

NDP Response: Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs

1. Please outline your party's strategy to make measurable investments with detailed outcomes to close the socio-economic gaps in funding and basic services for First Nations in Atlantic Canada?

New Democrats know that Indigenous peoples have been seeking a new fiscal relationship with the Crown that respects the existence of inherent title and rights and secures funding to support programs and services.

A New Democrat government will work with Atlantic First Nations and communities to encourage economic development and create good jobs through infrastructure investments and expanded access to broadband internet and cell service for rural and remote communities.

We commit to working with Indigenous entrepreneurs to find solutions for accessing capital and scale up. This includes supporting the Atlantic First Nations Labour Market Summit and the Atlantic Aboriginal Economic Development Integrated Research Program.

2. Many First Nations communities in Atlantic Canada do not have access to safe drinking water and wastewater infrastructure. Please outline your party's plan to ensure all communities meet the same, safe drinking water standards as non-First Nations communities across Canada? Will your party support the implementation of an Atlantic First Nations Water Authority?

Decades of neglect from the Canadian government have left Indigenous communities across the country waiting for clean drinking water. If providing clean water to First Nations communities were a priority, it would be done by now.

New Democrats recognize that when communities can control their own outcomes and are invested in their own success the livelihoods of people are improved.

New Democrats would work with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities affected by drinking-water advisories with a goal of lifting all advisories by 2021.

New Democrats recognize the hard work, scientific research, and technical expertise that have gone into the Atlantic First Nations Water Authority. We would work with the APC, regional partners and First Nations communities to build on the work that APC has done and put the control of water systems with the communities they serve.

3. *What specific measures and strategy will be implemented to ensure a young First Nations workforce can participate in all aspects of the Atlantic economy?*

New Democrats recognize that too many young First Nations people haven't had access to a quality education. Because First Nations youth are the fastest-growing population in Canada, something must be done to provide First Nations youth with the skills to succeed in the Atlantic and Canadian economy.

A New Democrat government will ensure that every child is provided with a safe place to learn and has the opportunity to succeed. We will fully implement *Shannen's Dream* of equitable access to education, backed by federal investments and infrastructure, so no student will be forced to learn in a dangerous environment.

New Democrats will support Indigenous youth by helping bridge the gap to post-secondary education through expanded financial assistance and increased educational opportunities for children growing up in care and distance education for rural and remote students.

New Democrats are also committing to immediately end interest on existing and future student loans to ease the burden education has on students. This is one step in our plan to make post-secondary education free.

New Democrats know that we can do better for all workers, and especially those entering or transitioning within the work force. We're committed to working with the provinces to ensure that Canadians have access to education throughout their professional lives, including proactive training and retraining.

We will work closely with the provinces and First Nations communities to establish national training priorities and create a new *Workers Development and Opportunities Fund* to expand training options beyond people who qualify for EI.

4. *How will your party support and implement the United Nations Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples?*

New Democrats know that the government of Canada cannot pick and choose which rights it will uphold and which ones it will ignore.

In partnership with Indigenous peoples, a New Democrat government will continue the work of New Democrat MP Romeo Saganash and fully implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and harmonize Canada's laws with this rights-affirming document.

5. How will you support the full implementation of the Truth & Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action?

New Democrats recognize that Canada's relationship with Indigenous peoples has been deeply troubled and must change. We believe that the Crown's relationship to Indigenous peoples must be based on an acknowledgement of Canada's- and it's governments'- colonial history, and the future of that relationship must include legally binding commitments to fair and equitable policies going forward.

New Democrats will work with Indigenous peoples, their communities, and their governments to co-develop a *National Action Plan for Reconciliation* to ensure that Canada's laws, policies, and practices are consistent with Canada's human rights commitments – including cultural rights, land rights, and rights to self-determination and self-government.

Through legislation, we will establish a *National Council for Reconciliation* to provide oversight and accountability for this process, reporting regularly to Parliament and to people living in Canada.

New Democrats will work in partnership with Indigenous communities across the country to help protect and revitalize the incredible diversity of Indigenous languages in Canada with new legislation and stable funding.

We would also continue the work of New Democrat MP Georgina Jolibois to finish what we started in establishing a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation to acknowledge the painful legacy of colonization, honour the Survivors of residential schools, and help communities across Canada commit to meaningful reconciliation.

6. Will your party support the development and implementation of a First Nations designed & driven Atlantic First Nations Housing Strategy?

New Democrats believe that everyone in Canada should be able to find a safe and affordable place to call home. Decades of failure by the federal government has resulted in a devastating housing crisis for many First Nations people, who are either living in overcrowded, run-down, and dilapidated homes or they are waiting on ever-growing waiting lists.

New Democrats believe it is time to end the housing crisis for good with safe and affordable housing in every Indigenous community.

New Democrats are committed to working with First Nations communities to implement co-developed housing strategies backed up with dedicated funding to meet the needs of distinct communities.

We will also work with First Nations communities to ensure there are resources to make homes greener and more energy-efficient, working to keep the benefits of good jobs, training, and investment close to home.

7. *How will your party support a Nation to Nation based relationship with First Nations in Atlantic?*

At the heart of our vision of a better Canada is the need for concrete, specific actions that advance Indigenous peoples and all Canadians down the path of reconciliation. The time for good words and promises is over. We need to work to build a new nation-to-nation relationship now.

A New Democratic government will replace mere consultation with a standard of free, prior and informed consent for First Nations communities affected by government policies – including for all decisions affecting constitutionally protected land rights. We are committed to good-faith, consent-based engagement and negotiations consistent with the Tsilhqot'in decision, an approach that honours Canada's legal and constitutional obligations.

8. *What will be your party's strategy to address the implications of climate change on First Nations communities?*

New Democrats know that the climate crisis is not just an environmental emergency: it also threatens traditional food sources and the very survival of many First Nations communities. At the core of our environmental effort, we will uphold Indigenous knowledge and respect inherent sovereignty. First Nations people have intimate connections to their homelands, territories, and resources and have provided stewardship since time out of memory.

First Nations peoples are best placed to protect the cultural and biological diversity through control over their territory.

New Democrats will ensure that First Nations have a seat at high-level decision-making tables to help direct climate change efforts in Canada.

We will also expand the Indigenous Guardians Program, invest in Indigenous-led science and support the creation of Indigenous-managed protected areas. We will ensure species recovery efforts, respect Indigenous rights and embrace traditional knowledge to increase biodiversity.

A New Democrat government will work jointly with First Nations leadership and communities to develop coordinated action-plans to respond to climate-change emergencies like wildfires and flooding.

In it for you • On se bat pour vous

NDP  **NDP**
Jagmeet
Singh

First Nations people must be partners in the development of job creation, employment training, and infrastructure investments that flow from federal efforts to address climate change.

9. *How will your party support a new fiscal relationship between First Nations and Canada including provinces?*

For decades now, Indigenous peoples have been seeking a new fiscal relationship with the Crown that respects the existence of inherent title and rights. A new fiscal relationship means secure funding to support programs and services, and access to revenue streams to help close the socio-economic gap and support self-government.

New Democrats will partner with First Nations and provinces to deliver reliable public infrastructure funding that puts people – not profit – first. By using *Community Benefit Agreements*, we will guarantee that good jobs, training, apprenticeships, and support for local businesses are part of every infrastructure project.

10. *What measures will be taken to implement all recommendations made by the National Inquiry on Murdered & Missing Indigenous Women & Girls?*

Respect for Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit people must be central to a new Crown-Indigenous relationship. But for too many First Nations women systemic discrimination and violence continues to be a reality.

The final report from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls must not sit on a shelf. New Democrats recognize the conclusion of the report that identifies a genocide against Indigenous women and girls in Canada.

New Democrats will work in partnership with Indigenous women, the families of the missing and murdered, and communities to implement the Inquiry's Calls for Justice and the calls to action brought forward by communities.

This includes establishing a comprehensive plan to address violence against First Nations women, girls and LGBTQI2S+ people, ensuring that all those fleeing violence have access to culturally appropriate programming, emergency shelters and transitional housing.

New Democrats acknowledge that respect for First Nations women, girls, and two-spirit people must be made real by ensuring equitable access and self-determination over land, culture, language, housing, child-care, income security, employment, education, and physical, mental, sexual, and spiritual health.