



Assembly of First Nations (AFN) *Prosperity for All*

Pre-Budget Submission Summary

“Budgets can be about more than program funding or revenue sharing. They can be a roadmap to Economic Reconciliation, a renewed relationship with the Crown, and a pathway to prosperity for all.” – National Chief Cindy Woodhouse Nepinak



“We have to do more, not less. That’s absolutely clear. That’s in social services, that’s in policing, health, that’s in education.” – Prime Minister Mark Carney, July 17, 2025

The Government of Canada committed to building one Canadian economy, lowering costs, strengthening public safety, and delivering on its promises to First Nations. The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) urges the federal government to fulfill these priorities in partnership with First Nations through sustained, informed, and transformative investment. In August, the AFN prepared a pre-budget submission detailing **strategic, cost-effective commitments** Canada can undertake to uphold First Nations rights and support long-term prosperity for all.

These priorities are also articulated in the AFN’s *Prosperity for All* platform, outlining budgetary measures and achievable actions Canada can undertake to uphold First Nations rights and support long-term prosperity for all.

1. Building the Future through Capital Investments

- Clean Water, Housing & Roads
- Education & Connectivity
- Community Infrastructure
- Loan Guarantees
- Climate Adaptation

To thrive, First Nations must have access to adequate infrastructure, including clean water, quality housing, reliable all-season roads, power supplies, schools, and high-speed internet. These initiatives would fuel the national economy and the well-being of First Nations.

The Conference Board of Canada reports that the capital investments required to close the First Nation infrastructure gap has the potential to generate \$635.3 billion in economic output over the next seven years and 338,300 full-time jobs per year.

Prime Minister Carney has himself acknowledged that closing Canada’s discriminatory First Nations infrastructure gap will more than offset the impact of all US tariffs.



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Category	Description	Investment
Community Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roads, utilities, water systems and maintenance, ports, wharfs, transportation infrastructure, community health and social infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$115 billion 7 years
Drinking Water Advisories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immediate investments across the drinking water supply chain while reintroducing and implementing First Nations water legislation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$670 million 2 years
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Address overcrowding, unit replacement and repair needs; an additional 108,803 new housing units are needed, and of the estimated 85,700 existing units, the majority require either minor (34%) or major (31%) repairs. To address homelessness, enhance the distinctions-based funding investments under Reaching Home to regional delivery organizations. Alongside investments to address housing supply crises, First Nations-led solutions to homelessness will advance implementation of MMIWG2S+ calls for justice 4.7, 18.24 and 18.25 to build safe spaces for people who need help and who are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless. There are also economic benefits to reducing chronic homelessness by reducing demand on shelters, hospital and emergency services, which can cost upwards of \$56,000 per year per person. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$139 billion 10 years
Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital investment to build, replace, repair, and expand First Nations schools. Operations and maintenance investment to maintain asset conditions and ensure full lifecycles are met. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$8.2 billion 5 years
All Season Roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Replace Canada's winter road network with all-season alternatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$35 billion 7 years



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Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure First Nations attain the standards in Canada's <i>Federal Connectivity Strategy, High-speed Access for All</i>. Reliable access to high-speed broadband and cellular will enable First Nations to articulate themselves into rapidly evolving domestic and global economies, and bolster labour force participation, business formation, productivity via access to skills and training and the adoption of modern business solutions, emergency management and response and more. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$15 billion 7 years
First Nation Infrastructure Loan Guarantees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First Nations-specific branch of the Canada Development Investment Corporation and other means to mobilizing the significant public and private capital needed to close the gap, such as the establishment of a First Nations Infrastructure Bank to ensure access to affordable capital as well as providing client and capacity development services, and support calls by the First Nations Major projects Coalition to expand the Indigenous Loan Guarantee Program beyond \$10 billion to address on-reserve infrastructure needs and meet growing demand. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$5-10. billion 7 years
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress towards meeting <i>Accessible Canada Act</i> requirements, beginning with accessibility retrofits to existing assets such as installation of grab bars, paved and level accessibility parking stalls and entryways, door thresholds and fire exit access, and more. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$1.5 billion 7 years
Climate Adaptation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapt homes, utilities, transportation, buildings to future environmental conditions to the year 2080. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$30.9 billion 7 years
Net Zero Carbon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieve net-zero carbon by 2050 by improving existing infrastructure and new facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$12.7 billion 7 years



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2. Uplifting Communities through Essential Services

- Policing
- Children & Families
- Education & Languages
- Program Integrity
- Environment
- Sunsetting programs

10 years out from the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action, essential service gaps remain for First Nations compared to non-Indigenous Canadians.

At the AFN's September Annual General Assembly, Chiefs reaffirmed long-standing support for more effective First Nations policing services, clean water legislation and long-term reform of Canada's discriminatory child welfare system.

At the Assembly, Chiefs unanimously declared a national state of emergency facing First Nation communities in relation to the fentanyl, opioid, drug addiction, bootlegging and alcohol crisis that is devastating families.

Canada can transform its promises to First Nations into deeds with strategic investments in the 2025 federal budget for essential community services that most Canadians take for granted.

Category	Description	Investment
Policing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Immediate enhancements to stabilize First Nations Policing Program and equitable services during transition to a new statutory framework.• Capacity to co-develop legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$2.6 billion• 5 years
Children and Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Long-term reform of discriminatory First Nations Child and Family services program• Jordan's Principle post-majority supports to extend eligibility to ages 18-30• Early learning and childcare legacy investments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$53.5 billion• 10 years
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regional Education Agreements, Post-Secondary and Adult Education programs• Core support for First Nations post-secondary institutions• Enhanced services through Jordan's Principle and High-Cost Special Education Program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$17.9 billion• 5 years



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Languages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustained investment in Languages and Cultural Programs under the <i>Indigenous Languages Act</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$3.8 billion 5 years
Program Integrity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inflation relief for Income Assistance clients Strengthen Non-Insured Health Benefits and Assisted Living supports Mental Wellness strategy including naloxone kits to every First Nation, prevention and recovery programs and support for the Indian Residential Schools Resolution Health Support Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$3.4 billion 5 years
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conservation of Wild Atlantic salmon and habitat First Nations-led freshwater stewardship and community-based monitoring. Climate and Emergency Coordinator network First Nations-led conservation, clean energy development and generation initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$2.6 billion 5 years
Sunsetting Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital funding for water infrastructure Indigenous Climate Leadership Agenda Specific Claims research funding Additions to Reserve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$1.276 billion 5 years

3. Growing Self-Determination through Governance

- Procurement
- Citizenship
- Justice and Rights
- Capacity Building
- Return of Lands

There are still too many unimplemented Calls to Action from the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. The same applies to the Calls for Justice of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Canada has a significant distance to travel to comply with the minimum human rights standards of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and its own implementation legislation.

The upcoming federal budget is the new government's first opportunity to honour promises, build community capacity for infrastructure development and give more control to First Nations over First Nation citizenship and procurement, particularly as it relates to the federal government's 5% First Nation procurement target across all federal departments.



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Category	Description	Investment
Justice & Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement First Nation Justice Strategy and UN Declaration Act • Respond to the Calls for Justice in support of MMIWG2S+ survivors, families, First Nations and representative organizations • Implement Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$2.1 billion • 5 years
Capacity Building and Self Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity support for First Nations' full and active participation in national interest project approval, impact assessments and reviews. • Establish First Nations Procurement Authority to ensure Canada meets 5% procurement targets. • Funded positions on-reserve for First Nations registration administrators. • Removing barriers to economic inclusion and service delivery, including through immediate and significant enhancements to Indigenous Governance and Capacity programs. • Enhance Emergency Management Program and support First Nations-led disaster planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$11.3 billion • 7 years
Return of Lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and strengthen investment in specific Claims and ATR implementation to support on-reserve development and accelerate land return. • Research investments to meet demands of First Nations and their Claims Research Units. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$225 million • 5 years



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Conclusion

Canada has exempted health, education and social service transfer payments to provincial governments from budget reductions. The same commitment must apply to essential investments in First Nation communities.

When asked about reports of federal cuts to First Nation budgets, the Prime Minister reassured Chiefs attending Canada's C5 Summit in July that he understood more investment was needed – not less.

The persistent gap in socio-economic outcomes between First Nations and the rest of the country coincided with the 2% budget cap Canada imposed for decades. New investments by the previous government started making a difference.

The most recent First Nations Well-Being Index report confirmed the largest gap closure between First Nations and the rest of Canada in the past four decades.

This is not the time to go back and undo that progress. Now is the time to move forward on a path that leads to prosperity for all.