

Google Canada Announces \$250,000 Investment In Indigenous Education Through New ComIT Program, 'Recoding Futures'.

450 Indigenous Youth To Receive Free IT Training

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Google Canada, through its philanthropic division [Google.org](#), has announced a transformative investment of \$250,000 into [ComIT](#), a registered tech-focused charity that provides IT training, free of charge and tailored to the immediate market, for students and early career professionals facing employment barriers. Google's contribution supports the development of a program called Recoding Futures that will offer both technical and soft skill training to 450 Indigenous people across Canada, empowering the next generation of IT professionals.



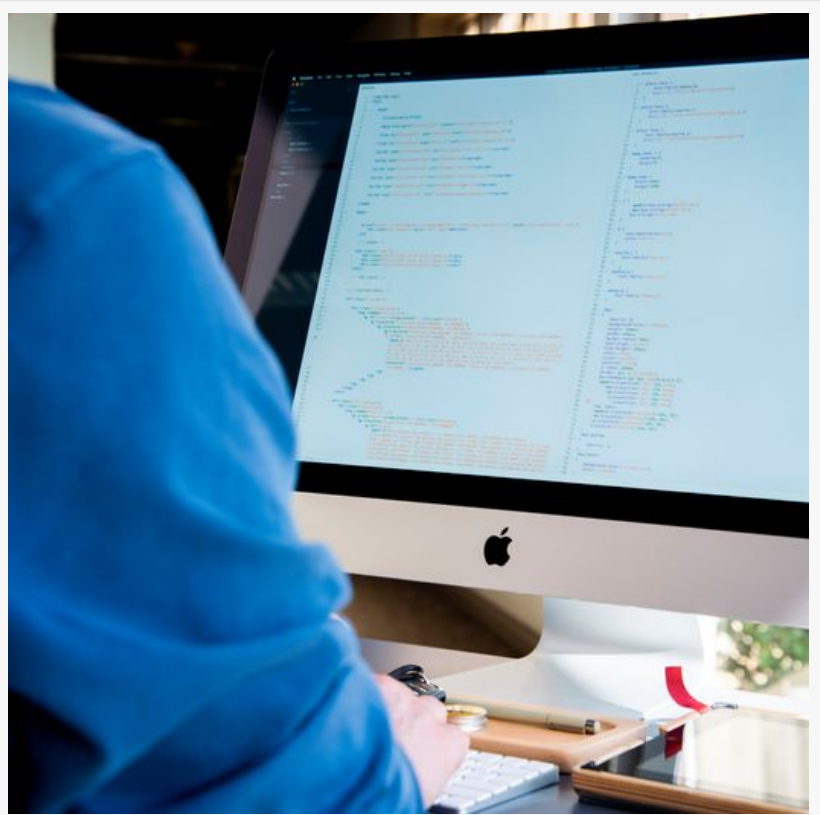
ComIT Student

With the highest annual job growth rate of any sector, the technology industry will determine Canada's economic recovery. Indigenous peoples remain largely underrepresented in the technology workforce, constituting 1.2% of IT positions nationally. However, they have the potential to make integral contributions to the industry's growth.

"We are pleased to work with insightful partners like ComIT," says Mike DeGagné, President and CEO of Indspire Canada, an Indigenous national charity that educates, connects, and invests in Indigenous people for the mutual benefit of their communities and our nation at large. "It's a ground-breaking way to assist First Nations, Inuit, and Métis learners as they overcome historical

obstacles to entry into this field, and we look forward to a mutually beneficial collaboration – one which will also benefit Indigenous students across Canada.”

A Conference Board of Canada report found the top two barriers to recruiting Indigenous employees are reaching Indigenous candidates, and a lack of job-specific training credentials on the part of those candidates. “It reflects a failure of recruitment strategies and training programs, which are often financially inaccessible for new or unemployed workers.” says Pablo Listingart, Executive Director of ComIT. “It’s our job to fix it, and it’s a win-win if we do.”



ComIT Course

Research agrees. According to analysts, closing the gap in access to education, employment, and income between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations could generate an additional \$335 billion in economic activity by 2031. “Indigenous peoples have been a central contributor to our national economy,” says Listingart. “With proper access to training, they have the potential to transform our recovery and our post-COVID technological landscape.”

Founded in 2016, ComIT curates courses that speak directly to the needs of local job markets, tackling the skills gap by focusing on the tools and coding languages used by local companies. Combined with a focus on professional development, ComIT has helped hundreds of graduates in Canada find jobs upon program completion.

ComIT’s one-month program will offer free training for 450 Indigenous people over the age of 15 who are interested in beginning or continuing their IT education. Included in the course will be lessons on Design Thinking, HTML, CSS, and Javascript, and the tools needed to build a basic website. Beginning in January, the course will be delivered over 9 classes, 3 hours each, twice weekly. The sessions will be virtual and recorded to ensure ease of access for all participants.

“In order to have a Canadian tech community that is truly reflective of our country, it’s important that we expand access to STEM education, and that relevant, universally accessible training programs are in place to address immediate job needs,” says Steven Woods, Google Canada Engineering Lead. “ComIT’s programs are unique. They work with companies to understand roles that need to be filled locally, and then create targeted education programs for these roles,

ensuring job applicants have the appropriate skills to then transition into job placements."

ComIT will follow the initial one month program with a series of employability courses, beginning in March. Those courses will run for 3 months, with 3 weekly sessions. Topics will vary depending on local labor market needs. Students will receive technical lessons in combination with resume building, interview skill training, and other soft skill development opportunities. ComIT will offer 5 online courses for 150 participants in total throughout the year, with the final course beginning in September 2021.

Applications are now open for Recoding Futures. Interested applicants can visit ComIT for more [information](#) and to register for the program.

About Google

Google is a global technology leader focused on organizing the world's information in a way that's universally accessible and useful. Google's innovations in web search and advertising have made its brand one of the most recognized in the world.

About Indspire

Indspire is an Indigenous national charity that invests in the education of First Nations, Inuit and Métis people for the mutual benefit of these individuals, their families, their communities, and our country. Indspire, recognized by Maclean's as a 2019 Top Rated Charity, works to enrich Canada through Indigenous education and achievement.

About ComIT

ComIT is a registered charity that provides free training and professional development opportunities in information technology. Their courses are taught by IT professionals working at leading companies, with a curated curriculum built to ensure graduates are equipped to meet the needs of the immediate labor market. ComIT believes that the democratization of education and opportunity is Canada's path forward.

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