



ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS  
**Special Chiefs Assembly**

December 5-7, 2023

Shaw Centre – Ottawa, Ontario

*Ottawa is located on the unceded unsundered  
Territory of the Algonquin People.*

ASSEMBLÉE DES PREMIÈRES NATIONS  
**Assemblée extraordinaire des Chefs**

Du 5 au 7 décembre 2023

Centre Shaw - Ottawa ( Ontario)

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du peuple algonquin.*



# Income Assistance Program Reform

## *From Surviving to Thriving*

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*December 4, 2023*

*Ottawa, Ontario*





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## Background

- Developed in 1964 to provide income support for individuals on-reserve to afford basic needs.
- Does not account for unique needs of First Nations or current socio-economic realities.
- Indigenous Services Canada has committed to program reform through a co-development process to make the program more responsive for First Nations.



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## Mandates for Reform

- AFN Resolution 28/2018, *Support for the establishment of a Technical Working Group on Social Development.*
- AFN Resolution 89/2019, *Continuing First Nations Income Assistance Reform.*
- AFN Resolution 07/2022, *Reform of the On-Reserve Income Assistance Program.*





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## Policy Recommendations

1. Develop and implement needs-based funding structure to account for factors such as remoteness, inflation and cost of living.
2. Align provincial, territorial and federal disability programming with the needs of Income Assistance clients.
3. Increase resources to promote First Nations-determination including:
  - a. Additional case managers and administrative staff.
  - b. Resourcing and resources to promote self-determination.



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## Policy Recommendations Cont.

4. Support First Nations to strengthen data collection, storage, access and reporting to support evidence-based funding
5. Adequate infrastructure to deliver programs and services and support First Nations governance.
6. Explore options to build a First Nations social safety net model to support First Nations with holistic, wrap-around supports to decrease poverty and support thriving First Nations.





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## Next Steps

- The AFN is awaiting an official record of decision on the policy authority to reform the IA Program.
- The AFN is seeking support of a draft resolution to continue to work with the Technical Working Group on Social Development on the reform the IA Program.



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## Draft Resolution 08/2023

- Direct the TWGSD to conduct and oversee costing and transition of reform of the IA Program using the First Nations-developed policy recommendations.
- Call upon Canada to fund the AFN to conduct costing of the long-term financial investments required to fully implement the First Nations-developed policy recommendations for the reform of the on-reserve IA Program.





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## Draft Resolution 08/2023 Cont.

- Direct the AFN to report back to First Nations-in-Assembly on the progress and findings of the costing and transition of IA Program reform, by July 2024.
- Call on Canada to provide a formal record of decision on the First Nations-developed policy recommendations to reaffirm their commitment to co-develop IA program reform.





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## Draft Resolution 08/2023 Cont.

- Call on Canada to co-develop future budget requests for the IA Program with First Nations that include regional priorities.
- Call on Canada to continue to provide ongoing inflation relief benefits for IA clients, until the IA Program rates are reflective of the cost of living in northern and remote areas.



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## Discussion

1. What additional considerations would need to be included within a needs-based funding approach for IA Program reform? (Ex. Remoteness, inflation.)
2. What is needed within First Nations to build data infrastructure?
3. How would First Nations determine if the IA Program adequately responded to the needs of First Nations?