

A photograph of a dense forest with tall, thin trees. Sunlight filters through the canopy, creating a warm, golden glow and long shadows. The trees are mostly evergreens, and the branches are bare in some areas.

# ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22



**NEW RELATIONSHIP TRUST**  
Empowering First Nations in British Columbia





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Foreword

The New Relationship Trust board and staff are pleased to present the 2021-2022 annual report, a retrospective on all that we have achieved over the past year, the impact our work has had on the First Nations we serve, and how we intend to harness those advances going forward.

In 2021, following comprehensive engagement with First Nation communities and leaders, the NRT consolidated its strategic approach to supporting First Nation governance—one of the key pillars of our strategic priorities—under one umbrella: Nation Building.

This streamlined funding program amalgamates three prior initiatives (Direct Support, Nation Governance and Tribal Council Policy) into a single initiative that supports Nation-building activities according to their self-determined priorities. Last year, nearly \$1.8 million was directed to 39 Nation Building projects.

A truly Nation-centred approach is being integrated into the NRT’s overall functioning, as we further develop our responsiveness as an organization, and build the internal capacity required to support our work sustainably under the perpetual funding model adopted in 2019. We have welcomed new staff, implemented new systems and continue to incorporate best practices into all of our processes.

These shifts have resonated with First Nations communities and raised the NRT’s profile, not just as a grant-giving organization, but as a flexible, trusted partner that works with various organizations to support First Nations in BC. This has given rise to opportunities to creatively expand and deepen existing partnerships, while forming new relationships that expand the scope of our support for First Nations in BC.

Funding for the BC Indigenous Clean Energy Initiative—which last year allowed us to administer 18 clean energy project grants to First Nation communities on behalf of the provincial government—was recently enhanced with a \$6.3 million infusion from the Government of Canada. This year the NRT was also awarded a \$30 million contract by Province of BC to administer the Community Energy Diesel Reduction program, and will be administering at

least \$5 million to support the recovery of Indigenous non-profits in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

These new developments are a clear validation of the groundwork the NRT has laid over its 17 years of operation, and of the evolving strategic approach adopted by the board of directors to support First Nations in building powerful and resilient communities on their own terms.

In a time marked by ongoing global challenges, we feel it is more important than ever to celebrate the successes unfolding locally. The “In Focus” section of this report highlights the extraordinary work of two of our funding recipients in reclaiming and rebuilding self-determination and sovereignty in ways that honour their unique contexts and journeys.

NRT has also continued to support First Nations initiatives in four other priority areas: Economic Development, Language & Culture, Education, and Youth & Elders. This report examines the diverse initiatives that support these key priorities and their outcomes, both annually and cumulatively.

Over the past year, our program funding supported 69 First Nation entrepreneurs and community businesses with equity match funding, leveraging \$6.2 million in business loans from our partnering Aboriginal Financial Institutions to support, modernize or expand their businesses. A total of 98 Youth, Elder and Language projects were funded along with 25 K-12 projects, while 280 scholarships were distributed to Indigenous post-secondary students.

We are proud of our role as a capacity-building catalyst for First Nations in BC to advance their Nation-building initiatives and establish resilient, healthy and vibrant communities, and are committed to continuing to grow, adapt and evolve in response to the unique needs and priorities of First Nations. ■



NEW RELATIONSHIP TRUST  
Empowering First Nations in British Columbia

NRT is a capacity building catalyst for First Nations in BC. We are committed to providing tools and funding opportunities to our clients that advance their nation-building initiatives and establish resilient, healthy, and vibrant communities.

EMPOWERING FIRST NATIONS COMMUNITIES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA



VISION

Self-determined, self-sustaining, First Nations with effective governments and healthy empowered citizens.



MISSION

NRT invests in the capacity development and transformation of First Nation governments and their citizens.



VALUES

RELEVANCE

Our funding is designed to be what is most relevant to the unique needs of each community.

INNOVATION

The desire to constantly improve and seek new funding opportunities for First Nations is ingrained in our approach.

EXCELLENCE

We strive to be the regional hub of excellence for supporting First Nation Capacity initiatives.

RESPONSIVENESS

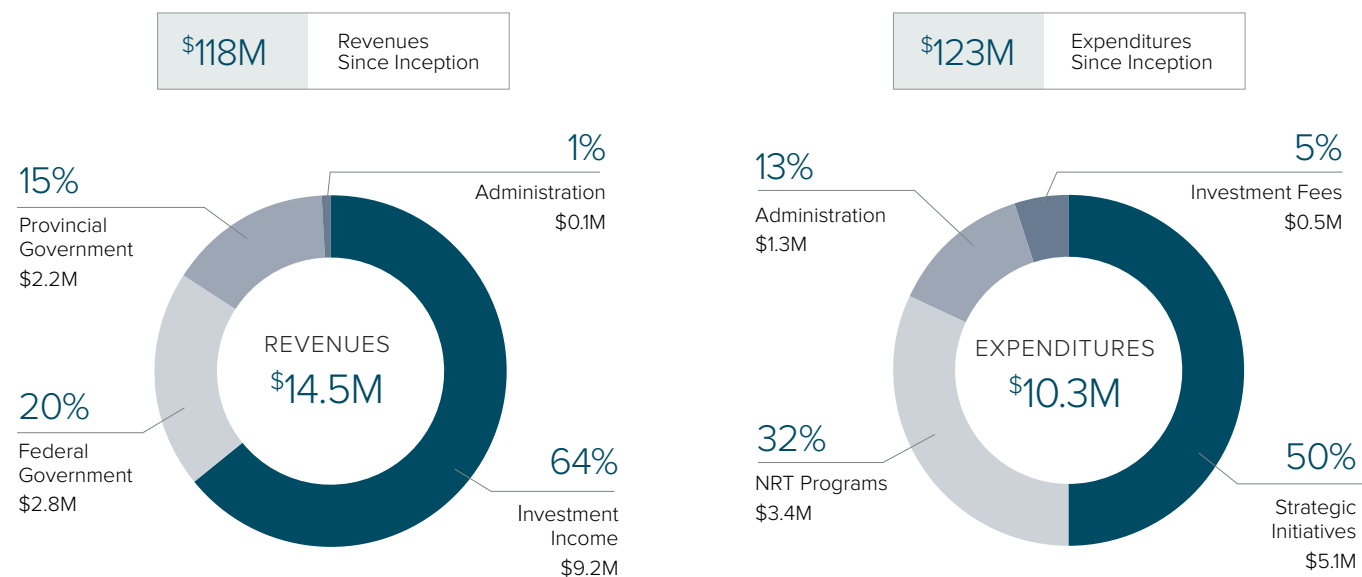
We will adapt and align our funding opportunities to the evolving indigenous landscape.



## 2021/22 FISCAL YEAR IN HIGHLIGHTS

## 16 YEARS OF NRT FUNDING

### NET ACTIVITY



### PROGRAM DELIVERY

280	Post-secondary students supported	\$6.2M	Financial leverage raised through equity matching grants
231	NRT Program Initiatives funded	\$4.4M	Clean Energy grants distributed
18	Clean Energy projects funded	1.32%	Administration costs as % of investment fund

### HIGHLIGHTS SINCE INCEPTION

Over the last 16 years we have invested

**\$74,921,482**

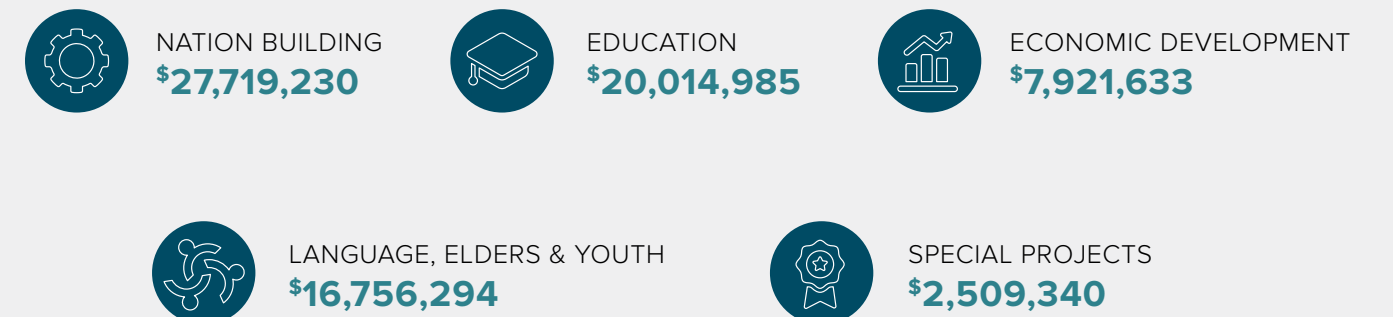
across NRT programs and

**\$101M**

in total grant funding across

**6,896**

projects.





# Kwiahkah

First Nation

When the Kwiahkah Nation applied for a Nation Building grant, they knew their two-pronged approach might give some funders pause. But both aspects were crucial to setting this small First Nation, located along the northeast of Vancouver Island, on its chosen path to self-determination: developing a constitution as part of their ongoing treaty negotiations, and completing a feasibility study for what could eventually become a regional seaweed cultivation industry and research hub.

“They [NRT] had faith in us as a small Nation that we could do that work. Our proposal was judged on its merits,” says Frank Voelker, the Kwiahkah Nation Band Manager. “I can’t tell you how good it feels.”

The Kwiahkah Nation was able to hire a legal expert and engage nearly all of their community members in developing a constitution that cemented the Nation’s long-held hereditary governance system. “It’s key to engage the membership, especially with a constitution,” emphasizes Voelker. “It’s the highest law in the land. It was really a great process seeing direct democracy at work.”

The second prong of the Kwiahkah Nation’s vision of self-sufficiency involved a feasibility study for a seaweed cultivation project, something Voelker said was essential helping the Nation direct limited resources in a “very surgical, very strategic” way. “This

study showed us how we can pursue this opportunity rather than just ‘spitballing,’” he explains.

In order to maximize the opportunity, the Kwiahkah Nation are making use of a decommissioned fish farm on their territory as infrastructure for the project, and are in talks with post-secondary institutions to set up a research station to study the carbon sequestration potential of native kelp species. They also plan to house their Guardian program at the same location, and hire the Guardians to monitor the seaweed crops as they mature. Eventually, they hope to seed a regional seaweed cultivation industry by providing pre-processing of wet kelp to reduce transportation costs in order to make the industry cost-effective for other remote operators. And by limiting the amounts harvested, the Kwiahkah Nation aim to help restore coastal ecosystems degraded by logging.

“It can turn into a massive multiplier and make it viable in areas where it’s not right now,” explains Voelker, “and do it in harmony with the environment—not harming the territory, but improving it.”

With a feasibility study complete, the Kwiahkah Nation was able to secure funding for a business development plan, now its final stages, and plans to launch operations as early as next year. ■



# Uchucklesaht

Tribe Government

Thanks to a BC Indigenous Clean Energy Initiative grant, the Uchucklesaht Tribe Government (UTG) on the west coast of Vancouver Island was able to undertake the conceptual design and development of a run-of-river clean energy generation and storage project that will prove essential to the revitalization of a village site with deep historical and cultural roots.

Until now, the remote community of Ehlthlateese was limited by geography and infrastructure to only a handful of year-round residents, reliant on diesel to meet their energy needs. Thanks to a major initiative to restore the local population to historic levels, the UTG has begun building new homes and community buildings in Ehlthlateese while also looking for ways to reduce—or eliminate entirely—their reliance on diesel.

“Continued reliance on diesel is unacceptable to our community due to the high costs and environmental risks associated with its transport, handling and combustion,” notes Ryan Anaka, UTG Director of Lands and Resources.

Once constructed, the project is estimated to generate approximately 650,000 kWh per year, reduce annual CO2-equivalent emissions by approximately 650 tonnes and overall diesel consumption by approximately 235,000 litres per year.

The project concept includes mitigation strategies to allow the year-round, two-way passage of adult and juvenile trout past the dam structure, as well as the expansion of salmon spawning habitat downstream, even though salmon will not be directly impacted by the project.

UTG and its partners worked closely with BC Hydro’s Non-Integrated Areas team to develop this project and plan for the eventual replacement of diesel infrastructure in Ehlthlateese with a clean energy alternative. The project aims to provide a model for other off-grid communities in BC to follow.

UTG was able to successfully leverage the funding received through NRT funding to obtain funding for the next phase of the project.

“NRT’s support has been invaluable in allowing this project to proceed. The project is a cornerstone of UTG’s plans to repopulate the village of Ehlthlateese in alignment with Nuuchah-nulth values and principles,” notes Anaka. ■





**\$1,764,136 INVESTED IN 2021-2022**

In 2021, three funding programs related to First Nation governance initiatives (Direct Support, Nation Governance, and Tribal Council Policy) were amalgamated into a new and streamlined initiative: **Nation Building**.

In 2021-2022, NRT invested in funding opportunities for First Nations, Indigenous organizations under the authority of a First Nation, and Tribal Councils in BC, to support Nation-building activities according to their self-determined priorities. Eligible projects can receive up to \$50,000 to strengthen the institutional, governance, and community capacities in reclaiming and rebuilding resiliency, self-determination and sovereignty within each Nation’s own context.

TARGET	2021-2022	STATUS
At least 20 First Nation projects linked to Nationhood initiatives are funded each year.	39 First Nation projects linked to Nationhood initiatives funded.	Achieved
New Nationhood funding guidelines and funding platform are implemented.	Nationhood funding guidelines and funding platform implemented in 2021-22.	Achieved

ENTREPRENEURS EQUITY MATCHING INITIATIVE AND COMMUNITY EQUITY MATCHING INITIATIVE

**\$502,500 INVESTED IN 2021-2022**

The NRT has partnered with the various BC Aboriginal Financial Institutions (AFI’s) to offer an equity matching initiative intended to assist BC Indigenous entrepreneurs and First Nation Businesses with equity-matching funds to support, modernize or expand a business in BC.

NRT provides equity match funding of up to \$5000 for First Nations entrepreneurs and \$25,000 for First Nations businesses to reduce the cash burden for entrepreneurs in meeting their equity requirements of a business loan. Funds are administered by the partner AFIs.

BC INDIGENOUS CLEAN ENERGY INITIATIVE

**\$4,429,738 ADMINISTERED IN 2021-2022**

The NRT administers funding on behalf of the Government of Canada’s Pacific Economic Development Canada (PacifiCAN) and the Province of BC to deliver the BC Indigenous Clean Energy Initiative (BCICEI) in 2021-2022.

Funded through the federal government’s Strategic Partnerships Initiative (SPI) and the BC provincial government’s CleanBC plan, BCICEI provides up to \$500,000 in support and capacity-building funds to Indigenous communities developing clean energy projects, helping to bridge the gap in early-stage funding and assisting some remote communities in reducing their dependency on conventional diesel power generation.

**BC First Nations Economic Development Working Group**

NRT participates in the BC First Nations Economic Development Working Group, a provincial working group tasked with overseeing the Action Plan for the BC First Nation Economic Development Strategy.

TARGET	2021-2022	STATUS
At least five annual funding opportunities are established and delivered to Aboriginal Financial Institutions in BC to support viable community-based business projects.	5 annual funding opportunities established and delivered.	Achieved
New and innovative criteria and funding streams are established and implemented, accessible to Indigenous entrepreneurs through the network of the Aboriginal Financial Institutions in BC.	New criteria and funding streams established and implemented.	Achieved





LANGUAGE

\$79,200 INVESTED IN 2021-2022

First Nations in BC speak 34 languages and more than 60 dialects, such that fully 60% of the First Nations languages in Canada are spoken in BC. However, virtually all of these languages are in danger, jeopardizing a vital link to past culture and history.

In 2018-2019, the BC Government announced a \$50 million grant to the First Peoples Cultural Council to help revitalize Indigenous languages in BC.

In consideration of NRT’s policy to not duplicate government funding, language funding is now directed to assist First Nations youth groups in British Columbia to implement language revitalization initiatives involving Elders and community members.

Grants up to \$4,000 are available for First Nations Youth groups and organizations, as well as BC First Nations communities representing Youth.

TARGET	2021-2022	STATUS
At least 20 Youth, Elder and language projects are funded each year.	98 Youth, Elder and language projects funded: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 34 Youth Projects</li><li>• 47 Elder projects</li><li>• 17 Language projects</li></ul>	Achieved

ELDERS & YOUTH

\$345,000 INVESTED IN 2021-2022

**Elders Grants**  
The NRT BC First Nation Elders Grant Initiative provides grants up to \$2500 for groups, communities and organizations representing First Nation Elders in BC to develop and deliver community programs that benefit and build capacity for Elders, including storytelling, culture camps and participation in events and gatherings.

**Youth Grants**  
The NRT BC Youth Grant Initiative provides grants up to \$2500 for capacity-building projects in areas such as leadership, mentorship, team building, language and traditional cultural activities. NRT also provides funds to the BC Association of Friendship Centres to support the annual Gathering Our Voices Aboriginal Youth Conference.







**\$901,600 INVESTED IN 2021-2022**

Education is a key to strength for First Nations. Assisting First Nations individuals to pursue and complete their education and training goals is a high priority for NRT, achieved through the following components:

**Supporting K-12 Initiatives**

The K-12 Education Grant program supports First Nations students from kindergarten to Grade 12 in their transition to healthy, engaged and productive young adults, empowering students to aspire to higher educational outcomes through increased opportunities.

Grants up to \$8000 per year are awarded to eligible BC First Nation schools and BC school classrooms with majority First Nation students. In 2021-2022, NRT invested \$201,600 for projects in K-12 learning environments that create connections to First Nation culture and traditions, building the capacity, confidence and motivation for students to be secure in their First Nation identity.

**NRT Scholarships & Bursaries**

NRT invested \$700,000 towards scholarships and bursaries to assist First Nations students in achieving post-secondary education and training goals. This initiative awards funding based on qualification criteria and the student's proposed contribution back to First Nations communities.

**Partnerships**

NRT supports the NRT Foundation to create funding partnerships with First Nations, corporations, organizations, and public and private scholarship organizations to increase the capacity of BC First Nations through investments in education. These partnerships enable the NRT Foundation to award more scholarships and bursaries each year.



**The Young Entrepreneurs Symposium**

The annual Young Entrepreneurs Symposium (YES) brings together young Indigenous youth with First Nation, Canadian and international business leaders and role models to build the skills, knowledge and networks they need to be the leaders of tomorrow.

Participants tackle three days of activities that provide an optimum mix of mentoring, competition and fun. Cash prizes are awarded to the top three teams at the gala.

Since the event's inception, more than 1,000 young Indigenous entrepreneurs have given confidence to their dreams while grounding themselves in the business fundamentals of planning, sales and marketing.

Due to the ongoing public health emergency, YES events for 2021-2022 have been deferred, and we look forward to announcing plans in 2023 for the event's return.





The NRT Foundation is a charitable non-profit society that was created by the NRT to advance the education goals of students from a BC First Nation through fundraising and the distribution of scholarships and bursaries.

Our mission is to assist students from a BC First Nation separately and collectively to meet their education goals, and to support the educational components of Indigenous language revitalization.

In 2011, NRT created the NRT Foundation to seek additional funding partners for education awards and to issue tax receipts to companies and individuals that contribute funds. This strategic decision allows the Foundation to use its charitable status to attract additional support for NRT’s education initiatives.

In 2012, the Foundation assumed oversight of NRT’s education initiatives. The NRT Foundation is seeking to leverage donations with the goal of building an endowment fund of \$30 million to offer Scholarships and Bursaries in perpetuity. The NRT Foundation hopes to achieve this goal over the next ten years.

To date, the Foundation has leveraged more than **\$6.2** million in support from new partners, and **3,387 scholarships and bursaries** worth **\$15.4 million** have been distributed.

“My name is Kayla Gambler. I am a descendant of the Musgamagw Dzawada’enuxw tribes of Kingcome Inlet, British Columbia, and the Anishinaabe of Pine Creek First Nation, Manitoba. I reside in the city of Vancouver, B.C., on the unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations. I am enrolled in the Youth Justice Diploma Program at Douglas College, beginning in the Fall 2021 semester, and plan to transfer into the Bachelor of Arts in Child and Youth Care in the third year.

In recent years I have had the pleasure of working for two non-profit organizations in Vancouver, B.C., that provide services to the Indigenous community and residents of the Downtown East side of Vancouver. Through these organizations, I have gained a wealth of knowledge and experience. I would like to further my education to build on the practical skills that I have gained. My goal is to work with vulnerable and high-risk Indigenous youth. I am extremely grateful to be a recipient of this award and would like to thank the New Relationship Trust Foundation for providing me with the support to reach my educational goals!”

— **Kayla Gambler** - 2021 NRT Bursary recipient



## Partnerships

NRT establishes and maintains partnerships with First Nations, public and private organizations that share common goals and values in order to leverage funds and minimize administrative costs.

### NRT’S CURRENT PARTNERS ARE:

- PacifiCan
- Province of BC
- All Nations Trust Company (ANTCO)
- Nuu-chah-nulth Economic Development Corporation (NEDC)
- Tale’awtxw Aboriginal Capital Corporation (TACC)
- Tribal Resource Investment Corporation (TRICORP)
- Community Futures Development Corporation of Central Interior First Nations (CFDCIFN)
- Stó:lō Community Futures Development Corporation
- Native Fishing Association
- Vancouver Foundation
- Coast Funds
- Barkley Project Group
- Sustainable Projects Group

TARGET	2021-2022	STATUS
At least one strategic funding partnership is established annually for the delivery of programming linked to self-determination and Nationhood initiatives.	1 strategic funding partnership established.	Achieved
At least one strategic partnership that promotes an innovative approach for moving economic reconciliation forward within First Nation communities in BC is supported.	1 strategic partnership supported.	Achieved
Collaborate with at least 30 First Nations and strategic partners each year on challenges, needs, priorities, and ideas to develop new ways of supporting First Nations in BC.	1 collaboration undertaken.	Partially achieved
Achieve at least one strategic relationship per year that enables NRT to leverage an external organization’s capabilities in Nation building.	1 strategic relationship established.	Achieved





# THE NRT TEAM

## 2021/22

### NRT STAFF



Walter Schneider  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Kim Brazil  
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE



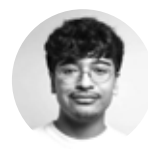
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DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS



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DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS  
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Lana Plante  
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- Programs Specialist



Jeffrey Hernandez  
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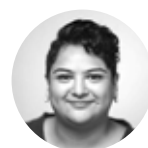
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NRTF Partnerships & Marketing



Sarah Powell  
SENIOR ASSOCIATE  
Programs Specialist  
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Selina Beltran  
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Programs Specialist  
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- Mike Mearns
- Tanya Corbet
- Kristen Rivers
- Susan Miller

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