Urban Indigenous Programming in Toronto

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Minister’s Briefing Assignment for PPG1007
Issue Statement

How can Indigenous Services Canada improve the coordination and delivery of urban Indigenous programming as provided by the federal, provincial, and municipal governments, and nonprofit agencies within the Greater Toronto Area over a five-year period?
Why Toronto?
A Changing Reality

Over the last 10 years, off-reserve Indigenous peoples constitute the fastest growing segment of Canadian society.

Since 2006, the Aboriginal population has grown by 42.5% -- more than four times the growth rate of the non-Aboriginal population.

Since, 2006, the number of Indigenous people living in urban areas has increased by 59.7%.

867,416
Canada’s Urban Aboriginal Population

46,315
Toronto’s Aboriginal Population
Toronto’s Urban Population

Indigenous Torontonians are diverse:
• Their median age is 32
• 22% are under the age of 15
• Around 65% are of First Nations descent - a group that includes 617 Nations Canada-wide
• Around 30% are Metis
• Many identify as LGBT or Two-Spirited
Services Provided by Indigenous Organizations within the Boundaries of the City of Toronto, 2015

Some of these organizations include:
- Anishnawbe Health Toronto
- Native Child & Family Centres
- Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centers
- First Nation School of Toronto
Indigenous Needs and Programming in Toronto

Indigenous people face persistent, systemic, and underlying forces of inequity, especially in urban centres. This has demonstrated effects on the Indigenous population*:

- 63% of Indigenous Torontonians are unemployed
- 45% of Individuals surveyed have been diagnosed with a psychological or mental health disorder
- More than a third are precariously housed
- 52% have spent time in jail

*Statistics taken from “Our Health Counts Toronto” from the Canadian Institute of Health Research.

According to the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council’s Research Project, programming in the Greater Toronto Area falls short in the areas of:

- Providing sufficient Indigenous housing
- Fostering Indigenous health
- Ensuring accessibility to services by Indigenous peoples
- Facilitating employment

School of Public Policy & Governance
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
Precarious Funding for Service Providers

According to the Toronto Aboriginal Research Project, Indigenous service providers “share a number of common challenges relating to insecure funding relationships with the government.” This manifests in:

**Attempts to reach short-term and unstable funding partners**
- “The funding can always be taken away so it is hard to strategically plan when you are looking for long term changes for clients, but only receive short term funding.” - Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre (TCFNCC) Employee
- “We have way too many project based funders and this makes us very vulnerable.” - Native Child and Family Services Toronto Employee

**Overburdened administrative capacity**
- “Excessive reporting requirements taxes resources and can be better applied to meeting the community’s needs.” - TCFNCC Employee

**Underfunded programs and unmet community needs**
- “Sometimes the community wants something and we can’t do it, for example the history project died and they kept trying to revive it, and we still can’t get grants for it.” - Native Canadian Center of Toronto Executive Director
The Federal Approach

Current Initiative:
*Urban Programming for Indigenous People (UPIP)*

UPIP, established in 2017, is designed to assist First Nations (status and non-status), Inuit and Metis living in or transitioning to urban centers.

→ Budget 2017 invests $118.5 million over 5 years towards four broad streams of funding:

- Organizational Capacity
- Research and Innovation
- Programs and Services
- Coalitions

Who can apply?

- Indigenous organizations
- Municipal governments
- Health authorities and institutions
- Education authorities and institutions, such as school boards, foundations and associations
Limitations of UPIP

UPIP’s broad approach means that it does not adequately allow for Toronto-centered funding decisions. Without the mandate of looking at an urban center comprehensively, UPIP can lose sight of funding needs and gaps.

In 2017, UPIP allocated $1,391,970.90 in funding for Ontario Friendship Centres with only 2 Toronto-based Friendship Centres receiving specifically-allocated funding:

- $35,213 for the Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre
- $60,216 for the Native Canadian Centre of Toronto

This funding does not adequately fulfill service requirements and is only made available to selected Indigenous service providers in Toronto.

*Data obtained from National Association of Friendship Centres

Importantly, UPIP currently disperses funds based on an application process. As such, Indigenous Service providers - and by extension the wider Indigenous community - do not have a say on how funding is allocated.

In short, UPIP’s contribution in Toronto is minimal, limited in scope, and does not prioritize Indigenous decision-making.
Our Proposal: Toronto Indigenous Grant Program (TIGP)
Establish the **Toronto Indigenous Grant Program (TIGP)** as an initiative of the Ontario Regional Office’s, Governance, Individual Affairs and Government Relations Branch.

**TIGP will act as a platform for Indigenous organizations to allocate federal funding based on their own assessment of need**

It will do so in three ways:

1. It will establish a TIGP Steering Committee comprised of: Indigenous service providers that will decide how funding is coordinated. It will also include representatives from each level of government, who will use Committee meetings as a forum to inform their own approaches to urban service provision.

2. It will designate a set amount of annual, grant-like contributions for Indigenous service providers in the GTA, utilizing funding from the current UPIP program and potential funding from intergovernmental partners.

3. It will disperse the pool of grant-like contributions based on the decisions of the Committee.
Rationale for Grant Model

The rationale for this approach is in line with Indigenous Service Canada’s recent commitment to “long-term funding with minimum bureaucratic oversight for 100 First Nations come April 2019”, as stated by the Honourable Minister Jane Philpott.

Allows for predictable federal funding, long-range strategic planning and provides service providers with the autonomy to spend funds as they see fit.

An important note about UPIP:
- TIGP does not dissolve the current UPIP program for Ontario. Instead, it will take from the general UPIP funding pool and apply it to Toronto
- In lieu of TIGP, UPIP will not apply to programming in Toronto
- Funding for the rest of the province will be disbursed under the UPIP model
Opting in: An Opportunity for Intergovernmental Collaboration

The funding for TIGP need not come only from the federal government.

In order to best serve Indigenous communities, TIGP also includes the ability for the provincial and municipal governments to opt-in to the funding pool. If these governments so choose, they can allocate portions of their current Indigenous affairs, grants, and funding budgets to the TIGP.

Doing so would entail a whole-of-government approach to Indigenous self-governance in urban service provision. Adding more funding to the TIGP pool would allow for a larger fulfillment of service needs. It would also mean a greater coordination of services, as the Steering Committee would have the ability to allocate funds based on its own assessment of appropriateness.
An approach that focuses on urban areas will bridge the gap between Indigenous Torontonians and the federal government by giving Indigenous service providers, and by extension, their community members, an opportunity to tailor programming to their urban reality.

Community led grant allocation will ensure that Indigenous Torontonians receive the services they need and want. This model of governance best accommodates Indigenous self-government and respects their decision-making autonomy.
TIGP’s Outcomes and Added Value

Built on the belief that better coordinated and targeted initiatives can fill the gaps in the status quo, TIGP aims to:

1) Provide a platform for Torontonian Indigenous service providers and the GTA’s wider Indigenous community to voice their concerns over the current state of urban programming

2) Foster an environment within the GTA wherein programming needs are acknowledged, and where Indigenous communities autonomously work towards filling these recognized gaps

3) Pursue the ultimate goal of a sufficient and balanced programming network across the GTA so that the urban Indigenous community feels supported by service providers and Indigenous Services Canada more broadly

Ultimately, TIGP would work to afford more Indigenous autonomy and self-determination in program and service delivery.
The Government’s Values

While TIGP is Indigenous-led by design, the values of Indigenous Services Canada are embedded in these two overarching principles that inspire the pilot project and can be used by the Committee as steering considerations:

**Target Values**

**Mutual Responsibility**

Sources consulted include: Government of Canada’s Recognition and Implementation of Rights Framework, UPIP’s programming documents, the Audit of the Urban Aboriginal Strategy, Ontario Federation of Friendship Indigenous Friendship Centres programming reports and the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council’s Final Research Report.
Target Values

**CULTURE**
Recognizing that strong Indigenous identity and pride is the basis for a person’s ability to *equitably* participate in urban life, and that Indigenous peoples face intergenerational trauma that must be considered and remembered.

**COMMUNITY**
Living in urban areas can lead to an absence of a common language on tradition and hence a lack of a defined Indigenous community.

**GENDER/SEXUALITY**
Acknowledge that Indigeneity views gender and sexual diversity as holistic and as such recognizing that the challenges faced by these different identities must be respected and understood.

**AGE**
Age is an important part of Indigenous culture, from the youth-elder relationship to should the distinct vulnerabilities youth face. Urban programming should acknowledge this importance.

**GROUP DISTINCTION**
The unique rights, interests and distinct urban experiences of First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples should be reflected in tailored services and programming. All groups should have equal access to program funding and services.
Mutual Responsibility

Difficulties that arise in allocating funds amongst the Steering Committee may be resolved under an acceptance of mutual responsibility over service provision in the GTA.

As opposed to considering the TIGD grant model as a competition for resources, Committee members can choose to focus on working collaboratively to allocate funds in a manner that strengthens programming across the GTA as a whole. It can do so under the premise that the various service providers have a mutual responsibility to best serve the urban Indigenous population in Toronto.

In this way, strengthening one program through funding does not necessarily take from another; instead, it can be understood as the community allocating funds based on an assessment of need and a choice made in order to achieve a shared goal.

This understanding of mutual responsibility over the TIGD funds is in line with the idea of Indigenous self-governance and decision-making.
What would TIGP look like?

Organizational Structure, Grant Program Breakdown, Adoption Timeline,
Organizational Structure

Indigenous Services Canada

Ontario Regional Office

Governance, Individual Affairs and Government Relations

Toronto Indigenous Grant Program (1 Policy Analyst)

TIGP Steering Committee
A Community Emphasis that Mitigates Bureaucracy

TIGP is based on the rationale that grant allocation should incorporate only minimal government intrusion. For that reason, transferring or hiring an analyst for the role is meant as a way to:

- Recruit Steering Committee members
- Carry out the administrative functions associated with grant giving
- Report to the Ontario Regional Office

The TIGP analyst will prioritize the sharing of results and information. Their main and overarching priority will be to support the Committee in an administrative and logistical capacity.

In offering a space for representatives from the provincial and municipal government to sit in on (but not act as a decision maker for) the Steering Committee’s deliberations, TIGP provides an opportunity for service providers to articulate their wider needs to these bodies and for the respective provincial and municipal approaches to service provision be informed by these conversations.
Mutual Accountability Framework

How would TIGP stay accountable?

Because the Steering Committee decides how urban service providers should receive funds, each individual Committee member - who will have a vested interest in ensuring their affiliated service providing organization meets their full potential - will want to ensure that grants are adequately implemented across the community.

Importantly, this model of mutual accountability means that the Steering Committee is accountable to the community and not to federal bureaucrats.

In more precise terms, the mutual accountability framework would enable:

• The Steering Committee to set its own short and long-term objectives, with annual meetings to assess whether these objectives have been met
• If the Steering Community so chooses, it can take inspiration for these short and-long-term objectives from the government’s values as listed on slide 16
### Toronto Indigenous Grant Program Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibilities</th>
<th>Committee Chair</th>
<th>Steering Committee</th>
<th>ISC Policy Analyst</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Committee Chair</strong></td>
<td>The Committee would be chaired by an individual selected by the Committee that is a well-known representative of the Indigenous community, but not directly associated with any Indigenous Friendship Centres or service providing organizations. The chair would act as the main spokesperson for the Steering Committee, focusing on ensuring positive-working relations and clear communication channels amongst committee members and with the Policy Analyst. The chair will help resolve conflicts that may arise between members of Steering Committee.</td>
<td>The Committee consists of one representative from each Indigenous Friendship Centre or Indigenous-led and oriented service provider within Toronto. Distribution of the TIGP grants would be determined by Committee members. Short and long-term objectives (in other words, an accountability model) will be set by the committee to ensure appropriate usage of grants. The Committee will meet on an annual basis to confer funds and to ensure that their accountability model is being followed. The Committee is is encouraged to consult with Indigenous service users leading up to this annual meeting.</td>
<td>The Policy Analyst would maintain an up-to-date directory of all Indigenous organizations in the GTA. The Analyst will be responsible for outreach and recruitment of Steering Committee members. The organizational database will help with this purpose. The Analyst will help promote collaboration between committee members to ensure improved services and adherence to mutual accountability principles. Ensure open communication between Steering Committee and the municipal and provincial government in order to address service provision needs.</td>
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## Financial Breakdown

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<th>Option 1</th>
<th>Option 2</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Transferring 1</strong></td>
<td>Policy Analyst from the current UIPP regional office (Recommended)</td>
<td>Hiring 1 new Policy Analyst</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Salary</strong></td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$360,000 over five years ($60,000 per year per FTE plus benefits)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Set-up cost</strong></td>
<td>$0 (Annual meetings to be held in different Indigenous centres)</td>
<td>$0 (Annual meetings to be held in different Indigenous centres)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Costs</strong></td>
<td>Approximately $3,000,000 over five years</td>
<td>Approximately $3,360,000 over five years</td>
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*This pilot project is estimated to cost $3 million dollars.*
Comparison of UPIP Funding vs. TIGP

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<th>UPIP</th>
<th>Toronto Indigenous Grant Program</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Grant Allocation</strong></td>
<td>A certain amount of funding is allocated in advance to certain organizations. Additional funding is available through calls for proposal</td>
<td>ISC gives a pool of funding to the Steering Committee and committee members will decide how the funds will be allocated amongst organizations within Toronto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grant Criteria</strong></td>
<td>Funding is available for up to five years under the following 6 key areas: women, vulnerable populations, youth, transition services, outreach programs, community wellness</td>
<td>The Steering Committee would develop and set its own criteria to allocate grants. Organizations would hold each other accountable on how the grant is spent.</td>
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5-Year Roll-out Strategy

Year 1
Set-up the TIGP

- Announce the creation of TIGP throughout ISC, to Indigenous service organizations and the public.
- Transfer or hire 1 Policy Analyst from UPIP’s regional office to oversee TIGP. Complete any needed program training (2 months).
- Assemble TIGP Steering Committee. Compile list of potential individuals to approach for chair and committee members and reach out accordingly (5 months).
- Selected chair and committee members develop and set short-term and long-term grant allocating and result-based objectives (5 months).

Years 2-5
Implement TIGP & Evaluate

- The TIGP Steering Committee will meet at least once a year to review service providers’ needs and discuss grant allocations in line with their set criteria. Individual meeting structure and times are up to the Committee to decide.
- The Steering Committee will formally be expected to meet once a year to allocate the grants.
- The Steering Criteria will hold annual review meetings to ensure accountability by evaluating the effectiveness of set criteria and grant allocations in improving service delivery needs. Representatives from each level of government will also be in attendance at these meetings.
- The Policy Analyst would provide ongoing collaborative support to committee members to ensure improved service provision and adherence to the mutual accountability principles.
Possible Shortcomings

**Confusion from Change**

As it stands, there would be significant differences between UPIP and TIGP with its grant allocation model. This may cause confusion for Indigenous organizations and stakeholders who are acquainted with the original UPIP process.

**Accountability**

The creation of the TIGP will transfer the accountability of the Ontario Regional Office to the Steering Committee and its members. There is a possibility that this transfer could lead to an overall loss of accountability.

**Stakeholder Resistance**

Indigenous organizations and community groups may be resistant to the formation of the Steering Committee and potentially, the individuals selected.
Risk Mitigation

Clarity Change

It will be imperative to effectively communicate changes regarding TIGP’s function and structure to stakeholders and Indigenous organizations across the GTA. This could be done through a news release, announcement by the Minister, a clearly formatted webpage, and a more in-depth briefing for individuals closely involved.

Mutual Accountability

TIGP’s guiding principle of mutual accountability means that the Steering Committee will be accountable to Indigenous service users and Indigenous communities at large. This transfer of accountability from ISC will foster greater inclusion of Indigenous perspectives and experiences within TIGP’s grant allocation model. The Steering Committee’s annual review of the set criteria used and of the grant allocations themselves, will allow TIGP to be responsive and provide targeted funding to areas that require the most need.
Risk Mitigation

**Empowerment of Urban Indigenous Communities**

The Steering Committee will prioritize Indigenous voices and needs by being Indigenous led. In doing so, the TIGP will mitigate concerns over paternalism and open itself to learning directly from Indigenous groups themselves.

**Uphold Values**

The TIGP and the Ontario regional office will need to clearly articulate that funding is based off of criteria and objectives framed by Indigenous organizations and the community itself. The TIGP must be sure to prioritize funding based on these principles in order to be able to fulfill its stated goals.
Thank you.
Appendix
What is already being done?

The City of Toronto

The Province of Ontario
The City of Toronto’s Approach

The City of Toronto only provides funding for Indigenous-specific health services, as carried out with Toronto Public Health’s partnership with Anishnawbe Health and the Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network.

Its other initiatives are focused on adopting 8 Calls to Action (from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission) throughout the city.

- These calls are focused on adopting reconciliatory practices throughout the city and in providing professional cultural development training for city employees

In 2017, the City of Toronto announced their commitment to fund an Indigenous Affairs Office.

- The main function of the Office is to foster adequate Indigenous representation with the city’s hiring practices
- Funding provision for Indigenous services and programming are outside the mandate of the proposed Office
The Provincial Approach

Current Initiatives:
The Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation is working with Indigenous non-profit organizations to develop an Urban Indigenous Action Plan to improve programming and services for urban Indigenous peoples.

In developing the Action Plan, Ontario coordinated an Urban Indigenous Policy Engagement Table with the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centers, Metis Nation of Ontario and Ontario Native Women’s Association to gain insight into how to better involve urban Indigenous partners, organizations and communities in planning and delivering community-based programs and services.

Ontario also offers general grant-funding programs, such as the Ontario Trillium Fund and the Ontario Arts Council, to provide support to specific programming initiatives.

Other Commitments:
- Invested $30 million from 2016-18 to expand community care services through 25 sites for Indigenous peoples province-wide
- Invested $70 million from 2016-18 to enhance existing and new child care and family programs province-wide
- Supported Anishnawbe Health Toronto in developing an Indigenous Community Hub
Field Work

The Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre, located in Regent Park, is one of the two Friendship Centres in Toronto that receives funding from UPIP.

Staff employed at this centre expressed concern that the Centre faces inadequate space to provide additional and needed programs and learning spaces. They also noted that the Centre receives inadequate funding to upkeep infrastructure and site maintenance needs.

The Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre was originally run in different basements in Regent Park. Over the years, members of the community were able to fundraise and collect enough money to purchase the building that is now the Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre.
Field Work

Native Child and Family Services of Toronto, located on Bay and College, does not receive funding from UPIP, but does acquire funds from the provincial and municipal governments and from non-for profits.

The centre’s administrative coordinator noted that the Centre specializes in providing an array of social and cultural-based services for Aboriginal families and children. The employee noted that the Centre faces inadequate staffing in carrying out its programming and services.

The employee also underscored that the Centre’s reliance on a multiplicity of funders has made their programming vulnerable and at times inconsistent.
Field Work-Notable Conversations

“What is UPIP? Could you please spell that out for me?”

“Any kind of additional grant would be helpful. It’s really nice that you mentioned UPIP to me today, I will probably do more research on that and see if this centre could apply for any funding there.”

“Toronto is not cheap, and housing is a big problem. People leave reserves in search of a better life, but once they get here, they realize how expensive everything really is. Transportation is not cheap, housing is not cheap, grocery is not cheap. It is not cheap to live here”

“More emphasize needs to be put on education, because the children are the future. We just want to make sure they can get the best education possible while also ensuring that they can learn about their own culture and language.”

“Many of the services offered right now are male trait driven, there are not enough focus on females, children and caregivers.”

“We try to help people better access the healthcare system. There are indigenous people with diabetes or dietary restrictions that do not have enough support right now.”

“There is not enough funding to cover the basic needs right now. For example, we used to have food drives once every week, but now it is once every two weeks due to the lack of support.”
The Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre
439 Dundas Street
Native Child and Family Services of Toronto
30 College Street