

**Aboriginal Funding** Copied from the Ripple Effects newsletter



There are 6,199 grants and contributions to 2,054 Aboriginal organizational recipients from 34 federal government departments for a total value of \$5,606,665,491. Of the \$5.6 billion identified Grants and Contributions, \$3,748,881,596 (67%) is transferred directly to Band Councils.

While Canadians receive services from all levels of government, through direct federal transfers to provinces and territories, and at an average annual growth rate of 6.6% per year, Finance Canada has maintained an arbitrary 2% cap on spending increases on core services since 1996. Yet, First Nation Governments provide a huge range of programs and services to their citizens.

Thirty-four separate agencies and departments reported program expenditures targeted to Aboriginal people. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada was the largest program provider, reporting 4,032 grants or contributions, for a total of \$4,634,000,049. Health Canada is second, with 987 reported transfers, for a total of \$624,001,570.

Treasury Board's Transfer Payment Policy governs the management of federal grants and contributions. A "grant" is a transfer payment made to an individual or organization which is **not subject to being accounted for or audited** but for which eligibility and entitlement may be verified or for which the recipient may need to meet preconditions. A "contribution" is a conditional transfer payment to an individual or organization for a specified purpose pursuant to a contribution agreement that is subject to being accounted for or audited.

If an individual wants to know the total Grants & Contributions profile for a particular organization for the year, more than 120 separate searches are required. This may frustrate all but the most determined citizen in their efforts to understand an organization's G&C profile.

Approximately \$4 billion of the estimated \$10 billion in Aboriginal program spending could not be identified through the public reporting of Grants and Contributions.

The reality behind the myths is that the money provided by the Federal Government to First Nations is insufficient rather than excessive, well-accounted for rather than misused, and almost all goes to pay debts and obligations to First Nations rather than the generous hand-out it is most often portrayed to be. It is our belief that the more that people understand the reality and reject the myths, the more likely it is that they will support the aspirations of First Nations across Canada and help those become reality as well.

Of the spending that does go to First Nations, the largest portion goes to provide basic services to people on First Nations reserves. Much of the remainder will go to pay longstanding debts that the Federal Government owes to First Nations' people, either collectively or individually, arising from

claims, litigation, treaties and other historic agreements between First Nations and the Crown. A small piece will go toward First Nations' self-government.

Approximately \$5.36 billion were allocated to First Nations in grants or contributions, or just over \$7,200 per person. When the federal, provincial and municipal budgets are measured against population, the average citizen of the City of Ottawa receives services costing approximately \$14,900. The City of Ottawa budget is just over \$2 billion for its 775,000 people.

Funding for core services such as education, economic and social development, capital facilities and maintenance has decreased by almost 13% since 1999-2000. The reality is that spending on First Nations does not meet the need in First Nations communities and never has. A minimum of 168 different financial reports are required of First Nations annually. It is also worth mentioning here that First Nations with fewer than 500 residents, highlighted in the Auditor General's comments as particularly burdened, make up 61% of all First Nations.

First Nations' budgets are controlled by the Federal Government; there is actually greater scrutiny and more accountability for those budgets than would be the case for comparable private sector organizations. When one looks at the continually miserable conditions on some reserves, one could wonder whether there has been any beneficial effect to the \$100 billion that have been spent on these reserves in the past 10 years.

The Federal Government states that funding to First Nations is intended to provide comparable services, meet lawful obligations and support self-government. However, the funds that First Nations currently receive are insufficient to achieve the goals for which they are intended.

*Every year that the social and economic circumstances of Aboriginal people remain as they are, it costs the country \$7.5 billion. That cost - the cost of the status quo - is the equivalent of nearly one per cent of Canada's GDP. It consists of a fiscal cost of \$4.6 billion, borne by all Canadians, and a loss of net income to Aboriginal people of \$2.9 billion." Today, the total cost of the status quo may be as high as \$15 billion.*

I am hopeful that this will answer some of the countless questions asked about "Where is the money"?

My sources and research on these numbers can be found at the websites of Indian and Northern Affairs, Statistics Canada, Assembly of First Nations and The Congress for Aboriginal People's.

### ***Canada's Shame***

Copied from the Ripple Effects newsletter

Between 1999 and 2001, only four per cent of Grade 9 students at reserve schools wrote and passed the provincial achievement test, or PAT, in math. Only 14 per cent scored grades of over 50 per cent in science, and only 19 per cent passed the social studies exam. In other words, most students at reserve schools never even start high school, because they never successfully complete junior high. Teacher turnover is a huge problem when teachers on reserves are paid 20 per cent less than in provincial schools.

Given the ugly legacy of residential schools, many aboriginal communities and families discourage children from going to school.

Aboriginal people are the youngest and the fastest growing population in the country – increasing six times the rate of Canada's non-Aboriginal population. Aboriginal people work in all industries of the economy and have great potential for expanding the labour force with the changing economy and Canada's GDP. According to study findings released in May 2009 by the Canadian Centre for the Study Standard of Living; if Aboriginal people in Canada attain the same level of education and employment as non-Aboriginal people our country's GDP would climb by an estimated \$401 billion by 2026.



**Ontario First Nation, Metis and Inuit Education Policy Provides New Hope For The Academic Success Of Aboriginal Students.**

In the past there have been articles written on the intellectual capabilities of Aboriginal people. Most if not all of them state that the Aboriginal people are mentally inferior to the intellectual capabilities of Whites.

In my opinion it was the method in which Aboriginal students were taught that made them less likely to succeed academically than non-Aboriginal students, not that they were in any way mentally inferior. After all, history has in the past been taught from the European perspective and therefore was not inclusive of the hopes, dreams,

aspirations and contributions of other races of people.

We all know about the horrors of Residential Schools. How would anyone expect a student to succeed academically under those conditions? The harmful effects of these institutions resulted in lack of self-esteem, substance abuse, and broken homes, which directly influenced the success of the next generation of Aboriginal people.

For ten years I have been active in the School Advisory Council of a local public school that my daughter attends. The last eight of these years I have held the position of Chairman of the School Advisory Council. I became active in this council so that I would have a voice in the education of my child. It has been proven that students are more successful academically when their parents play an active role in their education. It demonstrates that you care and want the best life has to offer for them.

Over these past ten years I have seen progress in regards to inclusiveness in the Ontario educational system. One of these signs of progress is the introduction of the Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit Educational Policy Framework, which has to be fully implemented in Ontario schools by the year 2016.

Space in this newsletter does not allow me to include all forty-one pages of this policy, so the following are the vision and policy statement of the Ontario First Nation, Métis and Inuit Educational Policy which will give you a general idea about the goals of the policy.

**Vision**

First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students in Ontario will have the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to successfully complete their elementary and secondary education in order to pursue postsecondary education or training and/or to enter the workforce. They will have the traditional and contemporary knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to be socially contributive, politically active, and economically prosperous citizens of the world. All students in Ontario will have knowledge and appreciation of contemporary and traditional First Nation, Métis, and Inuit traditions, cultures, and perspectives.

## Policy Statement

The Ministry of Education is committed to First Nation, Métis, and Inuit student success. Through cooperation and partnerships with First Nation, Métis, and Inuit families, communities, and organizations, First Nation governments and education authorities, school boards, other Ontario ministries, the federal government, the Ontario College of Teachers, and faculties of education, the ministry is committed to developing strategies that will:

- increase the capacity of the education system to respond to the learning and cultural needs of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students;
- provide quality programs, services, and resources to help create learning opportunities for First Nation, Métis, and Inuit students that support improved academic achievement and identity building;
- provide a curriculum that facilitates learning about contemporary and traditional First Nation, Métis, and Inuit cultures, histories, and perspectives among all students, and that also contributes to the education of school board staff, teachers, and elected trustees; and
- develop and implement strategies that facilitate increased participation by First Nation, Métis, and Inuit parents, students, communities, and organizations in working to support academic success.

**This policy is a giant step forward in assuring equal opportunity and inclusion for our children in the Ontario educational system. But the academic success of our children does not end with implementation of this policy. We as parents and grandparents need to be prepared to afford in our lives and our conversation an example of how we were so grievously wronged by such a prevailing opinion of our race. We need to prove by fact, not by theory that the thirst for knowledge is part of our nature, in common with all mankind, that we have the intelligence to use it rightly when acquired and the capabilities to ascend to the highest elevation of the human mind. And above all we need to ensure that such examples are given in the intellectual and moral cultivation of our children; so that they will increase in knowledge, in virtue and in every ennobling principle of man's nature.**

I remain un-ceded  
Spencer Alexander  
Métis



*OMFRC*  
*Special Edition*

***Our Shame***

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Amongst our aboriginal population, the rate of self-destruction of children is five to six times that among non-aboriginal children.

“Many First Nations communities are remote and isolated. They have no phone lines, no electricity, no indoor plumbing. There are social problems and problems with education and health care. We need to promote some public awareness of the housing conditions in too many First Nations communities. Canadians are living in Third World conditions. It’s shocking that so many First Nations communities live under boil-water orders — and this, in the country with one of the world's largest freshwater supply.” Mike Holmes, Building Contractor.