

Askîy Youth Guardian Application Guide



Otipemisiwak
Métis Government

The Otipemisiwak Métis Government's Environment and Climate Change Department is inviting Métis youth aged 18-29 to apply for one of four spots in the 2026 Askîy Youth Guardian Program. Successful applicants will participate in the Askîy Fish Health Targeted Monitoring Program led by Otipemisiwak Métis Government harvesters and staff from February 16 – 21.

To enter, youth must answer the following question through a method or media of their choosing: **“Tell us about yourself and what it would mean to be part of the ice fishing team.”** Interested youth should review the week's schedule on page 4 to ensure they will be available for the full program.

MONITORING BACKGROUND

The Environment and Climate Change Department conducts community-based monitoring programs through an initiative called Askîy (Cree for “Earth” or “land”) to investigate and address Citizens' environmental concerns. We have developed programs to monitor plants, fish, wildlife, and biodiversity that braid Western science with Traditional Knowledge. Monitoring programs are designed to engage Citizens, facilitate knowledge sharing within the community, involve the community in monitoring, and keep Citizens updated on project activities and outcomes.

In March 2021, we launched our Askîy Fish Health Targeted Monitoring Program, working with experienced harvesters to sample fish from select lakes across Alberta. Using both traditional gillnets and rod-and-reel techniques, harvested fish were measured and examined for fish health. All lethally-sampled fish were sent home with harvesters, who consumed them and reported on their internal fish health and palatability (e.g., taste, texture, smell). In 2022, we returned to many of the same lakes for sampling and collecting fish for toxicology testing.

In mid-February 2026, we will be continuing this work, and we invite Métis youth to participate. Participants will form the Askîy Youth Guardian team and participate

in the Askîy Fish Health Targeted Monitoring Program. The youth will learn scientific Traditional Knowledge about ice fishing and fish health assessments from Métis harvesters. Additionally, they'll learn Western scientific methods for monitoring fish health from Environment and Climate Change staff.

View the 2025 Youth Team in action at albertametis.com/AskiyYouthVideo

HOW TO APPLY

All applications must include:

- An original response to the question **“Tell us about yourself and what it would mean to be part of the ice fishing team”** in a medium of your choice such as:
 - o A video
 - o A piece of art (submit a photo of your artwork)
 - o A written response (like a poem, letter, or essay)
 - o If needed, you may also include an explanation of how your submission answers the question
- Confirmation that you'll be available for the entire monitoring week
- A completed **“2026 Askîy Youth Guardian Application”** Google Form, which includes a submission form and participant consent form

**All submission rules are provided on page 5 of this guide. We welcome all submissions, regardless of style or format. We want to hear why you want to come ice fishing with us in whatever way you choose to tell us.*

Entries must be submitted by **11:59 p.m. MDT on December 15, 2025**. Late entries will not be accepted.

EVALUATION

Each submission will be evaluated based on completeness and whether it answers the question. If it meets both criteria*, it will be deemed valid.

We will randomly draw four participants from the pool of valid submissions.

**More detailed evaluation criteria are provided on page 5 of this guide*



TRAVEL, ACCOMMODATION, AND MEAL PLAN

We will depart from Edmonton on **February 16** and arrive back in Edmonton on **February 21**.

Youth residing outside of Edmonton will be reimbursed for any travel and accommodation expenses that are required for their participation in the monitoring activities. This includes bus tickets or mileage for a personal vehicle, as well as hotel accommodation in Edmonton, if necessary for travel days.

We will provide hotel accommodation and a per diem for meals (approximately \$100 per day) that will be issued within one month of the trip's conclusion. All equipment necessary for monitoring will be supplied, but youth participants must bring their own outdoor clothing and footwear. If cost is a barrier, please reach out to us.

Youth will have the opportunity to participate in:

- Setting and pulling gillnets
- Rod-and-reel fishing
- Measuring fish
- Examining fish for health indicators
- Evaluating ice thickness for safety
- Listening to stories and learning from the harvesters

Youth will be expected to:

- Dress appropriately for the weather
- Be on time
- Help the harvesters and Otipemisiwak Métis Government staff
- Conduct themselves safely and respectfully

The Askîy Youth Guardian Team will share a camera to document their experiences throughout the week. The photos and videos will be used in a video that will be shared on our social media channels. Participants are also welcome to post on their channels during the monitoring week, tagging us on Facebook [@ABmetis](#) or Instagram [@albertametis](#) using [#AskîyGuardian](#).

MONITORING SCHEDULE

Please note that this schedule is subject to change.
The exact meeting and departure times will be shared with successful applicants.

FEBRUARY 16

Morning: Meet in Edmonton & drive to Conklin
Afternoon: Set nets in Christina Lake
Evening: Stay overnight in Conklin

FEBRUARY 17

Morning: Pull nets from Christina Lake
Afternoon: Assess fish
Evening: Stay overnight in Conklin

FEBRUARY 18

Morning: Drive to Bonnyville
Afternoon: Set nets in Moose Lake
Evening: Stay overnight in Bonnyville

FEBRUARY 19

Morning: Pull nets from Moose Lake
Afternoon: Assess fish
Evening: Stay overnight in Bonnyville

FEBRUARY 20

Morning: Drive to Pigeon Lake
Afternoon: Assist with Frosty Reels Family Camp set up
Evening: Stay overnight in Pigeon Lake area

FEBRUARY 21

Morning: Participate in Frosty Reels Family Camp
Afternoon: Drive back to Edmonton
Evening: Travel home



SUBMISSION RULES

ELIGIBILITY

- The Askîy Youth Guardian Program is open to all Otipemisiwak Métis Government Citizens aged 18-29.
- Submissions must be unpublished and an original entry. No copyrighted materials may be used.
- Submissions must be created by the applicant.

ENTRY INFORMATION

- Entries must be submitted through the “2026 Askîy Youth Guardian Application” Google Form by 11:59 p.m. (MDT) on December 15, 2025.
- Submissions must include an original response to the following question: **“Tell us about yourself and what it would mean to be part of the ice fishing team.”**
- Submissions may be in any medium or format, including video, art, or writing. You may also include an explanation of how your submission answers this question.
- Each applicant may only make one submission. Multiple entries from a single Citizen or group submissions will not be accepted.
- Any submission that is found to contain false information or be in violation of these rules, or the like, will be rejected. If a successful applicant is found to be not compliant with the rules or to have submitted false information, they may be expelled from the program.
- The rules may be changed without notice or reason, including changes that are required to ensure they comply with any applicable laws. By providing a submission, participants agree to abide by these rules.
- This program shall be governed by and construed in accordance with these rules, the laws of the Province of Alberta, and any applicable federal laws. These rules govern all aspects of the Submission Call-Out and are binding on all participants and other parties, including a participant’s parents or legal guardians, if applicable.
- Please contact Jac Curry at jcurry@metis.org for more information.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- All submissions will be evaluated in a single category, with no preference given for age or gender.
- Four youth will be randomly selected from the pool of valid submissions to participate in the Otipemisiwak Métis Government’s Askîy fish health monitoring work in February 2026 as a part of the Askîy Youth Guardian Team. All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their submissions.
- The Otipemisiwak Métis Government reserves the right to cancel, terminate, modify, or suspend the program for any reason, without any prior notice to any participant.

SELECTION OF AWARDS

- All entries that meet the following criteria will be deemed valid submissions: the applicant is an Otipemisiwak Métis Government Citizen between the ages of 18 and 29, who has submitted an expression of interest that answers the question **“Tell us about yourself and what it would mean to be part of the ice fishing team,”** and confirmed their availability for the ice fishing week.
- Valid submissions will be reviewed by the team of Otipemisiwak Métis Government harvesters who participate in the Askîy Fish Health Targeted Monitoring Program.
- If a valid submission answers the question and describes the applicant’s interest in participating in the project, the harvesters will assign it a “yes” ranking.
- All submissions that receive a “yes” ranking from the harvesters will be entered into a random draw, and the four youth whose submissions are drawn will be selected to participate.
- The successful applicants will be notified by telephone or email that they have been selected for the Askîy Youth Guardian Team. Arrangements will then be made for their participation and travel. If the participant declines their spot in the program, the seat may be forfeited and awarded to someone else.
- If the Otipemisiwak Métis Government does not receive entries of sufficient quantity or quality, it reserves the right not to select any participants for the monitoring work.