

Call to Researchers – Expression of Interest

Place-Based Research and Dissemination of the History of Japanese Canadian Residents of New Westminster



*Mrs. Akada & baby neighbour to Auntie Shizu [Royal Avenue, New Westminster]. ca. 1930s.
New Westminster Archives, IHP8034-035.*

The Japanese Canadian Legacies Society (JCLS) is supporting the City of New Westminster for the project titled *Place-Based Research and Dissemination of the History of Japanese Canadian Residents of New Westminster*.

The project aims to support a greater understanding of the legacy of Japanese Canadians in New Westminster through the documentation and presentation of their stories.

As a funding recipient, **the City of New Westminster Museum and Archives is looking to hire an experienced Researcher to source, collect, and analyze information about New Westminster's historic Japanese Canadian community; with a particular emphasis on the development of this community prior to the Second World War.**

Budget

The budget for this project is \$75,000 with additional project funds for necessary research travel available to the Researcher (Consultant).

Eligibility

This opportunity is open to individuals eligible to work in Canada. The work will primarily take place in the Lower Mainland (New Westminster and surrounding areas) with some opportunity for remote work. There will also be a requirement to travel to Toronto, Ontario.

Timeline

The funding provided to the City of New Westminster is regulated by a set timeline and all research must be completed by December 31, 2025. Contemplated phases of research include but may not be limited to:

Phase 1– Contemplated work includes municipal records assessment and external sourcing; outreach and planning. A milestone report is due June 30, 2025.

Phase 2 – Contemplated work includes research collection, research travel, research analysis and thematic work planning. A milestone report is due October 31, 2025.

Phase 3 – Contemplated work includes preparation of research findings for transfer to City archives, preparation of content for public facing webpage, work with interpretive team to communicate key research findings. Final reporting is due December 31, 2025.

Background

In 1942 during the Second World War, 22,000 Japanese Canadians living in British Columbia were forcibly uprooted and permanently stripped of their homes, businesses, and belongings and relocated to internment camps outside the coastal BC area and displaced across the country, with some exiled to Japan. The majority of the uprooted Japanese Canadians were born in BC.

Overnight, lives were shattered and entire communities eradicated. Japanese Canadians trusted they would one day return to their homes. Instead, their properties and possessions were sold without their consent.

After the war ended in 1945, the majority of Japanese Canadians were prevented from returning to the coast. They were ordered to either move east of the Rockies or to war-torn Japan. When the community was allowed to return to the coast in 1949, it had nothing to return to.

The history of what happened to Japanese Canadian communities in BC is still relatively unknown.

In recognition of this history, the Province of BC has supported the BC Heritage Sites program managed by the Japanese Canadian Legacies Society.

The purpose of the program is to assist local communities in promoting the legacies of Japanese Canadians in British Columbia through interpretive projects at sites of historical significance. These sites recognize a community who made important contributions to the building of this province, yet endured forced uprooting, incarceration, permanent dispossession, and displacement.

This program is intended to help make some of these now mostly invisible sites visible to new generations of British Columbians so that they may learn to appreciate the lasting legacies of Japanese Canadians in BC. Initiatives may include projects that promote memorialization, conservation and/or education of Japanese Canadian history tailored to a region within the province of British Columbia. These projects will have an enduring value.

Commemorating and celebrating our historic places—most of which remain under-recognized and underserved—is at the heart of the Japanese Canadian community’s work to rebuild connections to its heritage in British Columbia, and share this history and its lessons with all British Columbians.



*Funeral of Mrs. Matzu Nishiguchi at the Buddhist Temple on Tenth Street. 1932.
New Westminster Archives, IHP8018-002.*

Summary of Work

Using both archival and oral history methods, the research will seek to:

- Articulate the formation and growth of New Westminster’s Japanese Canadian community;
- Identify Japanese Canadian residents of the city during the subject period;
- Document the lived experiences of Japanese Canadian community members;
- Identify any Japanese Canadian social or political organisations as well as key figures within them;
- Document broader social trends and relationships relative to the Japanese Canadian community during the subject period (contextualize the findings).

Deliverables

1. Engage with Japanese Canadians connected to New Westminster and work with them to document the stories of local families (community involvement, work, social life, etc.) through document-based material and oral history interviews.
2. Source, review, and document non-municipal materials to provide context to local social and political thoughts about Japanese Canadians in New Westminster.
3. Source, review, and document information created by the Japanese Canadian community that reference their experiences during the subject period.
4. Provide an analysis of the research to summarize findings.
5. Work closely with Project Managers and key City staff to organize the research and ensure an accurate and balanced body of information.
6. Prepare content for a public-facing webpage to make research outcomes accessible to the broader community (final research reports and listing of resources).
7. Work with City Archivist to ensure resources will be made available at the New Westminster Archives.

Requirements

Key Qualifications:

- Working knowledge of Japanese Canadian history in British Columbia and Canada, including key pre-war communities, unjust wartime actions and experiences, and post-war impacts and legacies;

AND EITHER

- Hold or be currently enrolled in a relevant graduate degree program in the Humanities or Social Sciences; interdisciplinary perspectives and methods considered an asset.

OR;

- Hold a completed and relevant undergraduate degree *combined with* demonstrated experience as a research professional by way of a minimum of 2 successful projects of a similar socio-historic complexity and impact. Mixed research methods considered an asset.

Key Skills & Competencies:

- Demonstrated skill in historical research and analysis, including Canadian histories, and possess familiarity with a variety of archival records, tools, and databases;
- Understand primary and secondary source records, especially under recognized or marginalized histories;
- Experience organizing data for both internal and external use and access in perpetuity (files, systems, and web-based materials);
- Strong interpersonal skills and experience conducting oral history interviews of a sensitive nature (individual and intergenerational), including with individuals and/or descendants who have experienced or continue to experience injustice;
- Demonstrated practice in reflective empathy, cultural safety, and power analysis.
- Ability to effectively communicate research findings (both written and oral).
- Ability to work independently and within a team structure;
- Linguistic aptitude in Japanese an asset, but not required.

Evaluation Criteria

Submissions will be evaluated and weighted by:

1. Key qualifications (40%)
2. Key skills, relevant experience, and competencies (40%)
3. Proposed approaches and methodology for project deliverables (20%)

Contract

The selected consultant will enter into a contract with the City of New Westminster. Appropriate insurance and WSBC (WorkSafe BC) clearance letters will be required. For an example of a standard consulting agreement, please click on this link: www.newwestcity.ca/business-and-economy/doing-business-with-the-city/procurement_policy.php

How to Submit

Please submit a cover letter and resume detailing your relevant experience (in line with the evaluation criteria) to the project call.

Email – PDF emailed submissions are preferred (the City will confirm receipt of emails).

Please submit all required information in one (1) PDF file named “CNW JCLS Researcher Call – [Applicant First and Last Name]” to nwmasubmissions@newwestcity.ca.



*George Sasake and Tojiro Suto [Queensborough]. ca. 1930s.
New Westminster Archives, IHP6421.*

Deadline

11:59 pm on April 9, 2025 (PST)

Selection Process

Submissions are part of a two-phase process. A Selection Panel of New Westminster Museum and Archives staff will review submissions and shortlist applicants for interview and further consideration.

Contact

Questions?

Contact Rebeca Salas, Cultural
Heritage Supervisor

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