [The Indigenous Water Allyship](#).

Our invitation

This invitation is about walking together, supporting communities to strengthen their own strategies for protecting water, in ways that reflect their values, knowledge, and priorities.

When thinking about your proposal, it may help to know what kinds of activities this opportunity is meant to support. The following examples highlight the types of initiatives that align with the spirit of

strengthening community-led water security and protection, as well as those that may not fit within the scope of this call. These lists are meant as guidance only, recognizing that each community brings its own vision, knowledge, and priorities to the work of caring for water.

Eligible and non-eligible activities

Eligible activities may include:

These are examples of the kinds of initiatives this opportunity is designed to support. They should be rooted in community priorities, strengthen relationships with water, and build capacity for long-term stewardship:

- Community water security or management planning (participatory assessments, mapping, protection strategies).
- Source water protection initiatives (monitoring, community protocols, safeguarding culturally significant water bodies).
- Capacity building & training (workshops on water testing, Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) and youth engagement, Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) – Indigenous Knowledge (IK) – science exchanges).
- Small-scale pilot infrastructure projects (e.g., community-based monitoring stations, testing of filtration devices).
- Knowledge integration & cultural practices (TEK, IK, and scientific approaches for water stewardship).
- Community engagement through arts & storytelling (water, walks, social arts, intergenerational learning).
- Governance strengthening (community-led frameworks, protocols).

Non-Eligible activities include:

- Large-scale infrastructure projects (construction of full water treatment plants or distribution systems).
- Individual household retrofits or subsidies (e.g., paying for water bill, plumbing repairs).
- Activities not directly related to water access, quality, or protection.
- Projects led exclusively by non-Indigenous organizations without Indigenous leadership.
- Commercial or for-profit initiatives without direct community water benefits.
- Activities already fully funded by another program/donor.
- One-off events lacking follow-up or mechanisms to ensure lasting impact

Available Funding

To help guide your planning, most selected projects will likely receive support in the range of CAD \$50,000 to CAD \$250,000. However, we recognize every idea and context is unique. If your project requires resources outside this range, please feel free to share your vision and explain your needs.

Who can apply?

- Any First Nation in Alberta and all communities within each Nation
- The Métis Nation of Alberta or any Métis community in Alberta
- Indigenous-led organizations or community initiatives in Alberta focused on improving water access and/or freshwater protection, including Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)-related initiatives.

What to include in Your Proposal?

Below are some illustrative examples to help spark ideas. These are not requirements, and your proposal can look very different. We encourage you to share what feels most relevant, meaningful, and unique to your community.

- **Community priorities and project results:** for example, protecting a local water source, addressing boil water advisories, improving water education in schools.
- **Project activities:** please see examples of eligible activities above.
- **Lead organization(s) and partnerships:** for example, short description of your organization, and how you'll collaborate with local organizations, water operators, youth councils, or regional initiatives.
- **A preliminary timeline with key milestones and an indicative budget range,** ensuring feasibility while respecting community processes and cultural protocols.

Next Steps & Timeline

- **First round of submissions.** We invite you to share your project ideas or ongoing initiatives that could benefit from collaboration by Friday, September 26, 2025.
- **Exploratory call.** We propose scheduling a call in the week of September 29 – October 3 to discuss needs, opportunities, and ways to co-develop initiatives.
- **Collaborative design.** Based on these conversations, we can shape initiatives together, combining community leadership with One Drop's experience in water access, capacity building, and stewardship.

We strongly encourage including a brief letter of support from community leadership (for example, a Council, a relevant department, or a recognized community-based organization).

We understand communities may need more time and are open to adjusting as needed. If you cannot submit within the proposed timeline, please reach out to us. Together we will find the way to adapt according to your needs.

This is a living invitation – an open door to start building together, grounded in respect, trust, and shared commitment: ensuring that *water continues to flow as life, culture, and a shared future for all*.

Contact

For more information and to submit your proposal, please contact:

Raquel Porras

raquel.porrasgutierrez@onedrop.org

(438) 875 2807