



Video Transcript

Value-for-Money Audit: Indigenous Affairs in Ontario (2020)

As part of our 2020 Annual Report, we performed a value-for-money audit of the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs.

The nearly 375,000 Indigenous people in Ontario account for 3% of Ontario's population and 22% of all Indigenous people in Canada. Despite average provincial investments of \$898 million each year in the last five years, there are still social and economic disparities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Ontario.

The Ministry of Indigenous Affairs is responsible for setting priorities and tracking the province's progress in delivering policies and programs to improve the lives of Indigenous Peoples, ensuring the province consults with Indigenous communities on government decisions that may adversely impact their rights, and leading land claim negotiations.

Land claims are assertions made by an Indigenous community that their rights have been violated. The timely and fair settlement of these claims promotes reconciliation between the government and Indigenous Peoples.

In our audit, we looked at how the Ministry was performing, along with other provincial ministries and the broader public sector, in carrying out its responsibilities.

We found that the Ministry is not leading the province's Indigenous programs and services. Each provincial ministry independently designs and implements its own Indigenous policy initiatives according to its own priorities.

The lack of broadband access for Indigenous communities is limiting health, social and economic progress. Only 17% of households on First Nation reserves have access to basic Internet services.

The Ministry does not collect the information it needs to ensure the province is meeting its legal requirements to consult with Indigenous Peoples and their communities.

The Ministry is also not effectively leading negotiations for the timely settlement of land claims. The Ministry did not have adequate information to identify barriers that cause lengthy delays in process. The 19 land claims we reviewed that the province had concluded took, on average, 22 years to settle.

We also found that the Ministry lacks transparency and accountability because it does not assess or publicly report on the government's progress on meeting the needs of Indigenous Peoples.



Our report contains **14** recommendations, consisting of **28** actions, including that the Ministry:

- work with the government to consider updating its mandate, and make it better able to lead Indigenous affairs in Ontario;
- Assist other ministries with program agreements to make sure that funding is spent as intended; and
- establish timelines for negotiating, settling and implementing land claims, and document causes of delays.