

Should Canada reduce spending on foreign aid?

General background

Foreign aid is a key part of the global economy, totalling hundreds of billions of dollars and taking the form of grants, loans, and gifts (including goods and services) being voluntarily transferred amongst countries – usually from the more developed Global North to the developing Global South. It goes towards areas including but not limited to health, sanitation, education, and infrastructure, as well as on refugees within donor countries.

In the 2023-2024 fiscal year, Canada spent \$12 billion on foreign aid. This included \$6.8 billion in official development assistance (government aid that goes directly towards economic development/welfare in developing countries), or 0.34% of their gross national income (all earnings by a country's people and businesses). This makes the country the 6th largest total provider of official development assistance and 15th largest as a percentage of their gross national income.

Foreign aid spending became a contentious topic during the 2025 federal election, with now-Prime Minister Mark Carney promising not to cut foreign aid while Pierre Poiliviere's Conservatives vowed to divert \$9.4 billion in foreign aid over the next four years to military and domestic spending.

For more information:

- [What is foreign aid? How "Official Development Assistance" is measured](#) (Our World in Data)
- [Donor Profile: Canada](#) (Donor Tracker)
- [Election 2025: What are the Parties Saying About Foreign Aid?](#) (Centre for International Policy Studies)