

EXPERIENCES CANADA AND CANADA LIFE OFFER YOUTH ACROSS CANADA OPPORTUNITY TO FAST-TRACK THEIR IDEAS AND PROJECTS FOR RECONCILIATION

(OTTAWA – August 2, 2021) Experiences Canada is reopening applications for its virtual [Youth Leadership Forum on Reconciliation](#), bringing together 70 Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth (aged 14-25) from across the country to develop their ideas for taking greater action toward reconciliation.

Originally planned for July 5-9th, the Forum was postponed out of respect for the Indigenous participants and communities grieving the recent confirmations of burial sites at former residential schools across Canada. The event will now take place October 13th-17th and will offer youth participants' immediate access to the new Canada Life Micro-Grants for Reconciliation fund, allowing them to bring their projects to light.

“Over the past five years, Experiences Canada has been committed to building and strengthening relationships with Indigenous communities, doubling the participation of Indigenous youth in our exchanges programs,” said Deborah Morrison. “Over the past year we also produced extensive online programming and educational resources to amplify Indigenous voices and encourage learning and dialogue about the systemic injustices experienced by Indigenous peoples since settlers took over the country. However, like many Canadians, we know that now is the time for us to act, to do real things that will create meaningful impact.”

During the virtual forum, youth will participate in sharing circles to discuss the needs of Indigenous youth and their communities and share what reconciliation means to them. They will hear from Elders, Knowledge Keepers, community leaders and youth leaders about some of the inspiring work that is happening right now to effect change. Participants will also work in small groups to develop their own ideas and projects that address reconciliation as a priority and/or answer the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

“The goal of the week will be for participants to come away fully ready to implement a project that they feel pride in shaping and have the confidence to lead in their own community,” explains Jamie McCullough, Director of Programs for Experiences Canada. “What will make this forum unique is the immediate financial investment in their idea as well as the after-care youth will receive from Experiences Canada and volunteer mentors, following the forum, to help provide the participants with the support they need to carry out their project.”

“Canada Life is committed to reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and creating inclusive workplaces and communities. This begins with listening and learning to create cultures of understanding and acceptance,” said David Loney, Senior Vice-President, Technology Enablement Platforms, Canada Life. “That’s why we’ve been pleased to support Experiences Canada and their mission for more than four decades. Together, we’re providing youth the tools and opportunities to learn and create new ways to address injustices in our communities and our country. We want to empower today’s youth to become the mindful leaders of tomorrow.”

The Canada Life Micro-Grants for Reconciliation will provide youth participants with grants of up to \$2500 depending on the scale and scope of their project. The grants program will be administered by Experiences Canada and available to any youth participating in the Forum or accessing their online reconciliation webinars and resources. All youth recipients will be required to submit budgets and provide a final report or testimonial for their project commensurate to the level of their funding.

Experiences Canada is grateful for the generous support of Canada Life, along with other partners including Department of Canadian Heritage, Winnipeg Foundation, Power Corporation, and the Pollard Family Foundation who share their commitment to inspiring youth's voices and leadership in addressing key challenges and opportunities for their generation.

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