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Service Canada and the Common Experience Payment

The Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement is the result of class action and other lawsuits brought against the Government of Canada and the Church entities involved in running Indian Residential Schools (IRS). The settlement agreement comes into effect on September 19, 2007.

One component of the settlement agreement is the Common Experience Payment (CEP), which recognizes the experience of residing at an Indian Residential School and its impacts.

Service Canada is responsible for:

- providing CEP application forms;
- helping former IRS students complete their applications;
- verifying the identities of applicants;
- accepting the completed applications;
- processing the payments once the applications are approved; and
- responding to enquiries about the CEP.

The Government of Canada is sending CEP application forms by mail to about 80,000 former IRS students. As of September 19, 2007, applications are also available at Service Canada Centres, and on the Service Canada Web site at servicecanada.gc.ca.

Required identity documents

Option 1: Original birth certificate

The best way to verify your identity is to include an original birth certificate with your application. We will return your birth certificate to you by mail once we have verified your identity. Please note that we can only accept **original birth certificates**—not certified copies.

Option 2: Two secondary identity documents

If you do not have an original birth certificate, you can provide original or certified copies of two of the following secondary identity documents, one of which must include your photograph:

- Certificate of Indian Status (issued by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada)
- Provincial/territorial driver's licence
- Provincial/territorial health card
- Canadian passport

Note: We will return any original documents you submit by mail.

Certified copies

We can accept originals or certified copies of the secondary identity documents listed above under Option 2. Please note that we will keep certified copies on file. See the back of this page for details about who is qualified to certify your documents, and what they need to include in the certification.

Note: You cannot certify your own identity documents.

If your name has changed

If the name on your application is different from the name on your identity documents, you must also provide one of the following documents:

- a marriage certificate or registration;
- a divorce decree;
- a legal change-of-name document; or
- adoption papers.

If you cannot provide an original or certified copy of one of the above documents to verify your name change, you can submit a guarantor declaration. For more information on guarantor declarations, please contact the CEP Information Line at 1-866-699-1742 (1-800-926-9105 for people with hearing or speech impairments who are TTY users), which will launch on September 19, 2007. Information about guarantor declarations will also be available beginning September 19 online at servicecanada.gc.ca, or you can visit your local Service Canada Centre for details.

PLEASE READ THE IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON THE BACK OF THIS PAGE.

Who can certify copies

People who certify copies of identity documents must meet the following four conditions:

1. They must be Canadian citizens residing in Canada.
2. They must be available for Service Canada to contact them.
3. They must have known the applicant personally for at least two years.
4. They must hold one of the following positions:
 - Chief or Councillor of First Nations Band Council
 - Member of the Métis Settlements General Council
 - Member of the Saskatchewan Provincial Métis Council
 - Dentist
 - Executive Officer of Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.
 - Executive Officer of Inuvialuit Regional Corporation and of the six (6) Inuvialuit Community Corporations (Northwest Territories)
 - Executive Officer Makivik (northern Quebec)
 - Judge
 - Lawyer (member of a provincial bar association)
 - Notary in Quebec
 - Magistrate
 - Mayor
 - Medical doctor
 - Minister of religion authorized under provincial law to perform marriages
 - Notary public
 - Optometrist
 - Pharmacist
 - Police officer (municipal, provincial, or RCMP)
 - Postmaster
 - Principal of a primary or secondary school
 - Professional accountant (APA, CA, CGA, CMA, PA, RPA)
 - Professional engineer (P.Eng., Eng. in Quebec)
 - Senior administrator at a community college (including CEGEPs)
 - Senior administrator or professor at a university
 - Social worker with MSW (Masters in Social Work)
 - Veterinarian

How to certify copies

The person certifying your documents will compare your original documents with the copies. If the copies are exact duplicates of the originals, he or she will include the following on all copies:

- his or her name (printed legibly);
- his or her position title (from the above list);
- his or her signature;
- his or her contact information, including telephone number and full address; and
- the date he or she is certifying the documents.

In addition, the person certifying your documents will include one of the following statements on all copies:

- **For identity documents with a photo**, the person certifying the document must include the following statement: "I certify that this is a true copy of the original, and that the image is a true likeness of the applicant. I am a Canadian citizen and have known the applicant personally for at least two years."
- **For identity documents with no photo**, the person certifying the document must include the following statement: "I certify this to be a true copy of the original."

Completing the application form

It is important that you complete the entire CEP application form. Be sure to include:

- your full name, including names you may have been known by at residential school;
- your complete mailing address, including postal code; and
- the residential school(s) where you lived, and the dates you lived there.

If you live in Canada, you will have the option of receiving the Common Experience Payment either as a cheque by mail or by direct deposit. If you live outside Canada, we will send you a cheque by mail.

For more information

On September 19, 2007, Service Canada will launch its Common Experience Payment Information Line at 1-866-699-1742. If you are a person with a hearing or speech impairment, you can contact us by TTY at 1-800-926-9105. For more information, you can also visit the Web site at servicecanada.gc.ca, or drop into any Service Canada Centre.