

NEWS RELEASE



For Immediate Release

Federal Budget 2024 Falls Short of Meeting Urgent Needs of Nunavut Inuit

(April 17, 2024 — Iqaluit, Nunavut) While Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI) looks forward to collaborating with the federal government on several initiatives announced yesterday in the federal budget titled Fairness for Every Generation, there remains a wide gulf between what Canada announced today and what Nunavut Inuit require for lives equitable to what most Canadians enjoy.

“Twenty-five years after the creation of the territory, the quality of life of the average Nunavut Inuk today is demonstrably worse than in 1999,” said NTI President Aluki Kotierk. “There is a continuing and worsening housing shortage, seventy percent of Nunavut Inuit are food insecure, Inuktitut fluency is decreasing, and Nunavut Inuit are dying from tuberculosis, a treatable and preventable disease.”

Though education for Nunavut Inuit would go a long way toward solving many of these issues, and NTI specifically requesting education funding, there is no mention of Inuit Post-Secondary Education (IPSE) funding in Budget 2024. There is a burgeoning number of applicants for IPSE, and this increasing number of applicants to NTI and the Regional Inuit Associations (RIAs), from Nunavut Inuit furthering their education, has outpaced the funds provided by the federal government for the IPSE initiative for several years, and that gap is expected to grow.

Inuit in Nunavut experience food insecurity at significantly higher rates than the rest of Canada. NTI welcomes investments in the Harvesters Support Grant and a national school food programs. However, the commitments fall significantly shorter than the funds needed to implement the Inuit Nunangat Food Security Strategy and additional investments are urgently needed. NTI awaits involvement in the development and implementation of the program in accordance with guidelines set out in Article 32 of the *Nunavut Agreement*.

The federal government has repeatedly affirmed a commitment to close the Indigenous infrastructure gap by 2030. Yet the last two federal budgets have not included significant enough investments to bring Nunavut close to reaching that goal. Nunavut's fair share of the \$370 million Indigenous Housing and Community Infrastructure program will be a welcome infusion of funding. However, without capacity, predictability, funding and time, Nunavut's infrastructure gap is set to grow. Nunavut Inuit continue to build capacity from the ground up and work to allocate funding on priority infrastructure projects, and we hope to see continued and increased investments in future federal budgets.

The Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee (ICPC) demonstrates a shared commitment to the creating prosperity for all Inuit, which in turn benefits all Canadians. It is a direct result of the Inuit Nunangat Declaration and led to the development of the Inuit Nunangat Policy. This Policy applies to all federal departments and agencies with the goal of socio-economic and cultural equity between Inuit and other Canadians. Inuit are the most knowledgeable about the issues affecting us, and we must gain progressive responsibility in decision-making over matters that apply to Inuit and Inuit Nunangat.

NTI will continue to advocate for post-secondary education funding that meets the needs of the increasing number of Inuit students pursuing studies after high school; school food program funding in Nunavut; increased government support for housing and infrastructure in Nunavut; and a continuation of distinctions-based housing funding and commitment to an Inuit-led infrastructure needs assessment.

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