



COVID-19 and the Urban Indigenous Labour Force: A Plan for Full and Equal Participation in the GTA's Economic Recovery and Growth

Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment and Training

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Context: The Vitality and Potential of the GTA's Urban Indigenous Community

The devastating impacts of COVID-19 are well known: countless job losses and business closures against the backdrop of the human toll taken by the virus itself. It should come as no surprise that recovering from the pandemic will take just as much collective effort as fighting the virus. The pandemic revealed deep cracks within the economy where certain groups were harder hit by both the health and economic harms of the virus. Governments are now beginning to turn their focus to policies and programs that will help Canadians and Canadian businesses recover from the pandemic. Recovery plans must include specific policies and initiatives that help those that were hardest hit by the pandemic to come out even stronger, better supported and prepared to fully participate and thrive in the recovery to come.

Canada is not achieving its full economic and social potential as a country whenever any individual, or group, is left behind in the economy. Canada's full economic and social potential is realized when two necessary conditions are in place. The first condition is that businesses are creating jobs and economic opportunities so that anyone who wants to work, has work. But job creation alone is not a sufficient condition for achieving potential. The second condition is that anyone who wants to work has access to the skills training that empowers them to find work that is meaningful to them, dignified, and stable.

The Greater Toronto Area (GTA) is home to Canada's largest Urban Indigenous community. By some estimates, there are currently 55,000-70,000 Indigenous people living in Toronto alone, which is double the current official estimate.¹ In fact, 85.5% of Indigenous people in Ontario live in cities and towns, not on reserves as is the popular belief. Urban Indigenous people are often undercounted in official statistics like the Census which results in these communities often being overlooked by government policymakers – and they are often some of the hardest hit communities in times of economic hardship.

85.5%

of Indigenous people in Ontario live in cities and towns, not on reserves as is the popular belief.

The challenges facing off-reserve Indigenous communities during economic downturns are well documented. In the Great Recession of 2008-2009, off-reserve Indigenous people felt the impacts of the recession longer, and their recovery was slower than non-Indigenous people.² The pandemic-related impacts of the current recession are shaping up to be very similar to those of the Great Recession with off-reserve Indigenous people seeing more drastic decreases in employment compared to non-Indigenous people.³ For instance, while Indigenous and non-Indigenous people initially experienced similar declines in employment levels (approximately a 1-2% decrease in employment each month from March-June) due to COVID-19, 10 months into the pandemic, Indigenous people were experiencing comparatively worse employment outcomes than non-Indigenous people. In addition, just under 40% of Indigenous people surveyed have reported that the pandemic has made it difficult for them to meet their financial obligations, compared to a quarter of non-Indigenous people in the same survey.⁴ While some may not find these data compelling, it is important to remember that Indigenous Canadians, particularly Urban Indigenous Canadians, generally experience higher levels of unemployment, underemployment, and lower labour force participation during non-pandemic times.

The economic and social playing field was not close to even between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities going into COVID-19. This reality means that government policy makers cannot build recovery policies and programs that inherently assume everyone went into the COVID-19 economic recession with similar circumstances. There needs to be differentiation and specific solutions to help the GTA's Urban Indigenous

1. <https://file.news.yorku.ca/2019/05/02/toronto-has-twice-as-many-urban-indigenous-people-than-previously-believed/>, <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/accessibility-human-rights/indigenous-affairs-office/torontos-indigenous-peoples/#:~:text=Note%3A%20Agencies%20serving%20the%20Indigenous,Increase%20of%2025%20per%20cent>
2. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/45-28-0001/2020001/article/00085-eng.htm>
3. Statistics Canada. (March 2021). Labour Force Survey, Special Tabulation.
4. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/45-28-0001/2020001/article/00052-eng.htm>



The paper is about solutions that provide the GTA's Urban Indigenous community with the skills development and employment supports to give them greater agency in the economy to find meaningful work that is dignified and stable

community come back better and stronger from COVID-19. That is what this paper is about. It is about solutions that provide the GTA's Urban Indigenous community with the skills development and employment supports to give them greater agency in the economy to find meaningful work that is dignified and stable. This paper is about hope tethered to realistic and practical steps that governments and Urban Indigenous organizations like Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment and Training⁵ (Miziwe Biik) can take together to heal the economic and social harm of COVID-19 and continue on the journey of Truth and Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in Canada.

Miziwe Biik has been an innovator at the forefront of supporting the economic and social ambitions of the GTA's Urban Indigenous community for 30 years. Miziwe Biik has been designing and delivering culturally relevant education and job training programming that is responsive to labour market needs and leads to positive employment outcomes for its clients. The organization understands the specific employment barriers faced by the GTA's Urban Indigenous community and how to overcome them so that the full potential of this growing community can be achieved. To support governments of all stripes in preparing their plan for economic recovery, Miziwe Biik is putting forward specific and actionable recommendations to ensure that Urban Indigenous people are full participants in the GTA's and Ontario's economic renaissance. These recommendations are about more than "returning to normal" post-COVID, they are about a new set of impactful institutions and programs that are set toward the aim of making the Urban Indigenous community full and equal partners in the GTA's economic and social success.

To achieve this aim, Miziwe Biik is recommending that:

1. Ontario and Canada recognize Miziwe Biik as the first Urban Indigenous Training Institute in the GTA. Indigenous Training Institutes are a proven model for providing Indigenous people with access to education and training programming and credentials that lead to jobs. To date, these Institutes are either on-reserve, or institutions created by specific First Nations governments. A GTA-based Urban Indigenous Training Institute that serves Indigenous people from all Nations will substantially expand and enhance education and training programming that leads to good jobs for the GTA's Urban Indigenous population.
2. The Government of Canada allow Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program (ISET) partners to convert up to one-third of their program operating funding to capital funding that can be invested in dedicated, specialized, culturally relevant, and proximate training facilities for ISET funded skills and employment training programs.
3. Canada and Ontario review their existing Indigenous employment support programs to ensure that access to transportation ceases to be a barrier to employment training and employment by building in adequate supports and program requirements for transportation needs.
4. Canada, Ontario, and GTA municipal governments review and take action to establish Aboriginal Financial Institutions in the GTA to strengthen Urban Indigenous entrepreneurs' access to vital investment capital.

The adoption of these recommendations will create increased access to culturally tailored programs for the Urban Indigenous population of the GTA, expand access to capital for Urban Indigenous entrepreneurs, and create robust support for Urban Indigenous workers. Research has shown the initiatives set out in these recommendations result in lasting economic and social benefits for Indigenous people.⁶

5. [See Appendix A for a summary of some of the programs delivered by Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment and Training](#)

6. <https://fsc-ccf.ca/research/mapping-the-landscape-indigenous-skills-training-and-jobs-in-canada/>, <https://nacca.ca/igf/>



Recommendation 1: Recognizing Ontario's First Urban Indigenous Training Institute

The Issue

There is an opportunity to enhance and expand the educational opportunities available to off-reserve and Urban Indigenous people to address educational attainment and employment opportunity gaps that currently exist between the general population and these Indigenous communities.⁷ For example, 51% of off-reserve First Nations women and 40% of off-reserve First Nations men reported that not having enough education or training for available work made it difficult to find work.⁸

To close this gap, the Government of Ontario passed the *Indigenous Institutes Act* in 2017, which granted Indigenous Institutes the ability to develop independent post-secondary credential granting programs. This Act also recognized Ontario's Indigenous-operated Institutes as a pillar

of Ontario's post-secondary education system, alongside the province's colleges and universities.

Indigenous Institutes in Ontario are defined as Indigenous-owned and controlled, community-based educational institutes that develop and deliver culturally enriched, accredited post-secondary certificate, diploma, degree and post-graduate programs to Indigenous students.⁹

There are currently nine Indigenous Institutes in Ontario that are recognized under the *Indigenous Institutes Act*. These Institutes are either on-reserve, or reserve-based. They are represented by the Indigenous Institutes Consortium (IIC), which is the "collective voice of the province's Indigenous education sector".¹⁰

The nine Institutes are:



Anishinabek Education Institute



First Nations Technical Institute (FNTI)



Kenjgewin Teg



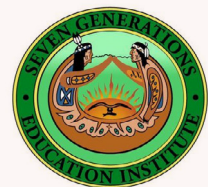
Iohahi:io Akwesasne Education and Training Institute



Ogwehoweh Skills and Trades Training Centre



Oshki-Pimache-O-Win: The Wenjack Education Institute



Seven Generations Education Institute



Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig



Six Nations Polytechnic¹¹

7. <https://www.homelesshub.ca/about-homelessness/population-specific/indigenous-peoples>

8. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-653-x/89-653-x2018003-eng.htm>

9. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/indigenous-institutes>

10. <https://iicontario.ca/indigenous-pse-pillar/>

11. <https://iicontario.ca/indigenous-institutes/>

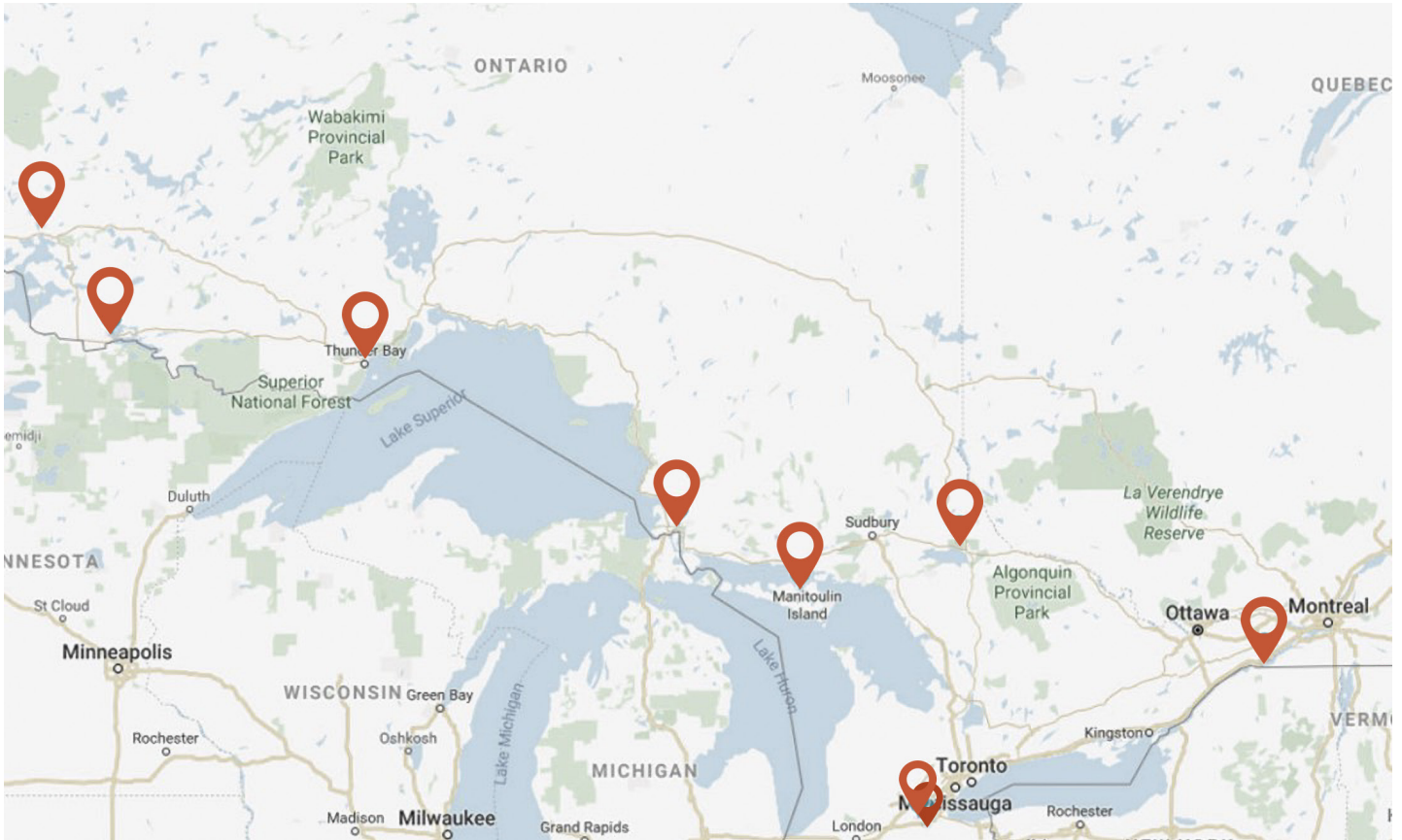


Figure 1: Indigenous Institutes in Ontario¹²

There are currently no Indigenous Institutes located in the GTA, or in most of the province's cities. That means there are no Indigenous organizations in the GTA currently accredited and able to receive funding and grant diplomas, certificates, or degrees in culturally responsive settings.

Establishing an Urban Indigenous Training Institute in the GTA would provide the GTA's Urban Indigenous community with greater control over its education and training needs and allow it to set priorities and develop programs that deliver credential granting programs in the flexible, personalized, and culturally responsive way that delivers employment outcomes for people. It will also ensure that Urban Indigenous people are fully integrated into Ontario's Indigenous Post-Secondary Pillar.

The Recommendation

Ontario and Canada should recognize Miziwe Biik as the first Urban Indigenous Training Institute in the GTA so that it has the opportunity to develop post-secondary credential granting programs and be represented by, or recognized on par with, the Indigenous Institutes Consortium.

Even though it has not been formally recognized, Miziwe Biik fulfills the definition of an Indigenous Institute. Miziwe Biik provides opportunities for students to complete post-secondary education credentials in a flexible, personalized and culturally responsive learning environment. Miziwe Biik is Indigenous-owned and operated, delivers skills training and education through an Indigenous lens, is focused on Indigenous traditions and practices, and delivers a program that directly impacts and serves the GTA's Urban Indigenous community.

12. <https://iicontario.ca/indigenous-institutes/>

Expected Benefits

Indigenous Training Institutes are a proven model for providing Indigenous people with access to education and training programming and credentials.

Recognizing Miziwe Biik as an Urban Indigenous Training Institute would:

- Provide the GTA's Urban Indigenous community with greater control over its education and training needs and allow it to set its own education and training priorities and programs.
- Provide the GTA's Urban Indigenous community with expanded and enhanced access to the skills training and market recognized credentials they need to exercise agency in the labour market and to secure good-paying jobs.
- Allow clients to qualify for financial assistance through OSAP, a new policy introduced in 2020 for Indigenous Institutes by the provincial government.¹³ Greater access to financial aid would be of enormous benefit to those seeking an Indigenous focused post-secondary education institution in the GTA and put Urban Indigenous students on a level playing field with non-Indigenous students in the GTA.
- Ensure that the GTA's Urban Indigenous population is represented in discussions regarding Indigenous education in Ontario. Otherwise, the "collective voice of the province's Indigenous education sector" will continue to be missing critical stakeholders.

A GTA-based Urban Indigenous Training Institute will provide a substantial education and training solution for the economic recovery and long-term prosperity of the GTA's Urban Indigenous community.



13. <https://budget.ontario.ca/2021/pdf/2021-ontario-budget-en.pdf>



Recommendation 2: Investing in Urban Indigenous Training Infrastructure



The Issue

The Government of Canada, through Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), makes significant investments in First Nations, Inuit, and Métis skills development and employment programming through the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) Program. ISET is designed to help First Nations, Inuit, Métis and urban/non-affiliated Indigenous people improve their skills and find employment, with the ultimate goal of reducing skills and employment gaps.

In 2016 and 2017, the Government of Canada engaged with key Indigenous partners and organizations across the country to review and renew the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS). Following this engagement, the Government and Indigenous partners co-developed the implementation of the ISET Program. The ISET Program builds on what was successful about ASETS and reflects what was heard from Indigenous partners. It includes:

- new distinctions-based strategies and funding streams that will help meet the unique needs of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban/non-affiliated Indigenous people;
- greater focus on the full continuum of skills development, from essential skills to skills upgrading;
- greater flexibility for Indigenous organizations to design programming to meet the needs of their people and communities;
- reduced administrative burden; and
- increased funding to support predictable and stable training and skills development over the next 10 years.¹⁶

Miziwe Biik delivers the ISET Program to the GTA's Urban Indigenous Community in its role as a Local Delivery Mechanism of the Aboriginal Labour Force Development Circle (ALFDC). The program provides significant operating funding for Miziwe Biik's skills development and employment programming, including for its apprenticeships in heavy equipment operation, carpentry, general labour, and horticulture. This operating funding is critical to opening up employment opportunities for Urban Indigenous people in the skilled trades. However, one of the ongoing challenges facing Miziwe Biik is securing the specialized training space such as workshops and labs needed to

house the programming. Currently, Miziwe Biik must fight for space with other training and education institutions in the GTA which can lead to issues such as in-consistent program timing (because of a lack of facility availability), training being too far from where clients live, and training not being delivered in culturally tailored and supportive environments.

The Recommendation:

The Government of Canada should allow ISET Program partners to convert up to one-third of its program operating funding to capital funding that can be invested in dedicated specialized and culturally relevant training facilities for ISET funded skills and employment training programs. For example, if Miziwe Biik was able to convert a portion of its ISET funding, it would use this capital allocation to fund the skilled trades workshop it is developing at its Institute Building to be located at Toronto's Indigenous Hub in the West Don Lands. Having access to dedicated, specialized, culturally tailored, and proximate training facilities would enable Miziwe Biik, and other ISET program delivery partners, to better plan and expand programming that leads to good paying jobs for its clients.

Expected Benefits

Enabling ISET partner organizations to convert some of their operating funding to capital funding would:

- Ensure that GTA Urban Indigenous skills and employment program participants have access to the facilities and equipment they need to get the "work ready" experience they need to pursue employment opportunities.
- Provide program managers with certainty around facility availability to manage and expand programming for clients.
- Provide the GTA's Urban Indigenous community with greater control over its education and training needs and allow it to set its own education and training priorities and programs.
- Better position Miziwe Biik (and other ISET organizations) to open up partnership opportunities with other employment and training providers and employers by being able to bring physical capacity to these partnerships.

Capital funding would greatly enhance the impact of the ISET Program for the GTA's Urban Indigenous community.

16. Employment and Social Development Canada. "About the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program". <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/indigenous-skills-employment-training.html>



Recommendation 3: Enabling Employment through Better Transportation Support

The Canada-Ontario Jobs Grant provides participants with up to \$500 to cover transportation costs. However, an individual is only eligible for this support if they commute more than 24km each way to/from their job or training site.

The Issue

Adequate and affordable transportation is a major employment barrier faced by Urban Indigenous people. In Ontario, 33% of off-reserve First Nations people have said that not having the means of transportation to get to available jobs causes them difficulty in finding work.¹⁷ Many apprenticeship positions, for example, require candidates for positions to have a driver's license and access to a vehicle. Many Urban Indigenous people do not have a driver's license, and if they do, they lack access to a vehicle. Worksites are also not always accessible by transit.

While certain programs have provisions in place to account for the cost of transportation, they do not adequately meet the needs of Urban Indigenous people. For example, the Canada-Ontario Jobs

Grant provides participants with up to \$500 to cover transportation costs. However, an individual is only eligible for this support if they commute more than 24km each way to/from their job or training site. If this is applied to an Urban Indigenous person needing to commute from one end of Toronto to the other (say, from Victoria Park Station to Kipling – approximately 21.9km), they would be ineligible for this financial support. Therefore, the eligibility criteria around supports through this program are inadequate and will not cover the cost of a reasonable commute: a subway ride.

The Recommendation:

Canada and Ontario should review their existing Indigenous employment support programs to ensure that access to transportation ceases to be a barrier to employment training and employment by adjusting eligibility criteria to reflect the realities faced by Urban Indigenous program participants..

Expected Benefits

Transportation is a substantial but easily fixable employment barrier faced by Urban Indigenous populations. Ensuring adequate support for transportation costs could significantly increase employment opportunities for Miziwe Biik's clients and Urban Indigenous people in the GTA.

17. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-653-x/89-653-x2018003-eng.htm>



Recommendation 4: Increasing Access to Capital for Urban Indigenous Entrepreneurs

The Issue

One of the main barriers faced by Indigenous entrepreneurs and businesses is their ability to raise capital. According to a survey by the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business, access to capital is the number one major obstacle to growth for Indigenous businesses.¹⁸

Aboriginal Financial Institutions (AFIs) are the main source of capital and lending for Indigenous entrepreneurs in Canada. Over the past 30 years, AFIs have distributed 45,000 loans worth \$2.5 billion. Each year 500 start-ups, and 750 existing businesses are financed through AFIs. AFIs play a critical role in filling the financial gaps and unmet needs of Indigenous entrepreneurs.¹⁹

There are three types of AFIs:

- **Aboriginal Capital Corporations (ACC):** ACCs are Aboriginal-owned business lending organizations that are capitalized by the Federal Government. ACCs provide loans and advisory services for Indigenous entrepreneurs and businesses based on local and regional market conditions.
- **Aboriginal Community Futures Development Corporations (AFDC):** AFDCs are capitalized by the Federal Government through regional development agencies and provide local communities with loans and support.
- **Aboriginal Development Lenders (ADL):** ADLs are capitalized either by the private sector or provincial government to provide debt and equity capital and business support services to Indigenous businesses and entrepreneurs. They also provide federal and provincial programs to Indigenous people.²⁰

As part of its COVID-19 relief funding, the federal government introduced \$306.8 million in interest-free loans and non-repayable contributions for Indigenous businesses. This support was provided

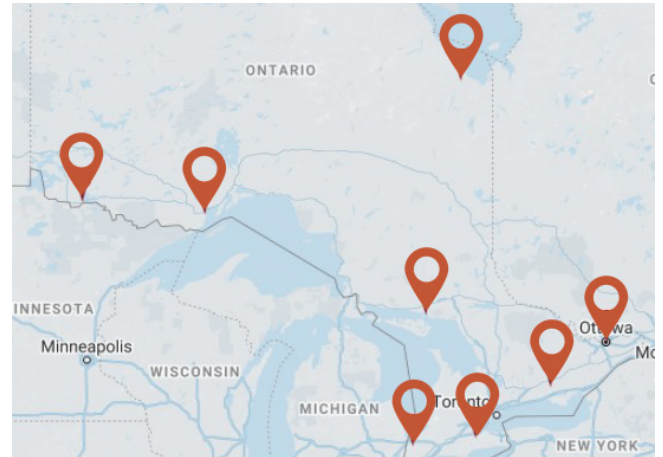


Figure 2: Map of Ontario's AFIs²³

through AFIs and administered by the National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association (the umbrella association overseeing AFIs nationally). The only way Indigenous businesses and entrepreneurs can access this funding is by contacting their AFI.²¹

There are 59 AFIs across Canada, with eight in Ontario.²² However, there are no AFIs in the GTA. The current locations of AFIs in Ontario are:

- Stirling
- Ottawa
- Fort William First Nation
- Fort Frances
- Sarnia
- Ohsweken
- Moose Factory
- Birch Island

The closest AFI to Toronto is Ohsweken, 100km from the City. This creates a significant barrier to accessing capital, business supports, and federal and provincial funding for Indigenous entrepreneurs and businesses located in GTA.

18. <https://nacca.ca/igf/>

19. <https://nacca.ca/aboriginal-financial-institutions/>

20. <https://nacca.ca/aboriginal-financial-institutions/>

21. <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1588079295625/1588079326171>

22. <https://nacca.ca/aboriginal-financial-institutions/>

23. <https://nacca.ca/aboriginal-financial-institutions/>



\$31 Billion

Contribution of Indigenous economy to Canada's GDP

The Recommendation:

Canada, Ontario, and GTA municipal governments should review and take action to establish Aboriginal Financial Institutions in the GTA to strengthen Urban Indigenous entrepreneurs' access to vital investment capital. This should include working with GTA Urban Indigenous organizations such as Miziwe Biik to establish an AFI in Toronto.

If an AFI is not able to be established in Toronto in the near-term, the federal government should seek another avenue to distribute COVID-19 Indigenous focused business support funds. This may include working with federally regulated financial institutions to establish Indigenous focused capital units

Expected Benefits:

Addressing this issue is critical to supporting Indigenous owned businesses in the GTA deal with, and recover from, the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Establishing an AFI in the GTA would give the GTA's Indigenous entrepreneurs and businesses a long-term capital partner to fuel recovery and growth.

According to a Conference Board of Canada report in 2016, the potential market for AFIs is 62,250 Indigenous businesses, which employ more than 124,000 Indigenous people.²⁴ Establishing an AFI in the GTA would address a major market gap and support the creation of even more Indigenous businesses in the region. The Indigenous economy contributes \$31 billion to Canada's GDP. \$12 billion of this contribution comes from Indigenous entrepreneurs. Creating these financial supports for Urban Indigenous entrepreneurs and businesses is essential to ensuring that the GTA's Urban Indigenous entrepreneurs and businesses are full participants in the economic recovery.

²⁴. <https://nacca.ca/igf/>

Conclusion: Unlocking Potential Through Deliberate Action



As hard as COVID-19 has been on all people and businesses in the GTA, there is hope on the horizon. Hope for better health. Hope for economic growth. Hope for Truth and Reconciliation.

In 2016, the National Indigenous Economic Development Board published a report that found that closing the opportunity gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians would boost Canada's economy by \$27.7 billion annually, or an approximate 1.5% boost to the nation's economy.²⁵ A recent Ryerson and Canadian Council of Aboriginal Business report argued that policymakers need to "commit to address underemployment through a focus on quality, targeted and culturally appropriate education, skills and training for Indigenous people" to realize this \$27.7 billion annual boost.²⁶

The economic and social playing field was not even between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities going into COVID-19. This means that government policy makers cannot build recovery policies and programs that assume

everyone went into the COVID-19 economic recession with similar circumstances. There needs to be differentiation and specific solutions to help the GTA's Urban Indigenous community come back better and stronger from COVID-19.

This paper provides a set of tangible solutions that will provide the GTA's Urban Indigenous community with the skills development and employment supports they need to take their economic futures into their own hands. Implementing the recommendations outlined in this report will be important in signaling that policy makers understand that a one size fits all approach to recovery will not work and that a deliberate approach, working in partnership with Miziwe Biik and others, is key to unlocking the full economic potential of the GTA's Urban Indigenous community.

25. <http://www.naedb-cndea.com/en/without-equal-economic-opportunities-no-reconciliation/>

26. <https://www.ryerson.ca/news-events/news/2020/07/indigenous-skills-training-and-employment-face-systemic-barriers/>

Appendix A: Miziwe Biik Overview

Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment and Training fills the gap in connecting Urban Indigenous people to job opportunities in GTA while providing the needed training and supports to overcome educational and other systemic barriers.

Miziwe Biik addresses these challenges through its program offerings. Focusing on the unique path of each individual, Miziwe Biik “works with employers to secure employment opportunities; to deliver federal and provincial programs; and promote Aboriginal entrepreneurship.”²⁷ Studies have also shown that the likelihood of success for training programs increases when training is culturally appropriate and includes wrap-around supports, which Miziwe Biik offers.⁶

Many of Miziwe Biik’s existing programs support both the needs of Urban Indigenous people as well as the needs of the labour market in the wake of COVID-19. The dual importance of these programs for an underserved population and the economy overall should be acknowledged, supported, and expanded.

Miziwe Biik is a Local Delivery Mechanism for the ISET Program under the Aboriginal Labour Force Development Circle. Miziwe Biik receives \$6M annually through ISET to delivery programming to the GTA’s Urban Indigenous community.

Current Miziwe Biik program offerings include:

Personal Support Worker Program



In response to the immediate health care needs brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, Miziwe Biik partnered with Medix College of Healthcare to offer a 32-week Personal Support Worker Program. The program is designed to prepare students for employment in the health care field, providing them with the skills and competencies needed to succeed.²⁸ The program launched in February 2021 and runs until October, with a 24-week virtual component as well as training in two workplaces. Given the urgent need for more Personal Support Workers in Ontario, this program provides Miziwe Biik clients with the opportunity to gain the skills needed to find work and provides the province with a partial solution in meeting the high demand in this sector.

Academic Upgrading



Given Indigenous people tend to face greater educational barriers than non-Indigenous people, Miziwe Biik provides the opportunity for academic upgrading, starting with obtaining an Ontario Secondary School Diploma. The Ngindassmin Academic program provides supplies, the GED manual, and TTC tokens on an as-needed basis. Accessible online, the program and its associated supports are available Monday to Friday from 9AM to 4PM. The program is designed to allow students to learn at their own pace and offers the chance to obtain a Grade 12 education, enter into a post-secondary program, pursue an apprenticeship, or increase eligibility for general employment opportunities.²⁹

27. <https://miziwebiik.com/about-us/>

28. http://miziwebiik.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/PSW-Program_Feb-2021.pdf

29. <https://miziwebiik.com/services/academic-upgrading/>

Employment Services



Miziwe Biik is also a designated employment service centre through Employment Ontario. With funding for 6 placements each year, Miziwe Biik matches clients with employment opportunities that meet their skills and interests.

In order to prepare clients for job placements, Miziwe Biik also offers many employment workshops and programs. These include workshops on how to undertake a successful job search, teaching things like resume and cover letter writing; interviewing skills; and networking, self-marketing, and LinkedIn. For clients who benefit from Ontario Works, programming is also available to learn about networking with employers, skills profiling, and more. Miziwe Biik also offers a team of Employment Counsellors to support clients in preparing job applications and interview prep, finding client-only job opportunities, and mentoring through one-on-one specialized appointments.³⁰

Self-Employment Program



Miziwe Biik's programming also extends to an 8-week self-employment program for individuals who are looking to start a business and develop a business plan.³¹ This online course teaches students the key details in preparing and executing a successful business plan, starting with a personal self-assessment of skills and goals and ending with a business plan tailored to the interests of the student.

Pre-Apprenticeship Programs



In partnership with the Skilled Trades College of Canada, Miziwe Biik offers three pre-apprenticeship training programs for its clients in: plumbing, construction and maintenance electrician fields, and carpentry. Each program provides students with the necessary academic upgrading required, as well as job readiness training. This includes theory, hands-on experience, and safety knowledge to be prepared for the workplace.³²

30. <https://miziwebiik.com/services/employment/>

31. http://miziwebiik.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Self-Employment-Program_2021.pdf

32. <https://miziwebiik.com/services/trades/>



Jim Windigo, a respected Ojibway Elder gave us our name. Miziwe Biik is like a body of water where a ripple effect has been created; it is the ability to reach out and make positive change in the lives of the Aboriginal peoples across the Greater Toronto Area.

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