

Government Spending and Own-Source Revenue for Canada's Aboriginals: A Comparative Analysis.

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Executive summary

With average unemployment rates on reserve above 20 percent and graduation rates below 40 percent, there is a clear gap in outcomes between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals in Canada. This is sometimes blamed on funding disparities. This study provides a fact-based evaluation of the oft-heard claims that spending on Canada's aboriginal population is not comparable to spending on other Canadians. It examines actual spending on aboriginal Canadians using data from the federal department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, Health Canada, and provincial governments, sources where aboriginal spending was clearly identified in the public accounts.

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC)

The data used to compare INAC spending on aboriginal matters with total federal program spending runs from 1946/47 through 2013/14. Per-person comparisons date from 1949/50.

The increase in spending on Canada's aboriginal peoples has been significant. In real terms, total department spending on Canada's aboriginal peoples rose from \$82 million annually in 1946/47 to over \$7.9 billion in 2013/14 (all figures in this report are inflation-adjusted to 2015 dollars). It grew from \$939 per registered First Nation individual in 1949/50 to \$8,578 in 2013/14—an increase of 814 percent.

In comparison, total federal program spending per capita, on all Canadians, rose by 376 percent, from \$1,532 in 1949/50 to \$7,295 in 2013/14.

Health Canada

The data from Health Canada dates from 1994/95 (the earliest year available) through 2013/14. In inflation-adjusted terms, Health Canada spending on First Nations/Inuit health care jumped from just under \$1.4 billion in 1994/95 to \$2.6 billion as of 2013/14. On a per-capita basis, the amount spent per First Nations/Inuit person by Health Canada rose from \$2,358 in 1994/95 to \$2,823 in 2013/14.

Included in the \$2.6 billion figure for 2013/14 is the \$1 billion cost of supplementary health care benefits for 808,686 First Nation and Inuit people, the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program. This Health Canada program delivers

health care benefits to First Nations and Inuit peoples that other Canadians normally receive from an employee benefit package or must purchase extra insurance for, or purchase out-of-pocket:

- /// Vision care (\$31.5 million);
- /// Dental care (\$207.2 million);
- /// Medical transportation (\$352.0 million);
- /// Pharmaceuticals (\$416.2 million), covering claims for pharmacy benefits not covered by private, public, or provincial/territorial health care plans;
- /// Other health care including medical supplies and equipment, short-term crisis intervention, and mental health counselling (\$14.2 million).

Provincial governments since the mid-1990s

Adjusted for inflation, total annual provincial spending on Aboriginals rose from just \$43 million in 1993/94 to \$946 million by 2013/14. The provinces spent \$77 per registered First Nations person in 1993/94 compared with \$1,028 in 2013/14, an increase of 1,235 percent. In comparison, provincial spending per capita, on all Canadians in the provinces, rose from \$7,672 in 1993/94 to \$10,059 in 2013/14, an increase of 31 percent.

Own-source revenue

The final set of statistics is derived from the 2013/14 publicly available audited financial statements for First Nation communities in Canada. In total, First Nations communities in Canada generated over \$3.3 billion dollars in claimed own-source revenue. Only 11 percent (\$386.6 million) was identified as natural resource revenue, the rest being classified as from other sources.

Alberta First Nations generated the highest levels of own-source revenue, cumulating to over \$711 million, of which \$122 million was classified as natural resource revenue.

In 2013/14, over 100 First Nations communities in Canada were generating more own-source revenue for their communities than they received in government transfers. For example, Tsuu T'ina Nation in Alberta was the top earner of own-source revenue in 2013/14. In a single fiscal year, the community generated over \$113 million in own-source revenue—over five times the amount Tsuu T'ina Nation received in government transfers for 2013/14.

In 2013/14, Frog Lake First Nation in Alberta generated the most natural resource based own-source revenue in the country—over \$45.6 million in one fiscal year. On a per-capita basis, Yale First Nation in BC generated the largest

natural resource revenue in the country. Their small community of just over 100 people generated \$45,557 per capita in natural resource revenue for 2013/14.

Summary

From the data available, over \$263 billion has been transferred to Aboriginals:

- /// INAC spending from 1946/47 to 2013/14 of \$214.7 billion;
- /// Health Canada spending from 1994/95 to 2013/14 of \$40.6 billion;
- /// Provincial government spending over the two decades up to 2013/14 of \$8.3 billion.

This analysis reveals that spending on Canada's aboriginal population has risen substantially in real terms—in total, per capita, and compared with overall government program spending. Meanwhile, in one year alone, First Nations communities in Canada were able to generate over \$3.3 billion in own-source revenue, and many First Nations communities in Canada are generating own-source revenue that surpasses their government transfers.

Introduction

Funding comparisons between aboriginal and non-aboriginal people often dominate policy and political discussion of the deplorable health, social, and economic outcomes of aboriginal people in Canada. This study seeks to quantify federal and provincial transfers to aboriginal people in Canada and how those compare to spending on non-aboriginal people. It also looks at how much First Nation communities generate in own-source revenue, and how much of this revenue is generated through natural resource projects as opposed to other sources, such as taxation and aboriginal businesses operating on reserve.

This paper will not investigate whether the measured funding has been properly spent or used in the most efficient manner. However, there is value in examining the general question of whether Canada's governments spend "enough" on aboriginal peoples. What is clear from the data is that Canadian governments have increasingly spent more in real terms, including in real per-capita comparisons, on the aboriginal population. It is also clear that communities are beginning to generate large amounts of own-source revenue to address the needs of reserve residents.

Spending on Canada's Aboriginals

This section details the dollars that have been spent on Canada's Aboriginals using federal and provincial data sources, derived from (and limited to) online resources made available by various governments. All figures are adjusted for inflation to 2015 dollars.

The first set of data is the spending incurred by the federal department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (Canada, 2015a, 2015b). This data dates from 1946/47 to 2013/14 (with the exception of the years 1967/68 and 1968/69, for which data was unavailable). Only the portion categorized as spent on direct transfers to or services for Aboriginals was counted. Spending on northern affairs and administration was excluded. Per-capita comparisons begin in 1949/50 to accommodate the 1949 census.

The second set of statistics is derived from provincial sources. Documents analyzed include the various public accounts, budgets, and annual estimates. The overall comparison begins in 1993/94 and ends in 2013/14. The third set of data is from Health Canada. The data here runs from 1994/95 (the earliest online data available) to 2013/14 (Canada, 2015b).

Federal spending at Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada

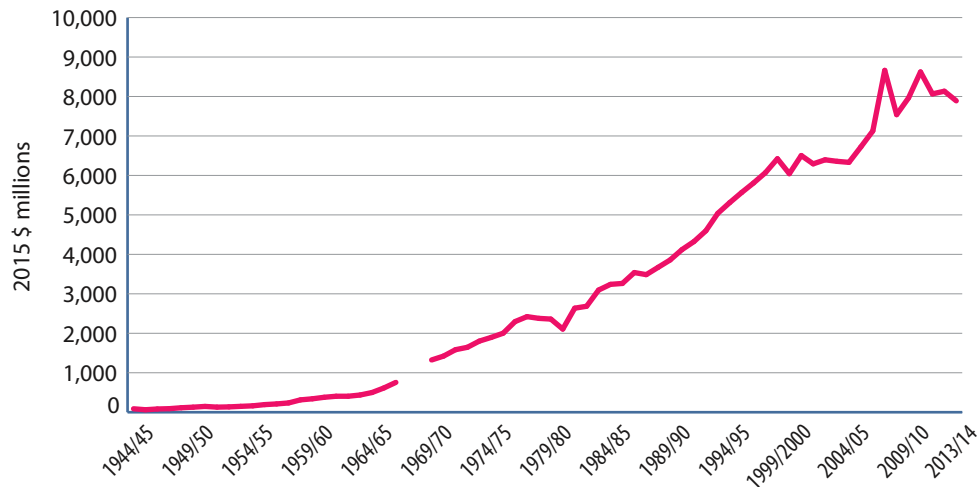
The department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) is the main source of tax dollars for aboriginal matters. The department spends money on education, social development, economic development, "managing individual affairs,"¹ treaty management, governance, federal administration of reserve land, Métis and non-status organizational capacity development, urban strategies, Métis rights, and internal services, including operating and capital and transfer payments where applicable (Canada, 2015c: 15.2).

1. Pertains to federal stewardship required under the Indian Act related to estates, band monies, registration and band membership, and selected other responsibilities (Canada, 2015c: 15.2).

The earliest data on spending on aboriginal Canadians dates from Confederation, but exists only in isolated pieces. The most consistent data for INAC dates from the Second World War. Data in this study dates from 1946/47 in order to correlate with overall federal government spending, where data is available from that year through the end of 2013/14 (Canada, 2015a, 2015b).

The increase in spending on Canada's aboriginal peoples has been significant, both in total dollars spent every year and per registered First Nations person. In real terms (adjusted for inflation to 2015 dollars), department spending on aboriginal Canadians rose from \$82 million annually in 1946/47 to almost \$7.9 billion in 2013/14 (**figure 1a**).² Overall federal government spending also increased during this period, from \$28 billion in 1946/47 to over \$256 billion in 2013/14 (**figure 1b**).

Figure 1a: Spending on Aboriginal matters by INAC, 1944/45–2013/14

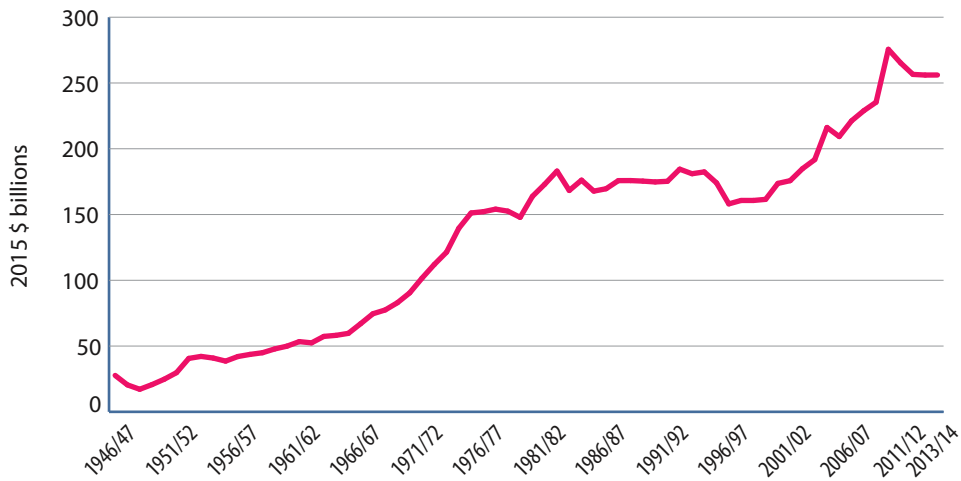


Notes: Excludes all spending attributable to northern affairs, internal services, and non-Aboriginal spending. Data unavailable for 1967/68 and 1968/69.

Sources: Canada 2015a, 2015b; Statistics Canada 2015b.

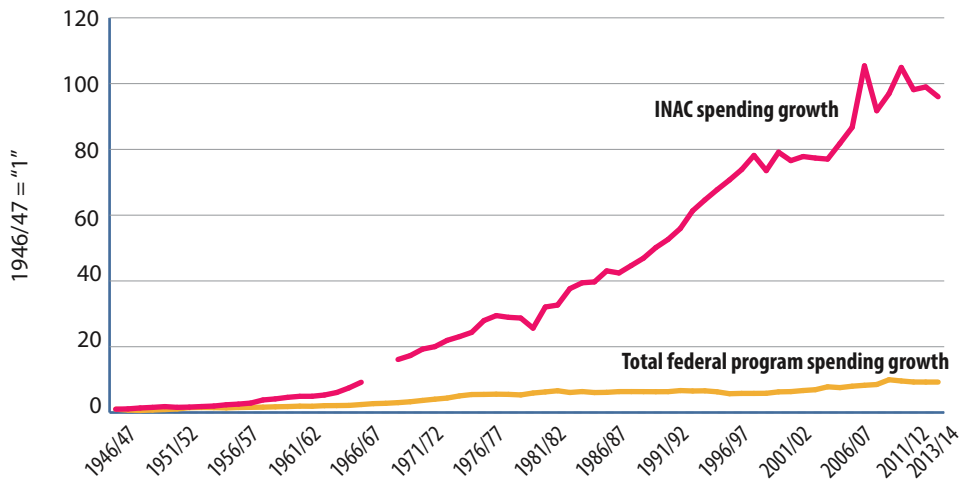
2. Department spending on “northern affairs” has been excluded, as has “internal” department spending, which would have been spent on various department priorities and not just aboriginal matters.

Figure 1b: Total federal program spending, 1946/47–2013/14



Sources: Canada 2015e, 2015f; Statistics Canada 2015b.

Figure 1c: Growth in INAC spending vs. total federal program spending, 1946/47–2013/14

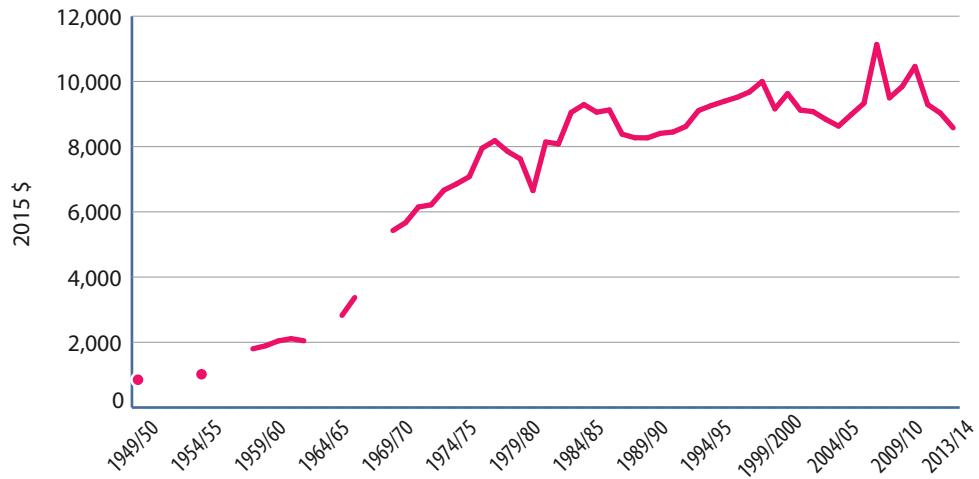


Sources: Canada 2015a, 2015b, 2015d, 2015e; Statistics Canada, 2015b.

Canada's aboriginal population is one of the fastest-growing and youngest populations in Canada, so a per-person comparison yields a more detailed examination of government transfers. INAC spending increased from \$939 per registered First Nation individual in 1949/50 to \$8,578 in 2013/14 (**figure 1d**), an increase of 814 percent. Meanwhile, per-capita federal program spending on all Canadians during the same period rose by 376 percent, from \$1,532 in 1949/50 to \$7,295 in 2013/14 (**figure 1e**). The growth in direct spending per capita on aboriginal matters has almost doubled in comparison to growth in all federal program spending (**figure 1f**).

Over the decades, with rare exceptions, INAC spending in inflation-adjusted dollars has been increasing, whether measured in total dollars spent annually by INAC or per person. This spending growth has been much more rapid than total federal spending.

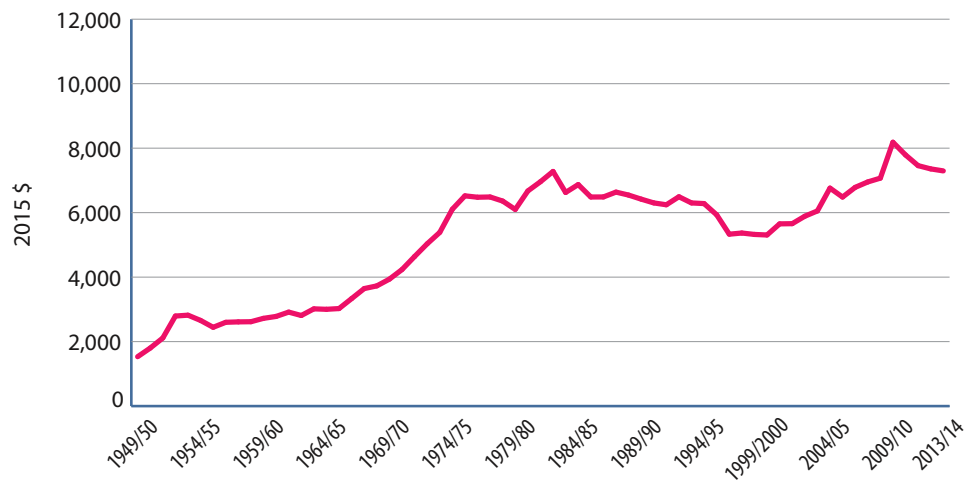
Figure 1d: INAC spending on Aboriginal matters per Registered Indian, 1949/50–2013/14



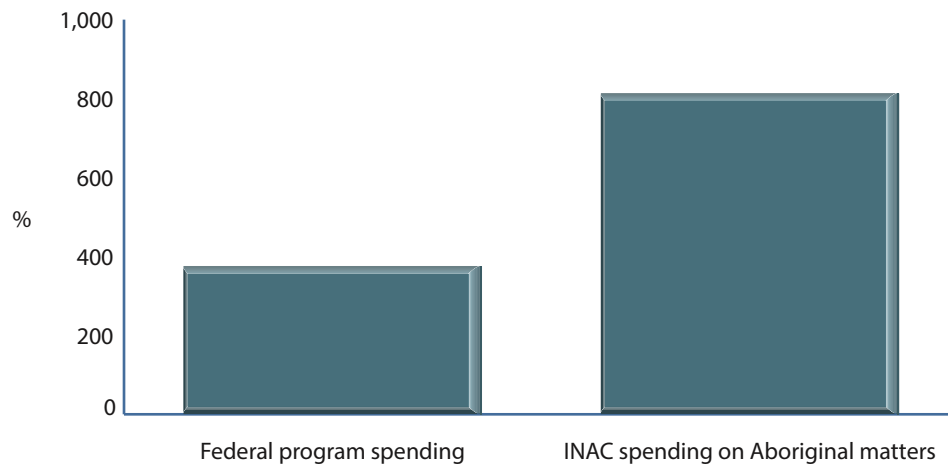
Notes: Excludes all spending attributable to northern affairs, internal services, and non-Aboriginal spending. Population data unavailable for 1950/51–53/54, 1955/56–57/58, and 1963/64–1964/65; spending data unavailable for 1967/68 and 1968/69.

Sources: Canada 2015a, 2015b, 2015d; Statistics Canada, 2015b.

Figure 1e: Federal program spending per capita (on all Canadians), 1949/50–2013/14



Sources: Canada, 2015e, 2015f; Statistics Canada, 2015b.

Figure 1f: Per-capita spending growth, INAC vs. total federal programs

Sources: Canada 2015a, 2015b, 2015d, 2015e, 2015f; Statistics Canada, 2015b.

Provincial spending

The provinces, unlike the federal government under the original 1867 constitution and the 1982 constitution, are not constitutionally obligated to spend tax dollars on aboriginal people. However, provinces have increasingly been spending on aboriginal matters. From available online sources, identifiable spending on Aboriginals for many provinces began in the 1990s. Our analysis begins in 1993/94 with the available provincial data.³ Data for all provinces was accumulated from the public accounts, budgets and annual reports. Expenditures were included if there were specific ministries for aboriginal priorities, and also if spending specific to Aboriginals was noted in other ministries.

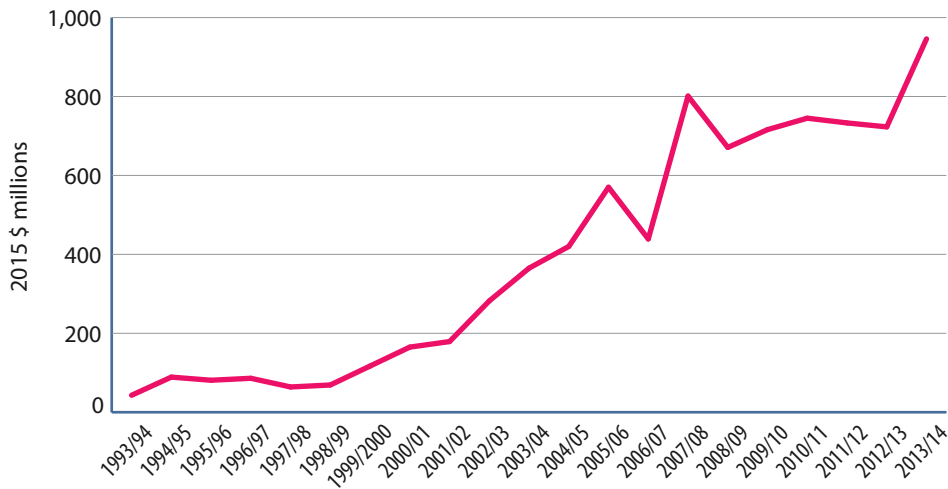
Total provincial spending on aboriginal matters rose from just \$43 million in 1993/94 to \$946 million per year by 2013/14, an increase of over 1,200 percent per capita (**figure 2a**). Total provincial program spending in the same period rose from \$219 billion in 1993/94 to \$351 billion in 2013/14, a 31 percent increase per capita (**figure 2c**).

3. Some provinces, such as Ontario, have had a separate Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs since at least 1993/94 (at least that can be traced through online documents). Online records from British Columbia show specific spending on aboriginal matters back to 1994/95 (British Columbia, 1995) and a specific ministry for that priority in subsequent years. However, the aboriginal-specific ministry has undergone various iterations including being subsumed into other ministries for a time. In some years, money normally spent in that ministry (now known as Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation) has been routed through the Attorney General's office (in the early 2000s, for treaty negotiations, for example). The 1994/95 start date is derived from what was available online (British Columbia, 1995 to British Columbia, 2015).

Given that different populations have increased at different rates, per-capita comparisons help further parse the trends. The provinces spent \$77 per registered First Nations person in 1993/94 compared with \$1,028 in 2013/14 (**figure 2b**). In comparison, total provincial spending per capita on all Canadians rose from \$7,672 in 1993/94 to \$10,059 in 2013/14 (**figure 2d**).

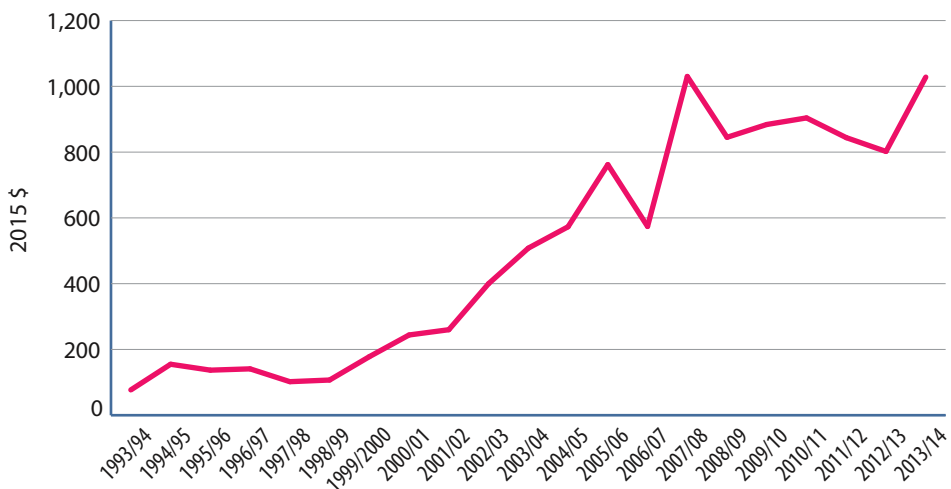
It is clear from the data that provincial spending on Aboriginals, in total and per person, has risen substantially in real terms.

Figure 2a: Provincial spending on Aboriginal matters, 1993/94–2013/14



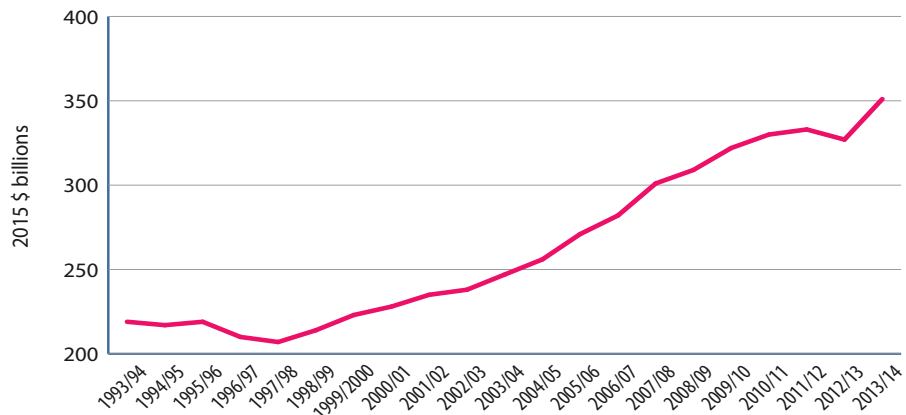
Sources: Statistics Canada, 2015b; provincial budgets, annual reports, and estimates.

Figure 2b: Provincial spending on Aboriginal matters per Registered Indian, 1993/94–2013/14



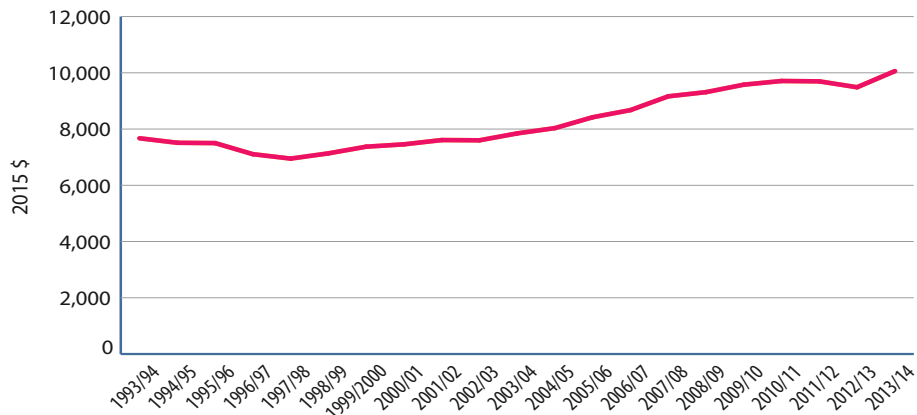
Sources: Canada, 2015d; Statistics Canada, 2015b; provincial budgets, annual reports, and estimates.

Figure 2c: Total program spending, all provinces, 1993/94–2013/14



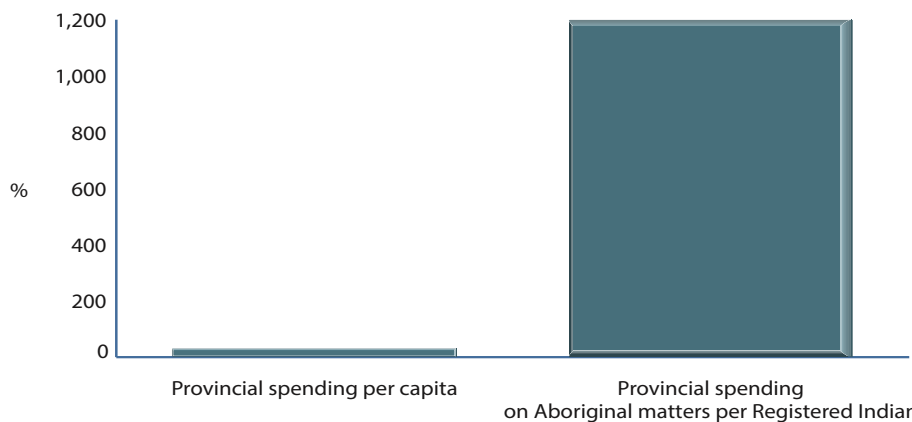
Sources: Canada, 2015e; Statistics Canada, 2015b, 2015e

Figure 2d: Provincial program spending per capita, 1993/94–2013/14



Sources: Statistics Canada, 2015b, 2015e; provincial budgets, annual reports, and estimates; Canada, 2015e.

Figure 2e: Provincial spending growth per capita, total vs. Aboriginal matters, 2011/12 increase over 1993/94



Sources: Statistics Canada 2015b, 2015e; provincial budgets, annual reports, and estimates; Canada, 2015e.

Health Canada spending

Health Canada operates the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program (NIHB) for eligible First Nations and Inuit peoples (Health Canada, 2014a). The NIHB is an example of a benefit available exclusively to aboriginal people, one that is significant in terms of cost, and by definition and design unavailable to non-aboriginal Canadians. In 2013/14, 808,686 eligible First Nations recipients had access to the following services in addition to those they could access at provincial/territorial level:

- ◆ Vision care (\$31.5 million);
- ◆ Dental care (\$207.2 million);
- ◆ Medical transportation (\$352.0 million);
- ◆ Pharmaceuticals (\$416.2 million), covering claims for pharmacy benefits not covered by private, public, or provincial/territorial health care plans;
- ◆ Other health care including medical supplies and equipment, short-term crisis intervention, and mental health counselling (\$14.2 million);

The NIHB noted a cost in 2013/14 of over \$1 billion for these services alone (Health Canada, 2014b). These are not constitutionally or treaty-required expenditures. Indeed, the federal government maintains that “current health programs and services including Non-Insured Health Benefits are provided to First Nations and Inuit on the basis of national policy and not due to any constitutional or other legal obligations” (Health Canada, 2012: 2).

The Health Canada NIHB benefit for First Nations/Inuit is in addition to what all Canadians have access to through their regular provincial coverage; other Canadians receive these benefits through employer packages or must either buy insurance for such extra services or pay out of pocket (Statistics Canada, 2015a, 2015b).

But total Health Canada spending on Canada's First Nations/Inuit peoples is more than double that \$1 billion NIHB figure, at \$2.6 billion in 2013/14. That larger number results from additional expenditures beyond the NIHB program, including for select primary care and infrastructure support (Canada, 2013c: 13.12). Some of that non-NIHB spending would be akin to provincial spending on health care (infrastructure support for hospitals, for example), but which in the case of remote reserves is instead funded by the federal government. In such cases, the non-NIHB spending should not be considered as additional to the services available to every Canadian but instead as spending parallel to what a provincial government spends for health services.

In inflation-adjusted terms, then, Health Canada spending on First Nations/Inuit health care has jumped to \$2.6 billion as of 2013/14 from just over \$1.3 billion in 1994/95. In total, department spending on the First Nations/Inuit

population for health benefits, services, and other health-related matters over this period amounted to over \$40 billion. The amount spent per First Nations/Inuit person was \$2,823 in 2013/14, up from \$2,358 in 1994/95.

Summary

In some instances, money spent on aboriginal matters is parallel to what would have been spent had the priority in question been run by another level of government. Analogously, for example, federal spending for on-reserve education would be a cost for provincial governments if First Nations students lived off reserve and were enrolled in provincial school systems. In other cases, as with Health Canada's Non-Insured Health Benefits, aboriginal Canadians are beneficiaries of spending that is not available to other Canadians.

From the data available for three governmental sources, over \$263 billion has been transferred to Aboriginals:

- ◆ INAC spending from 1946/47 to 2013/14 of \$214.7 billion;
- ◆ Health Canada spending from 1994/95 to 2013/14 of \$40.6 billion;
- ◆ Provincial government spending over the two decades up to 2013/14 of \$8.3 billion.

These figures are conservative; for example, municipal and territorial spending was not analyzed. Overall, the data reveals that spending on Canada's aboriginal population has risen substantially in real terms—in total, per capita, and compared with overall government program spending.

Table 1: Total spending on Aboriginals

	2015 \$ millions
Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (1944/45–2013/14)	214,698
Health Canada (1994/95–2013/14)	40,649
Provincial governments (Various start years from 1993/94 through 2013/14)	8,304
Total	263,651

Note: INAC spending on northern affairs excluded; only the department's spending on Aboriginal peoples is included here. Data unavailable for 1967/68, 1968/69

Sources: Canada, 2015a, 2015b; Statistics Canada, 2015b.

Table 2: Per-person comparisons, 2013/14

	2015 \$
Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada per Registered Indian	8,578
Health Canada per Registered Indian and Inuit (as of 2011/12)	2,741
Provincial governments per Registered Indian	1,028

Note: INAC spending on northern affairs excluded; only the department's spending on Aboriginal peoples is included here. Data unavailable for 1967/68, 1968/69

Sources: Canada, 2015a, 2015b, 2015d; Statistics Canada, 2015b.

Own-source revenue

While federal and provincial transfers account for the majority of funding for aboriginal people, it is not their only source of funds. First Nations communities are able to generate funding through measures other than government transfers. INAC's own-source revenue (OSR) policy "[takes] into account the ability of self-governing groups to contribute to the costs of their own government activities" and defines OSR as "the revenue that an Aboriginal government raises by levying taxes and resource revenues or by generating business and other income" (INAC, 2015a).

For the first time, the public is able to see how First Nations communities are raising their own-source revenue due to the introduction of the First Nations Financial Transparency Act (FNFTA). Signed into law in 2013, the FNFTA requires all bands to make their audited financial statements and salaries public.

This new component in the story on aboriginal spending is crucial, as it illustrates the fact that government transfers are not the only source of revenue for aboriginal Canadians. This section consolidates the audited financial statements of over 500 First Nation communities in Canada to highlight the revenue generated by bands through means other than government transfers.

OSR: Natural resource versus "other"

Government transfers at both the provincial and federal level make up the bulk of First Nations funding, but communities are able to raise their own revenues through various natural resource projects, investments, and land user fees. For this analysis we have separated own-source revenue into two categories: natural resource revenue, including contracts with private companies looking to use natural resources found on reserves as well as revenues generated from aboriginal-owned natural resource companies, and a general other category, which includes investment income, sales revenue, land user fees, provincial liquor or gaming authorities, casino revenue, any revenue labeled on audited financial statements as "other," and "miscellaneous."

Revenue labeled as “other” on a financial statement is difficult to trace; while the monies labelled this way by communities may be coming from natural resource projects, it is almost impossible to tell if this is the case. While some communities choose to break their revenue streams into specific areas, others choose to label all own source revenue as “other.” That is why the natural resource own-source revenue is a conservative estimate of total own-source natural resource revenue generated by First Nation communities in Canada. There is no standard practice across the First Nation communities analysed for this paper.

In 2013/2014 alone, First Nations communities across the country generated over \$3.3 billion in own source revenue (**figure 4a**). Within the \$3.3 billion, reported natural resource revenue accounted for \$386.5 million, while all other forms of OSR totaled \$2.9 billion (**figure 4b**).

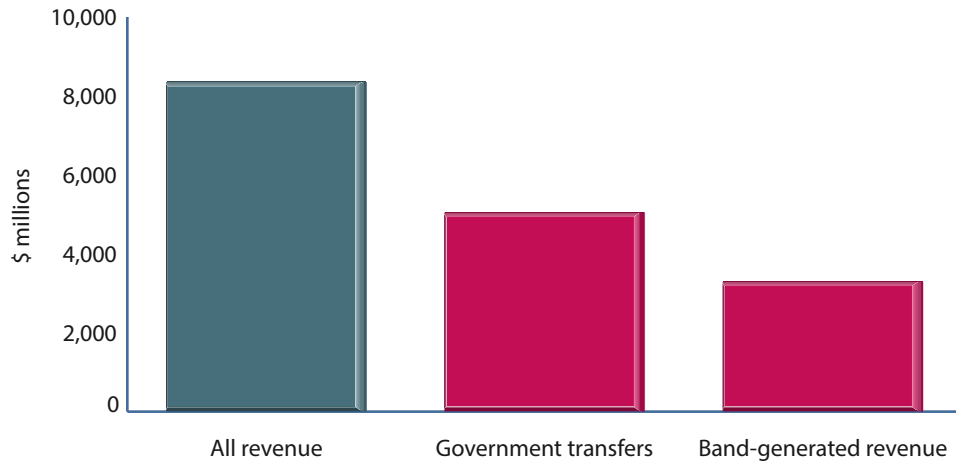
A province-by-province comparison shows that certain provinces are more successful than others in raising own-source revenue (**figure 5a**). BC (\$687 million), Alberta (\$712 million), and Ontario (\$648 million) all raise significantly more own-source revenue than the other provinces. But as a share of the overall revenue First Nations communities have received, the Maritimes generated the highest rate of OSR, with 51 percent of New Brunswick's, 60 percent of Nova Scotia's, and 50 percent of Prince Edward Island's revenue coming from OSR (**figure 5c**).

Looking strictly at reported natural resource revenue (**figure 5b**), Alberta raised the most (\$122.6 million), with BC close behind (\$114.4 million).

Percentage wise, Prince Edward Island First Nations have the highest rate of natural resource revenue with 12 percent of their total revenue coming from natural resource sales and contracts. Alberta followed with 8 percent of revenue coming from natural resources, then BC at 7 percent. Ontario generated the most in other forms of own-source revenue (\$603.2 million), followed by Alberta (\$589 million) and BC (\$572.1 million).

On a regional level, the natural resource revenue may seem small compared to the “other” category. For example, in BC, natural resource revenue only accounted for \$114.4 million, or 7 percent, of the BC First Nations' total revenue. The relatively low realization of natural resource revenue across all communities could be for two reasons. First, many natural resource agreements are over a long period of time. For example, the famous billion dollar deal in BC was a 40 year deal amounting to a \$25 million/year revenue stream for the community. A second possibility is that First Nations groups are not properly recording the revenue that they are receiving. First Nation communities may be choosing to identify natural resource revenue as other or miscellaneous in their audited financial statements. There's no requirement that communities identify natural resource revenue as natural resource.

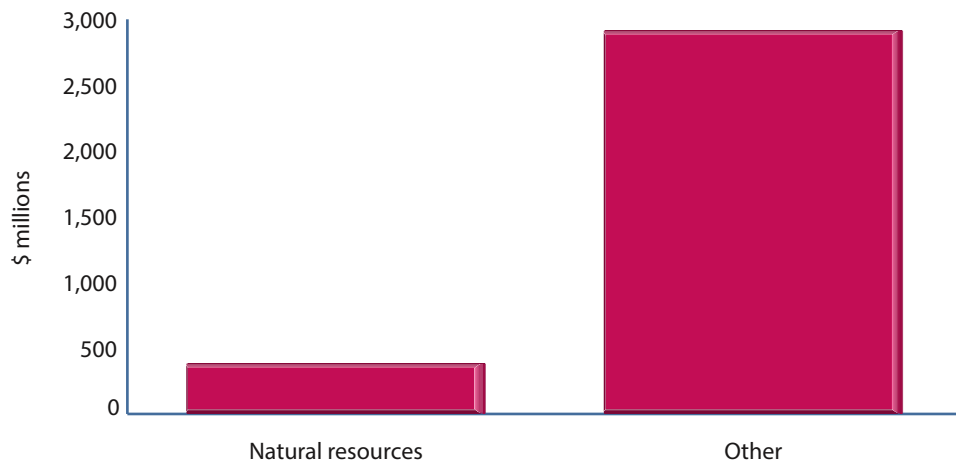
Figure 4a: Revenue breakdown



Notes: To access individual statements, go to community profiles at INAC.

Sources: INAC, 2015b.

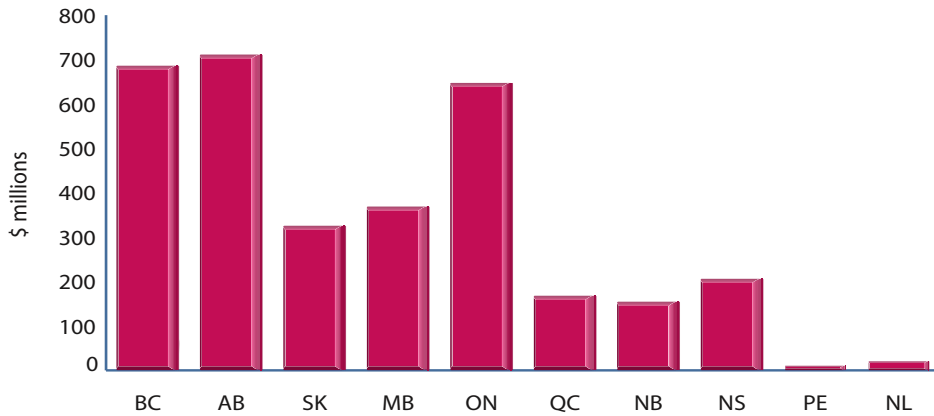
Figure 4b: Own-source revenue breakdown



Notes: To access individual statements, go to community profiles at INAC.

Sources: INAC, 2015b.

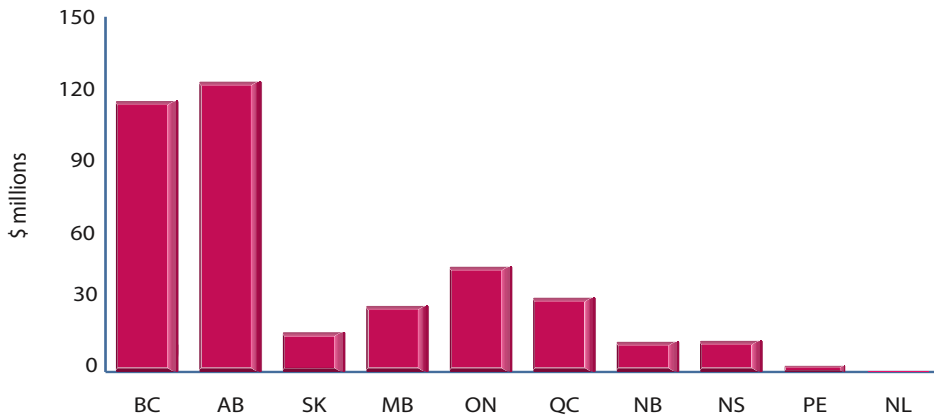
Figure 5a: Own-source revenue by province



Notes: To access individual statements, go to community profiles at INAC.

Sources: INAC, 2015b.

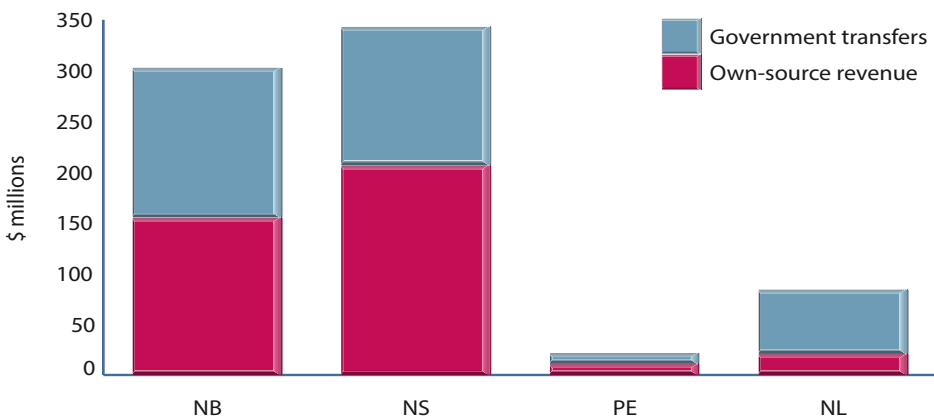
Figure 5b: Natural resource revenue by province



Notes: To access individual statements, go to community profiles at INAC.

Sources: INAC, 2015b.

Figure 5c: Own-source revenue and government transfers, Maritimes



Notes: To access individual statements, go to community profiles at INAC.

Sources: INAC, 2015b.

However, on an individual basis many First Nation communities are generating extensive revenue through natural resources and other methods. For example, in 2013/14, out of the over 500 communities analysed for this paper, Frog Lake First Nation in Alberta generated the most natural resource based own-source revenue in the country—over \$45.6 million in one fiscal year. On a per-capita basis, Yale First Nation in BC generated the largest natural resource revenue in the country. Their small community of just over 100 people generated \$45,557 per capita in natural resource revenue for 2013/14.

Tsuu T'ina Nation in Alberta was the top earner of own-source revenue in 2013/14. In a single fiscal year the community generated over \$113 million in own source revenue. That equates to over five times the amount Tsuu T'ina Nation received in government transfers for 2013/14. Furthermore, as **tables 3 and 4** demonstrate, the top 10 First Nations own-source revenue generators and top 10 natural resource revenue earners can predominantly be found in western Canada.

Table 3: Top 10 OSR generating communities

Tsuu T'ina Nation (AB)	\$113,068,892
Membertou (NS)	\$105,235,596
Fort McKay First Nation (AB)	\$67,359,641
Samson (AB)	\$62,561,165
Squamish (BC)	\$55,851,123
Chiniki (AB)	\$52,343,677
Saint Mary's (NB)	\$50,880,767
Frog Lake (AB)	\$49,812,290
Enoch Cree Nation #440 (AB)	\$49,287,191
Chippewas of Rama First Nation (ON)	\$42,226,254

Source: INAC, 2015b.

Table 4: Top 10 natural resource revenue generating communities

Frog Lake (AB)	\$45,626,175
Samson (AB)	\$36,921,541
Lax Kw'alaams (BC)	\$34,711,648
Chiniki (AB)	\$21,664,034
Moose Cree First Nation (ON)	\$15,418,700
Innu Takuaikan Uashat Mak Mani-Utenam (QC)	\$12,679,215
Squamish (BC)	\$10,642,193
Alexander (AB)	\$9,628,133
Tataskweyak Cree Nation (MB)	\$8,259,321
Yale First Nation (BC)	\$7,471,437

Source: INAC, 2015b.

The data collected through audited financial statements demonstrates that not only have government transfers to aboriginal Canadians increased at a rate higher than spending on all other Canadians, but also that First Nations communities are beginning to generate their own sources of revenue that in some cases, like Tsuu T'ina Nation, exceed over \$113 million a year.

Not all First Nations were included in this own-source revenue analysis. During the time of this analysis, there were 11 bands across British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec that had not submitted their audited consolidated financial statements and were consequently not included in this analysis.⁴

These numbers paint a very different picture from what the media often depicts. First Nations communities are able to generate a third of their revenue from OSR and do not have to be geographically blessed to only generate OSR through natural resource contracts. Communities are investing their money in trusts and economic development while private corporations are investing in the communities themselves.

Overall, the vast majority of First Nations communities complied with FNFTA regulations and Canadian Accounting Standards, making it easier to show an accurate portrait of how these communities are able to generate their own income outside of government transfers.

4. High Bar, Popkum, Semiahmoo (BC); Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation, Sawridge Band (AB); Ochapowace, Onion Lake Cree Nation (SK); Bunibonibee Cree Nation, Dakota Tipi, Roseau River Anishinabe First Nation Government (MB); Algonquins of Barriere Lake (QC). Bunibonibee Cree Nation is not on INAC's list of bands who did not comply with the FNFTA . However, on the FNFTA website, neither the financial statement nor the schedule of remuneration and expenses have been posted.

Conclusion

The natural question that follows an analysis of spending is typically: “are we spending enough?” Such a question is worth further study. However, the data in this report at least offers evidence that, adjusted for inflation, increasing amounts have been spent on Canada’s aboriginal population over the decades, both in total and per registered First Nations person. Unfortunately, outcomes for aboriginal Canadians have not increased. Graduation rates remain below 40 percent and average unemployment rates on reserve remain above 20 percent. Any debates over the “proper” amount of taxpayer dollars to spend on Aboriginals should take into account the existing spending levels quantified here. Furthermore, First Nations communities are generating large amounts of own-source revenue to supplement the increasing government transfers.

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