

Central Registry
Policies and Procedures
Version 1.0

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1.0 Preamble

The importance of having a central Métis registry to identify Métis section 35 right holders became apparent after the Powley decision in the summer of 2003. The inclusion of Métis in section 35 was never defined until the Powley decision came to fruition. The purpose of the section 35 is to protect practices that were a historically important feature of distinctive Métis communities and that persist in the contemporary Métis community as an integral element of the Métis culture.

Prior to the Powley decision, Métis identification was community driven, however, this simply defined Métis membership at a community level. The Powley decision defined not only who the Métis were in section 35 but affirmed that the specific collective identified has an Aboriginal right. The Powley decision spoke about the urgent need to develop a more systematic method in identifying Métis rights holders. The court identified four broad factors in Métis identification:

1. Self identification,
2. Ancestral connection to the historic Métis community
3. Contemporary Métis community acceptance
4. Unique from other Aboriginal peoples

The Métis Nation British Columbia (MNBC) Central Registry was introduced in October 2004 and fully implemented in 2005. The Provincial citizenship registry is responsible for compiling and maintaining a database of Métis citizens in British Columbia and is based on the process requirements identified as per the Supreme Court decision of Powley.

The MNBC Central Registry is the “objectively verifiable process” that supports the collective voice of the Métis throughout the homeland.

Regional registry staff assists the citizenship applicant with the completion of their application for Métis citizenship and forwards the files to Office of the Provincial Registrar in Surrey, BC for verification.

2.0 Purpose of the Central Registry

The purpose of the Central Registry is to:

1. Provide an “objectively verifiable process” for Métis identification in the province of British Columbia as governed by the MNBC Citizenship, Senate and Electoral Acts.

3.0 Provincial Citizenship Policy

3.1 Community Acceptance

Individual(s) applying for a MNBC citizenship card are required to provide proof of Community Acceptance as per *Article 3.0* of the *Citizenship Act*. In compliance with the MNBC Senate decisions of *Knight vs. MNBC Central Registry* - Senate Action Number - 3-16-10-46-3-00020 and *Zawislak vs. MNBC Central Registry* - Senate Action Number - 1-28-08-61-3-00019 the following policy will take effect immediately.

3.1.1 Knight and Zawislak Precedence

1. An applicant can request in writing to the Central Registry to have the Knight and Zawislak precedence applied.
2. Upon receiving the written request the Central Registry can provide community acceptance on behalf of the provincial community (Line 17 *Zawislak vs. MNBC Central Registry*).

3.1.2 Interim Community Acceptance Policy

1. The Central Registry will issue written community acceptance notification to the Metis chartered community.
2. The Metis chartered community has sixty (60) days to provide the Central Registry with community acceptance for the applicant.
 - a) Community acceptance will be accepted by:
 - Facsimile
 - Electronic Mail
 - Regular Mail
3. Upon expiry of the sixty (60) days the Central Registry can provide community acceptance on behalf of the provincial community.

3.2 Residential Requirement

1. Individual(s) nineteen (19) years of age and older applying for a MNBC citizenship card are required to provide proof of British Columbia residency.
2. Residency must be established by:
 - a) Three (3) consecutive months of documentation
 - b) Documentation must be within three (3) months immediately prior to the application date

3. The following is accepted as proof of residency and must include the applicant's name and residential address:
 - a) Income support or pay stub
 - b) Utility bills for BC residence (i.e. hydro/telephone/cable/gas)
 - c) BC residential property tax bill
 - d) Residential or tenant insurance
 - e) Residential rental or lease agreement
 - f) Post secondary school registration

3.2.1 Exemptions

1. The following individuals are exempt from *Section 3.2 Residential Requirement*:
 - a) Canadian Military personnel
 - b) Institutionalized individuals
 - c) Incarcerated individuals
 - d) Applicants eighteen (18) years of age and under

3.3 Citizenship Card Renewal

Citizenship card renewal is required for Citizens fifteen (15) years of age and older.

1. The following information is required for renewal:
 - a) Citizenship card renewal application form
 - b) Signature in black ink only
 - c) Current color passport photograph
 - d) Proof of residency if not previously submitted as per *Section 3.2 Residential Requirement*
 - e) INAC screening if not previously submitted as per *Section 3.7 Metis Distinction*
 - f) Surrendering of expired citizenship card
 - Failure to renew the citizenship card within ninety (90) days of written notification will result in card suspension

3.4 Citizenship Card Replacement

1. The following information is required for citizenship card replacement due to change of name, lost, stolen or damaged cards:
 - a) Citizenship card replacement application form
 - b) Current color passport photograph (not applicable for Citizens fourteen (14) years of age and under)
 - c) Signature (not applicable for Citizens fourteen (14) years of age and under)

- d) Twenty (20) dollar replacement fee

3.5 Change of Address

1. Citizens are required to notify the Registry within thirty (30) days of a change of residential address.
 - a) Card replacement, with updated address, is optional and will have a twenty (20) dollar replacement fee

3.6 Cards Lost, Stolen or Damaged in the Mail

1. The Central Registry is not responsible for cards lost, stolen or damaged in the mail.

3.7 Archived File

1. An incomplete application that has not supplied the requested missing elements within twelve (12) months will be initiated into the archive process.
2. The applicant will receive written notification their file will be archived in thirty (30) days from the date of notification.
3. Archived files will require the applicant to re-apply.

3.8 Suspended Citizen

1. Métis Nation British Columbia reserves the right to suspend a Citizenship card due to non-compliance with a renewal request. (refer to *Section 3.3 Citizenship Card Renewal*)
2. A Citizen holding a suspended Citizenship card surrenders the privileges attached to the card.
3. Upon providing the necessary information the Central Registry can re-instate the Citizenship card.

3.8.1 Re-instatement of Suspended Citizenship Card

1. A suspended Citizen is required to submit the mandatory information to the Office of the Provincial Registrar.
2. Upon receipt of requested information the Office of the Provincial Registrar can re-instate the Citizenship card.

3.9 Métis Distinction

1. The determination of Métis distinction, for the purpose of cultural and nationhood, is accomplished by the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) screening process.

4.0 Registration Procedure

4.1 Regional Processing

Applicants submit their completed application packages to the appropriate Regional Registry Clerk (RRC) for initial review. The role of the RRC is to prepare the applications for electronic filing, connect family members together electronically and to review the contents of the application received. Upon determination of any missing elements from the application, a letter is sent from the Clerk to the applicant outlining the details of the items required to process the application. Incomplete files are housed with each Clerk until the missing elements of the application have been received. When the applicant completes all necessary items, the Clerk will scan the photo and signature into the registry database, and, if the applicant has given the appropriate consent, the Clerk will scan the historical documentation to the historical document database. The file is then tracked electronically for location and noted in the correspondence log and forwarded to head office for review.

4.1.1 Prepare Standardized File

The RRC's are responsible for the application in hard copy as well as preparation of the electronic file. Hard copy files are created using blue file folders and follow a specific color-coded method to separate the various pieces of information contained within that file:

Starting from the front of the blue file folder:

1. Application checklist to be on the left side of folder.
2. Application contact sheet to be on the right side.
3. All correspondence from the applicant to be attached.

Under the pink paper divider items that would be included are:

1. Application main page
2. Color passport photograph glued to application (not applicable to applicants fourteen (14) years of age and under)
3. Signed consent forms
4. Photo Identification
5. Proof of Residency (applicable to applicants nineteen (19) years of age and older)

Under the blue paper divider items that would be included are all supporting documentation:

1. Chartered Métis community membership
2. Secondary Identification
3. Applicant's long form birth certificate (LFBC) or baptismal (BAP) record
4. Applicant's Metis parent's LFBC or BAP record
5. Applicant's Metis grandparent's LFBC or BAP record
6. Applicant's Metis great grandparent's LFBC or BAP record
7. Applicant's Metis great-great grandparents LFBC or BAP record
8. Marriage records
9. Death records
10. Scrip records
11. Census records
12. Family History or additional pedigree charts

Under the green paper divider the items that would be included are:

1. MNBC five (5) generation pedigree chart

Completed INAC form to have a copy of the acceptable forms of identification attached to the form i.e.: BC driver's license, BC identification, or birth certificate and placed behind pedigree chart.

4.1.2 Electronic Filing

1. Electronic filing will be prepared as per the Citizenship Database Guidebook pages 3 to 36.

4.1.3 Assessment

The appropriate RRC initially assesses incoming applications for completeness. The Clerk to determine that the applicant has provided all necessary documentation required reviews a checklist. The Clerk detailing the items required to complete the application notifies applicants submitting incomplete application packages in writing. This missing element letter is attached to the electronic application file in the notes/correspondence section within the registry database.

4.1.4 Submission to Provincial Office

Once application packages have been determined by the RRC's to be able to be processed, they are noted and routed electronically.

Files are forwarded to head office for review upon completion. Files forwarded to head office with items missing which prevent it from being processed will be re-routed electronically and forwarded back to the appropriate registry clerk.

4.2 Provincial Processing

4.2.1 Initial Processing

Upon arrival in the Registry application packages are sorted by region and forwarded to the appropriate Registry staff member for:

1. Initial review and assessment to ensure they are complete (*Refer to Section 4.1.4 Submission to Provincial Office regarding packages with missing items.*)
2. Screening for family members who have active/incomplete applications
3. Registry staff, as authorized by the Registrar, may collect additional historical genealogical documentation required to complete an applicant's file.
4. Applications for adopted, incarcerated or institutionalized individuals or children in care are forwarded directly to the Registrar to process.

Completed applications received in the Registry from the RRCs are date stamped and forwarded to the appropriate staff member for final assessment and processing.

4.2.2 Genealogical Validation and Verification

Complete applications are forwarded to the Registrar for genealogical validation and verification. The Registrar reviews the five (5) generation pedigree chart and cross-references it with the genealogical documentation provided by the applicant to support and verify the link between each generation.

4.2.3 Application Determination

Upon completion of the genealogical verification process the Registrar is able to determine if the applicant is of Historic Métis Nation Ancestry. The Registrar also reviews the file in its entirety to ensure all required components of the “objectively verifiable process” are fulfilled. These being as follows:

1. Self Identification
 - ✓ A person who self identifies
2. Is of Historic Métis Nation Ancestry
 - ✓ Genealogy
3. Accepted by the Métis Nation
 - ✓ Chartered Métis community membership

4. Unique from other Aboriginal peoples
 - ✓ Indian and Northern Affairs Canada screening process

The Registry will notify applicants who do not have chartered Métis community membership in writing that their application has been “approved pending community acceptance”. The written notification provides the applicant with the contact information for the appropriate chartered Métis community as determined by their place of residence indicated in their application package. Additionally a copy of the “approved pending community acceptance” letter is sent to the chartered Métis community.

4.2.3.1 Card ordering

Refer to MNBC Citizenship Database User’s Guide.

4.2.3.2 Appeal Option Notification

Refer to Section 7.0 Appeal.

4.2.3.3 Indian and Northern Affairs Canada Screening Process

The Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) form is included with each application and permits the MNBC and INAC to screen the applicant through the INAC band list program database to determine if the applicant is registered as First Nations.

Submitted INAC forms are reviewed for accuracy by the regional registry clerk and returned to the applicant if incomplete.

To be considered complete the form must be dated, the applicant’s name must be printed in the appropriate space, as well as the signature must be present in the appropriate area with their current address printed. Applicants under the age of nineteen (19) years of age must have their INAC forms signed by their parent or legal guardian.

The regional registry clerk will return the INAC form to the applicant using the standard form letter for return if:

1. It is incomplete
2. It has pages missing (all copies must be returned to MNBC)
3. No ID is attached
4. The ID attached is not legible
5. Incorrect ID is attached, driver’s license, BC identification card, birth certificate is accepted and must include copies of the front and back of the ID.
6. It is not signed
7. It does not have the current address and date

Completed INAC forms

Completed INAC forms are placed into the applicant's file until their file is processed. Once processed, the INAC form is tracked electronically within the Registry database and forwarded to head office with the citizenship application.

When files are processed, completed INAC forms are forwarded to the Vancouver, BC INAC regional office for processing. Once a citizenship applicant has been cleared through the INAC Indian band list screening, and it has been confirmed that the applicant does not appear on the band list, the indicator is flagged within the electronic application. The hard copy of the INAC form is stored within the secured records room accessible to registry staff only.

If an INAC form is returned from INAC screening and it has been determined that the individual's name does appear on the Indian band list the Central Registry issues a letter to the individual notifying them that are not eligible to receive a MNBC citizenship card.

4.2.3.3 Proof of Residency

Proof of residency within the province of British Columbia is a requirement of the MNBC citizenship application for applicants nineteen (19) years of age and older. A list of items considered acceptable documentation to submit as proof of residency has been provided.
A) (Refer to Section 3.2 Residential Requirement)

4.3 File Archiving Procedure

Citizenship applications that have been reviewed and deemed incomplete and are older than 12 months will be identified by the respective RRC. Applicants will be notified in writing of the intention of the Registry to archive their application file if the items required to complete the file is not received within thirty (30) days of the date of the letter of notification. The Registry Clerk will forward an additional letter to the applicant to review the items still outstanding from their application. Notification of these letters is logged inside the notes/correspondence section within the Registry database. The Registry Clerk will keep the files given such notice separated from the other active files. Upon the expiration of the thirty (30) day notification, the files will be noted accordingly by the clerk, routed appropriately electronically and forwarded to head office for archiving.

Once a file intended for archiving is received in head office, it is reviewed to ensure written notification has been given, the appropriate time frame has passed, and that the file is electronically routed correctly.

Once a file is archived, the applicant must submit a new application package to the MNBC citizenship registry. Archived files are housed in the secured records room at MNBC head office.

5.0 Central Registry

5.1 Meetings

1. The Central Registry generally will hold meetings on a quarterly basis, or as deemed necessary.
2. Conference calls generally will be held on a monthly basis, with exceptions to the months that have a Central Registry meeting. The number of conference calls may vary as deemed necessary by the Central Registry.
3. All meetings and conference calls are subject to the availability of funds.

5.2 Citizenship Database

The Central Registry will maintain an electronic Citizenship database. Registry staff is responsible for entering applicant information and maintaining the database system. The Citizenship database will contain the required information regarding all electronic applications for Citizenship and completed applications of Citizens.

5.3 Hard Copy Storage

The Central Registry will maintain hard copy storage of applications for Citizenship and completed applications of Citizens. Applicant and Citizenship files are stored in either a secure registry staff member's office or the Central Registry storage room. Registry staff is responsible for the preparation, maintenance and storage of hard copy files.

6.0 Registry Office

6.1 Roles and Responsibilities

Refer to Article 7 and 8 of the Citizenship Act

6.2 Registry Forms

The following Registry forms are used when applying for a Citizenship Card;

1. Main Application form
2. Consent to Release of Information form (mandatory)
3. Historical Consent to Release of Information form (optional)
4. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada Screening form (duplicate form)
5. Five Generation Pedigree Chart

These forms will be made available on the MNBC website on the Citizenship webpage (www.mnbc.ca) or can be requested from the appropriate Registry Clerk.

6.3 Citizenship Card

6.3.1 Content

1. Current color passport photograph (not applicable to individuals fourteen (14) years of age and under)
2. Full legal name
3. Date of birth
4. Residential address
5. Card issue date
6. Card expiry date
7. Eight (8) digit Citizenship ID number

Métis Nation BC Citizenship cards are void if altered in any way

6.3.2 Change of Residency

The responsibility lies with the applicant/citizen to ensure their contact information on file with the Central Registry is current.

6.3.3 Card Replacement

Citizens requesting a replacement card are required to fill out a replacement Citizenship card application form. This form can be obtained from the Regional Registry Clerks or the Central Registry.

The following items are required to complete the card replacement process:

1. Completed card replacement application form
2. Current color passport photograph (not applicable to Citizens fourteen (14) years of age and under)
3. Signature (not applicable to Citizens fourteen (14) years of age and under)
4. Twenty (20) dollar fee

The Replacement application form must indicate the reason the individual is requesting a Replacement card for example:

1. Lost, stolen or damaged card
2. Name change
3. Address change

In the case of a name change the individual is required to provide the appropriate legal change of name documents with the completed application form.

6.3.4 Card Renewal

Citizenship Cards are required to be renewed every five (5) years. Citizens will be notified in writing and provided a renewal application form by the Central Registry ninety (90) days prior to the expiry date of their card. Renewal is not applicable to Citizens fourteen (14) years of age and under.

The following information is required for renewal process:

1. Citizenship card renewal application form
2. Signature in black ink only
3. Current color passport photograph
4. Proof of residency as per *Section 3.2 Residential Requirement*
5. INAC screening if not previously submitted as per *Section 3.7 Metis Distinction*
6. Surrendering of expired citizenship card
 - a. Failure to renew the citizenship card within ninety (90) days of written notification will result in card suspension

6.3.5 Fees

The non-refundable twenty (20) dollar processing fee required for replacement cards is due at the time the replacement card application is submitted to Central Registry. Receipts are issued by Registry staff to the payee. A cheque or money order is an acceptable payment method, please do not send cash. Cheques returned NSF are subject to a thirty (30) dollar bank fee.

6.4 Privacy

6.4.1 Regional Application Handling

Applications submitted to the RRCs are stored in secured cabinets and offices, accessible only to the RRC. Application status inquiries for individuals nineteen (19) years of age and older must be made by the applicant themselves. Parents or legal guardians of minor children may inquire regarding application status on behalf of their children, however, no other inquiries are permitted.

6.4.2 Provincial Application Handling

Citizenship files are stored at the MNBC head office in a secured records room accessible by Registry staff only. Completed applications submitted for processing are stored in

secured cabinets and offices in the Central Registry department. Application status inquiries for individuals nineteen (19) years of age and older must be made by the applicant.

Parents or legal guardians of minor children may inquire regarding application status on behalf of their children, however, no other inquiries are permitted.

The Central Registry adheres to provincial and federal privacy laws.

6.4.3 Technical

The Citizenship database is accessible to Central Registry staff only. Registry staff is assigned both system and database usernames and access codes. Usernames and passwords are unique to each staff member. Citizenship database access is specific to each staff member based on their role within the Central Registry and the level of access required.

The Historical Document database used by the Central Registry is accessible to Central Registry staff only. Registry staff is assigned both system and database usernames and access codes. Usernames and passwords are unique to each staff member. Historical Document database access is specific to each staff member based on their role within the Central Registry and the level of access required.

Each database is backed up on and off site daily, additionally minor and major data recovery processes are in place should lose of data occur due to server malfunction, power outage, fire etc.

The Central Registry is subject to federal security and privacy audits.

6.4.4 Consent Forms

The MNBC citizenship application package includes two (2) consent forms. The main consent form is mandatory and allows the MNBC to maintain, and store the applicant's personal information in hard copy and electronic format. The secondary consent form is optional and requests permission from the applicant to submit the historical documentation submitted with their application to the historical document database.

7.0 Appeals

7.1 Citizenship Appeal File

The MNBC Provincial Registrar will compile a Citizenship Appeal file upon receipt of a Senate Demand from the Senate Clerk. The Registrar reviews the Citizenship Appeal file to ensure it is complete.

The file will include the following:

1. The contents of the original citizenship application file
2. An appeal check list
3. An appeal research log
4. An appeal research summary
5. An appeal letter
6. An appeal file number is assigned by the Senate Clerk

The Citizenship Appeal File will contain:

1. Citizenship Appeal Checklist: divided into three sections:
 - a) Basic application elements
 - b) Genealogical documentation
 - c) Notes on the genealogical documentation submitted
2. Appeal Research Log: divided into seven sections:
 - a) Appeal file number
 - b) Date of research
 - c) Location/Call number of sources researched
 - d) Description of sources
 - e) Documents retrieved and identified numerically
 - f) Geographic location of research
 - g) Notes/comments
3. Appeal research summary highlights research conducted on file
4. Appeal letter: divided into five sections
 - a) Outline of genealogical component.
 - b) Outline of genealogical findings.
 - c) Notification of the applicant's right to appeal.
 - d) Notification to contact the Registry in writing to indicate the intent to appeal or withdraw the application
5. Genogram: Format for viewing genealogy

7.2 Central Registry

Based on Senate demand issued by the MNBC Senate.

7.3 Citizenship Challenges

Based on Senate demand issued by the MNBC Senate.

8.0 Finance

Refer to Article 11 of the Citizenship Act

9.0 Adoption

The MNBC Registry will accept an application for Métis citizenship from an adoptee that provides verifiable documentation to support their adoption by an individual that is a Métis Citizen or is eligible for a MNBC Citizenship as per the *MNBC Citizenship Act*. The adopted Métis Citizen's citizenship is limited by life estate termination.

9.1 An adult adoption (18 years or older) is exempt from receiving Métis Citizenship

As per Article 12.0. of the MNBC Citizenship Act.

10.0 Conflict of Interest

Central Registry staff will remove themselves from Registry proceedings where they will be in conflict of interest when a situation arises which cause them to doubt their ability to act in an impartial manner. Removal from Registry proceedings due to a conflict of interest may be based on either an actual or perceived conflict with the ultimate objective being the protection of the Central Registry's integrity.

Protocol for dealing with conflict of interest:

Please refer to the MNBC Guidebook, Human Resource Manual, Conflict of Interest Policy

11.0 Changes to the Central Registry Policies and Procedures

1. If it is determined the Central Registry Policies and Procedures can be improved by amendment, addition or deletion, the Central Registry has the authority to make such changes provided they are in keeping with the spirit and intent of the *MNBC's mandate, vision statement and management principles*.

2. Copies of the Central Registry Policies and Procedures will be provided to the MNBC Board of Directors; the MNBC chartered community presidents and be included in the MNBC Policy and Procedure Guide Book. A digital copy will be available on the MNBC website.