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INUIT TAPIRIIT KANATAMI

2026 Pre-Budget Submission

June 2026

About Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

Vision

Canadian Inuit are prospering through unity and self-determination.

Mission

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami is the national voice for protecting and advancing the rights and interests of Inuit in Canada.

Definitions

Inuit

Inuit are one of the three Indigenous Peoples of Canada and their Arctic territory encompasses Nunavut, Nunavik in Northern Quebec, Nunatsiavut in Northern Labrador and the Inuvialuit Settlement Region of the Northwest Territories. Inuit means people in Inuktut, the Inuit language.

Inuit Nunangat

Inuit Nunangat is the Inuit homeland in Canada, encompassing Nunavut, Nunavik in Northern Quebec, Nunatsiavut in Northern Labrador and the Inuvialuit Settlement Region of the Northwest Territories.

Inuktut

Inuktut is an original language of Canada, the original language of Inuit Nunangat and the first language of the majority of Inuit Nunangat residents. It encompasses all dialects spoken in Inuit Nunangat and is the only linguistic term that covers all and only the Inuit language groups in Inuit Nunangat.

Who We Are

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) is the national, democratic Inuit representative organization whose mandate is determined by Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, Nunavut Tunngavik Inc., Makivvik, and Nunatsiavut Government. These four Inuit Treaty Organizations have each signed one or more modern treaties with the Crown. They are the only Section 35 Inuit rights holding organizations in the country and their members include all Inuit.

Inuit are one of three Indigenous Peoples recognized by Section 35 of Canada's Constitution. Our homeland, Inuit Nunangat, makes up 40 percent of the country's land area, 72 percent of its coastline, 32 percent of Canada's surface water, and significant marine areas. Our people monitor, use and manage all of it.

Inuit Treaty Organizations form the voting members of the Board of Directors of ITK and Inuit Circumpolar Council Canada. ITK works closely with Inuit Circumpolar Council Canada, whose mandate is to strengthen unity among Inuit internationally. Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada and the National Inuit Youth Council are permanent participants of the ITK and Inuit Circumpolar Council Canada Boards.



Inuit Priorities for Budget 2026

Recommendation 1:

Budget 2026 should be structured in a manner that is consistent with the Inuit Nunangat Policy by including a standalone Inuit-specific section.

Inuit have welcomed previous federal budgets that include allocations specifically for Inuit Treaty Organizations because these allocations are more accessible, impactful, and respect and support Inuit governance. From an operational perspective, inclusion of an Inuit-specific section in Budget 2026 would improve efficiency, transparency and cost savings, resulting in more immediate positive impacts and benefits for Inuit that in turn benefit all Canadians (as opposed to a six month-plus post-budget process to determine implications of pan-Indigenous or other investments intended to benefit Inuit).

Recommendation 2:

That the government reduce poverty and advance equity in Inuit Nunangat by introducing an income-tested, \$7,500 refundable tax credit for low-income individual residents of Inuit Nunangat.

Inuit make up 82 percent of the Inuit Nunangat population and are more vulnerable than all other Canadians to the economic shocks driving up the nation's cost of living, with rising prices exacerbating inequities such as poverty, food insecurity, and tuberculosis. The median after-tax income for Inuit in the region is \$32,000 compared to \$100,000 for the region's non-Inuit population. The federal government should help provide residents of the 51 Inuit communities of Inuit Nunangat with a \$7,500 income-tested refundable tax credit indexed to inflation for low-income, individual residents to help prevent them from falling further behind other Canadians. The region-specific tax credit would serve as a floor rather than a ceiling for providing relief from the economic shocks driving up the cost of living nationally that are magnified by the region's high cost of living, enabling eligible residents to afford necessities such as food, goods, services, and harvesting supplies. The measure should be accompanied by greater efforts to reduce filing barriers for individuals to make it easier for Inuit to access the key benefits they are eligible for.

Recommendation 3:

That the government establish and fund a permanent replacement for the Inuit Child First Initiative.

Inuit and the federal government have designed a program framework to replace the interim Inuit Child First Initiative, the Inuit-specific initiative addressing needs equivalent to those covered by Jordan's Principle. The new federal program is designed as a long-term solution to alleviate the systemic gaps in health, education and related services and supports in Inuit Nunangat that contribute to social and economic distress. The federal government should establish and allocate \$120 million annually for the new federal program with additional support over the transition period, to ensure that Inuit children are able to equitably access essential health, education and related services, products and supports, when they need them.

Recommendation 4:

That the government introduce legislation as part of the Budget 2026 Implementation Act to establish the Inuit Nunangat University.

Limited access to post-secondary education in Inuit Nunangat impedes the region's economic growth and prosperity. ITK has laid the groundwork for establishing Inuit Nunangat University as the country's first, multijurisdictional Arctic university by 2030, a major contribution to the development of Canada's Arctic territory and a core nation building initiative that would help put it on equal footing with other Arctic nations. Funding allocated in Budget 2025 is being used to develop INU's main campus infrastructure in Arviat, NU with satellite campuses to follow in the three other regions of Inuit Nunangat. However, federal legislation is needed to ensure that federal investment in the University's infrastructure can be utilized by establishing INU as a degree-granting institution that can begin enrolling students and providing coursework when it opens its doors in four years.

Recommendation 5:

That the government improve access to health and social services for Inuit by working with Inuit to develop a National Inuit Identity Card, including funding of \$10 million over three years.

The lack of a single ID card for all Inuit can impede access to federal programs and the enjoyment of Inuit rights, including Inuit mobility rights. ITK is developing a National Inuit ID Card tied to membership in the four Inuit Treaty Organizations to streamline Inuit access to federal programs and services. We are seeking \$10 million over three years to conduct engagement with federal departments that include focus on the legislative and regulatory reform that may be required to secure federal recognition of the card, as well as for the physical production and distribution of the card to Inuit. The National Inuit ID Card would serve as the Inuit equivalent of an Indian Status Card and would reduce federal waste by preventing federal programs and services from being exploited by non-Inuit.

Recommendation 6:

That the government establish a Build Inuit Nunangat Fund of \$1 billion over five years, to support infrastructure and housing that directly benefits Inuit.

The Arctic is the future and Inuit are the foremost experts on the Arctic. Other Arctic States are taking measures now to secure their respective futures through major investments in infrastructure, including housing, designed to bring their respective Arctic territories into their countries, as well as into the global economy. The federal government should establish a Build Inuit Nunangat Fund as part of a more ambitious vision for developing its Arctic territory and asserting itself as an Arctic power. A Build Inuit Nunangat Fund would allow Inuit to access the funds needed to accelerate the development of the marine, social, telecommunication, and other infrastructure required to bring Inuit Nunangat into the rest of the country at a time of renewed geopolitical focus on the region. Investment in enabling infrastructure would also help significantly increase housing in Inuit Nunangat. The Fund would serve as a mechanism for more rapidly expediting Canada's nation building by enabling the advancement of concurrent Arctic infrastructure projects.

Recommendation 7:

That the government provide funding to implement the Inuit chapter of the Indigenous Justice Strategy of A) \$ 90 million in capital investments for justice-related infrastructure plus \$9 million in O&M annually and B) \$60 million over 3 years to expand Inuit-led justice services.

Inuit are more likely than other Canadians to be involved with the justice system due to complex factors including systemic discrimination, social and economic inequities, limited access to justice services, and the imposition of a colonial system that is incongruous with local and regional realities. The Inuit chapter of the federal Indigenous Justice Strategy, released in March 2025, provides a roadmap for improving access to justice, supporting Inuit community well-being and reducing crime and violence in Inuit Nunangat. The co-developed Strategy addresses the interrelated factors that place Inuit at greater risk for entering the justice system by focusing on the practical measures needed to improve the current system and support Inuit in exercising greater control over justice systems. To be transformative, the IJS requires long-term investment and collaboration across the justice system. Inuit Treaty Organizations have identified key measures for phase one of implementation of the strategy, which include justice-specific infrastructure such as Inuit-led Justice Centres that support access to justice services in their communities and the expansion of Inuit-led services such as Inuit justice system navigators and on-the-land justice programs. However, lack of funding to date to implement the Strategy has prevented Inuit and our partners from implementing the solutions identified in the Strategy.

Recommendation 8:

That the government invest \$131.6 million to eliminate TB in Inuit Nunangat.

Further investments in tuberculosis elimination are needed to fulfill the federal government's commitment to eliminate TB in Inuit Nunangat by 2030. Inuit Nunangat remains a global hotspot for tuberculosis, despite the federal government's 2018 public commitment to eliminate the disease from Inuit communities by 2030. Securing Inuit Nunangat and developing its economic potential is contingent on improving population health in the region. New investments in tuberculosis elimination are urgently needed to address the rate of tuberculosis of Inuit that is over 600 times the Canadian-born non-Indigenous people in Canada. These rates of tuberculosis are present in Inuit Nunangat at a time of renewed global focus on the Arctic region. Canada is a G7 country and one of three Arctic States contending with a decades-long public health crisis from tuberculosis. Tuberculosis and other health inequities hold Canada back from achieving its full potential as an Arctic power.

Socioeconomic Inequity Between Inuit and Non-Indigenous Canadians

Inuit in Inuit Nunangat

\$32,000

Median individual income¹



52%

Employment rate³



47%

Overcrowded Housing⁴



58%

Not completed high school⁵



21%

Completed post-secondary education⁶



68%

Children experiencing food insecurity⁷



72 years

Average life expectancy⁸



19%

Home ownership⁹

Non-Indigenous Canadians

\$100,000

Median individual income²
(living in Inuit Nunangat)

74%

Employment rate³

9%

Overcrowded Housing⁴

13%

Not completed high school⁵

61%

Completed post-secondary education⁶

17%

Children experiencing food insecurity⁷

85 years

Average life expectancy⁸

67%

Home ownership⁹

Indicators are presented for Inuit living in Inuit Nunangat and non-Indigenous persons living in Canada unless otherwise specified.


Sources:

- 1 "Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population," Statistics Canada, 2021; Income before tax.
- 2 "Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population," Statistics Canada, 2021; income before tax for non-Indigenous persons in Inuit Nunangat.Cen
- 3 "Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population," Table 98-10-0420-01, Statistics Canada, 2021; Aged 25 to 64 years.
- 4 "Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population," Table 98-10-0284-01, Statistics Canada, 2021; Definition is whether a private household is living in suitable accommodations according to the National Occupancy Standard; that is, whether the dwelling has enough bedrooms for the size and composition of the household.
- 5 "Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population," Statistics Canada, 2021; Aged 19 years and over who have not completed a certificate, diploma or degree.
- 6 "Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population," Statistics Canada, 2021; Aged 19 years and over who have completed a post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree.
- 7 "Indigenous Peoples Survey (IPS)," Statistics Canada, 2022; "Canadian Health Survey on Children and Youth," Statistics Canada, 2023; Custom tables for ages 1–17 years who experience moderate or severe food insecurity.
- 8 "Life expectancy at birth of Indigenous populations in Canada, Table 17-10-0160-01, Statistics Canada, year; Average life expectancy at birth from 2016 to 2021.
- 9 "Census Profile, 2021 Census of Population," Statistics Canada, 2021.




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