

Income Assistance Reform: Moving Forward Together

AFN Homelessness Forum

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Indigenous Services
Canada

Services aux
Autochtones Canada

Canada

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Program Delivery:

- Income Assistance (IA) is delivered by First Nation bands and tribal councils, except in Yukon and Ontario:
 - in Yukon, delivered directly by CIRNA
 - in Ontario, delivered by the province

Policy Objective:

- provide **same rates and eligibility** as provincial and Yukon income assistance programs (Comparability and Alignment)
- Rates & eligibility **may be adapted in exceptional circumstances** (e.g.COVID-19)
- The **IA program** is a program of **last resort**

HIGHLIGHTS

Clients

- In 2017-18, there were **81,000 clients** and **69,000 dependents**.
- **40%+** of all IA clients are single males
- **1/3+ of all children on reserve** live with IA recipients
- IA dependency rate higher than provincial average:
 - **28%** on reserve compared to **6% off reserve**.
- Introduction of case management has contributed to decrease in dependency rate since 2013:
 - **34%** dependency in 2011-2012 to **28%** in 2017-2018.

Communities

- **Nearly 50%** of communities receiving IA have a **population < 500 people**
- **13%** of IA recipients have **no year-round access** to an **urban centre**

Source: IA Program Data, Census 2016, ISC Community Profiles

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Income Assistance program provides individuals and families living on reserve with financial assistance for:

- Essential / Basic Needs
- Special needs
- Case Management and Pre-employment supports

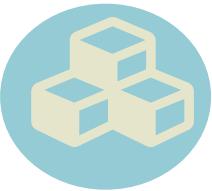
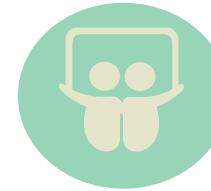
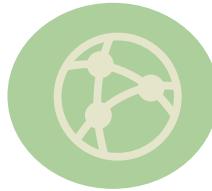


PROGRAM REFORM AND ENGAGEMENT

Recent government reports, tribunal decisions and AFN resolutions have called on the Government to **invest and reform the Income Assistance program**:

In Budget 2018 the Government of Canada committed \$8.5 million over 2 years for a First Nations-led engagement on program reform.

Conclusions included:

				
Provisions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Doesn't cover actual needs• Issue with Provincial / Yukon alignment	Capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Little training & overworked staff• Unmet needs due to lack of funding or service• IA Policy is no longer appropriate	Case Management & Pre-Employment Supports <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Should be expanded to all First Nation communities similarly to off reserve	Wraparound Services <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clients need more than just financial support• Lack of coordination in ensuring communities have access to other supports	Self-determination/Governance <ul style="list-style-type: none">• No one size fit all for communities• Need for greater control and flexibility• Traditional activities need to play a great role

CO-DEVELOPMENT AND FUTURE INVESTMENTS



Currently the Department is conducting ongoing discussions with partners to determine the path forward for co-development.

While co-development takes place, **the Government of Canada has provided an additional \$540 million over 2 years in Budget 2021** to support basic needs and increased program demand as a result of COVID-19.

The Department is committed to returning to Cabinet in 2023 to seek funding for the reformed elements of the Income Assistance program.

INCOME ASSISTANCE AND COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic is creating immediate and significant health, social, and economic challenges for individuals and families on reserve and has placed greater demand on the Income Assistance program.

COVID-19 Response

\$270M invested in 2020-2021 to:

- **match provincial/Yukon temporary measures;**
- provide **\$300 temporary benefit** per client per month for April, May and June 2020 (beyond provincial/Yukon measures) while providing First Nations with flexibility;
- support increased number of individuals and families on income assistance; and,
- provide increased service delivery.

The Income Assistance program will continue to monitor the needs in First Nation communities to determine appropriate levels of support until the full impact of COVID-19 is fully understood.

Thank you



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