



First Nations Not Affiliated to an FNCFS Agency

Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There are 172 First Nations not affiliated to a First Nations child and family services (FNCFS) agency that typically receive protection services from their respective province/territory. Prevention services (primary, secondary, and tertiary) may come from the province/territory or the First Nation. The service landscape is complex with multiple actors and limited information from provinces/territories on the integration of service delivery with First Nations.

Implementing reforms to the FNCFS Program for First Nations not affiliated to an FNCFS agency will require the integration of:

- Provincial/territorial service delivery and funding with First Nations receiving services (protection and/or prevention);
- Federal government funding (to the provinces/territories and to First Nations); and,
- First Nations not affiliated to an FNCFS agency's delivery of prevention services (primary, secondary, tertiary) and their integration with protection services.

To ensure First Nations children can thrive, gaps in the integration of services and funding among these actors must be overcome to define and implement a service delivery approach, funding model, and performance reporting framework. This means working consistently across jurisdictions to define common understandings of service delivery and ensuring that in practice, protection and prevention services (primary, secondary, tertiary) are integrated

among multiple actors. This will be a significant undertaking.

In November 2021, at the request of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society (Caring Society), with the support of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), IFSD was contracted to undertake a child and family services (CFS) needs assessment regarding First Nations not affiliated to an FNCFS agency. The purpose of this project was to assess needs in First Nations not affiliated to an FNCFS agency for the delivery of prevention and other CFS-related services. The data gathered for this project was intended to define a range of approaches and costs for the delivery of CFS in First Nations not affiliated to an FNCFS agency. First Nations not affiliated to an FNCFS agency were invited to participate through regional and national gatherings, a questionnaire, and in-depth collaboration.

46% national participation in a questionnaire (2022); 9 regional workshops (75 First Nations); 2 national gatherings (65+ First Nations); and 5 in-depth analyses.

IFSD is grateful to the First Nations who shared their time, information, and expertise on CFS. This work would not have been possible without their honest and generous contributions.

IFSD worked with First Nations to build the information analyzed and discussed in this report that considers current funding, needs, and



options for a way forward. First Nations were invited to contribute and collaborate in this work in different ways:

1. National questionnaire;
2. Regional workshops;
3. Case study collaborations; and,
4. National gatherings to review findings.

At its launch, the project was expected to be completed by December 2022. However, it took significantly more time than planned to work with First Nations to gather data and to access data from the Government of Canada. More time was needed to ensure First Nations had a meaningful opportunity to participate given spare capacity in First Nations on CFS is limited, mandates for CFS vary, and starting points are different. Unlike existing FNCFS agencies and provincial/territorial service providers, there is limited history of practice or of peer networks. The regional workshops and national gatherings represented for many First Nations not affiliated to an FNCFS agency, the first time they gathered with other peers.

In addition, agreements on FNCFS between federal and provincial/territorial governments are not publicly accessible. This limits understanding of service requirements and associated resources for the province/territory. For First Nations not affiliated to an FNCFS agency, this means a gap in information that impedes their ability to harmonize protection and prevention (primary, secondary, tertiary) in the best interests of the child, with least disruptive measures, and with a culturally informed approach.

The variability in starting points and service delivery models in First Nations not affiliated to an FNCFS agency meant that no single approach could be defined. This circumstance is distinct from that of FNCFS agencies which have a common set of services and consistency in their delivery. With the commonality of services in FNCFS agencies, a national funding approach could be defined and modelled. Given the heterogeneity in starting points of First Nations not affiliated to an FNCFS agency, differentiation in needs, activities, and services should be expected.

Despite challenges associated with heterogeneity, IFSD defined options for a funding structure, i.e., the way money moves to First Nations and the associated conditions, and funding amounts, i.e., national estimates for prevention (primary, secondary, tertiary) service delivery in First Nations not affiliated to an FNCFS agency.

The three structures include status quo, a regional support model, and a needs assessment model (Table A).



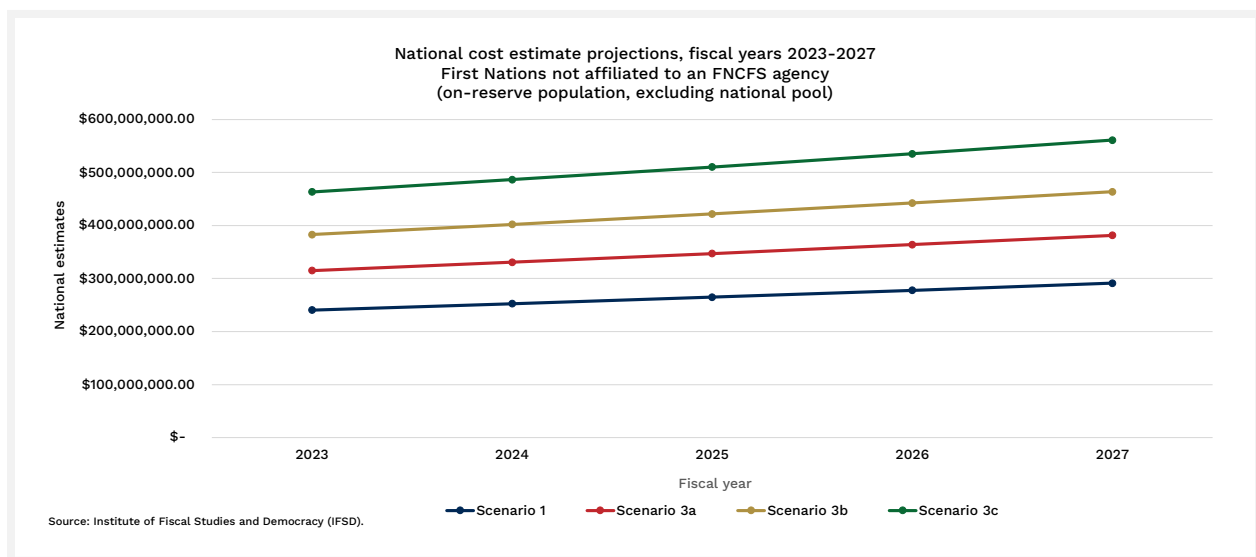
TABLE A

OPTION	DESCRIPTION	CHANGE FROM CURRENT STATE
1. Status quo	Fixed contribution approach.	None. Likely revision to terms and conditions.
1 a. Status quo plus	Apply block contribution approach.	First Nations have greater flexibility in how funds are used for CFS in communities. Must work with a fixed amount of funding.
2. Regional support model	Trusted regional organizations would serve as the funding allocator and capacity support provider for First Nations not affiliated to an FNCFS agency.	Variation in regional allocation models. Localized capacity support for CFS.
3. First National needs assessments	Funding held in trust by regional organizations until a First Nation is prepared to accept the funding for use (within approx. 1-5 years), following consultation with community on their own timeline.	Resources accessed based on readiness of First Nation.

To estimate funding amounts, IFSD developed a series of scenarios. There are three scenarios (scenarios 3a, 3b, 3c), in addition to the base scenario (scenario 1), that are reviewed in the integral report (all other scenarios are included in Appendix G). These scenarios use different

per capita allocations to define a baseline and include top-ups for service-related activities, e.g., information technology. Over the five-year period, estimates range from \$1.3B in scenario 1 to \$2.6B in scenario 3c (Figure A).

FIGURE A





The proposed structures and funding amounts represent a starting point. These changes do not represent a reformed approach to CFS delivery in First Nations not affiliated to an FNCFS agency. Without a consistent history of practice and prevention service delivery (primary, secondary, tertiary), it is not possible to define a baseline for operations. This means that any funding decisions implicating prevention service delivery in First Nations not affiliated to an FNCFS agency must recognize the need for time and effort to support the development and growth of consistent operations. This is about getting First Nations not affiliated to an FNCFS agency to a starting point. It will take time to clarify activities and their resource requirements, given the limited history of consistent service delivery.

Based on the report's findings, IFSD makes the following recommendations:

1. Clarify the prevention services (primary, secondary, tertiary) that First Nations are being asked to deliver with FNCFS resources.
 - ◇ Define federal reporting requirements for the funding.
 - ◇ Define service delivery expectations with their respective provincial/territorial FNCFS service providers, e.g., province/territory.
2. Publish agreements between the federal and provincial/territorial governments on FNCFS.
3. Require provincial/territorial governments to report to the First Nations they serve on the types of protection and prevention services (primary, secondary, tertiary) being offered, and their results.
4. First Nations and provincial/territorial governments should work in partnership to define memoranda of understanding to integrate protection and prevention (primary, secondary, tertiary) in service delivery.
5. On a regional/territorial basis, First Nations should define the funding approach that best suits their needs. This means that First Nations in different places may have different funding structures, e.g., regional organization managing allocation, separate bilateral agreements between First Nations and the federal government.
6. First Nations not affiliated to an FNCFS agency are only beginning to develop their approaches to the delivery of prevention services (primary, secondary, tertiary) with a limited history of practice. It will take time to clarify required activities and their resource requirements. Funding approaches should reflect that reality and should not be considered final until a consistent and stable set of activities are defined.
7. Ensure a review of the five-year approach at year three of funding and structure, relative to actual and desired activities in First Nations not affiliated to an FNCFS agency. Funding structure and resources should be adjusted based on findings.