Virtual Summit 2027

Call For Abstracts

March 3, 2027

As frontline community leaders and settlement agencies hold vital experience in building community, welcoming newcomers, and navigating relationships with Indigenous peoples and communities. This guide translates the official Call for Abstracts for the upcoming national virtual summit into clear, actionable steps to help settlement agencies, community organizers working with newcomers, and frontline workers share their practice, insights, and stories.

1. Summit Overview and Invitation

The national virtual summit, titled **Building Relationships: Indigenous Perspectives, Newcomer Belonging and the Future of Settlement**, will take place on **March 3, 2027**. The summit brings together frontline settlement agencies, Indigenous community leaders, youth advocates, policymakers, and researchers from across Canada.

The future of the settlement sector relies on moving beyond symbolic land acknowledgements toward active, respectful relationships grounded on Indigenous lands. For grassroots organizations welcoming newcomers, this means centering Indigenous sovereignty, honoring historical truths, and forming non-extractive, reciprocal partnerships with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Indigenous communities.

Settlement and newcomer agencies are invited to submit presentation proposals (abstracts) to share frontline experiences, collaborative models, organizational reflections, or youth-led initiatives.

Key Event Details at a Glance

- **Summit Title**: *Building Relationships: Indigenous Perspectives, Newcomer Belonging and the Future of Settlement*
- **Summit Date**: March 3, 2027 (Virtual Platform)
- **Proposal Submission Deadline**: November 24, 2026, at 11:59 PM EST

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2. The 10 summit submission streams: Finding Your Focus

The summit programming is organized into 10 suggested distinct streams. Grassroots agencies are asked to choose one **primary stream** and one **secondary stream** that best match their proposed session.

Stream Number & Name	Focus Area	Reflection Question
Stream 1: Indigenous–Newcomer Relationships	Direct relationships between Indigenous communities and newcomer populations.	What are you doing on the ground to help newcomers learn about host Indigenous Nations and act as respectful guests?
Stream 2: Indigenous Peoples & Settlement Sector	Structural adaptation of settlement agencies to uphold host nation responsibilities.	How is your agency moving from basic consultation toward genuine, long-term partnerships with local Indigenous organizations?
Stream 3: Truth, Reconciliation & Settlement	Implementing Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action in daily settlement work.	How does your organization embed reconciliation into newcomer orientation and staff practices beyond administrative checklists?
Stream 4: Indigenous Knowledge & Ways of Knowing	Integrating oral histories, land-based learning, and Elders' guidance into community wellbeing.	How does your agency learn from and center Elders, traditional knowledge, or holistic community care models?
Stream 5: Place, Land, and Belonging	Exploring how newcomers build belonging while respecting Indigenous presence and sovereignty.	How do newcomer experiences of arrival and belonging interact with urban Indigenous community realities?
Stream 6: Indigenous Youth & Newcomer Youth	Youth-led solidarity, intergenerational knowledge, activism, and creative expression.	How are young people in your community building cross-cultural connections through art, media, or civic dialogue?
Stream 7: Language, Culture, and Identity	Language revitalization, cultural protocols, and respectful cross-cultural connections.	How does your agency navigate cultural protocols and foster connections between newcomer and Indigenous languages without cultural appropriation?
Stream 8: Indigenous Women, Two-Spirit people, Families & Communities	Matriarchal leadership, Two-Spirit people knowledge, family wellbeing, safety, and non-extractive community support.	How does your programming support family wellbeing while honoring Indigenous women's leadership, Two-Spirit people and perspectives and safety?

Stream 9: Indigenous-Centred Practice in Agencies	Frontline operations, cultural safety, hiring, policies, and organizational readiness.	What concrete operational changes, cultural safety measures, or staff policies has your agency introduced?
Stream 10: Governance, Power, and Funding	Sector funding distribution, decision-making authority, and resource-sharing dynamics.	How can settlement resources and grant funding be shared fairly to eliminate tokenistic or extractive partnerships?

3. Session Formats: How You Can Present

The summit features five virtual delivery models to support interactive dialogue and oral knowledge transmission. Applicants should select the format that best fits their presentation style.

1. Interactive Workshops

- **Description**: Hands-on, practical skill-building sessions focused on sharing operational tools, frameworks, or assessment methods.
- **Virtual Delivery**: High interactivity with managed breakout rooms (maximum 15 participants per room), digital whiteboard activities, group problem-solving, and structured peer feedback led by co-facilitators.

2. Panel Discussions

- **Description**: Multi-perspective dialogues bringing together diverse voices (such as frontline practitioners, Elders, youth, and policymakers) to discuss shared challenges or strategic topics.
- **Virtual Delivery**: Moderated conversations followed by text chat Q&A, real-time audience polling, and dedicated chat moderators managing participant questions.

3. Individual Paper Presentations

- **Description**: Focused presentations sharing program evaluation data, empirical research findings, or policy analyses.
- **Virtual Delivery**: Structured 20-minute visual presentations followed by 10 minutes of direct Q&A, backed by downloadable brief summaries.

4. Storytelling and Land-Based Sharing Circles

- **Description**: Relational sessions rooted in oral traditions, lived experience, narrative sharing, and holistic community wellbeing.

- **Virtual Delivery**: Restorative digital circles following ceremonial grounding protocols, digital circle etiquette, unhurried reflective sharing, and structured chat mute protocols to preserve focus.

5. Media/Art Showcases

- **Description**: Creative, youth-led presentations using digital art, short video, performance, multimedia storytelling, or activist campaign highlights.
- **Virtual Delivery**: Live streaming featuring youth presenter panels, interactive chat reaction protocols, and youth-moderated audience reflections.

4. Step-by-Step Submission Checklist

All proposal packages must be submitted digitally through the official online portal. Before logging into the portal, prepare the following seven required components:

1. **Abstract Title**: Create a clear, impactful title that is **15 words or fewer**.
2. **Summary Abstract**: Write a summary of **300 words or fewer** explaining your core message, practical approach, or community insights. Prepare this text in Microsoft Word (.docx) or PDF (.pdf) format.
3. **Stream Alignment**: Identify one **Primary Stream** and one **Secondary Stream** (selected from Streams 1 through 10).
4. **Learning Objectives**: List **exactly 3 clear, actionable takeaways** that participants will gain from attending your session.
5. **Presenter Biographies**: Provide a brief biography of **150 words or fewer per presenter**, highlighting lived experience, community affiliation, and relevant practice expertise.
6. **Primary Contact Designation**: For sessions with multiple presenters, designate one lead presenter as the main administrative contact.

5. How Proposals Will Be Assessed

Proposals will be reviewed by an adjudication committee using five evaluation criteria. Understanding these criteria helps settlement agencies present their strengths effectively:

1. **Thematic Alignment**: How well your proposal connects to the summit goal of moving from symbolic land acknowledgements to active, relational responsibilities.
2. **Depth of Grounding and Reciprocity**: How your presentation demonstrates respectful, non-colonial, and non-extractive partnerships, avoiding superficial tokenism.
3. **Audience Engagement**: How clearly, you plan for participant interaction, reflection, or participatory discussion in a virtual format.
4. **Practical Practitioner Impact**: How useful your session is for frontline workers, offering actionable tools, lessons learned, or adaptable community practice models.
5. **Equity, Power-Sharing, and Data Sovereignty**: How your work upholds fair power dynamics, cultural safety, transparent recognition, and respect for Indigenous knowledge ownership.

6. Compensation, Honoraria, and Knowledge Rights

The summit strictly enforces non-extractive, fair compensation protocols and knowledge protection policies:

- **Elders and Knowledge Keepers**: Mandatory, respectful honoraria will be provided to all participating Elders and Knowledge Keepers in recognition of their spiritual leadership, historical authority, and community wisdom.
- **Indigenous Data Sovereignty**: Indigenous presenters, Elders, and community partners retain full ownership of their traditional knowledge, stories, and cultural expressions shared during the conference.
- **Recording**: Sessions will be recorded and shared in the NNTCR virtual hub for members to access and future references.

Please note: Selected agencies will receive $1000 to support their presentation

8. Deadlines and Submission Support

- **Submission Deadline**: **November 24, 2026, at 11:59 PM EST**
- **Submission Portal**: All proposals, abstracts, and bios must be uploaded directly to the submission google doc English and French. Email submissions will not be reviewed.
- **Accessibility and Support**: Newcomer settlement agency applicants requiring alternative submission formats or virtual accessibility accommodations are encouraged to contact NNTCR admin at nntcr@ccvt.org prior to the submission deadline.