

Interim Registry Policy

This is the general *MNO Interim Registry Policy*. Further details may be obtained in the Interim Guidelines. This *Interim Policy* includes the attached *Interim Guidelines*, a *Backgrounder* and Appendices. The MNO Registrar must follow the directions in this *MNO Interim Registry Policy*.

Self-Identification

This means that applicants to the MNO Registry must see themselves and identify themselves as distinctly Métis. This requires that individuals make a positive choice to be culturally and identifiably Métis. Being Métis is to be part of a proud and old culture and aboriginal society. If an individual identifies as an Indian (whether status, non-status, treaty or non-treaty) one is identifying as a different aboriginal people – not as Métis. An individual does not become Métis because one is simply not permitted to register as an Indian or Inuit. An individual is not Métis if they are registered as an Indian or Inuit on another aboriginal registry. An individual is not Métis simply because he or she has some aboriginal ancestry, but does not have Indian or Inuit status. An individual does not become Métis simply because he or she has Indian ancestry with parents who do not live on a reserve or parents who cannot pass on Indian status to them.

Proving Historic Métis Nation Ancestry

This means that an applicant must have an ancestral connection to the historic Métis society (the “Historic Métis Nation”). This requires a genealogical connection to a “Métis ancestor”¹ – not an Indian or aboriginal ancestor. This Métis ancestor must be connected to the Historic Métis Nation. Connection to the Historic Métis Nation means that an applicant’s “Métis ancestor” must have identified or been identified by others as a Métis who lived in the Historic Métis Nation Homeland at a time after the Historic Métis Nation came into being, which is generally considered to be the late 1700s. In light of this, and without more, evidence of an Indian or aboriginal ancestor who lived outside the Métis Nation Homeland prior to the late 1700s does not provide sufficient proof that an applicant is Métis. Moreover, and without more, evidence of an individual having an Indian or aboriginal ancestor who lived within the Métis Nation Homeland prior to the late 1700s does not provide sufficient proof that an applicant is Métis.

For the purposes of identifying whether the applicant’s Métis ancestor was living within the Historic Métis Nation Homeland, the Métis Nation Homeland is considered the land that the historic Métis Métis Nation lived in, used and occupied as its traditional territory. The Historic Métis Nation Homeland was quite large and the limits were not clearly defined. It is a general

¹ Many historic documents identify mixed-race aboriginal individuals using terms other than “Métis”. Such terms may include but are not limited to: chicot, bois-brule, half-breed, French breed, other breed, etc. There is no requirement that an applicant must provide a document that specifically uses the term “Métis”. Documents using these other descriptive terms may, taken together with other evidence, be acceptable as proof of Métis ancestry.

theory that this territory covered “west central North America” or the “North West” but there were also no hard borders to the Historic Métis Nation Homeland.

The MNO asserts that the Historic Métis Nation Homeland is the territory identified in the map attached as Appendix A. If an applicant can demonstrate a genealogical connection to a Métis ancestor who identified or was recognized as a Métis who lived in this territory in the late 1700s or later, that will suffice to demonstrate an ancestral connection to a Métis ancestor.

In applying this policy statement, the MNO recognizes that its identified Métis traditional territories are not defined with absolute precision. So, for example, if an applicant has a Métis ancestor who lived just outside one of these identified Métis traditional territories or over the United States or Quebec border the applicant may meet the requirement for demonstrating a Métis ancestor.

Community Acceptance

This means being accepted as Métis by the right-bearing Métis collective – the Métis Nation. It is part of the basic theory of “peoplehood” that the people defines itself and its citizens. While many may lay claim to being Métis Nation citizens, it is the role of the people themselves to determine who its citizens are and the terms on which those citizens will be accepted. The Métis Nation is not obliged to accept all claimants. The Métis Nation is in the process of developing national guidelines for acceptance and enrolment. In the meantime, the MNO, as the representative government of the Métis Nation in Ontario, accepts all applicants who meet its registration requirements by registering them with the MNO. Registration as a citizen of MNO constitute acceptance by the rights-bearing Métis community – the Métis Nation.

Within 6 months of submitting their application to the MNO Registry, an applicant whose application is not complete or has not been approved by the MNO Registrar shall be notified in writing. Such notice shall contain the reason(s) the application is not approved (i.e. more information needed, failure to establish that claim Métis ancestor is Métis, etc.). If the application is incomplete, the onus is on the applicant to provide the needed information to the MNO Registry. There is no appeal process for applications that are incomplete. If the application has not been approved for other reasons, applicants have two levels of appeal, as set out below.

Appeals

The MNO will have a two-stage appeal process. The first stage is a reconsideration of the application by the Registrar. Stage one is a prerequisite for stage two. In stage two an applicant may appeal the reconsideration decision of the Registrar. That appeal application will be reviewed by an independent genealogist with experience in Métis genealogy. The decision of the appeal genealogist will be final and binding on MNO and the applicant. All applications for reconsideration and appeals must be in writing. All reconsideration decisions of the Registrar and appeal decisions by the independent genealogist shall be in writing with reasons and shall be delivered in a timely manner. The MNO may impose fees on applicants for reconsiderations and appeals. In the event that finances are not provided from government to support the Registry, the appeal process may be streamlined or terminated.

Independent and Confidential Registry

MNO shall maintain the Registry as a confidential registry and shall not permit any access to individual files of registry decision making by anyone other than registry personnel and the Registrar. No PCMNO members shall take part in the decision-making with respect to any individual files. No information shall be disclosed from any file without the consent of the applicant or citizen.

Security

The MNO shall make every effort to protect the Registry from fire, theft, mischief and loss of electronic data.

Pending Applications

The MNO shall only accept files that are complete. Only files that are complete will be listed as pending applications. If a file is incomplete or rejected the MNO Registrar will notify the applicant within a timely manner.

Adopted by PCMNO, March 26, 2009