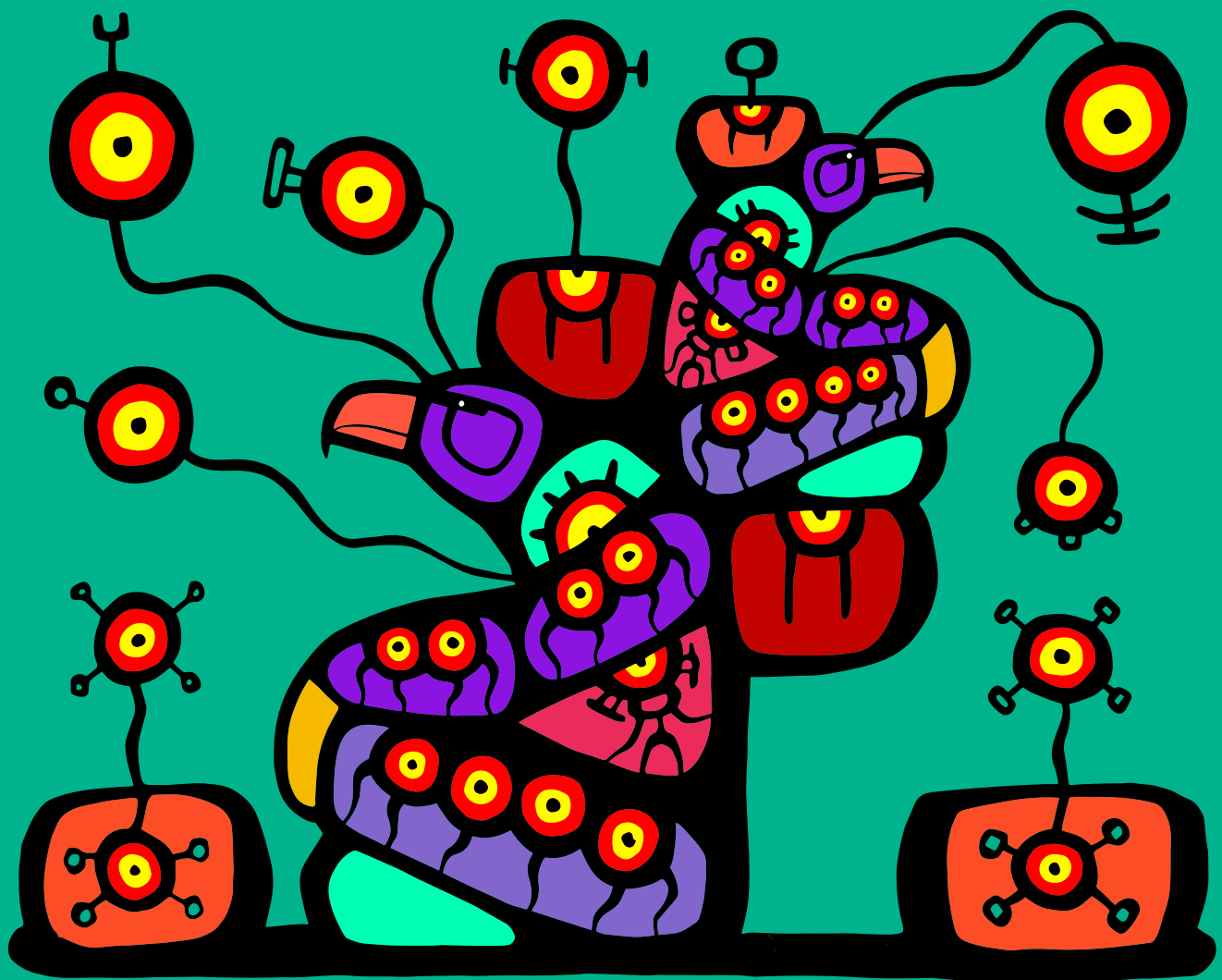


OPENING THE DOOR TO OPPORTUNITY II

Reporting on the Economic Contributions of
Indigenous Peoples in Alberta

SEPTEMBER 2024

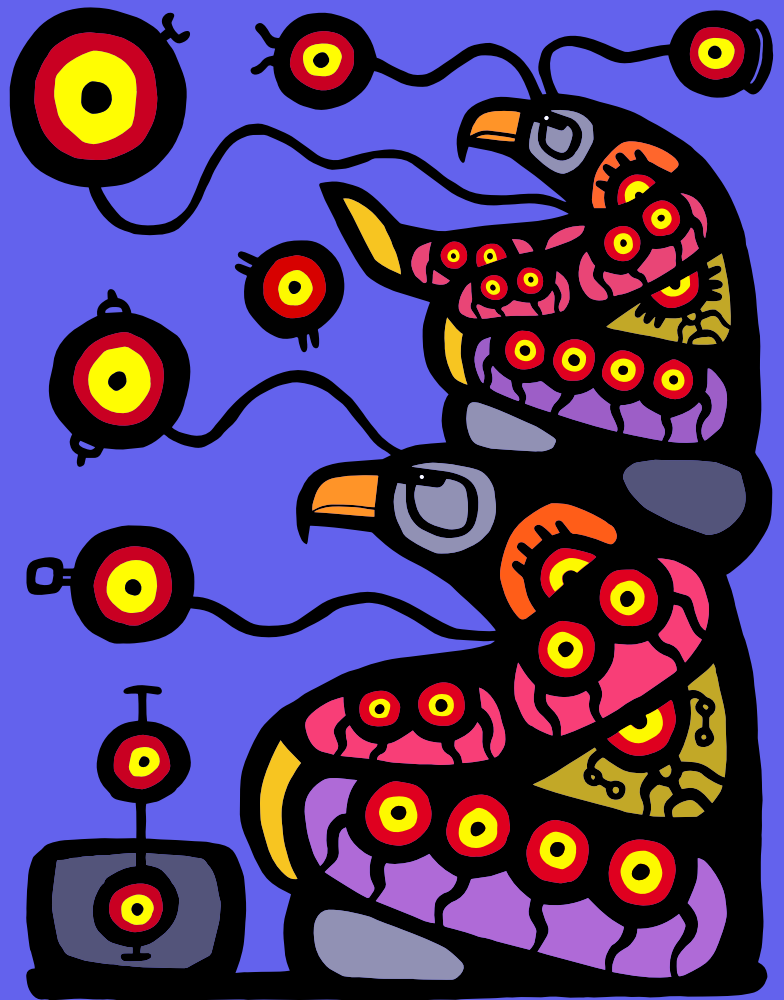


MNP

WE ARE PROUD TO DISPLAY KEVIN CARDINAL'S ARTWORK THROUGH THIS REPORT.

Kevin Cardinal is a visual artist with a deeply spiritual artistic practice influenced by his culture and experiences. He is of Woodland Cree ancestry from Bigstone Cree Nation located in north central Alberta on Treaty 8 Territory. Kevin's body of work interprets things seen, heard or experienced through travel, cultural and spiritual ceremonies. His art represents peoples, spiritual beings, ideas, concepts, and principles through animals and circles using bold black lines and lively, vibrant colours reminiscent of the Woodland style. By sharing his artwork, Kevin aims to promote cooperative relationships and bring healing and unity to the community — this is reflected in his artistic process.

Incorporating themes of humility, forgiveness, and courage, Kevin's organic and shape-driven body of work allows each piece to tell its own story. The animals he paints can represent people, spirits, beliefs, thoughts, emotions, and life experiences.



CONTENTS

Foreword	4
1 Executive Summary	6
2 Introduction	8
2.1 Background and Purpose	8
2.2 Structure of the Report	8
2.3 Limitations	8
Terminology and Concepts	9
3 Indigenous Peoples in Alberta	10
3.1 Population	10
4 Economic Contributions of Indigenous Peoples to the Alberta Economy	14
4.1 Overview	14
4.2 Overview of Economic Impacts	15
4.3 Total Economic Contributions of Indigenous Peoples in Alberta	15
4.4 Comparisons	16
4.5 Change in Economic Contributions Between 2019 and 2023	17
5 Indigenous Socioeconomic Outcomes	21
5.1 Indigenous Socioeconomic Outcomes	21
5.2 Opportunities to Improve Outcomes Through the Labour Market	28
6 Indigenous Entrepreneurship	33
6.1 Overview of Business Relationships	33
6.2 Indigenous Entrepreneurship	34
6.3 Support for Indigenous Entrepreneurs	36
6.4 Summary	37
6.5 Case Studies— Indigenous Entrepreneurship	39
7 Conclusion	45
The Value of Closing the Gap	45
8 Appendices	47
Appendix A—Approach	47
Appendix B—Indigenous Economic Contributions	48
Appendix C—About ATB Financial	54
Appendix D—About MNP	55

FOREWORD

In 2021, ATB and MNP partnered to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the economic footprint of Indigenous Peoples in Alberta.

Opening the Door to Opportunity, published in November 2021, provided a snapshot of the Indigenous economy in Alberta as of 2019 and highlighted potential opportunities to increase Indigenous participation in Alberta's economy and how that would benefit everyone.

As part of our commitment to advancing economic reconciliation, ATB and MNP have partnered to update the 2021 study to identify progress. This report builds on the work completed in 2021 and provides a comprehensive analysis of how opportunities for entrepreneurship and greater labour market participation are key to closing the gap, as well as the challenges and barriers faced by Indigenous Peoples with respect to these opportunities.

There are some signs that the gap is narrowing; however, the journey to full participation has only just begun. Our research finds that achieving full economic participation for Indigenous Peoples requires more than just increasing the participation of Indigenous individuals in the labour market. Indigenous individuals need to move into higher-skill, higher-paid occupations, and rates of entrepreneurship need to increase.

While there are numerous supports and initiatives aimed at helping Indigenous individuals progress to higher-skill occupations and engage in entrepreneurship, a key barrier for Indigenous Peoples is lack of capacity to navigate the increasingly complex business environment.

A fundamental building block for capacity development is providing access to the level and quality of education that is available to the non-Indigenous population. The 2021 Census data shows that the proportion of the Indigenous population with a university-level credential is roughly one-third that of the non-Indigenous population, and there is some indication that gap has grown since 2016. There are a multitude of systemic barriers to university for Indigenous students, such as racism, intergenerational trauma and poverty.

The gap in educational attainment is not just a barrier to Indigenous well-being, it is a missed opportunity to support Alberta's economic diversification and future prosperity. For example, increasing the participation of Indigenous workers in the labour market could raise Alberta's GDP by between 2 and 3 percentage points (\$8 billion to \$11 billion).¹

We hope this report will serve as a useful resource and a catalyst for action for all those who are interested in and committed to advancing Indigenous economic reconciliation. By working together, we can create a more prosperous and inclusive future for Indigenous Peoples and for all Albertans.

¹ Estimates are based on Indigenous participation in the labour market increasing to 76 per cent and an unemployment rate of 6 per cent. Compensation and value add are estimated from Statistics Canada's productivity tables.



“Indigenous Peoples are skilled entrepreneurs and have been since time immemorial. We continue to impact every facet of the economy in Alberta and across Turtle Island—from skilled trades to resource extraction to green energy and conservation. Investments in skills education and business ownership for First Nations benefit all Albertans. When we all come together in mutually beneficial partnerships – as business leaders and friends – we can drive growth and support economic reconciliation.”

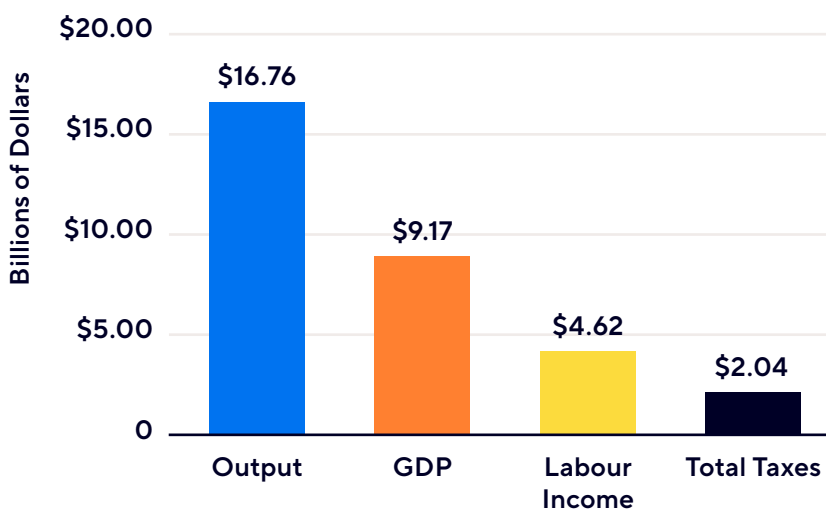
—Chief George Arcand Jr.
Alexander First Nation

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2021, ATB Financial (“ATB”) and MNP LLP (“MNP”) partnered on a study to document the economic contributions Indigenous Peoples make to the Alberta economy. The study provided a baseline for estimating the Indigenous economy in Alberta in 2019 and the gap between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population. Building on that work, ATB and MNP have partnered on an update to the 2021 study to assess how much progress has been made in increasing Indigenous participation in Alberta’s economy and what that means in terms of the economic contribution of the Indigenous economy in Alberta.

Here is what we found.

1.1 How big was the Indigenous economy in Alberta in 2023?



Over **80,000 FTEs** of total employment supported through the spending of Indigenous households, Indigenous governments and Indigenous-owned businesses.

The GDP generated by the Indigenous economy was equivalent to approximately 3 per cent of total GDP in Alberta.

1.2 Has the gap narrowed?

While Indigenous economic contributions to the Alberta economy grew between 30 per cent and 45 per cent from 2019 to 2023, not all of that growth was due to increases in Indigenous participation in Alberta’s economy.

- Approximately half of the growth in contributions was due to growth in the contributions of Indigenous businesses. This was due in part to new data sources that allowed for an improved estimate of the contributions of Indigenous-owned businesses, so it was not possible to identify how much growth was due to business growth and how much was due to improved data sources.
- Growth in Indigenous household expenditures accounted for approximately 35 per cent of the growth in contributions. A substantial portion of this was due to increases in the population and increases in inflation. After adjusting for inflation and population growth, the contributions of Indigenous households grew by approximately 4 per cent.

There is some indication that the gap in incomes between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population has narrowed. Income data from the 2016 and 2021 Censuses show that the gap in median annual incomes between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population narrowed by between 5 (Métis) and 20 (First Nations on-reserve) percentage points over the period. However, the 2021 Census period corresponded to a period during which there were significant income supports in place related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Total income data for 2019 suggests that approximately half of the decrease in the income gap for First Nations was due to those supports, while COVID-19 support did not affect the income gap for Métis.

There remains a significant gap in educational attainment. Educational attainment data from the 2016 and 2021 Censuses show that education levels for the Indigenous population in Alberta rose. However, the gap in educational attainment between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population remains and is most significant for university-level credentials, which are important for working in higher-skill occupations. In 2021, approximately 10 per cent of Métis and off-reserve First Nations people in Alberta had a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 27 per cent of the non-Indigenous population. Among First Nations individuals living on-reserve, approximately 4 per cent had a bachelor's degree or higher.

Indigenous Peoples are more likely to be employed in lower-paying, lower-skill positions. The distribution of employment by sector varies for the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population. Indigenous individuals are more likely to be employed in natural resources, healthcare, public administration and construction, while non-Indigenous individuals are more likely to be employed in professional services,

manufacturing, utilities and education sectors. Regardless of the sector, there are relatively fewer Indigenous individuals employed in management, professional and/or senior roles compared to the non-Indigenous population.

Indigenous Peoples face numerous barriers to entrepreneurship. In addition to lack of access to capital, lack of networks and geographic constraints, Indigenous individuals and communities lack capacity. This affects their ability to navigate the increasingly complex business environment and take advantage of opportunities.

1.3 The opportunity

Closing the gap in income between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population requires more than just increasing the participation of Indigenous individuals in the labour market. Indigenous individuals need to move into higher-skill, higher-paid occupations, and rates of entrepreneurship need to increase. This requires investments to close the gap in university-level education and supporting Indigenous individuals in gaining the skills and experience that come with advancement to more senior positions within organizations.

Closing the gap between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population does not just benefit the Indigenous population, it benefits all Albertans:

- If household incomes were comparable, there is the potential to generate an additional \$3.2 billion in household spending in Alberta, most of which would be at businesses owned by non-Indigenous individuals. This would support an additional 13,000 to 14,000 jobs annually.
- If gaps in labour market participation were closed, the goods and services produced by Indigenous workers could raise Alberta's GDP by 2 per cent to 3 per cent (\$8 billion to \$11 billion).

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background and Purpose

Indigenous Peoples in Alberta include First Nations, Metis Settlements and communities, as well as a small Inuit population. Indigenous Peoples are located throughout the province—in First Nations communities, Metis Settlements and urban areas—and play an increasingly important role in Alberta’s social and economic fabric. The contributions of Indigenous Peoples extend beyond the boundaries of First Nations communities or Metis Settlement lands, and it is clear that the interests of Indigenous Peoples and the future prosperity of Albertans are aligned.

In 2021, ATB and MNP partnered on a study to document the economic contributions Indigenous Peoples make to the Alberta economy. The study provided a baseline for estimating the Indigenous economy in Alberta in 2019 and the gap between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population.

Building on that work, ATB and MNP have partnered on an update to the 2021 study to assess how much progress has been made in increasing Indigenous participation in Alberta’s economy and what that means in terms of the economic contribution of Indigenous Peoples to Alberta’s economy. The study also looks at opportunities for advancing economic reconciliation through the labour market and Indigenous entrepreneurship.

2.2 Structure of the Report

The remainder of the report is organized as follows:

- Section 3 provides an overview of the Indigenous Peoples in Alberta.
- Section 4 provides estimates of the contributions of Indigenous Peoples to the Alberta economy.
- Section 5 provides an assessment of the socioeconomic outcomes of the Indigenous population in Alberta and opportunities for closing the gap through the labour market.
- Section 6 provides an overview of Indigenous entrepreneurship and case studies illustrating entrepreneurship in practice.
- Section 7 provides a conclusion and summary of the report’s findings.

2.3 Limitations

We have relied upon the completeness, accuracy and fair presentation of all information and data obtained from public sources, believed to be reliable and through interviews with Indigenous individuals in Alberta. The accuracy and reliability of the findings and opinions expressed in the presentation are conditional upon the completeness, accuracy and fair presentation of the information underlying them.

The findings and opinions expressed in the presentation constitute judgments as of the date of the presentation and are subject to change without notice. MNP and ATB are under no obligation to advise of any change brought to their attention that would alter those findings or opinions.

Terminology and Concepts

The following terminology and concepts are used throughout the report.

- **Alberta Métis Federation**—An organization of seven Métis communities in Alberta, separate from the Otipemisiwak Métis Government.
- **First Nations**²—One of the Indigenous Peoples of Canada as defined in Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982. This refers to Indigenous Peoples who are neither Métis or Inuit. It includes both status (i.e., recognized under the *Indian Act*) and non-status Indians (i.e., have either lost their status or have not had their status recognized).
- **First Nations Community (reserve)**—Land set aside by the federal government for the use and occupancy of a First Nation. Nations in Alberta may have one or more communities.³
- **First Nations Government**—The basic unit of government for a First Nation subject to the *Indian Act*. First Nations Governments are generally led by an elected Chief and Council, and, in some cases, Hereditary Chiefs, and can have a custom or standard electoral code. A First Nations government provides local services to its community and manages its reserve lands.⁴
- **Inuit**—One of the Indigenous Peoples of Canada as defined in Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982. This refers to Indigenous Peoples from areas of Northern Canada, including Nunavut, the Northwest Territories and parts of Ontario, Quebec and Labrador.
- **Métis**—One of the Indigenous Peoples of Canada as defined in Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982. This refers to individuals who are of mixed Indigenous and European ancestry and who self-identify as Métis, are a member of a present-day Métis community and have ties to a historic Métis community.
- **Metis Settlement**—Land set aside by the Alberta Government for the use and benefits of Métis people. Alberta is the only province in Canada with land-based Metis Settlements. There are eight Metis Settlements in Alberta, represented collectively by the Metis Settlements General Council (MSGC).
- The **Otipemisiwak Métis Government (formerly the Métis Nation of Alberta)** is a governance body for the Métis that provides services to the Métis citizens in Alberta. Otipemisiwak Métis Government citizens may also be members and residents of Metis Settlements.⁶ There are five territories of the Otipemisiwak Métis Government within Alberta, and each territory is divided into between two and six districts.

2 Indigenous Services Canada and Government of Alberta

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Otipemisiwak Métis Government

3. INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN ALBERTA

3.1. Population

As shown in Table 1, there were estimated to be between 350,000 and 360,000 Indigenous individuals in Alberta in 2023, which represented approximately 7.5 per cent of the province’s total population.⁷ First Nations account for the largest group (57 per cent), followed by Métis (41 per cent) and other groups (2 per cent). Between 2019 and 2023, the Indigenous population in Alberta was estimated to have grown by 12 per cent to 15 per cent. The majority of this growth was attributable to increases in the number of First Nations people living off-reserve. It is important to note that growth in the off-reserve population arises from natural increases (i.e., increased life expectancy and births), interprovincial migration and increased self-identification. These changes are discussed further in Table 1.

Indigenous Identity

Identity comes from connection. Recognition of Indigenous identity requires both self-identification and acceptance by the community with which an individual self-identifies.

Table 1: Indigenous Population in Alberta, 2023⁸

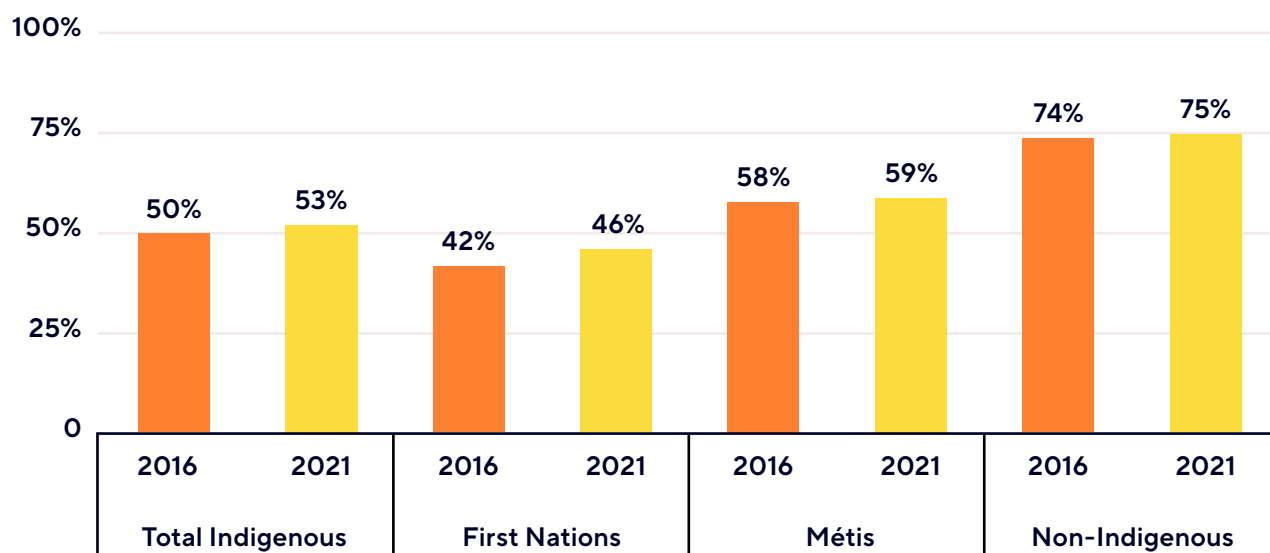
Indigenous Identity	2023 Population	Percentage Change From 2019	Change Between 2019 and 2023
First Nations	195,000– 205,000	15%–18%	The registered population of First Nations of Alberta grew by approximately 5 per cent between 2019 and 2023. The registered population living off-reserve increased by 10 per cent (6,000). This suggests that growth in the off-reserve population is due primarily to interprovincial migration and increased self-identification. Data were not available to assess how much of the growth was attributable to each of these factors.
On-reserve	75,000	1%	
Off-reserve	120,000– 130,000	20%–30%	
Métis	146,000	8%	“Other” includes Inuit and individuals with mixed Indigenous identity. As with changes in the First Nation off-reserve population, data were not available to assess the extent to which growth was due to migration, births or increased self-identification.
Other	9,000	125%	
Total	350,000–360,000	12%–15%	

⁷ Estimated based on totals in Table 1 and Alberta’s Q4 2023 population estimate from Statistics Canada

⁸ First Nations on-reserve population estimates are from Indigenous Services Canada First Nations Profiles, and all other estimates are derived from the working age population reported in the Government of Alberta’s 2022 Alberta labour force profiles for the Indigenous population living off-reserve and Statistics Canada’s 2021 Census.

The Indigenous population in Alberta is less likely to reside in urban areas than the non-Indigenous population. As shown in Figure 1, approximately 53 per cent of the Indigenous population in Alberta lives in Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge or Red Deer, compared to 75 per cent of the non-Indigenous population. Among Indigenous Peoples, First Nations are less likely to reside in urban areas (46 per cent in 2021) than Métis (59 per cent in 2021). Between 2016 and 2021, the percentage of the First Nation population that lived in urban areas increased by 4 percentage points, while the percentage of the Métis population that lived in urban areas was relatively stable.

Figure 1: Urban Population Percentage, Alberta, 2016 and 2021⁹



Note: Urban is defined as the Calgary census metropolitan area (CMA), Edmonton CMA, Lethbridge CMA and Red Deer CMA.

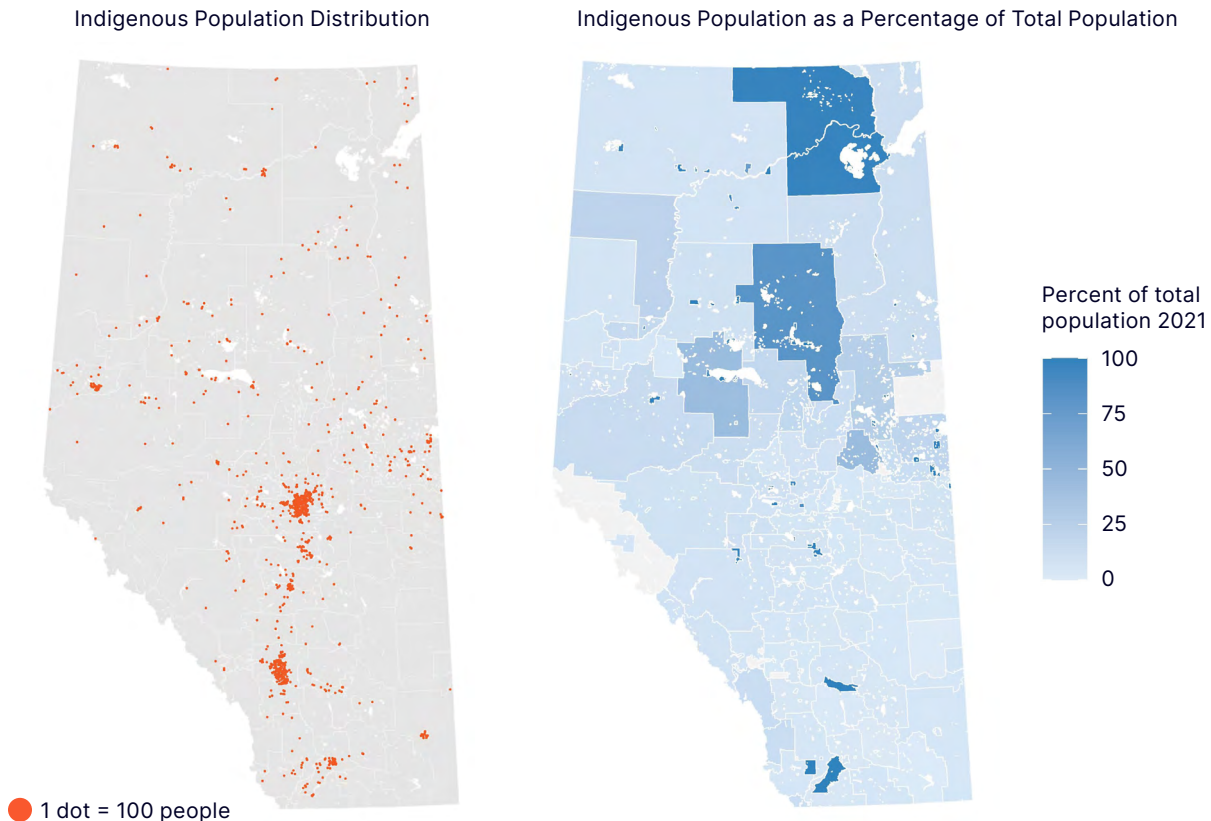
The distribution of the Indigenous population between urban and rural is connected to the land base. Figure 2 displays the distribution of the Indigenous population in Alberta by location. This highlights that the majority of Indigenous individuals in Alberta live in major urban centres like Calgary and Edmonton. However, the Indigenous population accounts for a relatively small percentage of the total population in major urban centres. Outside the urban centres, the Indigenous population accounts for a relatively higher percentage of the total population, particularly in northern Alberta and more remote regions. This is in part due to the location of the First Nations Communities, where 20 per cent of the Indigenous population lives.

Indigenous Peoples' Relationship with the Land

Indigenous cultures have a strong connection to the land. This arises from the view that there is an interconnected relationship between people, living things and non-living things. Indigenous worldviews see humans as caretakers of the land, with survival being linked to how people interact with everything around them.

⁹ Statistics Canada, Census Profiles 2016 and 2021

Figure 2: Indigenous Population Distribution by Location, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2021

FIRST NATIONS LAND AND GOVERNANCE

Alberta is predominantly covered by three numbered Treaties (signed between 1871 and 1923): Treaty 8, Treaty 6 and Treaty 7. Within these numbered Treaties, Alberta First Nations have defined traditional territories, which overlap and intersect. Typically, located within those territories are the Nations' community land. The Treaty 8 area in Alberta covers the northern region of the province and includes 24 First Nations. The main groups of Indigenous Peoples in Treaty 8 are the Nehiyawek (Cree) and Denesų́łn  (Dene), with a variety of dialects, cultural groupings and ethno-linguistic groups within these main groups.¹⁰ The Treaty 6 area covers parts of central Alberta and includes 16 First Nations. The main groups of Indigenous Peoples in Treaty 6 are the Denesų́łn  (Dene), Nehiyawek (Cree), Nakota Sioux and Sauleaux.¹¹ The Treaty 7 area covers southern Alberta and includes seven First Nations, the  y rhe Nakoda (the three Stoney Nakota Nations), Tsuut'ina and the Siksikaitsitapi-Blackfoot Confederacy (Kainai, Piikani and Siksika).¹²

48 First Nations
138 First Nations Communities

10 Government of Alberta, accessed September 9, 2021, <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/first-nations-reserves-and-metis-settlements-map#summary>

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.



In addition, some First Nations in Alberta were voluntarily or involuntarily enfranchised, which is a legal process whereby a person or group's Indian status under the *Indian Act* was terminated (i.e., Michel Callihoo Nation¹³), had their community land surrendered and sold (Papaschase Band¹⁴) or were otherwise displaced (Aseniwuche Winewak Nation¹⁵). Many of the members of these Nations (Michel Callihoo Nation and Papaschase) have regained their *Indian Act* status, but the Nations to which they belong lack recognition by Canada as a legal/legitimate First Nations with a recognized land base.

MÉTIS LAND AND GOVERNANCE

Métis in Alberta are categorized into distinct groups, the Otipemisiwak Métis Government, the MSGC and the Alberta Métis Federation (AMF). The MSGC comprises elected councils that govern the eight Metis Settlements. These Settlements are a recognized 1.25-million-acre land base in the province and are home to approximately 6,500 people.¹⁶

The Otipemisiwak Métis Government, established in 1928 and ratified through a province-wide vote in 2023, has a territorial governance system that covers the entire province of Alberta and represents over 66,000 Métis Albertans. Within this territorial structure, there are districts that allow for more effective and localized representation.¹⁷ In 2020, seven Métis communities broke from the Otipemisiwak Métis Government to form the AMF. The AMF represents historic-rights-bearing Métis communities in Alberta who can trace their ancestry to the historic Métis Nation and is community focused.¹⁸

5 Otipemisiwak Métis Government Territories
8 Metis Settlements
7 Alberta Métis Federation Communities

¹³ History Michel Band #472, accessed April 23, 2024.

¹⁴ A Brief History of the Papaschase Band, accessed April 23, 2024, https://www.papaschase.ca/text/papaschase_history.pdf

¹⁵ Aseniwuche Winewak Nation, accessed April 23, 2024, <https://www.aseniwuche.ca/awn-and-the-communities/>

¹⁶ Metis Settlements General Council, accessed March 2024, <https://www.msgc.ca/settlements>

¹⁷ Métis Nation of Alberta, accessed March 2024, <https://albertametis.com/governance/districts/>

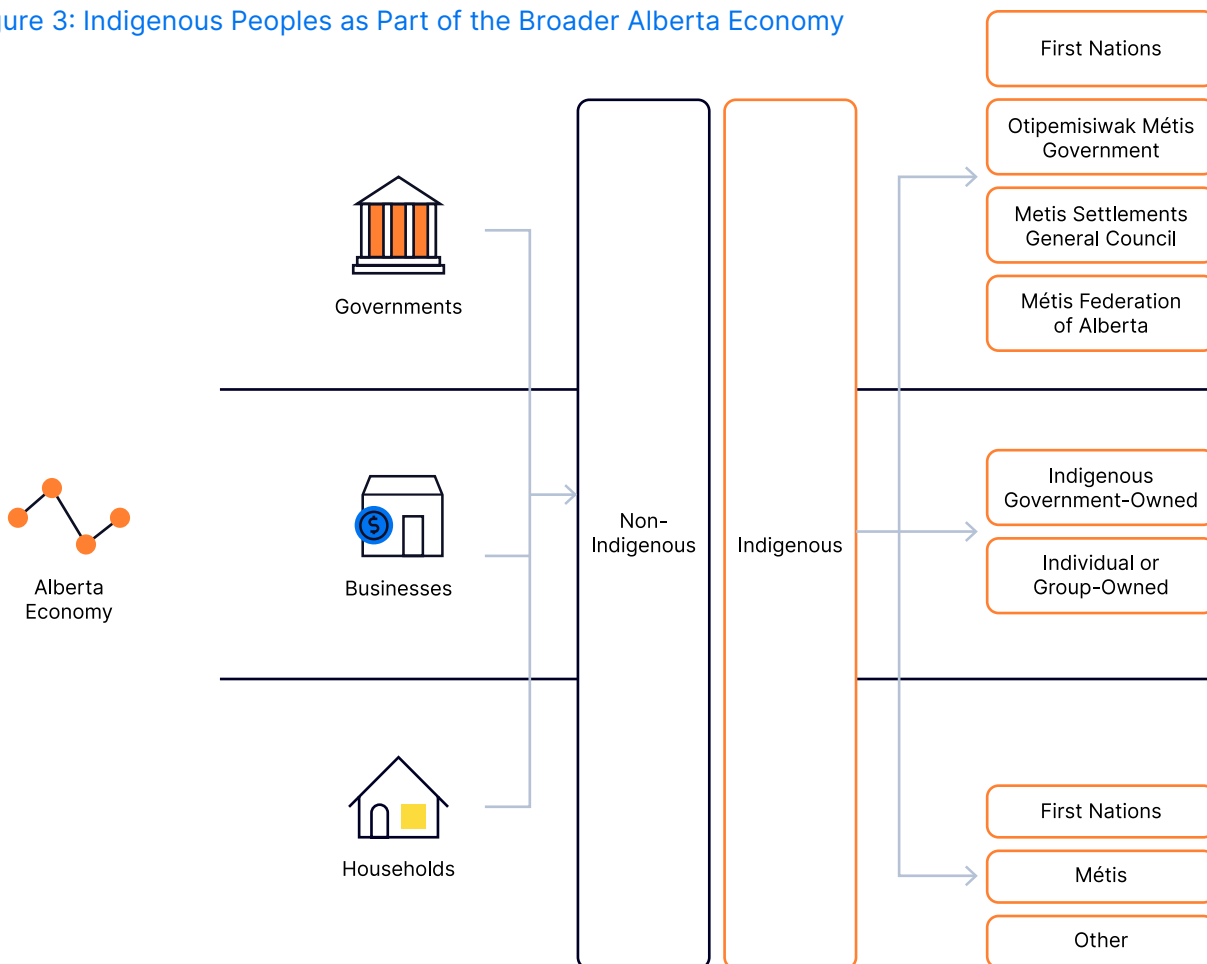
¹⁸ Alberta Métis Federation, accessed March 2024, <https://albertametisfederation.ca/about/>

4. ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTIONS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES TO THE ALBERTA ECONOMY

4.1 Overview

The Alberta economy comprises households, governments and businesses. The economic contributions of Indigenous Peoples arise from the spending of Indigenous governments, Indigenous-owned businesses and Indigenous households. Figure 3 outlines the relationship between the Indigenous economy and the broader Alberta economy.

Figure 3: Indigenous Peoples as Part of the Broader Alberta Economy



4.2 Overview of Economic Impacts

Economic impacts are generally viewed as being restricted to quantitative, well-established measures of economic activity. The most commonly used of these measures are output, gross domestic product (GDP), employment and government tax revenue:

- **Output**—The total gross value of goods and services produced by a given organization, industry or project, measured by the price paid to the producer. This is the broadest measure of economic activity.
- **GDP**—The “value added” to the economy (the unduplicated total value of goods and services)
- **Employment**—The number of additional jobs created, measured as full-time equivalents (FTEs)
- **Labour income**—Income that is received by households from the production of goods and services that is available for spending on goods and services
- **Government tax revenue**—The total amount of tax revenue generated for different levels of government

Economic impacts may be estimated at the direct, indirect and induced levels:

- **Direct impacts** are changes that occur in “front-end” businesses that would initially receive expenditures and operating revenue as a direct consequence of their operations and activities.
- **Indirect impacts** arise from changes in activity for suppliers of the front-end businesses.
- **Induced impacts** arise from shifts in spending on goods and services as a consequence of changes to the payroll of the directly and indirectly affected businesses.

To assess the economic impacts of the Indigenous economy in Alberta, MNP followed an input-output methodology using provincial industry multipliers published by Statistics Canada. Input-output modelling is a widely used and accepted approach, making it recognizable by many stakeholders and audiences. The structure of the approach also facilitates easy comparisons between reported results for different industries and projects.

For a detailed description of MNP’s economic impact methodology, please refer to Appendix A.

4.3 Total Economic Contributions of Indigenous Peoples in Alberta

Table 2 shows the estimated total economic impacts of the Indigenous economy in Alberta in 2023. The total economic contributions of Indigenous governments, businesses and households to the Alberta economy in 2023 were estimated to be:

- \$16.76 billion in total output.
- \$9.17 billion in total GDP.
- \$4.62 billion in total labour income.
- 81,600 FTEs of total employment.
- \$2.04 billion in total tax revenue.

Of these impacts, between 60 per cent and 70 per cent of output, GDP and employment arise from the spending of Indigenous governments, households and businesses on purchases from non-Indigenous businesses, and approximately 5 per cent of all impacts arise from the employment of non-Indigenous individuals by Indigenous governments and businesses.

Table 2: Estimated Total Economic Impacts of the Indigenous Economy in Alberta, 2023

	Output (\$ millions)	GDP (\$ millions)	Labour Income (\$ millions)	Employment (FTEs)*	Total Tax Revenues (\$ millions)
Indigenous governments	\$3,690	\$1,750	\$1,290	22,100	\$167
Indigenous-owned businesses	\$5,250	\$2,540	\$1,330	25,800	\$380
Household spending**					
Indigenous	\$6,790	\$4,230	\$1,740	29,300	\$1,300
Non-Indigenous	\$1,030	\$650	\$260	4,400	\$193
Total	\$16,760	\$9,170	\$4,620	81,600	\$2,040

* Employment is the direct, indirect and induced employment generated by the spending of Indigenous governments, Indigenous-owned businesses and Indigenous households. It does not include total employment of Indigenous Peoples at non-Indigenous businesses or organizations.

** Indigenous household impacts include the impacts of spending by all Indigenous households in Alberta regardless of the income source. The impacts of spending of non-Indigenous households are the induced impacts that arise from employment income received as a result of spending by Indigenous governments and Indigenous-owned businesses.



Indigenous governments account for approximately 25 per cent of the output, GDP, labour income and total tax impacts and 10 per cent of the employment impacts.



Indigenous-owned businesses account for approximately 30 per cent of the output, GDP, labour income and total tax impacts and 20 per cent of the employment impacts.



Indigenous households account for approximately 40 per cent of the output, GDP, labour income and total tax impacts and 65 per cent of the employment impacts.

Detailed estimates of the economic contributions of Indigenous governments, businesses and households are provided in Appendix B.

4.4 Comparisons

To provide perspective on the size of the Indigenous economy in Alberta, the contributions of Indigenous communities and businesses and the potential opportunity, we compared the contributions of the Indigenous economy to that of key industries in Alberta.

Total Alberta Economy and Alberta Agriculture and Technology Sector¹⁹

The Indigenous economy in Alberta was estimated to have generated a total GDP of approximately \$9.2 billion in 2023, which is equivalent to approximately 3 per cent of Alberta's total GDP in 2023.

¹⁹ Statistics Canada, Table: 36-10-0402-02. The tech sector is defined as the "Information and communication technology sector."

Total GDP generated by the Indigenous economy was also 40 per cent greater than the direct GDP generated by the Alberta agriculture sector and 87 per cent of the direct GDP generated by the Alberta tech sector in 2023.

Employment and Alberta Energy Sector²⁰

Total employment among the Indigenous population in Alberta was estimated to be approximately 150,000 in 2023, which is approximately equivalent to the total direct employment of the Alberta energy sector in 2022 (153,187 jobs).

4.5 Change in Economic Contributions Between 2019 and 2023

In comparing the contributions of the Indigenous economy in Alberta over time, it is important to note that there have been changes in the data available to produce the estimates. In some cases, more complete data were available, while in others, updated data were not available and changes were estimated. Table 3 summarizes the changes in data availability between 2019 and 2023.

Table 3: Data Availability, 2019 to 2023

	Change in Data Sources	Notes
Indigenous governments	No change	Data were not available for one First Nation and seven Metis Settlements.
Indigenous-owned businesses	Yes	Additional data available from Statistics Canada for Indigenous business ownership and self-employment rates was used to provide a more complete picture of Indigenous businesses in Alberta.
Indigenous households	No change	No change

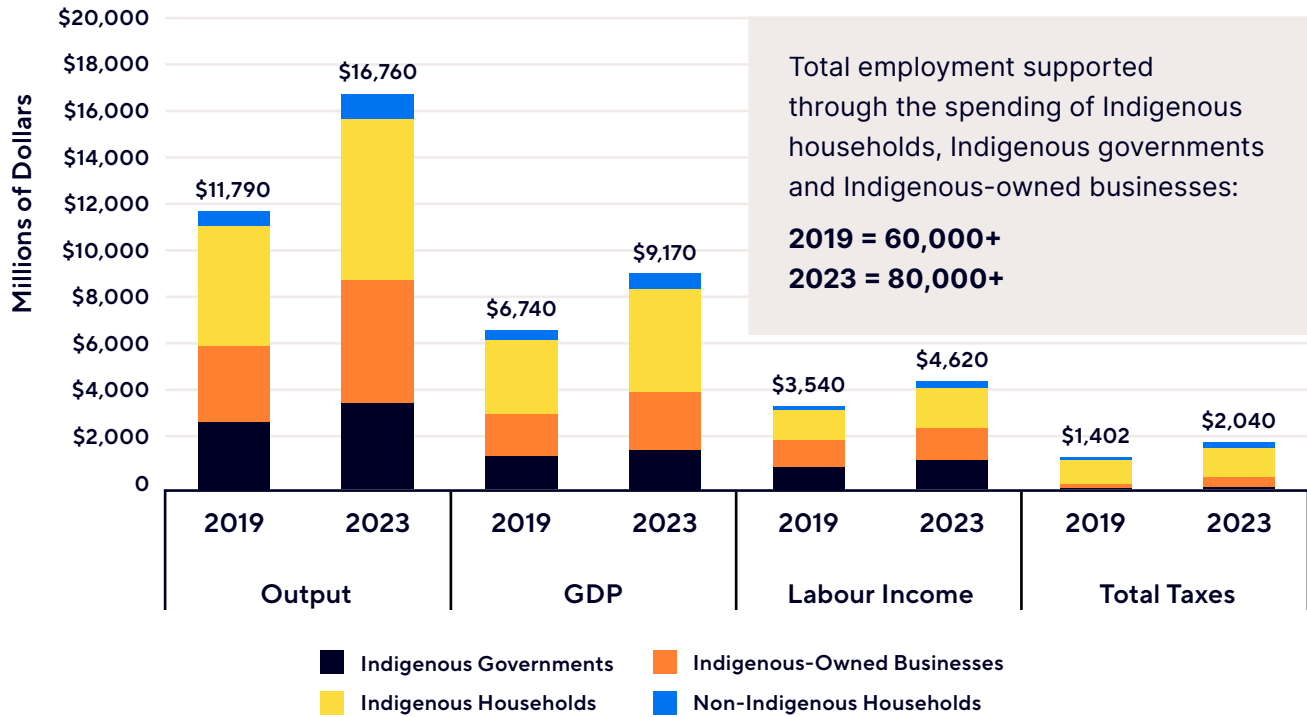
Figure 4 provides a comparison of the total economic impacts of the Indigenous economy in Alberta in 2019 and 2023. The economic contributions of Indigenous Peoples to the Alberta economy increased significantly over the period.

- Total output increased by 42 per cent.
- Total GDP increased by 36 per cent.
- Total labour income increased by 31 per cent.
- Total taxes increased by 45 per cent.
- Total employment (FTEs) increased by 36 per cent.

These increases were largely due to increases in the contributions of households and businesses and are discussed in more detail below.

²⁰ Natural Resources Canada, Energy Fact Book 2023–2024, <https://energy-information.canada.ca/sites/default/files/2023-10/energy-factbook-2023-2024.pdf>

Figure 4: Total Economic Impacts of the Indigenous Economy in Alberta, 2019 and 2023

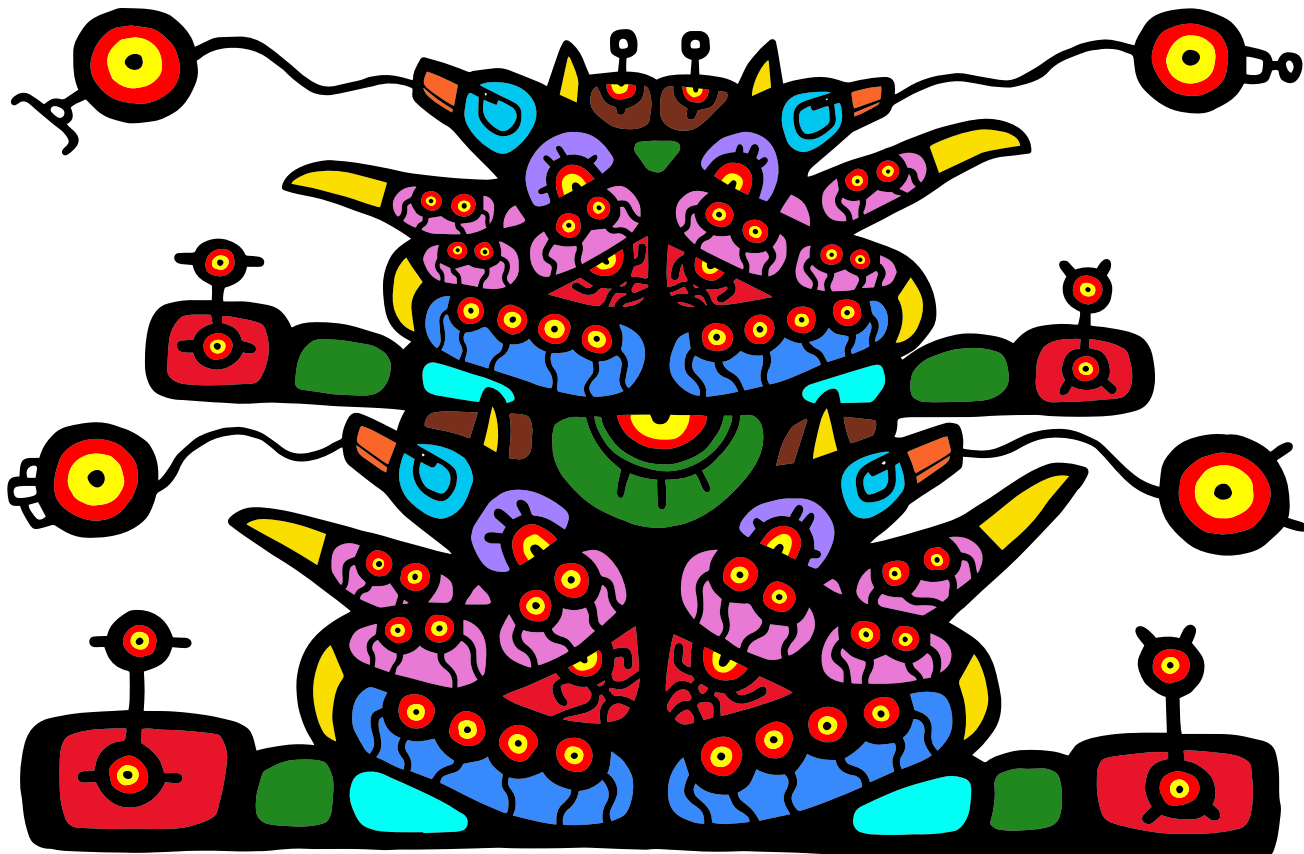


INDIGENOUS GOVERNMENTS

Total estimated Indigenous government expenditures grew from \$1.80 billion in 2019 to \$2.19 billion in 2023 (22 per cent growth). This estimate does not include all spending by Metis Settlements as this information was available for only one of the eight settlements and one Métis Nation. In addition, financial information was not available for one First Nation community. Inclusion of the missing information would increase the value of Indigenous government spending.

INDIGENOUS-OWNED BUSINESSES

Total estimated revenues of Indigenous-owned businesses in Alberta increased from \$2.3 billion in 2019 to \$3.5 billion in 2023 (52 per cent growth). Growth in the revenues of off-reserve businesses accounted for \$0.7 billion of the increase and was due in part to the use of new data sources that allowed for a more complete estimation of Indigenous-owned businesses located off-reserve. In addition, there was a substantial increase in the revenues reported by First Nations Economic Development Corporations (approximately 40 per cent).



INDIGENOUS HOUSEHOLDS

Total estimated expenditures of Indigenous households in Alberta increased from \$7.5 billion in 2019 to over \$10.0 billion in 2023 (34 per cent growth). Key factors in this increase were:

- **Larger population**—As discussed in Section 3, the Indigenous population in Alberta increased significantly between 2019 and 2023, which resulted in increased household expenditures. The increase in population accounted for approximately 35 per cent of the increase in household expenditures.
- **Off-reserve labour force participation and employment**—The most significant increase in Indigenous household expenditures was off-reserve, which was due in part to the significant increase in the off-reserve First Nations population, but also due to increased labour force participation and employment rates among the Indigenous population.²¹
- **Inflation**—The consumer price index for all items in Alberta increased by approximately 15 per cent between 2019 and 2023.²² Inflation accounted for approximately half of the increase in household expenditures.

Accounting for inflation and the increase in population, household expenditure grew by approximately 4 per cent between 2019 and 2023.

²¹ Government of Alberta, 2022 Alberta labour force profiles for the Indigenous population living off-reserve. Statistics Canada, Census Profile 2021.

²² Statistics Canada, Table: 18-10-0005-01



"Since the fur trade era, the Métis have made significant contributions to Alberta's economy. This legacy continues today. The Otipemisiwak Métis Government, formerly the Métis Nation of Alberta, and its affiliate organizations have been working hard to empower Métis citizens to fully participate in the economy and thrive. While there is more work to be done to close the income and employment gaps for Indigenous Peoples, it is important to recognize the invaluable contributions made by Indigenous communities, not only to the economy, but also in areas like culture, art and education."

—**Andrea Sandmaier, President, Otipemisiwak Métis Government**

"From the economic perspective, colonialism has been about destroying Indigenous economies and replacing them with colonial-imposed ones—all with a view to creating dependence on the latter. The spirit and intent of Treaty, however, includes a right to livelihood; any notion of "reconciliation" requires that we live this out. It is therefore important to have metrics such as this that measure our economic progress and standing."

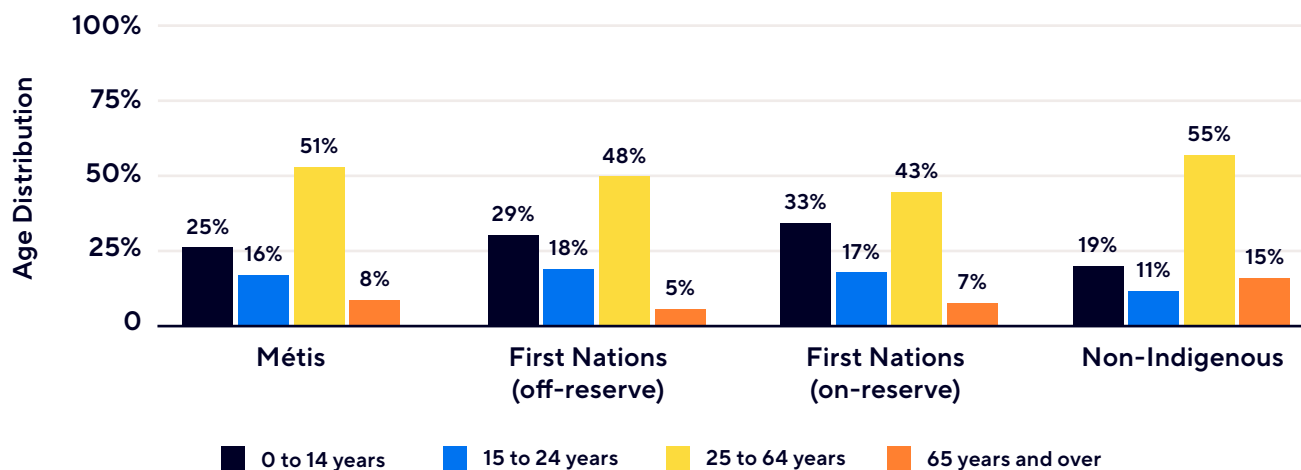
—**Isaac Twinn, Chief, Sawridge First Nation**

5. INDIGENOUS SOCIOECONOMIC OUTCOMES

5.1 Indigenous Socioeconomic Outcomes

The Indigenous population in Alberta is younger than the non-Indigenous population, as shown in Figure 5. Approximately 50 per cent of First Nations living on-reserve were under age 25, compared to 41 per cent of Métis and 30 per cent of the non-Indigenous population. Compared to the non-Indigenous population, there are relatively fewer Indigenous individuals over the age of 65.

Figure 5: Age Distribution, Indigenous vs. Non-Indigenous Population, 2021²³



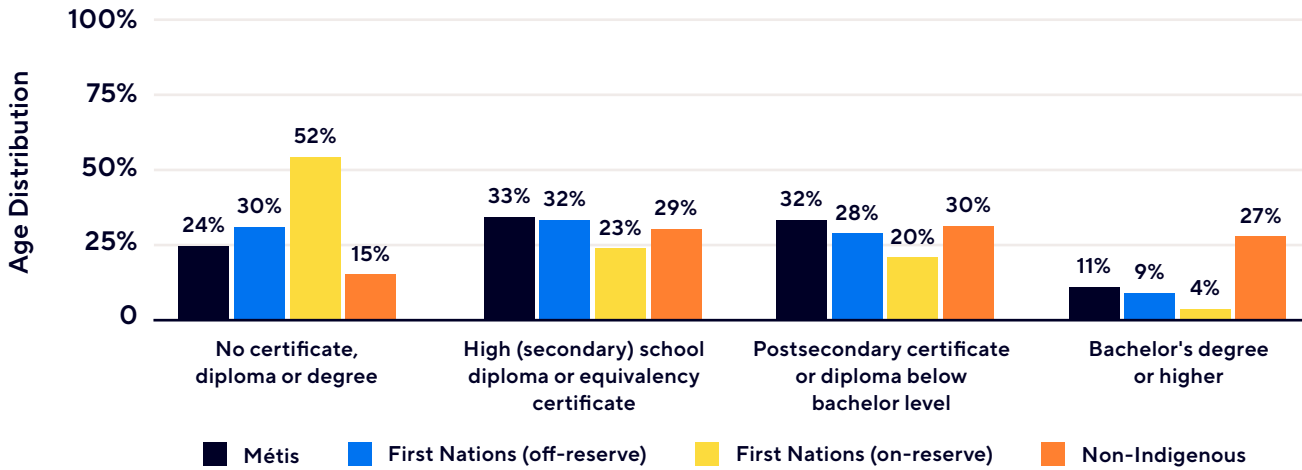
Between 2016 and 2021, education levels of the Indigenous population increased. The percentage of the Indigenous population without a high school diploma declined by between 3 and 4 percentage points, while the percentage with a bachelor’s or above increased by between 1 and 1.5 percentage points. Despite these changes, there remain significant gaps in education levels between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population. As shown in Figure 6, the percentage of the Indigenous population without a high-school diploma is substantially higher than that of the non-Indigenous population. Among those living off-reserve, the percentage of the Indigenous population with a high school diploma or post-secondary certificate below a bachelor’s was similar to that of the non-Indigenous population. At the bachelor’s or above level, the percentage of the non-Indigenous population with this level of education is between three and seven times higher than that of the Indigenous population.

Among the Indigenous population, education levels vary. First Nations individuals living on-reserve have substantially lower levels of education than First Nations or Métis individuals living off-reserve.

²³ Statistics Canada, Census Profile 2021, Alberta

Approximately 52 per cent of First Nations on-reserve did not have a high-school diploma in 2021 and only 4 per cent had a bachelor's degree or higher. Among the Indigenous population living off-reserve, 24 per cent of Métis people and 30 per cent of First Nations people did not have a high school diploma, while 11 per cent of Métis people and 9 per cent of First Nations people had a bachelor's degree or higher.

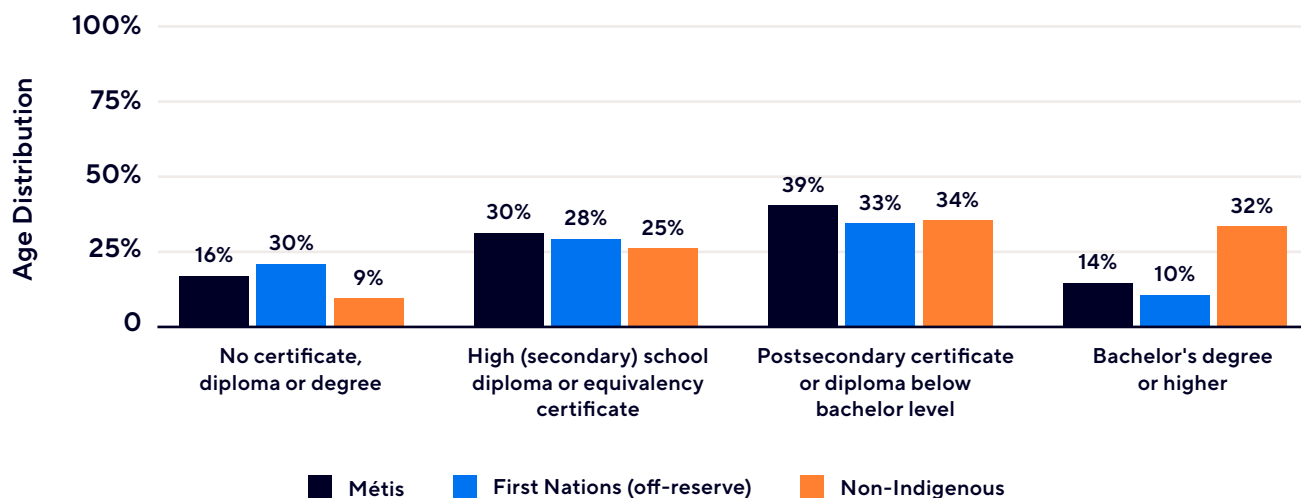
Figure 6: Highest Level of Education, Indigenous vs. Non-Indigenous, aged 15 and above, 2021²⁴



24 Statistics Canada. Census Profile. 2021

Figure 7 compares the highest level of educational attainment between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population for people aged 25 to 64. (Breakdowns for First Nations on- and off-reserve were not available.) This shows a slightly lower gap in educational attainment for those with no certificate, diploma or degree. This may be due in part to many Indigenous individuals finishing high school at an older age than the non-Indigenous population. For a bachelor's degree or higher, the gap in educational attainment is greater.

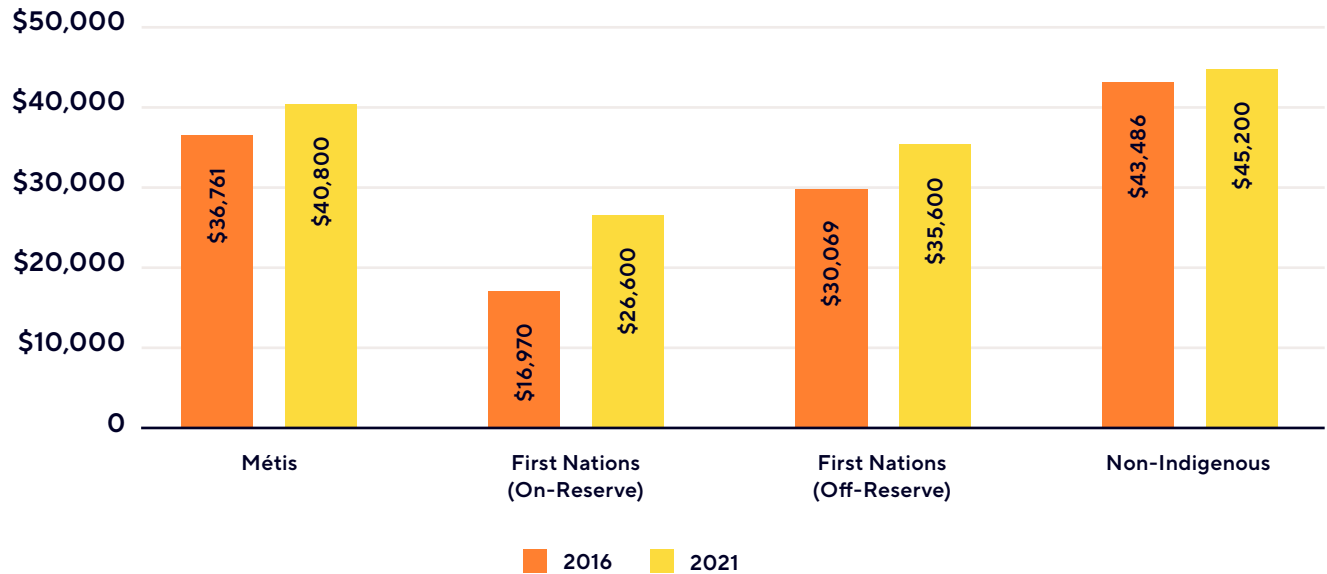
Figure 7: Highest Level of Education, Ages 25 to 64, Indigenous vs. Non-Indigenous, 2021²⁵



There are indications that the income gap between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population narrowed between the 2016 and 2021 Census periods. As shown in Figure 8, the median annual income for the Métis population in the 2021 Census period was approximately 90 per cent of the median income for non-Indigenous population, an increase of 5 percentage points. For the First Nations population living on-reserve, median incomes were approximately 60 per cent of the non-Indigenous population, an increase of 20 percentage points, while for the First Nations population living off-reserve, the gap narrowed by 10 percentage points to 79 per cent of the non-Indigenous population. Note that the 2021 Census period corresponded to a period during which there were significant income supports in place related to COVID-19. Comparing total income data in 2020 and 2019 suggests that COVID supports accounted for approximately half of the decrease in the gap for First Nations both on- and off-reserve, while for Métis people, COVID supports did not appear to have a significant impact on the gap.

²⁵ Statistics Canada, Table: 98-10-0425-01

Figure 8: Median Income, Indigenous vs. Non-Indigenous, Alberta, 2016 and 2021²⁶



The **labour force** includes all people over 15 that are either employed or actively looking for a job.

The **unemployment rate** measures the percentage of the population in the labour force, that does not have job.

The **participation rate** measures the percentage of the population over the age of 15 that is either employed or unemployed and actively looking for work.

The **employment rate** measures the percentage of the population over the age of 15 that are employed.

**First Nations (On-Reserve)
Participation Rate – 43% (2021)**

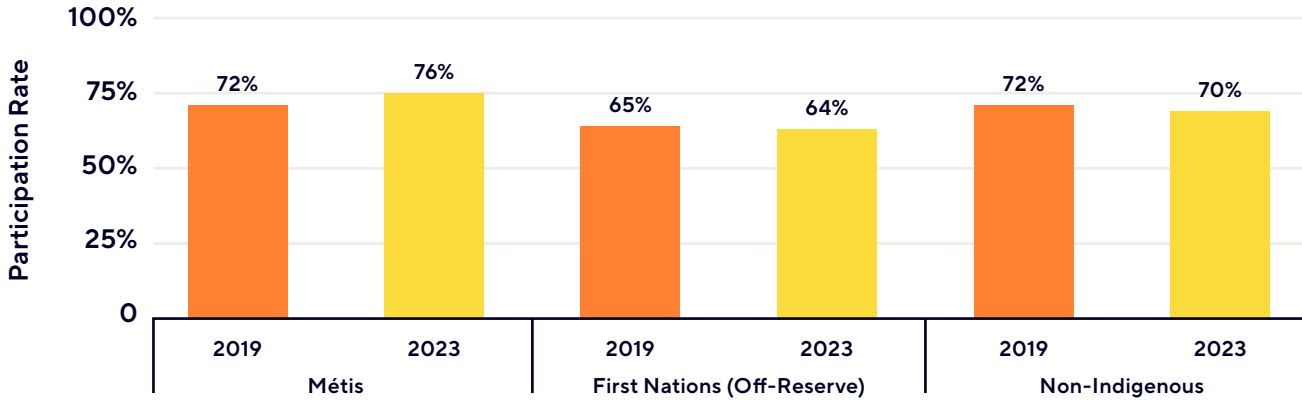
Source: Statistics Canada. Census Profiles 2021.

As shown in Figure 9, the labour force participation for Métis people was higher than that for the non-Indigenous population in 2023, while labour force participation of the First Nations population living off-reserve was lower. Data on labour force participation for the First

Nations population on-reserve was not available for 2023. The higher participation rate among the Métis population, compared to the non-Indigenous population, may be due in part to the relatively younger population. Typically, labour force participation rates begin to decline around age 55, and there are fewer Métis people over the age of 55 relative to the non-Indigenous population.

²⁶ Statistics Canada, Census Profiles 2016 and 2021

Figure 9: Participation Rate, Indigenous vs. Non-Indigenous, Alberta, 2019 and 2023²⁷

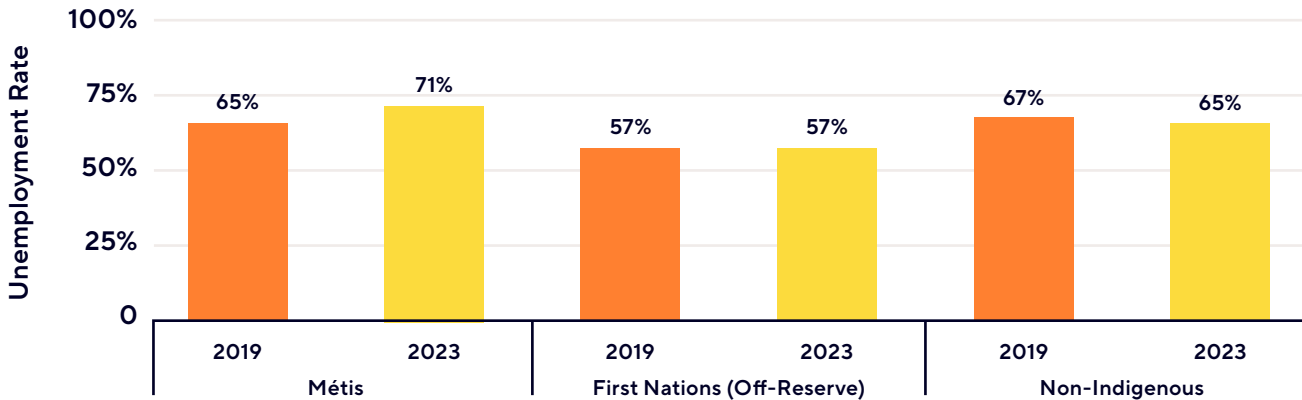


As shown in Figure 10, the employment rate for the Métis population was higher than for the non-Indigenous population in 2023, while the employment rate of the First Nations population off-reserve was lower. Data on employment rates for the First Nations population on-reserve was not available for 2023. Between 2019 and 2023 the employment rate gap between First Nations and the non-Indigenous population has largely remained the same.

**First Nations – On-Reserve
Employment Rate – 32% (2021)**

Source: Statistics Canada. Census Profiles 2021.

Figure 10: Employment Rate, Indigenous vs. Non-Indigenous, Alberta, 2019 and 2023²⁸



**First Nations – On-Reserve
Unemployment Rate – 26% (2021)**

Source: Statistics Canada. Census Profiles 2021.

As shown in Figure 11, the unemployment rate among Métis people in 2023 was slightly higher than that of the non-Indigenous population. For the First Nations population living off-reserve, the gap was between 5 and 6 percentage points higher. Data on unemployment rates for the First Nations population on-reserve were not available for 2023.

²⁷ Government of Alberta's 2023 Alberta labour force profiles for the Indigenous population living off-reserve.

²⁸ Ibid.

Figure 11: Unemployment Rate, Indigenous vs. Non-Indigenous, Alberta, 2019 and 2023²⁹

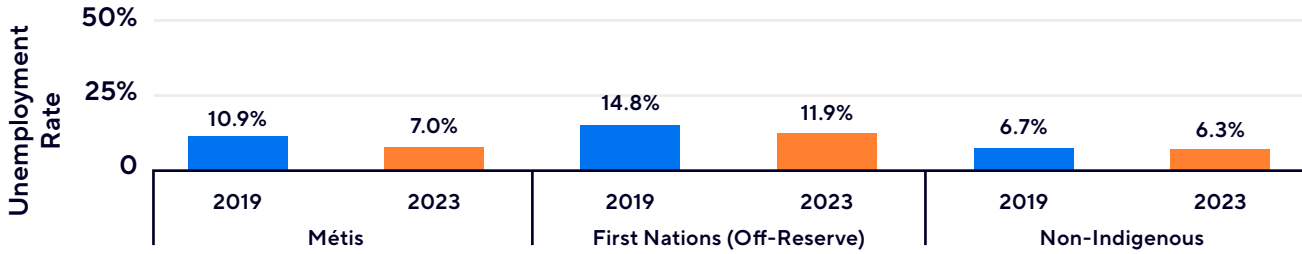


Figure 12 provides the distribution of employment by industry sector for the Indigenous population living off-reserve compared to the non-Indigenous population in 2023. Indigenous individuals were more likely to be employed in the natural resources, public administration, healthcare and construction sectors. Non-Indigenous individuals were more likely to be employed in the professional services, manufacturing and utilities and educational services sectors.

Figure 12: Distribution of Employment by Industry Sector, Indigenous Off-Reserve vs. Alberta Total, 2023³⁰

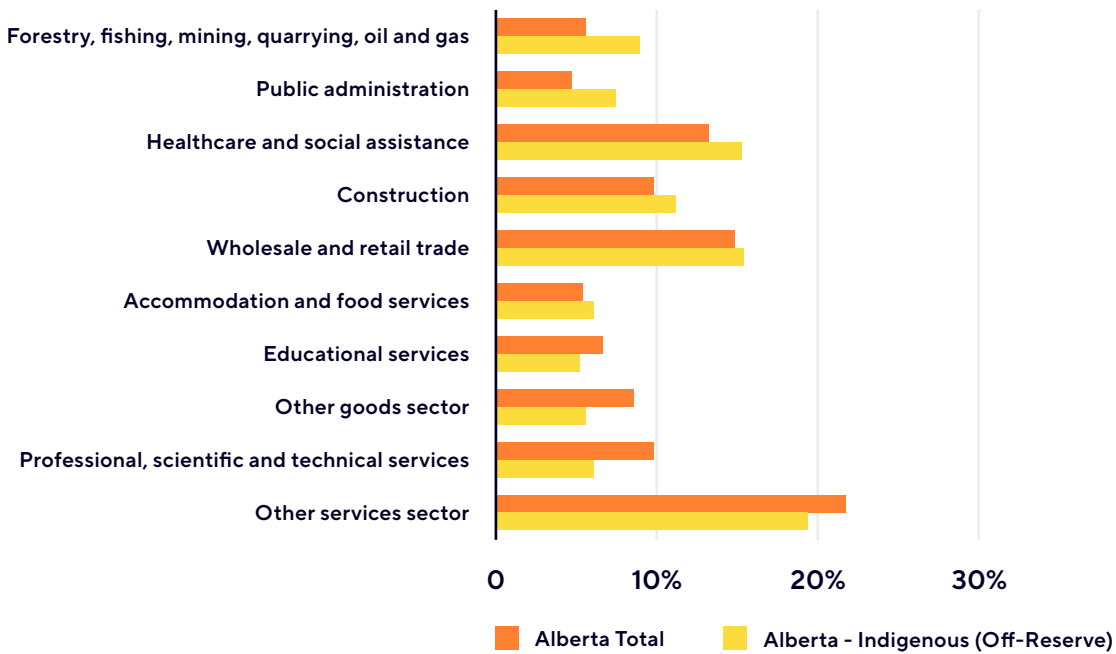
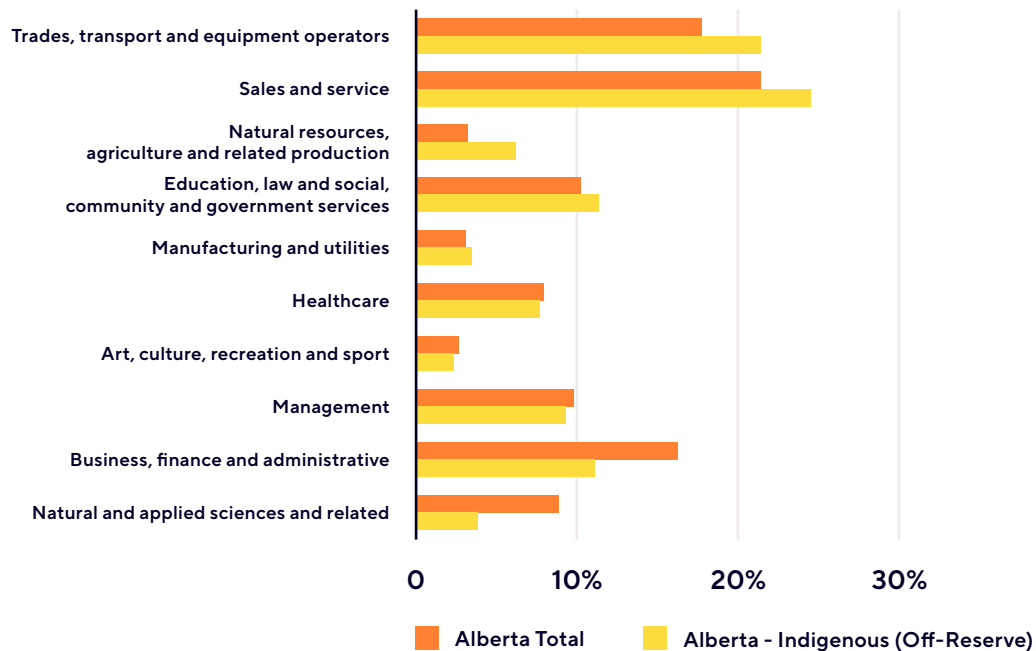


Figure 13 provides the distribution of employment by occupation for the Indigenous population living off-reserve compared to the non-Indigenous population in 2023. Indigenous individuals are more likely to be employed in trades, sales and services, and natural resources occupations. Non-Indigenous individuals are more likely to be employed in natural and applied sciences and business, finance and administration occupations.

29 Government of Alberta's 2023 Alberta labour force profiles for the Indigenous population living off-reserve.

30 Statistics Canada. Table: 14-10-0392-01. Alberta Government. 'Labour Force Statistics December 2023 Alberta the Indigenous population Living Off-Reserve Package'.

Figure 13: Distribution of Employment by Occupation, Indigenous Off-Reserve vs. Alberta Total, 2023³¹



The occupational categories presented in Figure 13 are relatively broad and contain both entry, mid-level and senior positions, as well as higher- and lower-skilled positions. The mix of level and skill influences compensation levels. Higher-level and -skill occupations tend to have higher compensation. Consequently, to understand how employment opportunities can contribute to closing the income gap, it is important to look at both the categories of employment and the composition of employment within these categories.

There is some indication that the distribution of employment in the higher-skilled and higher-paying occupations within these broader categories differs between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population. Table 4 provides two examples of occupation categories (healthcare and education, law and social, community, government services) where the percentage of employed Indigenous individuals is similar to that for employed non-Indigenous individuals, yet there are significant differences in the distribution within the specific occupations. For example, the percentage of Indigenous individuals in health occupations who are employed as physicians, dentists, pharmacists and in other professional treating occupations is less than half of the percentage of non-Indigenous individuals. These occupations are typically higher skilled and higher paying than other health occupations. Indigenous individuals employed in health occupations are more likely to be employed in assisting occupations, like nurse aides and dental assistants, which are lower skilled and lower paying.

³¹ Statistics Canada, Table: 14-10-0420-01. Government of Alberta, Labour Force Statistics: Alberta Indigenous People Living Off-Reserve Package [2023].

Within occupations in education, law and social, community and government services, there are also significant differences between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population. Indigenous individuals are less likely to be employed in professional occupations in education, such as teachers and professors, and professional occupations in law, such as lawyers and judges, and are more likely to be employed in paraprofessional and assisting occupations.

Table 4: Distribution of Employment, Select Occupations, Indigenous vs. Non-Indigenous, 2021³²

Occupation	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
Assisting occupations in support of healthcare services (e.g., nurse aides, dental assistants)	35%	29%
Nursing and allied healthcare professionals	25%	24%
Technical occupations in healthcare	23%	20%
Healthcare treating and consultation services professionals (e.g., physicians, dentists, pharmacists)	6%	13%
All other occupations in healthcare	11%	13%
Paraprofessional occupations in legal, social, community and education services (e.g., social workers, early childhood educators)	27%	17%
Professional occupations in education services	21%	30%
Assisting occupations in education	10%	8%
Professional occupations in law	2%	4%
All other occupations in education, law, community, government	40%	40%

5.2 Opportunities to Improve Outcomes Through the Labour Market

Our review of labour market data for Alberta suggests there are two significant opportunities within the labour market that could help to narrow the income gap between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population. The first is through increased participation in the labour market, particularly for First Nations, and the second is through increased representation in higher-skill occupations.

Canada’s aging population is creating opportunities for younger workers, both as a result of retirements and from increased demand for many services. As shown in Table 5, in Q3 2023, there were nearly 90,000 job vacancies in Alberta, an increase of approximately 70 per cent from Q3 2019. The largest increases in job vacancies (minimum 800) between Q3 2019 and Q3 2023 were:

- **Trades**—Mechanics, millwrights, construction labour, equipment operators, material handlers
- **Healthcare**—Nurse aides, nurses, social workers
- **Retail/Hospitality**—Cashiers, kitchen helpers

32 Statistics Canada, Table: 98-10-0587-01

Table 5: Occupations With an Increase in Job Vacancies of 800 or more, 2019 and 2023³³

Occupation	Q3 2023 Job Vacancies	Q3 2019 to Q3 2023 Change
Total – all occupations	89,800	70%
Heavy-duty equipment mechanics	1,520	390%
Nurse aides, orderlies and patient service associates	855	264%
Construction millwrights and industrial mechanics	825	259%
Construction trades helpers and labourers	4,615	210%
Registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses	850	198%
Cashiers	1,430	186%
Social and community service workers	2,645	174%
Heavy equipment operators (except crane)	1,320	172%
Material handlers	1,095	161%
Food counter attendants, kitchen helpers and related support occupations	6,945	150%

Looking forward, the Government of Alberta’s 10-year occupational outlook indicates that the number of job openings will exceed the number of job seekers through 2030. Table 6 provides the occupations that are projected to have the most job openings in 2030. The following types of occupations are projected to have the most job openings in 2030:

- **Healthcare**—Nurses, nurse aides
- **Technology**—Computer programmers, information analysts, graphic designers
- **Trades**—Construction trades, contractors, labour
- **Teaching**—Elementary and secondary school teaching/assistants, recreation instructors

33 Statistics Canada, Table: 14-10-0356-01

Table 6: Projected Job Openings by Occupation, 2030

Occupation	Cumulative Job Openings 2030
Total—all occupations	45,948
Registered nurses and registered psychiatric nurses	4,428
Information systems analysts and consultants	3,773
Contractors and supervisors, other construction trades, installers, repairers and servicers	3,764
Computer programmers and interactive media developers	3,743
Graphic designers and illustrators	3,551
Elementary and secondary school teacher assistants	3,419
Nurse aides, orderlies and patient service associates	3,400
Construction trades helpers and labourers	7,793
Sales and account representatives—wholesale trade (non-technical)	6,414
Shippers and receivers	5,312
Program leaders and instructors in recreation, sport and fitness	5,084
Landscaping and grounds maintenance labourers	4,799

The increase in job openings presents an opportunity to increase employment levels among Indigenous individuals. To illustrate the impact of increasing employment levels on average incomes, we estimated the increase in average income from an increase of 1 percentage point in employment for the off-reserve Indigenous population in a selection of occupations. The selected occupations included caregiving, sales and service, and assisting occupations in healthcare that are in high demand and that Indigenous individuals are over-represented in, as well as higher-skill occupations where Indigenous individuals are under-represented.

As shown in Figure 14 the impact of increasing employment varies by the type of occupation. A 1 percentage point increase in employment in lower-skill occupations such as caregiving, sales and service, and assisting occupations in healthcare reduces the gap by less than 1 per cent. Increases in employment in occupations that require higher skill levels have more of an impact on average incomes, with the greatest impact arising from increasing employment in middle- and senior-management positions.

Figure 14: Gap in Average Income Between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Individuals After a 1 Percentage Point Increase in Employment in Selected Occupations

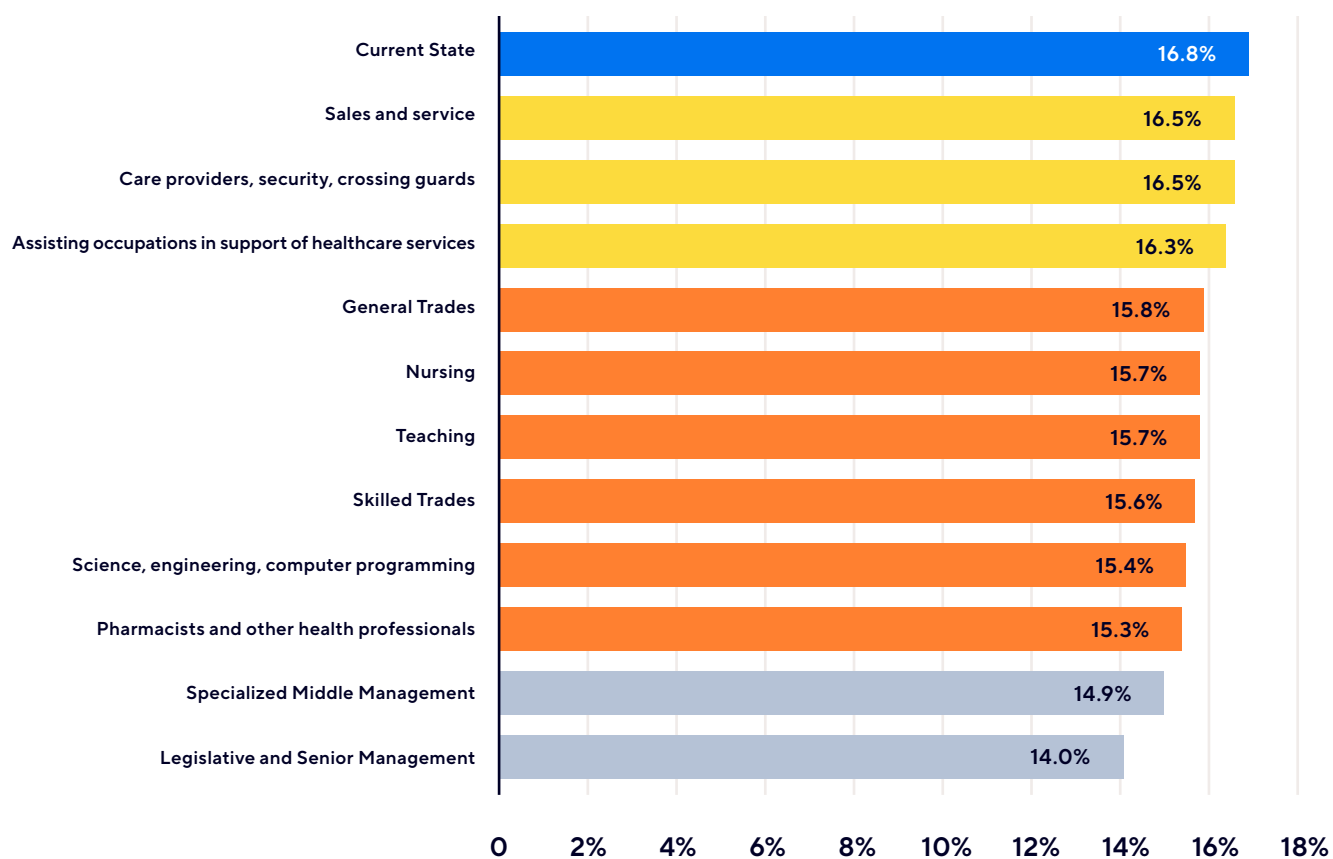
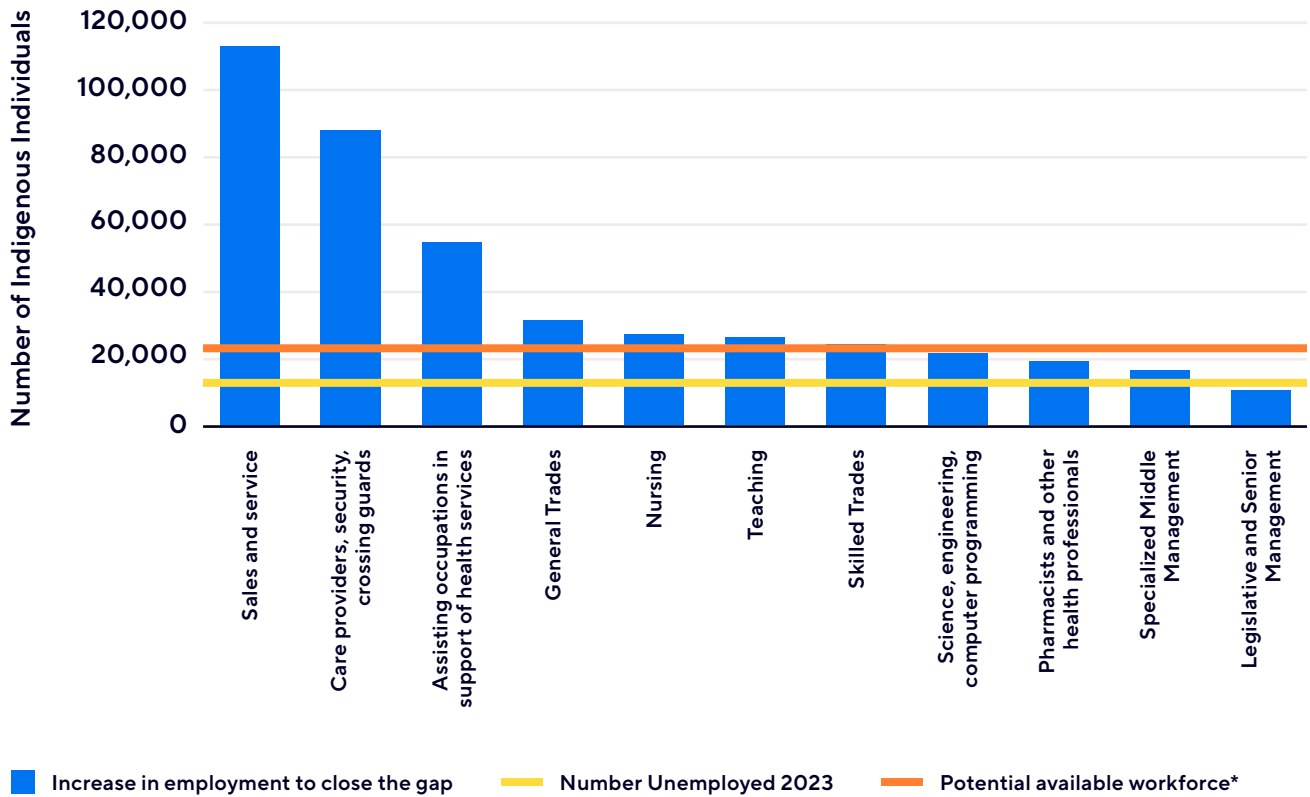


Figure 15 compares the increase in employment in selected occupations needed to close the income gap with the number of unemployed Indigenous individuals and the potential available Indigenous workforce. The increase in employment in lower-skill occupations, such as caregiving, sales and service, and assisting occupations in healthcare, that would close the income gap is between two and five times greater than the available people. As the skill level of the job increases, the increase in employment required to close the income gap declines. This suggests that increasing labour force participation alone is not sufficient to close the income gap. For the income gap to close, the number of Indigenous individuals in higher-skill occupations needs to increase as well.

Figure 15: Increase in Employment Needed to Close the Gap, Selected Occupations



* Potential available workforce is based on a labour force participation of 80 per cent and an unemployment rate of 6 per cent.

CLOSING THE INCOME GAP

The degree to which Indigenous income levels increase with improved labour market outcomes depends on the occupations and industry sectors of employment. The higher-skill occupations that have the greatest impact on closing the income gap typically require university-level credentials. As discussed in Section 5.1, the percentage of the Indigenous population with a bachelor's degree or higher is between 16 and 22 percentage points lower than the non-Indigenous population, and this gap is higher for those aged 25 to 64. This suggests that to meaningfully increase income levels for the Indigenous population, the gap in educational attainment needs to be addressed.



6. INDIGENOUS ENTREPRENEURSHIP

In understanding Indigenous entrepreneurship, it is important to distinguish between business relationships that are purely financial in nature and those that involve entrepreneurship. Purely financial relationships are those that provide payments to Indigenous communities but do not provide Indigenous communities with meaningful participation in ownership, decision-making or management of the entity or project. In contrast, entrepreneurship is where Indigenous individuals and/or communities are involved in the ownership and decision-making of the entity or project.

6.1 Overview of Business Relationships

Table 7 summarizes common business relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups. Impact Benefit Agreements (IBAs) were developed in the 1970s and 1980s to provide First Nations communities with compensation and access to a share of the economic benefits arising from resource development on their territory. IBAs typically include financial payments and may also provide employment opportunities for community members and contracting opportunities for businesses. Joint ventures are often formed for a specific opportunity to provide an Indigenous community with the outside expertise, capacity or capital needed to participate or when a non-Indigenous entity needs access to the networks, knowledge and/or experience of an Indigenous group. In addition to a financial relationship, employment and contracting opportunities, joint ventures may also provide a share of ownership and some input into decision-making. Partnerships are similar to joint ventures but typically involve an equity investment on the part of the Indigenous group.

Table 7: Business Relationships Between Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Groups

	Impact Benefit Agreements	Joint Ventures	Partnerships
Financial relationship	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ownership	No	May include an equity stake	Yes
Decision-making	No	Depends on the arrangements	
Employment opportunities for community members	May be included	May be included	
Contracting opportunities for Indigenous-owned businesses	May be included	May be included	

Each of the business relationships outlined in Table 7 provides financial benefits to Indigenous participants; however, experience has shown that the majority of the benefits accrue to the non-Indigenous participants. The majority of profits generated through these relationships are not shared, and Indigenous individuals have little, if any, input into decision-making. Interviewees also noted that employment opportunities are often low-skill and do not provide Indigenous individuals with the experience or training needed to advance to higher positions and build capacity within the community. As a result, these types of business relationships generally do not leave lasting legacies within communities, rather they provide short-term benefits.



6.2 Indigenous Entrepreneurship

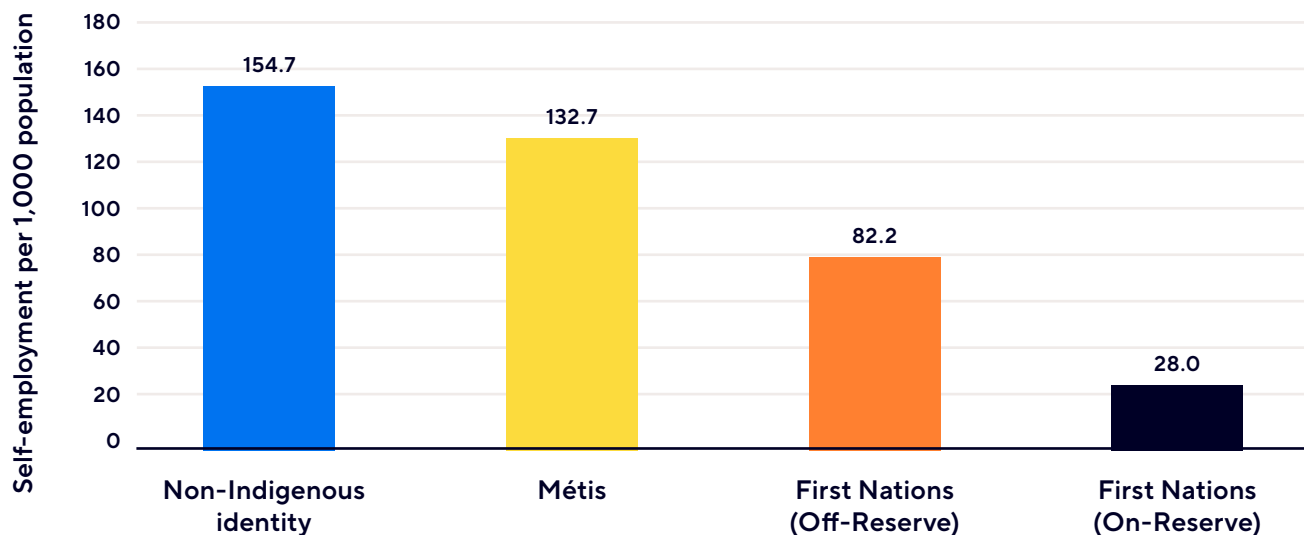
Indigenous entrepreneurship can involve individual ownership of a business or community ownership of a business. Individual ownership takes the same forms as ownership by non-Indigenous individuals (e.g., sole proprietorships, partnerships). Community ownership is typically done through Economic Development Corporations owned by the Nation, which keep the operations and management of business activities separate from community governance activities.

There is limited information on the extent of Indigenous entrepreneurship. Our review of publicly available information identified 353 Nation-owned businesses in Alberta. These businesses were estimated to generate between \$200,000 and over \$350 million in annual revenue for the Nation that owns them. Statistics Canada reports there were over 3,000 private sector businesses that were majority owned by Indigenous individuals in Alberta in 2022, the latest period for which data were available.³⁵ Please note there would likely be some overlap between the Nation-owned businesses and the number reported by Statistics Canada.

Figure 16 compares the rate of self-employment reported by Indigenous and non-Indigenous respondents to the 2021 Census who are aged 25 to 64. The self-employment rate among Métis respondents was approximately 85 per cent of that of non-Indigenous respondents. Among First Nation respondents living off-reserve, the rate of self-employment was just over half that of non-Indigenous respondents, and among First Nations living on-reserve, it was under 20 per cent of that of non-Indigenous respondents.

35 Statistics Canada, Table: 33-10-0601-01, Private Sector Business Counts by Majority Ownership, Fourth Quarter of 2022

Figure 16: Self-Employment per 1,000 Population, 25 to 64 years old, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2021

There are a number of barriers to entrepreneurship for Indigenous individuals. These can vary based on whether it is an individual or an Economic Development Corporation. The barriers to entrepreneurship for Indigenous individuals include:

- **Lack of access to equity or capital**—For Indigenous individuals living on-reserve, there is typically not a local bank, and they may not have a credit history or have a poor credit history.³⁶ In addition, rates of home ownership are lower among the Indigenous population, which means fewer Indigenous individuals are able to use the equity in their home to provide startup capital.
- **Lack of capacity**—Fewer Indigenous individuals have a bachelor's degree or above or experience in management positions, which means they may not have acquired skills foundational to business. This makes it difficult for Indigenous individuals to develop a business plan, negotiate contracts, access support programs or meet reporting requirements, all of which are important to starting and operating a business.
- **Lack of networks**—Lower rates of entrepreneurship mean that Indigenous individuals may not have access to Indigenous mentors who can help them navigate starting a business. It also means there may not be an established business network they can access.

For Economic Development Corporations, lack of capacity is often a significant barrier, as is accessing established business networks and capital.

In addition, barriers to entrepreneurship within Indigenous communities include:

- **Geography**—Communities are often located in remote areas, and supply chains and transportation networks may not be easily accessible. This limits the set of feasible opportunities.
- **Infrastructure**—Basic infrastructure, such as communications technology, transportation or electricity, may not be reliable.

³⁶ The Conference Board of Canada—Northern and Aboriginal Policy, Barriers to Aboriginal Entrepreneurship and Options to Overcome Them, 2017

6.3 Support for Indigenous Entrepreneurs

There are a number of supports available to address barriers to entrepreneurship for the Indigenous population. These include:

- **Training and education**—Support services, advice and training for Indigenous entrepreneurs are available from a range of places, including the Community Futures Network and Indigenous-run organizations such as the Alberta Indian Investment Corporation, as well as organizations like BusinessLink and ATB Financial. Indigenous entrepreneurs and First Nations Government administration staff who MNP interviewed indicated that some of the government-funded training and support were narrowly focused and there is a gap in what is available for different groups. For example, supports are often tailored to First Nations individuals living on-reserve and are not relevant for other Indigenous individuals. Métis interviewees also noted that in the delivery of training, demonstrating knowledge of Métis culture and history is important to encouraging Métis people to take the training.



- **Procurement policies**—Many governments and businesses have instituted procurement policies whereby a certain percentage of spending and/or contracts must go to Indigenous-owned businesses. The federal government has a minimum of 5 per cent Indigenous procurement, while the Alberta government does not have a specific percentage.³⁷ Interviewees noted that these policies can provide opportunities for Indigenous entrepreneurs to gain experience and break into new markets; however:

- The definition of Indigenous ownership is not consistent across different procurement programs, and the vetting process of Indigenous ownership can be limited. As a result, businesses that do not have meaningful Indigenous participation in decision-making, management and profit sharing may be permitted to participate.
- Businesses are not forced to compete for contracts and may become reliant on these procurement policies to sustain profitability. If the procurement policies or other market conditions change, these businesses may not succeed.

- **Indigenous lending and grant programs**—There is a wide range of lending and grant programs available to Indigenous entrepreneurs. These include the Apeetogosan Métis Corporation, Alberta Indian Investment Corporation, Indian Business Corporation, Treaty Seven Economic Development Corporation and Settlement Investment Corporation (Métis). Each organization offers different loan/grant sizes and targets different groups. Additionally, many non-Indigenous government and private organizations have Indigenous lending arms, including the large banks, ATB Financial and the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC).

³⁷ Government of Canada, Mandatory Minimum 5% Indigenous Procurement Target, <https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1691786841904/1691786863431>

Indigenous Participation in the Resource Sector

The first IBAs were developed in the 1970s and 1980s to engage Indigenous communities affected by resource development in their territories. Over time, as Indigenous communities demanded greater involvement in resource development and a share of the benefits, IBAs expanded from providing payments and royalties to including employment, procurement and set-asides.* As Indigenous communities and businesses have become more sophisticated, alternative forms of participation in the resource sector have emerged.

Equity participation provides Indigenous communities with more meaningful involvement in resource development. Through equity participation, Indigenous communities become owners in projects on their territories, giving them input in decision-making and access to the economic benefits flowing from the project. For proponents, partnering with Indigenous communities is good business, as Indigenous partners have an interest in managing timelines and costs to enhance returns.** It also earns the consent and support of affected communities, which can smooth the regulatory process.**

Equity participation is typically financed through debt because Indigenous communities often lack funds to invest. As a result, most investment is in existing, revenue-producing projects, for which financing is more easily obtained. At present, government loan guarantees and lending programs play an important role in allowing Indigenous communities to borrow at rates that make investment viable.

* Meerveld, Drew. *Assessing Value: A Comprehensive Study of Impact Benefit Agreements on Indigenous Communities of Canada*. March 2016. University of Ottawa, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs.

** Exner-Pirot, Heather. *Indigenous Equity and Its Growing Role in Canadian Energy and Resource Development*. December 2023. McDonald-Laurier Institute.

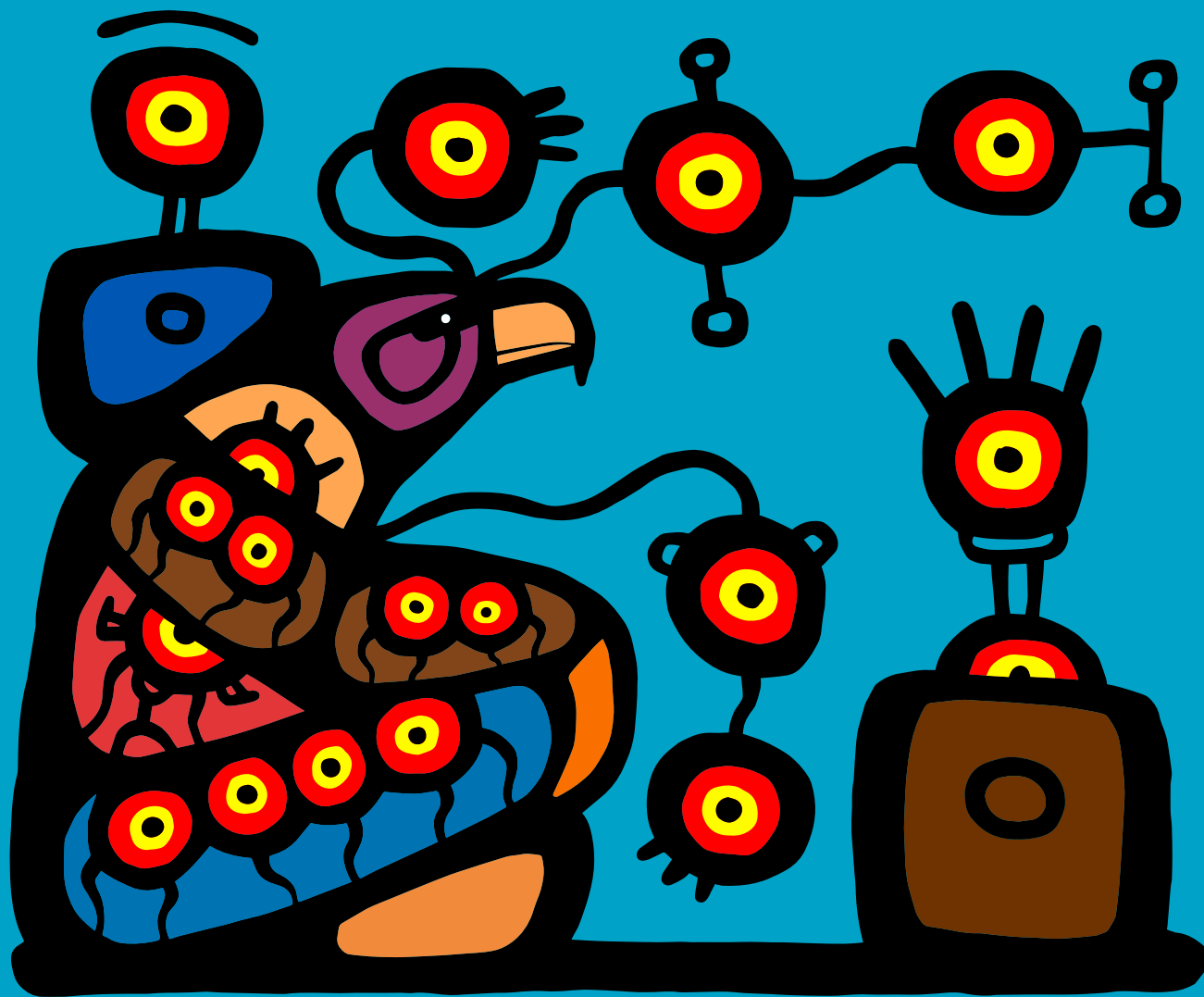
6.4 Summary

Indigenous participation in business has evolved from a passive role as signatories to IBAs for resource development projects, which provide financial payments but no input in decision-making, to more meaningful participation through equity ownership in major projects. These advances are significant; however, participation by Indigenous individuals in business remains limited.

While there are numerous supports available to help Indigenous businesses, a significant barrier to Indigenous participation in entrepreneurship for both individuals and communities is lack of capacity. This affects their ability to navigate the increasingly complex business environment and take advantage of opportunities. Building capacity requires investments to close the gap in university-level education and supporting Indigenous individuals in gaining the skills and experience that comes with advancement to more senior positions within organizations.

“Incorporating traditional Indigenous culture into our safety program, project execution and company culture is not just about inclusion; it’s about fostering unity and empowerment within our communities. When Indigenous Peoples lead and actively participate in our industrial projects, it sends a strong message of resilience and innovation which we hope will be life changing for our employees. These mutually beneficial partnerships are more than just economic ventures; they are pathways to meaningful growth, driving prosperity, and breaking down the barriers which will ultimately empower Indigenous entrepreneurs across Canada. Creating careers rather than jobs.”

—Robert Martineau, President, THOMAS INC.



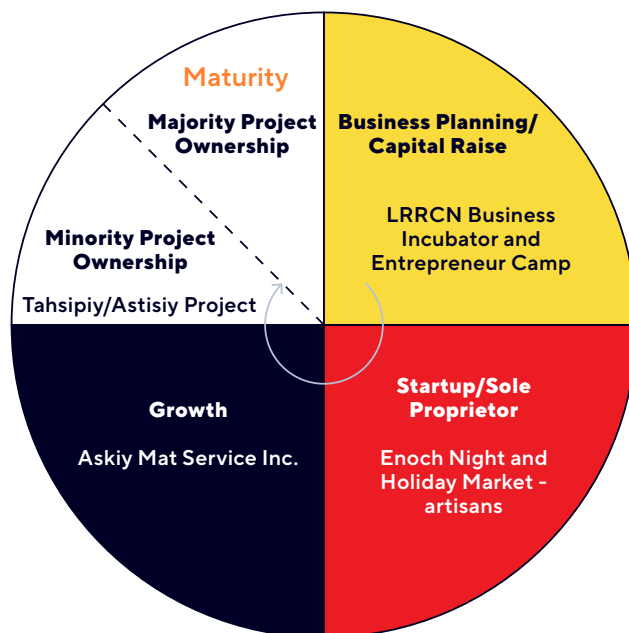
“Companies’ procurement policies and processes need to be redesigned with Indigenous small to medium-sized businesses in mind. These businesses often have limited time, capacity, and resources to navigate complex RFPs or learn new online systems, which significantly limits the opportunities they can pursue.”

—Sarah Jacknife, Co-Founder, (Re)rooting Indigenous Leadership Inc.

6.5 Case Studies— Indigenous Entrepreneurship

This section profiles Indigenous-owned businesses, entrepreneurs, projects and community initiatives across Alberta. Each example illustrates a phase in the growth cycle of businesses, beginning at the planning/capital raise phase and ending with ownership in a mature project or business. Figure 17 uses a traditional medicine wheel to show the growth cycle and where each example sits.

Figure 17: Case Study Medicine Wheel



LORNE BLESSE, KIWETIN CLOTHING

Background

Lorne Blesse is a member of Little Red River Cree Nation (“LRRCN”), a First Nation in northern Alberta approximately 125 km east of High Level, AB. Lorne is a local business owner and an Economic Development Officer with LRRCN. Lorne grew up in LRRCN, hunting and fishing along the north Peace River.

Kiwetin Clothing

In 2017, Lorne established a clothing brand, Kiwetin Clothing, to reflect his appreciation for the great Canadian landscape and infuse his Indigenous Culture to create something uniquely Canadian, for all Canadians.

Lorne initially struggled with securing capital funding through traditional lenders, and eventually found support through the organization Futurepreneur Canada. Futurepreneur Canada is a Development Bank of Canada (BDC) funded organization that supports entrepreneurs between the ages of 18 and 39.

Kiwetin Clothing has grown significantly, and in 2023 produces dozens of products including sweatshirts, hats, jackets, duffle bags, outdoor gear, etc. Additionally, Kiwetin Clothing provides custom apparel for other businesses and First Nations. Lorne is now a proud board member of Futurepreneur, an organization that provided the support he needed.

ENOCH NIGHT AND HOLIDAY MARKETS

Overview

The Enoch Night and Holiday Markets take place at River Cree Resort & Casino in the Enoch Cree Nation community. They began as a way to support Indigenous artisans and bring community members together in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.



The Night Market runs over a four-day period and is planned around the summer equinox and National Indigenous Peoples Day (June 21). It includes Indigenous artisans, cooks/caterers and entertainers who sell handmade goods and food products and provide cultural sharing/showcases. The Holiday Market occurs just before the holiday season in December and is a smaller indoor market. It is focused on handmade authentic Indigenous crafts and creations (e.g., bead wear, fur mitts, gauntlet gloves, ribbons) and includes Indigenous entertainers and cultural showcases.

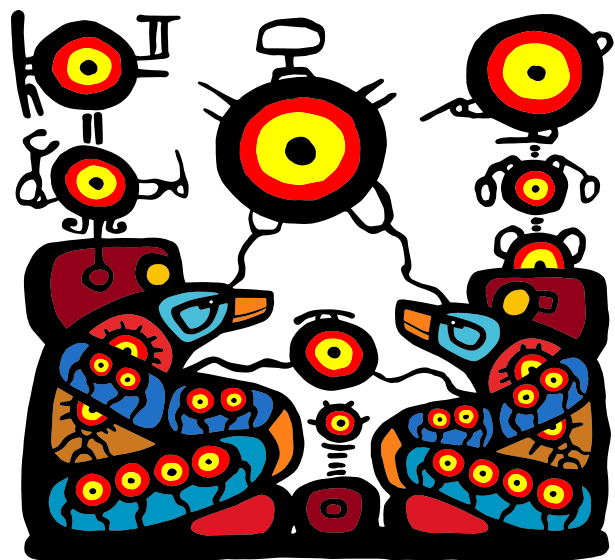
Enoch Night and Holiday Market vendors come from as far away as Manitoba, the Northwest Territories and British Columbia, while customers and tourists come from all over Canada and the USA, with some from outside of North America.

Background

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many people were dealing with social isolation and job loss. To bring community members together and provide income opportunities for Indigenous artisans, Enoch Cree Nation started the Enoch Night Market in June 2021. Due to the success of the summer Night Market, the Nation created a Holiday Market to bring community members together over the holiday season.

In 2021, approximately 25,000 people attended the Night Market and 20,000 attended the Holiday Market. In its first year, the Night Market was the largest outdoor Indigenous market in Canada. While attendance levels have declined due to the creation of similar Indigenous markets across Alberta, the number of vendors at the summer Night Market has grown from approximately 80 to 120. There are 60 vendors at the Holiday Market. At each market, 10 booths are reserved for Enoch Cree Nation members.

The markets will continue to support Enoch Cree Nation and other Indigenous vendors, artisans and entertainers, and there are plans to include more activities for children, including a kids' zone with bouncy castles, face painting, balloon artists and other child-friendly activities.



Highlights

The contributions of the Enoch markets include:

- **Language, reconciliation and culture sharing**—Because the markets are located on Enoch Cree Nation lands, the Cree language is used to market the events, including on posters and in social media posts. This gives Enoch Cree Nation the opportunity to share its culture (e.g., powwows with emcees explaining what is going on and the history of the dance or music playing) and fosters reconciliation through education and gathering in a respectful way. In addition, all entertainers are Indigenous, showcasing, sharing and supporting Indigenous music and dance.
- **Income generation**—According to participating vendors, the markets are a major source of their annual revenues. At the 2023 Holiday Market, the aggregate artisan revenues earned were approximately \$280,000. Many artisans will not sign up for other events or markets in the area and will spend all year crafting just to participate in the Enoch Night and Holiday Markets.

ASKIY MAT SERVICE INC. —SANDY SANDERSON

Background

Sandy Sanderson is the founder and owner of Askiy Mat Service Inc. and a member of Mikisew First Nation. Sandy previously worked supporting First Nations individuals with their business ventures and also as a Director with the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT).

After many years working in the private sector and for educational institutions, Sandy decided he wanted to start his own business. He began researching opportunities that would be both successful as well as meaningful to himself and his customers. Sandy discovered there were significant incidences of serious workplace injuries related to slips and falls on indoor

doorway mats in the Fort McMurray region. These incidents were largely due to poor maintenance, causing uneven surfaces that increased the likelihood of trips and falls. Sandy decided this was an ideal opportunity and began his own business: Askiy Mat Service Inc.

Askiy Mat Service Inc.

Sandy discovered a manufacturer of purpose-built flat mat washing machines that would reduce the occurrence of bumpy and uneven mats from the cleaning process. Askiy Mat Service Inc.'s cleaning process does not use heat or hot water, but instead uses high-pressure water to clean the mats and high-pressure air to dry them, ensuring no lumps or bumps are formed in the mats during the cleaning process. Once dry, the mats are rolled for site delivery.

Currently, Askiy Mat Service Inc. has two major clients in the oil and gas sector and services five out of their six sites. Beginning in 2019, Askiy Mat Service Inc. had grown to six employees by 2023.

Carbon Offsetting

Askiy Mat Service Inc. provides an environmentally friendly alternative to traditional industrial mat cleaning. The cleaning process does not use hot water or hot air and was carbon audited to measure its emissions compared to a traditional mat-cleaning process. The degree to which Askiy Mat Service Inc.'s cleaning process generates fewer emissions allows it to issue carbon credits, which can be transferred to clients to offset the emissions of their operations. Askiy Mat Service Inc. provides carbon offsets approximately equivalent to the emissions of 299 passenger vehicles a year.

“Askiy” means “earth” in Cree. Sandy chose the name because it aligns with his business objectives of reducing industrial waste and creating safer environments.

TAHSIPIY / ASTISIY PROJECT

Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation (AIOC) Tahsiپی/ Astisiy Partnership Overview of the Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation (AIOC). The AIOC is a Crown Corporation that facilitates investments by Indigenous groups and communities through offering loan guarantees and capacity support for projects.^{38 39} Its mandate is to foster empowerment and economic growth of Indigenous communities. The AIOC's loan guarantees are backstopped by the Government of Alberta, and it has the capacity to guarantee \$3 billion in loans.

Background on Tahsiپی/ Astisiy Partnership

In 2021, a group of eight Indigenous communities in northeastern Alberta, in partnership with Suncor Energy, (together the Astisiy LP) finalized a deal to acquire TC Energy's 15 percent ownership share in the Northern Courier Pipeline.⁴⁰ The eight Indigenous communities are (together the Tahsiپی LP):

- Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation
- Conklin Métis Local 193
- Fort McKay Métis Nation
- Fort McMurray #468 First Nation
- Chipewyan Prairie First Nation
- Fort Chipewyan Métis Local #125
- McMurray Métis
- Willow Lake Métis Nation

Northern Courier is a 90km pipeline that transports bitumen from the Fort Hills mine to Suncor's East Tank Farm, north of Fort

McMurray, Alberta. The remaining 85 percent of the pipeline is owned by the Alberta Investment Management Corporation.⁴¹ The AIOC supported the transaction, by providing a \$40 million loan guarantee to the Tahsiپی LP.⁴² The Northern Courier Pipeline is valued at approximately \$1.3 billion, and the Tahsiپی LP is projected to receive approximately \$16 million in shared annual payments from the project annually.⁴³

Impacts of Tahsiپی / Astisiy Partnership

The annual payments from Tahsiپی/ Astisiy Partnership (the Partnership) offer a stable revenue source to the eight Indigenous communities, and do not include any specification for where the funds must be spent. This allows communities to earmark funding to priority areas and adjust investments as time goes on. This is an additional tool communities can use to address specific funding areas, in contrast to IBA agreements, which can have restrictions around the use of funds.

The following provides examples of how four of the Tahsiپی LP communities have used and are planning on using funding from the Partnership.

McMurray Métis:

Representatives from McMurray Métis indicated the most significant impact of the Partnership is the autonomy they receive over the funding. This departure from the prescribed funding and reporting requirements of IBAs allows for meaningful long-term planning for the community. The ongoing funding stream also allows for McMurray Métis to secure loans against the funding, which provides further capacity to develop community businesses and infrastructure.

38 AIOC Who We Are. Available here: <https://theaioc.com/>

39 Ibid.

40 AIOC. Annual Report. 2021/22.

41 Suncor Energy: Astisiy News Release. Available here: <https://www.suncor.com/media/project/suncor/files/news-releases/2021/2021-09-16-nr-su-ncp-partnership-en.pdf?modified=20210920133431>

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid.

The primary initiative of the Partnership funding is the building and remodeling of the McMurray Cultural Centre in Fort McMurray. The equity received is an integral contribution to the \$100 million project. The construction phase will provide significant opportunities to member sub-contractors. Once complete, the Centre is expected to attract tourists to learn about Métis culture and provide a space for cultural programming for McMurray Métis community members.

Willow Lake Métis Nation:

The Partnership funding will continue to allow Willow Lake Métis Nation to diversify its community economy away from oil and gas. The funding will support specific initiatives as well as allow the community to secure loans for other business projects. The primary planned initiative is to allocate approximately \$90,000 toward a mortgage for a 205-acre site. The site will be used for tourism development and the establishment of a bison ranch with on-site indoor and outdoor experiences, a campground, and accommodations. Additionally, Willow Lake Métis Nation plans to develop a commercial indoor and outdoor garden facility, made possible by funding from the Partnership. Mother Earth's Garden will feature diverse crops as well as traditional medicines and tea ingredients.

Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation (ACFN):

Funding from the Partnership has provided the ACFN community with the capacity to improve a number of existing initiatives. The programs and services supplemented by the Partnership funding include the following:

- Youth and Elder Lodge – Support for the continuity of many cultural traditions including language. Programs offered include seasonal harvests of berries, medicinal plants, birds, caribou, and fish;
- Post Secondary - Funding to assist Members as they pursue post-secondary education;

- Housing Repair and Maintenance – Funding supplements for the housing program, which supports Members with rent, maintenance and the operational costs of housing;
- Elder Home Care – Supports for Elders with chronic health conditions, which provides assistance to clean and maintain homes on a regular basis to allow Elder's to age in place;
- Health Safety and Community Services – Funding supplements for a variety of activities designed to provide healthy lifestyle alternatives for youth and adults; Band Membership Assistance – Funding for direct payments to members who struggle with daily challenges including costs of funerals, rent during periods of unemployment, medical assistance, other family crises and some amount for regular distribution of profits to members of ACFN.

Fort McKay Métis Nation:

Partnership funding is planning to be strategically allocated to address key priority areas including:

- Housing – Funding for maintenance and repairs, as well as assistance in securing down payments/ mortgage financing, and housing construction for in-need community members;
- Social supports – Funding for critical services such as addiction treatment and mental health support as well as cultural retention programs;
- Employment – Funding for employment and training to support members to move off of social support payments and into full-time jobs;
- Debt repayments on mortgages, lands, and assets.

Fort Chipewyan Métis Nation (FCMN):

Partnership funding has been instrumental in allowing FCMN to offer more programming and events to community members, as well as include more members in existing programs/events.

The funding is shared between FCMN and Oosita (the business entity of FCMN). The key priorities for each of these are:

- FCMN – Youth programming, elders programming, winter events and cultural programming/events as well as employee payroll.
- Oosita – Support for economic development projects as well as employee payroll.



7. CONCLUSION

Indigenous Peoples contributed almost \$17 billion in spending and \$9 billion of GDP to the Alberta economy in 2023. Between 60 per cent and 70 per cent of the contributions of Indigenous Peoples to the Alberta economy arose from spending at non-Indigenous businesses by Indigenous governments, businesses and households.

Between 2019 and 2023, the contributions of Indigenous Peoples to Alberta's economy grew. Along with that growth, there is some indication that the gap in socioeconomic outcomes has narrowed. However, there remain significant gaps in incomes and employment between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population.

Closing these gaps will require more than just increasing the participation of Indigenous individuals in the labour market. Indigenous individuals need to move into higher-skill, higher-paid occupations, and rates of entrepreneurship need to increase. For progress to be made in these areas, investment is required in developing capacity within Indigenous communities, and the starting point for that is to increase the number of Indigenous individuals with a university-level credential. This will provide the foundational skills needed for Indigenous individuals to become entrepreneurs and to play a significant role in the future workforce.

The Value of Closing the Gap

Every billion dollars of household spending was estimated to generate approximately 4,300 jobs in Alberta and \$191 million in tax revenue for all three levels of government.* Closing the gap through increased Indigenous participation in the labour market and Indigenous individuals working in higher-skill occupations could increase total household spending by approximately \$3.2 billion.** This could support between 13,000 and 14,000 jobs and generate annual tax revenues of over \$600 million. In addition, the goods and services produced by increasing the participation of Indigenous workers in the labour market could raise Alberta's GDP by between 2 and 3 percentage points (\$8 billion to \$11 billion).**

* Impacts are based on Statistics Canada's 2019 Provincial Input-Output Multipliers for Alberta.

** Estimates are based on Indigenous participation in the labour market increasing to 76 per cent and an unemployment rate of 6 per cent. Compensation and value add are estimated from Statistics Canada's productivity tables.

"Lingering biases and historical structures continue to pose challenges for Indigenous Peoples, businesses, and communities, hindering their path to greater economic prosperity. This report highlights that when these barriers are lifted, Indigenous Peoples are better empowered to shape their own futures and positively impact the province's long-term economic outlook."

—Lee Thom, Councillor from Kikino
Metis Settlement

"When barriers are removed, Indigenous economic participation leads to more significant financial benefits and diversification. Reforming the system can unlock human potential and drive economic reconciliation, propelling Alberta toward long-term prosperity."

—Jack Royal, CEO for the Blackfoot Confederacy



8. APPENDICES

Appendix A—Approach

The activities involved in undertaking the study were:

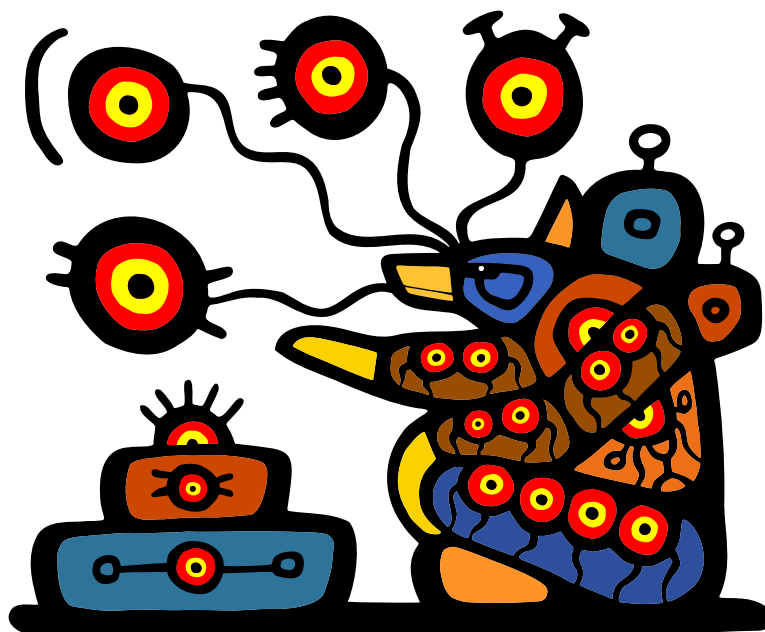
- Collecting data and information from publicly available sources and through interviews with representatives from Indigenous communities and Indigenous-owned businesses.
- Developing estimates of the Indigenous population in Alberta.
- Developing estimates of the economic contributions of Indigenous governments, households and businesses.
- Assessing the potential impact of increased Indigenous participation in the labour market through filling roles in industries with labour shortages.
- Developing a profile of Indigenous entrepreneurship in Alberta and the role of entrepreneurs in closing the socioeconomic gaps between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous population.
- Preparing case studies profiling Indigenous entrepreneurs.

Data used in the study was collected through a combination of primary and secondary research.

The secondary sources included:

- First Nation financial statements, published under the First Nations Financial Transparency Act
- Canada Revenue Agency
- Statistics Canada
- Government of Alberta
- Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB)
- Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)
- Northeastern Alberta Aboriginal Business Association (NAABA)
- Otipemisiwak Métis Government

Interviews with representatives from Indigenous organizations were used to fill gaps in the publicly available data and gather information for the case studies.



Appendix B—Indigenous Economic Contributions

INDIGENOUS GOVERNMENTS

Indigenous government spending in Alberta is the spending by First Nation Administrations, the MSGC and the Otipemisiwak Métis Government. The activities and associated spending by Indigenous governments include the following six broad categories:

- **Community development**—This may include investments in physical infrastructure (such as new roads and bridges), housing (including housing construction and renovations), waste management (including recycling and landfills), internet connectivity, community and recreational amenity buildings, and government operations.
- **Health**—This may include investments in homecare and community care programs, community-based healing initiatives, prevention programs, health services integration initiatives and substance abuse programs.
- **Education**—This may include investments in post-secondary school education, elementary and secondary education programs, apprenticeship and trades programs and industry-specific training, such as training of Indigenous healthcare professionals.
- **Economic development**—This may include Indigenous business development programs, Indigenous economic development programs, employment support programs, financial lending programs and Indigenous skills training.
- **Cultural development**—This may include Indigenous language projects, Indigenous broadcasting and communications and Indigenous cultural celebrations.
- **Social assistance**—This includes income assistance payments to on-reserve households.

This spending includes salaries and benefits paid to Indigenous government employees and employees of related entities.

As shown in Table 8, in 2023, total spending by Indigenous governments in Alberta was estimated to be approximately \$2.29 billion, of which \$700 million was paid to households as wages, salaries and benefits and \$190 million was paid to households through social assistance payments. The remaining \$1.4 billion was spent on goods and services for membership.

Table 8: Estimated Spending by Indigenous Governments in Alberta, 2023⁴⁴

	Total Expenditures—2023 (\$ millions)	Distribution (%)
Total spending	\$2,290	100%
Wages, salaries and benefits	\$700	31%
Social assistance payments	\$190	8%
Goods and services for membership	\$1,400	61%

⁴⁴ First Nations and Metis Settlements financial statements obtained either from ISC's First Nation Profiles or directly from the First Nation or Metis Settlement. One of eight Metis Settlements are included. As a result, the estimates understate the total expenditures of Indigenous governments in Alberta.

Table 9 displays the estimated direct and indirect economic impacts of spending by Indigenous governments in 2023. The majority of the indirect impacts both in terms of employment and spending accrue to non-Indigenous-owned businesses. In addition to the direct and indirect impacts, Indigenous governments generate induced impacts through the wages and salaries paid to households and through the wages and salaries paid by their suppliers to households. The impacts of spending of wages and salaries are included in the household impacts.

Table 9: Estimated Direct and Indirect Economic Impacts of Indigenous Government Spending in Alberta, 2023

	Output (\$ millions)	GDP (\$ millions)	Labour Income (\$ millions)	Employment (FTEs)	Total Tax Revenues (\$ millions)
Direct	\$2,290	\$860	\$700	11,900	\$7
Indirect	\$1,400	\$890	\$590	10,200	\$160
Total	\$3,690	\$1,750	\$1,290	22,100	\$167

INDIGENOUS-OWNED BUSINESSES

Indigenous-owned businesses are located both on- and off-reserve and are involved in nearly every sector of the Alberta economy. Table 10 provides a comparison of the estimated distribution of Indigenous-owned businesses both on- and off-reserve with all businesses in Alberta, for 2023.

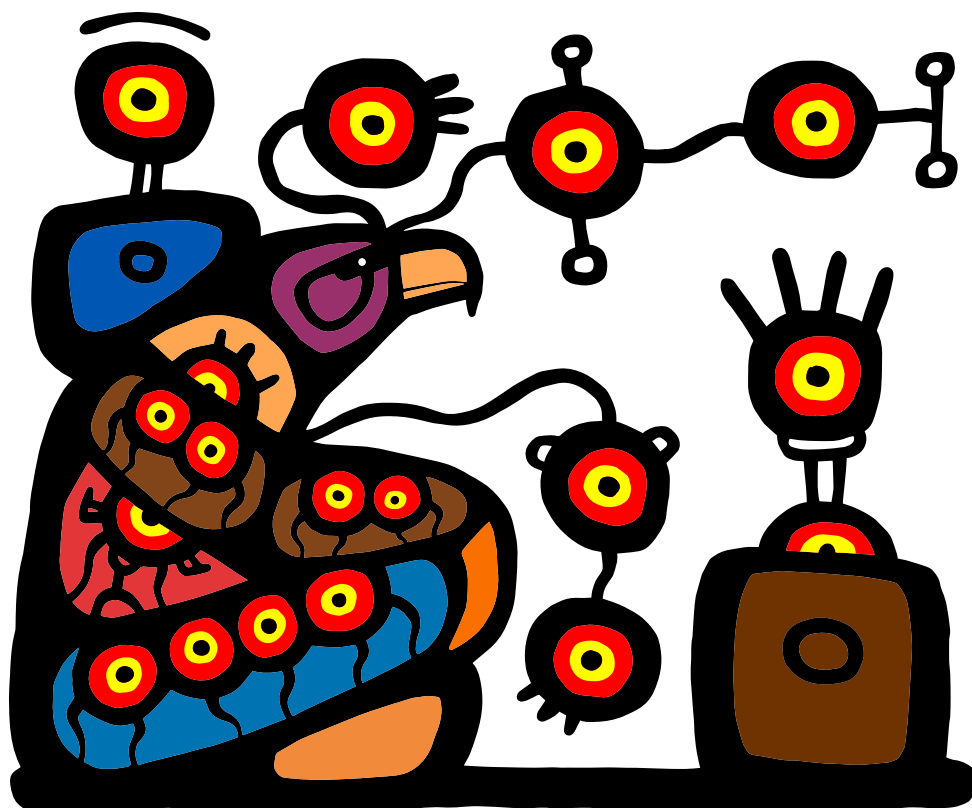


Table 10: Industry Sector Distribution of Indigenous-Owned Businesses and All Businesses in Alberta, by Sector, 2023⁴⁵

Sector	All Businesses (Alberta)	Indigenous-Owned (Off-Reserve)	Indigenous-Owned (On-Reserve)
Goods-producing industries	24%	35%	54%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying, oil and gas	11%	13%	39%
Utilities	0%	1%	1%
Construction	11%	15%	13%
Manufacturing	2%	6%	1%
Service-producing industries	76%	65%	46%
Wholesale and retail trade	8%	21%	6%
Transportation and warehousing	7%	8%	4%
Finance, insurance, real estate, rental and leasing	21%	2%	10%
Professional, scientific and technical services	14%	8%	8%
Business, building and other support services	5%	6%	4%
Educational services	1%	0%	0%
Healthcare and social assistance	7%	0%	0%
Information, culture and recreation	2%	5%	3%
Accommodation and food services	3%	8%	3%
Other services (except public administration)	7%	6%	7%

As shown in Table 11, in 2023, the total revenue from Indigenous-owned businesses in Alberta was approximately \$3.5 billion, of which \$1.8 billion was from on-reserve businesses and \$1.7 billion was from off-reserve businesses.

Table 11: Estimated On- and Off-Reserve Indigenous-Owned Business Revenues in Alberta, 2023

	Total Revenues—2023 (\$ millions)	Distribution (%)
Total	\$3,500	100%
On-Reserve	\$1,800	31%
Off-Reserve	\$1,700	49%

⁴⁵ Derived from Government of Canada. NAABA. CCAB, MNP. Statistics Canada.

Table 12 displays the estimated direct and indirect economic impacts of spending by Indigenous-owned businesses in 2023. The majority of the indirect impacts both in terms of employment and spending accrue to non-Indigenous-owned businesses. In addition to the direct and indirect impacts, Indigenous-owned businesses generate induced impacts through the wages and salaries paid to households and through the wages and salaries paid by their suppliers to households. The impacts of spending of wages and salaries by Indigenous-owned businesses and their suppliers are included in the household impacts.

Table 12: Estimated Direct and Indirect Economic Impacts of Indigenous-Owned Business Spending in Alberta, 2023

	Output (\$ millions)	GDP (\$ millions)	Labour Income (\$ millions)	Employment (FTEs)	Total Tax Revenues (\$ millions)
Direct	\$3,500	\$1,610	\$810	20,800	\$210
Indirect	\$1,750	\$930	\$520	5,000	\$170
Total	\$5,250	\$2,540	\$1,330	25,800	\$380

INDIGENOUS HOUSEHOLDS

Economic contributions of households in the Indigenous economy mainly come from two areas: spending by Indigenous households and spending of employment income received by non-Indigenous households as a result of the spending by Indigenous governments and Indigenous-owned business.

Spending by Indigenous households is supported by various sources, including employment income, government transfers (e.g., social assistance payments and Canada Pension Plan income) and other sources (e.g., private pensions and savings). Estimates of household income in the Indigenous economy were developed based on labour income generated by Indigenous governments and Indigenous-owned businesses, income reported to the Canada Revenue Agency on-reserve, employment information for the Indigenous population living off-reserve from Statistics Canada’s labour force survey, and information on government transfers from Statistics Canada.

As shown in Table 13, in 2023, the total household income in the Indigenous economy in Alberta was estimated to be \$10.23 billion, of which \$8.43 billion was wages and salaries paid to Indigenous households by non-Indigenous organizations, \$700 million was wages and salaries paid by Indigenous governments, \$240 million was wages and salaries paid by Indigenous-owned business and \$860 million was from other sources.

Table 13: Comparison of Household Income in the Indigenous Economy by Source, 2023

	Total Revenues—2023 (\$ millions)	Distribution (%)
Total	\$10,230	100%
Wages and salaries paid to Indigenous households by non-Indigenous organizations	\$8,430	82%
Wages and salaries paid by Indigenous governments	\$700	7%
Wages and salaries paid by Indigenous-owned businesses	\$240	2%
Other sources of income to Indigenous households	\$860	9%

Household spending occurs primarily off-reserve, generating economic impacts throughout the province of Alberta. Table 14 displays the estimated distribution of Indigenous household spending in Alberta.

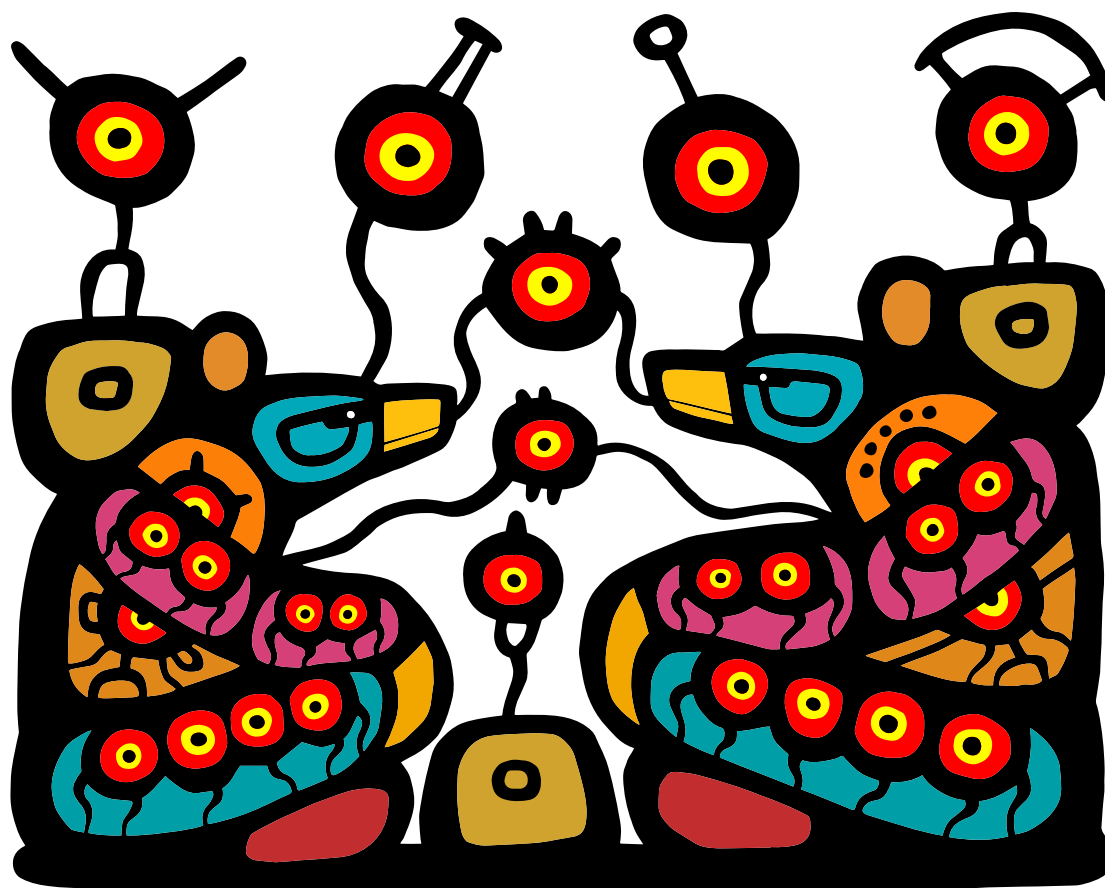
Table 14: Household Spending Distribution, by Category

Spending Category	Spending Distribution (%)
Shelter	23%
Food expenditures	12%
Transportation	11%
Household operations	6%
Water, fuel and electricity for principal accommodation	4%
Healthcare	3%
Recreation	4%
Income taxes	20%
Other	17%

Table 15 shows the estimated economic impacts of spending by Indigenous households in 2023.

Table 15: Estimated Total Economic Impacts of Household Spending in the Indigenous Economy in Alberta, 2023

	Output (\$ millions)	GDP (\$ millions)	Labour Income (\$ millions)	Employment (FTEs)	Total Tax Revenues (\$ millions)
Spending by Indigenous households	\$6,790	\$4,230	\$1,740	29,300	\$1,300
Spending by non-Indigenous households					
Induced impacts from Indigenous government spending	\$330	\$210	\$80	1,400	\$63
Induced impacts from Indigenous-owned business spending	\$700	\$430	\$180	3,000	\$130
Total	\$7,820	\$4,880	\$2,000	33,700	\$1,493



Appendix C—About ATB Financial

ATB Financial is the largest financial institution headquartered in western Canada and is the only mid-sized, full-service financial institution in Canada.

We have been providing expert advice and capital to businesses to grow and prosper, with strong expertise and market share in energy, agriculture, and real estate for 86 years.



Provides personal, business, energy, agriculture, corporate, and investment banking, as well as wealth management services to more than 820,000 clients in Alberta.



Positioned to declare quarterly dividends totalling \$100.0 million in fiscal 2025 to its Shareholder, the Government of Alberta.



Almost 1 in 5 Albertans bank with ATB Financial



Almost 1 in 4 Alberta businesses bank with ATB Financial



Recognized on seven Best Workplaces™ lists, including Best Workplaces in Canada - 1000+ Employees, Financial Services & Insurance, Women, Inclusion, Giving Back, Mental Wellness and Most Trusted Executive Teams



ATB Financial generates income with the **utmost attention to managing risk**. ATB Financial complies with top-tier global risk management regulatory guidance for capital and liquidity management.



Partnered with the Alberta Indigenous Opportunities Corporation to support 40 Indigenous communities in achieving equity ownership in energy infrastructure projects

Economic impact on Alberta

Since becoming a provincial Crown corporation 27 years ago, ATB Financial has returned over **\$5.3 billion** directly back to the Province in earnings, and has injected multiples of that figure into the Alberta economy.

ATB Financial's impact on provincial results in FY 2024

ATB Financial net income	\$337 million
Payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) settled as cash or issued as sub-debt	\$101 million
Deposit guarantee fee (DGF)	\$56 million
Total benefit	\$494 million

Anything that ATB Financial does not pay directly to government (for example, net income) shows up as earnings to the Province in consolidated financial statements.

As a self-funded organization, there is no cost to government for the operations of ATB Financial. ATB Financial also:



Generates a profit that is 100% included in the provincial budget



Pays interest on its wholesale borrowings and sub-debt



Provides payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT)



Pays at least a market rate for the deposit guarantee



\$2.0 billion in total revenue

a new annual record for ATB Financial



\$28.7 billion

in new and renewed lending in FY2024



11.9%

ATB Financial's Common Equity Tier (CET) 1 ratio, the strongest capital position of any regional bank in Canada



\$28.6 billion

in assets under administration by ATB Financial Wealth



5,000+

jobs provided as an Alberta-based organization



\$1.4 billion

societal impact in Alberta
(Compensation + net income + deposit guarantee fee (DGF) + PILOT + sponsorships + donations)

All numbers are for 2024 fiscal year



Appendix D—About MNP

ABOUT MNP

For 60 years, MNP has proudly served and responded to the needs of clients in the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors.



Today MNP is the fifth largest Chartered Professional Accountancy and business consulting firm in Canada and is the only major accounting and business consulting firm with its head office located in Western Canada. MNP has 127 locations and 8,700 team members across the country.

MNP'S CONSULTING SERVICES

MNP Consulting provides a broad range of business and advisory services to clients including:

- Strategy and Development Planning
- Stakeholder Engagement
- Performance Measurement
- Economic Analysis
- Research
- Data and Analytics
- Business Plans and Feasibility Studies
- Performance Improvement
- Financial Analysis

MNP'S ECONOMIC AND RESEARCH PRACTICE

Economic and Industry studies are carried out by MNP's Economics and Custom Research Practice. The Economics and Custom Research Practice is one of the largest of its kind in Western Canada and consists of a team of dedicated professionals that have a successful track record assisting clients with a variety of financial and economic studies. The team's work has encompassed a wide range of programs, industries, company operations and policy initiatives, and has helped clients with decision-making, communications of economic and financial contributions, documentation of the value of initiatives and activities, and development of public policy.

MNP'S INDIGENOUS SERVICES PRACTICE

National in scope and local in focus, MNP has proudly served First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Communities for more than 40 years. With more than 300 dedicated professionals serving this unique client group, MNP has developed a diverse suite of services designed to support your path to success and long-term financial health.

MNP has embraced collaborating with and learning about Indigenous Peoples, including their history and culture. Through this important relationship, we recognize the need for economic inclusion, higher standards of stewardship, collaborative decision making, and reciprocal prosperity.

MNP offers an integrated approach to working with all our clients in the assessment of their needs and in the development and implementation of practical and realistic solutions to address requirements. Our in-depth suite of business services combines industry expertise, market knowledge and professional insight with cultural awareness to identify opportunities to take you and your community, organization, or business to the next level.



MNP CONTACTS

Clayton Norris, CPA, CMA, CAFM, MBA, ICD.D

Vice President, Indigenous Services

E: Clayton.Norris@mnp.ca

Susan Mowbray, MA

Partner, Economics and Custom Research

E: Susan.Mowbray@mnp.ca