



## What is the history of this issue and how does it impact First Nations?

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) is dedicated to advancing the priorities of First Nations through research and analysis in support of advocacy on a broad range of issues and policy matters. The AFN has delivered success on many priorities as identified by First Nations; however, it has been a challenge to find meaningful research and data that is aligned with First Nations data sovereignty and the principles of OCAP™ (Ownership, Control, Access and Possession). Numerous resolutions have recognized data sovereignty as a cornerstone of nation-rebuilding (AFN Resolution 57/2016, *Funding for Regional First Nations Government Centres*) and that timely access to high-quality statistical information and data are essential to making informed decisions that affect the social and economic well-being of citizens (AFN Resolution 42/2018, *Data Sovereignty*). As the AFN strives to accelerate progress on its advocacy efforts, it has become increasingly important to encourage the development of sound research and data for the benefit First Nations.

## How has the AFN's recent advocacy affected this area?

Access to reliable and culturally relevant data is critical to building a complete portrait of First Nations lived experiences, unmasking inequalities, and ensuring delivery of effective policies and programs and services. It is in this context that Chiefs-in-Assembly adopted Resolution 57/2016, calling on Canada to fund the development of a First Nations data governance strategy (FNDGS). In March 2020, the First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC) officially tabled their comprehensive report, *A First Nations Data Governance Strategy*, articulating a path to data sovereignty with the establishment of a First Nations-led national network of fully functioning regional information governance centres to provide data and statistical services to First Nations. In 2021, the federal budget identified \$73.5M for Indigenous-led data strategies, including the further development and implementation of the FNDGS. The AFN continues to support the FNIGC and the FNDGS with an AFN representative serving as co-chair of the FNIGC Board of Directors, and ongoing advocacy at regular meetings between the AFN, FNIGC, Indigenous Services Canada and Statistics Canada.

The AFN also strives to develop policy analysis and research outputs that support First Nations priorities and goals. During the 2021 federal general election, the AFN provided key analysis on party platforms, statistical analysis on the potential impact of First Nations voters on specific ridings, and profiles on Indigenous candidates. Parliamentary monitoring of legislative and committee developments with a focus on monitoring legislation that impacts First Nations is also



ongoing. Strategic and insightful analytical products are provided to the AFN Executive about key horizontal issues, such as the federal budget and Ministerial mandate letters.

The AFN is also working towards a Gender-based Analysis Plus (GBA+) framework built on the foundation of First Nations worldviews and well-being. The work is primarily intended to support the AFN in advancing policy positions that account for the unique and important needs of all First Nations people: men, women, boys, girls, Two-Spirit, and all gender-diverse people. An environmental scan and key informant interviews and focus groups were undertaken, and potential tools and actions were identified.

### Where do we hope to go in the future?

---

Research is a critical function of the AFN which better enhances its ability to ensure First Nations inherent and Treaty rights, title and jurisdiction are respected. The AFN will continue to support First Nations self-determination and governance through nurturing effective relationships with key research partners, such as the FNIGC, and through the development of a forward-thinking strategic research plan. Creating and promoting meaningful research and data for the benefit of First Nations will continue to be a key focus area of the AFN in the coming years.