



For Immediate Release

Chasing Paper: Forms over Function in First Nation Administration

May 6, 2020 – Northern Policy Institute's latest commentary found that First Nations face hurdles when it comes to applying for and reporting on funding.

Chasing Paper: Forms over Function in First Nation Administration, by Caitlin McAuliffe explores a major obstacle for First Nations who receive funding: reporting. On average a First Nation submits over 130 reports annually about the funding they have received. Creating a burden on the already stretched Band staff. Many of these reports duplicate information but vary in format. Meaning more work for the First Nation but little added value for the funder. There is also a disconnect between the community and funder in regard to reporting. Sometimes the community's goals for the project don't match the outcomes that the funder wants reported. Meaning that the true impact of the project is never assessed or even communicated.

When applying for funding, there are other hurdles that must be overcome. Many funders will only fund large capital projects, leaving few funding options for smaller (but still vitally important) projects. Another technical barrier is that new innovative funds often require an incorporation number, which causes a problem since a First Nation is not technically a business, municipality, person, or non-profit organization.

Another issue that the commentary mentions is how the reported data is used (or not). The data collected could be very beneficial to First Nations to see what is working in other First Nation communities. The data from all reporting First Nations is not, however, compiled and published in an easily accessible and easy to understand way. This makes the data unusable by those who could benefit from it the most, the First Nations themselves.

Some key recommendations from the report are:

1. Strengthen relationships and mutual accountability frameworks by creating a joint body governing relationship between Indigenous peoples and the Crown, driven by self-determination.
2. Implement a data governance and privacy framework with funding bodies.
3. Culturally Relevant Data Collection and Management Tools.
4. Impact Reports and Data Stories

Want to learn more, read the report here: <https://www.northernpolicy.ca/chasing-paper>



Media Interviews: NPI Research Manager Rachel Rizzuto is available for comment. To arrange an interview, please contact:

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About the Author:

Caitlin is from Sudbury Ontario. She is a graduate from Laurentian University with a B.A., major in Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies, minor in Indigenous Studies and Sociology, as well as a Social Research Methods Certificate. She also holds an Aboriginal Community and Social Development Diploma from Georgian College and Public Relations Diploma from Humber College.

Caitlin has worked in community development with Innisfil Public Library and township, and as an Undergraduate Research Assistant at Laurentian University. She is dedicated to research, planning and policy in addressing the unique challenges of Northern Ontario.

Caitlin's areas of interest are within Indigenous Affairs, environmental sustainability, gender equity and economic development. Outside of research, she enjoys canoe trips and trail running.

About Northern Policy Institute:

Northern Policy Institute is Northern Ontario's independent think tank. We perform research, collect and disseminate evidence, and identify policy opportunities to support the growth of sustainable Northern communities. Our operations are located in Thunder Bay and Sudbury. We seek to enhance Northern Ontario's capacity to take the lead position on socio-economic policy that impacts Northern Ontario, Ontario, and Canada as a whole.