



STEPS TO OBTAIN YOUR NATIVE STATUS

IN NEWFOUNDLAND: ADOPTION

resource by: clarity & compassion

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Obtaining First Nations status (Indian status) under the Indian Act as an adopted person in Newfoundland and Labrador follows the general Canadian process outlined by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), with some province-specific considerations for adoption records and local First Nations.

The process involves determining eligibility through your biological or adoptive parents and submitting an application with adoption-specific documents.

Here is a concise, Newfoundland-specific guide, incorporating relevant information and tailored to adopted individuals.

NEWFOUNDLAND-SPECIFIC CONTEXT

INDIGENOUS GROUPS

Newfoundland and Labrador is home to the:

- Mi'kmaq (Qalipu)
- Innu (Sheshatshiu & Natuashish)
- Inuit (Nunatsiavut), and
- Southern Inuit (NunatuKavut).

Only Mi'kmaq and Innu are eligible for Indian status under the Indian Act.

Inuit and Southern Inuit have distinct processes ([Nunatsiavut beneficiary status or NunatuKavut membership](#)), and Métis are not eligible for status.

QALIPU MI'KMAQ FIRST NATION

The Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation (2011), has a unique enrolment process due to high application volumes and strict criteria.

Many applicants (over 72,000) were rejected in 2017, and status was revoked for some founding members. If you're seeking Mi'kmaq status, you must meet specific ancestry and community connection requirements.

ADOPTION RECORDS

Newfoundland's Adoption Act, 2013, controls adoption processes and access to records. Adopted people aged 19 and over can ask Vital Statistics for their original birth records and adoption orders, which help prove their biological parentage.

HISTORICAL NOTE

Newfoundland joined Canada in 1949, and its residents were not initially registered as Indians under the Indian Act, complicating status claims for those with Mi'kmaq ancestry. This may affect eligibility if your family was not recognized pre-1949.

ELIGIBILITY FOR FIRST NATIONS STATUS AS AN ADOPTED PERSON

YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR INDIAN STATUS IF:

BIOLOGICAL PARENTS

At least one biological parent is registered or entitled to be registered under Section 6 of the Indian Act. The “second-generation cut-off” limits status after two generations of parenting with non-registered individuals.

ADOPTIVE PARENTS

You were adopted as a minor (under 19) by parents registered or entitled to be registered, treated the same as biological children since 1985 amendments.

ADOPTION TYPE

Legal Adoption: Handled by Newfoundland courts with an Adoption Order.

Custom Adoption: Follows First Nation practices (e.g., Mi’kmaq or Innu traditions), requiring community documentation.

QALIPU-SPECIFIC

For Qalipu Mi’kmaq status, you must prove Mi’kmaq ancestry and substantial connection to a Qalipu community (e.g., Corner Brook, Flat Bay) as per the 2013 Supplemental Agreement.

STEPS TO APPLY FOR FIRST NATIONS STATUS IN NEWFOUNDLAND

1 CONFIRM ELIGIBILITY

BIOLOGICAL PARENTS

Identify your biological or adoptive parents' names, band numbers (**Mi'kmaq or Innu**), and registration status.

For Qalipu, confirm Mi'kmaq ancestry and community ties (e.g. **residency pre-2008**).

If biological parents are unknown, access adoption records through [Newfoundland's Vital Statistics](#) or the [Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development \(CSSD\)](#).

CONTACT ISC OR LOCAL RESOURCES

Call ISC at **1-800-567-9604** or email infopubs@sac-isc.gc.ca to discuss eligibility, especially for adopted applicants.

For Qalipu Mi'kmaq, contact the Qalipu Enrolment Committee via **qalipu.ca** or call **1-800-561-2266**.

Reach out to the Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation (Newfoundland government) at 709-729-1778 or email Deputy Minister *Jason Higgins* at JasonHiggins@gov.nl.ca for guidance.

ADOPTION RECORDS

Request your original birth registration and Adoption Order from Vital Statistics Newfoundland and Labrador (age 19+).

Contact **709-729-3308** or visit gov.nl.ca/dgsnl/vitalstats.

If adopted through CSSD, call **709-729-4465** to access adoption files.

QALIPU-SPECIFIC

For Qalipu Mi'kmaq status, you must prove Mi'kmaq ancestry and substantial connection to a Qalipu community (e.g., Corner Brook, Flat Bay) as per the 2013 Supplemental Agreement.

SIXTIES SCOOP

If you were adopted during the Sixties Scoop (1950s-1980s), your biological parents may have lost status due to colonial policies. Provide evidence of Mi'kmaq or Innu ancestry to reclaim status.

2 GATHER REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

You'll need to submit a combination of standard and adoption-specific documents. All documents must be original or certified copies, unless otherwise specified.

STANDARD DOCUMENTS

- **Application Form:** Form 83-171E (adults) or 83-171IE (children/dependent adults) from sac-isc.gc.ca.
- **Birth Certificate:** Original long-form birth certificate listing biological or adoptive parents. If biological parents aren't listed, request an amended certificate from Vital Statistics.
- **ID:** Original valid ID (e.g., driver's license) or a guarantor-signed copy if mailing.
- **Photos:** Two passport-style photos for a Secure Certificate of Indian Status (SCIS). Free photos may be available at ISC offices.
- **Custody Documents:** For minors, include custody/guardianship orders.
- **Death Certificate:** If a parent is deceased, provide their death certificate.

ADOPTION-SPECIFIC DOCUMENTS:

Legal Adoption:

- Copy of the Adoption Order or a letter from CSSD confirming adoption details (date, place, adoptive parents' names). Obtain from Vital Statistics or CSSD.
- Pre-adoptive birth document listing biological parents, if available.

Custom Adoption:

- Statutory declarations from Elders, band council, or community members verifying the adoption.
- Band council resolution from the First Nation.

Unknown/Unstated Parent:

- Amended birth certificate listing the entitled parent, or statutory declarations/affidavits showing it's "more probable than not" the parent was entitled (e.g., Mi'kmaq descent).
- ISC's policy is flexible post-Ontario court ruling.

Qalipu-Specific:

- Proof of Mi'kmaq ancestry (e.g., genealogy records, pre-1949 family records).
- Evidence of community connection (e.g., residency in a Qalipu community before 2008, cultural participation). Contact Qalipu for a checklist.

TIPS

Use the Newfoundland and Labrador Heritage website (heritage.nf.ca) or Library and Archives Canada for Mi'kmaq/Innu genealogy.

If records are missing, ISC's Adoption Unit can provide a consent form to access adoption details confidentially.

IN PERSON

Visit an ISC regional office

- St. John's, 709-772-4885 or

Qalipu First Nation offices

- Corner Brook, 1-800-561-2266).

Staff can certify document copies.

Due to potential Canada Post disruptions, in-person submission is recommended.

BY MAIL

SEND TO

Indigenous Services Canada
Adoption Unit (Attachments)
P.O. Box 1328 STN B
Ottawa, ON K1P 5R4

GENERAL APPLICATIONS

Office of the Indian Registrar
Indigenous Services Canada
Ottawa, ON K1A 0H4

QALIPU APPLICATIONS

SUBMIT DIRECTLY TO:

The Qalipu Enrolment Committee
P.O. Box 69
Corner Brook, NL
A2H 6C3

with Mi'kmaq-specific documents.



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FOLLOW UP AND RECEIVE STATUS

PROCESSING TIME

6 months to 2 years, longer for adoptions or Qalipu applications due to complexity.

Qalipu's high rejection rate requires thorough documentation.

TRACK STATUS

Call ISC **1-800-567-9604** or Qalipu **1-800-561-2266**. Provide additional documents if requested.

OUTCOME

If **approved**, you'll receive a registration number and SCIS (8-12 weeks).

You'll be added to the **Indian Register** and, for **ISC**-managed bands (Section 11), your First Nation's list.

For **Qalipu** or **Innu Nation** (Section 10), apply separately for band membership.

PROTEST/APPEAL

If **denied**, protest within three years with additional evidence (e.g., adoption records).

Appeal to a court if needed, with help from **Aboriginal Legal Services (416-924-7511)**.

NEWFOUNDLAND-SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

ADOPTION ACT, 2013

Allows adopted individuals (19+) to access original birth records, critical for proving biological parentage. Birth parents can file disclosure vetoes for pre-2003 adoptions, but this doesn't block status applications.

NO LOCAL ADOPTION AGENCIES

Newfoundland lacks private agencies for intercountry adoptions, but CSSD handles domestic adoptions. This affects record access for local legal adoptions.

SIXTIES SCOOP IMPACT

Many Newfoundland Mi'kmaq children were adopted out during the Sixties Scoop, often to non-Indigenous families, complicating status claims. Provide any evidence of Mi'kmaq ancestry to counter historical disenfranchisement.

QALIPU CHALLENGES

The 2017 rejection of 72,000+ Qalipu applications highlights strict criteria. Ensure robust documentation of Mi'kmaq ancestry and community ties.

INNU NATION

Innu status applications are less contentious but require proof of descent from Sheshatshiu or Natuashish communities. Contact Innu Nation at 709-497-8398.

ADDITIONAL TIPS



Vital Statistics:

- Contact 709-729-3308 early to secure adoption records.
- Delays are common, especially for Sixties Scoop cases.

Qalipu Support:

- Qalipu's enrolment process is rigorous.
- Use their genealogy resources (qalipu.ca) or
- Newfoundland and Labrador Heritage (heritage.nf.ca) for Mi'kmaq ancestry proof.

Legal Assistance:

- Aboriginal Legal Services (416-924-7511) can help with complex cases, especially if protesting a denial.

Community Connection:

- For Qalipu or Innu status, engage with the community (e.g., cultural events, band council) to strengthen membership applications.

No Fees:

- Applying for status is free
- ISC may offer free SCIS photos in St. John's.

NEXT STEPS

CONTACT VITAL STATISTICS

- Call 709-729-3308 or visit gov.nl.ca/dgsnl/vitalstats to request your original birth registration and Adoption Order.



REACH OUT TO ISC:

- Call 1-800-567-9604 or email for adoption-specific guidance.
- For Qalipu, contact 1-800-561-2266.

GATHER NEEDED DOCUMENTS

- Adoption Order, birth certificate, id, and custom adoption evidence (if applicable).

USE NEWFOUNDLAND GENEALOGY RESOURCES FOR MI'KMAQ/INNU ANCESTRY.

SUBMIT APPLICATION

- Deliver in person to ISC St. John's or Qalipu Corner Brook to avoid postal delays.

SUPPORT RESOURCES FOR

Indigenous Communities

Bay St. George Mi'kmaq Cultural Revival Committee

Canadian Red Cross

Congress of Aboriginal Peoples

First Light St. John's Friendship Centre

HVGB Housing & Homeless Coalition

Idle No More

Indigenous Student Resource Centre | ISRC | Memorial University

Innu Development Limited Partnership

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

Ktaqmukuk Hub for Rural Homelessness | Flat Bay Band Inc.

Mi'kmaq First Nations Assembly of Newfoundland

Mokami Status of Women Council - Women's Centre | Service Expansion Project

Native Women's Association of Canada | NWAC

Nunatsiavut Government

NunatuKavut Community Council | NCC

Office of the Child and Youth Advocate

Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada

Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation Band

Status of Women Central & Exploits Native Women's Centre

The Aboriginal Sport and Recreation Circle of NL

The Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat

The Labrador Friendship Centre

The People of the Dawn Indigenous Friendship Centre

The Salvation Army | Happy Valley-Goose Bay Corps | Bridge the Gap

Ulnuoweg Development Group

Violence Prevention | Avalon East