



Indspire

Indigenous education,
Canada's future.

L'éducation des autochtones.
L'avenir du Canada.

2018 Federal Pre-Budget Submission

August 2017

Introduction

Educational attainment is the most significant way of ensuring economic prosperity for Indigenous peoples, and Indspire is dedicated to raising funds to achieve that attainment. In 2016/17, Indspire raised enough funds to award \$11.6 million through 3,764 financial bursaries to Indigenous students across Canada.

Over the last two years, the funds raised have supported post-secondary students in over 85% of Indigenous communities across Canada. Of value to these students and communities is that funds raised with corporate, provincial, individuals, foundations and others are matched by the Government of Canada.

Indspire also provides programs to advance academic outcomes and foster systemic change in grade school through mentoring, professional development and educational programming.

Committed to honouring the Calls to Action, Indspire incorporates reconciliation into its programming, including the delivery of a workshop entitled *Truth and Reconciliation: An Educator's Guide* at the annual *National Gathering for Indigenous Education*, and providing cultural competency training for Indspire staff to build organizational capacity in implementing the Calls to Action.

In addressing the question “*What federal measures would help Canadians be more productive?*” Indspire submits that a productive Canada includes the full participation of Indigenous peoples.

According to Statistics Canada, the Indigenous population is Canada's fastest-growing demographic, increasing 20.1% between 2006 and 2011, compared to 5.2% for the non-Indigenous population.¹ The Centre for the Study of Living Standards reports that closing the education gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians would raise Indigenous employment by 90,000 workers, the GDP by \$28.3 billion, and Indigenous income by \$11,236 per worker by 2031. The Centre estimates that the cumulative gains to the GDP would be as large as \$261 billion over the 2011-2031 period.²

The federal government's commitment to a “renewed, nation-to nation relationship with Indigenous peoples” is to be commended. So too are the investments in Indigenous education, infrastructure and health. Such commitments and investments are what is required if systemic change is to happen. For sustainable change, investments in Indigenous-led organizations, such as Indspire, with a proven track record of success, must continue over the long-term.

¹ <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-011-x/99-011-x2011001-eng.cfm>

² <http://www.csls.ca/ipm/28/calver.pdf>

About Indspire

Indspire is Canada's only Indigenous-led national charity dedicated to advancing the educational outcomes of all Indigenous peoples. It raises funds to: provide financial support for the post-secondary education of Indigenous students; promotes and supports the achievements of Indigenous people (youth in particular); and assists communities and educators in improving educational outcomes.

2016-2017 Indspire Highlights

- \$11.6 million awarded through 3,764 bursaries to Indigenous post-secondary students
- Successful 2016 *National Gathering*, providing 800 educators with professional development through workshops and case studies
- 250 participants in *Peer Support: Educator Mentorship* program, an increase from 200 the previous year
- 20 additional *Successful Practices* and 12 additional *Nurturing Capacity* projects added to the *K-12 Institute* (number of resources now over 1,000)
- 820 Indigenous high school students attended the 2017 *Soaring conference* to meet employers, learn about financial support and tour local post-secondary campuses

Indspire now counts over 9,000 individual Canadians among its donors, and an increasing number of individuals recently contributed to a campaign in which an individual donor committed to double the amount if Indspire raised \$150,000. We surpassed the target, and these funds will support Indigenous post-secondary students through our bursary program.

Indspire's K-12 Institute

As Senator Murray Sinclair has said, "education got us into this mess and education will get us out".

For students to complete post-secondary education, they must graduate from high school. Thus, Indspire created the *K-12 Institute*, a resource centre that connects educators of Indigenous students with resources to improve outcomes and increase high school completion rates. It is supporting the building of capacity and fostering systemic change in communities across Canada.

Programs and initiatives include:

Nurturing Capacity: Building Community Success – Indspire supports communities across Canada to improve educational outcomes through the documentation and evaluation of innovative practices. This community-led process is supported by Indspire-funded Indigenous scholars, who provide training on data and evaluation.

K-12 Institute Resource Centre – Provides resources for educators, including *Successful Practices*, discussion forums, lesson plans, webinars, etc.

Peer Support: Educator Mentorship – A mentorship program for educators of Indigenous students, with participants in all provinces save two.

Rivers to Success: Mentoring Indigenous Youth – Indspire pairs students near the end of their post-secondary education with mentors from numerous fields, including: finance, healthcare, Human Resources, social services, law, environment, planning, arts, engineering and others. Participants are located in nine provinces and two territories.

Realizing Projects: Supporting Community Solutions – Provides support to community projects that enhance K-12 outcomes through innovative strategies.

Teach for Tomorrow: Indigenous Educator Apprenticeship Program – Indspire’s new national strategy to increase student success by growing the number of Indigenous educators across Canada. The first program of its kind, it will support 500 Indigenous students to pursue careers as educators. A pilot for year one is underway in Winnipeg, with a national roll-out planned once new partners are secured and the first year’s progress is evaluated.

National Gathering for Indigenous Education – Annual conference for educators who share promising practices and collaborate to translate theory into workable strategies. The conference is held in centres across Canada and attracts geographically and culturally diverse audiences.

Soaring Indigenous Youth Career Conference – Annual student conference with workshops, career advice, and tours of post-secondary campuses.

Building Brighter Futures: Bursaries, Scholarships, and Awards Program

This program provides financial assistance to Indigenous students as they pursue post-secondary studies. A 2017 survey of students demonstrates the program is achieving its purpose:

- 96% graduated

Of those who graduated:

- 53% continued to a second diploma/degree;
- 61% returned to their community/found employment serving indigenous populations.

Top 10 fields of study in 2016/17:

Discipline	# of Awards
Education	453
Nursing	345
Social Science	321
Business	315
Social Work	184
Indigenous Studies	175
Science	163
Fine Arts	141
Engineering	136
Law	135

Recommendations

A. That funding through the main agreement between Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) and Indspire increase from \$817,000 to \$2,450,000 annually, with a two percent annual escalator.

With INAC's support, Indspire has delivered programs focused on reducing the educational gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians.

Through annual funding, as well as the New Paths for Education proposal-based funding program, Indspire has:

- Grown the number of educators at the *National Gathering* from 250 to 800 in three years
- Increased the number of educators paired with a mentor from 148 to 250 in two years
- Developed and distributed over 1,000 resources for educators and stakeholders
- Evaluated and shared innovative practices that improve outcomes for students through the *Nurturing Capacity program*
- Reached more than 50,000 Indigenous high school students with career advice and workshops through the annual *Soaring* conference

The partnership between Indspire and INAC has produced strong results for a number of years. However, Indspire respectfully submits that the agreement between Indspire and INAC allows for limited flexibility and growth. Changes to the agreement are challenging to make, and the annual funding of \$817,000 has not increased for approximately 20 years.

Even with funds from New Paths, little certainty exists around the availability of such funds due to the requirement of an annual proposal. Indspire agrees with Minister Bennett's recent statement that there should be a move away from "the industry that has been built around programs". Indspire submits that the focus be shifted from proposal-based funding to more flexible and guaranteed funding with room for annual increases.

To continue the progress made by Indspire, we recommend that the main agreement should be increased through the following measures:

- (I) Increase funding for *Soaring* and the *Awards* to \$350,000 to reach more students with career workshops, connections to employers, tours of post-secondary campuses, and exposure to Indigenous role models
- (II) Include funding of \$200,000 for *Nurturing Capacity* for additional promising practices to be evaluated and disseminated (not funded)
- (III) Add New Paths funded programs to the main agreement:
 - \$500,000 for the *National Gathering* for more educators to receive professional development

- \$200,000 for *Peer Support* to provide mentoring opportunities to more educators
- \$300,000 to grow educator resources in the *K-12 Institute*

(IV) Provide annual funding of \$300,000 for research

Indspire is uniquely situated with a vast amount of untapped data on thousands of Indigenous students. Data collected include: age, geography, economic circumstances, volunteering, education levels, areas of study, status affiliation, language, disability, gender, etc. Mining these data will provide a rich source to inform public policy for all governments, as well as Indigenous leadership and institutions as they build capacity in their communities.

Summary of Request:

Programs	Current Level of Funding	Request
Indspire Awards, Soaring	\$167,000	\$350,000
Bursaries	\$600,000	\$600,000
Industry in the Classroom	50,000	N/A
National Gathering	Not funded through main agreement	\$500,000
Peer Support	Not funded through main agreement	\$200,000
Resources, webinars, lesson plans etc)	Not funded through main agreement	\$300,000
Nurturing Capacity	Not funded	\$200,000
Research	Not funded	\$300,000
Total annual funding	\$817,000	\$2,450,000

Indspire requests that an annual 2% escalator be included to account for inflation.

B. Additional \$5 million per year for *Building Brighter Futures: Bursaries* program

Although close to \$24 million through 7,556 financial awards has been disbursed to Indigenous post-secondary students over past two years, this represents only 11% of the financial need, which was just under \$218 million over the same period.

Indspire appreciates the government's Budget 2017 commitment to contribute \$25 million to our bursary program over five years. This support is critical to addressing the educational attainment gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians. Of concern, however, is that the commitment made by the previous government through Economic Action Plan 2015 to our bursary program will expire in March 2018, which will result in a \$5 million shortfall beginning in 2018/19. Considering that many Indigenous students now rely on Indspire for financial assistance, coupled with the fact that we only meet 11% of their need, this shortfall will severely affect students' ability to attend post-secondary. To maintain the level of funds available, Indspire requests the current

commitment be increased to \$10 million per year starting April 1, 2018, allowing approximately 1,500 more Indigenous students to pursue their post-secondary studies.

Conclusion

Indspire requests that its main funding agreement with INAC increase from \$817,000 to \$2,450,000 annually (with 2% annual escalator) by increasing funding for the *Indspire Awards* and *Soaring* youth conference; adding funding for research and the *Nurturing Capacity* program; and including funding for the *National Gathering*, *Peer Support* and the *K-12 Institute* into the main agreement. To continue assisting post-secondary students, Indspire further requests an additional \$5 million per year for its bursary program.

Indspire is proud of its work in supporting tens of thousands of students transition through education to employment. Equally important is the systemic change we are making through the *K-12 Institute* by sharing with educators and communities across Canada promising practices in Indigenous education and providing professional development opportunities.

Indspire believes more can and must be done. With increased and sustained support, Indigenous-led institutions like Indspire can serve as a non-political leader in the interests of making systemic change and advancing Indigenous education outcomes in First Nation, Inuit and Metis communities across Canada.

Sincerely,



Roberta Jamieson
President and CEO