



Indspire

Indigenous education, | L'éducation des autochtones.
Canada's future. | L'avenir du Canada.

Federal Pre-Budget Submission to the Minister of Finance

January 2016

Introduction

Indspire is Canada's only Indigenous-led, registered, national charity dedicated to advancing the educational outcomes of the country's First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

Since 1985, Indspire has pursued its vision of enriching Canada by advancing Indigenous achievement through the promotion and advancement of First Nations, Inuit and Métis educational, cultural, social and economic achievements.

Indspire is dedicated to raising funds for three purposes : (1) To provide support and funding for the post-secondary education and training of First Nations, Inuit and Métis students; (2) to promote, celebrate and support the achievements of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people (youth in particular); and (3) to assist communities and educators in improving K-12 educational outcomes.

2014-2015 Indspire Highlights

- Named one of Canada's top charities by the Financial Post
- A successful matching campaign with the federal government raised \$24 million with the support of provincial governments, individual Canadians and a host of corporations and organizations
- Over \$14 million awarded to Indigenous students through close to 5,000 financial awards through the *Building Brighter Futures: Bursaries, Scholarships, and Awards* program
- Almost 1,000 awards worth close to \$3.2 million awarded to Indigenous students to pursue health career-related studies
- \$300,000 in financial awards to Indigenous students studying trades.

Indspire enables Indigenous people to aspire to brighter futures through its two flagship programs: Indspire's *K-12 Institute* and the *Building Brighter Futures: Bursaries, Scholarships, and Awards* program, as well as through the annual *Indspire Awards*.

Indspire's K-12 Institute

As noted in the recent final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, "One of the most far-reaching and devastating legacies of residential schools has been their impact on the educational and economic success of Aboriginal people. The lack of role models and mentors, insufficient funds for the schools, inadequate teachers, and unsuitable curricula taught in a foreign language contributed to dismal success rates".

Educational attainment is one of the most significant ways of ensuring economic prosperity for Indigenous peoples. It is well understood that in order for students to achieve a post-secondary education they must first meet the challenge of graduating from high school. It was for this reason that Indspire created the *K-12 Institute*, which is a virtual resource centre that connects educators of Indigenous students with programs, information, and tools to improve educational outcomes and increase the high school completion rates of their students.

The programs within the *K-12 Institute* include:

Nurturing Capacity: Building Community Success – Indspire supports communities to improve educational outcomes through the documentation and evaluation of their innovative practices. This

community-led process is supported by an Indspire-funded Indigenous scholar, who works with programs on the ground to provide training on data collection and evaluation methodology.

Realizing Projects: Supporting Community Solutions - Indspire provides support to fund and facilitate community-based pilot projects that enhance K-12 educational outcomes through innovative strategies. Indspire oversees these community-led projects over a five year period.

Successful Practices: Showcasing Strategies that Work - include documented research, frameworks, models, and educational strategies that have worked to enhance student success. Indspire assesses the evaluation of these proven practices on its website, for the benefit of Indigenous education stakeholders nationwide. Currently, 80 successful practices are available online.

National Gathering for Indigenous Education – an annual conference for educators and others who work with Indigenous students to improve educational outcomes. Attendees share best practices and collaborate to translate theory into workable strategies.

Guiding the Journey: Indigenous Educator Awards – recognizes and celebrates outstanding educators for their achievement and innovation in Indigenous education. Award recipients are honoured at a gala that is held during the National Gathering.

Soaring: Indigenous Youth Career Conferences – At Soaring, high school students learn about a myriad of career and post-secondary education options. At conferences held across Canada, students participate in career workshops, learn about financial support, and meet Canada’s top employers.

Peer Support: Educator Mentorship - a mentorship and coaching program for educators of Indigenous students. Indspire pairs educators from across Canada based on their professional learning goals and provides online support to this learning community through webinars, discussion forums, and other professional development tools.

Industry in the Classroom: Indigenous Youth Career Seminars – seminars that provide high school students with in-depth information about specific careers in growth sectors of the economy. Facilitated by Indigenous industry experts from Indspire’s sponsors, these seminars are held in classrooms across Canada. This program is a successful partnership with industry and is designed to engage Indigenous students with career planning in specific growth sectors, including radio broadcasting, television broadcasting, oil & gas, and mining.

Rivers to Success: Mentoring Indigenous Youth – Indspire pairs First Nations, Inuit and Métis youth near the end of their post-secondary education with professionals in a variety of fields. Mentors share their wisdom and provide guidance in career planning. Students can talk to a mentor about how to write a résumé, prepare for interviews, build strong professional relationships, and more. Mentors can help them make the transition from school to work much easier.

2014-2015 Highlights of the K-12 Institute

- Close to 2,000 students and educators participated in Indspire’s *Soaring* career conferences
- Approximately 800 students across Canada learned about careers in radio, television and mining through the *Industry in the Classroom* program
- 148 emerging and experienced educators matched through Indspire’s *Peer Support* program
- Close to 500 attendees at the second annual *National Gathering for Indigenous Education*

Recommendations for Budget 2016 – K-12 Institute

To continue to advance K-12 educational outcomes of Indigenous students, Indspire respectfully requests:

- \$5.25 million in **new additional funding** over five years to the *K-12 Institute*:
 - \$300,000 per year for five years for Peer Support (total \$1.5 million)
 - \$300,000 per year for five years for the National Gathering for Indigenous Education (total \$1.5 million)
 - \$200,000 per year for five years for Nurturing Capacity Projects (total \$1,000,000)
 - \$200,000 per year for five years for Realizing Projects (total \$1,000,000)
 - \$50,000 per year for five years for Soaring conferences (total \$250,000)

Indspire Awards

Indspire Awards: Celebrating Indigenous Achievement – Representing the highest honour First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples can bestow upon its own achievers, the *Indspire Awards* were created in 1993, in conjunction with the United Nation’s International Decade of the World’s Indigenous Peoples. The *Awards* recognize individuals and youth who demonstrate outstanding achievement. They promote self-esteem and pride for Indigenous communities and provide outstanding role models for Indigenous youth. To date, 311 Indigenous Canadians have been honoured.

Recommendations for Budget 2016 – Indspire Awards

- \$200,000 per year in **new additional funding** for five years for the Indspire Awards

Building Brighter Futures: Bursaries, Scholarships, and Awards Program

Overview of the Program

To date, Indspire's *Building Brighter Futures: Bursaries, Scholarships, and Awards* program has awarded \$79 million through close to 25,000 bursaries and scholarships to Indigenous college and university students. Indspire is the largest funder of Indigenous student aid outside the federal government. The program also provides bursaries to Indigenous people to train for work in Canada's oil and gas and trades and technology sectors.

In 2014-2015, Indspire awarded over \$14.4 million in bursaries and scholarships to 4,921 First Nations, Inuit and Métis post-secondary students, which is a significant increase over the 3,115 bursaries awarded the previous fiscal year.

Although our results are impressive, the gap between the amount needed by Indigenous students and what we can provide grows annually. The \$14.4 million awarded in 2014-2015 represents only 16% of the amount needed by Indigenous students. In 2015-2016, over 600 applicants will not receive funding through the BBF program due to lack of available funds.

Impact of the Building Brighter Futures: Bursaries, Scholarships and Awards Program

The positive impact of the *Building Brighter Futures: Bursaries, Scholarships and Awards Program* on creating a labour-market ready Indigenous workforce is crystal clear. For example, in the last three fiscal years alone, Indspire funded close to 2,300 Indigenous students in health studies, 200 in oil, gas, trades and technology programs, and over 100 students in legal programs.

In February 2015, Indspire published a report entitled *Creating Positive Outcomes: Graduation and Employment Rates of Indspire's Financial Award Recipients*. The report is based on a qualitative-quantitative survey of over 1,200 students who received funding through Indspire's *Building Brighter Futures: Bursaries, Scholarships and Awards Program*.

The results of this survey show:

- 93% of Indspire's bursary recipients graduated
- 50% of these graduates received an undergraduate degree; 22% a graduate degree; and 15% a college diploma
- 82% of these graduates are now employed
- 84% of employed graduates are now serving the Indigenous population through their work
- 93% of graduates indicated their education prepared them for their occupation.

Recommendations for Budget 2016 – Building Brighter Futures: Bursaries, Scholarships and Awards Program:

- **New additional funding** to Indspire's *Building Brighter Futures: Bursaries, Scholarships and Awards* program in the amount of **\$7 million per year for five years (total of \$35 million)** which would include funds for First Nations, Inuit and Métis students in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) programs

Indspire respectfully submits that it will be important not to tie all ongoing funding to a 1:1 match. What Indspire seeks is a commitment of funds for post-secondary education and training through the BBF program, *including an envelope specifically earmarked for skilled trades* that can be distributed to students.

Conclusion

Although Indspire is well positioned to continue to lead the educational advancement of Canada's Indigenous people, new and multi-year federal and provincial funds are needed to bridge the gap between what students need and what is available. Indspire's successes to date indicate clearly that it possesses the ability to deliver more to Indigenous students when it is made available by government, industry, and individual Canadians.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Roberta Jamison". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Roberta Jamison
President and CEO
Indspire