



## Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Bulletin

### Spring Economic Update 2026

#### Summary:

- On April 28, 2026, Minister of Finance and National Revenue François-Philippe Champagne delivered the Spring Economic Update (SEU), [\*Canada Strong for All\*](#).
- The Update includes \$37 billion in new spending dedicated to the Canada Strong sovereign wealth fund, mobilizing the workforce through Team Canada Strong, and funding for affordable housing. These items do not include First Nations-specific allocations.
- The SEU lacks any distinctions-based investments in First Nations infrastructure, housing or clean water.
- The Update makes some commitments to First Nations, including \$794 million in 2026-27 to support the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program, \$630 million over two years starting in 2026-27 to maintain trauma-informed and culturally appropriate mental wellness services, and \$601 million in 2026-27 to support high-quality, culturally relevant elementary and secondary education on reserve.
- The SEU has significant gaps in some social areas, including no specific First Nations investments in languages, education, policing, or procurement.

On April 28, 2026, Minister of Finance and National Revenue François-Philippe Champagne delivered the Spring Economic Update, titled [\*Canada Strong for All\*](#).

The Spring Economic Update was positioned by the federal government as providing a path to *Canada Strong for All*—with new investments of more than \$37 billion across the \$25 billion *Canada Strong* sovereign wealth fund, mobilizing the workforce through *Team Canada Strong* investments, and \$7 billion to address affordable housing. None of these investments includes any specific allocations to First Nations, creating the impression that Canada’s path to “building strong” does not include First Nations. The Spring Economic Update also lacked distinctions-based funding for First Nations infrastructure, housing and clean water—despite the government’s commitment to close the infrastructure gap by 2030.

The Spring Economic Update makes some commitments to First Nations, particularly around health and education:

- \$794 million in 2026-27 to support the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program.
- \$630 million over two years, starting in 2026-27, to maintain trauma-informed and culturally appropriate mental wellness services for Indigenous people, including continued support for crisis lines and Indigenous-led mental wellness programming that supports community-based services grounded in culture and ceremony.
- \$400 million over five years, starting in 2026-27, to maintain access to high-quality primary care services, including nurses, nurse practitioners, and paramedics for First Nations in rural and remote on-reserve communities.

- \$601 million in 2026-27 to support high-quality, culturally relevant elementary and secondary education on reserve that meets the needs of students so that First Nations youth can participate fully in Canada’s skilled workforce
- \$700 million over six years, starting in 2025-26, to continue to support Indigenous communities to implement their own solutions to protect children and families by exercising their jurisdiction under *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*.

The Spring Economic Update falls short in meeting the urgent and long-term needs identified by First Nations. It does provide continued support for Jordan’s Principle and the First Nations Child and Family Services Program, but this reflects previously announced and ongoing funding, not new investments. It also lacks new investments in critical areas such as implementing the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, policing, or First Nations procurement.

The AFN will continue to advocate for consistent and sustained investments to close the First Nations infrastructure gap, identify and press for investments in First Nations priorities in advance of Budget 2026, and conduct further research and analysis to develop supporting rationale for funding requirements.

This detailed chart summarizes the Spring Economic Update.

## Spring Economic Update 2026 – *Canada Strong for All* Notable Investments

| First Nations or Indigenous-Specific  |  |                        |   |
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| Investment Area   | Fiscal Year(s) and \$ Amount(s)  | Reference(s) in Budget | Comments  |
| Housing – Urban, Rural and Northern Housing ( <b>Old funding</b> )  | Reallocate \$2.8 billion over 5 years for urban, rural and northern housing. | p.100                  | Reannouncing the reallocation and rebalancing of \$4 billion from Budget 2023 (\$2.8 billion unallocated referenced in Budget 2025).  |
| Education ( <b>New</b> )  | \$601 million in 2026-27.  | p.105                  | To Indigenous Services Canada to support high-quality, culturally relevant elementary and secondary education on reserve that meets the needs of students so that First Nations youth can participate fully in Canada’s skilled workforce.                                  |
| Children and families – <i>An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families</i> ( <b>New</b> ) | \$700 million over six years, starting in 2025-26.                           | p.105                  | To Indigenous Services Canada to continue to support Indigenous communities to implement their own solutions to protect children and families by exercising their jurisdiction under <i>An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families</i> . |

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| Health – Non-Insured Health Benefits ( <b>New</b> )                                 | \$794 million in 2026-27.                            | p.106 | To Indigenous Services Canada to support the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program, which provides First Nations and Inuit with coverage for a range of health products and services such as medical travel, pharmaceuticals, and mental health counselling.   |
| Data and Governance Capacity ( <a href="#">Announced March 26</a> )                 | \$359 million over three years, starting in 2026-27. | p.105 | To support data collection and Indigenous governance and capacity programs, enabling First Nations to effectively deliver community-based services. This funding will ensure First Nations can sustain core functions necessary to deliver essential services and actively participate in Canada's economy, while balancing community responsibilities and keeping pace with population growth. Includes \$283.3 million over two years through Indigenous Services, and \$55.6 million in 2026-27 through the ISC Emergency Management Assistance Program (EMAP). |
| Urban Indigenous Peoples ( <a href="#">Announced March 27</a> )                     | \$168 million over five years, starting in 2026-27.  | p.105 | To support Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples so that Friendship Centres across Canada can continue to provide critical supports and services to their community members.  |
| Social development – Assisted Living Program ( <a href="#">Announced March 27</a> ) | \$592 million over nine years, starting in 2025-26.  | p.105 | For social support services for people living on reserve with chronic illness or disability under the Assisted Living Program so that they can maintain their independence and participate in their communities  |
| Health – Mental Wellness ( <a href="#">Announced March 27</a> )                     | \$630 million over two years, starting in 2026-27.   | p.106 | To maintain trauma-informed and culturally appropriate mental wellness services for Indigenous people including continued support for crisis lines and Indigenous-led mental wellness programming that supports community-based services grounded in culture and ceremony.   |
| Health – Primary Care Services ( <a href="#">Announced March 26</a> )               | \$400 million over five years, starting in 2026-27.  | p.106 | To maintain access to high-quality primary care services including nurses, nurse practitioners, and paramedics for First Nations in rural and remote on-reserve communities. This funding includes \$41.17 million to support frontline health professionals employed by First Nations in 29 communities where nursing stations have been transferred to First Nations control, and \$84.38 million to hire contracted community paramedics  |

|   |   |        | to strengthen the existing health workforce.   |
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| Indigenous-Specific Spending in Annex 1 – Policy Actions Taken Since Budget 2025        |   |        |  |
| Extending Support for Indigenous Policing Capacity                                      | \$9 million over three years, from 2026-27 through 2029-30. | p. 137 | To Public Safety Canada (PSC).   |
| Extending Support for the Family Violence Prevention Program                            | \$65 million over five years.                               | p. 138 | To Indigenous Services Canada (ISC).   |
| First Nations Child and Family Services Program ( <b>Previously announced</b> )         | \$252 million over five years.                              | p. 138 | To ISC.  |
| Extending Support for Jordan's Principle ( <b>Previously announced</b> )                | \$778 million in 2026-27.                                   | p. 138 | To ISC.  |
| Extending Support for Indigenous Youth.   | \$1 million in 2026-27.                                     | p. 138 | To Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC).  |
| Extending Support for the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Initiative.   | \$40 million over five years.                               | p. 138 | To Public Prosecution Service of Canada (PPSC).  |
| Extending Support for the MMIWG - National Family and Survivors Circle.                 | \$3 million over three years.                               | p. 138 | To CIRNAC.   |
| Extending Support for Addressing the Legacy of Residential Schools.                     | \$118 million over two years.                               | p. 138 | To CIRNAC.   |
| Extending Support for Emergency Management Response and Recovery Activities on Reserve* | \$749 million in 2025-26.                                   | p. 139 | To ISC.  |
| Extending Support for the Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning.                    | \$3 million in 2026-27.                                     | p. 139 | To CIRNAC.   |
| Extending Support for First Nations Fiscal Relationships.                               | \$30 million over five years.                               | p. 139 | To ISC. Includes funding to renew the First Nations Financial Management Board's three initiatives funded by ISC, including their work on the New Fiscal Relationship Grant, as well as a small portion of the funding is salaries for the ISC team to administer the Grant process. |
| Support for Additions to Reserve  | \$11 million in 2026-27.                                    | p. 139 | Additional \$11 million for ATR capacity at Indigenous Services Canada.  |
| Extending Support for Flood Mapping on Reserve.   | \$18 million over three years.                              | p. 139 | To ISC.  |
| Specific Claims Research Funding  | 26-27, \$4 million  | p.139  | This investment will increase specific claims research funding from its base \$4 million to  |

|  |  |                        | \$8 million this fiscal year – First Nations requested \$42 million. The investment is for one year.  |
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| Extending Support for the Indigenous Partnerships Office and Indigenous Natural Resource Partnerships Program. | \$84 million over four years, starting in 2027-28.                           | p. 139                 | To Natural Resources Canada (NRCan)   |
| Section 35 Negotiation Funding.  | 26-27, \$40 million  | p. 139                 | One time funding for the section 35 negotiation, rights, recognition, and discussion tables administered by CIRNAC.   |
| First Nation Negotiations Funding Support.   | 26-27, \$5 million   | p. 139                 | One time funding for the <i>Contributions to Support the Negotiation and Implementation of Treaties, Claims and Self-Government Agreements or Initiatives</i> Program. This supports Comprehensive Land Claim Policy negotiations, Treaty Commission offices, and other self-government arrangements.   |
| <b>Investments where Indigenous Peoples may access a proportion or sub-set of the funds</b>                    |  |                        |   |
| Investment Area  | Fiscal Year(s) and \$ Amount(s)  | Reference(s) in Budget | Comments  |
| Fisheries – Small Craft Harbours   | \$957.8 million over five years, starting in 2026-27.                        | p.105                  | UNSURE OF FIRST NATIONS ACCESS To Fisheries and Oceans Canada for the Small Craft Harbours Program. This represents an increase of more than 35 per cent per year over the 10-year average and provides needed stability in funding for repairs. This is in addition to the Department’s annual program budget of approximately \$90 million a year. Next steps will be announced by the Minister of Fisheries. |
| Access to Capital – Canada Strong Fund   | \$25 billion over 3 years.   | p.55                   | UNSURE OF FIRST NATIONS ACCESS: The Fund will invest in strategic Canadian projects and companies alongside other investors, with a clear objective to achieve commercial returns to build the wealth of Canada. The government intends to consult on the specific design of this product.  |
| Workforce activation – Team Canada Strong  | \$2 billion over five years, starting in 2026-27, and \$262 million ongoing. | p.92                   | UNSURE OF FIRST NATIONS ACCESS to increase the number of young people who are ready to take up the challenge of a good career in the skilled trades. Team Canada Strong will provide a simple and seamless way to learn about and enter into the trades and link up with employers.   |
|  | \$331 million over five years,   | p.92                   | UNSURE OF FIRST NATIONS ACCESS to boost and modernise apprenticeship  |

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|  | starting in 2026-27, and \$18 million ongoing.  |      | training for a faster journey to the Red Seal. We would expand and accelerate union-led and employer-led training pathways. We also intend to work with provinces and territories to strengthen workforce and training systems.   |
|  | \$3.4 billion over five years, starting in 2026-27, and \$468 million ongoing.  | p.92 | UNSURE OF FIRST NATIONS ACCESS to address the challenges that can stop apprentices from completing their training and moving into permanent jobs. We will also call on employers (particularly those who get major federal investments) to do their part in recruiting and retaining trades workers.  |
| Housing – Low-cost financing                     | \$7 billion   | p.98 | UNSURE OF FIRST NATIONS ACCESS Accelerating over \$7 billion in low-cost financing to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. More affordable financing will help builders move projects forward sooner—getting rental homes on the market <b>faster</b> . Focuses on Apartment Construction Loan Program to speed up the construction of up to 16,500 new rental homes. |
| Environment: Canada’s Strategy to Protect Nature | \$3.5 billion over five years, starting in 2026-27, \$819.9 million in future years until 2036-37, with \$74.6 million in remaining amortization, and \$129.3 million ongoing thereafter (\$3.7 billion over five years, starting in 2026-27, \$792 million in future years until 2036-37, and \$129.3 million ongoing thereafter, on a cash basis) | p.78 | UNSURE OF FIRST NATIONS ACCESS government’s plan to work with partners from coast-to-coast-to-coast to deliver on Canada’s commitment to conserve 30 per cent of lands and waters by 2030.  |
| Environment – Whale Protection                   | \$91.3 million over five years, starting in 2026-27, with \$3.7   | p.79 | UNSURE OF FIRST NATIONS ACCESS ...to Transport Canada, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and the Canadian Coast Guard to implement a regional noise monitoring and   |

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|   | million in remaining amortisation and \$16.5 million ongoing  |       | management program and to address other threats to the endangered Southern Resident Killer Whale population.  |
| Environment – International Climate Finance | Proposes to provide \$3.0 billion over five years on a cash basis, starting in 2026-27, to Global Affairs Canada, and \$167.9 million over five years on a cash basis, starting in 2026-27, to Environment and Climate Change Canada to continue delivering climate-related supports to vulnerable countries. | p. 77 | This is a reduction from the previous allocation of international climate finance commitment (\$5.3 billion / 3 years), which included a dedicated \$15 million stream for international Indigenous Peoples partnerships, to GAC. It is unclear whether this new investment will continue to support this work. |
| Environment - FinDev                        | Provide \$2.0 billion in paid-in capital for FinDev Canada, as well as \$732 million over three years on a cash basis, starting in 2028-29, for a concessional loan facility .  | p. 77 | FinDev supports development through private capital and investment. It is unclear how the design of the concessional loan facility will work.   |
| Homelessness                                | \$125 million in 2026-27  | p.99  | UNSURE OF FIRST NATIONS ACCESS Federal government has extended the Unsheltered Homelessness and Encampments Initiative by one Year.   |
| Trade Infrastructure Strategy               | \$6 billion over 5 years, starting in 2026-27   | p. 75 | UNSURE OF FIRST NATIONS ACCESS Launch of <b>\$5 B Trade Diversification Corridors Fund</b> to help build and  |

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|               |   |      | modernize Canada’s ports, railways, airports, bridges, and highways, to help Canadian goods reach overseas markets. Launch of <b>\$1 B Arctic Infrastructure Fund</b> to support critical Arctic transportation infrastructure (including airports, ports, all season roads, and highways) with dual civilian and military applications. These investments aim to strengthen Northern communities, enhance economic development, and help secure Canada’s Arctic sovereignty.  |
| Food Security | <p>\$24 million over four years, starting in 2027-28, and \$9 million per year ongoing</p> <p>\$6.3 million in 2026-27 announced for the Northern Isolated Community Initiatives (NICI) Fund</p> <p>\$30 million top-up in 2026-27 to the Nutrition North Canada Retail Subsidy</p> | p.96 | <p>The Spring Economic Update 2026 announces the government’s intention to amend the Canadian Food Inspection Agency Act and the Pest Control Products Act to include consideration of food security and cost of food; further it proposes to provide \$24 million over four years, starting in 2027-28, and \$9 million per year ongoing, to enable Health Canada to expand economic analysis capacity and to optimize the review processes for pest control products.</p> <p>An additional \$6.3 million in 2026-27 announced for the Northern Isolated Community Initiatives (NICI) Fund to keep supporting local and Indigenous food production systems, including innovative northern food businesses, contributing to food security in the North, and a \$30 million top-up in 2026-27 to the Nutrition North Canada Retail Subsidy to help make nutritious food and essential items more affordable in 124 isolated northern communities by subsidizing the cost of shipping.</p> |

**Policy Announcements**

| Policy/Investment Area              | Reference(s) in Budget | Comments  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|---|
| <i>Improving Housing Supply Act</i> | p.99                   | Through the <i>Improving Housing Supply Act</i> , \$1.7 billion will go to provinces and territories to remove barriers and accelerate homebuilding, including reducing development fees and levies on new home construction. |
| Airport reform legislation          | p.56-57                | The Spring Economic Update 2026 announces the government’s intention to introduce legislation to ensure it can  |

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|   |               | obtain the information necessary for a comprehensive evaluation of airport reforms.   |
| Investment Summit   | p.75          | As announced on April 17, the Spring Economic Update 2026 proposes to facilitate the delivery of a premier Investment Summit in September 2026. This event will showcase Canada as a compelling investment destination and a trusted convener of global capital, with a focus on priority sectors such as energy and critical minerals, artificial intelligence, defence, and infrastructure.   |
| Sustainable Finance Summit  | p.77          | The Spring Economic Update 2026 proposes to support Canadian Climate Institute hosting a Sustainable Finance conference in the coming year. This event will bring together domestic and international stakeholders to promote progress on the Canadian taxonomy and discuss sustainable investment opportunities in Canada.   |
| Canada Nuclear Strategy   | p. 79         | The Government of Canada will soon release a Nuclear Energy Strategy to provide a clear and coordinated federal perspective on the sector's future development.   |
| Whole-of-Government Competition Plan                                  | p. 17 / p. 83 | To strengthen productivity and improve affordability, the Spring Economic Update 2026 launches a new Whole-of-Government Competition Plan that will take a focused and coordinated approach to ensure that competition is prioritised throughout the federal government's policies.   |
| Telecommunications Competition Roadmap                                | p.17 / p. 84  | The government will take a comprehensive, national approach to telecom competition and drive meaningful outcomes for Canadian consumers by implementing a Telecommunications Competition Roadmap. The Roadmap puts Canadians first, through actions that will improve choice, transparency, prices, and networks.   |
| Carbon Capture, Utilization, and Storage (CCUS) investment tax credit | Pg. 64        | The Spring Economic Update 2026 proposes that enhanced oil recovery (EOR) be made an eligible use for the purposes of the CCUS tax credit. Like other forms of eligible CO2 uses, CCUS projects that perform EOR would be required to permanently store the captured CO2. EOR would be made an eligible use starting the Day of the Spring Economic Update 2026, subject to the designation of a jurisdiction by the Minister of the Environment. |