



National Centre for
Truth and Reconciliation

UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

National Centre for Truth and
Reconciliation:
Federal Pre-Budget Submission 2022

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 1:** A multi-year funding commitment of \$25 million over five years to provide sustained financial support for the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation's (NCTR) core operations. The NCTR is mandated to play a central role in implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action. Renewed core funding is essential to fulfilling this mandate.
- **Recommendation 2:** Funding of \$7.5 million over five years to continue the work of the Missing Children and Unmarked Graves Project, which responds to Call to Action 76. With the recent highly publicized identification of unmarked graves in Kamloops and Cowessess First Nation residential schools, among others, there is urgent need for sustained funding for the NCTR to work in partnership with the Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNA) to ensure that the missing children and unmarked graves project is completed. Conversations about this work is currently underway between CIRNA and the NCTR.
- **Recommendation 3:** Funding of \$60 million for a permanent home for the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, serving as a national learning and educational site as well as a memorial site. The NCTR is a national centre worthy of a home that expresses the meaning and purpose of the work to commemorate what happened in the residential school system. The NCTR educates Canadians on the profound injustices inflicted on First Nations, Inuit, and the Métis Nation by the forced removal of their children to attend residential schools and the widespread abuse suffered by the children in those schools. It combats the gap in knowledge that has a profoundly negative impact on perpetuating negative stereotypes of Indigenous peoples in Canada. The NCTR's new home will be a permanent memorial space for all the children who attended the schools, including those who did not return home.

INTRODUCTION

The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) welcomes the opportunity to provide recommendations to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance as part of the 2022 pre-budget consultations.

The NCTR was created in 2015 as part of the mandate of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). The TRC was given the responsibility to listen to Survivors, their families, communities, and others affected by the residential school system and to educate Canadians about their experiences. The resulting collection of statements, documents and other materials now form the sacred heart of the NCTR. Our mandate ensures Survivors and their families have access to their own history while preserving their truths for all of Canada, for all time.

The NCTR is a place of learning and dialogue where the truths of the residential school experience will be honoured and kept safe for future generations. We preserve the record of these human rights abuses and promote continued research and learning on the legacy of residential schools. Our goal is to honour Survivors and to foster reconciliation and healing on the foundation of truth telling.

The NCTR is hosted by the University of Manitoba and is governed by its own Governing Circle operating with the guidance of a Survivors Circle, which includes Inter-Generational Survivors.

CORE OPERATING FUNDING

The federal government's initial \$10 million in funding in 2016 for the NCTR helped its establishment and supported its first six years, in response to the TRC's Calls to Action, specifically Call to Action 78. This allocation of funding was for the period of 2016 to 2022. Canada's support for the core work of the NCTR cannot be a one-time allocation. Rather, it must be a sustained commitment for the life of the NCTR.

For this reason, the NCTR requires a renewed multi-year funding commitment. The NCTR is recommending a commitment of \$25 million over five years to provide sustained financial support for the Centre's core operations. This includes infrastructure and human resources necessary to maintain the extensive holdings of our Archives and Collections, promoting access to these records, fostering ongoing research, and promoting public education. This increase is reflective of the current capacity requirements of the NCTR to respond to the increasing demands of Survivors, First Nations, Inuit, the Métis Nation, educational partners, and the general public.

The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation recommends:

- Providing sustained financial support for the NCTR with a multi-year funding commitment of \$25 million over five years to support its core operations in fulfilling the mandate tasked by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

MISSING CHILDREN/UNMARKED GRAVES PROJECT FUNDING

The recent highly publicized identification of unmarked grave sites in Kamloops and Cowessess First Nation residential schools, among others, have led to growing national attention on the importance of locating and protecting all the remaining grave sites. In this context, there is an urgent need for sustained funding for the NCTR to work in partnership with the Government of Canada, including the Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations, to ensure that the missing children and unmarked graves project is completed in a timely and effective manner.

This is a project envisioned to be completed in three phases. Phase I consisted of creating the Student Death Registry, responding to Call to Action 72. This registry identifies each lost child with well-researched information, containing the identity of 4,117 children lost at residential school. The NCTR has also created a [website](#) to commemorate the children lost and families left behind. The National Council of Elders, the NCTR Survivors Circle, and several other Elder and Survivor groups offered guidance and ceremonial protocols for this project through more than six months of consultation and engagement in Indigenous communities across the country. The NCTR now enters Phase II of this research where the Centre will investigate all evidence of lost children in its over five million document holdings. Crown Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs (CIRNA) funded the start of this work to the sum of over \$3 million.

Phase III will establish NCTR as the National Unmarked Graves Research Repository, by supporting investigation into unmarked burials of children at residential schools by constructing a national research data repository, using the Calls to Action 73 to 76, to frame the work. The NCTR has set up the IT architecture, workflows, and resources to serve as a trusted digital repository for the unmarked gravesites research data. The NCTR can also serve as the research data repository for active data for those communities who decide to entrust the NCTR with their data, records, and information. Communities will not need to shoulder the cost of system administration for long term digital preservation or community data storage and access. The NCTR has the mandate, expertise, and resources to serve as the National Unmarked Gravesites Research Repository.

The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation recommends:

- Funding of \$7.5 million over five years to complete the work of the Missing Children & Unmarked Graves Project.

A PERMANENT HOME

The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation requires a permanent home worthy of its place in Canada's past, present, and future. The NCTR is a place every Canadian should visit. The Centre is a memorial space for all the children who attended the schools and for those who did not return home. The Centre is also an international learning lodge and a place of pilgrimage where family members may visit for healing and to reconnect with lost histories and loved ones. It is a place where Canadian children and their families embark on their own journey of reconciliation based on understanding and appreciating the true history of the residential schools. It is a place where the fire of reconciliation burns forever.

The vision for the new home of the NCTR is for a multipurpose space in keeping with our mandate and our role in Canada. It will include an educational area for K-12 and post-secondary students. It will have

research facilities to foster academic studies of local, national, and international significance. There will be commemorative spaces, featuring world-class Indigenous archives, a gallery, and exhibits. And finally, it will be a gathering, healing, ceremonial, and dialogue space for Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous people to come together in a spirit of Truth, Reconciliation and Healing.

The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation recommends:

- Funding of \$60 million for the creation of a permanent building for the NCTR; to create a home worthy of its place in Canada's past, present, and future.

CONCLUSION

The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation has a vital place in Canada's ongoing journey towards truth, reconciliation, and healing. The three recommendations set out in this brief are essential to continuing this work in a respectful, comprehensive, and effective manner. This is consistent with the TRC's Calls to Action and Canada's obligations towards the Survivors, their families, and their communities. It is clear there is a strong national desire to honour these truths, to respond to the legacy of the residential schools and to carry forth the flame of collective responsibility. The recommendations put forth in this submission can make this vision become a reality.

We thank the Committee for its consideration.