

Accessible Canada Act Recommendations

A companion document to *First Nations Accessibility Standards: A Path Forward to Inclusion*.

The following are the recommendations being put forward by Indigenous Disability Canada.

Mar 31, 2025

IMPLEMENTATION

First Nations Communities Under the Accessible Canada Act

Indigenous Disability Canada recommends that the Federal Government of Canada take immediate action to ensure that First Nations are included under the Accessible Canada Act by expanding the scope of the Act to encompass the unique accessibility needs of First Nations communities.

Background

The purpose of the Accessible Canada Act is “to make Canada barrier-free by January 1, 2040”. However, Canada can never become completely barrier-free until the accessibility barriers and gaps in First Nations communities are identified and addressed. The inclusion of these communities is essential for achieving true national accessibility. In the community engagements, some participants were concerned to learn that First Nations had been exempted for the first five years,

“I’m surprised that communities were exempted from the Accessible Canada Act because that really slows things down a lot, it also puts pressure on the community during the engagement process.” (FG_4k)

The benefits of accessibility legislation should not be denied or delayed for First Nations. In the Accessible Canada Act Survey, when asked how community members felt that accessibility legislation could benefit their communities survey respondents gave examples such as,

“This community is a rural and relatively isolated community with community members who have disabilities. Accessibility legislation would ensure fewer people are left behind, now and in the future.”

“It can open a lot of doors for adults and children who have a disability. They are the future and their needs need to be addressed”

While there are concerns around the impacts of the implementation of the Act regarding First Nations, as highlighted by the Assembly of First Nations, “[t]he legislation places an additional administrative burden on First Nations to create accessibility plans,

conduct consultations, and report to the Accessibility Commissioner without the provision of funds to undertake these activities. The ACA contains no funding for First Nations to become fully accessible. Chronic and systemic underfunding of First Nations health, infrastructure and housing services and programming means that First Nations often fall short of what is considered an acceptable standard...” (AFN, 2022). Based on the outcomes of this project as informed by the participants, IDC recommends that First Nations communities be included in the *Accessible Canada Act* through the implementation of the recommendations being put forward in this document. By utilizing the recommendations presented here, First Nations can be included in the *Accessible Canada Act* in a way that supports sustainable change and culturally-relevant accessibility standards.

Flexible Phase-Based Accessibility Funding for First Nations Communities

Indigenous Disability Canada recommends that the Federal Government allocate dedicated funding to assist First Nations communities in overcoming the barriers to accessibility and ensuring they can fully comply with the Act’s provisions.

Background

To ensure that First Nations communities can effectively identify and address accessibility barriers and gaps, the federal government must provide additional funding. Under the current options available to First Nations, such as the New Fiscal Relationship Grant, funding to address accessibility is not specifically included. Due to current limitations in infrastructure, capacity, and funding, these communities require financial support to meet the requirements of the *Accessible Canada Act*, the regulations outlined in the *Accessible Canada Regulations*, and the standards set by Accessibility Standards Canada. Community members and band staff that participated in engagements expressed concerns about how communities would address the barriers and requirements under the *Accessible Canada Act*,

“We need more funding to address barriers.” (FG_3m)

“The community needs money to address physical accessibility barriers; like incentives to go forward with solutions. (FG_2c)

“Will the federal government be providing the funding that’s needed to upgrade [accessibility] in communities?” (INT_2)

For many First Nations, there is work that must be done to address critical infrastructure gaps and access to basic necessities prior to addressing accessibility issues; for example, many communities are still without clean drinking water, paved roads, or sidewalks. While there is funding available to address areas of concern such as infrastructure development, the observations made during this project and the existing literature suggest that there are still significant gaps in funding to address persistent physical accessibility barriers within First Nations communities. **Indigenous Disability Canada proposes the creation of a First Nations Advancing Accessibility Fund; a**

flexible, phase-based approach that considers the size, location, existing resources, and needs of each community. See *Appendix A* for a detailed overview of the proposed funding model, including accountability and application processes. The fund would be staged in three phases, allocated out over 15 years, with a total estimated cost of **\$6.1 billion to \$11.09 billion**. Indigenous Disability Canada believes that the proposed funding aligns with the needs identified in the Assembly of First Nations *“Closing the Infrastructure Gap by 2030”* report whereby the Assembly of First Nations estimates, as part of a total \$349 billion, that \$1.6 billion is needed to address accessibility, and \$59.5 billion is needed for infrastructure to close the gap between First Nations and the rest of Canada; Indigenous Disability Canada believes this fund would align with the need identified in that report.

Creation of Accessibility Navigation Services / Support Network

Indigenous Disability Canada recommends that Indigenous Services Canada create a network of Accessibility Navigators to work with communities in understanding and meeting the requirements of the Accessible Canada Act.

Background

As outlined in the research results, there is a need for dedicated navigational support for communities. The Assembly of First Nations explains, *“[t]here is no organizational body under the ACA that may work with a First Nation to develop accessibility solutions. Many First Nations do not have an individual on staff who has the expertise to determine the accessibility needs of the community; or, if they do, the capacity to undertake this project.”* (AFN, 2022).

To ensure communities are able to meet the requirements of the *Accessible Canada Act* and prevent undue hardship on community staff, a First Nations-specific accessibility resource must be made available to communities. The development and implementation of an Accessibility Navigation service will serve as an invaluable resource for communities, *“I think that there needs to be something in place for Indigenous communities to help people navigate the system... Like a navigator, because nobody should have to go through this stuff.”* (FG_4b).

Indigenous Disability Canada recommends that Navigators be regionally based, similar to regional Indigenous Services Canada offices; allowing each Navigator to work with several communities. Navigators should not work with their homes communities to mitigate confidentiality and interpersonal concerns. They would serve a multifunctional role in assisting communities to meet the requirements of the *Accessible Canada Act* including acting as accessibility experts and auditors who work with a community to identify accessibility barriers and priorities, aid in writing accessibility plans and progress reports, and provide information and resources. Consideration should be given to the development of templates and models of accessibility plans, progress reports, and other key documents; these documents should be developed in collaboration with First Nations to ensure community specificity and to ensure simplified and straightforward processes. Additionally, it may be beneficial to utilize Accessibility Navigators in the feedback process for First Nations, as there are concerns around maintaining

anonymity and confidentiality within communities. Having a non-biased third party to filter feedback through could increase the privacy of those wanting to provide anonymous feedback. A key function of an Accessibility Navigator will be to collaborate with communities to conduct an annual accessibility assessment that will serve as the application for the First Nations Advancing Accessibility Fund. These assessments will also be used as an accountability measure, a progress tracker, and as a way to access funding that best suits the needs of the community as they evolve, without adding arduous reports and applications to the process.

Flexible Time-Lines

Indigenous Disability Canada recommends that First Nations be provided with up to an additional 12 months from their first year of their inclusion under the Act to develop and publish their accessibility plans. This extended timeline will ensure that communities have an opportunity to create comprehensive accessibility plans and comply with regulations, ultimately leading to more effective and sustainable accessibility improvements.

Background

To support First Nations communities in meeting the accessibility requirements of the Accessible Canada Act, the Federal Government should allow for additional time to identify and address barriers effectively. Currently, under *Part 1 Planning, Feedback and Reporting Exemptions, Section 4 Initial accessibility plan, subsection (2) New regulated entity*, it states that for the creation of the initial accessibility plan, “the fixed day for that entity is June 1 of the year following the year in which the entity is established or becomes subject to the act, as the case may be.” This means that First Nations would have approximately one year to one and a half years to complete their initial accessibility plans and set up a feedback mechanism. Considering the unique needs of First Nations and the historic infrastructure and operational challenges faced in many communities, an additional twelve months of time to complete the initial accessibility plan is required. With this additional time, communities will be able to assess the needs and priorities of the community and gain a more in-depth understanding of accessibility and the *Accessible Canada Act*.

During this project, participants were asked to answer the following survey question: “*In your opinion, how should the five-year exemption of First Nations communities from the ACR be reflected in the ACA's timeline goal of ‘barrier-free by 2040’?*”

The responses are as follows:

Additional support from the federal government: **18%**

Information and training around: **20%**

More time to address barriers and make accessibility plans: **17%**

All of the above / multiple: **38%**

Other / Blank: **7%**

The majority of respondents identified that a combination of these types of support would be best for communities. Most importantly, respondents identified a need for additional support from the Federal Government, information and training, and more time to create accessibility plans and address barriers. By providing this additional time,

communities can identify what support they will need, receive information and training related to accessibility, and ensure accessibility plans are comprehensive and align with the priorities of the First Nation.

Monitoring and Compliance

Indigenous Disability Canada recommends that a targeted, collaborative, and education-based approach to monitoring and compliance be taken when developing the monitoring and compliance framework for First Nations. Based on the success of the compliance framework under the *Accessibility for Manitobans Act*, Indigenous Disability Canada proposes that a similar model be used to ensure the appropriate and sustainable compliance of First Nations communities.

Background

The *Accessible Canada Act* is a critical piece of legislation designed to ensure accessibility and inclusion for all people with disabilities across Canada. However, there are unique challenges when it comes to implementing this law in First Nations communities, where the intersection of self-determination, jurisdictional complexities, cultural sensitivities, and infrastructure limitations must be addressed to ensure success.

The Accessible Canada Act Survey and First Nations Leadership survey respondents were asked their thoughts on how best to enforce compliance with accessibility standards and *Accessible Canada Act* requirements. Respondents were asked to pick from the options based on existing legislation or provide their own opinions.

The responses were as follows:

Monetary penalties for non-compliance: **6%**

Incentives for meeting requirements: **21%**

Regular inspections or audits: **24%**

All of the above / multiple: **44%**

Other: **0.2%**

First Nations communities operate under distinct governance structures and can face unique challenges with resources, training, and support for implementing legislation like the *Accessible Canada Act*. Recognizing these realities, the proposed monitoring and compliance framework must prioritize education and capacity-building to ensure that compliance is achieved in a sustainable and culturally-appropriate way.

Some considerations to ensure the framework is successful include:

- **Co-creation of strategies:** The Federal Government should work directly with First Nations leadership to co-develop compliance strategies that reflect the unique needs and governance of each community.
- **Training programs and resources:** Building on the education-focused approach under the *Accessibility for Manitobans Act*, specifically Step 1 under the *Monitoring and Compliance Framework*. This will mean providing support to

First Nations communities to encourage and support compliance with the Act, its standards and deadlines. For First Nations communities, this means **the development of an accessible, culturally sensitive, and community-driven training program** should be provided for First Nations governments, which could include:

- Workshops, webinars, and in-person training tailored to First Nations communities
 - Educational resources in multiple languages, including Indigenous languages, alternative accessible formats such as braille or sign language, and formats that are accessible to people with varying levels of literacy
 - Development of capacity-building programs aimed at strengthening the ability of First Nations to manage and ensure compliance with the Act on their own terms.
- **Train-the-Trainer Model:** Local community leaders, including Elders and Youth Leaders, should be trained to help disseminate knowledge throughout the community. This will ensure that the education process is culturally grounded and sustainable over the long term.
 - **Create a robust compliance monitoring system using data collection and reporting** that involves regular monitoring and evaluation to requirements based on mutual learning.
 - **Supportive inspections that are aimed at identifying areas for improvement and offering solutions** rather than relying on punitive measures. Inspections should be done in partnership with communities, offering support to achieve full accessibility.
 - The Federal Government should provide **targeted funding to support the implementation of accessibility initiatives in First Nations** (see recommendation #2). This could include grants for infrastructure upgrades, training programs, and educational materials.
 - **Use of accountability mechanisms and flexibility that are designed to assist First Nations communities** rather than penalize them, incorporating strategies such as:
 - Feedback loops that offer regular opportunities for communities to share their experiences, challenges, and successes with the *Accessible Canada Act* implementation - allowing for the continuous improvement of framework.

By developing a monitoring and compliance framework that prioritizes education, capacity-building, and collaborative partnership, the Federal Government can help First Nations communities navigate and succeed in their implementation of the *Accessible Canada Act*, while respecting self-determination. A model based on the *Compliance Framework under the Accessibility for Manitobans Act* provides an excellent starting point, but with necessary adjustments to ensure that First Nations are fully supported on their path to accessibility. The overarching goal is to ensure that accessibility becomes an integral part of First Nations communities, leading to more inclusive, equitable, and empowered environments for all citizens.

This approach will ultimately foster better relationships between the Federal Government and First Nations, ensure the success of the *Accessible Canada Act*, and, most importantly, create a more inclusive Canada for all.

Increased and Effective Communication with First Nations

Indigenous Disability Canada recommends that the Federal Government of Canada develop and utilize an effective two-way communication framework that will not only allow for the dissemination of information to communities, but also for the Federal Government to actively listen to and engage with First Nations communities.

Background

For First Nations to be successfully included under the *Accessible Canada Act* there must be an increase in effective communication between the Federal Government and communities. The development and implementation of an effective communication strategy will be key in including First Nations in federal initiatives like the *Accessible Canada Act*. This strategy should consider a broad range of communication methods, such as email, phone, mail, in-person meetings, social media, and radio. Additionally, ensuring an update of the First Nations Profiles webpage on the Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada website to reflect accurate contact information for First Nations communities must be done. Indigenous Disability Canada also recommends that as part of this communication strategy, each First Nation should have at least one generic email address for the community, i.e. 'generalreception@firstnation.com', that is monitored regularly, and used in continuity during staff turnover and transitions; this will ensure a consistent line of communication to a community.

By utilizing a variety of communication methods, the government can better ensure that important information is reaching communities and community members. Currently, this is an area that focus group participants identified as needing improvement, "*The community may be informed on opportunities for federal engagement but the members are not. We should be informed well ahead of engagements.*" (FG_2i). Surveys and focus groups indicated a preference for a variety of communication methods, including email, mail, radio, social media, and in-person. When asked, "*what method would be most successful in spreading awareness on ACA in First Nations?*" Respondents provided suggestions such as:

- "*Partner with community leaders and elders: Building relationships and trust with community leaders and elders is crucial in ensuring that any initiatives related to accessibility and the ACA are culturally appropriate and respectful. These individuals can help spread awareness about the importance of accessibility and the ACA within their community*";
- "*Information sessions, information packages, a clear meaning of how this affects our communities*";
- "*Have a trained or experienced person do a report in each community*"
- "*More meetings, planning, assessment*";

- “Social media, community meetings”.

By prioritizing culturally appropriate, accessible, and consistent communication, the government can ensure meaningful engagement with First Nations communities, thereby fostering greater inclusion and collaboration under the *Accessible Canada Act*.

LEGISLATION

First Nations Specific Consultations on Standards and Regulations

Indigenous Disability Canada recommends that any amendments to standards be informed by these consultations, with a particular focus on understanding and respecting First Nations’ experiences of accessibility and disability

Background

To ensure that accessibility standards are culturally relevant for First Nations communities, the federal government must mandate that all relevant standards created by Accessibility Standards Canada incorporate an Indigenous-lens. This requires conducting First Nations-specific consultations with community members with disabilities, caregivers, staff, and leadership. To mitigate consultation fatigue, various methods of engagement should be explored and the consultations should be completed in as few sessions as is feasible. These consultations should cover all standards - whether already published, under development, or currently under review - before they are applied to communities. This approach will ensure that the standards are both relevant and effective for First Nations communities. Given the unique nature of First Nation communities in contrast to the majority of other federal entities under the *Accessible Canada Act*, as places where people live their whole lives, including participating in activities such as work, recreation, accessing health care, school, engaging with culture, etc., the extra consultations and attention are warranted. Additionally, a review of the existing standards should be conducted to ensure alignment with the Truth and Reconciliation of Canada: 94 Calls to Action and relevant UN Conventions to which Canada is a signatory, including UNDRIP, UNCRRP, and UNCRC.

Accessibility Standards: Geographic Considerations

Indigenous Disability Canada recommends that accessibility standards and regulations related to the built-environment be adapted to address these specific challenges, ensuring that remote and northern First Nations can effectively meet the requirements as they are being developed.

Background

The Federal Government must ensure that accessibility standards and regulations account for the unique geographic challenges faced by remote and northern First Nations communities. These communities encounter additional barriers to establishing and maintaining accessibility in the built-environment due to difficult terrain, extreme

seasonal variations, and limited infrastructure. The geographic location also contributes to challenges in attracting and retaining qualified staff, particularly for healthcare services, and this in turn affects the communities' ability to offer a broad range of programs and services. This tailored approach is essential for achieving equitable accessibility in all communities.

Culturally Relevant “Duty to Consult”

The Federal Government must amend the "Duty to Consult" requirement to reflect the unique needs of First Nations communities. Currently, the regulation states that "the entity must consult with persons with disabilities in the preparations of its accessibility plan and every updated version of its accessibility plan." Indigenous Disability Canada recommends that this be expanded to specifically include Elders and families of persons with disabilities within First Nations communities.

Background

This amendment will ensure that the consultation process is more inclusive and culturally appropriate, addressing the specific needs and perspectives of First Nations communities in the development of accessibility plans.

Accessibility Standards: Cultural Considerations in the Built-Environment

The Federal Government must ensure that the Built-Environment Standard developed by Accessibility Standards Canada includes specific provisions for the inclusion of cultural spaces that respect and preserve the traditions of First Nations communities.

Background

It is essential that the standard provides mechanisms for each Nation to balance the preservation of their cultural heritage with modern accessibility requirements. This will include incorporating traditional designs, materials, and ceremonial spaces that are central to Indigenous ways of life while ensuring that these spaces are fully accessible to all members of the community, including those with disabilities. Access to, and participation in cultural activities was identified as an important part of accessibility to community members, *"I would like to take my son to the Powwow but when I consider transportation ... and the uneven surfaces that he would have to take his wheelchair over while at the Powwow, it isn't feasible..." (FG_3e)*

This approach will ensure that First Nations communities have the autonomy to decide what aspects of their cultural heritage should be prioritized in the built environment, while ensuring that accessibility needs are fully met in a way that is culturally appropriate and respectful. By integrating this flexibility into the Built-Environment Standard, the Federal Government can support the creation of spaces that honor Indigenous culture and traditions, while also advancing the goal of a barrier-free society.

Accessibility Standards: Cultural Considerations in Program and Service Design and Delivery

Utilize a holistic approach to accessibility, and revise the standard *Design and Delivery of Accessible Programs and Services: Accessible Service Delivery – Accessibility* to ensure that the language used within reflects the inclusion of First Nations and First Nations Peoples with disabilities.

Background

There must be a broader definition of ‘accessibility’ that meets the needs of First Nations — one that goes beyond physical access and considers emotional, mental, spiritual, and cultural well-being, as participants often viewed accessibility and culture as intertwined concepts, “[c]ulture and tradition are important parts of accessibility because they are important parts of our lives.” (FG_5j). Continuing to shift away from a medical model of accessibility towards a social model will encourage the development of holistic programs and services that better support First Nations’ perspectives on health and wellness. This approach should address the interconnection of health, education, social services, and community engagement. In line with this, when designing and delivering training for service providers, as under *CAN-ASC-5.2.1: Part 1: Design and Delivery of Accessible Programs and Services: Accessible Service Delivery – Accessibility for federally regulated entities as defined by the Accessible Canada Act, Section 12.3.1 Development*, the use of an Indigenous lens and consultation with First Nations Peoples with disabilities should be included as part of the training development process.

The inclusion of First Nations under the *Accessible Canada Act* and *Regulations* will require a shift in the language used in new and existing standards to ensure that the unique needs of First Nations peoples with disabilities are considered. This may involve adapting terminology related to disability and accessibility to better reflect Indigenous perspectives and amending standards to clearly include Indigenous Peoples with disabilities. For example, under *CAN-ASC-5.2.1: Part 1: Design and Delivery of Accessible Programs and Services: Accessible Service Delivery – Accessibility for federally regulated entities as defined by the Accessible Canada Act, Section 12.1 Contents of Training, Part b. iv “how to interact with persons with disabilities who:”* should be amended to include persons with disabilities who are First Nations.

Transportation as a Key Element of Programs and Services

To address the specific needs of First Nations communities, transportation must be included in programs and services. Indigenous Disability Canada recommends that a program to provide public transportation options within First Nations be developed.

Background

Based on the community engagements and literature review, Indigenous Disability Canada recommends that transportation be included as an essential service in First Nations communities. For programs and services to be truly accessible, there must be a

way for people to get to them. This is especially important in rural and remote areas where communities may be spread out and other types of transportation do not exist, i.e. taxis or public transit, one participant describes the lack of transportation options in their area, *“even in the whole area there’s a lack of transportation, we don’t have taxis, we don’t have buses, like there’s no transportation here.”* (FG_7h). From a First Nations perspective, transportation is a service and a key part of ensuring full and equal cultural participation. Transportation can be one of the most prominent barriers to cultural participation, particularly when considering transporting not only people but their mobility equipment as well (Croxall et al., 2020). This lack of transportation leaves persons with disabilities excluded, as one participant describes how they are unable to attend many community events or programs,

“Because for now, I’m only really able to go to the events that are at the building right next to my house. But there are events all over, like in the other reservations in there that I’m not really able to get to all the time because I can’t drive. And there’s programs to help elders get to those programs, but not specifically the disabled to get to the programs,” (INT_4).

The current medical transportation program under Non-Insured Health Benefits is limited in scope and excludes transportation for picking up prescriptions or medical equipment, adult daycare or respite care, and compassionate travel. For non-medical transportation, people often rely on other community members, but this is not a viable alternative to a transportation service, as a community member explains, *“[t]here are a lot of people who don’t drive or can’t drive, so they rely on their family members to get around – but there are times where that support isn’t there, or can’t help”* (FG_2i). Initiatives like the Rural Transit Solution Fund do not meet the current needs of First Nations and would be yet another application and reporting process. With the challenges of getting around communities and how frequently many community members have to leave the community to access essential services and healthcare, transportation to and within First Nations communities is an essential service that must be prioritized to achieve accessibility.

Conclusion

These recommendations have been developed to work together to best support the inclusion of First Nations under the *Accessible Canada Act* and *Accessible Canada Regulations*. By implementing these recommendations, the *Accessible Canada Act*, including expectations, regulations, and standards, will be more responsive to the specific needs and circumstances of First Nations communities while still working towards their goal of a ‘barrier-free Canada’.

References

1. Assembly of First Nations (2022). A Distinct First Nations Accessibility Law Discussion Guide for First Nations
2. Assembly of First Nations (2024). Closing the Infrastructure Gap by 2030, A Collaborative and Comprehensive Cost Estimate Identifying the Infrastructure Investment Needs of First Nations in Canada
3. Croxall, L., Gifford, W., & Jutai, J. (2020). First Nations Elders Who Use Wheeled Mobility: An Exploration of Culture and Health. *Canadian Journal on Aging/La Revue canadienne du vieillissement*, 39(2), 318-327

Appendix A

First Nations Advancing Accessibility Fund

Purpose: This **three-phase flexible approach** provides a clear path for communities to progressively work toward full accessibility while adapting to varying needs and resources over time. It begins with essential, immediate improvements, expands to more complex infrastructure upgrades and capacity-building, and culminates in full compliance and ongoing maintenance.

Each stage allows flexibility in how funds are allocated to ensure that resources are used efficiently, with the ultimate goal of creating a fully inclusive and accessible society by 2045.

Eligibility Requirements: To receive this funding, communities must have an audit done to identify accessibility gaps and barriers. Auditors must *not* be from the community that they are working with, to pre-emptively address concerns around confidentiality and interpersonal issues. The assessment must be included with the application and will determine which stage of funding will be assigned to the community. These audits must be done at no cost to the community, and the assessment process must include input from community members with disabilities in addition to a thorough built environment evaluation.

Communities located in Zones 3 and 4 are eligible to receive additional funding up to the maximum in each stage. Additional funding will be based on size and location

Funding is released on a yearly basis. Each year, a community must reapply using the audit that was conducted and included in the previous year's annual report.

Enforcement Mechanisms: Reporting must be submitted annually to the calendar date that the funding was received. Reporting must include an annual accessibility audit, must demonstrate that the funding was used appropriately, and indicate the amount of funds (if any) that will roll over to the next year.

If communities fail to comply with the reporting requirements, they will not be granted funding for the following year and will be required to submit a new application and audit.

Stage 1: Immediate and Essential Accessibility Improvements (2026-2030)

Goal: Quickly address the most urgent accessibility gaps in communities. Focus on critical infrastructure and services that support daily needs.

Key Focus Areas:

1. **Public Infrastructure Retrofitting:**
 - Modify public buildings like **community centers, schools, healthcare facilities, and government offices** to meet basic accessibility standards.
 - **Example Improvements:**
 - Install **ramps, wider doorways, and accessible washrooms.**
 - Install **elevators** in multi-story buildings where needed.
 - Ensure **signage** is clear and accessible, including **braille and large print** options.

- **Estimated Cost:** Upgrading a building might cost between **\$10,000 and \$100,000** per building depending on size and current conditions.
- 2. **Infrastructure Accessibility:**
 - Upgrades and accessibility features for public infrastructure, including **roads, sidewalks, bridges, and community spaces**.
 - **Example Improvements:** Install or modify **sidewalks** and **crosswalks**.
 - **Estimated Cost:** **\$3.2 million to \$4.15 million** per community, based on size and scope of infrastructure.
- 3. **Accessible Transportation:**
 - Implement **wheelchair-accessible buses or vans** and ensure **public transit** can accommodate people with disabilities.
 - **Example Improvements:** Designated accessible seating, lowered curbs, ramps for buses, and community transportation vehicles.
 - **Estimated Cost:** Establishing an accessible transportation system could cost **\$50,000 to \$500,000** per community.
- 4. **Digital Accessibility:**
 - Upgrade **websites** and **digital government platforms** to be fully accessible (e.g., implementing **screen readers**, providing **closed captions**, and ensuring **alternative text** for images).
 - **Estimated Cost:** Implementing basic website accessibility can range from **\$10,000 to \$50,000** per community.
- 5. **Health and Education:**
 - Modify **health clinics** and **schools** to ensure they are fully accessible for people with mobility issues.
 - **Example Improvements:** Accessible entrances, medical equipment like adjustable-height tables, and specialized school desks.
 - **Estimated Cost:** **\$50,000 to \$500,000** per facility upgrade.

Community Budget for Stage 1:

- **\$740,000 - \$1.13 million** per year.

Total Nationwide Estimate:

- **\$469.9 million to \$717.5 million** annually for the entire country.

Total Stage 1 Estimate:

\$2.35 billion - \$3.59 billion

Stage 2: Infrastructure Expansion and Capacity Building (2031-2035)

Goal: Expand and enhance the infrastructure developed in Stage 1, improving accessibility in more areas and focusing on **capacity-building** for long-term sustainability.

Key Focus Areas:

1. **Expanding Public Infrastructure:**

- Continue improving public infrastructure, including **community halls, recreational facilities, band administration and health buildings,** and **schools** to meet full accessibility standards.
 - **Example Improvements:** Upgrades to pathways, public spaces, and cultural spaces.
 - **Estimated Cost: \$50,000 to \$200,000** per facility, depending on the size.
2. **Transportation:**
- Scale up **public transportation** systems, ensuring that inter-community travel is also accessible. This could include more buses, accessible intercity routes, or upgrades to rural transportation systems.
 - **Example Improvements:** Expand routes, add more accessible vehicles, and improve mobility options for people with disabilities.
 - **Estimated Cost: \$100,000 to \$1 million** per community depending on transportation needs and distance.
3. **Health and Education Upgrades:**
- Further improve **healthcare** facilities by making them more **patient-friendly** and ensuring that they meet comprehensive accessibility standards.
 - Expand **accessible learning environments** in **schools** (e.g., specialized desks, assistive technologies, physical accessibility in classrooms).
 - **Estimated Cost: \$100,000 to \$500,000** per healthcare and educational facility.
4. **Capacity Building & Training:**
- Focus on **training** local leaders, administrators, and staff to integrate accessibility principles into daily operations.
 - **Example:** Train First Nations governments to ensure that they are continuously meeting accessibility standards, managing accessible facilities, and serving citizens effectively.
 - **Estimated Cost: \$10,000 to \$50,000** per community annually for training and staff development.

Budget for Stage 2:

- **\$300,000 to \$600,000** per year.

Total Nationwide Estimate:

- **\$150 million to \$300 million** annually for the entire country.

Total Stage 2 Estimate:

\$750 million - \$1.5 billion

Stage 3: Full Accessibility and Continuous Improvement (2036-2045)

Goal: Achieve **full compliance** with accessibility standards and establish a **sustainable, inclusive** society with regular updates and improvements.

Key Focus Areas:

1. **Full Infrastructure Accessibility:**

- Complete accessibility for all public infrastructure, including **community buildings, roads, bridges, and community spaces**.
 - Ensure all **inter-community transport** (e.g., buses, ferries, airports, vans) is accessible, including remote or isolated communities.
 - **Example Improvements:** Design all new buildings with **universal design principles**, ensuring that accessibility is built into the foundational plans.
 - **Estimated Cost: \$200,000 to \$3 million** per community, based on size and scope of infrastructure.
2. **Ongoing Maintenance and Monitoring:**
- Develop a system to **monitor** accessibility standards across communities to ensure compliance and tackle any new challenges.
 - **Example:** Regular audits and inspections of public spaces, healthcare, education, and transportation services to ensure they remain accessible.
 - **Estimated Cost: \$50,000 to \$100,000** per community annually.
3. **Digital Equity:**
- Ensure **digital platforms** (government services, educational materials, healthcare access) continue to be **equitable** and accessible for all, including emerging technologies and future needs.
 - **Example:** Implement assistive technology in government and healthcare portals, ensuring inclusivity in digital spaces.
 - **Estimated Cost: \$50,000 to \$200,000** per community for upgrades.
4. **Sustainable Funding and Long-Term Programs:**
- Establish long-term, **sustainable funding models** to maintain accessibility in the future. This could include community-driven fundraising or public-private partnerships.
 - **Example:** Create a fund to **replace accessible infrastructure** as it ages, ensuring that accessibility remains a priority.
 - **Estimated Cost: \$50,000 to \$100,000** per year for ongoing funding.

Budget for Stage 3:

- **\$600,000 to \$1 million** per year.

Total Nationwide Estimate:

- **\$300 million to \$600 million** annually for all communities

Total Stage 3 Estimate:

\$3 billion to \$6 billion

Summary of Total Costs for All 15 Years (Funding Ends in 2045):

\$6.1 billion to \$11.09 billion

These costs are estimates only; this document is intended as a sample funding approach.