

# 2023-24 Manitoba First Nations **Alternative Federal Budget**

March 2023





# Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs

EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS

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# List of Acronyms

AFN	Assembly of First Nations
ALI	Aboriginal Languages Initiative
ALP	Assisted Living Program
AMC	Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
CAD	Canadian Dollar
CFS	Child and Family Services
CHRT	Canadian Human Rights Tribunal
CIRNAC	Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada
CIRST	Crisis Intervention Response Team
CLCAs	Comprehensive Land Claim Agreements
CTA	Community Tripartite Agreement
DCH	Department of Canadian Heritage
EUTC	Eagle Urban Transition Services
FN	First Nations
FNCFS	First Nations Child and Family Services
FNIHB	First Nations and Inuit Health Branch
FNHSSM	First Nations Health and Social Secretariat of Manitoba
FNPF	First Nations Police Forces
FNIPP	First Nations and Indigenous Policing Program
GC	Government of Canada
IAP	Income Assistance Program
IFSD	Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy
IJP	Indigenous Justice Program
ILCP	Indigenous Languages and Culture Program
IPCA	Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
ISC	Indigenous Services Canada
LT-DWA	Long-Term Drinking Water Advisories
MB	Manitoba
MFNPCHN	Manitoba First Nations Personal Care Home Network
MMIWG	Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
NAN	Nishnawbe Aski Nation
NAPS	Nishnawbe Aski Police Service



# List of Acronyms

NIHB	Non-Insured Health Benefits
NFSC	National Family and Survivors Circle
NWAC	Native Women's Association of Canada
OCAP®	First Nations Principles of Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession
PBO	Parliamentary Budget Office
PCHs	Personal Care Homes
REA	Regional Education Funding Agreement
SA	Self-Administered
TBS	Treasury Board Submission
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada
UNDRIP	United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
2021 CHRT 41	Canadian Human Rights Tribunal 41





# Executive Summary

## Now is a unique moment.

Canada has stated it is committed to a new fiscal relationship with First Nations. If Canada follows such words with action, a Manitoba First Nations-led approach to addressing chronic underfunding and widening gaps can commence. The way forward was wisely foreseen by Manitoba First Nations elders, knowledge keepers, and leadership. In 1971, the need to respect Treaty and inherent rights, approach First Nations on a Nation-to-Nation basis, and operate within a context of fiscal self-determination was elegantly articulated in *Wahbung: Our Tomorrows*. This vision has been reiterated and championed in present day by the proponents of this Alternative Federal Budget, we the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and Assembly of First Nations Manitoba Region. The 2023-24 Manitoba First Nations Alternative Federal Budget is a starting point for a new relationship between Canada and Manitoba First Nations to co-develop transformative programs and policies.

Sufficient fiscal resources are needed for First Nations to achieve self-determination. The 2023-24 Manitoba First Nations Alternative Federal Budget requires a minimum of \$8 billion in total federal spending to support

and advance the priorities of First Nations in Manitoba. Committed, substantial funding would shepherd health transformation and self-governance initiatives, address persistent and chronic community health needs, expand urban transition services, and move Child and Family Services to a preventive model governed by First Nations.

It is essential that the Government of Canada recognize First Nations as the best stewards of their futures. Manitoba First Nations must be given the ability to assert their inherent jurisdiction across policy areas via authority over funding. Canada must dismantle past colonial funding relations and eliminate the use of non-First Nations intermediaries in program funding for First Nations.

The annual federal budget offers an opportunity for Canada to realize its stated goals of reconciliation. Co-developing programs and fiscal policies with Manitoba First Nations is one pathway Canada can meaningfully demonstrate its commitment. Fiscal self-determination for First Nations in Manitoba is only the beginning of this renewed relationship and understanding.



# Recommendations

1

Canada should spend, at a minimum, \$8B in total funding per year ongoing for five years for self-government, health and social services, economic development, and other initiatives for Manitoba First Nations.

2

Colonial funding relations must be dismantled between Canada and First Nations in Manitoba. First Nations governments in Manitoba must be granted oversight and direction over the administration of funding for services for First Nations in Manitoba. The need for this is amply demonstrated in numerous areas, including Jordan's Principle implementation and First Nations Child and Family Services.


3

Related to Recommendation #2, First Nations governments in Manitoba must be the self-governing administrator and recipient of fiscal transfers for services to First Nations citizens that currently flow through the Manitoba Provincial Government.



# Overview of Required Federal Spending

Spending Sector	Investment Area	Required Investment (in millions) Per Year, Ongoing for 5 Years
<b>Health, Dignity, Cultural and Spiritual Well-Being</b>	Health Transformation, Clinical Care, Health Facilities, and Related Services	\$ 515.2M
	Elder Care and Supportive Services	\$ 112.0M
	Support for Indian Residential School Survivors	\$ 62.0M
	Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB)	\$464.6M
	Mental Health, Addictions Treatment and Prevention, Trauma Support, and Suicide Prevention Initiatives	\$ 111.7M
	Locating and Commemorating Unmarked Indian Residential School Gravesites	\$ 34.0M
	Revitalization of First Nations Languages, Cultural Promotion, and Cultural Activities	\$205.7M
<b>Homes</b>	First Nations On-Reserve Housing Program	\$5,659.7M for 2023-24, and \$2,281.7M ongoing until 2040
	Affordable Housing in Urban Centres and Other Off-Reserve Communities	\$363.0M
<b>Child and Family Support</b>	Implementation of Jordan's Principle in Social and Health Services	\$ 190.0M
	Child & Family Services	\$662.6M
	Implementing <i>An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis Children, Youth and Families</i>	\$570.0M
	First Nations Child and Family Services and Jordan's Principle Settlement Compensation	\$21000M+ (2023-24 until paid out)



Spending Sector	Investment Area	Required Investment (in millions) Per Year, Ongoing for 5 Years
<b>Employment, Economic Development and Income Support</b>	Employment Strategy and Training Programs	\$17.9M
	Economic Development Initiatives	\$65.5M
	Tourism, Hudson Bay Railway, Remote & Northern Air Service, and Intra-Provincial Bus Service	\$55M (in addition to current funding)
	Income Assistance	\$336.8M
<b>Land and Wildlife Stewardship</b>	Wildlife Stewardship, Climate Mitigation and Adaptation	\$5.0M
	Additions-to-Reserve	\$4.1M
	Specific Land Claims	\$29.6M
	Comprehensive Land Claims	\$258.4M
<b>First Nations Institutions, Governance, and Intergovernmental Relationships</b>	First Nations Citizenship	\$9.2M
	UNDRIP Implementation	\$5.6M
	Canada-First Nation Treaty Relationship	\$2.8M
	Governance Capacity Support	\$133.4M
<b>Infrastructure</b>	Connectivity	\$83.9M
	Drinking Water and Wastewater	\$41.2M
	Community Infrastructure	\$826.5M
<b>Community Safety and Restorative Justice</b>	Implementation of MMIWG Calls for Justice	\$67.3M
	Decolonizing Justice	\$1.0M
	First Nations Police Forces	\$86.6M
	Emergency Services	\$14.5M
<b>Urban Services</b>	Transition Centres and Other Urban Supports	\$3-3.5M for 2023-24; \$1-1.4M
	Urban Reserves	\$40M for 2023-24





# Background

The Manitoba First Nations Alternative Federal Budget is an alternative budget process intended to facilitate dialogue and collaboration with the Government of Canada. The alternative budget process is undertaken with the overarching goal of improved economic and social development outcomes for healthier sustainable economies, nations, families, and citizens of all First Nations in Manitoba. The Manitoba First Nations Alternative Budget, therefore, centers the priorities, plans, self-identified needs, and resolutions of First Nations in Manitoba.

## The Need for Fiscal Self-Determination

Much of the vision of what is needed to enact substantial and systemic change for First Nations, in Manitoba and across Canada, was wisely foreseen by First Nations Elders and Knowledge Keepers in the 1971 position paper *Wahbung: Our Tomorrows*. The 2023-24 Manitoba First Nations Alternative Budget represents a continuation of this approach and is an opportunity for Canada to co-develop programs and better fiscal relations with Manitoba First Nations to realize the vision of *Wahbung* as well as the spirit and intent of the Treaties. *Wahbung* identified the ongoing non-implementation of Treaties continues to have a harmful effect on First Nations in Manitoba and therefore recommended the following:

*“Today, [many] grievances of the Indian people remain unappreciated by the federal government. This is particularly true in regard to questions of treaties and aboriginal title... We are determined that a settlement which will fit the entire range of grievances relating to treaties and aboriginal title be secured... we demand full and continuous participation in the establishment of structures and processes which will provide a full and comprehensive redress. The bitter experience of centuries dictates that such structures and processes unfold from a knowledge of the Indian reality, as articulated by Indian people.”*

*Wahbung* further noted that Canada at the time, and currently, has existing legislative tools to improve how it interacts and engages with First Nations. New or innovative legislation, processes, and authorities are simply not required:

*“The Indian Act must be amended, not abolished. Some of the contents of the Indian Act have become restrictive, and contradictory to the progress of Indian communities not only in Manitoba, but in Canada as well. It must become a document providing opportunity to overcome the conditions of poverty under which Indian people are forced*

*to live... The Act must contain an atmosphere to allow meaningful social development for Indian people according to their own guidelines...*

*...It is clear from consultations that our people do not want the Indian Act abolished, but changed to a document offering opportunity for development and on-going progress... It is the wish of the people that the Indian Act become a document to provide for creating opportunities to combat the spectrum of poverty conditions we are facing today. Certain restrictions in the Act should be subject to immediate revision, and others subject to review as changes indicate in future development, and future wishes of the Indian people.”<sup>2</sup>*

Canada’s Treaties with First Nations are International Treaties between sovereign Nations. Furthermore, Canada has obligations under various human rights instruments and commitments, such as the United Nations 2030 Agenda, to address longstanding structural inequalities in the quality of life that First Nations in Manitoba experience. Demographic data shows Canada must act urgently as past initiatives addressing inequalities have stalled, with Human Development Index scores weakest in Manitoba.<sup>3</sup> In some areas, such as health, the gap is widening.<sup>4</sup>

This demonstrates the great need to dismantle colonial fiscal relations, which the 2023-24 Manitoba First Nations Alternative Budget can be a key instrument in facilitating. The Government of Canada acknowledges that First Nations rights were not shown appropriate respect.<sup>5</sup> In 2015,


Prime Minister Justin Trudeau stated “it’s time for a new fiscal relationship with First Nations that gives your communities sufficient, predictable and sustained funding. This is a promise we made, and a promise we will keep.”<sup>6</sup>

There is much to be hopeful for in the promise of a new fiscal relationship. However, the Government of Canada has expressed positive and hopeful promises to Manitoba First Nations in the past without the sustained political will for realization.

For example, on December 7, 1994, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) and the federal government entered into the agreement *The Dismantling of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, the Restoration of Jurisdiction to First Nations Peoples in Manitoba and Recognition of First Nations Governments in Manitoba*, otherwise known as the “Framework Agreement Initiative” or “FAI.”<sup>7</sup> This agreement committed Canada and the AMC to a 10-year negotiation process aimed at achieving a self-government agreement for Manitoba First Nations.

The FAI had 18 core principles and three objectives, the latter of which are detailed below:<sup>8</sup>

1. Dismantle the existing departmental structures of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development as they affect Manitoba First Nations.
2. Develop and recognize First Nation Governments in Manitoba legally empowered to exercise the authorities required to meet the needs of their citizens.
3. Restore First Nations Governments and jurisdiction (including those of the other federal departments) consistent with the inherent right of self-government.



Discussions by First Nations in Manitoba through the FAI process regarding fiscal relations focused on the following areas:

- Objectives of fiscal relations.
- Principles to guide fiscal relations.
- Roles and responsibilities of the parties involved.
- Proposed model.
- Fiscal transfers.
- Fiscal transfer mechanisms.

There were, however, issues with the FAI process stemming from a lack of resources and commitment from the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.<sup>9</sup> Based on the findings of the FAI Chiefs review Committee, the Chiefs-in-Assembly resolved in 2007 to discontinue negotiations under the FAI until Canada demonstrated the political will and commitment to a new approach that includes a new fiscal relationship consistent with a nation-to-nation approach in which the needs of First Nation people are paramount.<sup>10</sup>

It has been over two decades since Manitoba First Nations and the Government of Canada agreed to the FAI process. There were several options, recommendations, and research and analysis documents completed for consideration through this process.

Despite this, current fiscal arrangements continue to provide inadequate funding; the current funding model does not allow for long-term planning and does not address the issues

that First Nations in Manitoba face. There must be adequate funding for services, standards, and outcomes comparable to non-First Nation citizens.<sup>11</sup> It is critical that the Government of Canada make a true commitment to improve the lives of First Nations in Manitoba.

Prime Minister Trudeau's promise of a New Fiscal Relationship presents an opportunity to build on and implement past work and proposals by Manitoba First Nations. In 2017, the AMC Chiefs-in-Assembly passed a resolution creating a Manitoba Regional Specific Fiscal Relations Table to develop a New Fiscal Relationship between Canada and Manitoba First Nations that will address the chronic underfunding and the socioeconomic gap between First Nation and non-First Nation citizens. However, this table has not yet begun this work.

An Alternative Budget for First Nations in Manitoba is part of the ongoing need for this dedicated table to exist, consistent with Article 23 of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*:

*"Indigenous peoples have the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development. In particular, Indigenous peoples have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining health, housing and other economic and social programmes affecting them and, as far as possible, to administer such programmes through their own institutions."*<sup>12</sup>



## Context of the Manitoba First Nations Alternative Federal Budget

The Manitoba First Nations Alternative Federal Budget is a new exercise, first initiated in 2022. As the process continues in subsequent years, the approach to estimating needed resources will be refined. This process necessarily requires cooperation and information-sharing from ISC Manitoba Region, the Department of Finance, and other federal entities in this ongoing endeavour. Therefore, these required spending figures should be seen as a *starting point*, not as an *end point*, for cooperation and program co-development from Canada with Manitoba First Nations Governments.

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In the following calculations, figures vary in level of disaggregation and specificity. This is driven by the newness and promptness of this exercise, as relationships with various financial reporting entities in federal government central and regional offices could not be firmly established to capture the full nuance and institutional minutiae of each program. “Horizontal Initiatives”

such as the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) Calls for Justice Implementation, Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples, and others cross many different federal departments. Particularly regarding MMIWG spending, the financial reporting by Canada is currently not exact on which spending is new MMIWG spending and what funds are longstanding program areas with MMIWG implications that have been reclassified into the Horizontal Initiative. This creates risk of double-counting expenditures.

Significant research is required to determine a benchmark estimate for establishing First Nations Post-Secondary Institutes in Manitoba. Canada must commit to full cooperation and information-sharing with research teams mandated by Manitoba First Nations developing plans and undertaking the policy groundwork for First Nations Post-Secondary Institutes in Manitoba. This will produce even stronger and more comprehensive Manitoba First Nations Alternative Federal Budgets in future years.

The 2023-24 Manitoba First Nations Alternative Federal Budget has made substantial progress over the 2022-23 iteration of this exercise. It is expected that the Alternative Budget will improve year over year as the participatory research process deepens to better identify the complex, interconnected fiscal and resource needs of Manitoba First Nations.

## Manitoba First Nations Demographics

Manitoba First Nations citizens face varying needs and circumstances. Citizens of Manitoba First Nations may live on-reserve or off-reserve



in rural municipalities, towns, and cities in Manitoba or even out of province. Regardless of residence, Canada's Treaty obligations to these First Nation citizens remains.

The most recent Indian Status Registry count published by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) shows there were 95,054 Manitoba First Nations citizens living on-reserve and 69,062 Manitoba First Nations citizens living off-reserve on Dec. 31, 2020.<sup>13</sup> Researchers at the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy (MCHP) estimated the Manitoba First Nations citizen population living off-reserve in Manitoba to be 52,196 persons in 2016.<sup>14</sup> MCHP researchers were able to identify whether an off-reserve Manitoba First Nations citizen was in province by linking information in the Indian Status Registry with data in the Manitoba Health Insurance Registry.<sup>15</sup> A growth rate has been applied to their estimate to obtain an estimated population figure for 2021 (see Table 1, below).

Table 1: Manitoba First Nations Citizens (2021)	
Living On-Reserve	95,054
Living Off-Reserve	69,062
Living Off-Reserve in Manitoba (Estimated)	57,038
Living Off-Reserve Out of Province (Estimated)	12,024
<b>Total Manitoba First Nations Citizens</b>	<b>164,116</b>

Manitoba's total First Nations population is second only to the province of Ontario.<sup>16</sup> Yet the socio-economic gap between First Nations and other residents is stark. Past initiatives addressing inequalities have stalled, with Human Development Index scores weakest in Manitoba.<sup>17</sup> In some areas, such as health, the gap is widening.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, the MCHP identified many stark disparities in health outcomes between First Nations living in Manitoba and other residents (see Table 2, below).<sup>19</sup>

**Yet the socio-economic gap between First Nations and other residents is stark. Past initiatives addressing inequalities have stalled, with Human Development Index scores weakest in Manitoba. In some areas, such as health, the gap is widening.**

**Figure 1: Manitoba First Nations (2021)**



Dismantling colonial fiscal relations and asserting First Nations jurisdiction and self-determination in health, education, child and family services, and economic development will be critical to closing identified health gaps and outcomes in Manitoba. Co-development of a new fiscal relationship between Manitoba First Nations and Canada is key to this.

Table 2: Health Indicators for Manitoba First Nations and All Other Manitobans			
	On-Reserve First Nations	Off-Reserve First Nations	All Other Manitobans
<b>Male Life Expectancy at Birth</b> (Crude age in years, 2012-2016)	67	70.3	79.4
<b>Female Life Expectancy at Birth</b> (Crude age in years, 2012-2016)	71.8	73.4	83.8
<b>Pre-Mature Mortality Rate</b> (Age- and sex-adjusted, per 1,000 individuals, aged 0-74, 2012-2016)	4.8	3.8	1.4
<b>Mood and Anxiety Disorder Prevalence</b> (Age- and sex-adjusted percentage of individuals, age 10+, 2012/13-2016/17)	21.10%	30.30%	22.00%
<b>Drug and Substance Use Disorder Prevalence</b> (Age- and sex-adjusted percent of individuals, age 10+, 2012/13-2016/17)	10.80%	14.70%	3.90%
<b>Hospitalization Rate for Ambulatory Care Sensitive Conditions</b> (Age- and sex-adjusted, per 1,000 individuals, age 0-75, 2016/17)	17.4	12.1	3.4
Data Source: Katz et al (2019)			

<sup>1</sup> Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, *Wahbung: Our Tomorrows*, Manitoba, Canada, October 1971. <https://manitobachiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Wahbung-Our-Tomorrows-Searchable.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Martin Cooke, *Application of the United Nations Human Development Index to Registered Indians in Canada, 2006–2016*, Indigenous Services Canada, last modified November 2019, <https://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.895951/publication.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Alan Katz, Marcelo L. Urquia, Leona Star, Josée G. Lavoie, Carole Taylor, Dan Chateau, Jennifer E. Enns, Myra J. Tait, and Charles Burchill, “Changes in health indicator gaps between First Nations and other residents of Manitoba,” *CMAJ* 193, no. 48 (2021): E1830-E1835.

<sup>5</sup> Assembly of First Nations and Government of Canada, *A New Approach: Co-Development of a New Fiscal Relationship*, Gatineau, Quebec (2017): 21. [https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2017/aanc-inac/R5-601-2017-eng.pdf](https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2017/aanc-inac/R5-601-2017-eng.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>7</sup> Chiefs-in-Assembly, “RE: Canada-First Nations Fiscal Relations,” Dakota Tipi First Nation: Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, (November 28-29, 2017). <https://manitobachiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/Certified-Resolutions-Nov-2017.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> Don McCaskill, Ted Harvey, Andrea Williams, and Bev Jacobs, *Manitoba Framework Agreement Initiative Review Final Report*, Maang Associates (February 12, 1999): 1. <https://publications.gc.ca/Collection/R32-233-1999E.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 19.

<sup>10</sup> Chiefs-in-Assembly, “RE: Framework Agreement Initiative,” Long Plains First Nation: Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs General Assembly (January 23-25, 2007), <https://manitobachiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/CIA-Resolution-January-2007-General.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> Chiefs-in-Assembly, “RE: Canada-First Nations Fiscal Relations.”

<sup>12</sup> United Nations General Assembly, *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, accessed August 17, 2022 [https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP\\_E\\_web.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf).

<sup>13</sup> Indigenous Services Canada, *Registered Indian Population by Sex and Residence: 2020*, last modified 2021, accessed September 20, 2022, [https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2021/sac-isc/R31-3-2020-eng.pdf](https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2021/sac-isc/R31-3-2020-eng.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> Alan Katz et al., *The Health Status of and Access to Healthcare by Registered First Nation Peoples in Manitoba*, (Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Centre for Health Policy, Fall 2019): 9. [http://mchp-appserv.cpe.umanitoba.ca/reference/FN\\_Report\\_web.pdf](http://mchp-appserv.cpe.umanitoba.ca/reference/FN_Report_web.pdf).

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, 8-9.

<sup>16</sup> Indigenous Services Canada, “First Nations in Manitoba,” last modified March 3, 2021, <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1100100020400/1616072911150>.

<sup>17</sup> Martin Cooke, “Application of the United Nations Human Development Index.”

<sup>18</sup> Katz et al., “Changes in health indicator gaps,” E1830-E1835.

<sup>19</sup> Katz et al., *The Health Status of and Access to Healthcare by Registered First Nation Peoples in Manitoba*, (Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Centre for Health Policy, Fall 2019): 9, [http://mchp-appserv.cpe.umanitoba.ca/reference/FN\\_Report\\_web.pdf](http://mchp-appserv.cpe.umanitoba.ca/reference/FN_Report_web.pdf).





# Province of Manitoba

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**The Province of Manitoba needs to respect First Nations jurisdiction, consult with First Nations when legislating in areas that impact First Nations inherent and Treaty rights, compensate, and provide restitution for past harms, and cooperate with First Nations Governments on their own terms when asked to do so.**

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Treaties are between sovereign nations: Canada and First Nations. The Province of Manitoba has no legitimate influence on matters of First Nation jurisdiction. When legislating in areas that affect First Nation jurisdiction and Treaty rights, the provincial government must consult<sup>1</sup> with First Nations. Failure to consult with Treaty rights holders represents a derogation of Treaty rights and a breach of the duty to consult. Manitoba has legislated in various areas that impact First Nations, including child and family services, education, natural resources, and economic development. The Province has not always consulted with affected First Nations rights holders and stakeholders nor have they consistently respected the jurisdiction of First Nations governments. This needs to change.

The Province of Manitoba is also the beneficiary of enormous transfer payments from Canada. Many fiscal transfers are based on per person funding, in which the treasury of Manitoba benefits from a large First Nations population despite the impact of provincial health and social programs being more limited for First Nations citizens living on-reserve. Manitoba has also received enormous fiscal benefits over the decades from the massive transfer of resource wealth facilitated by the *Natural Resources Transfer Act* (NRTA).

The Province of Manitoba needs to respect First Nations jurisdiction, consult with First Nations when legislating in areas that impact First Nations inherent and Treaty rights, compensate, and provide restitution for past harms, and cooperate with First Nations Governments on their own terms when asked to do so.

In the 2022-23 fiscal year the Province of Manitoba will receive \$5.1 billion in funding through major transfers from the federal government. Of this amount, \$2.2 billion were in Canada Health Transfers and Canada Social Transfers, which are directly allocated based on population. About \$185 million in Canada Health Transfers and \$65 million in Canada Social Transfers due to First Nations citizens living on or off-reserve in Manitoba. Provincial services for First Nations living on-reserve are limited. Manitoba First Nations

governments need population based, statutory transfers to prevent reliance on a middle-manager for limited services.

## Fiscal Transfer Payments from Canada to Manitoba

In the 2022-23 fiscal year the Province of Manitoba will receive \$5.1 billion in funding through major transfers from the federal government. Of this amount, \$2.2 billion were in Canada Health Transfers and Canada Social Transfers,<sup>2</sup> which are directly allocated based on population. About \$185 million in Canada Health Transfers and \$65 million in Canada Social Transfers due to First Nations citizens living on or off-reserve in Manitoba. Provincial services for First Nations living on-reserve are limited. Manitoba First Nations governments need population based, statutory transfers to prevent reliance on a middle-manager for limited services.

Table 3: Per Capita Federal-Provincial Transfers due to the Manitoba First Nations

	Manitoba Population Share	Canada Health Transfer	Canada Social Transfer
First Nations citizens living on-reserve in Manitoba	7.10%	\$115,652,375	\$40,793,489
First Nations citizens living off-reserve in Manitoba	4.20%	\$69,398,000	\$24,478,413
Total First Nations citizens living in Manitoba	11.30%	\$185,050,375	\$65,271,902

## Land and the NRTA

Canada's colonial relationship with First Nations in Manitoba is defined by the dispossession of First Nations from their lands and resources, in violation of Treaty. Given Canadian federalism, this colonial and dispossessive relationship extends to the Province, aided through legislation and resource transfers initiated by the federal government. The federal government violated the Treaties by passing the *Natural Resources Transfer Act* (NRTA) in 1930.<sup>3</sup> Under the NRTA, the Province of Manitoba assumed responsibility over natural resources and resource development contrary to Treaty obligations and to the exclusion of consultation with all Manitoba

First Nations.<sup>4</sup> This expropriation of resource wealth from First Nations has been tremendously lucrative for the Province<sup>5</sup> and led to the imposition of legislation and various regulations by the provincial government contrary to the inherent and Treaty Rights of First Nations.<sup>6</sup>

In 2011 the Province of Manitoba intentionally flooded Lake Manitoba, causing enormous harm to several First Nations. These include the Lake Manitoba First Nation and Lake St. Martin First Nation, among others.<sup>7</sup> The impact of this decision has been tremendous and includes displacement to this day. First Nations citizens have been dispossessed from their reserve lands and ancestral territories resulting from this decision, languishing in hotels in Winnipeg and elsewhere for a decade. Tragically, many citizens have died and never received a chance to return home.<sup>8</sup> These immensurable harms in terms of loss of land, culture, and infrastructure suffered by First Nations citizens resulted due to a lack of provincial planning and infrastructure to protect all Manitobans during the 2011 floods. Without progress on outlet channel projects, the risk of similar tragedies remains.<sup>9</sup> The Province of Manitoba needs to engage with affected First Nations to expedite the construction of outlet channels that will prevent and mitigate flood damage, protecting all Manitobans.<sup>10</sup>

It is paramount that the Province engage in a collaborative process with First Nations on environmental infrastructure projects, with First Nations being able to ensure their first-hand and traditional knowledge is effectively used to prevent and mitigate environmental damage.<sup>11</sup> Manitoba's highest trial court ruled that the Province of Manitoba did not adequately consult First Nations near Lake St. Martin on The Lake Manitoba and Lake St. Martin Outlet Channels project.<sup>12</sup>

As a result of the NRTC, the Province of Manitoba has engaged in numerous lucrative economic development opportunities through their Manitoba Hydro Crown Corporation. These benefits have not been shared with First Nations in the past, who have felt the impacts of hydro development on their traditional territories and economies. Manitoba tabled *The Manitoba Hydro Amendment and Public Utilities Board Amendment Act* (Bill 36) in late March 2022.<sup>13</sup> This bill restricts the Public Utilities Board's oversight of Manitoba Hydro rates and restricts rate reviews to once every three years.<sup>14</sup> This could result in substantially higher electricity rates that disproportionately impact low-income persons and First Nations citizens on-reserve. Many First Nations citizens on-reserve lack less expensive heating alternatives. The AMC has advocated for a reduced First Nations electricity rate, which Manitoba Hydro has repeatedly refused.<sup>15</sup>

The Government of Manitoba's lack of First Nations consultation on Bill 36 is disrespectful and contrary to reconciliation. To repair the deteriorating relationship between Manitoba Hydro and First Nations, the provincial government must change the existing legislative regime to enable a more cooperative energy business model that empowers Manitoba First Nations to generate and distribute clean, competitive, and reliable energy that puts their citizens, Nations and the environment first through a First Nations Power Authority.<sup>16</sup>

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**Of the roughly  
11,000 children in  
Manitoba's child  
welfare system  
80 per cent are  
First Nations.**

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## Child and Family Services

Child and Family Services is a sector where much harm and suffering has been caused through provincial interference in areas of First Nations jurisdiction. Of the roughly 11,000 children in Manitoba's child welfare system 80 per cent are First Nations.<sup>17</sup> This enormous level of apprehension of First Nations children has harmed the children themselves, their families, and their Nations.<sup>18</sup> The provincial child welfare system has led to abuse of children in care and disconnection from their families, communities, nations, and cultures. It has resulted in shame and low self-esteem for parents.<sup>19</sup> The imposition of a colonial child welfare system must end. Manitoba and Canada must recognize that the wellbeing of First Nations children must be entrenched and safeguarded through First Nations laws, rather than colonial interference.

The AMC is firm on child welfare policy and legislation: the colonial governments must support First Nations jurisdiction over children and family.<sup>20</sup> The Province of Manitoba must work with First Nations before making amendments to the *Child and Family Services Act* (CFS Act), which impacts First Nations jurisdiction.<sup>21</sup>

In October 2022, the AMC-Child Family Advocate Office filed a class action lawsuit against the Government of Manitoba and the Attorney General of Canada. This lawsuit is on behalf of First Nations children, their families, Nations, and concerns the impacts of apprehension and placement in foster care “off-reserve” of First Nations children by provincial Child and Family Services (CFS).<sup>22</sup> This lawsuit covers cases from 1992 to present day. The lawsuit seeks the following:<sup>23</sup>

1. An immediate end to the discriminatory practices resulting in the apprehension of so many First Nations children.
2. Proper funding for services for First Nations children now.
3. \$1 billion in compensation for First Nations children, families, and First Nations for the damage caused by the CFS system since 1992.
4. Recognition that the wellbeing of First Nations children must be entrenched in First Nations laws relating to the wellbeing of First Nations children and families.

The Province of Manitoba has deprived First Nations children of federal funds meant for their support. Children's Special Allowances (CSA) are monthly payments from the Government of Canada to



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**Starting in 2005, the Government of Manitoba mandated child welfare agencies to remit their CSA funds from the federal government back to the province.**

**This CSA claw back policy took away \$334 million of needed funding for social inclusion for First Nations children in care.**

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Manitoba or private child welfare agencies earmarked exclusively for the care, maintenance, education, and advancement of First Nations children in care.<sup>24</sup> This could be through support for First Nations children through education, recreation activities, and training. Starting in 2005, the Government of Manitoba mandated child welfare agencies to remit their CSA funds from the federal government back to the province. This CSA claw back policy took away \$334 million of needed funding for social inclusion for First Nations children in care.<sup>25</sup>

The provincial government tried to retroactively authorize this and absolve itself of liability through section 231 of the *Budget Implementation Tax Statutes Amendment Act* (BITSA) passed in November 2020. Manitoba's Court of Queen's Bench (now Court of King's Bench) ruled that the CSA claw back policy discriminated against First Nations children in the provincial CFS system. The Court further noted that section 231 of BITSA:

*"... overwhelmingly impacts the Indigenous children and disabled children in care. The CSA policy prevented the claimant group from receiving equal benefit of the law resulting in economic and social consequences to Indigenous children in care."*<sup>26</sup>

The Court's ruling did not require the Government of Manitoba to return the taken CSA dollars but does find that taking the funds was discriminatory. The ruling allows for separate lawsuits against the Province to recover lost CSA funds.<sup>27</sup> The AMC demands Manitoba make full restitution to First Nations children in care for the unlawful and discriminatory taking of CSA payments.<sup>28</sup> This solution involves immediately discussing compensation for First Nations children and youth impacted by the loss of their CSA payments as well as the Province putting into practice its intention to listen by honouring the numerous calls to restore First Nations jurisdiction over child and family matters.<sup>29</sup>

As First Nations Family Advocate Cora Morgan notes:

*"We are at a crossroads – we can keep having conversations around the table about what to do about how the child welfare system impacts our families, or the province can act now by stepping aside and finally listening to what we have been saying this entire time. The province must concede that the only way forward is to restore the jurisdiction of child and family matters to First Nations."*<sup>30</sup>



<sup>1</sup> AMC Communications, “Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Responds to the Speech from the Throne,” Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, November 16, 2022, <https://manitobachiefs.com/amc-responds-to-the-speech-from-the-throne/>.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Finance Canada, “Major Federal Transfers, 2022-23,” last modified February 2, 2022, <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/programs/federal-transfers/major-federal-transfers.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Chiefs-in-Assembly, “RE: Guiding Principles for Dismantling of INAC,” The Pas: Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Special Chiefs Assembly on Dismantling, April 19-21, 1994. <https://manitobachiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/CIA-Resolution-April-1994-Dismantling.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Chiefs-in-Assembly. “RE: Fishers Legal Defence Fund - (WRTC) 2009 Court Case,” Sagkeeng First Nation: Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs General Chiefs Assembly, May 19-21, 2009. <https://manitobachiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/CIA-Resolution-May-2009-General.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> AMC Communications, “AMC Responds to Release of Manitoba Provincial Budget,” Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, March 20, 2022, <https://manitobachiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/20-03-20-AMC-Press-Release-re-MB-Budget-FINAL.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Chiefs-in-Assembly, “RE: Fishers Legal Defence Fund.”

<sup>7</sup> AMC Communications, “AMC Responds to Class Action Settlement.”

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> AMC Communications, “The AMC and AFN Manitoba Respond to Court Ruling on Inadequate Engagement with First Nations on Flood-Prevention Project,” Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, June 24, 2022. <https://manitobachiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/AMC-News-Release-The-AMC-and-AFN-Manitoba-Respond-to-Court-Ruling-on-Inadequate-Engagement.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> AMC Communications, “Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Statement on New Hydro and Public Utilities Board Bill,” Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, March 25, 2022. <https://manitobachiefs.com/assembly-of-manitoba-chiefs-statement-on-new-hydro-and-public-utilities-board-bill/>.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> AMC Communications, “The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC)-First Nations Family Advocate Office Files Class Action Lawsuit on Behalf of First Nations Children, Families and Nations Impacted by the Manitoba Child Welfare System,” Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, October 6, 2022. <https://manitobachiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/AMC-News-Release-AMC-FNFAO-Files-Class-Action-Lawsuit-re-FN-Children-and-CWS-1.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, “Bringing Our Children Home: Report and Recommendations,” Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, June 2014, 7. <https://manitobachiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Bringing-Our-Children-Home-Final-Report-June-2014.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> AMC Communications, “AMC Responds to the Manitoba Provincial Governments Amendments to the Child and Family Services Act,” May 26, 2022. <https://manitobachiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/AMC-News-Release-AMC-RESPONDS-TO-THE-MANITOBA-PROVINCIAL-GOVERNMENTS-AMENDMENTS-TO-THE-CHILD-AND-FAMILY-SERVICES-ACT.pdf>.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> AMC Communications, “Class Action Lawsuit on Behalf of First Nations Children, Families and Nations.”

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> AMC Communications, “Court Rules That Manitoba Government Discriminates Against First Nations Children in the Child Welfare System,” Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, May 19, 2022. <https://manitobachiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/AMC-News-Release-CSA-Court-Ruling.pdf>.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> AMC Communications, “AMC Demands Full Restitution of CSA Funds Unlawfully Taken from First Nations Children in Care,” Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, August 5, 2022. <https://manitobachiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/AMC-News-Release-AMC-Demands-Full-Restitution-of-CSA-Funds-Unlawfully-Taken-From-First-Nations-Children-in-Care-FINAL.pdf>.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

# Health, Dignity, Cultural and Spiritual Well-Being





# Health, Dignity, Cultural and Spiritual Well-Being

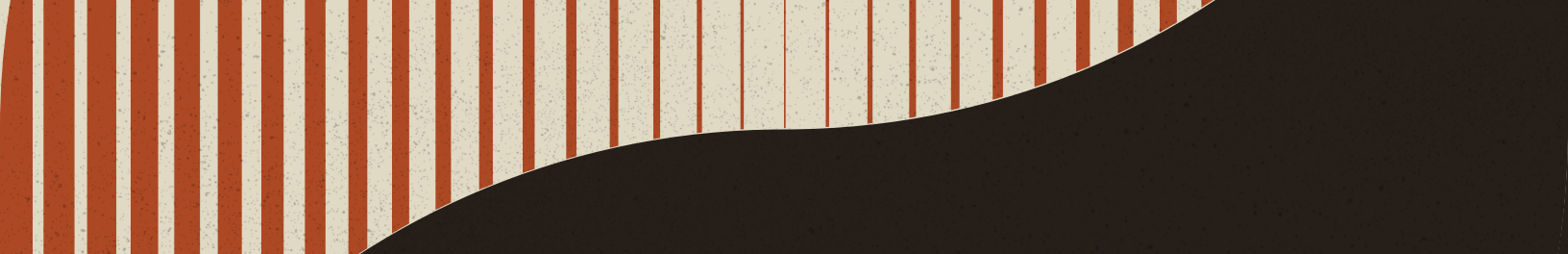
Health, Dignity, Cultural and Spiritual Well-Being are deeply interrelated for the First Nations of Manitoba. First Nations citizens had well-developed traditional networks of support in their Nations that provided for healing for all aspects of the person. Dispossession and the culturally destructive and repressive effects of colonialism had a profoundly harmful impact on various aspects of well-being for First Nations. As Grand Chief David Courchene observed in his Message of the Grand Chief in *Wahbung: Our Tomorrows*:

*“During the centuries in which we lived on this land, we faced many times of struggle, for the land is not always kind, and our people like any other people had to find ways to adapt to a changing environment.*

*These last hundred years have been the time of most difficult struggle, but they have not broken our spirit nor altered our love for this land nor our attachment and commitment to it. We have survived as a people.*

*Our attachment means that we must also commit ourselves to help develop healthy societies for all peoples who live upon this land. But we will not be able to contribute unless we have the means first to develop a healthy society for ourselves. Since the signing of the Treaties one hundred years ago, we have been constantly and consistently prevented from doing so.”<sup>1</sup>*

The impacts of colonialism are represented by startling statistics, such as weak Human Development Index scores<sup>2</sup> and wide health gaps between First Nations citizens and other residents of Manitoba.<sup>3</sup> The way forward to improve the well-being of First Nations citizens is through federal fiscal support for the reconstitution of self-determined and self-governed First Nations systems for health, spiritual, and cultural support.



Self-determined and self-governed First Nations-led systems include funding First Nations Health Transformation initiatives and improving Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB), necessary to fulfil the Crown's Treaty obligations for health. Particularly crucial are mental health supports for those affected by Indian Residential Schools and First Nations citizens at large. A full suite of mental health and trauma supports are required for many First Nations. This includes the need for capital and operational funding for more addiction treatment centres in First Nations. Support for the families and Nations of victims of Indian Residential Schools must include funds to locate and commemorate unmarked Indian Residential School Gravesites.

The benefits of health services governed and delivered by First Nations became very apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic. First Nations Personal Care Homes in Manitoba took proactive steps, well before provincial mandates, to monitor staff for infection and implement isolation if required. Compared to long-term care facilities across Manitoba, First Nations Personal Care Homes had a much lower fatality rate. Continued support to amplify this success story, through operational funding to ensure wage parity with provincial employees and funds to construct more Personal Care Homes, are needed.

Funding to support traditional cultural activities and languages for First Nations in Manitoba is further crucial for well-being. This ensures the dignity of individual First Nations citizens and supports Nation-building and Nation-strengthening for Manitoba First Nations.

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<sup>1</sup> Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, *Wahbung: Our Tomorrows*, Manitoba, Canada, October 1971. <https://manitobachiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Wahbung-Our-Tomorrows-Searchable.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Martin Cooke, Application of the United Nations Human Development Index to Registered Indians in Canada, 2006–2016, Indigenous Services Canada, last modified November 2019, <https://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.895951/publication.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Alan Katz et al., "Changes in health indicator gaps between First Nations and other residents of Manitoba," *CMAJ* 193, no. 48 (2021): E1830-E1835.





# Health Transformation, Clinical Care, Health Facilities, and Related Services

**[There are] striking gaps in health outcomes that exist between First Nations and all other Manitobans.**

## Issue

First Nations in Manitoba have long been underserved by the mainstream healthcare system, facing numerous barriers to care including interpersonal and structural racism.<sup>1</sup> This has exacerbated the striking gaps in health outcomes that exist between First Nations and all other Manitobans.<sup>2</sup> First Nations' Treaty right to self-determination and sovereignty of healthcare in their territories and for their citizens is a necessary precondition to eliminating systemic racism, making health services available within First Nations reserve lands, and achieving true equity in health.

## Required Spending

\$475.2M in total spending per year ongoing for five years for Health Transformation, Clinical Care, Health Facilities, and related services.

**Table 4: Health Transformation, Clinical Care, Health Facilities, and Related Services Spending Estimations**

<b>FNIHB Program Name</b>	<b>2023-24 Required Investment (MB)</b>
Health Planning, Quality Management and Systems Integration	\$103,149,295
e-Health Infrastructure	\$6,448,949
Health Facilities	\$151,991,910
Health Human Resources	\$424,189
Healthy Living	\$22,683,458
Healthy Child Development	\$56,471,140
Environmental Public Health	\$3,863,398
Communicable Disease Control and Management	\$142,081,564
Community Oral Health Services	\$4,301,358
Clinical and Client Care	\$23,800,960
<b>All Programs</b>	<b>\$515,216,221</b>



## Benefits

Investment in Health Transformation Clinical Care, Health Facilities, and related services will address many longstanding needs in Manitoba First Nations. This investment will demonstrate the Governments' commitment and accelerate North, South, and Province-wide Health Transformation initiatives in Manitoba, increase First Nations Health staffing capacity and recruitment of First Nations citizens from their own Nations for health roles, and provide better access to clinical care in First Nations with remotely located land bases and population centres.

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<sup>1</sup> Brian Sinclair Working Group, "Out of Sight: A Summary of the Events Leading up to Brian Sinclair's Death and the Inquest That Examined It and the Interim Recommendations of the Brian Sinclair Working Group," September 2017, [https://libguides.lib.umanitoba.ca/Id.php?content\\_id=33973085](https://libguides.lib.umanitoba.ca/Id.php?content_id=33973085); Southern Chiefs Organization, "Survey on Experiences of Racism in the Manitoba Health Care System 2021," 2021, <https://scoinc.mb.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/SCO-Racism-Report-final-WEB.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Alan Katz et al., *The Health Status of and Access to Healthcare by Registered First Nation Peoples in Manitoba*, (Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Centre for Health Policy, Fall 2019), [http://mchp-appserv.cpe.umanitoba.ca/reference/FN\\_Report\\_web.pdf](http://mchp-appserv.cpe.umanitoba.ca/reference/FN_Report_web.pdf).



# Elder Care and Support Services

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**First Nations deserve to age with dignity, close to their families and with culturally appropriate facilities and services.**

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## Issue

Elders are very important within First Nations culture and play an invaluable role in their communities as knowledge keepers. Yet there are significant gaps in the First Nations and Inuit Home and Community Care Program, as well as an insufficient number of care homes in First Nations to keep elders in their Nations.<sup>1</sup> This is a serious problem as First Nations frequently require assisted living services at a younger age due to higher disease incidence.<sup>2</sup> The lack of wage parity with staff in the provincial system is a major issue for recruitment at First Nations Personal Care Homes.<sup>3</sup> First Nations deserve to age with dignity, close to their families and with culturally appropriate facilities and services.

## Required Spending

\$112M per year ongoing for five years for Elder Care and Supportive Services.

## Benefit

Investment in Elder Care and Support Services will allow improved access to home care, funding for assisted living, the construction of more First Nations Personal Care Homes, as well as a recruitment strategy for staffing at First Nations Personal Care Homes that ensures wage parity with workers in the provincial system.

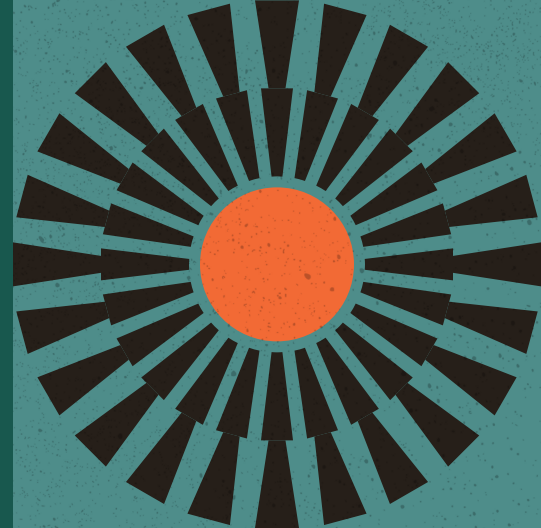
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<sup>1</sup> Evaluation, Performance Measurement and Review Branch, “Evaluation of the First Nations and Inuit Home and Community Care Program” (Ottawa, ON: Indigenous Services Canada, July 2019), [https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-ISC-SAC/DAM-AEV/STAGING/texte-text/ev\\_ihcc\\_1568379320577\\_eng.pdf](https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-ISC-SAC/DAM-AEV/STAGING/texte-text/ev_ihcc_1568379320577_eng.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs, *The Challenges of Delivering Continuing Care in First Nation Communities: Report of the Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs* (Ottawa, ON: House of Commons of Canada, 2018), <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/421/INAN/Reports/RP10260656/inanrp17/inanrp17-e.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

# Spotlight



## Manitoba First Nations Personal Care Homes and the COVID-19 Pandemic

Manitoba First Nations Personal Care Home (PCH) directors knew they were in a vulnerable position. Stories were coming out in the first half of 2020 about the rapid spread of COVID-19 in long-term care homes in Ontario and Québec. Many First Nations have small populations and experience crowded housing due to insufficient federal investment, which presents risks for airborne disease spread. Many of the First Nations PCHs in Manitoba were also tightly staffed, with little room to potentially lose workers to sickness.

First Nations PCH leadership took these risks seriously. Crucial was information sharing between members of the Manitoba First Nations Personal Care Home Network. Early on, members of the network drafted documents and templates for pandemic planning and response that proved vital.

Christopher Hersak, director of Dakota Oyate Lodge, noted various factors were crucial to the solid performance of the Lodge during COVID-19. There was seamless communication between the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation leadership and personal care home staff. As well, Dakota Oyate Lodge took the drastic step of reconfiguring its

distribution network for medical supplies around local sellers. This resulted in higher costs but meant the home did not suffer from long waits and shortages from bottlenecks in the global supply chain. Sioux Valley Dakota Nation was also at the forefront of using wastewater as a means of surveillance testing for community spread, starting this early in 2020.

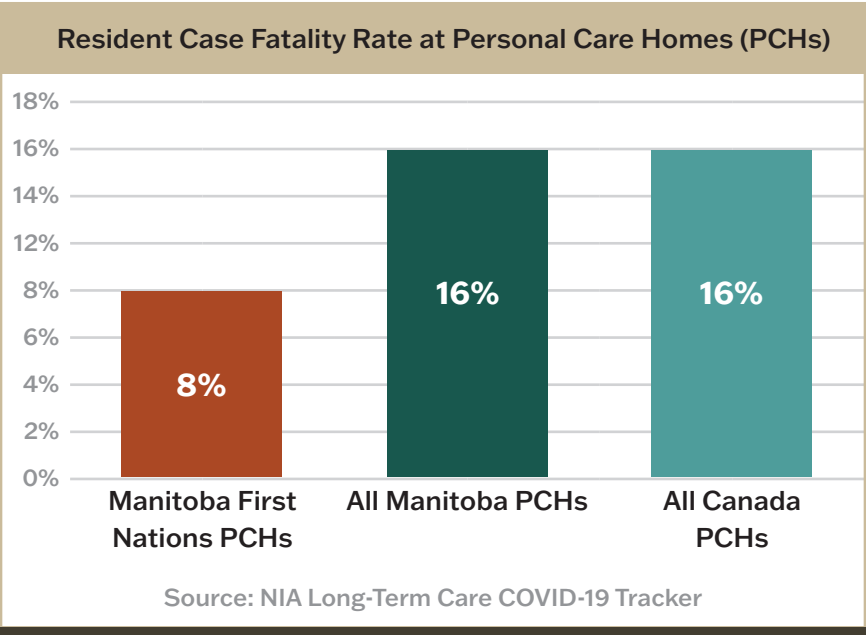
Many First Nations PCHs made early, proactive use of rapid antigen testing well before its widespread use in the provincial health system. This included surveillance testing of staff, most of whom resided in the communities of the PCHs for which they worked, and for testing visitors. Manitoba First Nations PCHs also instituted vaccine mandates for staff well before the provincial government implemented the same policy.

Statistics show that Manitoba First Nations PCHs fared comparably well during the pandemic. Data aggregated by the National Institute on Ageing (NIA) at Ryerson University shows that the Resident Fatality Rate at First Nations PCHs in Manitoba was half that of all Manitoba Personal Care Homes and long-term care facilities across Canada.



**“For the next pandemic, we’ll be ready” says Christopher Hersak.**

**Figure 2: Resident Case Fatality Rate at Personal Care Homes (PCHs)**



Staff at different First Nations Personal Care Homes in Manitoba found other decisions and policies helpful. These include community lockdowns instituted by some First Nations, the northern travel restriction in Manitoba, and federal COVID funding that allowed for sick pay for staff to isolate and for the hiring of new staff. Political advocacy from the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, and the Southern Chiefs Organization for First Nations citizens to get priority access to vaccines was another critical factor identified.

Manitoba First Nations PCHs face many challenges. These include the need for federal investments to increase staff and enable wage parity with workers in the provincial system. Additional First Nations PCHs in more First Nations are needed as well. Nevertheless, there is hope going forward.

“For the next pandemic, we’ll be ready” says Christopher Hersak.



# Support for Indian Residential School Survivors

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**The terrible consequences of this system continue to reverberate through families and nations in the form of intergenerational trauma, physical and mental health inequities, social inequality, and worsened economic outcomes for First Nations citizens.**

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**...82% reported that their substance use behaviours began after attending residential schools, and roughly 78% had abused alcohol.**

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## Issue

The residential school system separated Indigenous families, instilled shame in First Nations for their culture, and inflicted emotional and physical abuse on students, constituting a genocide against Indigenous people in Canada.<sup>1</sup> The terrible consequences of this system continue to reverberate through families and nations in the form of intergenerational trauma, physical and mental health inequities, social inequality, and worsened economic outcomes for First Nations citizens. Critically, studies indicate residential school survivors and their descendants have an elevated risk of suicide and addiction. In a British Columbia assessment of 127 survivors, 82% reported that their substance use behaviours began after attending residential schools, and roughly 78% had abused alcohol.<sup>2</sup> The intergenerational trauma of residential schools deeply impacts suicide incidence and ideation for First Nations citizens. For example, one in four teenagers on-reserve who had a parent who attended a residential school had considered suicide, compared with one in 10 teenagers who did not have a parent or grandparent attend.<sup>3</sup> No substantive or lasting transformation can occur in First Nations communities until healing takes place from this trauma. First Nations, their citizens, and First Nations-led service organizations require sufficient resources to provide cultural and trauma-informed supports and treatment to the families and individuals who continue to be harmed by the legacy of this system.

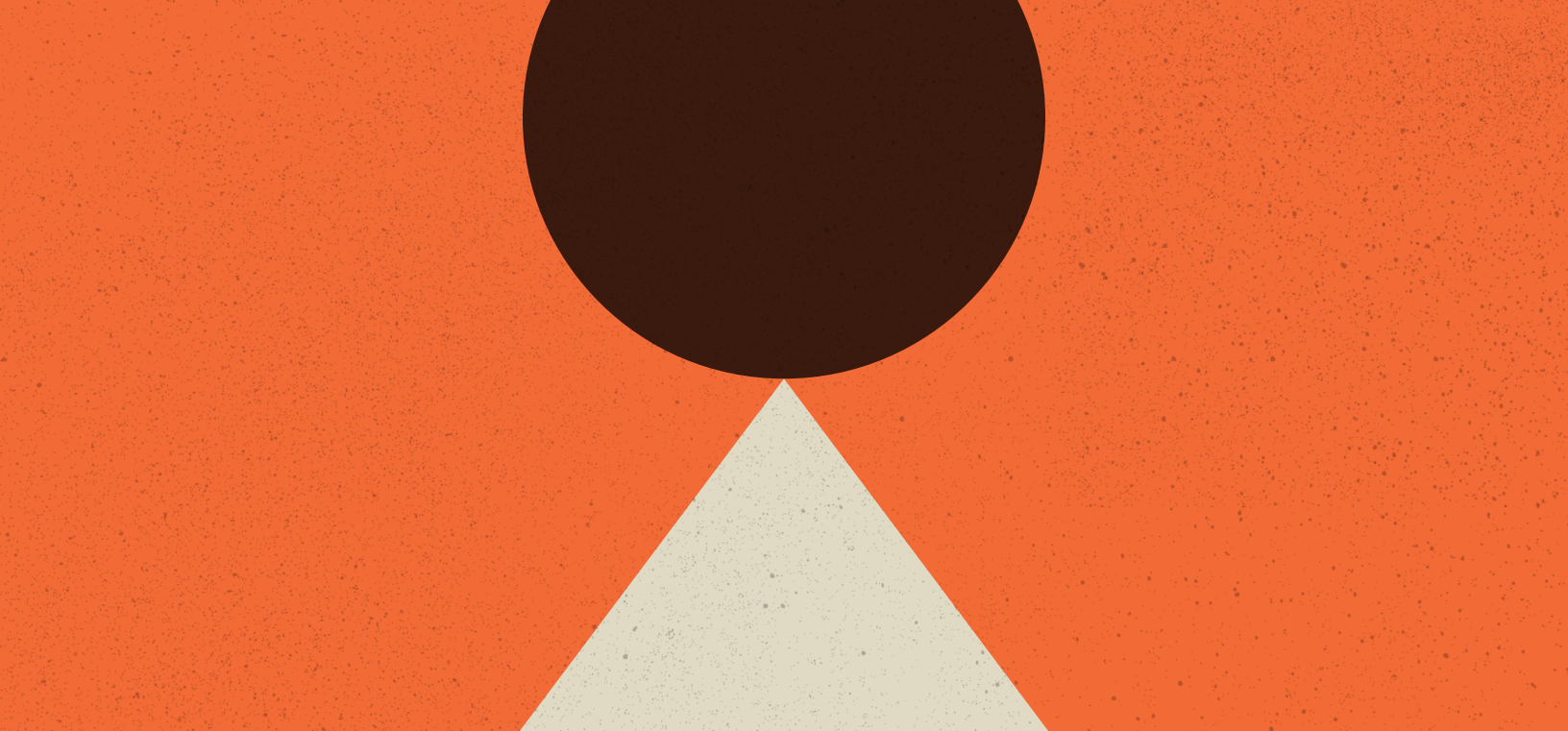
## Required Spending

\$62M per year ongoing for five years to provide support for Indian Residential School Survivors.

## Benefit

This investment will support survivors dealing with the trauma of Indian Residential Schools.





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**...one in four teenagers on-reserve who had a parent who attended a residential school had considered suicide, compared with one in 10 teenagers who did not have a parent or grandparent attend...**


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<sup>1</sup> AMC Communications, "The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Recognizes the Historic Motion in the House of Commons Unanimously Recognizing Residential Schools as a Genocide," Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, October 30, 2022. <https://manitobachiefs.com/amc-recognizes-the-house-of-commons-recognizing-residential-schools-as-a-genocide/>; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *What We Have Learned: Principles of Truth and Reconciliation*, (Winnipeg, Manitoba, 2015): 5-8. [https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Principles\\_English\\_Web.pdf](https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Principles_English_Web.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Marcel Gemme, "Substance use among Indigenous Peoples in Canada: A cycle of trauma and addiction," Drug Rehab Centres in Canada, last modified December 8, 2022, <https://www.drugrehab.ca/indigenous-peoples-in-canada-discrimination-and-generational-substance-use.html>.

<sup>3</sup> First Nations Information Governance Centre, *National Report of the First Nations Regional Health Survey Phase 3: Volume One* (Ottawa: 2018): 144. <https://fnigc.ca/about-fnigc/our-history/>.





# Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB)

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**The existing system of Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB), however, is rife with systemic racism, arbitrary refusals, and long waits.**

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## Issue

The provision of medical benefits not insured by the provincial health plan is a Treaty obligation of Canada. For First Nations citizens living in the numerous remote reserves and communities of Manitoba's vast landscape, medical transportation is necessary to access medically required health services that are not available on-reserve or near the home residence. Other non-insured health benefits First Nations people rely on include mental health counselling, necessary to work through the lasting effects of colonization, and vision care, dental care, and prescription and over-the-counter medications. Such benefits are necessary to fulfil the Treaty right to health. The existing system of Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB), however, is rife with systemic racism,<sup>1</sup> arbitrary refusals, and long waits. To ensure care without delay and fulfil Canada's Treaty obligations, systemic transformation and restructuring of the medical transportation system and NIHB towards First Nations control and self-government is necessary.

## Required Spending

\$465M per year ongoing for five years to address issues in the current Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) program.

## Benefit

This investment will ensure current issues identified within the dispersal of NIHB allocations are addressed. A greater investment will reduce arbitrary refusals, provide additional non-medical escorts (i.e., a family member for pregnant individuals traveling out of community to give birth), and the provision of a new service of non-medical escorts within the Medical Transportation NIHB benefit, which will aid elders, persons with a disability, and persons experiencing mental health challenges.



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<sup>1</sup> AMC Communications, “The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and the Assembly of First Nations Manitoba Call for Restructuring Medical Transportation System After Delayed Medical Response for First Nation Infant,” Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, October 12, 2022, <https://manitobachiefs.com/amc-afn-call-for-restructuring-after-delayed-medical-response-for-fn-infant/>.



# Mental Health, Addictions Treatment and Prevention, Trauma Support, and Suicide Prevention Initiatives

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**Past funding for addictions treatment centres in First Nations has been far too limited and capped by the federal government.**

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## Issue

Intergenerational trauma including community disruption, loss of culture and language, and the forced removal of children from their homes are lasting impacts of colonization. This trauma manifests as widespread mental health issues<sup>1</sup> and is directly linked to suicide rates among First Nations people that are three times higher than among non-Indigenous people.<sup>2</sup> Colonialism and resulting trauma is a root cause of addictions issues for First Nations citizens.<sup>3</sup>

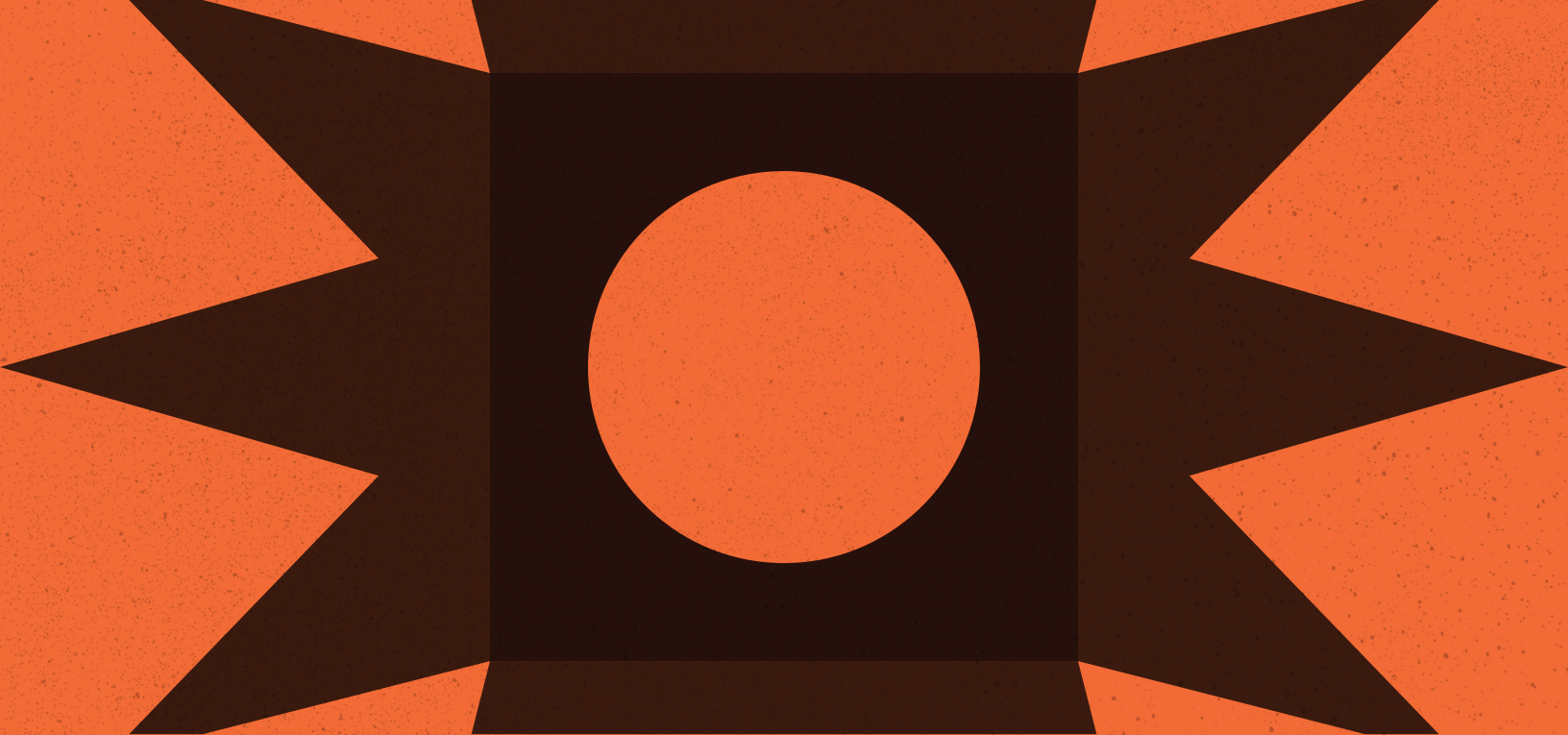
Suicide among Indigenous youth in Canada is a nationwide crisis which continues to be emphasized by alarming national statistics, state of emergency declarations from individual First Nations, and the resulting media attention. Particularly in remote and northern communities, the history of colonization, isolation, poverty, and language barriers can lead to substance use crises. Past funding for addictions treatment centres in First Nations has been far too limited and capped by the federal government.<sup>4</sup>

## Required Spending

\$111.7M per year ongoing for five years to support Mental Health, Addictions Treatment and Prevention, Trauma Support, and Suicide Prevention Initiatives

## Benefit

This investment will provide greater services and supports for individuals suffering from mental health issues, trauma (including family violence, gender-based violence, intergenerational and residential school trauma), and suicide support and prevention. This would support improved programming at the community-level, particularly for remote and isolated First Nations, and support the construction of new Addictions Treatment Centres.



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<sup>1</sup> Michaela M. McGuire, “Let’s Talk about Indigenous Mental Health: Trauma, Suicide Settler Colonialism,” Yellowhead Institute, January 26, 2022. <https://yellowheadinstitute.org/2022/01/22/lets-talk-about-indigenous-mental-health-trauma-suicide-settler-colonialism/>.

<sup>2</sup> Mohan B. Kumar and Michael Tjepkema, Suicide among First Nations People, Métis and Inuit (2011-2016): *Findings from the 2011 Canadian Census Health and Environment Cohort (CanCHEC)*, (Ottawa, Ontario: Statistics Canada, 2019): 5. [https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/99-011-x/99-011-x2019001-eng.pdf?st=e7Bv7\\_nm](https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/99-011-x/99-011-x2019001-eng.pdf?st=e7Bv7_nm); Robyn Jane McQuaid et al., “Suicide ideation and attempts among First Nations peoples living on-reserve in Canada: The intergenerational and cumulative effects of Indian residential schools,” *The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry* 62, no. 6 (2017): 422-430.

<sup>3</sup> Laura Hall, Colleen Dell, Carol Hopkins, Christopher Mushquash, and Margo Rowan, “Research as Cultural Renewal: Applying Two-Eyed Seeing in a Research Project about Cultural Interventions in First Nations Addictions Treatment,” *International Indigenous Policy Journal* 6, no. 2 (May 2015), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5112026/>.

<sup>4</sup> AMC Communications, “Treatment Centres for Addiction Issues Urgently Needed for First Nations in Manitoba,” Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, October 30, 2018, <https://manitobachiefs.com/treatment-centres-for-addiction-issues-urgently-needed-for-first-nations-in-manitoba/>.



# Locating and Commemorating Unmarked Indian Residential School Gravesites

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**The careful location and protection of mass graves is essential to providing recognition, reconciliation, closure, and healing for First Nations citizens and families.**

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## Issue

A persisting horror of Canada's Indian Residential School system is the death and disappearance of thousands of children who were taken from their families and whose bodies were never returned, instead buried in unmarked graves and unofficial gravesites.

Whole communities have suffered the loss of these children and continue to experience an inability to find closure around the unnecessary death of so many from the Indian residential school generations. In response, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada has called for "the ongoing identification, documentation, maintenance, commemoration, and protection of residential school cemeteries or other sites at which residential school children were buried."<sup>1</sup> Locating such sites is a lengthy and expensive process; the federal government has a fiduciary and moral responsibility in supporting these efforts as a crucial aspect of reconciliation.

## Required Spending

\$34M per year ongoing for five years to support locating and commemorating unmarked Indian Residential School gravesites in Manitoba.

## Benefits

Identifying and commemorating residential school gravesites in Manitoba is a crucial step in recognizing the horrific harms enacted by the colonial Indian Residential School System. First Nations citizens and families continue to suffer the loss of family and community members due to lack of knowledge of what happened to their loved ones. The careful location and protection of mass graves is essential to providing recognition, reconciliation, closure, and healing for First Nations citizens and families.





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<sup>1</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, “Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action,” (Winnipeg, Manitoba, 2015): 8. [https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls\\_to\\_Action\\_English2.pdf](https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf).





# Revitalization of First Nations Languages, Cultural Promotion, and Cultural Activities

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**Canada has a duty to support the revitalization of First Nations languages and cultures to remedy these wrongs and support First Nations as they strengthen and reconstitute their historic traditions, languages, and Nations.**

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## Issue

A key part of the colonial project of dispossessing First Nations from their lands and undermining their sovereignty were ongoing attempts to extinguish and suppress First Nations cultural traditions and languages. The state-sponsored suppression of First Nations culture is apparent in history, from various laws Canada enforced against Indigenous cultural practices, to the Residential School and Indian Hospital system. Canada has a duty to support the revitalization of First Nations languages and cultures to remedy these wrongs and support First Nations as they strengthen and reconstitute their historic traditions, languages, and Nations.

Presently, the Department of Canadian Heritage (DCH) provides funding through the Indigenous Languages and Culture Program (ILCP), which superseded the Aboriginal Languages Initiative (ALI). During January and February of 2022, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) conducted regional engagement sessions aimed at developing a First Nations Language and Funding Model.<sup>1</sup> While the present stakeholder consultations have passed, AFN suggested that the Funding Model be updated every three years, giving AMC an opportunity to address Manitoba's needs within this policy framework as part of a larger proposed budget.<sup>2</sup> The funding model is to be submitted to the Treasury Board by AFN in Fall 2022.<sup>3</sup> One of the goals of this submission is to unlock funding provided in Budget 2019.<sup>4</sup>

## Required Spending

\$205.7M total spending per year ongoing for five years. The unlocking of Budget 2019 funding will aid in the provision \$115.7M in annual funding. An additional ask of \$14,000M over ten years for First Nations languages is also proposed as part of the AFN's Treasury Board Submission (TBS).<sup>5</sup> Considering expected DCH funding, in addition to unlocked Budget 2019 funds and the \$14,000M ask (assuming these funds are distributed evenly over ten years), average five-year spending would be \$6,402.5M, of which Manitoba would receive \$205.7M for each of five years.<sup>6</sup>



## Benefits

Supporting the AFN model has several benefits, including supporting a shift from proposal-based funding to predictable programmatic funding with greater consideration to regional allocation.<sup>7</sup> This will also include more First Nations control over the use of funds and which agents those funds are shared with.<sup>8</sup> This would prove crucial to supporting the Nation-building and Nation-strengthening efforts of First Nations governments and citizens.

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<sup>1</sup> Assembly of First Nations, *First Nations Languages Funding Model: Dialogue Session July 4, 2022* (Ottawa: Assembly of First Nations, 2022), 14. <https://www.afn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/22-06-01-AGA-Dialogue-Session-Languages-Funding-Model.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 5.

<sup>4</sup> Assembly of First Nations, *Languages Forum Report March 2-3, 2022* (Ottawa: Assembly of First Nations, 2022), 7. <https://www.afn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/2022-Language-Report-EN.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Assembly of First Nations, *First Nations Languages Funding Model*, 6. <https://www.afn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/22-06-01-AGA-Dialogue-Session-Languages-Funding-Model.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Indigenous Services Canada, *Registered Indian Population by Sex and Residence, 2020*. Registered Indian Population by Sex and Residence (Ottawa, ON: Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, 2021), viii, [https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2021/sac-isc/R31-3-2020-eng.pdf](https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2021/sac-isc/R31-3-2020-eng.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 7.

# Spotlight

## Indigenous Languages of Manitoba (ILMB)

Language revitalization is a critical part of the path to reconnect, reawaken, and reconcile Indigenous cultural identity. Language, culture, and identity are deeply interconnected, and the revitalization of Aboriginal languages is a necessary and desirable approach to facilitate cultural and linguistic preservation and diversity.

Indigenous Languages of Manitoba (ILMB) preserves and promotes language revitalization through advocacy, outreach, and educational programming that is accessible, equitable, and free to all. ILMB provides learning programs in an expanding list of Indigenous languages including Anishinaabemowin (Ojibwe) and Ininimowin (Cree). Sessions, provided in a combination of English and the Indigenous language, gather stories from the past and present to support the widest possible target audience including beginner learners.

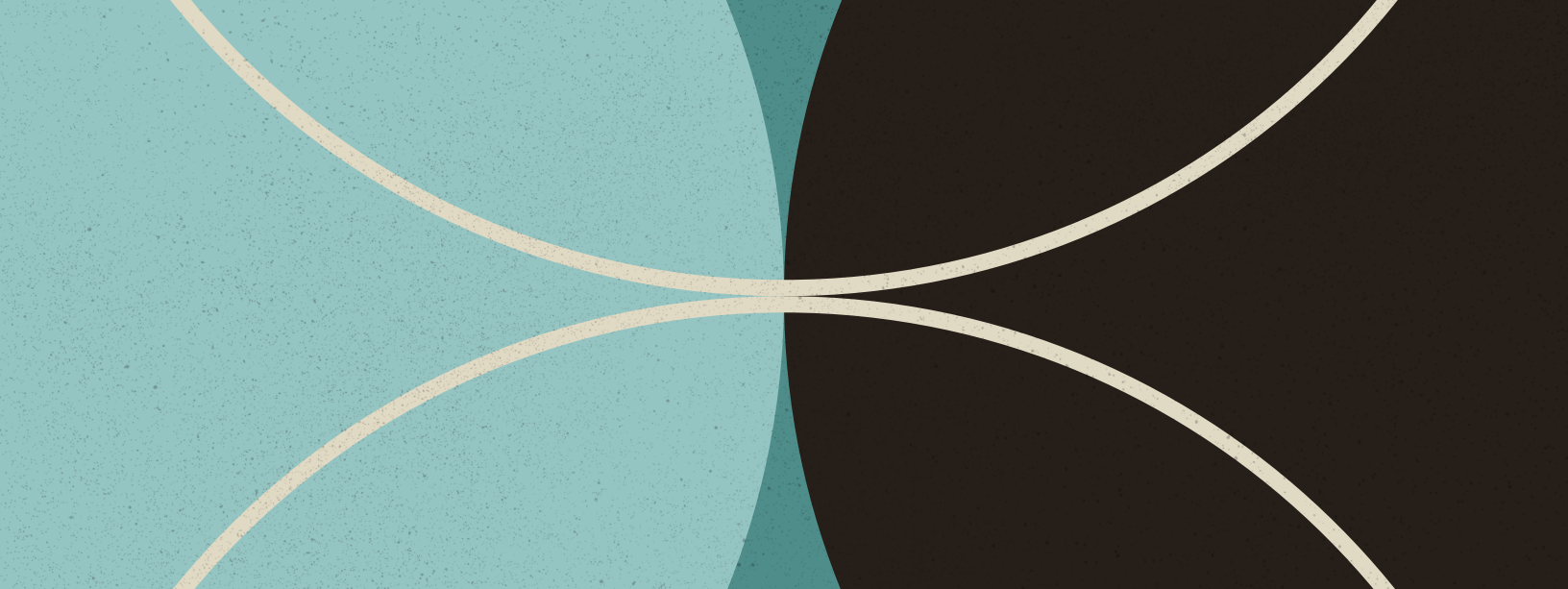
Beyond in-classroom learning, ILMB provides several authentic land-based opportunities for language and cultural revitalization including multi-week camps for adults and families. These options provide culturally relevant activities and practices that incorporate sharing traditional knowledge from elders with those in attendance. Storytelling, including the use of humour, and traditional practices play a significant role in the exchange of language and culture in this setting.

Indigenous Languages of Manitoba is currently working on the development of an Indigenous Language and Cultural Learning Centre northwest of Winnipeg. This dedicated facility will provide opportunities in a land-based environment and enhance ILMB's current offerings including classes and camps throughout the year.

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**Storytelling, including the use of humour, and traditional practices play a significant role in the exchange of language and culture.**

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The camps and in-classroom learning instill students with a sense of confidence in their cultural connection. Students and instructors are left “feeling like a superstar” and as though they have “won the lottery” with empowerment and pride in overcoming the past shame associated with Indigenous language and Indian Residential Schools.

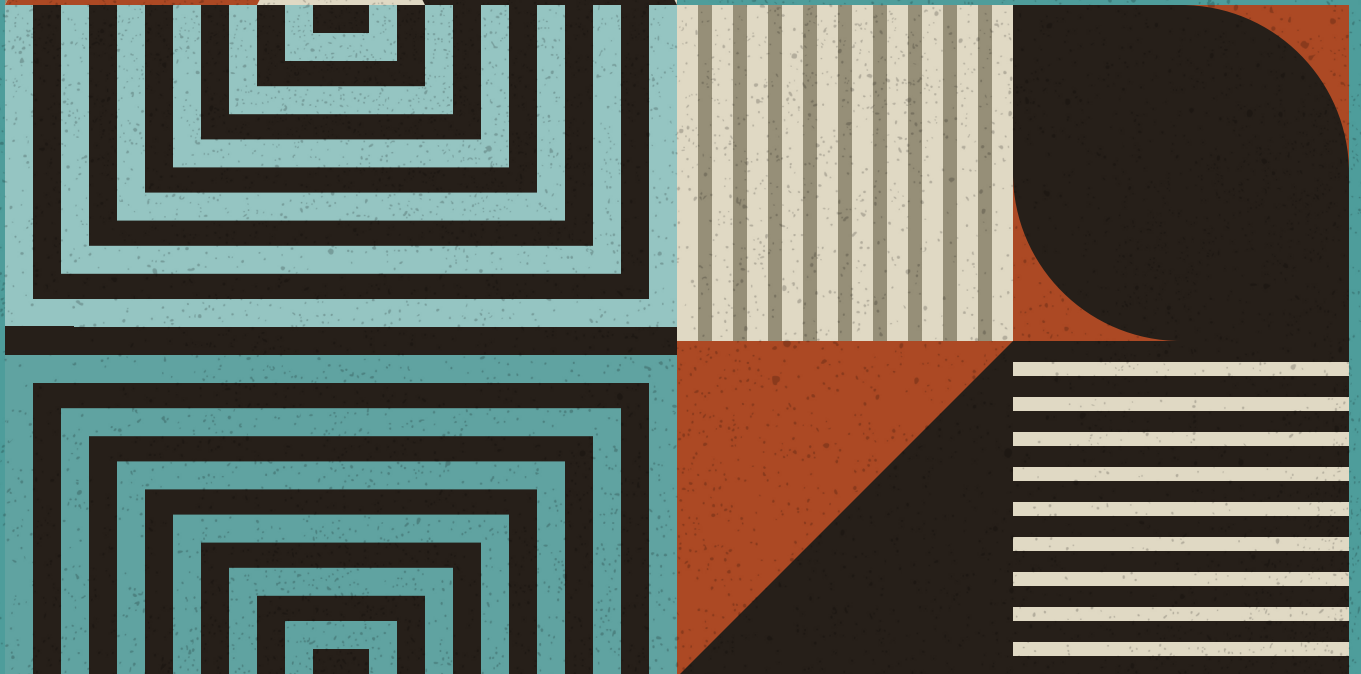
Beyond ongoing funding challenges, the biggest barrier and gap that challenges language revitalization is the ongoing loss of elders and those with traditional knowledge. Now is the time to learn and share language and culture since First Nations people are continually losing speakers with the passing of elders before they have shared language and stories with enough people.

With proper funding, the ever-dwindling pool of elders and Indigenous speakers possessing traditional knowledge can connect with younger generations and given the opportunity to share their stories and experiences. To this end, cultural and language revitalization relies on timely funding to support efforts before knowledge keepers are forever lost. A failure to fund language revitalization now ensures a critically missed opportunity to support the diversity of Indigenous cultures in Manitoba.

Indigenous languages may be considered endangered because of the ongoing loss of speakers and their knowledge while a revitalized language is one which is likely to be spoken and used by future generations. By adopting and supporting effective practices for language revitalization, Indigenous languages and culture can be saved, celebrated, and enhanced.



# Homes







# Homes

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**...nearly 25 per cent of adults lived in homes needing major repairs. The survey also demonstrated 38.3 per cent of adults lived in crowded housing conditions, and 56.6 per cent of children lived in crowded households...**

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First Nations are facing a housing crisis in Manitoba. Data from the 2015-2016 First Nations Regional Health Survey, which surveyed over 30 participating Manitoba First Nations showed nearly 25 per cent of adults lived in homes needing major repairs. The survey also demonstrated 38.3 per cent of adults lived in crowded housing conditions, and 56.6 per cent of children lived in crowded households.<sup>1</sup> Current funding levels allocated for housing construction is frequently redirected to repair and maintenance, deepening the overcrowding crisis.<sup>2</sup> Overcrowding in housing is directly linked to inequitable health outcomes, and is therefore a significant health concern. Elders, seniors, and persons with disabilities in First Nations experience greater challenges as a result of inadequate housing not suited to their needs or hazardous to their health. Inadequate housing and overcrowding in on-reserve housing is also linked to lowered socioeconomic outcomes, such as lower-than-average education achievement rates.<sup>3</sup>

Addressing housing shortages and backlogs to repairs on-reserve are crucial to ensuring Manitoba First Nations do not experience worsening health conditions and have the ability to exercise their sovereignty. Additionally, many First Nations citizens living off-reserve experience homelessness, precarity, or unaffordable rent burdens. The Government of Canada needs to honour its commitment to a Nation-to-Nation relationship by codeveloping funding and program strategies with Manitoba First Nations to address housing needs for First Nations citizens living on- and off-reserve.

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<sup>1</sup> First Nations Health and Social Secretariat of Manitoba, "First Nations Regional Health Survey Phase 3 (2015-2016: Manitoba Regional Report)" (Winnipeg: FNHSSM, September 2018), 85 [https://www.fnhssm.com/\\_files/ugd/ce86f2\\_f1b037d998d142a886da5d74b6422e20.pdf](https://www.fnhssm.com/_files/ugd/ce86f2_f1b037d998d142a886da5d74b6422e20.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Senate of Canada Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples, *Housing on First Nations Reserves: Challenges and Successes*. Ottawa: Canada, 2015. Last modified February 2015. <https://sencanada.ca/en/content/sen/committee/412/appa/rms/08feb15/home-e>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



# First Nations On-Reserve Housing

## Issue

Manitoba First Nations have been vocal about the growing backlog of repairs and new builds needed for housing on-reserve. Phase 3 of the First Nations Regional Health Survey (2015-16) identified repairs and overcrowded homes, especially for children, as an acute issue.<sup>1</sup> In addition, *The Implementation of Jordan's Principle in Manitoba: Final Report (2022)* identified the critical need for committed funding and other resources to ensure adequate housing and clean water for every First Nation child.<sup>2</sup> It is critical First Nations governments be given a leading role in the administration, governance, and delivery of housing programs and funds, on- and off-reserve.

## Required Spending

\$5.7B in federal investment is needed to address current repair, replacement, and housing stock expansion needs on-reserve immediately. \$2.3B is needed to address future needs on-reserve over the next eighteen years (until 2040).

## Benefits

Addressing overcrowding on-reserve can help with child education, health, family stability, and employment. Addressing urban homelessness will improve the quality of life for many and improve mental health.

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<sup>1</sup> First Nations Health and Social Secretariat of Manitoba (FNHSSM), First Nations Regional Health Survey (RHS) Phase 3 (2015-2016): Manitoba Regional Report (Winnipeg: First Nations Health and Social Secretariat of Manitoba, September 2018): 85. [https://www.fnhssm.com/\\_files/ugd/ce86f2\\_f1b037d998d142a886da5d74b6422e20.pdf](https://www.fnhssm.com/_files/ugd/ce86f2_f1b037d998d142a886da5d74b6422e20.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> V. Sinha et al., *The Implementation of Jordan's Principle in Manitoba: Final Report* (Winnipeg: Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, 2022), 85-86. <https://manitobachiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/22-01-28-The-Implementation-of-Jordans-Principle-in-Manitoba-Final-Report.pdf>.



# Affordable Housing in Urban Centres and Other Off-Reserve Communities

## Issue

Many First Nations citizens and other Indigenous people living off-reserve in urban centres and other communities face housing affordability issues.<sup>1</sup> In particular, there is great need for increased urban housing services off-reserve for First Nations living in urban centres like Winnipeg, Thompson, and Brandon who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness. Furthermore, many First Nations living off-reserve experience unaffordable rent burdens and housing inadequate for their family needs.

## Required Spending

\$363.0M for 2023-2024. \$360.5 million to maintain and expand affordable housing for First Nations citizens and other Indigenous people living off-reserve and \$2.5 million for the development of a First Nations-led housing coordination service to facilitate linkages between existing off-reserve housing services, First Nations Governments, and First Nations mandated entities.

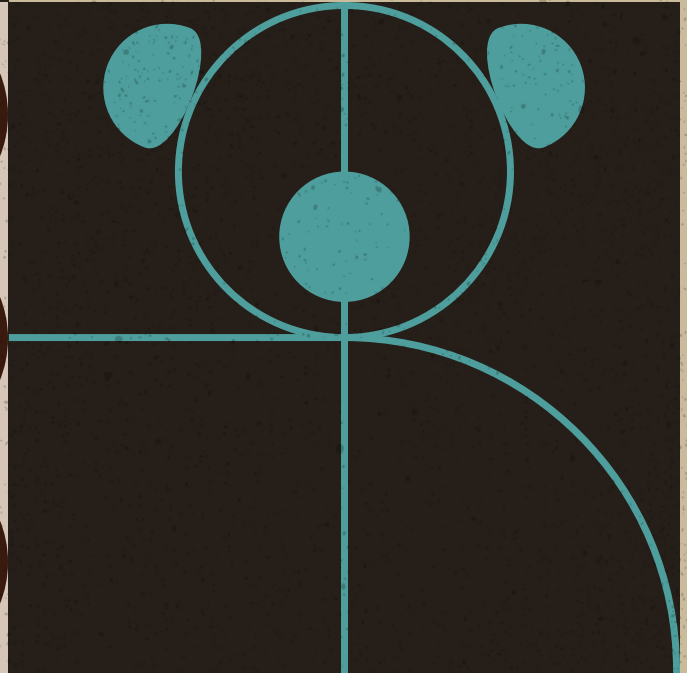
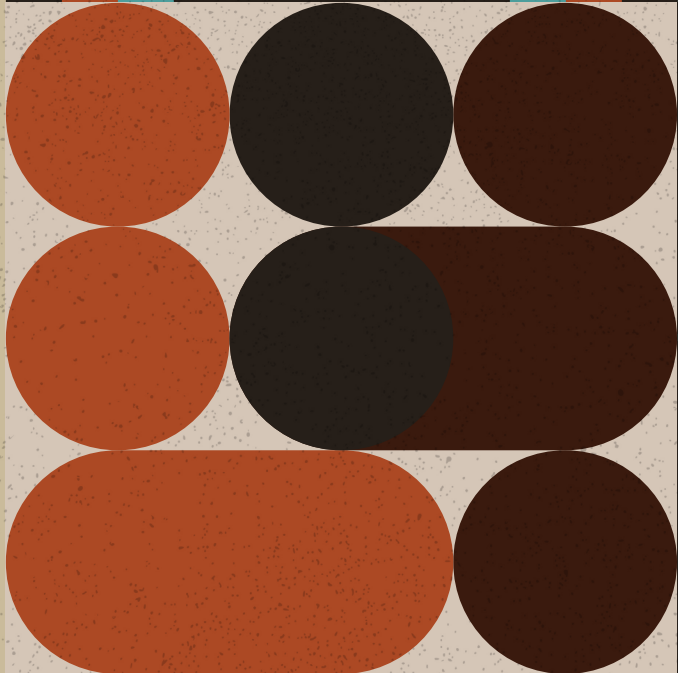
## Benefits

Construction of affordable housing within a culturally appropriate framework would give many currently homeless First Nations citizens living in Winnipeg, for example, safety and an opportunity to engage with schooling, family, cultural and community activities, and employment. Important social, cultural, and educational aspects of First Nations and Indigenous peoples' lives can only be fully realized once pressing shelter needs are addressed. Housing supports could also help those with unaffordable rents and inadequate housing obtain more appropriate accommodations.

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<sup>1</sup> Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, "Statement from the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs RE: National Housing Strategy," April 10, 2018, <https://manitobachiefs.com/statement-from-the-assembly-of-manitoba-chiefs-re-national-housing-strategy/>.

# Child and Family Support





# Child and Family Support

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**Of the 11,000 children in Manitoba's child welfare system, a staggering 80 per cent are First Nations.**

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The Anishinaabeg, Anishinininwak, Dakota Oyate, Denesuline, Nehethwuk/Inninwak and other First Nations peoples in Manitoba possess inherent Aboriginal and Treaty rights that include jurisdiction over the well-being of their families and children. Disregard of this inherent jurisdiction by Canada and Manitoba has led to disastrous outcomes for First Nations. Of the 11,000 children in Manitoba's child welfare system, a staggering 80 per cent are First Nations.<sup>1</sup> The Manitoba child welfare system serves as an extension of the cultural genocide approaches of the 60s scoop and the Indian Residential School System.<sup>2</sup>

In 2017, the AMC signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Canada on child welfare.<sup>3</sup> In the MOU the AMC agrees to participate in discussions with Canada regarding the reform of child and family services. The *Keewaywin Engagement Manitoba First Nations Child and Family Services Reform Final Report* identifies elements needed for a new, self-determined First Nations model-of-care. This includes the deconstruction of the current child welfare system, making prevention the standard and preferred practice over apprehension, establishing customary care/kindship models of care across First Nations in Manitoba, restoring traditional cultural and language practices, and addressing socio-economic conditions among other key recommendations.<sup>4</sup>

The MOU, the 2016 Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT) ruling on Canada's inadequate implementation of Jordan's Principle and subsequent decisions, as well as the federal government's intended goal to reform the First Nations Child and Family Services Program presents a unique opportunity. Canada can work with Manitoba First Nations to ensure the inherent jurisdiction of First Nations in child and family well-being is recognized. This includes ensuring fiscal transfers for child and family services for First Nations go directly to First Nations, rather than to intermediaries,<sup>5</sup> and the end of provincial control in First Nations child and family service matters.<sup>6</sup> As noted in the *Bringing Our Children Home* report:



*“Overall, there must be a transition to a First Nations System that is based on the original systems of child rearing, education, and nurturance of individual spirit. Resources must be used in appropriate ways to break the existing cycle to restore spiritual, physical, mental, and emotional health and well-being.*

*The only way out of the current child welfare crisis is to develop a completely new system based on the First Nations principles of: love, compassion, respect, and dignity. With the guidance of the First Nations Elders and Grandmothers, clear direction on how to do this will come from a higher power of Spirit. In order for this new path to be successful, it will be imperative for First Nations to never compromise the long-term goals of ‘Bringing Our Children Home.’”<sup>7</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> AMC Communications, “The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC)-First Nations Family Advocate Office Files Class Action Lawsuit on Behalf of First Nations Children, Families and Nations Impacted by the Manitoba Child Welfare System,” Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, October 6, 2022. <https://manitobachiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/AMC-News-Release-AMC-FNFAO-Files-Class-Action-Lawsuit-re-FN-Children-and-CWS-1.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> First Nations Family Advocate Office, “Keewaywin Engagement Manitoba First Nations Child and Family Services Reform Final Report September 2017,” Long Plains First Nation: Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, 2017, iii. [https://manitobachiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Final-FNCFS-Reform-Engagement-Report\\_September-2017.pdf](https://manitobachiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Final-FNCFS-Reform-Engagement-Report_September-2017.pdf).

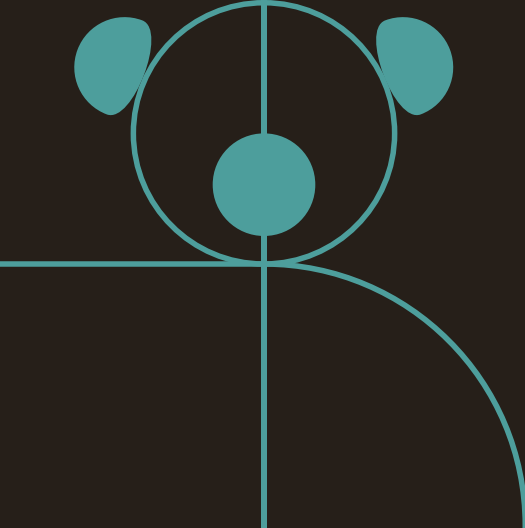
<sup>3</sup> Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, “Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs-Canada Memorandum of Understanding,” 2017. <https://manitobachiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/AMC-Canada-MOU-on-Child-Welfare-Signed-Documents.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> First Nations Family Advocate Office, “Keewaywin Engagement Manitoba First Nations Child and Family Services Reform Final Report,” 31.

<sup>5</sup> Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Women’s Council, “Setting the Foundation for Change: A Strategy towards First Nations’ Jurisdiction of Child Welfare in Manitoba,” Long Plains First Nation: Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, March 2018, 10. <https://manitobachiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/FNWC-Session-Final-Report-Web.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>7</sup> Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, “Bringing Our Children Home: Report and Recommendations,” Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, June 2014, 2. <https://manitobachiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Bringing-Our-Children-Home-Final-Report-June-2014.pdf>.



## First Nations Child and Family Services and Jordan's Principle: Ongoing Services, Compensation, and Reform

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**Of the 11,000 children in Manitoba's child welfare system, a staggering 80 per cent are First Nations.**

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### Issue Statement

The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal's 2016 Merit Decision asserted failure to cover capital costs for First Nations Child and Family Services (FNCFS) limited their ability to effectively deliver provincially mandated, culturally appropriate services to children and families.<sup>1</sup> The continued failure to support FNCFS became the impetus for Canadian Human Rights Tribunal 41 (2021 CHRT 41), wherein FNCFS, small, and First Nations agencies were ordered to fund the full cost of purchasing or building capital assets for delivering FNCFS and Jordan's Principle services.<sup>2</sup> On December 31, 2021, the Agreement-in-Principle on Long-Term Reform of the First Nations Child and Family Services Program and Jordan's Principle, budgeting \$19,807M for FNCFS reform and Jordan's Principle services, was signed.<sup>3</sup> This funding was made available as part of the 2019 *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*, which provides the framework for First Nations jurisdiction over their own services.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, concerning the allocation of funds, 2021 CHRT 41 ordered feasibility studies and consultations to be conducted ahead of the implementation of a spending plan as of April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023.<sup>5</sup>

### Required Spending – Ongoing FNCFS Funding

The proposed budget for the Manitoba share of ongoing FNCFS funding is \$662.6M per year for five years. Suggested FNCFS reform spending is \$570M for Manitoba per year for five years. To prevent the imposition of colonial forms of governance on Manitoba First Nations Child and Family Services, and to further self-determination of First Nations service providers, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and its partners must be granted an active member in the policy-making process by Canada.

### Required Spending – Jordan's Principle

\$190M for Manitoba per year ongoing for five years. Contrary to its representation in ISC's 2022-2023 Department Plan, funding for Jordan's Principle should not serve as a stand-in for ongoing

FNCFS funding as this is not its purpose.<sup>6</sup> Likewise, ongoing stable funding is needed to provide services during the transitional period of FNCFS reform. Furthermore, the redistribution of funds, rather than securing of new funds, risks reducing funding to existing preventive programs.<sup>7</sup>


Suggested spending on compensation for individuals denied or delayed Jordan's Principle services, those on-reserve, children removed from their homes, those denied essential services, and caregiver parents and grandparents, should be set at \$21.0B dispersed over five years.

## Benefits

Suggested funding support will ensure FNCFS will be sufficiently funded during the reform phase, while collecting data that can inform long-term policy attuned to the substantive needs of First Nations in Manitoba. Sufficient support for Manitoba's First Nations, and the organizations that represent them, will ensure the timely and fair distribution of funds to children and caregivers discriminated against by child and family services in Canada. Permanent funding and substantial support will encourage the development of data collecting and the sharing of services that will assist government and non-government actors in the development of future policies for Indigenous youths.

**Table 5 – Child and Family Services – National Spending (Estimated Manitoba Share)<sup>8</sup>**

Actual National Spending					
	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
First Nations Child and Family Services	\$401.90	\$1,245.0M	\$1,483.5M	\$1,520.90	\$1,792.90
Jordan's Principle	-	\$195.7M	\$562.2M	\$582.1M	\$658.49
Suggested National Spending (Manitoba)					
	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026	2026-2027	2027-2028
First Nations Child and Family Services	\$3,000.0M	\$3,000.0M	\$3,000.0M	\$3,000.0M	\$3,000.0M
	(\$662.6M)	(\$662.6M + Subsequent inflation)	(\$662.6M + Subsequent inflation)	(\$662.6M + Subsequent inflation)	(\$662.6M + Subsequent inflation)
Jordan's Principle	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
	(\$190.0M)	(\$190.0M)	(\$190.0M)	(\$190.0M)	(\$190.0M)
<i>Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis Children, Youth and Families</i>	\$3,000.0M	\$3,000.0M	\$3,000.0M	\$3,000.0M	\$3,000.0M
	(\$570.0M)	(\$570.0M)	(\$570.0M)	(\$570.0M)	(\$570.0M)



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<sup>1</sup> Indigenous Services Canada, “2021 Canadian Human Rights Tribunal 41: Order,” last modified February 17, 2022, <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1644607163941/1644607214188#:~:text=On%20November%2016%2C%202021%2C%20the,of%20services%20under%20Jordan's%20Principle>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Indigenous Services Canada, “Executive Summary of Agreement-in-Principle on Long-Term Reform,” last modified February 18, 2022, <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1644518166138/1644518227229>

<sup>4</sup> Indigenous Services Canada, “Long-term reform of First Nations Child and Family Services and long-term approach for Jordan’s Principle,” last modified July 19, 2022, <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1646942622080/1646942693297>

<sup>5</sup> Indigenous Services Canada, “2021 Canadian Human Rights Tribunal 41: Order.”

<sup>6</sup> Indigenous Services Canada, *Departmental Plan 2022-2023*. Ottawa: Indigenous Services Canada, 2022, 57, [https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-ISC-SAC/DAM-CORP/STAGING/texte-text/dept-plan-2022-2023\\_1646161786888\\_eng.pdf](https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-ISC-SAC/DAM-CORP/STAGING/texte-text/dept-plan-2022-2023_1646161786888_eng.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Olivia Stefanovich, “Ottawa’s child welfare reform could mean cuts to Indigenous services, agencies warn,” last modified October 20, 2022, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/indigenous-child-welfare-changes-child-family-services-1.6608174>.

<sup>8</sup> Department of Finance Canada, *2022 Budget: A Plan to Grow Our Economy and Make Life More Affordable* (Ottawa: Department of Finance Canada, 2022). <https://budget.gc.ca/2022/home-accueil-en.html>; Government of Canada, Receiver General, *Public Accounts of Canada*. Vol. II: Details of Expenses and Revenues, Accessed September 17, 2021. [https://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/201/301/public\\_accounts\\_can/pdf/2017/2017-vol2-eng.pdf](https://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/201/301/public_accounts_can/pdf/2017/2017-vol2-eng.pdf); Government of Canada, Receiver General, *Public Accounts of Canada*. Vol. II: Details of Expenses and Revenues, Accessed August 20, 2022. <https://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/recgen/cpc-pac/2021/index-eng.html>; Indigenous Services Canada, “Infographic for First Nations Child and Family Services,” last modified September 20, 2022. <https://www.tbs-sct.canada.ca/ems-sgd/edb-bdd/index-eng.html#infographic/program/INDSC-BXM12/financial>; Indigenous Services Canada, “Infographic for Jordan’s Principle and the Inuit Child First Initiative,” last modified September 20, 2022. <https://www.tbs-sct.canada.ca/ems-sgd/edb-bdd/index-eng.html#infographic/program/INDSC-BXM01/services>.

# Spotlight

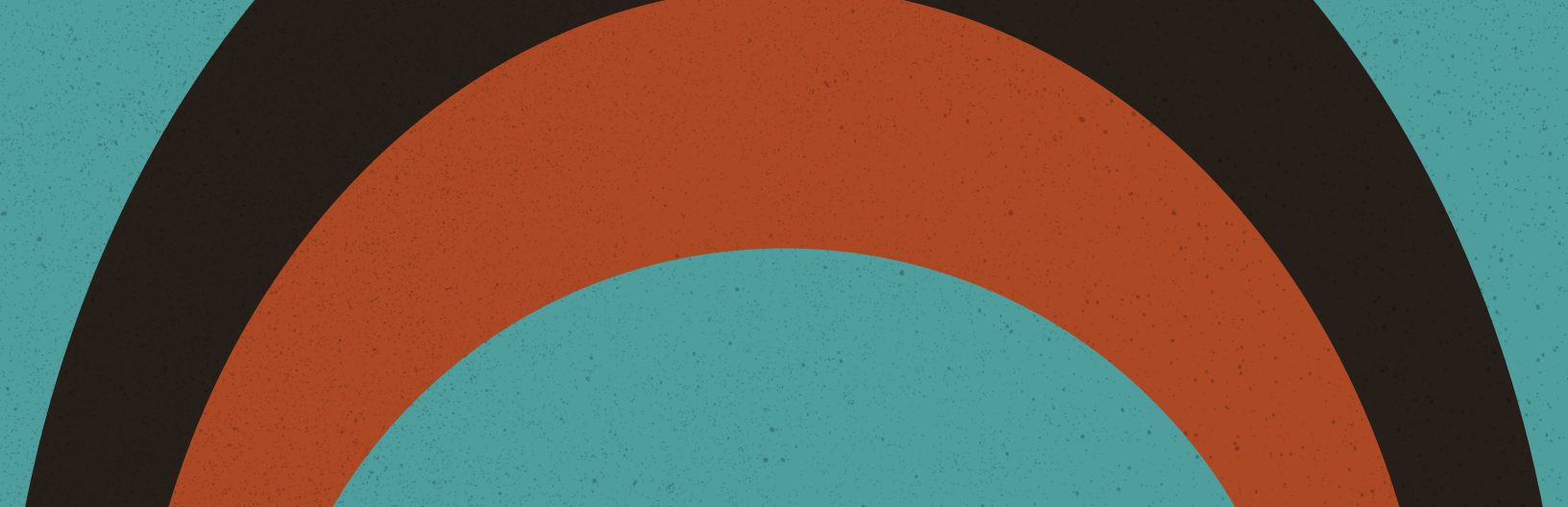
## Keewatinohk Inniniw Minoayawin and Jordan's Principle Services

Keewatinohk Inniniw Minoayawin (KIM) was established by the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc. (MKO) Chiefs Task Force on Health in January 2020 to address gaps in health care for First Nations. KIM is an ideal recipient for Jordan's Principle funding, as it addresses gaps in service provision for First Nations children and youth.<sup>1</sup>

In 2020, KIM received Jordan's Principle funding from the federal government as part of their Clinical Partnership. Two positions were created to provide pediatric and clinical health psychological services to 13 northern First Nations.<sup>2</sup> The program aimed to improve access to medical services and address gaps in care and referrals for First Nations children. Pediatricians and nurse practitioners help identify developmental and chronic health needs in children and youth, as well as make referrals for tertiary care and psychological services.<sup>3</sup>

Such services have previously been inaccessible for many remote and northern First Nations. This reality is a concerning precedent as psychological services are particularly vital in diagnosing developmental anomalies. The use of telehealth and flexible means of service delivery has been important in providing health services to higher-need communities, nine of which had no pediatric or psychological services and limited general practitioner services. More effective service delivery has reduced the need for traveling long distances from remote communities for medical services.<sup>4</sup>





In total, 374 children received medical services under the Clinical Partnership during the 2020-21 fiscal year. Extending benefits past 2021, the program also included enhanced education and on-site workplace development, ensuring First Nations are better equipped to respond to health needs. Similarly, resident doctors accompanying clinicians has built trust between communities and health care service providers, resulting in better identification of First Nations health needs.<sup>5</sup>

Although the COVID-19 pandemic revealed certain gaps in northern Manitoba First Nations health services, KIM's Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Barry Lavallee, notes such gaps should not be confused with the larger issue of First Nations health care services being chronically under-resourced. Jordan's Principle services can address specific gaps, such as lack of child psychological services, but basic needs such as nurses and physicians require separate and sustainable funding from the federal government. Jordan's Principle funding should not be used as a substitute for the inadequacy of other underfunded and under-resourced health services.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Keewatinohk Inniniw Minoayawin Inc., *The KIM Story*, 2. <https://kiminoayawin.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/The-KIM-Story.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> V. Sinha et al., *The Implementation of Jordan's Principle in Manitoba: Final Report* (Winnipeg: Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, 2022), <https://manitobachiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/22-01-28-The-Implementation-of-Jordans-Principle-in-Manitoba-Final-Report.pdf>.

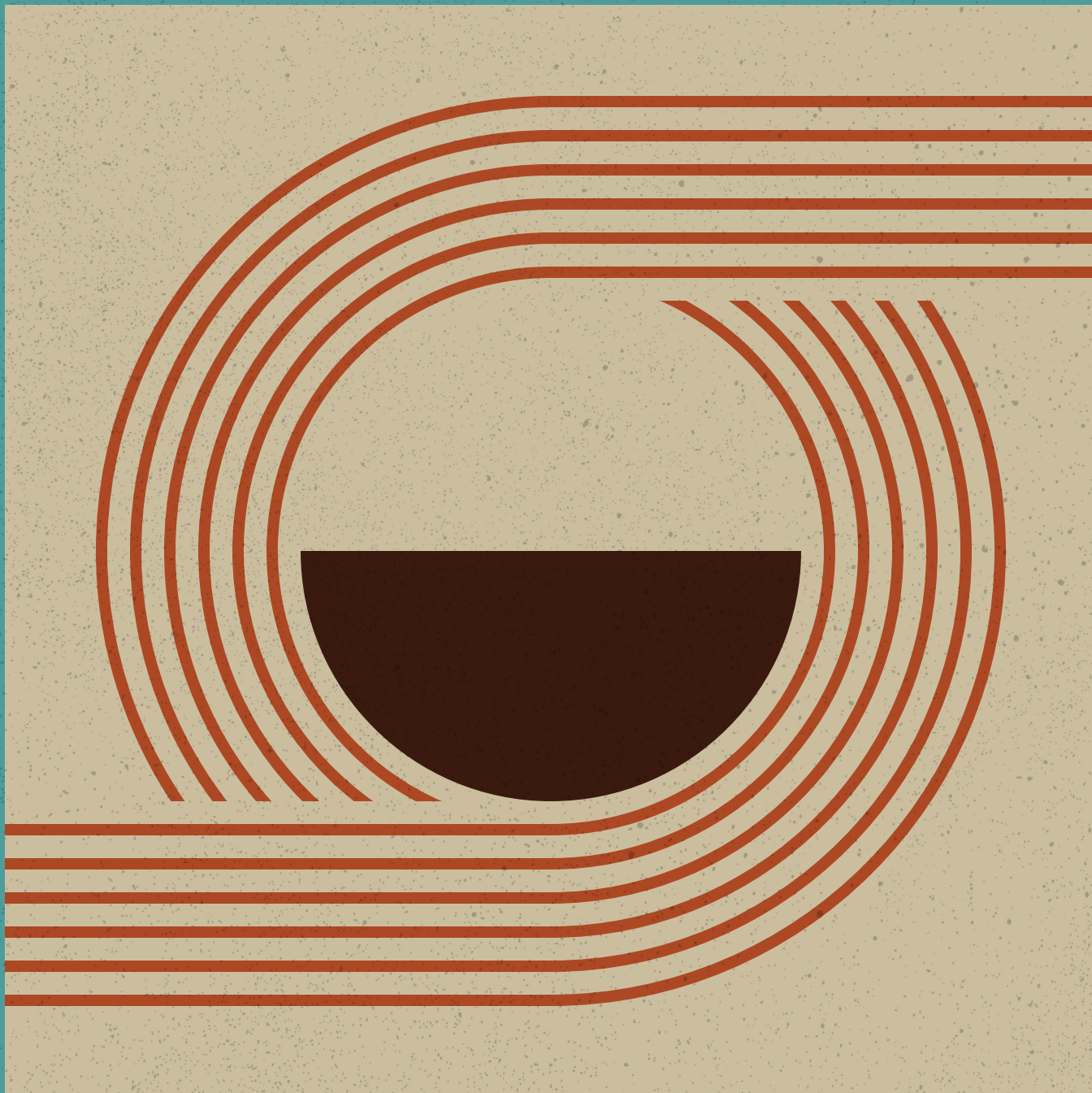
<sup>3</sup> Keewatinohk Inniniw Minoayawin Inc., *Keewatinohk Inniniw Minoayawin: Northern Peoples' Wellness Annual Report 2020/21*, (Internal document): 23.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 23.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>6</sup> Ian Graham, "Health care for northern First Nations in a state of emergency, leaders say," *Thompson Citizen*, May 30, 2022. <https://www.thompsoncitizen.net/local-news/health-care-for-northern-first-nations-in-a-state-of-emergency-leaders-say-5423660>.

# Education





# Education

Manitoba First Nations have an inherent and Treaty right to education. This right has been undermined by years of underfunding by Canada. Inadequate support for First Nations education limits the ability of First Nation citizens to gain meaningful employment and economic participation, and fundamentally undermines the efforts of First Nations to restore traditional cultures and languages. Inadequate K-12 education has meant fewer First Nations have been able to attend post-secondary, and many Nations have a waiting list for funding for those who do qualify. The lack of access to post-secondary training also means many Nations have difficulty recruiting skilled workers. Investment in First Nations education will create opportunities for First Nations citizens, families, and communities.

To elicit change for First Nations education in Manitoba, the AMC is working to reassert First Nations jurisdiction over education. At advance the stated goal of First Nations obtaining complete autonomy over how they run their schools, the AMC is negotiating a Regional Education Agreement (REA) with the federal government.<sup>1</sup> The end result of negotiations should lead to an equitable funding allocation model for First Nations K-12 schools based on realistic cost drivers.

Post-secondary education is also very essential for economic independence and cultural restoration. Under direction from the Chiefs Committee on Education (CCOE), AMC was designated the First Nations organization responsible for the adjudication and administration of Post-Secondary Partnership Program (PSPP) funding.<sup>2</sup> The PSPP supports First Nations established post-secondary institutions and First Nations-directed community-based programming. The AMC works with First Nations leaders to distribute funds in an equitable manner.

The REA is under negotiation. When agreed to, a better understanding of needed K-12 funding for Manitoba First Nations schools will be available. Further research is needed to estimate needed funding to establish First Nations Post-Secondary Institutes in Manitoba.

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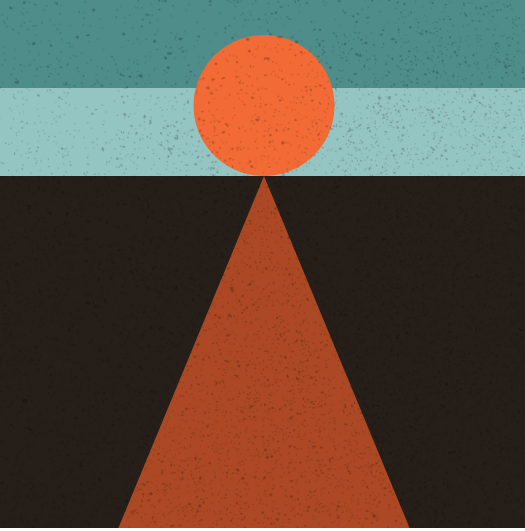
<sup>1</sup> AMC Communications, “AMC Marks International Day of Education” (Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, January 24, 2022), <https://manitobachiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/2022-01-24-International-Day-of-Education-FINAL.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



# **Employment, Economic Development, and Income Support**





# Employment, Economic Development, and Income Support

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**Dispossession and colonization undermined vibrant, healthy traditional economies among the First Nations of Manitoba.**

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Dispossession and colonization undermined vibrant, healthy traditional economies among the First Nations of Manitoba. Restoration of economic health to First Nations and economic opportunity for First Nations citizens requires federal investment and support of First Nations priorities. The restoration of First Nations economies and economic independence will require intensive, substantial work in many areas. This includes the development of a Manitoba First Nations Employment Strategy and training programs to ensure First Nations citizens receive necessary job skills in a manner culturally appropriate and focused on community-identified needs. Investment in economic development initiatives that will foster First Nations industries are also crucially needed to repair decades of economic depression and repression. Addressing critical transportation infrastructure for First Nations through the Hudson Bay Railway, air service, and intra-provincial bus service is another area requiring substantial work and investment. Improving the Income Assistance Program to provide more equitable services and flexible funding to those in need is another facet of restoring economic opportunity to Manitoba First Nations.





# Employment Strategy and Training Programs

## Issue

First Nations citizens in Manitoba are chronically underemployed (particularly on-reserve) or unemployed due to inadequate support, training, education, and lack of opportunities, all of which are intrinsically tied to past and ongoing colonial harms. Investment in a long-term employment strategy and adequate training programs is necessary to equip First Nations citizens with necessary skills and training that will lead to long-term employment.

## Required Spending

\$17.9M per year ongoing for five years for Manitoba First Nations Employment Strategy and Training Programs.

## Benefits

Greater investment in Manitoba First Nations-specific employment and training programs will address decades of colonial harm that has economically depressed First Nations peoples within the province. Such programs will aid Indigenous peoples by improving their skillsets and finding sustainable and beneficial employment. Further, greater investment will allow First Nations in Manitoba to design and deliver job training services for First Nations that are culturally appropriate and meet individual community need.



# Economic Development Initiatives

## Issue

Over several centuries, the process of government-enacted colonization laid waste to strong, vibrant, and sustainable Indigenous economies in North America.<sup>1</sup> Support must be given to First Nations economic development in Canada if reconciliation is to be realized. It must undo centuries of policies that have undermined the economic sovereignty and financial independence of First Nations in Canada, which have isolated communities and created widespread poverty.<sup>2</sup>

## Required Spending

\$65.5M per year ongoing for five years will allow for Nation-based Economic Development Initiatives in First Nations across Manitoba.

## Benefits

Significant investment to support strengthening First Nations economic development initiatives is an important step in the reconciliation process. First Nations populations are also a fast-growing population – therefore requiring economic support and opportunities to ensure collective prosperity and the alleviation of ongoing suffering and impoverishment.<sup>3</sup> Reconciliation can only be realized by bolstering First Nations economies to improve poor socioeconomic conditions, a result of years of colonial-created economic depression and dependence.

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<sup>1</sup> L. Schembri, “Remarks of Lawrence Schembri, Deputy Governor National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association,” (Gatineau, Quebec: May 5, 2022): 2, last accessed September 22, 2021, <https://www.bankofcanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/remarks-2022-05-05.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 3.



# Tourism, Hudson Bay Railway, Remote and Northern Air Service, and Intra-Provincial Bus Service


## Issue

Transportation for citizens of First Nations with remote, northern, rural, and isolated land bases can be a challenge. Intra-provincial travel<sup>1</sup> can be important for visiting family members and loved ones, attending routine medical appointments, education, shopping, and more. The exit of Greyhound in 2018 left a serious hole in service for many First Nations citizens that, as of yet, has not been filled.<sup>2</sup> An issue for independent long-haul bus companies in Manitoba, including First Nations owned enterprises, is the lack of access to maintenance shops owned by Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure across the province, and the fundamental reality that only a few major routes are profitable.<sup>3</sup>

Improved access to air travel and the need for continued maintenance and enhanced operations of the Hudson Bay Railway are also significant transportation issues. Combined Federal-Provincial funding of \$147 million over two years for the Hudson Bay Railway was recently announced in August 2022.<sup>4</sup> At approximately \$73.5 million per year, this is a welcome investment. However, more substantial and ongoing funding is required to address current and long-standing issues.

## Required Spending

\$55M in new spending is required for meaningful support for the Hudson Bay railway, expansion of bus service for First Nation citizens living on-reserve or in rural, remote, or northern areas, the creation of a First Nations-led tourism strategy, and increased air service to First Nations. This estimation would be in addition to any current spending already allocated to existing initiatives, such as recently announced Federal-Provincial joint funding for the Hudson Bay Railway.



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**As it stands, there are no federal subsidy programs to facilitate intra-provincial bus companies adopting unprofitable service routes.**

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## Benefits

With proper infrastructure support (i.e. maintenance shops) for long-haul bus companies, 20-25 buses could service the entire province for intra-provincial travel.<sup>5</sup> As it stands, there are no federal subsidy programs to facilitate intra-provincial bus companies adopting unprofitable service routes.<sup>6</sup> This would greatly improve profitability and access, the latter of which is crucial for First Nations citizens to travel and receive timely health care services, reunite with family, and ensure safety, particularly for vulnerable populations (i.e. Indigenous women, girls, and youth).

Additionally, federal spending on First Nations-led tourism initiatives is necessary to improve public appreciation of First Nations culture and generate needed revenue for many Nations.

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<sup>1</sup> “Intra-provincial travel” refers to travel between cities, towns, villages, and other population centres as opposed to within municipality public transit.

<sup>2</sup> Northern Manitoba Transportation Sector expert, “Virtual Interview: Haul Bus Service in Manitoba,” interview by Waapihk Research, September 6, 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> The Canadian Press, “Feds, province pump more money into rail line to Churchill, Man,” CityNews, August 3, 2022, <https://winnipeg.citynews.ca/2022/08/03/feds-province-pump-more-money-into-rail-line-to-churchill-man/>.

<sup>5</sup> Northern Manitoba Transportation Sector expert, “Virtual Interview: Haul Bus Service in Manitoba.”

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.



# Income Assistance

## Issue

The Income Assistance Program (IAP) was first introduced in 1964 as a policy to ensure income assistance was available to on-reserve First Nations citizens in the provinces and territories. The program is meant to provide eligible on-reserve individuals and their families with a comparable standard of living, and to help individuals better transition from income assistance to employment and education.<sup>1</sup>

The program has not substantially changed since its inception in 1964, as noted in a 2018-19 engagement process with IAP recipients.<sup>2</sup> Changes required to enhance the program include: more equitable services, rates based on the actual cost of living, increased access to case management and pre-employment supports, greater funding for increased community capacity, and more control and flexibility over the design and delivery of the program by First Nations governments to ensure culturally appropriate approaches and initiatives.<sup>3</sup> Greater federal investment is required to implement these needed reforms to the IAP program.

## Required Spending

\$336.8M per year ongoing for five years to ensure better access to the Income Assistance program for many low-income First Nations citizens living on-reserve in Manitoba.

## Benefits

Greater federal investment in the IAP in Manitoba will necessarily initiate the implementation of reforms required to make the program more accessible, culturally appropriate, and flexible. Such reforms will better support First Nations IAP recipients and their families, reducing overall unemployment and poverty rates in on-reserve communities.

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<sup>1</sup> Indigenous Services Canada, “First Nations-led engagement on Income Assistance 2018 to 2020, national summary report,” last modified June 22, 2021, <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1618345382082/1618345423300#chp1>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



# Land and Wildlife Stewardship





# Land and Wildlife Stewardship

First Nations have an inherent and fundamental relationship with the land. Traditional stewardship of the land is integral to First Nations societies, spirituality, and economies. Colonization led to dispossession and the minimization of land bases for First Nations. First Nations have rights to land, resources, and jurisdiction over their traditional territories. It is essential that the federal government provide support to meet its Treaty and fiduciary obligations, and that these rights and jurisdiction be fully asserted by the First Nations of Manitoba.

An important aspect of First Nations land and wildlife stewardship is First Nations governed and managed conservation and habitat preservation. This can help conserve the land and habitat of animals. The aforesaid importantly serve as carbon sinks which help mitigate climate change, an issue affecting all peoples and cultures, but most acutely Indigenous societies. An important element of First Nations governed conservation and habitat preservation, in addition to nation-building for Manitoba First Nations, is addressing outstanding land claims.



# Wildlife Stewardship, Climate Mitigation, and Adaptation

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**Indigenous conservation and stewardship are critical aspects in achieving Canada's 2030 Greenhouse Gas (GHG) reduction target and contributing to the country's resiliency in the face of a changing climate.**

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## Issue

The 2021 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report lays out an urgent call to action in mitigating the irreversible and catastrophic effects of climate change. Over the years, Canada, and its G7 peers, have made numerous commitments to addressing this pressing issue but has repeatedly failed to fulfill those promises. With a broad consensus that time is running out, the need to take real action on multiple climate fronts is increasingly evident.

Indigenous conservation and stewardship are critical aspects in achieving Canada's 2030 Greenhouse Gas (GHG) reduction target and contributing to the country's resiliency in the face of a changing climate. One of the simplest ways of addressing climate change is through nature-based solutions which are effective in both cost and outcome.

Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs), where Indigenous governments have the primary role in protecting and conserving local land and waterways through governance and knowledge systems, establish important carbon sinks and help maintain biodiversity within a defined geography.<sup>1</sup> The Canadian government has established a target of conserving 30% of the country's lands and waters by 2030.<sup>2</sup>

In August of 2021, the federal government announced an investment of \$340M over five years to support Indigenous Protected Areas and Indigenous guardians across Canada. This investment furthers efforts toward the Canadian-set target of protecting 30% of land and waters.

## Required Spending

\$25M in additional funding over five years (\$5M annually) in Wildlife Stewardship, Climate Mitigation, and Adaptation for the development and expansion of Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) and to support an Indigenous guardians network within Manitoba.



## Benefits

The Canadian government has established a target of conserving 30% of the country's lands and waters by 2030 and IPCAs represent a meaningful and well-managed path to reach this goal. Parallel with establishing IPCAs, the development and support of an Indigenous-guardians network to enable local community members as "eyes and ears on the ground" and combine traditional knowledge with Western science can be useful in coordinating research and mentoring youth as future stewards of the land.

An additional \$25M of funding over five years would fast-track the expansion of IPCAs and protect expanses of Manitoba's boreal forest and peatlands which are well-established carbon sinks. This approach can help ensure that a federal climate target is reached with time to spare rather than missed and retroactively redefined.

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<sup>1</sup> Indigenous Leadership Initiative, "Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas," accessed September 18, 2022, <https://www.ilinationhood.ca/indigenous-protected-and-conserved-areas>.

<sup>2</sup> Matt Simmons, "Canada commits \$340 million to Indigenous protected areas, guardians programs," *The Toronto Star*, August 12, 2021, <https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2021/08/12/canada-commits-340-million-to-indigenous-protected-areas-guardians-programs.html>.



# Additions- to-Reserves

## Issue

The Additions-to-Reserves program, housed within Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) is intended to create a new reserve for a First Nation or add land to the existing reserve land of a First Nation. Continued federal investment is required to meet First Nations community access to land, resources, and increase the community and economic development of First Nations, all of which are necessary to fully realize reconciliation efforts.

## Required Spending

\$4.1M per year ongoing for five years for the Additions-to-Reserve program in the Manitoba region.

## Benefits

The Additions-to-Reserves process is essential to advance reconciliation and improve the Nation-to-Nation treaty relationship between First Nations in Manitoba and the Government of Canada. The above federal investment will ensure this important process can continue and Manitoba First Nations are fully supported as they negotiate Additions-to-Reserves in their territories and communities.





# Specific Land Claims

## Issue

Specific land claims address past wrongs against First Nations. Specific land claims (made by First Nations against the Government of Canada) “relate to the administration of land and other First Nation assets and to the fulfilment of historic treaties and other agreements.”<sup>1</sup> Importantly, specific claims are separate and distinct from comprehensive land claims and modern treaties.<sup>2</sup> Continued federal investment is required to address First Nations specific land claims, address wrongs, and ensure the federal government fulfils its treaty responsibilities to First Nations citizens. This process is essential for reconciliation.

## Required Spending

\$29.6M per year ongoing for five years for Specific Land Claims.

## Benefits

The above federal investment will ensure Manitoba First Nations continue to be supported as they negotiate Specific Land Claims in their territories and communities.

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<sup>1</sup> Indigenous Services Canada, “Specific Claims,” last modified December 1, 2021, <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100030291/1539617582343#chp3>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



# Comprehensive Land Claims

## Issue

Modern treaties, also known as Comprehensive Land Claim Agreements (CLCAs), are typically tripartite, including Indigenous organizations or nations, the Crown, and provincial/territorial governments as signatories. Since 1975, Canada has signed 25 additional treaties with Indigenous groups, several of which include self-government.<sup>1</sup> CLCAs are important as they provide clarity and predictability with respect to land and resource rights, ownership, and management. Continued federal investment is required to support First Nations in their negotiation of CLCAs.

## Required Spending

\$258.4M per year ongoing for five years for Comprehensive Land Claims.

## Benefits

The above federal investment will ensure Manitoba First Nations continue to be supported as they negotiate CLCAs with the provincial government and Government of Canada.

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<sup>1</sup> Indigenous Services Canada, "Treaties and agreements," last modified July 30, 2020, <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1100100028574/1529354437231>.

# First Nations Institutions, Governance, and Intergovernmental Relationships





# First Nations Institutions, Governance, and Intergovernmental Relationships

The First Nations of Manitoba are sovereign and engage with Canada on a Nation-to-Nation basis. However, past actions by Canada have diminished many of the traditional governance systems of First Nations. Fiscal support from Canada is required to redress this harm and restore First Nations governance institutions as they engage Canada on a Nation-to-Nation basis and work together towards reconciliation. This work must be self-determined and based on the priorities and agency of First Nations. As *Wahbung: Our Tomorrows* noted:

*“The transition from paternalism to community self-sufficiency may be long and will require significant support from the state, however, we would emphasize that state support should not be such that the government continues to do for us, that which we want to do for ourselves.*

*We would emphasize for the purpose of clarity and to avoid any misunderstanding that the Indian tribes of Manitoba are committed to the belief that our rights, both Aboriginal and Treaty, emanate from our sovereignty as a nation of people. Our relationships with the state have their roots in negotiation between two sovereign peoples.”*

Respecting and supporting nationhood at an institutional level requires considerable support in many aspects of First Nations governance and institutions. This includes respect for Nation-specific policies regarding First Nations citizenship and assistance determining the impact of any legislative changes around Status. First Nations governments and mandated institutions must be supported to take on expanded roles in service delivery and recruit skilled workers. Canada must further support the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba to strengthen, rebuild, and enhance the Treaty Relationship. Funding to fully implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) further requires substantial support.

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<sup>1</sup> Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, *Wahbung: Our Tomorrows*,” Manitoba, Canada, October 1971. <https://manitobachiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Wahbung-Our-Tomorrows-Searchable.pdf>.



# First Nations Citizenship

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**Canada must engage with Manitoba First Nations on a Nation-to-Nation basis, respecting the Honour of the Crown and the Treaty relationship by recognizing self-governance over citizenship in their Nations.**

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## Issue

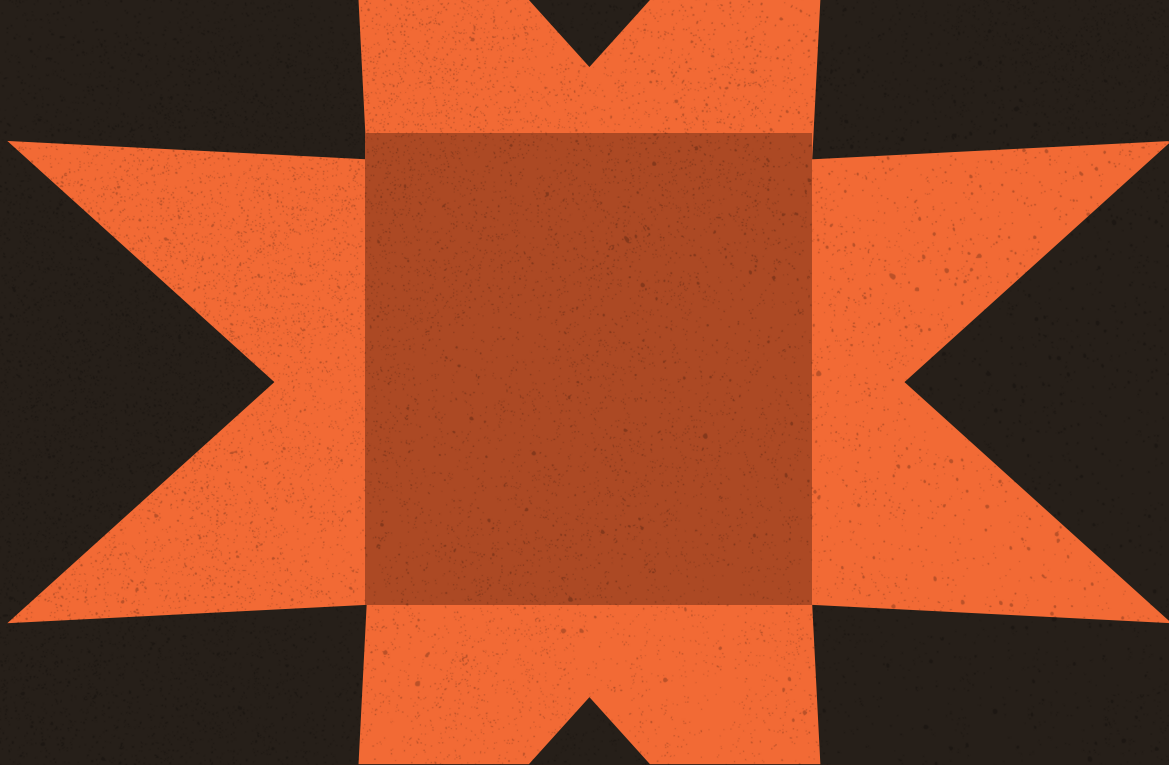
First Nations have inherent jurisdiction over citizenship matters for their Nations. Canada, through the definition of “Indian” under the Indian Act, intrudes on this jurisdiction.<sup>1</sup> Past colonial administration of Indian Status eligibility has resulted in loss of status entitlement for First Nations citizens and even the “de-listing” of a band, as was the case for Arrows Lake Band, the Sinixt Nation of British Columbia.<sup>2</sup> Loss of entitlement for First Nations and citizens seriously undermines the exertion of Treaty rights, results in the loss of federal funding for on-reserve programming, and outright de-listing creates the risk of Canada converting Treaty and Reserve land to Crown land.<sup>3</sup> Canada must engage with Manitoba First Nations on a Nation-to-Nation basis, respecting the Honour of the Crown and the Treaty relationship by recognizing self-governance over citizenship in their Nations.

Through resolution OCT-11.07, the AMC Chiefs-in-Assembly directed the AMC to seek commitment from Canada to support the development of a *First Nations Citizenship Recognition Act*.<sup>4</sup> Through this act, Manitoba First Nations would be meaningfully consulted in a manner consistent with the principles of free, prior, and informed consent.

## Required Spending

\$9.2M per year ongoing for five years to support the administration and development of Nation-specific policies around First Nations Citizenship. This includes the development of a *First Nations Citizenship Recognition Act* through meaningful consultation with Manitoba First Nations consistent with the principles of free, prior, and informed consent. Funding will support determination of what is required to meet the needs of any additional status membership as a result of legislative changes, including costs for mandatory program areas such as housing, education, social services, and reserve lands.





## Benefits

Further inquiry can help clarify where Indigenous peoples in Canada fit regarding the Indian Act and First Nations frameworks for understanding and identifying citizenship. Doing so would help to ameliorate historical injustices, namely the denial of status as a means to justify the non-delivery of services stipulated in Treaties with the Canadian government.<sup>5</sup>

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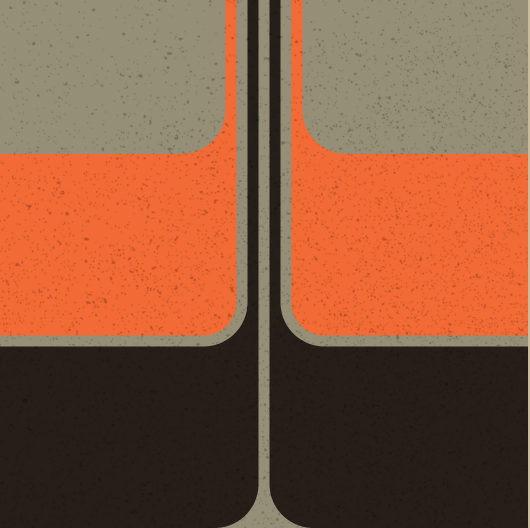
<sup>1</sup> Chiefs-in-Assembly, "RE: First Nations Citizenship and Bill C-3," Brokenhead Ojibway Nation: Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Special Chiefs Assembly, October 11-13, 2011. <https://manitobachiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/CIA-Resolution-October-2011-Special.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, *First Nations Citizenship Workshop: Final Report*, Winnipeg, Manitoba: Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, March 2018. <https://manitobachiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/AMC-First-Nations-Citizenship-Workshop-Report-FINAL.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Chiefs-in-Assembly, "RE: Manitoba First Nations Citizenship Recognition Legislation," Brokenhead Ojibway Nation: Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Special Chiefs Assembly, October 11-13, 2011. <https://manitobachiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/CIA-Resolution-October-2011-Special.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> National Centre for First Nations Governance, *Reclaiming Our Identity: Band Membership, Citizenship, and the Inherent Right*, National Centre for First Nations Governance, retrieved September 23, 2022, 25-26. [https://fngovernance.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Reclaiming\\_Our\\_Identity.pdf](https://fngovernance.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Reclaiming_Our_Identity.pdf)



# United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) Implementation

## Issue

Canada is a signatory to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), which recognizes Indigenous rights to self-determination and government, land rights, and cultural rights, among others.<sup>1</sup> Honouring this commitment by ensuring all Canadian laws and policies are consistent with UNDRIP's principles and that meaningful, substantive consultation is practiced on all issues and decisions that affect Indigenous peoples, is an essential step on the path to reconciliation. First Nations in Manitoba must be involved with the process of implementation to ensure that it is done comprehensively, within the spirit and the letter of the declaration.

## Required Spending

\$5.6M per year ongoing for five years to support UNDRIP Implementation in Manitoba.

## Benefits

Further investment supporting the implementation of the UNDRIP declaration is an essential step on the path to reconciliation. Investment in this area will ensure First Nations in Manitoba are continually and meaningfully involved with the process of implementation, which will ensure the spirit and the letter of the declaration is respected.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations General Assembly, *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, accessed August 17, 2022 [https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP\\_E\\_web.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf).

# Canada-First Nations Treaty Relationship

## Issue

The Treaties between First Nations and the Crown are sacred, inviolable international covenants. Such treaties, between sovereign Nations, were entered with the understanding and belief the terms wherein would be respected and fulfilled by all parties. However, honouring, fulfilling, and implementing the Treaties has not been achieved to their full and proper extent by various Governments of Canada.<sup>1</sup> In 2001, the AMC Chiefs-in-Assembly agreed to create the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba (TRCM) in collaboration with Canada.<sup>2</sup> The TRCM is a neutral body with a mandate to strengthen, rebuild, and enhance the Treaty Relationship. This includes independent research that advances discussion on Treaty related matters.<sup>3</sup>

## Required Spending

\$2.8M per year ongoing for five years to better foster the Canada-First Nations Treaty Relationship through established institutions, such as the TRCM.

## Benefits

The key benefit of a significant federal investment includes improving public understanding of the Treaty Relationship as well as facilitating better protection, interpretation, and implementation of Treaty rights for the First Nations of Manitoba.

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<sup>1</sup> Chiefs-in-Assembly, "RE: Honouring Our Treaties," *Sioux Valley Dakota Nation: Chiefs Special Assembly on Health & Framework Agreement Initiative*, March 5-9, 2001, <https://manitobachiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/CIA-Resolution-March-2001-Health-and-FAL.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, "Treaty Relations," *Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs*, 2018, accessed December 15, 2022, <https://manitobachiefs.com/policy-sectors/treaty-relations/>.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



# Governance Capacity Support

## Issue

Respect and support for First Nations sovereignty and self-government is essential to actualize the health and social transformation that is prerequisite to improve lives, and to respect the Nation-to-Nation relationships established in the Treaties. In addition to having an inherent right to self-governance, First Nations know their own needs, cultures, and histories best, and are therefore best positioned to make decisions for their own communities. This includes the development and administration of their own unique programs, services, and governance systems. However, colonial violence and paternalism have diminished First Nations resources and capacity for self-government. Governance capacity supports must be established as a prerequisite for First Nations to succeed as they continue to reclaim their sovereignty and take back control over community health and social programming.

## Required Spending

\$133.4M per year ongoing for five years for Governance Capacity Support in Manitoba.

## Benefits

The required investment would allow individual First Nations Governments and Tribal Councils to take on expanded roles in governance, administration, and the delivery of health, social, economic development, and other services for First Nation citizens. Increased governance capacity supports will allow the recruitment of professional and skilled workers for First Nations governments, especially through training. Recruitment and training will allow communities to professionally develop citizens of a given First Nation.

# Infrastructure







# Infrastructure

Infrastructure is critical for First Nations self-determination and sovereignty. There have been years of underinvestment and underfunding of First Nations infrastructure by the Canadian government. This includes various types of community infrastructure such as all-weather roads, lot development for housing, community centres, and broadband connectivity needed for First Nations to participate in the modern economy, and even the fundamental human need of clean drinking water.

A report of the Auditor General of Canada in 2021 noted that Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) had failed to provide the needed funding to meet the Prime Minister's promise of ending all First Nations drinking water advisories by March 31, 2021.<sup>1</sup> Denial of the basic human necessity of clean drinking water for First Nations in 2023 is unacceptable. The AMC and First Nations in Manitoba have advocated on the issue of drinking water for several decades. The AMC has proposed First Nations stewardship over First Nations water resources and a Manitoba First Nations Water and Infrastructure Commission based on First Nations values, principles, and beliefs.<sup>2</sup> Investment is needed to end any emerging or long-standing water advisories and establish First Nations self-governance and self-determination over water and other crucial infrastructure.

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<sup>1</sup> AMC Communications, "AMC Responds to Report 3 of the 2021 Reports of the Auditor General of Canada" (Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, February 25, 2021), <https://manitobachiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/21-02-25-NR-RE-AG-of-Canada-Report-3.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



# Connectivity

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**Manitobans face the second-lowest internet speed in Canada: 86% of rural households do not have access to a 50/10 internet speed.**

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## Issue

Manitobans face the second-lowest internet speed in Canada: 86% of rural households do not have access to a 50/10 internet speed. This is generally considered to be the minimum bandwidth required for important tasks, such as video conferencing, accessing educational videos, and other digital materials. Internet access needs to drastically improve to connect 21 First Nations communities in Manitoba (specifically, those that do not have year-round road access). Other Nations require faster, more reliable Internet connections. The delayed investment in this infrastructure area has created an environment in which rural and remote communities, who are lacking access – or do not have adequate access – are consistently falling farther behind southern Manitoba communities and urban centres, particularly in regard to comparable infrastructure, technology, and services.<sup>1</sup>

## Required Spending

\$83.9M in investment is required to unlock faster connections for 48 rural and remote First Nations in partnership with Manitoba First Nations. In 2021, Canada committed to providing \$41M to rural and remote Manitoba communities.<sup>2</sup> Canada must therefore commit to a \$42.9M investment to close the gap for high-speed internet for Manitoba First Nations.

## Benefits

First Nations in Manitoba require this investment to obtain comparability with urban centres and other locales, which do not have the same issues of deficient and inadequate connectivity infrastructure. Strengthening connectivity in remote First Nations communities will aid First Nations citizens and their families to access employment, education, essential services, and stay connect with loved ones.



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<sup>1</sup> The Council of Canadian Academies, “Waiting to Connect: The Expert Panel on High-Throughput Networks for Rural and Remote Communities in Canada,” (October 28, 2021), [https://www.cca-reports.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Waiting-to-Connect\\_FINAL-EN\\_digital.pdf](https://www.cca-reports.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Waiting-to-Connect_FINAL-EN_digital.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> CBC News, “Feds Announce \$41M in Funding for High-Speed Internet for Manitoba Rural, First Nations Communities,” *CBC News*, August 4, 2021, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/manitoba-rural-first-nations-communities-internet-federal-funding-1.6129458>.



# Drinking Water and Wastewater

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**As recently as 2016, approximately one-third of First Nations people living on reserves use drinking water from systems that threaten their health and some communities had been under drinking water advisories for almost 20 years.**

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## Issue

The Canadian federal government has fallen short of meeting its March 31, 2021, deadline to remove all long-term drinking water advisories (LT-DWA) on First Nations reserves.<sup>1</sup> This commitment addresses the TRC's Call to Action #19 to close the gaps in health outcomes and child welfare between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities by improving access to clean drinking water. As recently as 2016, approximately one-third of First Nations people living on reserves use drinking water from systems that threaten their health and some communities had been under drinking water advisories for almost 20 years.<sup>2</sup>

Some progress has been achieved on the promise, with 135 LT-DWAs lifted across Canada since November 2015,<sup>3</sup> but existing short and long-term drinking water advisories continue to reinforce the socio-economic factors that lead to increased risk of disease experienced by Aboriginal peoples. Additionally, aging water-related infrastructure, growing community needs, and operator training and retention contribute to increased risk of prolonged or newly issued drinking water advisories.

## Required Spending

\$41.21M per year ongoing for five years would cover capital costs and operations and maintenance, including ongoing training for water system operators, for on-reserve water and wastewater facilities.

## Benefits

The required federal investment estimate will close the annual \$138M federal funding gap for operations and maintenance that the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) has identified. As noted by the Auditor General of Canada, insufficient operations and maintenance funding may lead to rapid deterioration of water-related infrastructure and increased costs as the infrastructure ages.



Closing the funding gap helps ensure reliable on-reserve access to clean drinking water while minimizing increased costs associated with deferred maintenance.

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<sup>1</sup> Parliamentary Budget Officer, *Clean water for First Nations: Is the government spending enough?*, Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer (December 2021), accessed August 11, 2022, <https://distribution-a617274656661637473.pbo-dpb.ca/8544c3674361c171dbaded06eaff8c5261695d58b608cbc5505f521aaab326fb>.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew McClearn, “Water systems at risk”, *The Globe and Mail*, August 16, 2016, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/indigenous-water/article31589755/>

<sup>3</sup> Indigenous Services Canada, “Ending long-term drinking water advisories,” accessed September 15, 2022, <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1506514143353/1533317130660>.



# Community Infrastructure

## Issue

The significant infrastructure gap between First Nations and non-Indigenous communities in Canada poses a considerable barrier to enabling safety and prosperity in First Nations.<sup>1</sup> High-quality public infrastructure — including schools, roads, health facilities, connectivity, and wastewater systems — reduces social and economic inequities between First Nations and non-Indigenous communities and fosters sustainable Indigenous economic participation.

## Required Spending

\$826.5M per year ongoing for five years for new community infrastructure, such as upgrades to all-weather roads, maintenance and operations, on-reserve lot development, and new community centres.

## Benefits

Sufficient funding to close critical infrastructure gaps and providing communities the flexibility to design and deliver infrastructure projects, which align with unique local contexts, is crucial to the health and sustainability of First Nations.

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<sup>1</sup> Harold Calla. "Closing the First Nations Infrastructure Gap Benefits All in Canada." The Hill Times, August 3, 2022, accessed December 15, 2022. <https://www.hilltimes.com/story/2022/08/03/closing-the-first-nations-infrastructure-gap-benefits-all-in-canada/271037/>.

# Community Safety and Restorative Justice





# Community Safety and Restorative Justice

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**Relative to the broader Canadian population, First Nations – particularly women, girls, LGBTQ+, and Two-Spirited peoples are disproportionately more likely to be victims of violent crimes.**

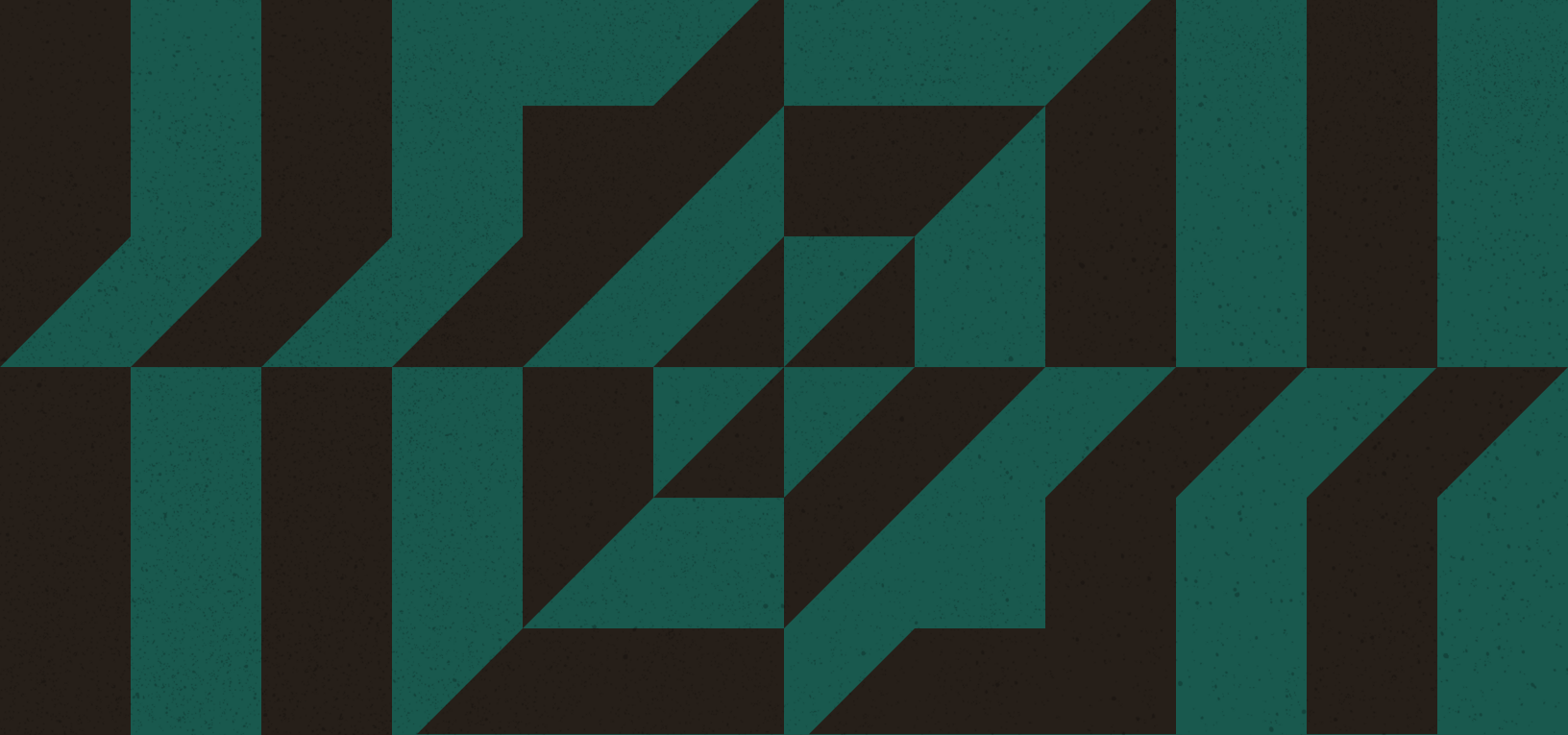
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Community safety and restorative justice are important issues for First Nations in Manitoba and across Canada. Relative to the broader Canadian population, First Nations – particularly women, girls, LGBTQ+, and Two-Spirited peoples are disproportionately more likely to be victims of violent crimes. This is a systemic failure by governments in Canada to adequately account for the unique needs of First Nations and reform institutions that have perpetuated racist and discriminatory colonial practices.

The failure to implement the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) Calls for Justice has only furthered the normalization of violence against First Nations women, girls, LGBTQ+, and Two-Spirited peoples. By disregarding the seriousness of these crimes, a clear message is conveyed that perpetrators of violence against Indigenous peoples are less likely to suffer any consequences for their actions and crimes against the most vulnerable will continue undeterred.<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, a decolonization of the existing justice system is needed, as First Nations are not only more likely to be the victims of violent crime, but also incarcerated in disproportionate numbers. The effects of incarceration can be detrimental to quality of life and persist well after a prisoner is released.

The December 2022 discovery of four murdered Indigenous women in Winnipeg has, once again, elevated the salience of community safety for First Nations in Manitoba. The case emphasizes the ongoing issues with Winnipeg Police Service (WPS) and First Nations safety. WPS has struggled to identify the names and remains of all the victims, two of whom come from Long Plain First Nation, Manitoba.<sup>2</sup> Similarly, WPS has been reluctant to dedicate the resources needed to locate two of the victims, which are believed to be in a metropolitan Winnipeg landfill.<sup>3</sup> This tragedy raises the issue of self-administered First Nations policing, as Nations are frustrated by having to work through apathetic settler police forces.



The vulnerability of First Nations and Indigenous peoples to violent crimes is a historical problem that has unjustly been allowed to persist to the present day. Action is urgently required to fund improved and new programs that advance community safety and restorative justice.

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<sup>1</sup> AMC Communications, “The AMC Calls on Winnipeg Police Service to Search Prairie Green Landfill for the Remains of Mercedes Myran and Morgan Beatrice Harris” (Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, December 7, 2022), <https://manitobachiefs.com/the-amc-calls-on-winnipeg-police-service-to-search-prairie-green-landfill/>.

<sup>2</sup> CBC News, “Unidentified Victim of Alleged Winnipeg Serial Killer Will Be Known as Mashkode Bizhiki’ikwe or Buffalo Woman,” *CBC News*, December 5, 2022, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/winnipeg-alleged-serial-killer-unidentified-victim-buffalo-woman-mashkode-bizhikiikwe-1.6675261>.

<sup>3</sup> AMC Communications, “The AMC Call on Winnipeg Police Service.”





# Implementation of the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) Calls for Justice

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**Between 2015 and 2020, over one in every four female homicides in Canada were Indigenous women or girls, despite Indigenous women and girls accounting for just five percent (%) of the country's female population. As noted by the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), "there is nothing to suggest that those crimes are on the decline." Overall, more than six in ten Indigenous women have experienced either physical or sexual assault in their lifetime since the age of 15. More precisely, almost two-thirds (64%) of First Nations women experience violent victimization in their lifetime.**

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## Issue

Between 2015 and 2020, over one in every four female homicides in Canada were Indigenous women or girls, despite Indigenous women and girls accounting for just five percent (%) of the country's female population.<sup>1</sup> As noted by the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), "there is nothing to suggest that those crimes are on the decline."<sup>2</sup> Overall, more than six in ten Indigenous women have experienced either physical or sexual assault in their lifetime since the age of 15.<sup>3</sup> More precisely, almost two-thirds (64%) of First Nations women experience violent victimization in their lifetime.<sup>4</sup> In 2016, Carolyn Bennett, former federal minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, referred to the city of Winnipeg as "ground zero" in terms of the growing awareness about the violence Indigenous women and girls face.<sup>5</sup> Manitoba has the third highest number of MMIWG cases in Canada, after British Columbia and Alberta.<sup>6</sup> Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ people continue to face significant and devastating violence in Manitoba – at least 11 Indigenous women and girls have been murdered in Winnipeg since June 2019, when the National Inquiry released its final report.<sup>7</sup> Most recently, the murder of four Indigenous women by the same perpetrator, whose remains are believed to be in Winnipeg landfills, highlights the urgent and pressing need for all levels of government to take action to end violence against Indigenous women and girls. Pressing issues, as noted by the chair of the National Family and Survivors Circle (NFSC) include access to safe housing, emergency shelter spaces, and more transitional and longer-term housing options that offer proper cultural and social supports.<sup>8</sup> Despite this, according to NWAC, the federal government has yet to spend funds announced in fall 2020 to support the creation of desperately needed shelter and transitional housing spaces.<sup>9</sup>

Additionally, in June 2022, NWAC's *Canada's MMIWG2S National Action Plan: Annual Scorecard* notes that "while some progress has been made over the past 12 months on some of [the Calls to Action], little or none has been made on others."<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, despite





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**... “while some progress has been made over the past 12 months on some of [the Calls to Action], little or none has been made on others.”**

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attempts at better reporting and transparency regarding funding streams to implement the Calls to Action, there remains too little information regarding how the \$2.2 billion five-year commitment of the federal government is being distributed and what concrete action is being achieved in key spending areas in each region across the country. As such, the following estimations of required spending are extremely provisional based upon the data and reporting currently available.

### **Required Spending**

\$67.3M per year ongoing for five years to support the Implementation of the MMIWG Calls to Action in Manitoba.

### **Benefits**

Continued work, across federal departments and ministries, of the 231 Calls for Justice from the National Inquiry into MMIWG will support systemic change to address the ongoing tragedy of missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in Manitoba. Investments will confront violence and improve the safety and security of Indigenous women and girls, ensuring culturally appropriate healing, support services, and new initiatives for survivors and families.

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<sup>1</sup> Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak Inc., “Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls,” accessed September 8, 2022, <https://mkonation.com/advocacy-areas/mmiwg/>; Statistics Canada, “Violent victimization and perceptions of safety among First Nations, Métis and Inuit women and among women living in remote areas of Canada,” last modified April 26, 2022, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/220426/dq220426b-eng.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> Native Women’s Association of Canada, “NWAC Annual Report Card of Government’s National Action Plan to Address MMIWG and Violence Finds (Very) Little Progress; Nanos Survey Shows Canadians Agree,” last modified June 3, 2022, <https://nwac.ca/abc/media-1>.

<sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada, “Violent victimization and perceptions of safety among First Nations, Métis and Inuit women and among women living in remote areas of Canada.”

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Kathryn Blaze Baum, “Manitoba seeks role in inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women,” *The Globe and Mail*, July 15, 2016, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/manitoba-seeks-role-in-inquiry-into-missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women/article30944702/>.

<sup>6</sup> Marina Puzyreva and John Loxley, “Cost of Doing Nothing: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls,” *Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Manitoba* (October 2017): 10, [https://policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/Manitoba%20Office/2017/10/Cost\\_of\\_doing\\_nothing\\_MMIWG.pdf](https://policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/Manitoba%20Office/2017/10/Cost_of_doing_nothing_MMIWG.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Kelly Geraldine Malone and Stephanie Taylor, “In a crisis’: Deaths of Indigenous women in Winnipeg spark calls for safe housing,” *CBC News*, June 26, 2022, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/mmiwg-indigenous-women-winnipeg-1.6502097>.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> “NWAC Annual Report Card of Government’s National Action Plan to Address MMIWG and Violence.”

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.



# Decolonizing Justice

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**Manitoba has among the worst records of the provinces for disproportionately incarcerating Indigenous peoples. An Indigenous person in Manitoba is more than 13 times as likely as a non-Indigenous resident to be admitted to adult custody in the province.**

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## Issue

Manitoba has among the worst records of the provinces for disproportionately incarcerating Indigenous peoples. An Indigenous person in Manitoba is more than 13 times as likely as a non-Indigenous resident to be admitted to adult custody in the province (see Table 6, page 96). Incarceration separates families and has long-term negative consequences on many aspects of life, including employment. The continued failure to address this overrepresentation is also a violation of the TRC Call to Action 30. Even more unjustly, most inmates in provincial institutions in Manitoba are in remand awaiting court and have not been convicted of a crime.

## Required Spending

An additional \$5M in federal funding over five years (\$1M annually) is required to expand First Nations-led restorative justice programs in Manitoba. This investment will ensure: timely access to services regardless of a client's residence; the provision of community justice workers in each First Nation; strong family and community engagement; land-based culturally affirming ceremonies and activities; and enhanced training and professional development for on-site staff.

## Benefits

Providing individuals, families, and communities with community-based restorative justice programs diverts justice-involved individuals away from a backlogged and discriminatory system while providing a culturally appropriate pathway to healing and restoration.

**Table 6: Admissions to Adult Custody, by Sex, Identity, and Jurisdiction 2018-19<sup>1</sup>**

Jurisdiction	Male		Female		Indigenous (Sexes Combined)	Indigenous Population by Province	Likelihood of Adult Custody (Factor)
	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous			
<b>Newfoundland and Labrador</b>	333	1,214	39	187	23%	9.00%	3.02
<b>PEI</b>	25	606	4	129	4%	2.00%	2.04
<b>Nova Scotia</b>	337	3,676	108	512	10%	4.00%	2.67
<b>New Brunswick</b>	362	4,319	148	916	9%	6.00%	1.55
<b>Quebec</b>	2,080	35,887	450	46,677	3%	2.00%	1.52
<b>Ontario</b>	6,441	49,550	1,615	7,212	12%	3.00%	4.41
<b>Manitoba</b>	16,126	6,051	4,919	1,044	75%	18.00%	13.67
<b>Saskatchewan</b>	7,917	2,711	1,922	349	76%	16.00%	16.63
<b>Alberta</b>	12,235	18,358	3,535	2,875	43%	7.00%	10.02
<b>British Columbia</b>	6,600	14,448	1,016	1,282	33%	6.00%	7.72
<b>Yukon</b>	254	129	27	11	67%	23.00%	6.78
<b>NWT</b>	856	97	62	6	90%	51.00%	8.65
<b>Nunavut</b>	1,325	51	74	14	96%	86.00%	3.91
<b>Total (Provinces &amp; Territories)</b>	54,891	137,046	13,919	19,200	31%	4.90%	4.68
<b>Federal</b>	1,994	5,001	233	330	29%		

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada, "Adult and Youth Correctional Statistics in Canada, 2018/2019," last modified December 16, 2020, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2020001/article/00016-eng.htm>; Indigenous Services Canada, "Annual Report to Parliament, 2020," 2020, [https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-ISC-SAC/DAM-TRNSPRCY/STAGING/texte-text/annual-report-parliament-arp-report2020\\_1648059621383\\_eng.pdf](https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-ISC-SAC/DAM-TRNSPRCY/STAGING/texte-text/annual-report-parliament-arp-report2020_1648059621383_eng.pdf).



# First Nations Police Forces

## Issue

It is essential for First Nations to have control and self-government over the policing of their citizens. Strong, sustainably funded First Nations Police Forces with understanding of and respect for the Nations they serve are vital to First Nations self-determination and to ensure community safety.

Presently, the funding allocated for the First Nations and Indigenous Policing Program (FNIPP) is limited (\$144.3M nationally in 2020-2021) and contributes to shortcomings in the services provided by self-administered First Nations police services.<sup>1</sup> Reactive policing is the norm, as First Nations police often lack the resources required to provide culturally appropriate services.<sup>2</sup> Time-limited contribution agreements inhibit long-term planning, undermining recruitment efforts, specialized services, and result in a significant toll on officer physical and mental health.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, officers are limited in their ability to engage with members of the community they police, undermining their ability to build trust with community members and conduct effective policing.<sup>4</sup> This is no less caused by Self-Administered (SA) First Nations police detachments being forced to service large populations over vast geographic areas, many inaccessible due to seasonal roads or being fly-in communities.<sup>5</sup> The realities of remote and northern policing make many officers inclined to leave for municipal policing jobs, resulting in a loss of the institutional memory and trust built in those Nations. This is much the same case for community tripartite agreements (CTA) agreements as well.<sup>6</sup> Ultimately, Manitoba First Nations rely on a mix of SA and CTA policing.<sup>7</sup>

## Required Spending

It is recommended that Public Safety Canada provide \$86.6M per year, ongoing for five years, to enlarge and support self-administered First Nations policing in Manitoba.





## Benefits

The growth of self-administered policing on-reserve should serve as an affirmation of two points: the right to self-determination when governing First Nations services, and secondly, the need to treat First Nations policing as an essential service.<sup>8</sup> Bolstering these services will facilitate culturally aware policing and more effective public safety.

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<sup>1</sup> Public Safety Canada, “Infographic for Indigenous Policing,” Last modified September 20, 2022, <https://www.tbs-sct.canada.ca/ems-sgd/edb-bdd/index-eng.html#infographic/program/PSEP-BVT05/financial>.

<sup>2</sup> Public Safety Canada, *Evaluation of the First Nations and Inuit Policing Program: Evaluation Report February 2022* (Ottawa: Public Safety Canada, 2022), 12. <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/2022-vltn-ndgns-police/2022-vltn-ndgns-police-en.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 18

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 17.

<sup>8</sup> R. Ruddell, J. Kiedrowski, “Reforming Indigenous policing: Understanding the context for change,” *Journal of CSWB*, 5, no. 4 (2020). <https://www.journalcswb.ca/index.php/cswb/article/view/168/443>

<sup>9</sup> Government of Canada, *Engaging on Federal First Nations Police Services Legislation* (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 2022), 6. <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/nggng-fdrl-frst-ntns-plc-srvcs-lgsltn-2022/nggng-fdrl-frst-ntns-plc-srvcs-lgsltn-2022-en.pdf>

# Spotlight



## Narrative Spotlight Section: First Nations Chiefs of Police Association (FNCPA)

The First Nations Chiefs of Police Association (FNPCA) is a non-profit organization created in 1993. The organization assists self-administered First Nations police services across Canada develop policing practices appropriate to their respective Nations. The FNPCA is formally recognized by the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police (CACP) and is funded through membership fees and, more recently, the federal government.<sup>1</sup>

The priorities of the FNCPA include: the sharing of expertise and practices to help facilitate effective policing in First Nation territories; supporting culturally appropriate and socially diverse approaches to policing; accountable policing; partnership; and educational initiatives.<sup>2</sup>

The FNCPA has played a leadership role since the establishment of First Nations self-administered policing in 1991. Budding First Nations police forces are often confronted with unique problems, such as difficulty with recruitment, low retention of officers, and small forces serving many remote communities. In response, the FNCPA has assisted First Nations forces through leadership training. This service is crucial, as small junior

police forces often lack experienced officers to staff senior positions. The FNCPA also works with tribal councils, encouraging cooperation and the formation of larger regional forces, thereby benefiting from economies of scale to better serve First Nations.<sup>3</sup>

More broadly, the FNCPA also provides services to assist First Nations self-administered police adapt to the needs of their communities. Often, First Nations forces have been saddled with duties that go beyond those typical of police in major Canadian metropolitan areas, and governments are taking notice. Data collection, cooperation with governments and other agencies, as well as legislative reforms are all goals of the FNCPA to equip First Nations self-administered forces to meet demand and gain the trust of the Nations they serve. First Nations self-administered police forces must cease to be just an “add-on” service, and rather complementary to existing RCMP and provincial police.<sup>4</sup>

Work must continue to ensure First Nations policing is successful. Important data must be collected to inform future policy decisions, and the transition towards self-administered policing



will be slow, owing to lack of funding, low retention, and challenges with recruitment. While positive models exist, such as FNCPA and Nishnawbe-Aski Police Service, more support and investment are required to facilitate a smooth transition and better future.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> First Nations Chiefs of Police Association, “History,” accessed December 2022, <https://www.fncpa.ca/about-fncpa/history/>.

<sup>2</sup> First Nations Chiefs of Police Association, “Responsibilities,” accessed December 2022, <https://www.fncpa.ca/about-fncpa/responsibilities/>.

<sup>3</sup> Edward Lennard Busch, “Interview,” interview by Waapihk Research, December 16, 2022, written notes.

<sup>4</sup> Busch, interview.

<sup>5</sup> Busch, interview.



# Emergency Services

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**Over 15,500 individuals have been evacuated from Manitoba First Nations due to wildfires since 2013...**

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## Issue

Climate change has made extreme weather events more common and increased the risk from disasters like flooding and wildfires. Manitoba is vulnerable to both, and the risks to First Nations are increased by remoteness and the location of many Nations in fire-prone areas. Over 15,500 individuals have been evacuated from Manitoba First Nations due to wildfires since 2013, including over 1,600 people from four communities during the wildfires of 2021.<sup>1</sup> Some of these evacuations have become long-term in nature as communities work to rebuild. This has been the case for close to 800 flood evacuees from different communities, some of whom have been away from their communities for over a decade.<sup>2</sup> These disasters and the experiences of evacuation have been painful for First Nations and had economic, health, and social consequences that relevant organizations and government agencies have only begun to grapple with in recent years. A 2018 Senate report identified numerous interconnected areas where First Nations disaster preparedness, response, and relief should be improved, including funding, consultation and planning, cultural safety, and the integration of Indigenous knowledge.<sup>3</sup> As of 2022, only \$126.1M in federal spending has been invested in dikes, sea walls, and erosion-control measures. The extent to which Manitoba First Nations benefits from this investment is unclear.<sup>4</sup>

Local emergency services, including fire and ambulance, are also underfunded in First Nations, and often rely on volunteers who do not receive adequate training or support. A recent Statistics Canada report found that First Nations are roughly 12 times more likely to die in a fire than non-Indigenous Canadians.<sup>5</sup> Along with inadequate housing, the lack of funding for emergency response, including inadequate access to firefighting services, is also a major issue. Greater resources are needed to build local capacity and empower First Nations to support themselves and each other in culturally appropriate ways during times of crises.



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**First Nations are roughly 12 times more likely to die in a fire than non-Indigenous Canadians.**

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## Required Spending

\$14.5M per year ongoing for five years to support the improvement and enhancement of Emergency Services in First Nations communities in Manitoba.

## Benefits

Greater resources to buttress Emergency Services in First Nations communities in Manitoba will aid in greater local capacity and the empowerment of First Nations to support their own communities in culturally appropriate ways during times of crisis.

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<sup>1</sup> Indigenous Services Canada, “Wildland Fire and Flood Evacuation Statistics,” March 2, 2020, <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1583177459681/1583177553276>.

<sup>2</sup> Indigenous Services Canada, “2011 Manitoba Flood: Status of Community Rebuilding and Numbers of Displaced Persons,” last modified May 27, 2021, <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1392046654954/1535122238673>.

<sup>3</sup> Standing Senate Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs, “From The Ashes: Reimagining Fire Safety and Emergency Management in Indigenous Communities,” June 2018, <https://www.ourcommons.ca/Content/Committee/421/INAN/Reports/RP9990811/inanrp15/inanrp15-e.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Indigenous Services Canada, “Flooding in First Nations Communities,” last modified December 12th, 2022, <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1397740805675/1535120329798>.

<sup>5</sup> Mohan B. Kumar, “Mortality and Morbidity Related to Fire, Burns and Carbon Monoxide Poisoning among First Nations People, Métis and Inuit: Findings from the 2011 Canadian Census Health and Environment Cohort” (Centre for Indigenous Statistics Partnership, Statistics Canada, March 1, 2021). <https://indigenousfiresafety.ca/wordpress/download/123/2020-2021/7271/mortality-and-morbidity-related-to-fire-burns-and-carbon-monoxide-poisoning-among-first-nations-people-metis-and-inuit.pdf>.



# Urban Services





# Urban Services

First Nations inherent and Treaty rights extends to First Nations citizens living off-reserve. Canada's relationship with – and fiduciary responsibility to – First Nations must be understood as similarly extended to off-reserve First Nations. Economic opportunities and wealth have accumulated in urban centres on the traditional lands of First Nations. First Nations citizens have, historically and to this day, been excluded from or relegated to the margins of these spaces. Despite this, First Nations and other Indigenous peoples migrate to Manitoba's urban centres – such as Winnipeg, Thompson, The Pas, and Brandon, among others – for economic opportunities. These First Nations urban migrants often experience barriers and racist and discriminatory attitudes which further compounds difficulty transitioning to a new place and cultural context.

With federal fiscal support, First Nations can assert jurisdiction and economic self-determination through the development of urban reserves in Manitoba. Alongside this, funding for urban transition services and programming can aid First Nations and other Indigenous migrants to urban centres overcome significant barriers, such as finding affordable housing, stable and meaningful employment, and accessing health services. Adequate fiscal support from Canada could strengthen the successful Eagle Urban Transition Centre in Winnipeg and establish similar centres in other Manitoba cities.



# Transition Services and Other Urban Supports

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**...in Winnipeg alone, the Indigenous population could grow to approximately 13.8% of the total urban population by 2031...**

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## Issue Statement

First Nations citizens and other Indigenous people, especially those moving from on-reserve communities to urban centres, face barriers to finding affordable housing, stable employment, and accessing health care.<sup>1</sup> As stated in a 2020 report reviewing gaps in urban Indigenous health and wellness, “migration to urban centres is complex and multifaceted”<sup>2</sup> and as such additional supports and care are required. Urban Indigenous peoples may have distinctive health issues compared to those residing in rural and remote communities, while experiencing a loss of cultural identity, racism, stereotypes, and discrimination.<sup>3</sup> The aforementioned can be compounded due to a lack of access to culturally appropriate social supports, mental health services, and services to address intergenerational traumas associated with colonialism, residential schools, and gender-based violence.<sup>4</sup> The issue of Indigenous urban migration is growing: the proportion of Indigenous peoples living in urban areas has grown substantially since the 1960s, and it is projected that in Winnipeg alone, the Indigenous population could grow to approximately 13.8% of the total urban population by 2031.<sup>5</sup> Despite these trends, urban Indigenous organizations in all provinces are underfunded<sup>6</sup> and it has been documented that demand for Indigenous urban support often outstrips Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) funding allocations for urban programming.<sup>7</sup> The federal government must therefore commit to greater funding allocations to support urban Indigenous peoples, particularly in the area of housing and transition.

The Eagle Urban Transition Centre (EUTC), in operation since 2005 and located in the city of Winnipeg, is the only Indigenous-run settlement service available in Manitoba. It has a documented history of aiding the mobile Indigenous population and has produced evidence-based results that demonstrate the benefit and increased need for their services, which include housing assistance, medical care, employment services, direct family assistance, and walk-in services.<sup>8</sup> Expansion of similar services to the cities of Thompson, Brandon, Portage La Prairie, and The Pas is required to better support urban migration, as many individuals spend time in these smaller urban centres before re-locating to Winnipeg.<sup>9</sup>

## Required Spending

It is recommended that the federal government increase spending for Indigenous urban settlement services by \$3-\$3.5M in 2023-24, with an additional \$1-\$1.4M per year ongoing for five years. These funds would be used to expand the services available through the Eagle Urban Transition Centre (EUTC), as well as to establish similar services in the urban centres of Brandon, Portage la Prairie, Thompson, and The Pas.

## Benefits

The EUTC is well placed to provide continued support and has the institutional will and experience to expand their services in the city of Winnipeg; an increase in funding will support additional staff, training, and the capacity to serve the growing urban population. Further, de-centralization of transition services, by expanding services to smaller urban centres, will alleviate many of the issues associated with migrants (i.e. lack of knowledge, cultural support, housing, and employment options), thereby supporting more successful transitions for the migrant Indigenous population.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Josh Brandon and Evelyn Peters, "Moving to the City: Housing and Aboriginal Migration to Winnipeg," *Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives Manitoba* (November 2014): 1, [https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/Manitoba%20Office/2014/12/Aboriginal\\_Migration.pdf](https://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/Manitoba%20Office/2014/12/Aboriginal_Migration.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Ashley Hayward, Jaime Cidro, and Coreen Roulette, "Identifying the gaps: A scoping review of urban Indigenous health and wellness in Manitoba and Saskatchewan," *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* 29(2): 33, <https://cjur.uwinnipeg.ca/index.php/cjur/article/download/292/139/>.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Brandon and Peters, "Moving to the City," 9.

<sup>6</sup> Urban Aboriginal Knowledge Network, "Phase 2: The Urban Aboriginal Service Delivery Landscape: Themes, Trends, Gaps and Prospects – Final Report – Key Findings and Regional Summaries," *UAKN Secretariat* (March 31, 2016): 11, [https://uakn.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/NAFC-UAKN-National-Project\\_Phase-2-Final-Report-Regional-Summaries\\_2016-1-1.pdf](https://uakn.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/NAFC-UAKN-National-Project_Phase-2-Final-Report-Regional-Summaries_2016-1-1.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Brittany Collier, "Background Paper: Services for Indigenous People Living in Urban Areas," *Library of Parliament*, (December 1, 2020): 7, [https://lop.parl.ca/sites/PublicWebsite/default/en\\_CA/ResearchPublications/202066E](https://lop.parl.ca/sites/PublicWebsite/default/en_CA/ResearchPublications/202066E).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Brandon and Peters, "Moving to the City," 40.

# Spotlight

## Eagle Urban Transition Centre

**As the only Indigenous-run settlement service available in Manitoba, the EUTC serves as many as 1,700 First Nations families and 10,000 First Nations and non-First Nations walk-ins each year.**

The Eagle Urban Transition Centre (EUTC), created by the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, has operated in the city of Winnipeg since 2005. As the only Indigenous-run settlement service available in Manitoba, the EUTC serves as many as 1,700 First Nations families and 10,000 First Nations and non-First Nations walk-ins each year. Clients of EUTC are diverse, both on- and off-reserve First Nations citizens, and Indigenous and Métis populations. Initially a small entity, the EUTC now employs over 30 staff and runs six programs annually. Providing wraparound, culturally relevant, and non-discriminatory services, the EUTC is committed to providing Indigenous people experiencing transitional issues access to resources that support a healthy balanced life, independent living, and wellness in the areas

of: physical, mental, spiritual and emotional.<sup>1</sup>

EUTC is an important reference and support service for migrant Indigenous populations, providing housing assistance, medical care, employment services, direct family assistance, and walk-in services.<sup>2</sup> EUTC acts as an important junction, directing clients to service providers. These services are important as First Nations moving from reserves to urban centres – often a wholly unknown and new environment – face many challenges. The competitive and individualistic nature of city life is often at odds with cooperative reserve life, and assistance is often needed to help migrants adapt. Proactively working with migrant Indigenous individuals and families to by providing access to goods and services helps mitigate crisis and the need for assistance at a future date. Assistance can be simple, such as helping to acquire documentation needed to access health services and benefits. EUTC also plays a key role in building relationships between different governments and service providers while collecting crucial data, adding efficiency and effectiveness to program delivery.

Despite the success of EUTC, key challenges remain. New issues within the urban, migratory Indigenous population are constantly arising, however, the most pressing remain ongoing addictions, homelessness, and a lack of





affordable housing. Funding for EUTC's programs must be stable and long term, not just project-based funding, to provide consistent services and support staff with new training and education.

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<sup>1</sup> Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, "EAGLE Urban Transition Centre," last modified 2018, accessed August 18, 2022, <https://manitobachiefs.com/urban/>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.



# Urban Reserves

## Issue

Urban reserves are an important means for First Nations governments to assert sovereignty in traditional territories. Urban reserves present an opportunity for First Nations to obtain a share of the economic benefits of activities occurring in traditional territories which have been urbanized and colonized by settlers. Two significant urban reserve initiatives are occurring in Manitoba at present. A notable initiative is the redevelopment and reclamation of a historic symbol of Canadian settler-colonialism, the Hudson's Bay Building, located in the heart of downtown Winnipeg through the *Wehwehneh Bahgahkinahgohn* project led by the Southern Chiefs Organization Inc (SCO).<sup>1</sup> The former Kapyong Barracks site in Winnipeg is also being reclaimed through the Naawi-Oodena project led by the Treaty One Development Corporation.<sup>2</sup> The Treaty One Development Corporation includes the Nations of Brokenhead Ojibway Nation, Long Plain First Nation, Peguis First Nation, Roseau River Anishinaabe First Nation, Sagkeeng First Nation, Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation, and Swan Lake First Nation.<sup>3</sup> More projects that reclaim traditional territory and create space for urban Indigenous peoples and First Nations need to be supported and advanced in the province of Manitoba.

## Required Spending

\$40M in additional spending in the 2023-24 funding year through grants to First Nation governments and mandated-entities to support Urban Reserves development. Such an investment would further support *Wehwehneh Bahgahkinahgohn*, Naawi-Oodena, and other projects in Manitoba. This suggested federal investment would be in addition to any existing spending, such as \$65 million in loans to the *Wehwehneh Bahgahkinahgohn* project already committed by the Government of Canada.<sup>4</sup>



## Wehwehneh Bahgahkinahgohn



The historic Hudson's Bay Company Building on Portage Avenue in downtown Winnipeg.

Source: <https://scoinc.mb.ca/a-new-future-wehwehneh-bahgahkinahgohn/>

## Kapyong Barracks Master Plan



The former Kapyong Barracks site, re-imagined as a multi-use urban-reserve.

Source: <https://treaty1.ca/t1n-cow-mdsa2022/>

## Benefits

Urban reserves in Saskatoon and British Columbia have injected millions of dollars into local economies and while enabling the creation and development of First Nation-owned businesses.<sup>5</sup> Urban reserves can feature mixed-use developments that advance social and economic opportunities, and provide affordable housing, assisted living facilities, and child-care as well as cultural programming.<sup>6</sup> An investment of \$40 million in 2023-24 will support and advance initiatives for further First Nation-mandated projects in urban centres such as Winnipeg, Brandon, Thompson, and others.

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<sup>1</sup> Southern Chiefs' Organization Inc., "A New Future: *Wehwehneh Bahgahkinahgohn*," Southern Chiefs' Organization Inc., 2022, <https://scoinc.mb.ca/a-new-future-wehwehneh-bahgahkinahgohn/>

<sup>2</sup> Sam Samson, "Winnipeg Council Approves Tax Deals with First Nations Groups for Urban Reserve, Hudson's Bay Redevelopment," *CBC News*, June 23, 2022, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/winnipeg-treaty-1-urban-reserve-southern-chiefs-the-bay-1.6499687>.

<sup>3</sup> Treaty One, "Treaty One Development Corporation," Treaty One, 2021, <https://treaty1.ca/development-corp/>.

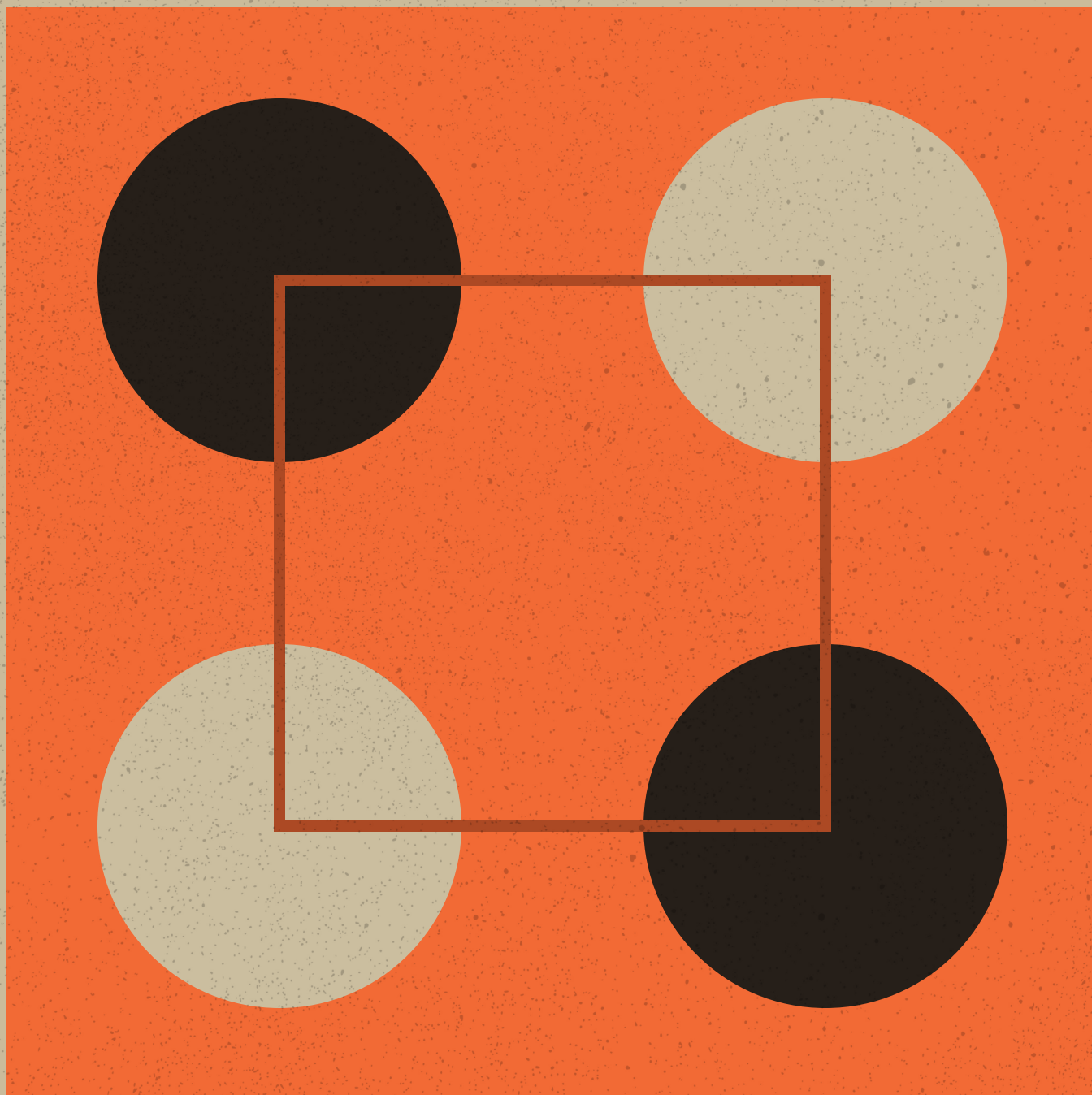
<sup>4</sup> Bartley Kives, "Winnipeg Poised to Offer \$10M Worth of Tax Breaks to Bay Redevelopment," *CBC News*, June 9, 2022, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/the-bay-redevelopment-city-assistance-sco-1.6482866>.

<sup>5</sup> Tim Fontaine, "Demystifying Urban Reserves," *CBC News*, March 13, 2015, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/demystifying-urban-reserves-1.2993051>.

<sup>6</sup> Southern Chiefs' Organization Inc., "A New Future: *Wehwehneh Bahgahkinahgohn*."



# Conclusion







# Conclusion

The Manitoba First Nations Alternative Federal Budget is a new exercise that poses promise for fiscal policy and program co-development between Canada and Manitoba First Nations. Canada has many fiduciary responsibilities to First Nations through treaties and inherent rights. Regrettably, Canada has not lived up to most of these obligations. First Nations whose traditional territories are in Manitoba face particularly adverse conditions, such as weaker human development index scores relative to First Nations in other provinces<sup>1</sup> and a widening health gap between Manitoba First Nations citizens and non-First Nation residents of Manitoba.<sup>2</sup> A new approach is desperately needed.

A new approach needs to be based on dismantling colonial fiscal relations and supporting First Nations self-determination. By doing so, this means effectively recognizing and asserting First Nations jurisdiction in health, education, child and family services, justice, and economic development, among other sectors. Canada has stated the nation is committed to a new approach, with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau declaring in 2015 that he supports “a new fiscal relationship with First Nations that gives your communities sufficient, predictable and sustained funding. This is a promise we made, and a promise we will keep.”<sup>3</sup>

Manitoba First Nations want action to enforce such statements. In 2017, the AMC Chiefs-in-Assembly passed a resolution creating a

Manitoba Regional Specific Fiscal Relations Table to codevelop a new fiscal relationship between Canada and Manitoba First Nations.<sup>4</sup> A transformative, new fiscal relationship would address chronic underfunding and persistent socioeconomic gaps between First Nations and non-First Nations citizens in Manitoba. As of yet, the Table has not begun this work and as such there is ample opportunity for Canada to engage with, and listen to, Manitoba First Nations regarding their priorities and needs.

Comprehensive program and policy co-development between Manitoba First Nations and Canada is needed. This will necessarily entail information-sharing and transparency from federal departments on program funding, disbursements, and usage statistics. This will anchor and properly scope research into fiscal needs for future budget years.

The old colonial approaches to policy and programs for First Nations are not working – whether it be delays and denials in health services, a traumatizing and apprehension-based orientation to child and family services, or an underfunded and culturally inappropriate approach to education. The way forward is for Canada to respect the sovereignty of First Nations and engage on a Nation-to-Nation basis. This will include supporting First Nations as they assert their inherent jurisdiction in health, child and family services, education, economic development, and other sectors.

As Wahbung proclaims:

*"The four Indian tribes of Manitoba – the Cree, Ojibway, Chipewyan and Sioux – by united effort [...] present to the Canadian people through their government our position on policies necessary to achieve a just and honourable and mutually satisfactory relationship between the people of Canada and the Indian people of Manitoba.*

*It is sad that this enlightened age in this democratic country, a people necessarily must declare themselves. But we, the Indian tribes from all Indian lands in Manitoba, hope that there will follow an understanding and commitment by everyone so that there will be a better future for all the land we all love.*

*We approach the non-Indian people of Canada as [people] of honour speaking to another honourable people. We hereby declare our confidence in the integrity and goodwill of the majority of people in Canada. The integrity and goodwill of their representatives have been tried in the past and found badly wanting, and we live today with results. But until proven otherwise, we trust that this is a new age in which the Canadian public will clearly encourage and support their political representatives in working with us to achieve an honourable relationship with the original people of this land."*<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Cooke, *Application of the United Nations Human Development Index to Registered Indians in Canada, 2006–2016*, Indigenous Services Canada, last modified November 2019, <https://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.895951/publication.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Katz et al., "Changes in health indicator gaps between First Nations and other residents of Manitoba," *CMAJ* 193, no. 48 (2021): E1830–E1835.

<sup>3</sup> Assembly of First Nations and Government of Canada, *A New Approach: Co-Development of a New Fiscal Relationship*, Gatineau, Quebec (2017): 21. [https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2017/aanc-inac/R5-601-2017-eng.pdf](https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2017/aanc-inac/R5-601-2017-eng.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> Chiefs-in-Assembly, "RE: Canada-First Nations Fiscal Relations," Dakota Tipi First Nation: Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, (November 28–29, 2017). <https://manitobachiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/CertifiedResolutions-Nov-2017.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, *Wahbung: Our Tomorrows*, Manitoba, Canada, October 1971. <https://manitobachiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Wahbung-Our-Tomorrows-Searchable.pdf>.

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March 2023

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Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs  
EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS