



BC Métis
FEDERATION

Membership and Internal Approval Process

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Introduction

The BC Métis Federation (“BCMF”) seeks to establish mutually recognized relationships with other Métis organizations to support its mandate to facilitate and assist its member organizations/community/nations in their movement towards self-determination. In assuming the right to determine membership and the ability to regulate its members, the BCMF recognizes that in granting individual affiliation, as supported by its representative communities, it must account for the complexity and nuance of being and becoming Métis in BC. Membership rules, therefore, incorporate multiple pathways to legitimate belonging including lineage in kinship webs that extend to the Prairies and across the Pacific Northwest, adoption into (or familial association with) a historic Métis community that existed throughout the province, and repatriation of lost, stolen, or lapsed relationality resulting from discrimination, assimilation, and intolerance. BCMF membership, therefore, reflects a past, present and future interconnectedness that is informed by our member communities, an interdependence that ensures the ongoing survival, vitality, and wellbeing of our people.

Membership Explained

Because there are many ways of being Métis in BC, we have an adaptive, yet rigorous, membership process. As set out in the Internal Approval Process below, two basic criteria must be met in order to qualify for full membership: (1) evidence-based lineage to a historic Métis community; and (2) attested acceptance by a Métis community. Multiple self-determining Métis communities existed in and across the Pacific Northwest which were variously constituted by Red River diaspora and local mixed-ancestry people, both the result of intermarriage between newcomers and First Nations communities. These Métis communities functioned as “relational webs” rather than “linear genealogies”, were mobile, diverse, and dynamic, and understood themselves as “free” and “independent”. Applicants must prove a direct familial and historical connection to kinship webs within their Métis community of origin.

Membership opportunities also exist for those people who have lost their Métis heritage as the result of adopting-out, policies of assimilation, discrimination, or neglect. All self-

identifying applicants who seek to repatriate their Métis membership must prove a direct familial and historical connection to kinship webs within their Métis community of origin.

BCMF member communities may also nominate an applicant for membership if they were adopted into or have a deep association with the self-determining Métis community. The applicant must show their familial ties and/or historical connections and prove that their membership has broad support within (or is unanimously supported by) within the host community.

The Committee will not consider an application for membership unless it is complete. The application process consists of the following elements:

1. A completed application form;
2. A completed statutory declaration;
3. A consent to release form; and
4. A lineage chart, genealogical diagram, or kinship map that shows a historical (five generations) connection to a Métis diaspora or community along with all supporting documents (long form birth certificate, baptismal records, death records, community affidavits, etc.).

Applicants may request BCMF assistance to fill out the forms. However, it is the sole responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all the information presented on the application is accurate and truthful. As local communities develop robust self-governance systems, more effort can be put towards providing familial and historical support to those seeking membership.

The Committee will provide a written decision to all applicants in a timely manner. The Committee may use its discretionary power to request of the applicant further supporting information or corroborating evidence (birth certificates, marriage or baptismal records, community affidavits, etc.).

Applicants may submit a written request for reconsideration of a decision by the Committee within 30 days of the decision. A request for reconsideration must identify the

reason(s) the applicant disagrees with the decision, and include any supporting documentation. The original decision may be maintained or changed. We will inform the applicant of the reconsideration decision in writing.

All records relating to membership, including supporting documentation, will be retained by the BCMF and the relational webs recorded on BCMF's geographic information system for the purposes of showing the interconnectedness of our ways of being. BCMF will retain your personal information in accordance with applicable privacy law.

Membership and Oversight Committee

The BCMF Membership and Board Oversight Committee (the "Committee") is established pursuant to Parts 3, 6, and 9 of the by-laws of BCMF (the "Bylaws"). The Committee considers all matters in relation to membership, as well as resolves disputes pursuant to section 9.2 of the bylaws.

Pursuant to section 7.10 of the Bylaws, BCMF may adopt new policies for its Committees. The BCMF Board of Directors (the "Board") has adopted the following, in respect to the Committee:

- a) The Membership and Board Oversight Committee will be composed of no less than two members who do not actively sit on the Board; and
- b) If a matter pursuant to section 9.2 of the Bylaws arise, and that matter directly involves a Board member, then that Board member will recuse themselves from hearing that matter and abstain from voting on it.

The Committee and BCMF Membership

The Committee oversees and adjudicates the whole of the membership process and has the final say on all matters of membership in the BCMF. The Committee includes the BCMF Membership Coordinator, the BCMF Director of Research, and at least three other BCMF members who are appointed by the Board. Twice per month the BCMF Membership Coordinator and the BCMF Director of Research meet to review all applications received by BCMF. Once per month the full Committee meets and reviews any applications that the

BCMF Membership Coordinator and the BCMF Director of Research have flagged for special consideration.

The Committee functions with a consensus agenda and makes informed and measured decisions on applications. The consensus agenda allows BCMF to ensure that the membership reflects their values and enables them to protect the integrity of their community.

More specifically, the Committee's role in BCMF membership approval is subject to the Internal Approval Process, as referenced in section 3.2 of the Bylaws.

Internal Approval Process

BCMF seeks to mutually recognize and partner with local communities in British Columbia to create a robust membership process that leads to strong community coherence and wellbeing for all its members. As a locally derived process that is facilitated by the BCMF, membership is an expression of each community's ability to define their own citizenship as an aspect of self-determination within the policy umbrella of a provincial organization. The membership process, therefore, is flexible, nuanced, and relational but based upon a community and provincial consensus that is unique to the Pacific Northwest.

The Internal Approval Process is conducted by the Committee, pursuant to section 9.2(a) of the By-laws. The Internal Approval Process is a two-stage process for membership approval:

1. verification of genealogy; and
2. verification of community acceptance.

Genealogy

BCMF accepts various forms of genealogical documentation to verify Métis ancestry. Birth certificate with parental information, commonly referred to as a "long form birth certificate" from Vital Statistics is the most frequently submitted document. Another common form of

documentation is a baptismal certificate from the Archdiocese of the church where the baptism occurred. BCMF recognizes that in some situations it may be a difficult, lengthy and costly route to obtain certain genealogical documentation, therefore there are additional forms of documents that BCMF accepts, such as marriage certificates listing parental information and death certificates with parental information, commonly referred to as a “long form death certificates” from Vital Statistics for deceased kinship. Genealogical documentation is a mandatory requirement and must go back for five generations or 100 years, whichever comes first and must correspond with the information provided on the BCMF five generation genealogy diagram. Genealogical details on a genealogy diagram and corresponding documentation is only required for the kinship pertaining to the Métis ancestry.

Once an application is completed in its entirety and sufficient documentation is provided, the membership coordinator will begin the verification process. The verification process consists of linking the genealogical documentation presented to the kinship listed on the genealogy diagram. Once a link has been established, the membership coordinator will then use internal genealogical resources such as census records, scrip records, books consisting of geographically specific compiled documentation such as birth, baptisms, marriages, deaths and burials.

Community Acceptance

The required acceptance by a BCMF Métis partner community is automatically recognized where proof of Métis community acceptance has been established. This may be done by providing a photocopy of the membership card or a letter of confirmation from the community leader stating recognition.

The Committee seeks to be representative of Métis communities across B.C. and aspires to appoint BCMF members to the Committee who reflect these different communities. The Committee meets virtually on a monthly basis to analyze, review and discuss applicant files presented by the BCMF Membership Coordinator for community acceptance. Applicants who do not hold a community card with a BCMF partnership community will require acceptance by the Committee before being granted a BCMF full membership card.

Applicants will access BCMF’s Membership webpage and complete all of the required fields in their application form, confirm the statutory declaration, give their consent for release of

information, and provide evidence of their familial and historical connection to a Métis community. Once the application is received by BCMF, the Registrar will check the documents for their completeness and accuracy and, if satisfied, will forward the full application on to the President of the BCMF who will distribute it to the Committee for their consideration.

If the application is incomplete or lacks sufficient evidence required by the Committee, it will be returned to the applicant for their attention and resubmission.

The Committee will adjudicate each application on its own merits and will come to a consensus on the candidate's admissibility. Successful applicants will be notified of the decision of the Committee and encouraged to complete the registration process for membership.

Applicants that do not meet the membership threshold will be provided a written explanation of the application's deficiencies.

Applicants may submit a written request for reconsideration of a decision by the Committee within 30 days of the decision. A request for reconsideration must identify the reason(s) an application disagrees with the decision, and include any supporting documentation. The original decision may be maintained or changed. We will inform the applicant of the reconsideration decision in writing.

Revocation of Membership

Members may have their memberships revoked under the following circumstances:

1. Specific evidence of identify fraud or false claim to Métis heritage or community connection;
2. Egregious conduct that is not consistent with Métis community values, protocol, and practice;
3. By written request of the member asking to be removed from the BCMF membership list; and
4. Failure to pay the required membership fees.

All revocations will result in the immediate loss of all rights, privileges and responsibilities associated with being a BCMF member. All decisions of revocation rest with the Committee.

Classes of Members

BCMF recognizes three (3) classes of members: full members, associate members, and honorary members. These three classifications of membership are set out in Part 3 of the Bylaws.

Conclusion

BCMF's membership is a diverse and dynamic expression of Métis personhood and therefore reflects the varied and multifaceted interconnections that exist with our member communities. As a representation of the unique historical and cultural experiences of our local constituents, a membership in the BCMF is evidence of all self-determining mixed ancestry/Métis people, kinship webs, and communities across the province. BCMF members are responsible to protect our own knowledge sovereignty and to ensure that Métis communities maintain control over their own ways of knowing and living.