

HOUSE OF COMMONS STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS
Report 54 (42nd Parliament, 1st Session), *Report 5, Socio-economic Gaps on First Nations Reserves—Indigenous Services Canada, of the 2018 Spring Reports of the Auditor General of Canada.*

Indigenous Services Canada
Progress Report on Socio-Economic Gaps
(Recommendation 1.3)

Reporting on Socio-economic Gaps

In addition to work on the National Outcome-Based Framework, the Department has been reporting annually to Parliament on socio-economic gaps. The *Department of Indigenous Services Act*, which came into force on July 15, 2019, officially established the department of Indigenous Services Canada and its mandate to improve access to high quality services for First Nations, Inuit and the Métis Nation. Section 15 of the Act outlines the department's mandate to report on an annual basis to Parliament on, "(a) the socio-economic gaps between First Nations individuals, Inuit, Métis individuals and other Canadians and the measures taken by the Department to reduce those gaps; and (b) the progress made towards the transfer of departmental responsibilities [to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis governments and organizations.]".

Two annual reports to Parliament have now been presented. Members of the Committee can access the reports at:

<https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1575132098314/1575132118001>
<https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/fra/1575132098314/1575132118001>

The first report, released in 2020, provides a broad overview of the socio-economic gaps between First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, and the non-Indigenous population in Canada, covering a wide range of social, economic, and health dimensions, from income and education through life expectancy and language use. It highlights not only what gaps exist today, but how those gaps have evolved over time. The report provides baseline data on socio-economic gaps, relying primarily on information from the 2016 Census.

The report also outlines the steps the Department has taken over the past five years to address specific socio-economic gaps, as well as how the Department has been working with Indigenous partners to advance the complex process of transferring control of services over to Indigenous Peoples, through regional sectoral agreements in areas such as education and health, the development of Indigenous-led institutions, and legislative initiatives, such as Bill C-92, *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*.

The second report, released in 2021, builds on our understanding of the socio-economic gaps. It focuses on the Department's actions to close the gaps through quality services and increased resources, and, in particular, provides a statistical examination of the physical and mental health; economic; education; safety and social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Indigenous communities.

Lastly, the 2021 report discusses gaps in the collection and availability of Indigenous data. It acknowledges data gaps and their impact on the ability to monitor progress; outlines steps to address these gaps in the short and long term; and outlines several co-developed initiatives for advancing Indigenous data capacity. Additionally, Budget 2021 allocated \$73.5 million over three years to continue work towards the development and implementation of a First Nations data governance strategy, as well as \$8 million over three years to support Inuit and Métis Nation data strategies.

These reports respond to the request for baseline data and annual reporting on socio-economic gaps. Indeed, through these reports, ISC looks forward to providing annual updates to Parliament that will allow parliamentarians to track progress in closing the socio-economic gaps, in particular, as data from the 2021 Census becomes available, and the government establishes further measures to improve the quality of Indigenous data.