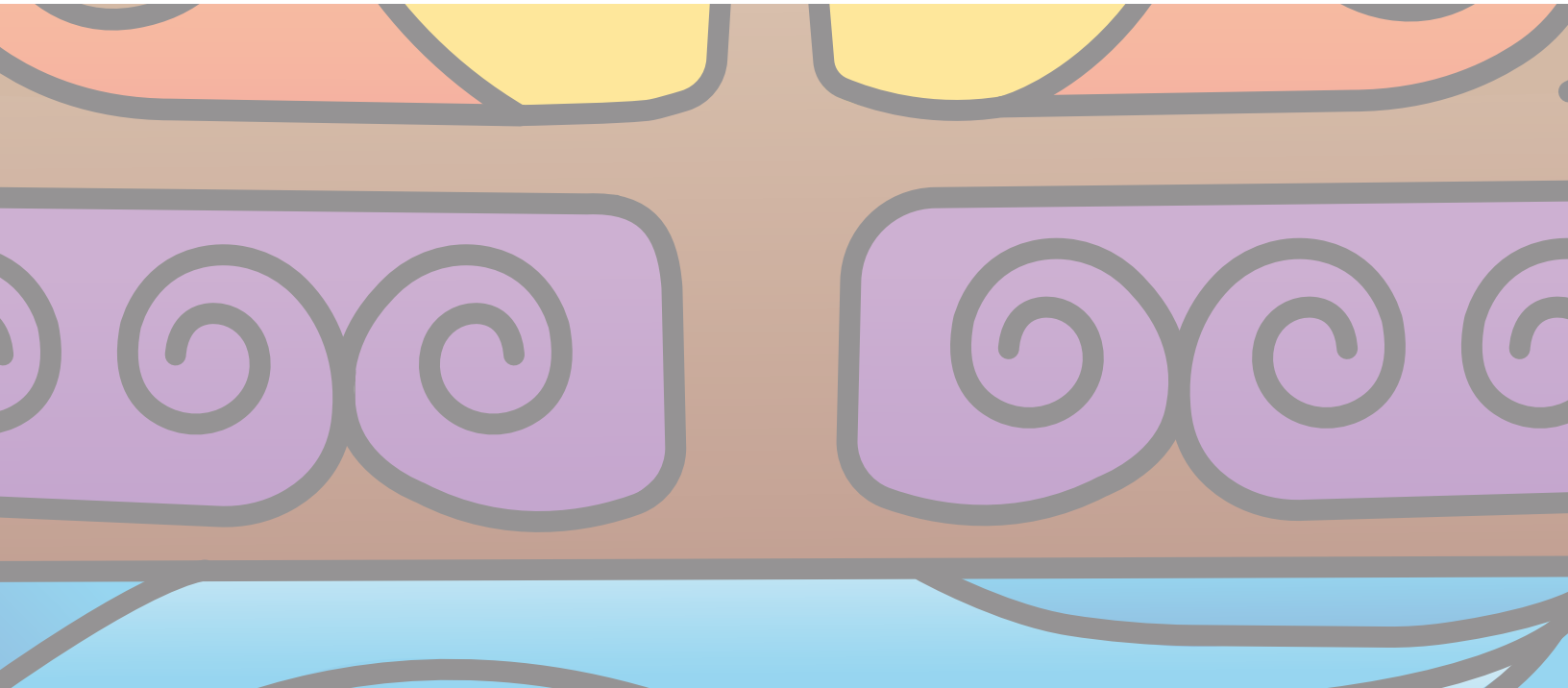
Wolastoqey
Tribal Council Inc.

New Brunswick Law Foundation
Fondation pour le droit au Nouveau-Brunswick

HOW TO LEGALLY RECLAIM YOUR OR YOUR CHILD'S TRADITIONAL NAME

Traditional names are considered names used before attending Canada's Indian Residential School, or names given at a cultural naming ceremony. Legally reclaiming your traditional name can be a part of your healing journey and help you express your identity.

In New Brunswick, residential school survivors and their families can legally reclaim their traditional names through Vital Statistics New Brunswick. Those who are eligible can apply to have the name change fee waived until July 2027.



This Step-by-Step Guide Will Help You Navigate This Process

Step 1:
Am I Eligible?

The waived fee to change your name applies to:

- Residential school survivors who have been residents of NB for a minimum of three months.
- Descendants of residential school survivors, such as children, grandchildren, and partners/spouses who have been residents of NB for a minimum of three months.
- For those under the age of 16, a parent or guardian with legal custody can apply for their child to reclaim their traditional name, unless there are ongoing legal proceedings regarding custody or parentage of the child.

Step 2:
Fill Out the Application

- Call Vital Statistics NB to inform them that you are looking to reclaim your or your child's traditional name and ask for a fee waiver application at **(506) 453-2385.** Select option #4 to reach the correct department.
- Vital Statistics will provide you with a fee waiver application form, as well as a *Change of Name* application form for you or your child.The Change of Name application form is also available online through Vital Statistics.

Some of the information you will be asked to provide on the fee waiver application includes:

- Personal information about you or your descendants, such as birthdate, place of birth, etc.
- The name and location of the residential school you or your family member attended.
- Your traditional name before attending a residential school.

- The name you were given at the residential school.
- Statement from the Applicant stating that all the information provided is accurate.

Some of the information you will be asked to provide in your Change of Name application includes:

- Personal information, such as your name, birth date, address, occupation, phone number, etc.
- Your or your child's proposed name. A new name must contain only letters from the English alphabet. No numbers, symbols (other than a period, hyphen or apostrophe), or profanity.
- If you had previously legally changed your name.

Step 3:
Documents You Need to Provide

Along with your filled-out Change of Name application and the fee waiver application form, you must provide **the following documents** to reclaim your traditional name successfully and legally. Applications that do not include the required documents or information will be considered incomplete and will result in processing delays.

- Your or your child's original **birth certificate**;
- A **long-form birth certificate** that contains information on the parents is required if you are an adult requesting a surname change or if you are requesting a first or surname change for your child. If you do not have a long-form birth certificate, you can obtain one from Vital Statistics.
- Suppose your or your child's name has been previously changed. In that case, you must **return any original documents** from the issuing authority, such as the "Certificate of Change of Registered Name" or Court Order.
- For your child's application, if a **custody order** has been obtained, you must provide it.
- If you are 18 or older, you must complete a **fingerprint-based criminal record check.**

Criminal Record Check

- A criminal record check will determine if you have been charged or convicted of a crime. If a criminal record exists, your new name is added to it.
- Contact your local police department to begin the process of obtaining a criminal record check.
- The federal fee to obtain a fingerprint-based criminal record check has been waived for survivors of residential schools. There is a federal fee and a local fee when instigating a name change, and many police services are also waiving the local fee to complete a criminal record check to help you reclaim your traditional name. Contact your local police department for more information on the fees they charge for this service.
- You must complete a written request form to waive the fee at the time your fingerprints are being taken. Written request forms are available at fingerprinting service locations and on the RCMP website.
- The written request form asks for your name, proposed name, date, and signed confirmation that you are an Indigenous person who suffered an imposed name change as a result of the residential school system, or a descendant of said person.

Step 4:
Submitting Your Application

To submit your application, mail your change of name application form, fee waiver application form, original birth certificate, criminal record check, and any other supporting documents requested to Vital Statistics.

- **Vital Statistics Office**
  Service New Brunswick
  PO Box 1998
  Fredericton, NB E3B 5G4
  Phone: (506) 453-2385
  Email: vitalstatistics@snb.ca12
  Website

Once your application has been received and approved, you will be sent a Change of Name certificate with your reclaimed traditional name.

Step 5:
Changes to Records

After successfully legally reclaiming your traditional name, you will need to change your records to match your traditional name. Many of the fees required in this process have been waived for residential school survivors and their descendants.

The following documents can be changed at no cost if you are eligible through Service New Brunswick:

- Driver's license or I.D.
- Birth certificate
- Marriage license
- Medicare card

The following documents can be changed at no cost if you are eligible through Service Canada or Indigenous Services Canada:

- Passport, until May 30, 2026
- Status card
- Social Insurance card



Resources

- **Service New Brunswick**
  Service Hours: Monday to Friday, 8:15am – 4:30pm
  Phone: 1-888-762-8600
  Email: snb@snb.ca
  Website

- **Service Canada**
  Service Hours: Monday to Friday, 8am – 5pm
  Phone: 1-800 O-Canada (1-800-622-6232)
  Department Contacts Website
  Service Canada Website

- **Indigenous Services Canada**
  Service Hours: Monday to Friday, 9am – 6pm
  Phone: 1-800-567-9604
  Email: infopubs@sac-isc.gc.ca
  Website

New Brunswick Law Foundation
Fondation pour le droit au Nouveau-Brunswick

WOLASTOQEY TRIBAL COUNCIL INC.