

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Canada is a nation of many diverse people, but one that historically has not treated all members equally. Specifically, the treatment of indigenous peoples in Canada has traditionally been one of oppression, marginalization, corruption, and violence. However, efforts like the recent release of the Truth and Reconciliation report work to restore Canada's relations with the first people of our nation.

During their campaign, the Liberal Government showed a strong focus on indigenous issues and made many promises to continue and improve the reconciliation process. It is long overdue that these efforts work to reconcile a history of violence, oppression, and ostracization of Canada's first people. Thus, it is time to increase funding and support in the post-secondary sector for indigenous students.



In a 2011 report by the Assembly of First Nations, an overwhelming number of indigenous students cited post-secondary education as a fundamental requirement of First Nations Self-Determination and Governing¹. While education is of clear value, the funding to support indigenous students attending post-secondary education has been minimal. The funding has been eroded by inflation, inhibiting its ability to benefit indigenous students over the past decade². Specifically, funding for the Post-Secondary Student Support Program has not increased more than 2% for many years due to a cap placed by the previous Conservative government. This cap has severely limited the impact of this program and its ability to make post-secondary education accessible for indigenous communities.

During the 2015 Federal Election campaign, the Liberal Party promised to lift the 2% cap on funding increases to the Post-Secondary Student Support Program and provide an additional \$50 million dollars per year to the fund³. However, this promise was not included in the most recent federal budget. Thus, the members of ADVOCAN implore the government to continue on the path towards reconciliation and follow through with its campaign promise by increasing funding and support to the Post-Secondary Student Support Program.

¹<http://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/education/virtualsummitsurvey.pdf>

²http://www.afn.ca/uploads/files/7_-_fact_sheet_-_post-secondary_education.pdf

³<https://www.liberal.ca/files/2015/10/New-plan-for-a-strong-middle-class.pdf>