

A Detailed Plan to Secure the Future of Canada's Indigenous Peoples



Indigenous peoples and all Canadians should expect their government to recognize Indigenous and treaty rights and to work together with Indigenous peoples as nation-to-nation partners to resolve long-standing challenges. Recent events have illustrated the scale of the obstacles that Indigenous peoples have faced throughout Canada's history, and Canadians are more determined to move forward with reconciliation than ever before. At this singular moment in Canada's history, it is crucial that our efforts are focused on durable solutions that make a real and meaningful impact on the quality of life of Indigenous peoples.

Recent reports, including the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, have identified significant gaps in opportunity and outcome between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. All levels of government need to engage with Indigenous peoples to make meaningful progress in closing these gaps.

Canada's Conservatives believe in building a true partnership to ensure a just and secure place for thriving, self-determining Indigenous nations within the fabric of Canada. That starts with making the recognition of Indigenous rights a top priority and that is the lens through which we will approach all Indigenous issues. It also begins with making serious efforts to listen, learn, understand, and demonstrate our enduring commitment through our actions.

Making Amends for Past Injustices

Canadians' consciences were shocked at the revelation of unmarked graves at the sites of former residential schools. These discoveries were a heartbreaking reminder of the pain Indigenous children, their families, and their communities were subjected to. While the path of reconciliation is long and difficult, we must act now to make amends for past injustices perpetrated by and on behalf of the Government of Canada.

Canada's Conservatives will:

- Develop a comprehensive plan to implement TRC Calls to Action 71 through 76.
- Fund the investigation at all former residential schools in Canada where unmarked graves may exist, including the sites where children have already been discovered.
- Ensure that proper resources are allocated for communities to reinter, commemorate, and honour any individuals discovered through the investigation, according to the wishes of their next of kin.
- Develop a detailed and thorough set of resources to educate Canadians of all ages on the tragic history of residential schools in Canada.
- Build a national monument in Ottawa that honours residential school survivors and all the children who were lost.

Prosperity through partnership

Recognition of Indigenous rights has been hard-won after decades of struggle by First Nations, Inuit, and Metis people, both in the courts and through treaty negotiations. It has been a long and challenging journey as Canadians have sought to understand and give life to these rights. This journey is far from over.

Indigenous people want a say in what happens on their traditional territories. They want to be true partners in the responsible development of those lands, including through equity opportunities and timely access to capital to support their involvement. The Liberal government has paid lip service to this partnership, but they have repeatedly failed to consult with First Nations and Territorial governments before cancelling projects and shutting down opportunities that would have directly benefited Indigenous communities.

Canada's natural resource industries have led the way in developing new ways to partner with First Nations, Inuit, and Metis peoples. Natural resource industries are significant employers of Indigenous peoples. In many regions, these industries provide the best chance for lifting rural, remote, and isolated communities out of poverty. Many First Nations and other Indigenous rights holders have pioneered world-leading benefit agreements and equity partnerships with private companies that have led to better projects and increased opportunities for Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities alike.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) has affirmed the right of Indigenous communities to pursue economic opportunities and benefit from the development of resources on their traditional territories.

A Conservative government will respect and uphold these rights by:

- Working with Indigenous-led organizations, such as the First Nations Major Project Coalition, the Indigenous Resource Network, the Indian Resource Council, the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business, the Council for the Advancement of Native Development Officers, the National Coalition of Chiefs, and First Nations LNG Alliance, to support communities that wish to become partners in good projects that meet high environmental standards.
- Creating the Canadian Indigenous Opportunities Corporation that will support First Nations and Inuit organizations seeking to purchase an equity stake in major projects.
 - Based on the Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation, it will apply rigorous market analysis to guarantee loans to Indigenous groups so they can invest in natural resource and infrastructure projects.
 - We will provide an initial \$5 billion of capital for investment in projects across the country.
- Requiring future governments to consult with Indigenous Communities before cancelling approved projects when they have signed or are negotiating benefit agreements or partnerships.
- Implementing Article 18 of UNDRIP by working with First Nations to develop a transparent process that communities can use to identify who represents them in consultations if it is to be someone other than elected Chiefs.
- Working with First Nations and other Indigenous rights holders to develop a consultation process that allows for more meaningful dialogue.
- Creating a streamlined environmental review process for major projects that partner with

First Nations during the environmental assessment phase.

- This will encourage early partnerships, allow the incorporation of traditional knowledge, and build confidence in the assessment process.
- For clarity, such agreements will not be prejudicial to First Nations consultation.
- Supporting Indigenous Protected Areas that safeguard culturally significant areas without alienating future benefits that may accrue to the impacted Indigenous community if used in a way that maintains those safeguards.
 - Support an Indigenous Guardians program that will support communities in developing and maintaining protected areas, among other things.

Levelling the playing field

The success of Indigenous businesses is vital to the success of Canada. Indigenous businesses in Canada can thrive and support healthy communities but face many barriers that are unique to Indigenous peoples, such as paternalistic legislation like the Indian Act, isolated communities, a lack of infrastructure, fewer networking opportunities, and the need for capacity building and community supports.

To level the playing field and encourage Indigenous business success in Canada, Canada's Conservatives will:

- Provide \$4 million over three years in targeted funding for the hiring and training of local and regional economic development officers.
- In collaboration with municipal and First Nations organizations, promote mechanisms that foster relationships between municipalities and neighbouring First Nations.
- Utilizing the existing infrastructure of Indigenous national organizations (NACCA & CCAB), provide capacity building and business education to enhance and promote Indigenous business success and success stories.
- Develop an Indigenous Business Mentorship Program where Indigenous communities and entrepreneurs can connect with and receive guidance from others who have succeeded.
- Modernize the First Nations Land Management Act to bring it more in line with the Framework Agreement.
- Commit \$25 million to a national police support and community training program to reduce the incarceration rates of Canada's Indigenous communities.
- Working with Indigenous community groups, establish a national working group in the Canadian public service to encourage applications from Canada's Indigenous communities.
- Improve opportunities for Indigenous businesses to receive government contracts by:
 - Setting active targets and accountability mechanisms for departmental procurement officers.
 - Ensuring procurement rules don't unnecessarily exclude legitimate Indigenous businesses.
 - Providing constructive feedback to unsuccessful bidders.
 - Working with ISED, investigating new measures (or enhancing previous measures) through the Industrial and Technological Benefits policy to increase Indigenous business involvement in the defence and security industries.

Pursuing Self-Determination

Canada's Conservatives believe that service delivery on First Nation reserves is ultimately best managed by First Nations themselves. Many successful models show that devolving control of service delivery to First Nations can work well. We have seen it work with education, health, and child and family services.

We will:

- Increase Indigenous governance capacity by training young Indigenous leaders including through the Institute of Corporate Directors.
- Empower the First Nations Finance Authority to monetize government funding, leveraging the market to supercharge First Nations infrastructure.
- Remain open to exploring innovative new models to fund and deliver social services and critical infrastructure.
- Develop, in collaboration with Indigenous groups, a National Action Plan that addresses violence against Indigenous women and girls.
- Consult with First Nations on overhauling the current funding models, with the goal of making it easier for First Nations to escape Third-Party Management, reducing red tape, and providing a clearer path with better incentives for moving towards block funding.

Drinking Water

The fact that many Indigenous communities still lack safe drinking water is a national shame. Clean water is essential to human health and well-being and making meaningful progress must be a priority for any government.

Canada's Conservatives will:

- Recognize safe drinking water as a fundamental human right and end long-term drinking water advisories.
- Target high-risk water systems.
- Work with Indigenous communities to find new approaches, such as regional or coalition-based governance, that will help ensure water systems investments are protected and continue providing clean drinking water in the long term.

Mental Health

Tragically, Indigenous people die by suicide at much higher rates than non-Indigenous people. Driven by a combination of intergenerational trauma, poverty and many other factors, this ongoing crisis in mental health has only been heightened by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Addressing poverty and infrastructure gaps will help improve risk factors for mental health in the medium to long term, but there is no question that help is needed now.

Canada's Conservatives will:

- Provide \$1 billion over five years to boost funding for Indigenous mental health and drug treatment programs.
- Support innovative approaches to address the crises of mental health and addiction, such as land-based treatment programs and programs delivered in Indigenous languages.
- Support the development of mental health and drug treatment programs by Indigenous people to develop capacity at the community level and allow for the delivery of culturally appropriate programs delivered in the appropriate Indigenous language.

Introducing Stability to Urban Indigenous Assistance

Canada's Conservatives will negotiate longer-term funding contracts with urban indigenous organizations to provide stability and better planning opportunities.

A Skilled Indigenous Workforce

Indigenous economic development will mean increased opportunity for Indigenous people in the skilled trades. Unfortunately, there are several barriers that have led to an underrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in these jobs.

Canada's Conservatives will:

- Work with Indigenous groups, provinces, territories, and trade organizations to identify opportunities to increase access for Indigenous workers and youth to apprenticeship programs.
- As part of our investment in jobs training, invest in trades training programs designed in partnership with the private sector, Indigenous organizations, and provincial/territorial governments to maximize opportunities for employment.

Broadband in Rural Indigenous Communities

Indigenous peoples living in rural and remote regions of Canada face a significant connectivity gap, even compared to other Canadians living in rural and remote areas. Only 24% of households in Indigenous communities have access to high-speed internet compared to 37% for rural households and 97% for urban ones. Because of this, Indigenous peoples will be significant beneficiaries of our plan to connect all Canadians to high-speed internet by 2025.

However, Indigenous communities face additional challenges when it comes to navigating existing broadband programs. For example, complex application processes pose a barrier to small, isolated communities. It can be more difficult for Indigenous communities to access the funding they need.

To deal with these issues, Canada's Conservatives will:

- Streamline application processes for Indigenous communities.
- Provide more support and develop more flexible funding arrangements.
- Provide technical support during the application process.



A Detailed Plan to Secure the North

Justin Trudeau has turned his back on Northern Canada. He has no northerners in his cabinet. He makes unilateral decisions impacting northerners' land, sea, and well-being without giving the territories a say and without any meaningful consultation with Indigenous peoples and other northerners.

Canada's Conservatives believe in empowering and supporting northerners while building the infrastructure needed to truly realize the potential of the Canadian north.

Respect for Northerners

Canada's Conservatives will:

- Complete devolution, beginning by allowing the territories to set their borrowing limits instead of Ottawa arbitrarily setting limits.
- Ensure that decisions about development in the north will be made by northerners, not by Ottawa.
 - This will include allowing northerners to decide on the level of development and the opportunities they want, such as responsibly unlocking Canadian oil and natural gas for export to European and Indo-Pacific markets.

Building the Northern Economy

Canada's Conservatives will:

- Give each of the territories their fair share of federal training funds and revive mine training in Nunavut, in partnership with mining companies, to increase employment of Inuit in mining.
- Work with the territories, local Indigenous communities, and Parks Canada to find opportunities to build the eco-tourism economy at our Northern parks.
- Work with governments and communities in Nunatsiavut, Nunavut, Nunavik, and the Inuvialuit Settlement Region to develop community-based marine fisheries, which will help create employment and fight local and regional food insecurity.
 - For communities across Inuit Nunangat, oceans are an essential lifeline and source of food.

Supporting Life in the North

Canada's Conservatives will:

- Double the residency deduction, which has not increased since 2016, to recognize the rising cost of living in the north, boost the basic amount in the intermediate zone to match the northern zone, and add the Northern Peninsula of Newfoundland, new parts of northern Saskatchewan, and new parts of north-western B.C. to this zone.
- Implement a Northern Housing Strategy built on:
 - Providing the territories with their fair shares of federal housing funding;
 - Ensuring that funding is stable and predictable; and
 - Working with Indigenous groups including the Inuit, and with resource companies investing in the north to ensure that housing gets built.
- Support innovative approaches to address the crises of mental health and addiction, such as land-based treatment programs developed and managed by Indigenous communities as part of a plan to enhance the delivery of culturally appropriate addictions treatment and prevention services in First Nations communities with high needs.
- Improve Nutrition North so that it achieves the goal of ensuring that northerners have access to affordable healthy food.

Canada's Conservatives recognize that work doesn't mean a 9 - 5 office job for many people in the north. That's one of the reasons why our child care plan emphasizes flexibility for parents, in contrast to the Liberal one size fits all approach that will shut out anyone who doesn't fit their model.

Our Vision for Northern Infrastructure

Canada's Conservatives have a vision for a Canadian north that is connected to the rest of our country and the world. Realizing the potential of our north - and the jobs and opportunity for northerners that will come with it - requires a generational investment in infrastructure.

We will ensure that the territories receive their fair share of infrastructure funding by reserving a funding envelope for them that accounts for the high construction cost in the north. We will address the Northern infrastructure gap in housing, telecommunications, transportation, energy, and climate change preparedness.

Our plan for northern infrastructure includes:

- The Grays Bay Port and Road Project, connecting Nunavut and NWT, via
 - a 230 km all-weather trunk road connecting a Port at Grays Bay to an existing ice road from Yellowknife via the Northwest Territories diamond mines; and
 - The only deep-water port on the Northwest Passage to (seasonally) connect to the national highway system.
- The Kivalliq Hydro-Fibre Line, an Inuit-led project that will deliver renewable energy and broadband service to underserved remote communities while enabling the region's mining sector to flourish.
- Completing the Tuktoyaktuk road and port and pursuing an Arctic Gateway policy across the Canadian North.
- A large-scale project to provide clean power to the Yukon, developed in partnership with the Government of the Yukon.

Defending the Canadian North

Canada's Conservatives will not forsake our northern peoples or cede an inch of our Arctic sovereignty. Over the past years, Russia has refurbished and built over 30 Arctic bases, 14 operational airfields, 16 deep-water ports, and over 50 new military icebreakers. The Chinese government has also increased interest in the Arctic. All while the Liberal government has marginalized Canada's Northern communities from accessing opportunities toward their development.

To protect our Arctic sovereignty, we will:

- Expand the Canadian Rangers in number and mandate while making investments in their preparedness, equipment, and training.
- Refurbish and expand our RCAF Forward Operation Locations (FOL) and allow civil airport authorities to co-locate and utilize runways.
- Complete the Nanisivik Arctic naval facility on Baffin Island and develop a new Arctic naval base at Churchill, Manitoba that will make the Arctic more accessible to the RCN year-round and provide joint operation of these ports with local communities.
- Deploy new autonomous vehicles for Arctic surveillance operations in the air and at sea as part of a new Canadian sovereignty, deterrence, and detection strategy, with Bagotville as the main site to host the Government of Canada's Unmanned Aircraft Systems
- Expand the RadarSat constellation and launch more low earth orbit (LEO) satellites for both telecommunications and defence in the Arctic.

