

Policy #2022-002: Verification of MNO Citizenship File Status to Other Governments and Third Party Institutions

(Adopted March 27, 2022)

1. Effective Date

This Métis Nation of Ontario (“MNO”) Policy #2022-002: *Verification of MNO Citizenship File Status to Other Governments and Third Party Institutions* (“Policy”) is effective as of March 27, 2022 (“Effective Date”).

2. Purpose

This Policy sets out the process through which other governments¹ or third party institutions² may verify whether an MNO citizen’s Registry file meets the MNO’s current requirements for citizenship as set out in the MNO Bylaws and Registry Policy for the purposes of being considered for awards, benefits, or recognition.³

3. Application

This Policy applies when an MNO citizen voluntarily applies to another government or third party institution for the purposes of receiving an award, benefit, or recognition where proof an individual is a Métis rights-holder is a requirement and the individual relies on their MNO citizenship number or card for that purpose.

4. Background, Context, and Need for this Policy

The MNO’s *Statement of Prime Purpose* provides that the MNO’s foundational aims and objectives include to: “research, publish and promote the genealogical documentation of the Métis;” “ensure that Métis can exercise their Aboriginal and Treaty rights;” and “gain the recognition and respect of the Métis as a Nation and a people.”

As a government that represents rights-bearing Métis communities and the Métis Nation within Ontario, the MNO possesses an inherent right to self-determination and self-government. Since its creation in 1993, the MNO’s definition for citizenship and related requirements have evolved based on direction from the citizens and communities it represents as well as other political, legal, and constitutional developments. These include:

¹ For the purposes of this Policy, “government” may include the Government of Canada, the Government of Ontario, and/or another recognized Métis Nation government, or other governments as determined by the Métis Nation of Ontario from time to time.

² For the purposes of this Policy, a “third party institution” refers to external entities, including: educational institutions, businesses, organizations, associations, corporations, and not-for-profit corporations.

³ For the purposes of this Policy, “award, benefit, or recognition” may include: scholarships, bursaries, grants, honours, employment, post-secondary admission, programs, services, business contracts, loans, etc., as determined by the Métis Nation of Ontario from time to time.

- the Supreme Court of Canada’s confirmation of the existence of a distinctive rights-bearing Métis community in the Upper Great Lakes region and at Sault Ste. Marie in 2003 ([R. v. Powley](#)) as well as the collaborative work and joint research with Ontario that identified six other historic Métis communities in Ontario in [2017](#);
- The adoption of a [new definition of Métis](#) in 2004 as well as a [Registry Policy](#) in 2009 that provides direction to the MNO Registrar with respect to the MNO citizenship definition;
- the completion of an [independent review](#) of the MNO Harvesters Card system as well as the signing of the [MNO-Ontario Framework Agreement on Métis Harvesting](#) in 2018; and
- the signing of an [MNO-Canada Métis Government Recognition and Self-Government Agreement](#) in 2019.

In 2017, the MNO initiated the Registry and Self-Government Readiness Project (“**Registry Review**”). The Registry Review assessed all MNO citizenship files to determine whether they meet the MNO’s current requirements for citizenship (i.e., verified as a Métis rights-holder). If an individual’s Registry file met the current requirements for MNO citizenship, they were issued a new MNO citizenship card as set out below.

Figure 1: Sample new MNO citizenship card (issued between 2017 to Present): valid for the purposes of identifying verified Métis rights-holders in most cases



In 2021, the results of the Registry Review found that the vast majority of MNO citizenship files were complete (i.e., approximately 20,000 complete files). The Registry Review also identified over 5,000 incomplete MNO citizenship files. At this time, these individuals remain MNO citizens.

In 2021, the MNO also initiated province-wide consultations on the results of the Registry Review. While these consultations are ongoing and future direction is obtained from MNO citizens and communities, the MNO does not want to be put in a situation where an MNO citizenship number or older MNO citizenship card are relied upon to verify an individual is a Métis rights-holder, but that individual’s MNO citizenship file is incomplete.

As such, the MNO wants to provide a mechanism through which other governments and third party institutions can verify whether an MNO citizen’s Registry file is complete (i.e., the individual is verified as a Métis rights-holder) in the context where an MNO citizen voluntarily applies to another government or third party institution for the purposes of receiving an award, benefit, or recognition and proof the individual is a Métis rights-holder is a requirement of such award, benefit, or recognition.

5. The Verification Process

As a result of the history and evolution of the MNO Registry described above, there are currently a minority of MNO citizens that the MNO cannot verify as Métis rights-holders at this time. These MNO citizens have MNO citizenship numbers as well as older MNO citizenship cards, but have not been verified as meeting the MNO's current requirements for citizenship.

Where an MNO citizen voluntarily applies to another government or third party institution for the purposes of receiving an award, benefit, or recognition where proof the individual is a Métis rights-holder is a requirement of the award, benefit, or recognition and the individual relies on their MNO citizenship number or card for that purpose, that other government or third party institution may seek to verify the status of an MNO citizen's Registry file by contacting the MNO Registry or designated MNO staff at:

MNO Registry

Address: Suite 1100 – 66 Slater Street Ottawa, ON, K1P 5H1

Phone: (613) 798-1006 / **Toll Free:** 1 (855) 798-1006

Email: info@mnoregistry.ca

In order to verify that an MNO citizen's file is complete, the other government or third party institution must provide the MNO Registry or designated MNO staff with the MNO citizen's: first name, last name, and MNO citizenship number as well as verify the MNO citizen has voluntarily applied for an award, benefit, or recognition that requires verification that an individual is a Métis rights-holder and that the MNO citizen is relying on the MNO's citizenship number and/or citizenship card for that purposes. This must be done in writing.

When such a request is received, the MNO Registry will confirm its authenticity by contacting the citizen to confirm their consent to the release of their citizen status to the other government or third party institution. If the citizen's file is not complete, the MNO registry will inform them of this, and may offer them an opportunity to complete it prior to responding to the other government or third party institution.

After receiving such confirmation from the citizen, the MNO Registry or designated MNO staff will respond confirming whether or not the file of the MNO citizen meets the MNO's current requirements for MNO citizenship. For clarity, the MNO Registry or designated MNO staff will not provide any additional details specific to an MNO citizen's file to the requesting government or third party institution. The written response from the MNO will simply state:

The MNO Registry can confirm that [name of citizen] meets the MNO's current requirements for citizenship as set out in the MNO Bylaws and Registry Policy; or

The MNO Registry cannot confirm that [name of citizen] meets the MNO's current requirements for citizenship as set out in the MNO Bylaws and Registry Policy; or

[Name of citizen] has not provided their permission for the MNO to confirm whether they meet the MNO's current requirements for citizenship.

6. Authority for the Policy

The Provisional Council of the MNO ("**PCMNO**") is the democratically-elected and province-wide governing body of the MNO. The MNO Bylaws authorize the PCMNO to "make decisions and act in a manner consistent with upholding and advancing the *Statement of Prime Purpose*" (Article 14).

Pursuant to the MNO Bylaws, the MNO Registrar has the “primary responsibility to manage and administer the MNO Registry” and determines whether an individual meets the current requirements for citizenship within the MNO based on the MNO Bylaws, Registry Policy and Guidelines, as adopted by the MNO Annual General Assembly (“**AGA**”) (Article 67(i)).

7. Interpretation

The terms of this Policy shall be given such fair, large, and liberal construction and interpretation as best ensures the attainment of its objects. Nothing in this Policy shall be interpreted in a way that would result in a conflict with the MNO Bylaws.

8. Adoption and Implementation

This Policy was adopted by resolution of the PCMNO on March 27, 2022, based on the MNO’s inherent right of self-government as well as the authorities set out in the MNO Bylaws.

This Policy shall be brought to the MNO AGA for its consideration and potential adoption. Any decision made under this Policy following its Effective Date and any subsequent changes made by the PCMNO or the AGA shall not invalidate any previous response made under this Policy or give rise to a claim against the MNO.

In implementing this Policy, the MNO administration may: adopt policies and procedures for various MNO branches, inform other government or third party institutions of this Policy’s existence, and/or enter into agreements with other governments or third party institutions to further its operationalization.