

**Written Submission for the Pre-Budget Consultations
in Advance of Federal Budget 2026**

By: The Terry Fox Humanitarian Award Program





Recommendation: That, to advance and strengthen the Terry Fox Humanitarian Award to compete shoulder-to-shoulder with the world’s most recognized scholarships, such as the Rhodes and Fulbright, the government make a one-time investment of \$30 million over the next two years to increase the value and number of awards, and expand our reach to underserved communities.



A Canada inspired and united by the courage, resilience, and humanitarianism of its youth.
Terry Fox Humanitarian Award, 2026

Introduction

Canada's most promising youth are being recruited away – and the competition is better funded.

Canada faces an urgent test of national resolve. Challenges to our sovereignty, economic independence, and social cohesion demand a new generation of purpose-driven leaders – courageous, resilient Canadians committed to building something greater than themselves. These are the young people our country needs most, and the ones other nations are working hardest to attract.

Scholarships, such as the Rhodes and Fulbright, are actively targeting Canadian talent. Better funded institutions in the U.S. and abroad are luring our best and brightest away from our nation. Every outstanding young Canadian who leaves for a foreign scholarship is a loss our country can no longer afford to ignore.

Canada has its own answer – one with 44 years of proof behind it: **the Terry Fox Humanitarian Award is uniquely positioned to be a preeminent scholarship globally – to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Rhodes and Fulbright, and to keep Canada's most promising young people invested in the future of this country.**

Our vision – *A Canada inspired and united by the courage, resilience, and humanitarianism of its youth* – is a direct response to what Canada needs right now: **unity of purpose, investment in its people, and the confidence to declare that our values and our youth are worth fighting for.**

Established in 1982, the Terry Fox Humanitarian Award (TFHA) has a record of accomplishment. In the first four decades, we:

- Grew an initial \$15 million to a \$32 million endowment
- Funded the first degrees of over 1,100 of our nation's most promising students
- AND issued over \$21 million in scholarships to deserving Canadians.¹

¹ Between 1982-2025, the total value of awards issued was \$21,592,000 and the total amount paid out as of March 31, 2025, is \$17,005,159.



We are seeking a one-time investment of \$30 million to scale the impact and reach of TFHA by increasing the value and number of awards, expanding outreach to underserved communities, and forging the partnerships necessary to better serve young Canadians with the most potential to change the world for the better.

This proposal is organised into four sections:

1. History of Canadian Partnership and Award Criteria: 1985-2026
2. The Goal: United and Strong, a Vision for Change and New Partners
3. The Plan: Increase Value and Elevate by Optimizing Capacity and Reach
4. Conclusion

History of Canadian Partnership and Award Criteria: 1985-2026

From the very beginning, support for the Terry Fox Humanitarian Award has been non-partisan.

Terry is an unrivalled symbol of Canadian grit – the determination to dream the impossible, the courage to traverse obstacles, and the hope for a better future. No greater icon unites and inspires Canadians like Terry Fox.

The Government of Canada established the program through two agreements:

1. In 1982 - \$5 million under Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau
2. In 2006 - \$10 million under Prime Minister Stephen Harper

In 2023, we submitted a proposal for \$40 million and received \$10 million from *Budget 2024*. While appreciated, this fell short of what is needed to align the value of the award with the cost of education.

Award Criteria

Recipients are selected for distinction in:

1. Humanitarian Service
2. Courage and Determination
3. Citizenship and Civic Engagement
4. Amateur Sport and Fitness
5. Academics



TFHA invests in youth who:



Solve humanitarian problems that address the most pressing issues of today.



Emulate Terry's bravery and tenacity in overcoming obstacles.



Impact and change local, regional, and global communities, deeply and positively.

To qualify for the award, applicants must be a:



- Canadian citizen or landed immigrant
- Student graduating from secondary school, or completing their first year of CÉGEP
- Student who is already pursuing post-secondary studies at a recognized Canadian institution but has yet to complete their first degree.

Between 1985 and 2026, TFHA alumni have made significant contributions worldwide - leading work on climate change, global health at the WHO, international finance at the World Bank, Indigenous justice, STEM research, and poverty reduction.

We are consistently ranked among Canada's most prestigious scholarships, including by *Maclean's* magazine.² Our "by Canadians for Canadians" legacy spans over 1,100 recipients from every province, reflecting a breadth of ethnic, racial, gender, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

² We are one of the top three scholarships reported on by *Maclean's* annually, in its *Education* issue. TFHA was featured most recently in April 2026. See <https://macleans.ca/education/student-hub/paying-for-it/how-i-won-the-terry-fox-humanitarian-award/>



The Goal: United and Strong, A Vision for Change & New Partners (Federal, Provincial, and Corporate)



There is a vacuum nationally, and globally – and TFHA is positioned to fill it.

Scholarship programs have been widely utilized for nation-building. By investing and showcasing their most promising citizens, nations have increased economic competitiveness, furthered understanding and cooperation, and shored up unity and national identity through the provision of scholarships. Scholarships are vehicles that successfully contribute to developing positive relationships for the purposes of securing peace, stability, and productivity on the world stage.

Yet Canada does not have a counterpart that unites and connotes a sense of national aspiration and pride in a manner comparable to TFHA.

Measured against the competition, we are severely under-resourced.

Both the Rhodes and Fulbright commit more resources to Canadian youth on an annual basis than TFHA. For example, despite deep cuts to their *Federal Budget 2026*, the US Government approved \$667 million for the Fulbright, including programs targeted to attract Canada's best and brightest. Major Canadian scholarships were established with investments that were exponentially larger than that of TFHA. The Pierre Elliot Trudeau Foundation, for instance, received an investment of \$125 million in 2002.

No other name is comparable to that of Terry Fox in uniting Canadians. Upon receiving the Order of Canada in 1980, Terry recounted;

You know I've heard a lot about how I've had a part in maybe helping unite the country, each province... that really makes me feel good...I dreamt of a lot of things in my run but that was something I never expected...

Forty-six years later, Terry continues to unite us across the aisle, cutting through layers of division to serve as the strongest symbol of Canada's best qualities. Globally, he is respected and revered as the embodiment of hope, courage, and determination.

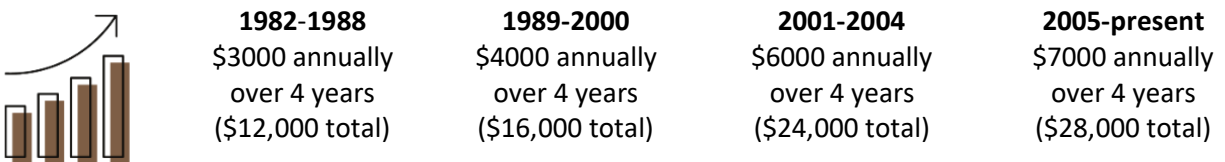


Terry’s name and reputation have the gravitas to inspire and call us to action – to help others, to dream the impossible, and to go the distance as we reach for the extraordinary.

Terry Fox Humanitarians are uniquely positioned to act as powerful ambassadors and play a leadership role in shaping the future.

The Plan: Increase Value and Elevate by Optimizing Capacity and Reach

The program has not been able to keep pace with the rising cost of education, having increased the scholarship amount only three times:



For two decades the award value has been frozen, while tuition has risen close to 800% since 1982 – the award has grown by only 233%.

With the growing cost of education and a comparative lack of funding, we are losing promising candidates to better-funded opportunities in the United States. Additional pressures – an unpredictable investment climate, an increased non-profit disbursement quota, and contractual obligations to protect existing endowments in perpetuity – further constrain our ability to serve young Canadians.

As illustrated by the diagram, the total number of scholarships we are funding has dropped from a high point of 51 in 1985, to only 13 in 2025.





Our goal is to bring tuition coverage in line with current costs, to \$7,500 maximum per year, and provide a monthly stipend of \$1,000 per month (to a maximum of 10 months) for full-time education (to cover living expenses, books, and other materials). This would bring the total award value in line with our competitors, to a maximum of \$17,500 per year, and \$70,000 over 4 years.



Annual Announcement in Ottawa (and Provinces)

Beginning in 2024, we fostered a new partnership with the House Speaker of Canada and MPs across all parties. Graduates and new cohorts are being announced on Parliament Hill, in a ceremony co-hosted by MPs from the Liberal, Conservative, Bloc Québécois, Green, and NDP parties – a testament to TFHA’s non-partisan appeal.

We are also creating partnerships with the provinces. BC’s House Speaker will host its first TFHA announcement in November 2026. We are also working with Ontario, Alberta, and BC to establish provincial funding to match Federal investments, and aim to approach Québec, the Maritimes, and other provinces.

Quebec and Indigenous Youth Outreach

To serve all Canadians, we must expand our reach to Québec, Indigenous communities, and other underserved populations. Dedicated bilingual staff and regional representatives are needed to bridge relationships, raise awareness, and increase applications from these communities.

Other Events and Expansion Opportunities

In just over a year, we hosted regional events in Calgary, Toronto, Vancouver, Halifax, Montréal, Winnipeg, and Edmonton, bringing community leaders and young minds together. We also launched an online series featuring prominent Canadians from academia,



business, and public service – including university deans, MPs, and nonprofit leaders – creating empowering spaces for youth to connect, build capacity, and advance their ideas.

Conclusion

Canada stands at a defining crossroads – and Terry Fox has never been more relevant.

In a time of economic uncertainty, rising division, and intensified competition for our best minds, Canada needs a rallying symbol.

TFHA is uniquely equipped to answer this moment. No name is more compelling than Terry Fox. Rooted in values that define us – courage, resilience, and compassion – TFHA is not simply a scholarship program. It is a statement of national purpose: that Canada invests in its youth and refuses to cede its finest minds or its defining values to anyone.

For 44 years, TFHA has honoured the courage, hope, and determination of young Canadians. Over 1,100 recipients now lead transformative work at the WHO, the World Bank, major hospitals, and influential institutions across Canada and the globe. They are proof of what happens when Canada bets on its best.

Yet the program has not kept pace with the rising cost of education, the growing ambition of competing international scholarships, or the urgent need to reach underserved communities – including Indigenous and Québécois youth. The \$30 million investment requested would directly address these gaps: increasing the number and value of awards to reflect today's educational costs and expanding outreach to communities that have yet to fully benefit from Terry's legacy.

This is a rare opportunity to transform a proven program into a world-class institution. The Rhodes and Fulbright have long understood what Canada needs to act on: that scholarships are instruments of nation-building, and that investing in purpose-driven young people is one of the highest-return commitments a government can make. With \$30 million, Canada can close that gap – and do so under the banner of its most beloved and unifying icon.

Courage. Hope. Determination. These are not just the words that describe us - they are the words Terry Fox left us. They describe the Canada we aspire to be, and the young Canadians who are already living those values every day.



We ask the Government of Canada to match that spirit – and to make the investment that will carry it forward. Now, more than ever, Canada needs the Terry Fox Humanitarian Award at its full potential.