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

The Languages and Learning Sector (the Sector) continues to focus on the full implementation of the federal *Indigenous Languages Act* (the Act), which received Royal Assent in June 2019 after decades of advocacy from First Nations across the country.

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) is a member of the Joint Implementation Steering Committee (JISC) along with representatives from the Department of Canadian Heritage (DCH), Indigenous Languages Branch (ILB), Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) and the Métis National Council (MNC). JISC’s co-development work is currently centred on establishing a new distinctions-based Indigenous Languages Funding Model (Funding Model) to ensure there is adequate, sustainable, and long-term funding for all Indigenous-led revitalization efforts.

**How has the AFN’s recent advocacy affected this area?**

Federal Budget 2019 committed $333.7 million over five years, and $115.7 million each year after that, and Budget 2021 proposed an additional $275 million over five years, starting in 2021-2022 to support the reclamation, preservation, and revitalization of Indigenous languages and to implement the Act. While that was a significant increase in funding, those new investments have not been sufficient to meet the demands of First Nations. Further, the development of the new Funding Model is required to unlock 2023-24 and ongoing funding to support First Nations languages.

There is a significant gap between the funding requested by First Nations and the amount available. For 2021-22, First Nations requested $101.3 million. Only $24 million is available to First Nations for 2021-22. AFN continues to advocate for adequate, sustainable, and ongoing funding for First Nations language revitalization.

The Office of the Commissioner of Indigenous Languages (OCIL) was established in July 2021. In advance of the appointment, the Sector successfully advocated for the selection process to be modified to include First Nations representation on the Selection Committee. Ron Ignace was appointed as the Commissioner of OCIL, and Joan Greyeyes was appointed as the First Nations Director.

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

AFN Resolution 10/2021 *Support for the co-development of a new distinctions-based Indigenous Languages Funding Model*, directs the Chiefs Committee on Languages, Technical Committee on Languages and the AFN to continue collaborating with regions, First Nations, First Nations educators, First Nations language experts, the Government of Canada, other Indigenous organizations, and other organizations as required, in developing a new Funding Model. A First Nations Funding Model will be presented to First Nations-in-Assembly at the Annual General Assembly July 2022 to ensure existing funding committed to in the 2019 Budget is unlocked and to support a budget ask for greater funding overall. The next steps for the Funding Model are:

* **Fall 2021**: AFN and TCOL will begin developing components for the First Nations Funding Model (including a regional funding allocation formula);
* **December 2021**: DCH will submit a Memorandum to Cabinet seeking a new program authority for the Minister of Canadian Heritage to enter into section 8 and 9 agreements and arrangements;
* **January-May 2022**: engagements with First Nations followed by co-development of a new funding model, inclusive of JISC, CCOL, TCOL, and First Nations recommendations;
* **AGA in July 2022**: AFN will seek ratification of the First Nations Funding Model. Subject to ratification at the AGA, the First Nations Funding Model will be formally shared with DCH; and
* **Summer 2022**: DCH will submit a Treasury Board Submission for acquiring the spending authorities that will be required for the new distinctions-based Indigenous Languages Funding Model and for unlocking Budget 2019 incremental funding for future years.

The Sector is beginning costing research with Indigenous researchers and is analyzing the results of a survey launched over the summer to improve baseline data about First Nations languages and to support advocacy efforts.

It is the constitutional and inherent right of each Indigenous government to direct, maintain and develop their own language and culture. First Nations must lead the recovery, reclamation, revitalization, and maintenance and normalization of Indigenous languages. Structures must be designed to support what First Nations need to achieve their vision and goals for language. First Nations rightfully expect to be involved in decisions about all allocation decisions. The Sector will continue to advocate for funding that meets the needs of First Nations, First Nations language experts, and language champions who lead language revitalization.