

Gwa'sala-‘Nakwaxda’xw Nation – Health & Wellness Department
Proposal for Funding Support from the Hi’li’gam Trust
Project Title: Land-Based Healing Through Water Access
Date: April 28, 2025

Amount requested: \$67,059.00

1. Project Summary

This proposal respectfully requests support from the Hi’li’gam Trust to fund the rental of a boat from May to August for the Gwa’sala-‘Nakwaxda’xw Nation’s Health & Wellness Department. The boat will be used to safely transport community members to our traditional homelands as part of a culturally grounded, land-based healing initiative. This project directly supports the restoration of wellness, identity, and connection to culture by enabling access to the remote places that hold spiritual, cultural, and historical meaning for our people.

For generations, our ancestors thrived through a deep relationship with the land and water. Reconnecting with these homelands offers a pathway to collective healing for community members, especially those experiencing intergenerational trauma, mental health challenges, or disconnection from culture. Through this project, our Health & Wellness Department will integrate all existing programming—including mental health support, cultural revitalization, family wellness, and youth engagement—into land-based activities. These include traditional teachings, ceremonies, harvesting practices, storytelling, and group wellness check-ins.

The project will prioritize the involvement of Elders and Knowledge Holders, creating spaces where youth and families can learn directly from them. In this way, the boat becomes more than transportation—it becomes a bridge connecting past, present, and future, helping our people reclaim identity, restore wellness, and walk together in healing on our ancestral lands.

2. Background and Rationale

The Gwa’sala and ‘Nakwaxda’xw people were forcibly relocated from our ancestral territories, where we had deep and lasting relationships with the land and waters. Despite this, our connection to these lands remains strong, and they continue to play a critical role in our cultural, spiritual, and physical wellness.

Many of our traditional homelands are accessible only by water. Without a reliable and safe transportation method, community members face barriers to participating in healing programming. This funding will enable the Nation to rent a boat for four months, ensuring that our Health & Wellness team can facilitate regular trips for on-the-land healing and cultural engagement activities.

3. Objectives

- **Reconnect community members** with traditional homelands through safe and supported water access.
- **Promote healing and wellness** through culturally grounded land-based activities.
- **Strengthen cultural identity** by bringing Elders, youth, and families together on the land.
- **Support intergenerational learning** through storytelling, traditional knowledge, and ceremony.

4. Activities and Timeline

Activity	Description	Timeline
Boat Rental	Rent a reliable and safe boat, including safety gear and maintenance support	April
Weekly Cultural Trips	Organize weekly transportation to traditional territories for health and healing	May–August
On-the-Land Healing	Facilitate teachings, ceremonies, traditional harvesting, and wellness check-ins	May–August
Elders & Youth Engagement	Invite Elders and Knowledge Keepers to guide teachings and share history	Ongoing
Program Evaluation	Collect feedback and measure impact for future planning	August–September

5. Budget Estimate

Item	Cost (Estimated)
Boat Rental (4 months)	\$ 40,000
Fuel & Maintenance	\$ 7,000 +/-
Safety Equipment	\$ 2,000
Honoraria for Elders/Knowledge Holders	\$ 4,000
Morage	\$ 1169.00
Insurance	\$ 2,890.00
Food Costs	\$ 10,000
Total	\$ 67,059.00

A full budget breakdown is available upon request.

6. Expected Outcomes

1. Community members reconnect with homelands for healing and cultural grounding.
 2. Strengthened health and wellness outcomes through culturally safe programming.
 3. Increased cultural knowledge and identity pride among youth and families.
 4. Deepened relationships between generations and with the land.
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7. Sustainability and Long-Term Vision

This project will serve as a foundation for future land-based wellness programming. The long-term vision is to establish a community-owned vessel and ongoing funding for year-round cultural access. The boat rental this year will allow us to build capacity, measure success, and support long-term planning for sustained land-based healing.

8. Contact Information

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