

Nishnawbe  
Aski Nation

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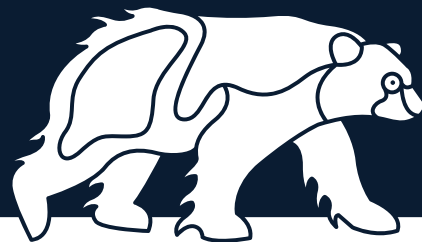
**ANNUAL REPORT**

2022-2023

# Table of Contents

- Executive Council . . . . . 1**
  - Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum . . . . . 2
  - Deputy Grand Chief Bobby Narcisse . . . . . 4
  - Deputy Grand Chief Victor Linklater . . . . . 6
  - Chief Administrative Officer Melinda Meekis . . . . . 8
- About Nishnawbe Aski Nation . . . . . 10**
- NAN Advisory Councils . . . . . 12**
- Affiliated Organizations . . . . . 14**
- Administration . . . . . 14**
- Department Updates**
  - Communications, Media & Information Technology . . . . . 15
  - Community Wellness . . . . . 21
  - Early Years . . . . . 29
  - Governance and Treaty . . . . . 39
  - Homelessness . . . . . 45
  - Justice Research and Policy . . . . . 47
  - Opioid Use Disorder . . . . . 51
  - Reclamation and Healing . . . . . 53
  - Women’s Initiatives . . . . . 59
  - Education . . . . . 65
  - National Assembly of Remote Communities . . . . . 85
  - Social Services . . . . . 87
  - Health Transformation . . . . . 97
  - Housing and Infrastructure . . . . . 105
  - Sustainable Initiatives . . . . . 129
- NAN - IAO Relationship Table . . . . .133**
- NAN Offices . . . . .135**
- NAN Financial Statements . . . . .137**

**50<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**



**1973 - 2023**





# Nishnawbe Aski Nation

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL



DEPUTY GRAND CHIEF

**Anna Betty Achneepineskum**

Wachiya and Boozhoo Ogimakanak, Elders, Women, Youth and Citizens of Nishnawbe Aski.

As leaders, it is challenging but fulfilling work that we get to do each day, and I am grateful for this opportunity. When I was elected in 2021, I accepted the challenge of being an Executive Council member. My heart is with our people, and I remain committed to serving the people and communities of Nishnawbe Aski alongside the Executive Council, Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Staff, Community Leadership, Tribal Councils, and partner organizations.

In the last year, we helped families, men, women, youth, children, Elders, 2SLGBTQ+ individuals, Survivors, victims, and the deceased. We are here for our people, but we know there's always more we can do, and that we can do it better, together. I hope you enjoy reading the reports by the Community Wellness, Reclamation and Healing, Women's Initiatives, Early Years, and Justice Departments, and reports on Fire Safety and Prevention, Homelessness and Opioid Use Disorder. This is important work we are doing, but I also want to highlight a few areas.

His Holiness Pope Francis came to Canada in July 2022. The six-day papal visit included a historic apology to Survivors for abuses at Indian Residential Schools. Some Survivors accepted the apology, others did not. Healing looks different for each Survivor, which is why we will keep promoting a variety of healing initiatives to Survivors. We are here for Survivors and their families.

We are reviewing the NAN Crisis Response Program with the goal of improving our response. We want to achieve an efficient crisis response that factors in the cultural practices of our people, and equitable remuneration for crisis response workers. This line of work takes committed people, and some of us understand the physical, emotional, and mental tolls of the job.

We heard from Leadership that the opioid drug addiction epidemic is devastating communities. Many of us have grieved for the loss of loved ones due to overdose deaths, which would have been preventable if harm reduction services and treatment were more accessible or available. To help combat this crisis, a NAN-wide drug addiction prevention strategy is needed to secure the required investments. We have started to conduct research and collect data, but we need more resources. We must not give up when our people are looking to us, as leaders, to do something.

Our communities continue to lose precious lives due to fatal house fires. Our Treaty partners only respond with some investment when there has been a fatality in a community. NAN received a mandate to file a human rights complaint on the lack of fire safety and prevention capacity in communities, which will be a priority in the next year because our families and children deserve to be safe and protected from house fires.

Even in death, our people need a voice. This is why we pushed for the additional 16 cases identified for further investigation in the report back to the "Broken Trust" report to be actioned. I am pleased that the Ontario Provincial Police will investigate 13 cases. We will work with them and Nishnawbe-Aski Legal Services to support the families of the deceased. But we can't forget the 25 unsolved cases of missing and murdered Indigenous women also identified. Our people deserve justice. Families deserve closure and answers for the death of their loved ones.

Together we are stronger. We must support each other and work together to make life better for our people. Miigwech, and may Creator watch over you and keep you safe.





DEPUTY GRAND CHIEF

**Bobby Narcisse**

Booshoo, Wacheya!

I am proud to have completed the second year of my term as your Deputy Grand Chief, which has come with many strides and some challenges. I want to acknowledge my office and department staff supporting our communities and the citizens of Nishnawbe Aski Nation while I was on medical leave for several months. Upon my return, I was able to pick up where we had left off in December with high level negotiations. Thank you to our NAN staff, Leadership, Women, Youth and Elders for their encouragement and support.

The Social Services Department has evolved to better meet the needs of the communities we serve. We have made significant inroads through our advocacy work in this sector. New community-based solutions are being supported, and we have secured additional funding to support these initiatives. We have evolved the Social Services Department into two branches: Strategic Advancement Department, and Support and Implementation Department.

Strategic Advancement focuses on advocacy and negotiations with all levels of government. I am pleased to announce that with the support of this Department we are in the early stages of creating the NAN-Canada Choose Life Table. The Support and Implementation Department will focus on integral programs such as the Family Well-Being Program, whose goals are eliminating family violence, keeping youth and children out of care, and preventing youth from entering the justice system. This prevention program focuses on all age groups and is designed at the grassroots level to focus on your community needs to help build strong family bonds.

Like our Social Services Department, our Education Department has also made several strides this past year supporting students on their educational journey. The team continues to build partnerships across NAN and urban centers to better advocate for safety and support for every NAN learner. The Education Jurisdiction Team has returned to the negotiation table and is already making gains to update the final agreement with Canada. I acknowledge the Director and Managers of the education department for playing an integral role at the various tables they attend, bringing the expertise and information provided by partners to assist in the discussions.

Lastly, but most importantly, I would like to thank our NAN Chiefs and Technical Committees for guiding us in our work. I always look forward to our meaningful discussions as we move forward advocating for Nishnawbe Aski Nation.

Miigwetch,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bobby Narcisse".





DEPUTY GRAND CHIEF

**Victor Linklater**

Greetings to all Chiefs and Citizens of Nishnawbe Aski Nation!

It is a great honour to complete my second year as Deputy Grand Chief of Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN). I would like to thank the NAN Chiefs, Elders, Women, Youth, and citizens for your continued trust, as well as your words of guidance along the way.

This year was not without its challenges. However, what stands out to me is the enduring strength and unwavering collective efforts of the NAN Leadership, Elders, Women, Youth, and citizens who continued to dedicate themselves to the important work of transforming existing systems to meet the needs of NAN citizens. I am committed to continuing to work with you all in the spirit of transparency, accountability, and partnership. We are stronger together.

Health Transformation has continued to evolve, with strengthened partnerships at the heart of our approach. I am proud of the significant work undertaken to design a new approach to Health Transformation that promotes enhanced alignment with NAN communities, Tribal Councils, and Health Authorities/Co-Ops. The advice and leadership of the NAN Chiefs Council on Health Transformation was integral to the work accomplished this year, and I would like to acknowledge their important role in advancing this portfolio. I would also like to acknowledge Alvin Fiddler, Lead Negotiator, and thank him for his continued service and contributions to NAN territory.

*Victor Linklater*





CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

**Melinda Meekis**

On behalf of Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN), I am pleased to present our 2022-2023 Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements.

The past year we created partnerships and new opportunities to advance NAN strategies, priorities, and work plans. This year's Annual Report highlights the successes and progress we have made over the past fiscal year. I am proud of our Senior Management Teams that support the work of the Executive Council.

Several departments have been restructured to improve efficiency and strengthen the organization. We are continuing to review and revise our internal policies and procedures to ensure that NAN remains a safe, welcoming, and rewarding work environment for everyone.

Under the guidance of the Chiefs Finance Committee, we will continue to operate the organization to better position the communities for self-determination and improved social economic conditions.

I am proud of our Directors, Managers and staff. They are key to our success, and I am grateful for their dedication and resiliency to building more meaningful relationships with our communities, stakeholders, and partners.

Meegwetch

*Melinda Meekis*

# ABOUT NISHNAWBE ASKI NATION

Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) was established in 1973, and was originally known as Grand Council Treaty No. 9 until 1983. Grand Council Treaty No. 9 made a public declaration – A Declaration of Nishnawbe-Aski (The People and the Land) – of our rights and principles in 1977.

NAN territory encompasses James Bay Treaty No. 9 and the Ontario portion of Treaty No. 5, a landmass covering two-thirds of the Province of Ontario, spanning 210,000 square miles.

NAN represents 49 First Nations with a total population (on and off-reserve) of approximately 45,000 people grouped by Tribal Council. Six of our member Nations are not affiliated with a specific Tribal Council.

Our people traditionally speak Cree and Algonquin in the east, Ojibwe in the west, and Ojibway in the central south area.

NAN advocates on behalf of our member First Nations for self-determination with functioning self-government through partnerships and agreements with our Treaty partners - the governments of Canada and Ontario.

## FIRST NATIONS & TRIBAL COUNCILS

### Independent Bands

- |  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| 1. Hornepayne                          | 4. Sandy Lake          |
| 2. Mishkeegogamang                     | 5. Wahgoshig           |
| 3. Mocrebec Council of the Cree Nation | 6. Weenusk (Peawanuck) |

### Independent First Nations Alliance

- |                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| 7. Lac Seul    | 9. Pikangikum |
| 8. Muskrat Dam |               |

### Keewaytinook Okimakinak

- |                 |                       |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| 10. Deer Lake   | 13. McDowell Lake     |
| 11. Fort Severn | 14. North Spirit Lake |
| 12. Keewaywin   | 15. Poplar Hill       |

### Matawa First Nations

- |                    |                  |
|--------------------|------------------|
| 16. Aroland        | 21. Marten Falls |
| 17. Constance Lake | 22. Neskantega   |
| 18. Eabametoong    | 23. Nibinamik    |
| 19. Ginoogaming    | 24. Webequie     |
| 20. Long Lake #58  |                  |

### Mushkegowuk Council

- |                   |                     |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| 25. Attawapiskat  | 29. Missanabie Cree |
| 26. Chapleau Cree | 30. Moose Cree      |
| 27. Fort Albany   | 31. Taykwa Tagamou  |
| 28. Kashechewan   |                     |

### Shibogama First Nations Councils

- |                     |                   |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 32. Kasabonika Lake | 35. Wawakapewin   |
| 33. Kingfisher Lake | 36. Wunnumin Lake |
| 34. Wapekeka        |                   |

### Wabun Tribal Council

- |                      |                 |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| 37. Beaverhouse      | 40. Flying Post |
| 38. Brunswick House  | 41. Matachewan  |
| 39. Chapleau Ojibway | 42. Mattagami   |

### Windigo First Nations Council

- |                        |                     |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| 43. Bearskin Lake      | 47. Sachigo Lake    |
| 44. Cat Lake           | 48. Slate Falls     |
| 45. Koocheching        | 49. Whitewater Lake |
| 46. North Caribou Lake |                     |





# Nishnawbe Aski Nation Advisory Councils

**Nishnawbe Aski Nation has several advisory councils that advise and support the work of the Executive Council and staff.**

## NAN ELDER'S COUNCIL

The Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Elder's Council was established on March 24, 1988. The NAN Elder's Council consists of 12 members selected from all geographic areas of NAN territory.

They are selected for their vision and experience, and range from 60 to 80 years old. The Elder's Council mandate is to review NAN resolutions and to provide guidance and advice to the NAN Chiefs, NAN Executive Council, and all other people of NAN on major issues.

Our Elders provide direction on their understanding of Treaty No. 9 and Treaty No. 5, stating that the treaty arrangement would protect First Nations way of life, and that First Nations never surrendered their title to their land.



## NAN WOMEN'S COUNCIL

The NAN Women's Council represents women and families in the governance of NAN. The primary purpose of this leadership role is to ensure that women's issues, family issues, concerns, priorities and needs are identified and addressed within NAN.

The NAN Women's Council honours its leadership role by:

- ▶ Ensuring that women have meaningful participation in the strategies and initiatives led by NAN.
- ▶ Promoting and facilitating community-based and governmental action required to address women's issues by leading forums, advocating for resources and embracing leadership.
- ▶ Providing support to the Deputy Grand Chief responsible for the Women's Initiatives portfolio.
- ▶ Representing women and families in the decision-making process of NAN Chiefs Assemblies.
- ▶ Working to support the collective needs of women's issues, concerns and priorities.

## OSHKAAATISAK (ALL YOUNG PEOPLES) COUNCIL

**The Oshkaatisak (All Young Peoples) Council represents the youth of Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN). The Oshkaatisak Council strives to promote youth empowerment and engagement with the goal of improving the livelihood and hope for the future of all NAN youth.**



Ashley Bach



Erickson Owen



Janine Frogg



Jericho Anderson



Linden Waboose



Mallory Solomon



Tehya Quachegan

**The Oshkaatisak Council supports its fellow youth in the following ways:**

- ▶ Advocates for NAN youth at the local, regional, national and international level.
- ▶ Shares and promotes the successes of NAN youth and other First Nations youth.
- ▶ Creates opportunities for NAN youth to enhance leadership skills and healthy behaviours.
- ▶ Identify ways to increase advocacy, coordination and strategic ways to increase resources and supports for NAN youth.

## Affiliated Organizations

Support and lobbying efforts throughout the 1980s and 1990s helped to establish several important institutions and agencies that NAN is proud to consider part of a strong partnership network.

### CHILD WELFARE

Kunuwanimano Child and Family Services, Timmins

[www.kunuwanimano.com](http://www.kunuwanimano.com)

Tikinagan Child and Family Services, Sioux Lookout

[www.tikinagan.org](http://www.tikinagan.org)

Payukotayno: James and Hudons Bay Family Services, Moosonee

[www.payukotayno.ca](http://www.payukotayno.ca)

### EDUCATION

Oshki-Pimache-O-Win: The Wenjack Education Institute, Thunder Bay

[www.oshki.ca](http://www.oshki.ca)

### MEDIA & CULTURE

Ojibway Cree and Cultural Centre, Timmins

[www.occ.ca](http://www.occ.ca)

Wawatay Native Communications Society, Timmins-Sioux Lookout

[www.wawataynews.ca](http://www.wawataynews.ca)

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund, Thunder Bay

[www.nadf.org](http://www.nadf.org)

### POLICING & JUSTICE

Nishnawbe Aski Police Service, Thunder Bay

[www.naps.org](http://www.naps.org)

Nishnawbe Aski Legal Services Corporation, Thunder Bay

[www.nanlegal.on.ca](http://www.nanlegal.on.ca)

### HEALTH

Ka-Na-Chi-Hih Special Solvent Abuse Treatment Centre, Thunder Bay

[www.kanachihih.ca](http://www.kanachihih.ca)

Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority, Sioux Lookout

[www.sfnha.com](http://www.sfnha.com)

Weeneebayko Area Health Authority, Moose Factory

[www.waha.com](http://www.waha.com)

## Administration Human Resources

Our fulltime equivalent staff level is at 146 employees.

Our staff complement is approximately 62% First Nation overall. Approximately 53% of NAN's First Nation employees are registered members of NAN First Nations.

### DEPARTMENT UPDATES

## Communications, Media & Information Technology

### OVERVIEW

The Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Communications, Media & Information Technology Department produces and distributes information to support the work of the Executive Council's advocacy on the issues and events affecting the people and communities of NAN. Department staff ensure that information and perspectives of NAN are effectively and consistently communicated and received throughout NAN territory, to NAN First Nations, members of the public and to news media on a local, regional, national and international level. The department also provides strategic planning for a variety of publication and communication materials, social media, media relations, special events, photography and branding.

The Communications Department focuses on increasing awareness of NAN and NAN First Nations through conventional and emerging media. It maintains effective media relations to communicate the needs, challenges and positions of NAN and NAN First Nations to various levels of government and the public. On an ongoing basis, the department recommends specific internal and external communication initiatives/strategies to the NAN Executive Council, NAN Leadership (Chiefs), First Nations Councils, First Nations members and other departments in NAN.

In coordination with the NAN Executive Council, the Communications Department utilizes media-relations to advocate on behalf of NAN First Nations and supports their initiatives including:

- Strategic planning through consultation with Executive Council, Chiefs, Elders, community representatives and department managers.
- Preparation and distribution of news releases, coordination of press conferences, promotion of all NAN Assemblies and events.
- Promotion of positive news stories while positively addressing detrimental issues at the community level.
- Advocacy through media to support First Nations following tragedies and declaration of States of Emergency.





## DEPARTMENT RESTRUCTURE

As the incoming workload has expanded, the Communications Department restructured to ensure that increased demands are met. The Department has increased to a total of five staff members which includes the addition of a second Multimedia Designer, with each position tailored to address the work that is needed to advocate for and support our communities.

Currently, the positions in the department include:

### 1. Director of Communications

- ▶ Responsible for all Communications staff
- ▶ Report to/seek direction from Grand Chief's office & Chief Administrative Officer
- ▶ Lead items that are critical and/or high-level
- ▶ Lead major projects and long-term initiatives that require a sustained effort

### 3. Communications Analyst

- ▶ Coordination of Annual Report, Chiefs Kits, submissions, reports, etc.
- ▶ Coordination of special events and E-Commerce lead (NAN Web Store)
- ▶ Edit submissions, projects, submissions to cabinet, government, proposals, reports

### 2. Digital Communications Manager

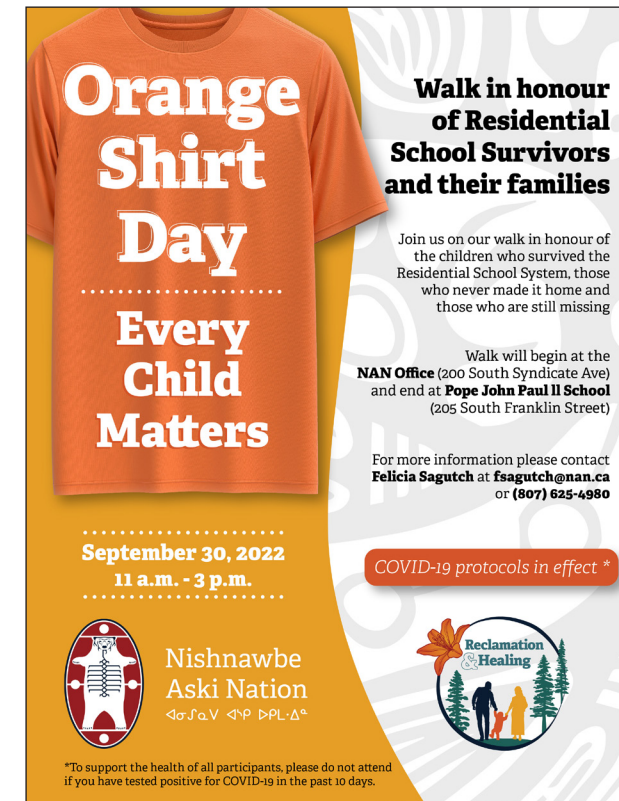
- ▶ Brand management and marketing
- ▶ Management of social media, scheduling and posting
- ▶ Oversee in-house Multi-Media Designers/external vendors
- ▶ Management and coordination of website content with departments

### 4. Multimedia Designer (x2)

- ▶ Design posters, graphics, infographics, newsletters, brochures, ads, videos, campaigns and other communications materials
- ▶ Prepare weekly production schedules for review and prioritizing with manager
- ▶ Website and Social Media

The NAN website (nan.ca) provides information on NAN advocacy, programs, departments, history and culture along with reports, photos, videos and publications. Also included on the website are media releases, media conferences and information on upcoming events.

Since Communications revamped the website to reflect the enhanced NAN image, information has been easier to find for NAN Leadership and members of the public to learn about the people of Nishnawbe Aski. To enhance the user experience, all information has been updated to ensure it is current and presented in a manner that is informative to all of our audiences.



Poster developed by the Communications Department Multimedia Designer to promote Orange Shirt Day in 2022.

Communications also maintains NAN's social media presence primarily through:

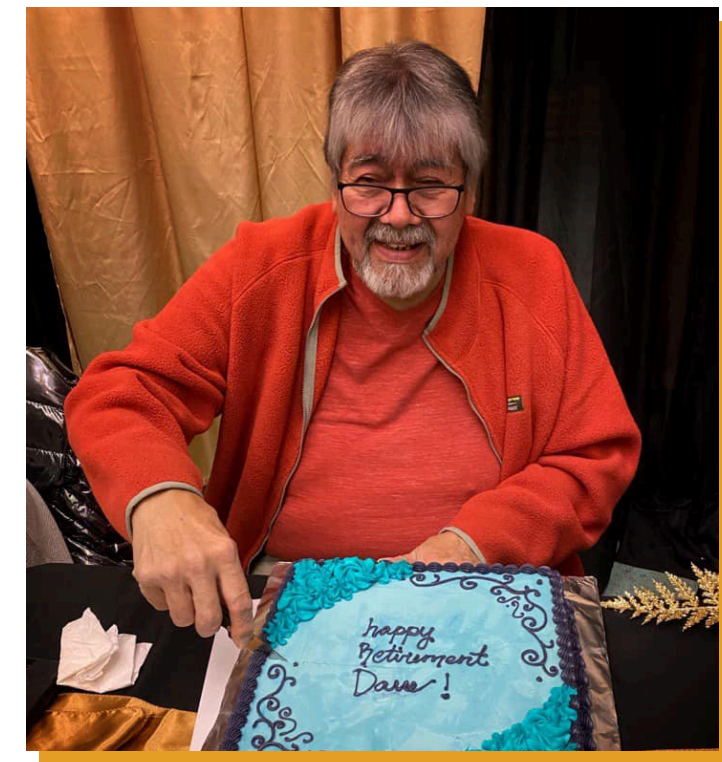
- Facebook (@Nishnawbe Aski Nation)
- Instagram (@nishnawbe\_askination)
- Twitter (@NANComms)

These accounts are updated regularly and receive new followers daily.

Facebook is used extensively to:

- Promote political positions of NAN and NAN First Nations
- Highlight issues and challenges faced by NAN First Nations
- Publicize NAN events and events of NAN First Nations
- Advertise employment opportunities within NAN and NAN-affiliated organizations

Twitter allows NAN to communicate directly to the many members of the news media who follow our feed. Instagram allows Communications to share photos, videos and go live from our events.



Former CAO David Fletcher at his retirement party in Moose Cree First Nation, February 2023



Breaking ground at WAHA's Oshki Kiskinowacihitawin Ceremony, January 2023



### HIGHLIGHTS

- Attended His Holiness Pope Francis' visit to Canada in Alberta and Quebec
- Accepted the 2022 Ovation Award of Excellence, Community Relations for Operation Remote Immunity's communication work
- Attended Orange Shirt Day celebrations with the NAN Executive in Ottawa and Thunder Bay
- Highlighted Orange Shirt Day recognition on social media pages
- Attended Winnipeg Blue Bombers game for National Day of Truth and Reconciliation event
- Attended the 4th Annual Tree of Light Ceremony for the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Tree of Hope Project
- Sold out of Pride Month and Pink Shirt Day apparel within 24 hours of launch

### NAN E-STORE

There is a high demand for NAN merchandise by community members and members of the public. To ensure that the NAN e-Store becomes sustainable, shipping is calculated at Canada Post rates, as opposed to a flat rate. Local pickup option eliminates shipping fees.

The current line of products has increased from 5 items to 22 items. These items include: hoodies, t-shirts, ball caps, pride shirts, joggers, toques, polo shirts, water bottles, NAN flags, NAN's pride flag and Orange Shirt Day lawn signs/decals. All profits made flow back into the e-Store to produce new products.



### NAN OPEN HOUSE

On December 2, 2022, NAN hosted an Open House. The goal of the event was to welcome members of the community to learn more about NAN and the work that the organization does.

The day opened with a prayer from Elder Helen Cromarty. Over 100 representatives from organizations across the City of Thunder Bay, and students from St. Ignatius, Westgate and Superior Collegiate & Vocational Institute attended the event.

While at the event, delegates got to meet with the Executive Council, receive a tour of the NAN building and meet with departments to discuss ongoing work.

**DECEMBER 2**  
**12 - 2:30 PM**

JOIN NISHNAWBE ASKI NATION'S

# OPEN HOUSE

The community is invited to meet Grand Chief, members of the Executive Council, and learn more about NAN and the work we do.

**200 SYNDICATE AVE. S THUNDER BAY, ON**

**12 PM**  
GUESTS ARRIVE

**12:30 PM**  
WELCOME BY CAO  
INTRODUCTION OF NAN EXECUTIVE

**1 PM**  
FOOD, REFRESHMENTS, NETWORKING, & TOUR



RSVP BY NOVEMBER 18 USING THE QR CODE OR TO: TAMARA DELUCA T: 807.621.5549 E: tdeluca@nan.ca




Nishnawbe Aski Nation  
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Poster developed by the Communications Department Multimedia Designer to promote NAN's Open House.

#### NAN Website

**214,770**  
Page Views

(20,192 increase from last year)

#### Facebook Page

**473,467**

(# of accounts who saw any content from or about our page – 86,295 increase from last year)

#### Paid Impressions

**192,947**

(# of times our ads were on someone's screen – 133,475 increase from last year)

#### Instagram Reach

**30,112**

(# of accounts who saw our feed – 20,865 increase from last year)



**Instagram Followers: 2,401**  
(440 increase from last year)



**Twitter Followers: 13.4 K**  
(400 increase from last year)



**Facebook Followers: 11K (11,656)**  
(1,656 increase from last year)

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The Information Technology (IT) unit consists of the IT Manager and Network Administrator who manage the NAN network including the Thunder Bay offices and the NAN Timmins office.

The IT unit:

- Oversees and implements strategy, planning, acquisition and deployment of the NAN network; and
- Supports ongoing training, network and end user support, hardware and software updates.

Additionally, the unit supports Communications with NAN members and partners through video conference, webcasting, online and in-person meetings.

## DEPARTMENT UPDATES

# Community Wellness

## CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM

### OVERVIEW

The NAN Crisis Response Team (CRT) provides immediate, short-term support and assistance to its member communities who have suffered a traumatic event or are experiencing a social emergency. Crisis response includes responding to emergency requests by offering crisis management and coordination, navigating resources and services, referrals and advocacy. The CRT networks and coordinates with the First Nation communities, Tribal Councils, Health Authorities, and social service agencies in conjunction with provincial and federal government to ensure continuity of services, address gaps and barriers, map out resources and promote cost effectiveness.

### PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The CRT is involved in a variety of activities and day to day tasks to serve NAN communities and members living in or visiting urban centres.

Some of these tasks and duties included, but were not limited to:

- Arranging accommodations, groceries, meals, travel and supplies for family members.
- Arranging debriefing sessions for NAN Crisis Response Team and community Crisis Coordinators.
- Arranging monthly conference calls with community and Tribal Council Crisis Coordinators, Health Directors and additional frontline staff.
- Arranging travel and coordinating shipment of tangible equipment and supplies to communities.
- Assisting with Missing Persons Search, setting up command centre, providing necessary tools and equipment, coordination effort with family, community, affiliated organizations, police services and municipalities.
- Assisting communities with funeral arrangements.
- Connecting and supporting community Liaison Workers during an evacuation to provide relief.
- Identifying, arranging travel and accommodations for mental health services to support individuals and families in need.
- Maintaining case notes and record keeping to track statistics and data.
- Observing and partaking in flood/fire evacuation calls to monitor and address any gaps or challenges communities experience throughout the evacuation process.
- Providing advocacy and mediation with funders, other agencies and supportive services.
- Providing culturally appropriate mental health resources for communities needing in-person clinical or traditional services.
- Providing respite and relief for community Crisis Coordinators and frontline staff experiencing burnout.
- Supporting communities with Crisis Team funding reports.

### OTHER ACTIVITIES

- NAN CRT continues to take guidance from and work with communities to support in difficult times of crisis and emergency situations contingent upon community needs.
- The NAN CRT assisted with the coordination of the Crisis Response Review Forum, held in Thunder Bay on October 18-20, 2022, and also participated in the group discussions to provide insight and feedback of their role in crisis response in NAN territory.

### NEXT STEPS

The NAN CRT is currently reviewing and updating policies and procedures to accurately reflect the support community leadership and frontline staff are needing from NAN and for the team to operate in an effective and efficient manner.

The policies and procedures in review and being updated are, but not limited to:

- NAN Crisis Response Policy.
- NAN CRT Workplan.
- NAN Crisis Response Manual.
- NAN CRT On-Call Protocols.

## CRISIS TRAINING PROGRAM

### OVERVIEW

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Community Wellness Training Program continued to foster excellence by encouraging and promoting the personal and professional growth of Crisis Teams working in NAN communities, while also offering and facilitating specialized training intended to meet the educational needs and skill development of NAN Front-line workers at the community and Tribal Council level.

Throughout the year, Team members have become certified to facilitate programs that will benefit front line crisis workers in the communities and Tribal Councils. These programs include: Critical Incident Group Debriefing, Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST), Mental Health First Aid - First Nations and safeTALK.

### NEXT STEPS

- Continue to provide professional development opportunities to the Crisis Team Coordinators and Regional Crisis Coordinators to enhance skill development and promote lifelong learning.
- Continue to create a safe and welcoming virtual space for all training events during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.
- Offer in-person training opportunities following COVID-19 provincial guidelines.

## HIGHLIGHTS

Number of Trainings: 24 Events



In NAN Communities

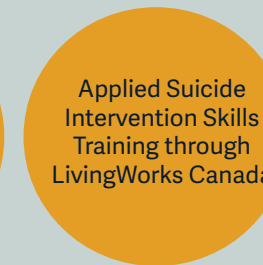


In Hub Cities such as Thunder Bay, Timmins or Sioux Lookout



Virtual Events

In addition to the existing expertise amongst the skilled training facilitators on the Team, skillsets were expanded by becoming certified in delivering training models such as:



**In an effort to raise awareness on some of the issues faced by First Nations people, beading kits were created by the Team with the intention of honouring individuals, families, and communities to promote healing and wellness.**

Red Dress beading kits were created to honour Murdered and Missing Women, Girls and Two-Spirited peoples in May 2022.

To honour the contributions of First Nations Veterans, poppy beading kits were also created in November 2022.



Community Wellness Trainers with their first group of Mental Health First Aid – First Nations participants in Ginoogaming, in January 2023.





Community Wellness Coordinator facilitating Case Management training in Timmins, in August 2022.



Community Wellness ASIST Trainer with participants in Timmins, in February 2022.



Depicted here are some of the completed Orange Shirt Day beading projects as part of the September beading kit.

## MEN'S HEALING INITIATIVE

### OVERVIEW

The Men's Healing Initiative (MHI) keeps an open door for men who have been sexually abused no matter the perpetrator, as every man deserves to feel safe and supported in their healing journeys from childhood sexual trauma. This idea was brought forth from the victims of both Ralph Rowe and Jack Wicksey to open their brotherhood and support other victims of sexual abuse.

The NAN Chiefs-in-Assembly mandated and affirmed their support for the long-term, direct, and intergenerational healing support for the victims (and their families) of prolific pedophile Ralph Rowe.

In 2018, the program was extended to the victims of Jack Wicksey, who was alleged to have been a predatory pedophile while he was a House Counselor at Pelican Falls Centre near Sioux Lookout.

### Mandates:

**Resolution 05/15:** Support for Victims of Ralph Rowe - NAN Chiefs-in-Assembly mandate the NAN Executive Council to advocate for, and ensure programming and support are implemented to Rowe Survivors and their families.

**Resolution 09/70:** Support for Victims of Ralph Rowe - Following the guilty verdict, Rowe's designation as a "sex offender" in turn saw more victims come forward. NAN Chiefs-in-Assembly mandate the NAN Executive Council to ensure more advocacy negotiating for funding from all levels of government to support the growing group and their families to assist with both short and long-term needs for healing.

### PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

#### RECOMMENCEMENT OF MEN'S GATHERING:

After a two-year hiatus, due to the inability to gather, NAN and the MHI revived the Survivor Gatherings in October 2022.

#### NEW MEN'S HEALING INITIATIVE COORDINATOR:

The Team has successfully hired a new Coordinator in August 2022. The new MHI Coordinator has established the level of trust necessary to effectively integrate himself amongst survivors.

#### NAN MEN'S SHARING CIRCLE:

NAN's MHI has established a reoccurring weekly sharing circle for men through a partnership with Ka-Na-Chi-Hih Addiction Treatment Center.

#### SEXUAL ABUSE (SA)/SEXUAL VIOLENCE (SV) AWARENESS CAMPAIGN:

NAN is committed to raising awareness and the dismantling of stigma surrounding male survivors of sexual violence and abuses. MHI is exploring the utilization of print media, radio broadcast and other forms of media outlets. The goal is to

facilitate an effective awareness campaign on the effects of sexual abuse, promote healing and to break down stigmas which prevent victims from disclosure.

#### MHI GROWTH AND EXPANSION:

MHI is seeking to broaden its group size and expand the delivery of services through a variety of approaches i.e., in conjunction with a disclosure project intended to disseminate the status and information of the current class action lawsuit (McKay v. Rowe et al.), and how to initiate an individual claims process.

#### CONTINUED SA/SV PEER SUPPORT:

NAN and MHI Survivors continue to support other male victims of sexual abuse through group integration and encouragement of others to commence their healing journeys in a safe and supportive environment.



**CONTINUED ACCESS TO SUPPORTS:**

NAN continues to provide access to Elders and mental health professionals for the delivery of traditional and non-traditional methods of healing, while continuing to seek the guidance and consultation of Survivors to further develop their personal wellness and healing journeys.

**CONTINUED PROGRAM DELIVERY:**

NAN continues to provide sessions and workshops on: mental health awareness, emotional wellbeing, coping skills, substance misuse and resources for abstinence, healthy relationships, general life skills, and suicide awareness and prevention either in-person or virtual gatherings.

**REFERRALS AND RESOURCES:**

NAN continues to provide navigation and referrals to essential services, resources and support as requested.

**OTHER ACTIVITIES**

- A delegation of MHI survivors attended a Men's Gathering: "Feeding the Home Fire" hosted by North Bay Indigenous Hub in February 2023.
- NAN continues to assist and support survivors while they navigate through Class Action Lawsuit (McKay v. Rowe et al). In March 2021, the Court made an order confirming the Defendants' vicarious liability. This left open the question of how Class Members would prove that they are individually entitled to compensation. In absence of an agreed-upon claims process, the Court was requested to order a claims protocol. In August 2022, the Court hearing to determine the claims protocol was adjourned to enable one final attempt at a mediated settlement. A hearing before the Court is scheduled for September 2023. The Class Action also seeks compensation for family members of abuse survivors.
- NAN and The Boy Scouts of Canada Commissioner, Andrew Price, have been meeting to discuss the details of an apology and the outline of a legacy project aimed at fostering healing for those affected by the abuses committed by R. Rowe.
- NAN continues to work with the Wicksey Survivors and their families to provide the required support and resources during the court proceedings.
- NAN continues to assist and support Survivors while they navigate through a Class Action Lawsuit against Northern Nishnawbe Education Council. Six of the nine men who have suffered abuses, at the hands of J. Wicksey, while residing at the Pelican Falls Centre throughout the 80's and 90's, have reached a settlement through mediation. Two of the men have gone through the discovery process and are awaiting mediation date. Sadly, one individual RF who recently started the difficult claims process passed on in December 2022 due to health complications.
- NAN and the MHI will host a "Wellness Exploration Retreat" on June 6, 7, 8, 2023. The retreat is designed to assist survivors and their families with discovering traditional and non-traditional methods of spiritual, emotional, mental and physical wellbeing.



Community Wellness Coordinator facilitating Case Management training in Timmins, ON in August 2022.

Community Wellness Coordinator facilitating Case Management training in Timmins, ON in August 2022.



Community Wellness Coordinator facilitating Case Management training in Timmins, ON in August 2022.

**NEXT STEPS**

- NAN to review and update workplan and budget to seek additional funding to offset the high cost of living due to inflation for ongoing support for Survivors to promote healing, education, and awareness in a culturally sensitive and appropriate manner.
- Develop and plan an engagement process to consult with Survivors in a respectful and sensitive manner, regarding apology from The Boy Scouts of Canada Commissioner, and gain their input and feedback on what this means for the Survivors.
- Develop an initiative and establish supports specifically for men who experience domestic abuse, violence and trauma.

**HEALTH EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT****OVERVIEW**

The NAN Community Wellness Department facilitates the Health Emergency Management (HEM) Program which is funded through Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) to support NAN communities with capacity building and creating policies in response to health and social emergencies, as well as to assist in the development of emergency preparedness plans.

The intent of the HEM Program is to collectively address health and social emergencies in NAN territory, by coordinating and collaborating with Communities, Tribal Councils and partnership organizations and internally with other NAN programs.

The activities work toward inclusion of alignment of services and resources, identify appropriate contacts, establishing roles, mapping out existing supports, capacity building through training, and to review, update or develop emergency preparedness plans in the areas of prevention, mitigation and response.

**PROGRAM ACTIVITIES**

**Mandate: Resolution 16/25:**  
Social Emergency Response

While the HEM program was not a direct result of Resolution 16/25, it does support its intent. Through collaboration of emergency preparedness plans for natural disasters, social emergencies, disease outbreaks, substance use and mental health crises, the HEM Program strives to support community needs by being proactive and having the proper channels in place and to collaborate with other internal programs, and external partners to serve communities experiencing crises.

The HEM Program complements other internal programs to ensure communication throughout NAN departments to look at all aspects of a situation, in turn, formulating a fulsome approach to health emergencies. Every crisis, regardless of the origin of cause, has the potential to result in health emergencies thus it is of the utmost importance to support and collaborate with other department programs to support NAN First Nation Communities.

## HIGHLIGHTS

**OCTOBER 18 - 20, 2022** The HEM Program funded and supported the Comprehensive Crisis Review Forum, to work with various frontline workers of NAN First Nations to determine the forward moving steps to address Social Crises in NAN territory.

- ➔ In partnership with Queen’s University a report was generated using the information and data compiled from the forum to present to communities and to funding partners to advocate for better crisis response within NAN territory.
- ➔ The NAN HEM Program has also provided various communities with supplies and resources during crisis situations. These resources include: cots, blankets, groceries, gas, and other supplies that were identified by the communities in need.
- ➔ During search efforts for missing persons that were supported by the NAN Crisis Response Team, it was noticed that certain items would be beneficial to support future searches. These items included: prospector tents, wood stoves, flashlights, lanterns, cots, blankets and sleeping bags which could be used to support searchers in both urban centres and in community. The NAN HEM Program purchased some of these items for future use during search efforts, health/social/natural emergency management situations, and for additional lodging in community during influx of visitors during these events.



Participants at the Comprehensive Crisis Review Forum for Community Crisis Coordinators hosted by the Community Wellness Department in Thunder Bay, Ontario, October 18-20, 2022.

## NEXT STEPS

- Introduce HEM goal, objective and workplan. Coordinate and collaborate with Tribal Council and their respective communities (grouped) and map out existing services and resources.
- Build capacity and provide and offer various types of training pertaining to health and social emergencies. Assist with developing or updating community health and social emergency response plans.
- Align and coordinate with affiliated organizations, provincial and federal partners. Share available and have accessible emergency plans for each community, Tribal Council and PTO.

## DEPARTMENT UPDATES

# Early Years

### OVERVIEW

The Early Years Department supports community led initiatives that enhance capacity skill building and mentorship to meet the needs of families and children in their own communities. The Department advocates at the federal and provincial levels to develop and implement long-term, sustainable community solutions to close gaps in services for children and provide needs-based funding. The Department has successfully engaged diverse people across Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN), the region, province and nationally to work collaboratively on implementation of key action priorities, particularly NAN parents, caregivers and Elders.





## PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

### CHILDREN'S INTEGRATED REHABILITATION

**Mandate: Resolution 16/20:** Support for the Development of NAN Children and Youth Services Model

The Mamow Sakinichinitoonanoowan Awashishaak Onci - "Together Holding Hands for the Children" Regional Network held its first face-to-face meeting since COVID-19. The Network revisited the Terms of Reference and updates were provided on the work of the six Action Teams (below) and key priorities were identified for 2023-2024.

#### NEXT STEPS

- A strategic planning session will be held in June 2023 to build on the framework and develop specific action items based on the priorities brought forward in January 2023.

#### 1. ACTION TEAM: Mamou Wiidanogimiidiwin "Everybody Working Together" (Community Case Management Action Team)

- A draft curriculum has been completed. Training will be provided to communities as a pilot before being finalized and developed into a toolkit.

#### 2. ACTION TEAM: Clinical Mentorship

- The Indigenous Rehabilitation Assistant was approved by the Ministry of Colleges and Universities. The Ministry is completing the funding requirements and is expected to offer the program during the winter schedule at Northern College and the Oshki-Pimache-O-Win: The Wenjack Education Institute.

#### NEXT STEPS

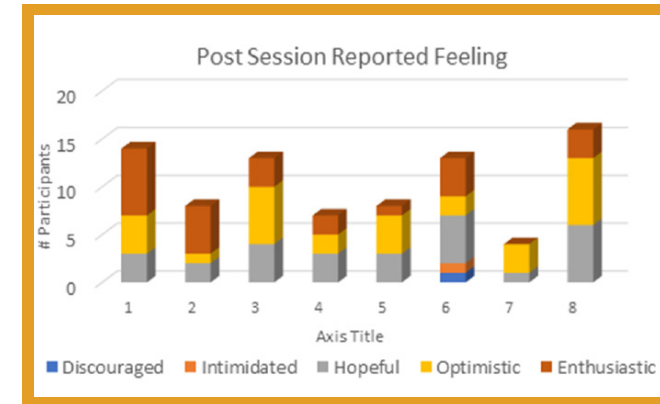
- Produce a promotional campaign.
- Recruit students.
- Arrange agreements for practicum placements and supervision with children treatment centres and similar organizations.

#### 3. ACTION TEAM: Infant Mental Health

**Mandate: Resolution 19/13:** Support for the Development of NAN Specific Infant Mental Health Promotion Strategy

- NAN, in partnership with Infant Mental Health Promotion at the Hospital for Sick Children, Payukotayno Child & Youth Milopemahtesewin Services (CYMS) and community partners, completed the community-led and designed training and curriculum titled, "Natural Helpers". The culturally relevant Infant Mental Health Curriculum integrates community, Elders and Knowledge Keeper's teachings and practices with western science that supports the social, emotional, physical and mental development of children 0-5 years of age.
- The goal of the Natural Helpers project is to build community capacity in supporting prenatal, infant and early mental health. Facilitated conversations were held with engaged community members who share a common interest in better supporting local families with young children. Through increased awareness, knowledge and understanding, the project highlighted the critical importance of relationships in the first five years of a child's life. The initiative acknowledges that the community plays an important role in supporting infants, young children and their families and also that every individual has something valuable to contribute to their community and future generations. The project builds upon the strengths within communities, recognizing how the traditional culture and ways of being and knowing are essential to the health and wellbeing of young children and their families.

- 67 participants attended the eight sessions and completed an evaluation component after each. One of the questions asked participants how they felt after each session. While not all participants responded, it is notable that the dominant emotional states were hopeful, optimistic or enthusiastic.



#### NEXT STEPS

- Continue working in partnership with CYMS and Hospital for Sick Children to expand/modify the curriculum and training in James Bay First Nation communities.
- Develop a similar approach with other NAN communities who are interested and committed to the process.
- Presented Natural Helpers at the World Association for Infant and Mental Health Congress in Dublin, Ireland on July 15 - 19, 2023.

#### 4. ACTION TEAM: Autism Spectrum Disorder

**Resolution 19/04:** Support for the Development of NAN Specific Autism Spectrum Disorder Strategy

- NAN and children treatment centres across NAN territory worked collaboratively to develop a northern approach to the Ontario Autism Program to better meet the needs of children living in remote First Nations and ensure easier pathway to autism services.
- The intent was to present the northern approach to the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services in March 2023. However, Minister Merrilee Fullerton resigned unexpectedly on March 24th. The work will continue with new Minister, Michael Parsa.
- Booklets for parents/caregivers on autism have been completed in Ojibway, Cree, Oji-Cree and English and have been widely distributed across NAN territory. Three additional 4-minute-long videos have been completed. There has been positive feedback from families and service providers on the information and design of the booklets and videos.
- Training and information sessions on autism for parents/caregivers in communities have been completed. Implementation of these sessions will begin in spring 2023.
- The Parent Support Network (PSN) held 10 virtual meetings to provide parents with the opportunity to support each other, learn strategies to help their children with Attention Deficit Disorder, Autism Spectrum Disorder and learn self-care. Currently, 26 members attend on a regular basis.

"The group is so helpful, and something I look forward to monthly – it's a reminder to add in me time."

- PSN Member

"I like these meetings a lot, because I'm learning something, and other parents help me when they share their stories to."

- PSN Member



- A NAN Parent Facebook page has been created. This page has information and resources on neurodiversity and opportunities for training are provided for parents/caregivers to access. Currently, 128 NAN members are registered.

#### 5. ACTION TEAM: Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)

- Bill S-253 enactment provides the development of a national framework designed to support Canadians with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, their families and their caregivers.
- The national framework must:
  - (a) include measures to address the training, education and guidance needs of health care and other professionals regarding the prevention and diagnosis of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder and support measures for those who are impacted by it;
  - (b) identify measures to promote research and intergovernmental information-sharing in relation to the prevention and diagnosis of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder and support measures for those who are impacted by it;
  - (c) set out national standards for the prevention and diagnosis of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder and for support measures for those who are impacted by it;
  - (d) set out a strategy to increase awareness of the risks of alcohol consumption during pregnancy and the consequences of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, including recommending changes to legislative and policy frameworks related to alcohol consumption and marketing; and
  - (e) identify any other measures that the Minister considers appropriate to prevent fetal alcohol spectrum disorder while ensuring individuals with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder are properly diagnosed.

- On October 20, 2022, Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum attended the introduction of Bill S-253: An Act Respecting a National Framework for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, introduced by Senator Mohamed-Iqbal Ravalia in the House of Commons.
- Deputy Grand Chief Achneepineskum stressed to Senator Ravalia the critical importance of NAN's communities being included and consulted in further implementation of the Bill.
- The Minister of Justice, the Minister of Employment and Social Development, the Minister of Indigenous Services and any other ministers who, in the Minister's opinion, have relevant responsibilities and Indigenous communities and organizations with predominantly Indigenous leadership must be consulted.
- NAN has established a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Action Team consisting of 20 members, including community members, NAN Oshkaatisak and Women's Council members, a physician, and service providers who are working to develop an Awareness Campaign and Training Strategy for community workers.

#### 6. ACTION TEAM: Family Directed Respite Services

- 425 children have been provided services through the 4-year partnership with NAN and Wesway Respite Services and funding from Jordan's Principle.
- The Family Directed Respite Services program continues to have positive impacts to NAN families and community visits are increasing after COVID-19.
- Wesway conducts an annual survey to determine if they are meeting the needs of families and if there should be changes to how the program is implemented.

#### THE FOLLOWING FAMILY QUOTES CAME OUT OF THE ANNUAL SURVEY:

A single father struggled with managing the behaviour of his son with autism. He felt overwhelmed and worried about his son's future. He said that everything changed when he was offered respite support. The funds have provided him with enough resources that he can hire respite providers who can support his son in so many ways, both at home and in his community. His son's life has become fuller and he's a lot happier as a result. This father said he has nothing but thanks for this respite support which has made life so much better for him and his son. He now has hope.

Another mom shared that she has been using her respite for her son who has a developmental disability. She's thrilled that she finally gets the breaks that she has missed out on for so long. Her son has recently faced some bullying due to his disability. Again, she credits the respite funds for helping with this pressure as well. She says she can now afford to hire a respite provider who can safely support her son to get out of the house into the community without worrying about bullying.

#### NEXT STEPS

- An application has been submitted to Jordan's Principle to increase services to 500 children.
- Training will be developed for family directed respite workers (autism, First Aid).

#### INDIGENOUS HEALTHY BABIES HEALTHY CHILDREN PROGRAM

- 13 virtual monthly Indigenous Healthy Babies Health Children (IHBHC) Coordinator meetings were held to provide ongoing support and relationship building between NAN, communities, and Coordinators from different communities.
- These monthly meetings provided the opportunity to share, assist in program planning and identify key training priorities. The focus of these meetings were to ensure the needs were met within individual communities, providing insight in completing program reports and assisting in program planning. Information sharing and training included: updates, birth certificate registration training with the Ministry of Public and Business Service Delivery (MPBSD) and available supports and resources.
- The 2023 Hat and Mitt Drive delivered over 2,700 hats and mittens for children 0-6 years old.

*"Every time I have a meeting with any of you ladies at NAN, I leave feeling revived and excited. Sometimes I feel discouraged or in a slump and after a meeting with NAN I have revived energy and I'm ready to get to work."*





One of the favourite parts of the conference was the Elders Panel "Raising Children in their Culture and Language". Elders Stella Schimmens (Moose Cree), Jenosa Sainnawap (Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug) and Sam Achneepineskum (Marten Falls) shared their thoughts and wisdom.



Stan Wesley facilitates while getting conference attendees up and moving, keeping everyone motivated and re-energized for the two-day event.

## BARRIERS TO GOVERNMENT ISSUED ID: BIRTH REGISTRATION, BIRTH CERTIFICATE

### Mandate: Resolution 07/42:

Birth Registration-Documentation Blitz

- NAN received \$153,000 from Indigenous Affairs Ontario (IAO) to hold pilot ID clinics in six NAN communities in partnership with Keewaytinook Okimakanak Board of Education (KOBÉ), Matawa First Nations Management and Vital Statistics Registry Branch in Thunder Bay.
- Both KOBÉ and Matawa had ID Navigator positions in place. These positions were Commissioners of Oath which are required for delayed and complex applications requiring affidavits.
- The goal of the ID pilot project was to host ID clinics to support parents/caregivers to register births of their children and apply for birth certificates and health cards. As well, lessons learned from the ID clinics will help inform future program and policies in relation to the development of "Barriers to ID: Proposed Action Plan" document undertaken by NAN, the MPBSD and IAO for presentation to Deputy Ministers.
- The funding covered the fees, travel, honorariums for translators in communities and resources.
- 844 applications were completed in the six First Nation communities. Applications ranged from birth certificates (Ontario and Manitoba), delayed birth applications and adult and child health cards.
- The summary report identifies many lessons learned and "best practices" in delivering ID clinics in communities. Vital Statistics Registry Branch was key in assisting with complex applications as well as pre-screening children to see if they had been registered previously and only required a birth certificate which ensured families received minimal delays in getting a birth certificate.

- Challenges were experienced regarding babies born in Manitoba and getting the applications approved as NAN did not have the same relationship with Vital Statistics as they do in Thunder Bay. COVID-19 presented challenges as clinics were cancelled due to ongoing outbreaks and errors in completing some of the applications.

### NEXT STEPS

- Deputy Grand Chief Achneepineskum will meet with Deputy Ministers from IAO and MPBSD to present "NAN Barriers to ID: Proposed Action Plan" in spring 2023.
- The proposed Action Plan requests a 5-year commitment to continue the ID clinics, waive all fees, increase access to services, recognize customary care and traditional adoption practices.





## INDIGENOUS EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE

**Mandate: Resolution 14/09:** Nishnawbe Aski Nation Early Learning Framework

- The National Expert Working Group (NEWG) on Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care (IELCC) was mandated by the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Resolution 39/2016: First Nations National Working Group on Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) to oversee the national engagement process to inform the Indigenous ELCC Framework and to lead the work on IELCC at the national level. Employment and Social Development Canada only confirmed funding in 2022-2023 to AFN to reconvene the NEWG.
- In January 2023, NAN Early Years staff obtained observer status on the NEWG and continues to seek membership status to ensure northern and remote concerns and issues are brought forward.
- The NEWG put a call out for proposals in January 2023 for the research and development of First Nations-specific funding model for IELCC. A new funding model is expected for 2024.
- The 2022-2023 NAN First Nation Program and Services Allocation was \$11,601,529 and the NAN Partnership and Governance was \$1,770,280. NAN received \$177,028 of Partnership and Governance funding with the difference allocated to NAN First Nations.
- The NAN Early Learning and Child Care Technical Working Group held its first meeting in February 2023 and is comprised of Elders, NAN Women's and Oshkaatisak Council members, ELCC coordinators, parents, academia partners and NAN Housing and Infrastructure department.
- A NAN Early Learning and Child Care Gathering was held in Thunder Bay on June 15-16, 2022, with representatives from seven communities participating in a community planning workshop with Together Design Lab (TDL) from Toronto Metropolitan University beginning to look at early years teaching methods, programming and design.
- TDL has provided a summary report and Case Study Resource guide examining design elements of child-centered spaces from around the world as an important first step in creating a tool kit for communities interested in applying for new infrastructure funding.
- In September, NAN Early Years department and Tribal Council Technical Service Units assisted the nine childcare centres in completing an application for repair and renovation funding and additional \$50,000 Needs Assessment funding. All nine centres received the funding they requested, but only \$25,000 for Needs Assessments was granted.
- The three Aboriginal Head Start centres received \$10,000 and were required to complete an extensive survey from which decisions will be made regarding future repair and renovation and new infrastructure funding.
- The Our Children, Our Way Early Years Conference was hosted in Thunder Bay by NAN Early Years. This 3-day event was held during November 22-24, 2022 and supported enhancing capacity for those working in the Early Years while continuing important work towards a NAN Early Years Framework and Strategy. 175 people registered for the conference from 35 NAN First Nation communities and Tribal Councils.
- Phase 1 of a research project with Dr. Nicole Ineese-Nash and Dr. Shelagh McCartney of Toronto Metropolitan University was completed and a report was produced. The research examined mainstream policies, where they create barriers in Indigenous practice, and feedback and information gathering from NAN members. The report identified the needs and wants of NAN communities in relation to Early Years education and care and provided a foundation for future work.
- Support to NAN Early Learning and Child Care centres continues with resources, opportunities for collaboration and increased access to training opportunities.

- An Early Learning and Child Care Professional Network was established. 12 meetings of the Professional Network were held this year for IELCC Coordinators and focused on sharing strengths and successes, identifying needs and brainstorming solutions and providing opportunity for networking, training and collaboration.
- NAN Early Years team visited Ginoogaming First Nation Aboriginal Head Start who requested additional cultural programming support. NAN partnered with Tristan Ashishkeesh, Executive Director of Ojibway and Cree Cultural Centre, to bring enriching cultural camps for children and sharing circles for educators through hands on learning.
- NAN Early Years department is compiling resource kits for communities interested in new infrastructure funding available in 2023-2024.
  - ▶ The following resources are now available: Case Study Report, Our Children, Our Way Resource Report, Virtual 365 Degree Tour of the new Ginoogaming Aboriginal Head Start Centre and video interview with Ginoogaming staff.

### NEXT STEPS

- Community Information sessions in May 2023 on IELCC, Jordan's Principle and Final Settlement: CHRT Ruling Infrastructure Funding for early years.
- Early Years and Early Learning and Child Care Promotion Campaign.
- Contract with First Nations Engineering Services for a NAN Child Care Facility Capital Needs Assessment to develop recommendations on the capital, infrastructure and preliminary land requirements.
- Waiting for approval regarding a proposal submitted to IELCC Quality Improvement Project; funding announcements are expected in the fall.

*“Do you know why centres like this are so important? When I was a boy, I was taken from my family and I was put in residential school. In residential school we were not allowed to speak our language. We were not allowed to keep our names, our long hair, our traditional clothing. We were punished for these things. Punished for speaking our language and punished for practicing our culture.”*

*With these rules they stripped us of who we are. That is why centres like this are so important. I look around and I see our culture celebrated. I hear our language and I see syllabics on the walls. These centres are so necessary, so needed because they allow children to learn who they are, to celebrate and to be proud. Centres like this can help an entire community reclaim their language and celebrate their culture.”*

- **Victor Chapais**, Elder and Ginoogaming First Nation Councillor



**HIGHLIGHTS**



Left: Children engaged with their own culture, using the drumsticks to drum, at the Ginoogaming Aboriginal Head Start Centre.



Right: Books sent to children every month.



Ojibway and Cree Cultural Centre Executive Director Tristan A. smudging with the children from the centre during a cultural camp at the Ginoogaming Aboriginal Head Start Centre.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

**Governance and Treaty OVERVIEW**

The main objective of this department is to protect Treaty and Aboriginal rights held by the communities and community members of Treaty No. 9 and No. 5 and ensure these rights are not infringed upon. Additionally, it is intended to move beyond programming and focus on assisting Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) First Nations with becoming self-governing Nations.

The programs of the department include:

- Specific Claims Research Program, Recognition of Indigenous Rights and Self-Determination (RIRSD)
- Treaty Table Discussion and Mechanisms
- Fur Trapping & Licensing Program
- Canada-Ontario Resource Development Agreement

The activities of the department include:

- Monitoring the hunting and fishing
- Trapping
- Harvesting activities of its member communities





## RECOGNITION OF INDIGENOUS RIGHTS AND SELF-DETERMINATION - TREATY TABLE

NAN continues to engage with the

Government of Canada on the co-development of a Treaty dialogue mechanism that could lead to the establishment of a NAN and Canada Treaty Table. This was mandated by NAN Chiefs-in-Assembly through Resolution 14/04: Treaty Implementation, "to explore a process to reconcile the Treaties" and Resolution 14/38: Treaty Implementation and Treaty Community Tables, "to set-up a Treaty table and/or community Treaty tables with our Treaty partners".

A draft memorandum of understanding was presented to NAN leadership in May 2022. There was mixed reactions since NAN and regional/national organization does not have the authority to negotiate Treaty matters because those rights belong to the rights holders. To advance the Treaty initiative, we are developing a Treaty Education Strategy that will include: developing a NAN Treaty website, engaging with the Elder, Youth, Women's Councils, and visiting the communities.

### SPECIFIC CLAIMS RESEARCH

The Specific Claims Research Program is a negotiations process funded by the Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) to advance the research, development and presentation of the claims to the Minister (Canada). The specific claims deal with the historical grievances of First Nations and the Crown (Canada). NAN First Nations have had success in reaching their settlements (\$12 million to \$150 million). This involved settling the outstanding Treaty Land Entitlement (TLE) claims. Four NAN First Nations are currently in negotiations. There are claims that have been developed over the years with some First Nations deciding not to file, while other files have been transferred to First Nations and are currently under their management.

On April 19, 2022, Canada approved the Beaver House First Nation's Treaty Claim, the first Claim to be approved for NAN under the Special Claims category. Beaver House is currently in negotiations and are on their way to being recognized as a First

Nation (band status). NAN continues to provide technical support on this file.

The mandate is limited to assisting NAN First Nations with research and preparation of claims for submission to the Minister. Once a claim is accepted for negotiations, the First Nation hires their own negotiations team - the Department does not get involved in the negotiations.

During the year, we have researched four claims, consisting of: a TLE claim, reserve surrender, timber and farmland claims. There are continued challenges related to accessing documents at archival institutions. Since March 2020, all federal institutions were closed due to COVID-19 pandemic. There is currently a backlog of ordering files and access to the National Archives is limited.

### NAN LICENSING AND FUR MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT

Since 1998, NAN has been issuing licenses to NAN trappers that wish to trap commercially, allowing them to access the international markets. There are three trapping agreements in Ontario, involving NAN, Treaty No. 3, and Anishinabek Nation. A five-year (2023-2027) renewal agreement has been secured with Ontario through the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF). The agreement recognizes the first right of refusal of traplines that become vacant in Ontario. This means that First Nations can acquire vacant lines if they have ancestral ties to the line. NAN First Nations have been successful in retaining vacant lines and reinstating back to original families/communities.

The fur industry has been dismal over the last three years due to supply and demand, the global pandemic, Russia's invasion in Ukraine and the demise of the North American Fur Auction. Over the last two years, trappers have not been able to sell their pelts.

Annual workplans are jointly developed with MNRF, but the administration of traplines (licenses) is under NAN management. The Department is currently looking at training new instructors and planning for a First Nation-led training.

### CANADA ONTARIO RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT (CORDA)

CORDA is a tripartite initiative between the federal government, provincial government, and First Nations in Ontario. First Nation partners include: Grand Council Treaty #3, Anishinabek Nation, NAN, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians (AIAI) and Independent First Nations.

CORDA was established to assist the First Nation Peoples of Ontario to utilize renewable natural resources to their economic benefit. It supports projects whose intent is to foster economic development and natural resource management for future generations and financially supports projects that promote resource development, management, harvesting, conservation and traditional learning. It has an annual budget of \$1 million.

The CORDA Committee consists of 10 committee members. Membership includes five Aboriginal representatives from First Nation Treaty organizations and five representatives from the Governments of Ontario and Canada. The responsibility of the Committee includes project review and selection, ensuring projects reflect sustainable resource management and ensures they are in alignment with program guidelines. The CORDA Committee is sensitive to the needs of First Nation Peoples' cultural heritage, ensuring that these needs are addressed during the application review process.

NAN Chiefs have identified land-based activities (hunting, fishing, and trapping) as a priority with target groups including the youth and women. On average, there are about 9-11 projects annually, with just over \$240k in funding support.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

NAN supported and conducted five community Trapper Training sessions for the 2022-23 season. Nearly 30 students completed the course. NAN will continue to support Trapper Training and the overall fur industry.

NAN met with political territory organizations (PTO) partners and MNRF on workplan activities and fur harvesting issues/policies affecting our communities and members.

The NAN Fur Depot continues to collect fur bearing animals and coordinates the shipment of fur to the Fur Harvesters Auction in North Bay. This season has been slow, but the price of fur from the March 2023 sale showed a healthier level.

## ONTARIO HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

NAN continues to participate in the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) Indigenous Reconciliation Advisory Group (IRAG). The Advisory Group was created by OHRC to engage in and sustain trusting relationships with Indigenous peoples built on dignity and respect and to work together to advance reconciliation and substantive equality.

The OHRC and Advisory group continue to work towards the development of a policy (i.e., education, justice, housing, employment, etc.) within the framework of UNDRIP.

The commission also provides regular updates on OHRC initiatives such as COVID-19 discrimination, Poverty Reduction Strategy, Kenora Anti-loitering By-law, Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario application related to J. Knapysweet (Timmins Police) and A. Sutherland (Timmins Hospital) and addressing systemic discrimination in sports (i.e., lacrosse).

## HERITAGE AND BURIAL SITES

This work relates to the heritage and burial sites in Ontario that gave rise to the Ipperwash Inquiry as one of the key recommendations. The Chiefs of Ontario (COO) provide the coordination and the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCS) provides funding support. The MTCS is the lead Ministry and responsible for the Return of our Ancestors Project.

As part of this initiative, two groups were established, a technical working group and an advisory group. The technical working group consists of one representative from the four PTOs (Union of Ontario Indians, NAN, Grand Council Treaty # 3 and AIAI), Independent First Nations, and Six Nations. The Advisory Group mainly consists of Elders or Knowledge Keepers, councilors and Chiefs appointed by their respective PTOs or organization.

The Advisory Group came up with the name “Kee: Way” (going home), to signify the importance of the work. Hence, the groups have been renamed Kee: Way working group and Kee: Way Advisory Group.

COO continues to coordinate the activities related to policy, regulatory and Return of Ancestors, artifacts and other First Nation’s historical items with direction provided by technical and advisory groups.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### NAN Fur Depot highlights for the 2022-23 trapping season (wild fur received):

Species	Amount Received
Beaver	7
Marten	500
Wolf	3
Squirrel	7
Total (approx.)	517

### Fur Harvesters Auction March 2023 (approx.): Elder’s Retreat:

Species	Average
Beaver	\$40.00
Mink	\$4.70
Sable	\$54.00
Otter	\$40.00
Fisher	\$53.00

## ELDER’S RETREAT

An Elder’s Retreat was hosted at the Nor’Wester Hotel in Thunder Bay September 13 and 14, 2022. Elders from across Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) territory gathered to share their wisdom and discuss the past, present, and future of NAN.

Topics for discussion included:

- Employment/Job Creation and an economic development agreement with governments
- Law Making - Health Transformation
- Treaty and Treaty Rights
- NAN Day for Elder Recognition - March 20

## CULTURE CAMPS

Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) has been working on projects that will create opportunities for young people to have access to safe spaces and a variety of cultural events. The Dog Lake and Graham Road sites will allow NAN to partner with other Indigenous organizations to host youth events. These events include workshops that strengthen identity and mental health by providing access to ceremonies (sweat lodge, feasting, naming, colours, fasting, etc.), various land-based activities, and workshops with Elders that focus on two spirit teachings and inclusion of all people.

The right to self determination is inherent within First Nations communities. Creating these cultural spaces will allow youth to reclaim and rekindle traditions, receive teachings and learn the unique values of First Nations peoples, as well as connect with peers, Knowledge Keepers and Elders. NAN has ensured that the space is inclusive of all Indigenous Peoples, including women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+.

The summer and fall of 2022 saw the construction of a camp along Graham Road, approximately 200 km northwest of Thunder Bay. NAN worked with Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry to select a suitable site that is both isolated and easy to access. A camp house was constructed with outhouse and storage buildings and additional room for constructing bunk houses and/or campsite. The location is ideally close to hunting grounds, and has access to water and creates the perfect setting for language immersion and cultural teachings.

The NAN Dog Lake site features an outdoor cooking space, gazebo, a path for easy access to the river, picnic tables and a vehicle to transport young people to and from the site. NAN has also recently built a sweat lodge. The site has gender neutral bathrooms, storage spaces, two firepits and an area for games of horseshoe. There are plans to develop a space for a teepee, a designated art space, and more access to the river.





Cabin at Graham Road Property (below).



Dog Lake Property (below).



PROGRAM UPDATES

# Homelessness

## OVERVIEW

In the past year, significant progress has been made in addressing the issue of homelessness in Thunder Bay. Through strategic collaborations, active engagement with stakeholders and community initiatives, efforts have been focused on improving the lives of marginalized individuals and advocating for their rights.

The program activities undertaken aim to provide support, increase funding and challenge negative perceptions surrounding homelessness. The focus on collaboration, advocacy, community engagement and media outreach demonstrate the commitment to meaningful change and making a lasting impact on the issue of homelessness in communities.

## PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

### STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND ADVOCACY

- Engaged with Thunder Bay Mayor, Ken Boshkoff, and Timmins Mayor, Michelle Boileau, to discuss encampments, violence against vulnerable populations and land allocation for safe encampments.
- Met with and collaborated with The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board CEO and Chair, Cochrane District Social Services Administration Board CEO and Board and Kenora District Services Board CEO and Board to advocate for increased funding for housing in urban areas and First Nations representation on district social services administration boards.
- Participated in the Assembly of First Nation's (AFN) Homelessness Data Project, gathering crucial information to inform decision-making and advocate for evidence-based solutions.
- Met with Matawa First Nations Management Homelessness Policy Analyst, toured the ongoing development of the Matawa Wellness and Training Centre, attended their Tiny Home Pilot Project tours at Hammarskjold High School and wrote a letter of support for their future homelessness project.





## LIVED EXPERIENCE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Led a lived experience meeting with homeless and precariously housed individuals at Elevate NWO to gain firsthand insights and ensure their voices are heard in advocacy efforts.
- Engaged with Cal Rankin, the Executive Director of Shelter House, to address funding challenges and advocate for necessary improvements.
- Strengthened collaborative efforts through meetings with Holly Gauvin, the Executive Director of Elevate NWO, fostering partnerships and enhancing support for marginalized individuals.

## COLLABORATION WITH CITY INITIATIVES

- Contributed as members of the City of Thunder Bay's Vulnerable Populations Table, participating in discussions and initiatives aimed at supporting marginalized communities.
- Contributed to the upcoming release of the City of Thunder Bay's Opioid Report, highlighting the impact of substance abuse on vulnerable populations and advocating for appropriate responses.

## ADVOCACY AND MEDIA OUTREACH

- Advocated for increased funding to outreach programs in Thunder Bay through letters, briefings and meetings with the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs.
- Published an op-ed piece in TBNewswatch addressing the callous approach towards those living in encampments, raising awareness and promoting a more compassionate response.

## COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

- Organized and facilitated community engagement initiatives, including cooking dinner and donating holiday gift bags at Shelter House during Christmas.
- Coordinated the donation and distribution of warm winter clothing items, such as jackets and snow pants to organizations including PACE Thunder Bay, Elevate NWO and Shelter House.
- In September, NAN, in partnership with the City of Thunder Bay and Shelter House, hosted a Community BBQ and Wellness Event to benefit the homeless and vulnerable population, in Thunder Bay. Community partners and service organizations provided information about services while Shelter House served a delicious BBQ lunch to those in need. Additionally, in October, NAN staff coordinated a Community Wellness BBQ at the Timmins Native Friendship Centre in Timmins. Over 450 plates of food were served at these two events.

## NEXT STEPS

- Strengthen partnerships with Indigenous organizations, ensuring that culturally appropriate supports and services are available for individuals.
- Explore initiatives that incorporate Indigenous-led housing solutions, Indigenous knowledge systems and holistic approaches to healing and well-being.
- Advocate for increased funding and build on advocacy efforts by engaging with federal and provincial governments to secure additional funding for homelessness prevention, affordable housing programs and support services both on and off reserve.
- Continue to foster collaborations with key stakeholders, including government officials, local District Social Service Administration Boards, Indigenous organizations and community-based service providers.
- Explore opportunities for joint initiatives, resource sharing and collective advocacy.

## DEPARTMENT UPDATES

# Justice Research and Policy

## OVERVIEW

The NAN Justice Research and Policy Department has had a very active year; however, there is still a great deal of work to be done to deliver on the mandates received from the Chiefs-in-Assembly. NAN received mandates through the following resolutions:

- **Resolution 20/14:** Justice and Law Transformation in NAN Territory
- **Resolution 20/13:** Community Safety and Justice Recommendations
- **Resolution 20/17:** Support to Implement Call for Justice 1.4 from the National Inquiry into MMIWG

The Justice Research and Policy Department is also working to fulfill the mandates to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) through Resolution 10/06 and Resolution 10/65.

Urgent issues within the justice system exist that impact NAN First Nations. In 2022, there were 15 homicides in Thunder Bay, which set a record. The inquest into the in-custody deaths of Don Mamakwa and Roland McKay concluded in November 2022 and revealed systemic racism and the horrific treatment of First Nations people suffering with medical issues within the colonial justice system. Canada refuses to recognize First Nation laws and continues to fail to enforce and prosecute, under Canadian law, by-laws created by First Nations.





The Department receives no core funding so it relies on proposal-based projects that can be aligned to NAN mandates. Given the limited department budget, a strategic planning session was conducted in 2022 to clarify and define the department's role, and as result, was renamed from the NAN Justice Department to the NAN Justice Research and Policy Department. The Department's new role is to advocate for a change to the existing justice system in NAN territory through research and policy to enable pathways to justice transformation in NAN territory.

The Department's role includes:

- Research and engagement focused information gathering on multi-sectoral justice issues and the social determinants of health and mental health will be utilized to inform policy and legislative reform.
- Collaborate in partnership internally and externally to support capacity building in the area of justice across NAN territory.
- Share jurisdiction and intergovernmental research and policy.
- Develop community engagement and education awareness on rights and nation-building for governance capacity building.

Lack of funding to address justice issues in NAN First Nations has become a significant issue. The Department has been denied multiple funding requests and the current minimal staffing levels are at risk.

NAN continues to urge the governments of Ontario and Canada to recognize their responsibilities for the failures of the colonial justice system and partner to repair and reform the colonial system while also enabling First Nations to rebuild First Nation-led justice systems.

## PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Throughout this work, the goal of the Department is to keep leadership and citizens informed and engaged and seek guidance from NAN Chiefs and the people of Nishnawbe Aski. From April 2022 to March 2023, Department activities were presented at the Keewaywin Conference in August 2022 and at the Winter Chiefs Assembly in January 2023. The NAN Justice Research and Policy Department also hosted, with the help of Nishnawbe Aski Police Services (NAPS) and Nishnawbe-Aski Legal Services Corporation (NALSC), the "NAN Engagement on the UNDRIP" in September 2022. All NAN Chiefs were invited to attend and participate in this engagement.

### IMPLEMENTING THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

After presenting the draft report to Chiefs-in-Assembly, the "NAN Report on the Engagement on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" was submitted to Canada in January 2023. The report highlighted many issues that Chiefs raised through the engagement including the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent, the right to self-determination and the need for Ontario to engage on these issues as a treaty partner. The Department has met multiple times with Canada's Department of Justice to highlight deficiencies with Canada's implementation of the UNDRIP and to advocate for stronger, NAN First Nation specific priorities to be included in Canada's UNDRIP Action Plan.

### ENVISIONING A NISHNAWBE ASKI NATION JUSTICE STRATEGY

The NAN Justice Strategy is funded by Justice Canada for 2022-2024 to engage with NAN communities on what an Indigenous Justice Strategy (IJS) in Canada should include. This two-year project has focused on pre-engagement activities, but will shift to active engagement with NAN First Nation leadership through the remainder of the project. Specifically, an engagement with NAN Chiefs is being organized for September 2023 to discuss priorities and next steps for the IJS. Part of the work identified the creation of a NAN Chiefs Committee on Justice, which is still being developed.

### WIICHIITOWIN KE-ISHI KANAWABAMAWANOWIC-ANISHININI – "WIICHIITOWIN PROJECT"

This research project was funded by Justice Canada for 2021-2023 and gathered information on traditional governance and models of justice. The information obtained will assist in community history recording and create a reference for future governance and law-making ability for First Nation people. Elders with knowledge of traditional governance and laws were interviewed so that their knowledge would help guide the steps towards self-determination in this area. The NAN Justice Research and Policy Department has put together an onboarding resource for NAN Chiefs and the final report will be completed by June 30, 2023.

### LIVING BY THE SEVEN GRANDFATHER TEACHINGS: A NISHNAWBE ASKI NATION SEVEN PART SPEAKER SERIES

Funded by the Ministry of the Solicitor General under the Safer and Vital Communities Grant for 2021-2023, the Speakers Series project addressed hate motivated crime targeted towards Indigenous youth. The videos address elder abuse, sexual violence, human trafficking, bullying and lateral violence, gender diversity, racism and living the good life (minobimadiziwin). The messaging in the videos encourages youth to follow the Seven Grandfather Teachings and includes the wise encouragement of Elder Helen Cromarty and deep knowledge of Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum. Significant contributions were also made by youth role models Linden Waboose, Ashley Bach and Cassandra Spade. The videos will be made available through NAN social media.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

The NAN Justice Research and Policy Department participates at the Tripartite Collaborative Technical Table on Enforcement and Prosecution of First Nations Laws, a table consisting of representatives from First Nation organizations and the federal and provincial governments. However, no funding has been provided to enable participation at this table.

The NAN Justice Research and Policy Department coordinated a report on the proposed federal Indigenous policing legislation that included a survey to all Chiefs and Councils, Tribal Councils and policing service providers. The report outlined preliminary considerations and next steps for deeper understanding, including the need for a NAN Chiefs meeting on policing issues. Minimal funding was flowed through Chiefs of Ontario to enable this initial work.



Justice Research and Policy Department team members in July 2022: Stephen Lee, Fay Pettypiece, Natalie Binguis, Lilli Kindla and Emmalee Goudie Summer Students (Left to Right).





*NAN Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum at the NAN Engagement on the UNDRIP (September 15, 2022, Thunder Bay).*



*NAN Deputy Grand Chief Bobby Narcisse at the NAN Engagement on UNDRIP (September 15, 2022, Thunder Bay).*



*Former AFN National Chief Ovide Mercredi addresses Chiefs and Proxies at the NAN Engagement on the UNDRIP (September 15, 2022, Thunder Bay).*

## DEPARTMENT UPDATES

# Opioid Use Disorder

## OVERVIEW

The Office of Deputy Grand Chief (DGC) Anna Betty Achneepineskum has dedicated human resources to address the escalating Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) crisis within Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) territory, honouring mandates from the Chiefs-in-Assembly such as Resolution 19/40. Over the past six months, efforts have encompassed extensive literature reviews, field visits, contributing to significant reports and advocating for the improvement of OUD treatment facilities within hospitals, with particular attention to the emergency department in Thunder Bay.

Endeavours have concentrated on fostering community-led actions, enhancing cultural practices and promoting healing mechanisms. This is driven by a firm belief in the potency of a robust, holistic and sustainable solution grounded in the strengths of NAN community, incorporating harm-reducing and culturally integrated treatment approaches. A steadfast commitment to supporting NAN communities through cooperative engagement, in-depth research and the implementation of strategic actions is maintained.

## PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

### LITERATURE REVIEW WITH QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY:

NAN received \$45,000 from the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs (IAO) to launch an opioid data project. Phase 1 of the four-phased project has been successfully completed. This project is designed by NAN and supported by the Office of Professional Development and Educational Scholarship, Queen's Health Sciences and Queen's University. This phase encompassed an exhaustive literature review and document analysis, probing existing policies, processes and practices related to treatment and detox pathways and systems related to OUD. This review highlighted the pressing need for an action-based approach for recommendations that have been raised and reinforced over the past few decades. Moreover, it highlighted the importance of amplifying the voices of NAN members in this crucial discourse.

### SITE VISIT TO TIMMINS HOSPITAL:

The team had the privilege of touring Timmins Hospital, an acknowledged leader in addressing the OUD crisis. Their innovative and strategic approach towards OUD management provided invaluable insights into effective, ground-level treatment modalities. By directly observing their robust practices and pioneering methodologies, the team was able to deepen their understanding of how an integrated approach to opioid treatment can result in substantial outcomes. In fact, the success of the hospital's treatment program has been lauded for significantly reducing opioid-related mortality rates. This visit underscored the potential effectiveness of such approaches when implemented thoughtfully within NAN communities, providing a beacon of hope and a model for mitigating the OUD crisis in urban areas.



## LEADERSHIP MEETING WITH THUNDER BAY REGIONAL HEALTH SCIENCES CENTRE:

As a crucial step towards enhancing the standard of opioid addiction treatment services, DGC Achneepineskum held a significant meeting with the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC) leadership. The meeting highlighted the severity of this devastating crisis, which has caused opioid-related mortality rates to surge alarmingly in northern Ontario, with Thunder Bay recording the highest death rates in 2021 and 2022. Recommendations were made regarding the implementation of specific strategies, including the provision of acute withdrawal beds in the hospital and treating withdrawal symptoms in the emergency department. By ensuring timely, quality care during the withdrawal process, offering immediate access to life-saving medications and providing necessary support to manage withdrawal symptoms, these changes can significantly improve the outcomes for NAN member patients and overall community health. The meeting with TBRHSC leadership was more than just emphasizing the importance of upgrading addiction treatment facilities. It served as a call to action – a plea for immediate, decisive and compassionate measures to tackle the opioid crisis. The lives of countless community members are at stake, making the integration of immediate, comprehensive treatment services both a medical and moral necessity.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

- Contribution to the Chiefs of Ontario (COO) Opioid Report: NAN's active participation in the COO Opioid Report strengthened NAN research and community engagement initiatives. NAN's involvement aided in understanding the broad spectrum of OUD challenges and proposed solutions at the provincial level.
- Participation in the Thunder Bay Opioid Report: NAN contributed significantly to the Thunder Bay Opioid Report, focusing on regional issues and responses regarding OUD. NAN's active involvement in this report aligns with the mission to construct a comprehensive, community-centered solution to the crisis.
- Attended the Thunder Bay Harm Reduction Conference in November 2022.

## NEXT STEPS

- Ongoing Communication with Key Stakeholders: Continue regular follow-up with the TBRHSC and other significant stakeholders to ensure the implementation of the recommended changes, such as the provision of acute withdrawal beds.
- Launch the Next Phases of Opioid Data Project: Proceed with launching the subsequent phases of the opioid data project, which involve further data collection, focus group consultations, qualitative research, and eventually, report preparation and presentation.
- Strengthen Community Engagement: Ensure that the voice of the NAN communities is heard and considered at every step of the way through meetings, surveys or interviews, especially during the focus group consultation phase.
- Advocacy for Funding: Continue to advocate for more funding from IAO and other potential sources to ensure the project's long-term sustainability and expansion.
- Public Awareness Campaigns: Conduct campaigns to raise awareness about OUD and the resources available for treatment within the NAN communities including educational programs, workshops or informational materials.



## DEPARTMENT UPDATES

# Reclamation and Healing

## OVERVIEW

On May 28, 2021, the remains of 215 children were discovered using Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) at the Kamloops Indian Residential School (IRS) site in British Columbia. In response to this, and other findings that followed, Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Chiefs-in-Assembly passed Resolution 21/10: Strategic Response to the Identification of Unmarked Graves and the Recovery of Missing Nishnawbe Aski Nation Children from Indian Residential Schools. The resolution mandated the creation of the NAN Reclamation and Healing Department and the Survivors and Families Empowerment (SAFE) Council.

There were over 139 Indian Residential Schools across Canada, 18 of which were in Ontario.

There were seven schools in NAN territory:

1. Bishop Horden Hall (Moose Fort, Moose Factory), Moose Factory Island
2. Chapleau (St. John's), Chapleau
3. Cristal Lake, Northwestern Ontario
4. Pelican Lake (Pelican Falls), Sioux Lookout
5. Poplar Hill, Poplar Hill
6. St. Anne's (Fort Albany), Fort Albany
7. Stirland Lake (Wahbon Bay Academy), Stirland Lake

Through funding agreements made in partnership with the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs (IAO) and the Indian Residential Schools Resolution Health Support Program (IRSRHSP), the Reclamation and Healing Department was able to operate during the 2022/2023 year to fulfill this mandate and the needs of NAN territory.



Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum giving opening remarks at NAN's Orange Shirt Day event, September 30, 2022.



## PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

### DEPARTMENT INITIATIVES

In April 2022, Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum, as well as staff from the newly formed Reclamation and Healing Department, travelled to Niagara Falls for a staff retreat. With the help of a consultant, the Department strategy and workplan, the communications process plan and the goals for the next year were discussed. Additionally, best practices for the transition of the former Indian Residential Schools-Men's Healing Initiatives Program into the Reclamation and Healing Department were considered. Following this, the Department filled the Cultural Support Officer position.

To respect the COVID-19 related restrictions of NAN communities, Department staff were able to visit Lac Seul First Nation, North Caribou First Nation, Eabametoong First Nation, and Long Lake #58 First Nation in the later part of 2022/2023. In addition to community visits, the staff took part in site visits to utilize the expertise of established Survivor-led initiatives. Site visits included:

- Former Portage La Prairie Indian Residential School in Long Plain First Nation;
- Former Marieval Indian Residential School in Cowessess First Nation, Saskatchewan;
- Mohawk Institute, in Brantford, Ontario;
- Former Kamloops Indian Residential School in Kamloops, British Columbia.



Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum, Kimberly Murray, Independent Special Interlocutor, and Reclamation and Healing staff at The National Gathering for Missing Children and Unmarked Burials in Winnipeg, MB in November 2022.



Swag bags given away to participants of the Residential School Site Search Forum (Lead Community Technical Gathering) in February 2023, in Thunder Bay, Ontario.

Reclamation and Healing staff were able to provide emotional and practical support to Survivors, share information and make referrals to mental health providers throughout the year. Staff were active at both internal and external events for the 2022/2023 year including: Overdose Awareness Day, Recovery Day, Annual McIntosh Residential School Traditional Powwow, Nee Kee Wa Nan Initiative Meeting, Shingwauk Gathering, Feast in Honour of Allen Towegishig, NAN Mental Health Summit, NAN Elders Gathering, St. Joseph's IRS Gathering and provided meal service at the Thunder Bay Shelter House.

Four Department hosted events were held in the 2022/2023 year with substantial turn out and positive feedback:

- The NAN IRS Gathering
- Orange Shirt Day
- The Residential School Site Search Forum
- The Lead Community Meeting

The 3-day Annual IRS Gathering hosted NAN Survivors from across the region. The theme of the Gathering was, "Find Your Path To Healing" and was facilitated by Dennis Windego and Grandmother's Voice.

Orange Shirt Day was a public event that saw over 300 participants and included a commemorative walk from the NAN office to the former St. Joseph's Indian Residential School site, story sharing and a meal provided to everyone in attendance.

The Reclamation and Healing Department was chosen to host a Lead Community Technical Gathering funded through the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs. The Director of Reclamation and Healing was chosen to chair the lead community meetings for the 18 sites across Ontario. Technical staff, Elders and support from the 18 lead communities attended the 4-day event that included experts in research, ground searches, best practices, policing and data management. The Lead Community Meeting brought together representatives from the seven sites within NAN territory to encourage collaboration, information sharing and updates on next steps.

Department staff were also fortunate to attend three of the National Gatherings on Unmarked Burials in Edmonton, Winnipeg and Toronto. These Gatherings were hosted by the Office of the Independent Special Interlocutor for Missing Children and Unmarked Burials. Through these events, the staff were able to connect with experts in upholding Indigenous law, trauma and supporting the search and recovery of unmarked burials.

In accordance with the NAN Communications Process Plan, the Department has created new educational and technical resources that promote department initiatives and raise awareness about the seven sites, their caretaker communities and their associated initiatives. This was achieved through the creation of information brochures, booklets and a Reclamation and Healing website that is close to completion.

Challenges continued to be raised regarding supports provided to IRS Survivors, mainly around their access to counselling. NAN has worked collaboratively with IRS counsellors and will advocate for mental health reform to ensure Survivors are able to access trauma informed mental health supports. They will also ensure mental health providers are compensated and supported to provide necessary services to Survivors. This year, the Department had the opportunity to host a meeting with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) and clinicians about the barriers around accessing supports and appropriate mental and cultural supports within the region to streamline processes.



Deputy Grand Chief Victor Linklater, Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum, Kuk7pi Rosane Casimir, & Deputy Grand Chief Bobby Narcisse outside the Kamloops Indian Residential School at Tk'emlúps te Secwépeḿc (Kamloops, BC).



Teepee and Sacred Fire overlooking Prince Arthur's Landing, with a full moon during the Annual IRS Gathering, December 2022.



Under the guidance of the SAFE Council, the six pillars of the Reclamation and Healing Strategy (see figure below) expanded to include future goals as well as key points into the next stage of development. An approved strategic plan will be implemented by the Department. Through extensive collaboration and partnership, the Department has created an invaluable network of technical support, government partners, elected officials, experts and Knowledge Keepers that will guide the work to come as NAN lead communities embark on the important and sensitive processes of reconciliation and repatriation under the strategy.



Illustration of the Reclamation and Healing Strategy pillars.



Participants of the Annual IRS Gathering, December 2022.

## ADVISORY COUNCIL UPDATE

The SAFE Council was able to meet their goal of quarterly meetings in April, June, November and February. The June meeting took place in Winnipeg, where members of the SAFE Council had the opportunity to meet with Independent Special Interlocutor for Missing Children and Unmarked Burials, Kimberly Murray and advocate for NAN Survivors, take a tour of the Canadian Museum of Human Rights, including the Indian Residential School exhibit, and tour the headquarters of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.

The Department was able to support members of the SAFE Council in their advocacy work while they attended an Assembly of First Nations meeting in support of a Resolution to hold the Canadian Government and its lawyers accountable for suppressing evidence for St. Anne's Indian Residential School Survivors and addressing Pope Francis on behalf of NAN Survivors during his visit to Canada in July 2022.

Members of the SAFE Council also attended the National Gathering on Unmarked Burials in Toronto as well as the NAN Elders Gathering.

Through meetings with the Department, the SAFE Council have continued to identify areas of focus for future activities and have continued to inform the Department's work intended to support Survivors, families and communities on the road to healing and recovery and also provide education on the history of IRS.

The NAN Reclamation and Healing Department looks forward to working with IRS Survivors and their families, NAN communities, Survivor-led initiatives and the completion and implementation of the strategy.



SAFE Council with Reclamation and Healing Department staff at Portage La Prairie Indian Residential School in Long Plain First Nation, Manitoba.



Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum and Reclamation and Healing Department staff at the memorial for Marival Indian Residential School in Cowessess First Nation.

## DEPARTMENT UPDATES

## Women's Initiatives

### OVERVIEW

The Women's Initiatives Department is responsible for mandates specific to women's issues including: family violence prevention, ending violence against Indigenous women, implementation of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) Calls for Justice, and the empowerment of Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) women.

The Women's Initiatives Department works closely with the NAN Women's Council and receives guidance from members on activities and initiatives that are coordinated and implemented.





## PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

### Mandates:

**Resolution 10/71:** Prevention of Sexual Assault/ Abuse Against Women and Their Families within Nishnawbe Aski Nation directs the NAN Executive Council to actively advocate and support the NAN Women's Council's work to address and prevent sexual assault/abuse against women and children within NAN.

**Resolution 12/71:** Needs Assessment and Safety Audit on Human Trafficking within Nishnawbe Aski Nation supports the NAN Women's Council efforts to secure funding to raise awareness on human trafficking across NAN territory and endorses the working relationship the NAN Women's Council is starting with the Nishnawbe Aski Police Service (NAPS), the Nishnawbe-Aski Legal Services Corporation (NALSC) and other affiliated organizations that have an interest in keeping at-risk women and youth safe and preventing human trafficking from occurring within NAN territory.

**Resolution 13/28:** Violence Against First Nation Women and Families supports the work of the NAN Women's Council in its work to make all forms of violence against women and children a priority and to raise awareness, educate and advocate for victims of violence.

The issues that these Resolutions address are interconnected and continue to be priority areas for the NAN Women's Council and the Women's Initiatives Department. Over the course of the year, several activities and initiatives were coordinated and implemented to advance the mandates, including:

- Convening monthly meetings of the NAN Women's Council to discuss priority issues and receive input and guidance on activities and initiatives throughout the year.
- Creating awareness of violence against women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people through social media posts on NAN's Facebook, Instagram and Twitter platforms.
- Lending support and attending the Human Trafficking conference in Attawapiskat First Nation on October 15, 2022.

- Developing graphics for social media use and print materials calling for a stop/end to violence against women.
- Hosting a hybrid (i.e., in-person & virtual) Awareness Social in recognition of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on November 25, 2022, which featured guest speakers and a light lunch. The event was held in-person at NAN's Thunder Bay office and was also streamed online via NAN's YouTube channel.
- Coordinating a hybrid discussion on harmful gender norms and attitudes on December 12, 2022, which was facilitated by Turtle Concepts. The results of which will be used to inform ongoing awareness and education work on gender-based violence (GBV) in NAN.
- Developing, coordinating and implementing a, "Personal and Street Safety Initiative for Students" in collaboration with NAN's Education department. Approximately 640 students from 10 senior elementary and high schools in Thunder Bay and Timmins participated in the initiative which underscored the importance of personal safety through interactive presentations by the Thunder Bay Police, the Timmins Police and local martial arts instructors (basic self-defense). Topics discussed included: substance use and abuse, consent, human trafficking, internet safety and the importance of being aware of safe and unsafe people and situations.

**Resolution 19/34:** Support for Full Implementation of the National Inquiry into MMIWG Calls for Justice directs the NAN Executive Council to work with the federal and provincial governments to ensure that full implementation of the Calls for Justice are addressed and adequately funded.

Raising awareness about the MMIWG crisis is a priority. The issues surrounding missing and murdered First Nations women must be brought into the public's awareness to increase the accountability of the justice systems and to show support to the families and communities of those who have been taken. During the last year, the following activities were carried out:

- An internal review of the MMIWG National Inquiry 231 Calls for Justice was led by the Women's Initiatives Department to determine what has been implemented and how NAN could lead, assist or advocate for the full implementation of the Calls, especially within NAN territory and urban hubs of northern Ontario (i.e., Thunder Bay, Sioux Lookout and Timmins). The review was done in collaboration with the Justice, Early Years, Healing and Reclamation and Community Wellness Departments.
- Support and attendance at the MMIWG Conference in Attawapiskat First Nation on June 11, 2022.
- Staff from the Women's Initiative Department, members of the NAN Women's Council and four NAN community members attended the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National MMIWGB2S+ Gathering on February 14-16, 2023, in Vancouver, British Columbia. The delegation also joined the 32nd Annual Women's Memorial March which took place in downtown Vancouver.
- Participation in the 16th Annual MMIWGB2S+ Valentine's Day Memorial Walk in Thunder Bay on February 14, 2023.
- Creating awareness and honouring the memories of MMIWG from NAN through social media posts on NAN's Facebook, Instagram and Twitter platforms.

**Resolution 15/04:** International Women's Day mandates the active promotion of International Women's Day through celebrations, activities and events that promote the contributions that women have made and continue to make for the families and communities of NAN First Nations.

**Resolution 04/106:** NAN Women's Gathering supports the coordination of the NAN Women's Gathering and mandates the NAN Executive Council and staff to assist with the delivery of the gathering.

**Resolution 20/17:** Support to Implement Call for Justice 1.4 from the National Inquiry into MMIWG directs the NAN Executive Council to work with the NAN Women's Council to support the implementation of Call for Justice 1.4 and focuses on increasing advocacy and awareness within NAN territory in order to take urgent and special measures to establish and maintain equitable roles for women in leadership and governance.

### Call for Justice 1.4 states:

*"We call upon all governments, and in particular Indigenous governments and Indigenous representative organizations, to take urgent and special measures to ensure that Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people are represented in governance and that their political rights are respected and upheld. We call upon all governments to equitably support and promote the role of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in governance and leadership. These efforts must include the development of policies and procedures to protect Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people against sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and racism within political life."*

To encourage concrete action, in 2023/2024, NAN will be creating a process for monitoring the implementation of Call for Justice 1.4. This will involve working with partners, such as Nishnawbe Aski Police Service and other relevant parties in NAN territory, to identify pathways and opportunities that will support and promote NAN women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people in governance and leadership.

A core goal of the Women's Initiatives department is to empower NAN women and promote the importance of elevating women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people into leadership roles. Their leadership will be key to economic growth, political stability and social transformation in NAN. To this end, the following activities took place in 2022-2023:

- Women's Initiatives coordinated and implemented the annual NAN Women's Gathering in February 2023 in Thunder Bay after a two-year hiatus due to COVID-19. Registration response was overwhelming and over 150 women from NAN territory attended the three-day gathering. With the goal of creating a safe space to empower women, youth and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, the agenda included plenary and breakout sessions on human trafficking, victim survivor services, advocacy strategies, women in business, self-care, traditional rites of passage and more.
- Highlighting International Women's Day (March 8) and International Day of the Girl Child (October 11) via social media posts on NAN's Facebook, Instagram and Twitter platforms.
- Continuing the "Championing Women Leaders" social media campaign that featured women, youth and 2SLGBTQQIA+ leaders from NAN.
- NAN Women's Council members attended the Chiefs of Ontario (COO) First Nations Women's Leadership Summit on February 7-9, 2023.

A priority for the next year will be to secure core funding for the Women's Initiatives Department and the NAN Women's Council so that work on mandates and priority issues can be sustained and increased in scope which will result in more impact at the NAN community level.



## HIGHLIGHTS

Elimination of Violence Against Women.

February 14 MMIWG social media post.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

NAN continued to participate in both provincial and federal processes to support ongoing advocacy work specific to violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people via membership on:

- Ontario's Indigenous Women's Advisory Council
- COO First Nations Women's Council
- AFN Women's Council

Additionally, NAN Women's Initiatives joined:

- The Thunder Bay Coalition to End Human Trafficking
- The Regional Anti-Human Trafficking Committee for the Cochrane-Temiskaming Districts, (including the James Bay Coast)

Collaborative relationships were also strengthened with the Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA), and the Nishnawbe Aski Police Service Survivor Assistance Support Program and a new relationship was established with the Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority Iikwew Mashkowziwin (Woman's Strength) project team. Women's Initiatives looks forward to building on these relationships and collaborating on initiatives in the coming year.

Women's Initiatives also began planning to co-host the first Moose Hide Campaign Day Awareness Walk with ONWA in Thunder Bay on May 11, 2023. The two organizations are excited to be working together to bring this grassroots awareness movement to Thunder Bay and hope to expand it to other communities in the future.





The NAN delegation at the 32nd Annual Women's Memorial March in Vancouver, BC on February 14, 2023. From left to right, Jamilee Wanakamik, Roselynn Koostachin, Janine Frogg, Maryann Panacheese-Skunk, Eileen Loon and Tahshiina Cheechoo.

Indigenous Liaison Officer Constable Bob Simon of the Thunder Bay Police Service shares personal safety tips with students at Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School on November 22, 2022, as part of the NAN "Personal and Street Safety Initiative for Students".



Delegates participate in an interactive session at the 2023 NAN Women's Gathering held in Thunder Bay at the Best Western Nor'Wester Hotel & Conference Centre on February 21-23, 2023.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

# Education

OVERVIEW

The NAN Education Department advocates for quality education programs and services for NAN First Nations, adequate and sustainable funding from the Government of Canada and provides educational advocacy for the NAN First Nations and First Nation organizations. The Education Department is mandated to work with the NAN Education Committee.

The Education Department provides information, analysis and coordination related to First Nations education to Chiefs-in-Assembly, the NAN Education Committee, NAN education organizations and NAN First Nations. This includes analysis and coordination of information from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), the Ontario Ministry of Education (EDU), Assembly of First Nations (AFN), Chiefs of Ontario (COO), and other relevant Ministries, organizations and initiatives as required.



**1st Place winners – Carol Contest**  
Kattawapiskak Elementary School SR Kindergarten Class



**Mandate: Resolution 22-04:** Re-establishment of Chiefs Committee on Education and Approval of Terms of Reference for the Chiefs Committee.

The new Chiefs Committee on Education (CCOE) will support the direction for the Education Reset Table, with the overarching goal of achieving NAN-specific education funding, programs and services. The CCOE will receive information and direction on education priorities from their education technicians to help them in providing decisions for the Reset Table discussions.

## EDUCATION RESET TABLE

The Terms of Reference for the Education Reset Table were signed on December 6, 2022. The Education Reset Table Working Group has met regularly since January 2023. It was a productive resumption meeting of the main Table, following unfortunate delays resulting from Deputy Grand Chief Narcisse's medical leave, and personnel changes with respect to Canada's representatives at the Table.

Indigenous Services Canada's (ISC) newly appointed Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM), Marc Sanderson, replaced former ADM David Peckham as Canada's Co-Chair of the Education Reset Table. ADM Sanderson is Mohawk from Six Nations. Shelly Blizzard Jones has also joined the table as ISC's Deputy Director of Education Program.

With respect to the Table's mandate and scope, the Terms of Reference state as follows:

*"The mandate of the Table is to oversee and guide reform of the education systems that serve NAN communities by reviewing and reforming the policy and funding frameworks that support those systems."*

*"The table is mandated to develop a policy and funding framework, for which Canada will seek policy and funding authorities, that supports NAN First Nations exercising jurisdiction over education."*

*"The Table shall explore and critically assess the overall pace of reform to date and opportunities to establish effective accountability mechanisms for the pace of reform moving forward."*

NAN is pleased to report that the Table made progress toward resuming the NAN-Canada Education Jurisdiction "Governance" Table negotiations with agreed upon timelines and milestones in place. The Table also made progress toward securing dedicated funding for implementation of the outstanding Seven Youth Inquest recommendations. These are positive steps forward for NAN communities.

Dates are set for regular meetings through to September.

## CHIEFS AND TECHNICIANS COMMITTEE ON LANGUAGE AND LEARNING (CTCLL)

NAN Education has continued to regularly participate as a member of the First Nation Education Coordination Unit (FNECU) as organized through the COO. The FNECU focuses on education issues impacting First Nations people and First Nations communities from pre-school to post-secondary school and beyond through the lifelong learning process.

Ontario continues to remain outside of the AFN table for Education matters; several attempts have been made at reconciliation that would enable a return to the table. Due to the unfair funding allocation methodology used for Education at the national table, Ontario would not be able to return until an agreement is made on a new methodology. Unfortunately, Ontario's attempts have gone without response to date. We continue to hold bilateral tables with ISC so that Ontario First Nations can address issues directly with Indigenous Services Canada. Current Bilateral Tables include Ontario Technical Table for the Interim Funding Approach (OTTIFA), Post-Secondary Education and the Education Partnerships Program (EPP).

## ONTARIO TECHNICAL TABLE FOR THE INTERIM FUNDING APPROACH (OTTIFA)

### Mandates:

**Resolution 17/48:** NAN Specific Process for Education

**Resolution 18/08:** Interim and Regional Education Funding Formula

**Resolution 18/22:** New Interim Funding Approach for First Nation Interim Education

The Interim Funding Formula was created on the principle of 'provincial comparability' and uses the Ontario Grants for Students' Needs (GSN) funding model as a base. First Nations schools have unique needs and requirements that are not supported in the GSN and therefore, does not achieve comparability. To address this gap, the OTTIFA was created to allow First Nations and federal government partners to work together to identify areas of the formula that remain outside of 'provincial comparability'. NAN works with COO and other partners on the OTTIFA Table to review the Interim Funding Formula and makes recommendations for improvements to make the formula more reflective of the First Nations reality within Ontario.

OTTIFA Task Teams continue to work toward obtaining more parity through the interim funding formula. The results of recommendations submitted over the last year are as follows:

- Adult Education – Approved \$350M nationally to be issued over 5 years.
  - ▶ Through this funding, all students on the nominal roll will attract full funding regardless of their age.
  - ▶ Startup/expansion funding will be available annually (how this funding will be allocated/distributed is still under discussion).
- Supported School Designation – Appoint all First Nations schools as supported schools in the interim funding formula as they are all autonomous and proximity to one another is not a benefit.

- ▶ This recommendation was approved and will be implemented in 2023-2024.
- Provincial Student Supports – Provide base funding for a community-based First Nations Lead position to support FN students attending provincial schools.
  - ▶ This recommendation was approved conditionally, pending ISC receiving a new mandate for regional enhancement implementation, which is currently being considered by central agencies but is not currently available.
- High-Cost Special Education Program (HCSEP) Needs Based Allocation – Provide \$6 million annually to be maintained annually outside the incremental pot to support the HCSEP Needs Based process.
  - ▶ ISC deferred this decision due to an ongoing national review of the HCSEP. It is recommended that work continue at the OTTIFA table on high-cost special education to be re-submitted at a later date.
- Funding Protection – Continue most areas of funding protection as it supports needed programs and services for learners.
  - ▶ While ongoing work from the OTTIFA table and the Funding Protection Task Team was taken into consideration for the decision regarding the future of the time limited Funding Protection Program, the new national approach to funding protection based on gradual funding stabilization was finalized before the recommendation was submitted.

When OTTIFA recommendations are submitted to headquarters, it can take months before a response is received. When it is received, the response does not usually provide any details or reasoning for their decision. This is an issue that is being brought to the Reset Table to be addressed by Deputy Grand Chief Bobby Narcisse.



## FIRST NATIONS LIFE-LONG LEARNING TABLE

Bilateral Engagement, or First Nations Lifelong Learning Table (FNLLT), is a bilateral initiatives partnership between NAN and the Province of Ontario. The partnership responds to and looks at specific priority areas to address the achievement gap and the needs of First Nation students and communities by creating holistic educational initiatives, policies, enhancement of supports and accessibility of resources available to First Nation students and their families in provincially funded schools. As a partner in this initiative, NAN acts as a central entity to accomplish the objective of identifying priority areas through coordinated actions with communities, as well as advocating and creating processes that will promote student success and wellbeing while increasing First Nation students' access to meaningful education.

Bilateral Engagement initiatives for 2022-2023 include:

- Curriculum – A Curriculum Working Group was created to review the curriculum review process through the Ministry of Education (EDU). For the second year in a row, curriculum changes were made without proper engagement. The Working Group continues to look at the current EDU process so that recommendations can be made to EDU for proper First Nation engagement at all stages of the curriculum review process.
- Mental Health – Ongoing engagement with province on the resources available for students and what role EDU plays regarding mental health in the public school system.
- Language – Ongoing review of language initiatives including the creation of a Language Framework Recommendation that provides recommendations for next steps within policy, advocacy, communities and through programs and resources.

Other bilateral initiatives discussed and reviewed over the past year include: data collection and sharing, community engagement, human rights complaint procedure, student wellbeing, regional education agreements (tuition agreements) and Jordan's Principle in public schools.

Within NAN, the following initiatives were achieved over 2022-2023:

- Languages Curriculum Training – Virtual gathering held April 20-21, 2022. The event was limited to 80 participants and of that number, 77 participants logged on and attended both days of the conference, which received outstanding reviews.
- Land Based Learning Gathering 2022 – Virtual gathering held May 17-18, 2022 was attended by over 140 participants and three classrooms. Again, the event met with high reviews.
- Wiidokaakehwin – An in-person, two-day conference, held August 30-31, 2022, brought youth and educators together in Thunder Bay to discuss the gaps and barriers faced by youth in the public school system. Youth noted that racism and bullying continue to be the most prominent issues and while the racism and bullying came mainly from the non-Indigenous students, they felt that the educators were also lacking in understanding, knowledge and the ability to adequately support First Nations students.
- They indicated that there should be a mandatory element to the training of educators that encompasses cultural awareness, competency and safety. Without this essential learning, some educators are simply not able to provide the proper support that is required to defuse racial attitudes and situations. A copy of the meeting report highlighting these issues was sent to the Indigenous Education Office of the EDU.



## LANGUAGE STRATEGY

**Mandate:**

**Resolution 18/07:** NAN Language Strategy

The NAN Language Strategy's focus continues to look toward language revitalization. Four language sessions were provided to all interested NAN members in 2022-2023. Sessions were provided in the Cree, Ojibwe and Ojibwe languages with members able to register for whichever language they wanted to attend. Additionally, each dialect had two classes: a beginner class and an intermediate class. All sessions were very well attended. In fact, registration numbers continue to rise. Plans are in place to start creation of a new child-friendly version of the language sessions complete with songs, puppets and kookum stories!

## INQUEST RECOMMENDATIONS – EDUCATION

### ONLINE BOARDING PARENT TRAINING MODULES

**Mandate: Recommendation 81:** In order to ensure the safety of all First Nation students while going to school on-reserve or off-reserve, conduct annual training of all staff and boarding parents associated with First Nation schools with respect to:

- Recognition, management and care of intoxicated students;
- Crisis intervention;
- Suicide prevention; and
- First aid, including cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

The first online Boarding Home Parent Module was completed in November 2021. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was no requirement for boarding parent training that year. In the fall of 2022, the training platform was shared with representatives from each of the partner organizations running boarding home programs to administer online boarding parent training. A second Boarding Parent Training Module is currently under development and is expected to be completed by the end of summer 2023. The second module will focus on mental health.

## CONTINUITY OF CARE

**Recommendation 87:** In order to ensure continuity of care and increased prospect (where desired) of a return to Thunder Bay for those students who are sent back due to health and safety concerns, make all efforts to ensure that community supports, including a continuing education, health and mental health plan are in place prior to sending a student back to his or her home community. Canada and Ontario should ensure that there is sufficient funding and resources in place for these support programs.

Three post-secondary students were contracted over the summer of 2022 to undertake research to find information on all the various support services available to NAN youth/students within the NAN catchment areas. NAN is now working with an app development team to create an app for student support workers that will easily help them find service providers and locations for the various needs of students in their care. The app is currently in the testing phase and is planned to be available for the fall of 2023.

### BOARDING STUDENT TRANSITIONS WORKBOOK

**Recommendation 125:** Through the Ministry of Education, work with NAN through the Education Partnerships Program to foster local relationships between school boards and First Nation communities in order to support student transitions between provincially funded schools and First Nations schools.

To date, two workbooks have been created and distributed to schools to help prepare students for life in an urban centre. The first focuses on the various aspects of living in a boarding home. The second workbook discusses mental health and self advocacy and includes topics such as: what mental health is, dealing with grief, anxiety and depression, substance use/abuse and more.

A third workbook is currently in production and is expected to go into print by August 2023. This third book focuses on life skills, study habits, effective communication, budgeting, time management and much more.



## COMMUNITY BUILDING CAMPAIGN

**Recommendation 126:** Through the Ministry of Education, continue ongoing work regarding supports for students experiencing racism and continue to work with its partners to support the learning in the curriculum to address this issue.

NAN's Community Building Campaign has been a success since the 2021 Northern Nishnawbe Education Council's Wake the Giant Event. Consisting of 16 informational panels, four art panels, four rounded panels and four seating areas, this display covers an area of approximately 50' x 30' and is set up to mimic the shape of the NAN logo (arial view). The Community Building Panel display has received great reviews and was featured in a Treaty Video made for NAN by Makwa Creative and narrated by Tanya Talaga. By educating the public, this panel campaign works toward making Thunder Bay a safer and more accepting place for NAN students to live while they are in school, hundreds of miles from their home communities. The panel campaign continues to be relevant; it has been displayed at four schools over the spring and has actively been used by the Thunder Bay Police Service in their training. The panels are reviewed and updated as necessary to reflect the most accurate information.

A second, smaller set of panels is being created and delivered to the Timmins and District Hospital (TADH) where it will be permanently displayed. This second set was developed following the creation of a partnership between NAN and the TADH to help ensure the safety and care of all NAN youth attending the hospital. The second set of panels match the information on the main panel set in a slightly smaller scale aimed at indoor use. On May 15, 2023, the new set of Community Building Panels will be open to public viewing.

## STUDENT SAFETY AND OTHER ACTIVITIES






In fall 2022, Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum requested an activity to teach students about street and self safety. The NAN Education Student Safety Coordinator, together with the Education Inquest Coordinator and Women's Initiatives Department, went to all

the high schools in Thunder Bay to provide an interactive workshop and community booths for students to learn how to be safe outside of school hours.

In support of mental health, NAN Education held our third annual Christmas Carol and Video Competition. Fourteen carols and eight videos were received showcasing the wonderful talents of our students. Feedback from the teachers spoke to how much the students are enjoying making the submissions for these competitions and several have advised that the students are already looking forward to next years' entry!

On October 25-27, 2022, the Education Department hosted a Special Chiefs Assembly on Education. During the three-day Assembly, the student panel provided insight into the gaps that still remain to create a safe and healthy school environment in Thunder Bay. Updates from a variety of areas impacting education were shared and discussions were productive.

## HIGHLIGHTS

-  New partnership created between NAN Education and Timmins and District Hospital.
-  Creation of third workbook in the series for students living away from their home communities.
-  Development of a new app to aid student support workers in finding service providers for students throughout the NAN territory.
-  Ongoing promotion of language revitalization.
-  Curriculum review and consultation work to develop new processes of curriculum development that properly encompasses the First Nations view.



**1st Place winners – Video Contest**  
Mary Jane Naveau Memorial School Grade 7 & 8.

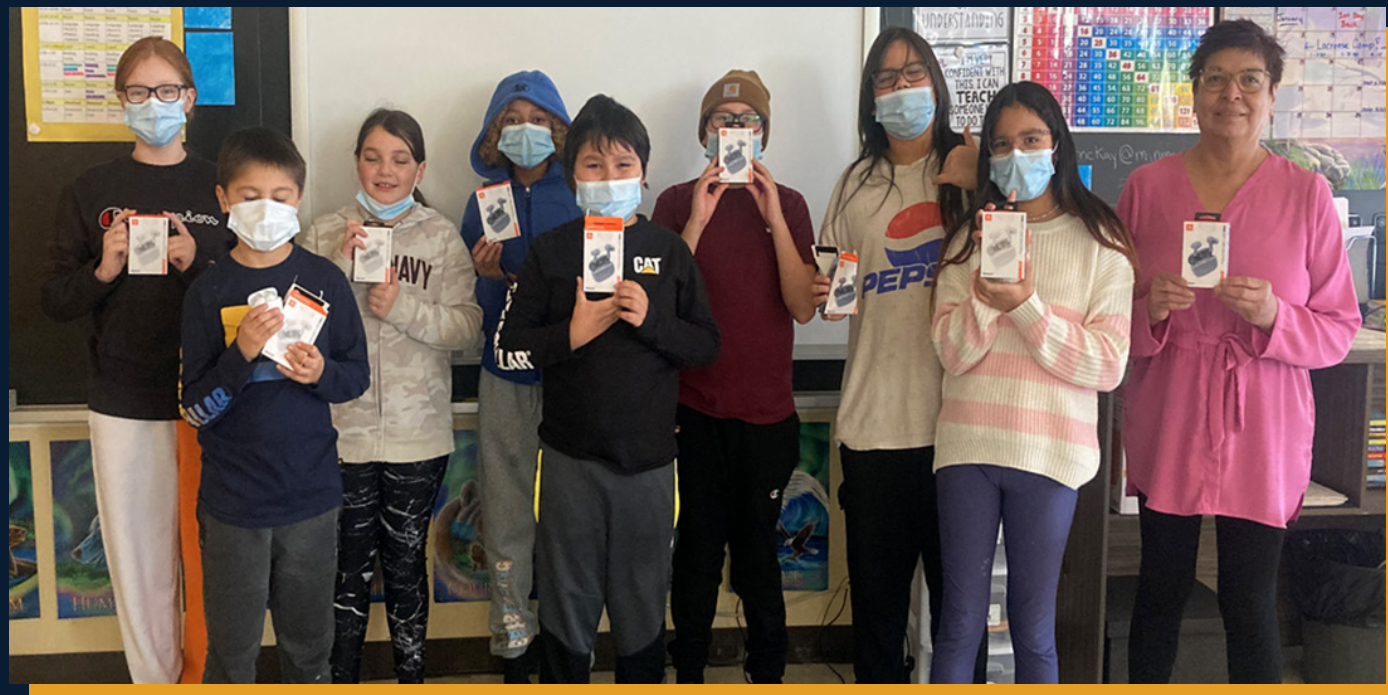


**2nd Place winners – Video Contest**  
Delores D. Echum Composite School Grade 7.





**2nd Place winners – Carol Contest**  
Mamawmatawa Holistic Education Centre JK, SK, and Grade 1.



**3rd Place winners – Carol Contest**  
Mary Jane Naveau Memorial School Grades 4, 5, and 6.

## Education Jurisdiction

### OVERVIEW

NAN Education Jurisdiction is mandated to better First Nations education through the development of an education system for Participating First Nations that meets parity and exceeds standards seen in the provincial school system. Achievable through negotiations processes with Canada and other First Nations education partners, the Education Jurisdiction Department advocates for the Participating First Nations through consultation. Structural Readiness (SR) is a program within Education Jurisdiction that ensures capacity building and community inclusion for the Department.





## PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

NAN-Canada Education Jurisdiction Agreement Negotiations

### Mandates:

**Resolution 18/23:** Support of Participating First Nations: Education Jurisdiction Agreement-In-Principle

**Resolution 16/79:** Education Jurisdiction

**Resolution 07/68:** Education Jurisdiction

**Resolution 06/40:** Education Policy Framework

**Resolution 00/05:** Governance and Education Jurisdiction

**Resolution 98/75:** Nishnawbe Aski Nation Governance and Education Jurisdiction

## FRAMEWORK AGREEMENTS

### Mandates:

**Resolution 98/31:** Nishnawbe Aski Nation Education Jurisdiction Negotiation Budget

**Resolution 97/11:** Reaffirmation; NAN First Nations Jurisdiction Over Education

**Resolution 90/31:** NAN First Nations Jurisdiction Over Education

**Resolution 98/75:** Nishnawbe Aski Nation Governance and Education Jurisdiction

## FRAMEWORK AGREEMENTS

### KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

Derek Chum was contracted as Education Jurisdiction's Lead Negotiator in August 2020. The negotiations were paused due to the federal election and subsequent NAN leadership election; therefore, the Negotiation Team has not met with Canada since July 2021. Negotiations will resume with Canada following a reset of the relationship with Canada with respect to education matters overall.

During October 2022, NAN held a Chief's Special Assembly on Education, in Thunder Bay. The Education Department gave a general overview of their programs to chiefs and delegates in attendance. An update was provided regarding the Reset Table's impact on negotiations, the purpose of the Education Agreement in development and successes in community engagement.

## NEXT STEPS

- Communication and feedback on the Education Agreement continues virtually and in-person, where possible. The Education Jurisdiction Team is open to invitations for presentations to community leadership, local education authorities, residents and Tribal Councils. Developing community communication materials and activities has been an important focus over the last year.
- Negotiations are expected to resume this year and preparation should also begin this year on the Implementation Plan. The Implementation Plan sets out the process and timing to develop the laws, bylaws, regulations and policies for the Territory Wide Education Body and Participating First Nations. NAN will also negotiate a separate fiscal transfer agreement to fund the Territory Wide Education System. The fiscal transfer agreement is a substantial undertaking and will require accurate community data to ensure the Territory Wide Education System is properly funded. Accessing community data for this purpose is required. The ratification package will include the Education Agreement and local education laws. Ratification by the Participating First Nations should begin in 2024.

## STRUCTURAL READINESS

In its tenth year, Structural Readiness (SR) activities are intended to prepare NAN First Nations for the implementation of a First Nation education system.

### Mandates:

**Resolution 18/23:** Support of Participating First Nations – Education Jurisdiction AIP

**Resolution 17/65:** Community Engagement Communication Plan - First Nations of Nan Education System

**Resolution 17/32:** First Nations Education System in NAN Territory

**Resolution 16/33:** Development of A NAN Education Structure-System

## KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES

In 2022-2023, NAN's SR program offered training programs to support capacity development, continued work on the Local Education Code Toolkit and ran the Education Jurisdiction Summit.

### TRAINING PROGRAMS

- OCAP® (Ownership, Control, Access and Possession) Workshops: Two workshops were held in 22-23, one virtually and one in-person, in Thunder Bay, on February 23, 2023 during the Education Summit.
- Banff Indigenous Leadership Programs: Continued into 2022-2023, each participating community had costs covered for enrollment in any two Indigenous Leadership training programs at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity.
- Relational Governance Workshop: This new training program was developed out of the creation of the Maskwacis Education Schools Commission, and was offered through the University of Alberta. The workshop covered the difference between relational and exclusive sovereignty and the connection between sovereignty and governance. This workshop was offered to the Chiefs Committee on Education and the NAN Education Committee members.

## LOCAL EDUCATION CODE TOOLKIT

- Continuing the development of the Local Education Code, two activities were debuted at the Education Jurisdiction Summit: Law Making – Creating Our Bundles and First Nation Governance Models.
- Law Making – Creating Our Bundles: The purpose of this activity is to support the work necessary to begin building a Local Education Code and is intended to help develop a shared vision and understanding of what jurisdiction for the community means. The activity was broken into three parts and supports dialogue and reflection on what the community's educational needs and visions are.
- First Nation Governance Models: This activity explores existing First Nations governance structures across Canada; specifically, how they are represented and how they provide services. The objective is to build on their successes and design an improved model specific to NAN First Nations.

## EDUCATION JURISDICTION SUMMIT 22/23

On February 22-23, 2023, the Education Department hosted the Education Jurisdiction Summit, in Thunder Bay. With over a hundred registrants, last year's Summit included two special guests: Davin Dumas, Director of Language and Culture from Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre Inc., and Dr. Brian Wildcat, Assistant Superintendent of Maskwacis Education Schools Commission. These two shared their successes and struggles, providing culturally relevant education services. Delegates also heard updates on the Education Jurisdiction file from DGC Narcisse and the Lead Negotiator, Derek Chum. They presented the newest Local Education Code Toolkit activities and had the opportunity to learn more about UNDRIP or OCAP®.



## NEXT STEPS

- Local Education Code Toolkit: This year, the Education Jurisdiction Team will refine the materials previously created (Law Making – Creating Our Bundles and First Nation Governance Models activities) by reviewing them with the NAN Education Committee, Advisory Councils, Chiefs Committee on Education and Education Staff. Also, the Education Jurisdiction Team will continue the development on missing elements of the toolkit, conflict-of-interest rules and the inclusion of language and culture in a legal document.
- Communication Materials: To ensure there are no communication gaps, SR will be coordinating the creation of three consolidated, one-page handouts on Education Jurisdiction. An overview, governance and law-making to be translated into Cree, Oji-Cree, and Ojibway.
- Banff Indigenous Leadership Programs: Deferred into 2023-2024, communities who have not yet taken advantage of the activity will have tuition and travel costs covered for two training programs at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity. The programs range from project management to establishing Indigenous Institutions of Governance.
- Education Jurisdiction Summit 2023-2024: This annual two-day event is intended to bring together education staff and leadership to look to next steps for the Education Jurisdiction and learn from our education partners and other groups across Canada.

## INTERIM MEASURES (EDUCATION JURISDICTION PREPARATORY WORK)

### Mandates:

**Resolution 98/75:** Nishnawbe-Aski Nation Governance and Education Jurisdiction Framework Agreements

**Resolution 16/79:** Education Jurisdiction

**Resolution 18/23:** Support of Participating First Nations-Education Jurisdiction AIP



### Education Jurisdiction Summit 22-23

NAN-Canada Education Reset Table Overview – High Level Bilateral Table between ISC & NAN presentation, at the Delta Waterfront Hotel in Thunder Bay Feb 22nd, 2023.

## KEY ISSUES AND ACTIVITIES COMMUNITY-BASED COORDINATORS

The Education Jurisdiction Team has been working adamantly to promote awareness on the funding and resources available to Participating First Nation communities through the Community Based Coordinator (CBC) position and community engagement activities. We are actively engaging with 18 NAN First Nation Local Education Authorities:

- North Spirit Lake First Nation
- Marten Falls First Nation
- Constance Lake First Nation
- Matachewan First Nation
- Wahgoshig First Nation
- Mattagami First Nation
- Missanabie Cree First Nation
- Kasabonika First Nation
- Muskrat Dam First Nation
- Wunnumin Lake First Nation
- Kingfisher Lake First Nation
- Attawapiskat First Nation
- Chapleau Cree First Nation
- Ginoogaming First Nation
- Neskantaga First Nation
- Mishkeegogaming First Nation
- Bearskin Lake First Nation
- Eabemetoong First Nation

The Team has been able to coordinate community engagement sessions available to multiple communities in Timmins, Thunder Bay, Sioux Lookout and Toronto. Communities have also been allowed to directly contact the department to invite us for a community event or engagement session. These activities include hosting virtual information sessions, open houses, workshops and Community Engagement Planning meetings. These sessions were aimed at building awareness on Education Jurisdiction while also promoting the CBC position and funding available which communities could utilize to further build awareness and capacity surrounding the process.

The Team continues to promote awareness on education jurisdiction and promote the utilization of the funding and to work with each community to identify what path works best for their vision, values and capacity.

## FLOW THROUGH FUNDING AGREEMENTS

We have had more communities submit their Flow Through Funding Agreement for community engagement activities:

- Missanabie Cree First Nation
- Bearskin Lake First Nation
- Ginoogaming First Nation
- Marten Falls First Nation
- North Spirit Lake First Nation
- Matachewan First Nation
- Mattagami First Nation
- Wahgoshig First Nation
- Mishkeegogaming First Nation
- Muskrat Dam First Nation

There are still several pending First Nations that have yet to finalize their flow through agreements. We will continue to reach out to the Participating First Nations on the Education Jurisdiction Nation Rebuilding Funding to ensure the money available continues to support the process.

## TOOLKITS AND SUPPORTING RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

The History of First Nation Education Module, the Understanding Education Jurisdiction, the Education Agreement, the Territory Wide Education System Module and the Community Engagement Guide are toolkits that have been completed this year. We are in the process of developing the third and final module, Developing Local Education Codes and Lawmaking in this Education Agreement. This toolkit will assist communities in understanding local and territory wide laws that will be crucial in the development and directing of the Territory Wide Education System. The toolkits are designed to assist



and support community education jurisdiction activities and be the catalyst for crucial input into the process.

## TRAINING & ACTIVITIES

The Team continues to develop the third module for the Education Agreement Toolkit (Developing Local Education Codes and Law Making). Additionally, the Team has been utilizing our Building our Bundle law making activity with great success. This activity is intended to introduce you to some of the work necessary to begin building a Local Education Code for your community and further support our team in developing and delivering the resources needed to support the communities in creating a Local Education Code that is reflective of each community's education needs and vision.

As more communities begin to actively participate and assign members to the role of CBC, the team will coordinate to provide each new member with orientation and training sessions on the Education Agreement Toolkit, the Community Engagement Guide and resources binder kits. The Team will continue to send them the portable office equipment, materials and resources for beginning community activities, as well as keep them engaged and informed on the process.

## NEXT STEPS

- The Team will continue to assist communities in hiring, orienting and training CBCs.
- The Team will continue to actively engage with membership and coordinate activities such as open houses and information sessions to build awareness and understanding while also seeking feedback on the Education Agreement, the Territory Wide Education Body and the development of Local Education Codes Module.

This work includes:

- Completing and presenting the training materials to the CBCs
- Coordination of various activities
- Support and oversight of these activities and establishing a relationship and rapport with key individuals working in First Nations education that will be essential in implementing the community engagement activities.



### Relational Governance Workshop

Dr. Matthew Wildcat Associate Professor for the University of Alberta presenting group work Feb 21st, 2023.

*"Relational governance is ultimately meant to help people identify forms of authority, citizenship and laws that work towards building Indigenous institutions."*

# Education Partnerships Program

## OVERVIEW

**Mandate: Resolution 20/12:**  
Education Partnerships Program

The Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Education Partnership Program (EPP) is a partnership between NAN, Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) and the Ministry of Education which supports the advancement of First Nation student achievement in First Nation and provincial schools at elementary and secondary levels. As a proposal-based program, a Joint Implementation Workplan is developed and implemented annually in collaboration with NAN partner education organizations, Tribal Councils and the NAN Education Committee and EPP Steering Committee.





## PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

NAN has well-established partnerships, education service delivery organizations and governance structures that are actively supporting students. Since 2013, NAN has created and led numerous initiatives on behalf of the partners that have resulted in strong reciprocal relationships between NAN First Nations and the provincial education system at both the Ministry of Education and District School Board levels. Those relationships continue to flourish each year and that is directly attributable to the EPP.

The EPP provides support for multiple education-related activities which include capacity development, partnership establishment, partnership maintenance, on-going governance and support for successful targeted student attainment activities not covered by the funding formula or other federal program funding.

The annual NAN EPP Workplan focuses on the following agreed upon priority areas: student support services, curriculum, governance and administration, human resources and parental participation. The NAN EPP, Tribal Councils and partner education organizations base their planned activities on these priority areas, but also continue to emphasize the well-being and safety of NAN First Nations students with the ultimate aim of improving student outcomes. Student safety and well-being is of the utmost importance and is addressed through the delivery and implementation of the following initiatives:

- Student Orientation Sessions
- Youth Outreach: Extra-Curricular Extravaganzas and Culture Days
- On-Call Student Worker Certificate Training
- Boarding Home Parent Training
- Secondary Transitions event and resources
- Seven Youth Inquest initiatives and activities

In addition, the following resources dealing with the on-going concerns of First Nations student safety and awareness of urban living environments have continued to be distributed on an on-going basis including:

- Attendance, retention, and First Nation student success
- City Orientation Curriculum
- Life Skills and Transitions Curriculum
- Grade 8 Summer High School Transition Program
- Know Your Rights and Responsibilities Resource Document (Thunder Bay and Timmins versions)
- Know Your Rights and Responsibilities pocket card
- Parent-Student Communication Guide (Oji-Cree, Ojibway, Cree, and English)
- Student Accommodation Provider Guide
- Boarding Home Parent Training online module
- Secondary Transition Handbook
- Tutoring Programs Best Practices Toolkit

The involvement of First Nation communities and provincial partner organizations is crucial to the success of the NAN EPP. The following activities were held in person or through a hybrid model in 2022- 2023 to bring all partners together:

- Boarding Home Parent Training sessions
- Best Practices in First Nations Education Forum
- First Nation Resource Material sharing
- First Nation Curricula sharing
- EPP Liaison meetings
- EPP Liaison and School Board Indigenous Leads Coordination joint meetings
- On-Call Student Support Worker Training
- Youth Outreach: Extracurricular Extravaganza and Culture Day events
- Student Transition event
- NAN EPP Steering Committee meetings
- Seven Youth Inquest Task Team meetings
- Seven Youth Inquest Political Table meeting
- Seven Youth Inquest Education Table meetings
- Continued implementation of Inquest Recommendations
- NAN – KPDSB activities: New Teacher Induction Program, Principal Mentor Coaching, Mental Health Champion initiatives
- Educators as 2SLGBTQQIAP+ Allies

The NAN EPP has continued to build on activities undertaken in previous years, especially those involving First Nation student's well-being and safety. Other objectives include continuing to strengthen relationships between NAN First Nation communities and the Ontario provincial District School Boards (DSBs) within the three catchment areas of Timmins, Thunder Bay and Sioux Lookout. All activities returned to in-person, with an offered hybrid option for those unable to travel.

The EPP and the results to date have confirmed the value of creating and continuing a collaborative partnership approach to address education challenges. NAN looks forward to continuing to support our EPP Partners in advancing student outcomes in First Nation and provincial schools through the annual joint EPP initiatives and activities.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

### STUDENT SUCCESS INITIATIVES

As the federal Interim Funding Formula was implemented in April 2019, 2018-2019 became the final year of the First Nation Student Success Program funding (FNSSP). NAN continued to retain a small portion of the former FNSSP funding in 2022-2023 to continue minimal second level services, such as continued advocacy and support for some former FNSSP partners under the NAN agreement. Those partners include: Mattagami First Nation, Lac Seul First Nation, Weenusk First Nation and Keewatinook Okimakanak (K-Net).

Under new funding agreements, these partners continued to deliver various student success initiatives in 2022- 2023, while K-Net continued to provide data management services for two partners.

## HIGHLIGHTS

500

**NAN Students**  
Attended Student  
Orientation Sessions

33

**Teacher Resource Kits**  
distributed to EPP District  
School Board partners and  
NAN communities

### NAN EPP HIGHLIGHTS

- The NAN Educators as 2SLGBTQQIAP+ Allies session held for the first time which was met with great results.
- Continued strengthening of all partner relationships.



# Seven Youth Inquest

## OVERVIEW

**Mandate: Resolution 16/78:** Implementation Of The Seven Youth Inquest Recommendations

The Seven Youth Inquest examined the tragic deaths of seven First Nations youth who attended high school in Thunder Bay between 2000-2011. The goal of the proceedings was to make recommendations to prevent similar deaths in the future. The Inquest concluded on June 28, 2016, with the judge and jury delivering 145 Recommendations.

The Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Inquest Coordinator oversees the implementation process for the Seven Youth Inquest Recommendations.



## PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The Seven Youth Inquest moved forward on several recommendations through the various activities and meetings that took place during the 2022-2023 year. Some issues raised by the Seven Youth Inquest Partners in this fiscal period include:

- Concerns with maintaining staff within partnering organizations;
- Infrastructure and renovations within Matawa Education and Care Centre;
- Access to sustainable and predictable funding;
- Funding specific to Provincial Students (21 years of age);
- Increased funding to support the development of curriculum with an Indigenous focus;
- Reflective of cultural traditions and alignments with the Ontario curriculum;
- Special allowance for student activities, clothing etc.; and
- Permanent funding for appropriate long-term plans to address student safety and the Mental Health Act.

Although Matawa Education and Care Centre raised these concerns, other Inquest Partners agree that they share similar concerns for their youth.

The development of additional resources to address Recommendation #40 began in late December 2022. This recommendation calls for the development of health promotion materials to address the ongoing concerns of First Nation student safety and awareness of urban living environments. The anticipated completion date for these additional resources will be in the next fiscal period.

Resources being developed for distribution include:

- Health promotional resources
- The Missing Person Search Tool Kit index card
- Anti-sex trafficking information sheet
- Drug Use Prevention and Healthy Habits booklet

A commitment by all parties named to the Inquest to work together is crucial for the successful implementation of Inquest recommendations. To maintain the momentum of working together, the following activities were held to engage the parties in ongoing discussions and to provide updates:

- Seven Youth Inquest Coordinators meetings
- Task Team meetings
- Political Table meetings
- Education Table meetings
- Inquest Partners meetings

The annual Political Table meeting was held January 26, 2023 in-person at the Valhalla Inn and co-hosted by the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre. The importance of working united with all levels of government continues to be crucial to the success of the Seven Youth Inquest. The Political Table serves as a forum to hold all Inquest Parties accountable for their role in implementing the recommendations. As in previous years, the Governments of Canada and Ontario and all parties named to the Inquest were invited to join the discussion. Inquest Partners voiced their concerns for the immediate implementation and ongoing funding of the Recommendations. Specifically, concerns for safety of First Nation Youth, funding, staffing within organizations and permanent funding for appropriate long-term plans were discussed. Representatives from First Nation communities, Ontario, Canada, City of Thunder Bay, Thunder Bay Police Service, Nishnawbe Aski Police Service and the Thunder Bay Regional Health Science Centre were in attendance.



Several Task Teams were initially established to work under the direction of the Education Table and to undertake work in specific areas related to the implementation of the Inquest Recommendations. The three specific groups that fall under the "Task Team" umbrella include: Student Well-Being, Infrastructure and Programs, Services and Funding. The goal of the Student Well Being Task Team is to implement recommendations with respect to student support services and to enhance student well-being for NAN youth in Thunder Bay and in their home communities. Student Well-Being Task Team meetings were held on October 13, 2022 and March 20, 2023.

The goal of the Infrastructure Task Team is to implement recommendations with respect to the availability and quality of needed education related infrastructure, supporting NAN youth in Thunder Bay and within their home communities. Discussions throughout the year continued to focus on addressing the current related work and needs. Meetings were held October 13, 2022, and November 9, 2022.

The goal of the Programs, Services and Funding Task Team is to implement recommendations with respect to the type and scope of programs, services and funding required to support the cultural, physical and educational needs of students in Thunder Bay and in their home communities. The Task Team met on October 12, 2022 and was scheduled to meet in March 2023. Due to the unavailability of key representatives, this meeting was rescheduled to April 13, 2023.

The Education Table works towards implementing strategies related to education programs and services pursuant to the Inquest recommendations. Two meetings of the Education Table were held in 2022-2023, with discussions focusing on current issues and successes within the Inquest. First Nation Partners participated in discussions during this table meeting that relate to the current Seven Youth Inquest workplan activities and meetings.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### Recommendation 40:

- Health promotional resources aimed at youth on-reserve are complete

### Recommendation 47 and 87:

- Discussions on Student Continuity of Care and Forum
- Discussions on comprehensive assessments
- Expanding the role of First Nation education counsellors to off-reserve high schools

### Recommendation 91:

- A Missing Persons Search Toolkit completed
- Missing Persons Search Toolkit reviewed for reprint and distribution
- Missing Persons Search Toolkit Index card developed



## DEPARTMENT UPDATES

# National Assembly of Remote Communities

The National Assembly of Remote Communities (NARC) was established in November 2021, by the following five founding members who each signed the NARC Mission Statement:

- Deputy Grand Chief Bobby Narcisse for Nishnawbe Aski Nation;
- Vice Chief David Pratt for the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN);
- Grand Chief Garrison Settee for Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO);
- Dene National Chief Norman Yakeleya for the Assembly of First Nations Northwest Territories; and
- Regional Chief Marlene Poitras for the Assembly of First Nations Alberta.

This resulted from a presentation that Deputy Grand Chief Bobby Narcisse and NAN's experts gave on NAN's Remoteness Quotient (RQ) work to the parties to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT) proceeding on child welfare, in which NAN has Intervenor status. After that presentation, First Nation leaders from those founding organizations reached out to Deputy Grand Chief Narcisse to create the first ever national advocacy voice for remote communities.

The above regional leadership, in the spirit of a united voice on issues impacting remote Indigenous communities, signed a Mission Statement of their intent to unite under an assembly of common interest to formally establish NARC.

Deputy Grand Chief Bobby Narcisse and NAN's Social Services Team advocated to integrate NARC into the Agreement-in-Principle (AIP) on Long-Term Reform of the First Nations Child and Family Services (FNCFS) Program and Jordan's Principle, which the CHRT parties signed on December 31, 2021 (the AIP on Long-Term Reform). The AIP on Long-Term Reform includes commitments for structural changes to address remoteness issues including:

- Index FNCFS program funding to account for the increased costs associated with remoteness;
- Acknowledge and dedicate funding of NARC for five years starting April 1, 2022;
- Establish NARC-Canada Remoteness Table to address remoteness nationally; and
- Create a dedicated Remoteness Secretariat to support the NARC-Canada Remoteness Table.

Following the signing of the AIP on Long-Term Reform, the founding members of NARC developed a Constitution and By-laws to provide a framework for the governance and administration of NARC as an unincorporated association. A formal Board Meeting of Charter Members, a vote was held to establish Co-Chairs. Vice Chief David Pratt of FSIN and Deputy Grand Chief Narcisse were appointed as Co-Chairs of NARC in a unanimous vote.

**INAUGURAL SYMPOSIUM & ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY PRESENTATION**

Deputy Grand Chief Bobby Narcisse and NAN’s Social Services Team worked with Vice Chief David Pratt and his team to co-host the inaugural NARC Symposium in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, from May 31 to June 2, 2022. Delegates from across the country attended to discuss the following daily themes: “The Journeys of Remote Communities”, “Community Vulnerabilities Respecting Settlement Payouts” and “The Science of Measuring Remoteness”. In a signing ceremony on Day 3, the Co-Chairs formally signed the Constitution and Bylaws and Grand Chief Scott Harper of Island Lake Anishinew Okimawin signed the Mission Statement to join the NARC membership. By all accounts, the inaugural Symposium was a success. One delegate said it was “like coming home”.

In July 2022, delegates warmly received a presentation by the NARC Executive at the AFN Annual General Assembly in Vancouver, BC with respect to the founding and activities of NARC.



**RECENT DEVELOPMENTS**

Since last summer, the NARC Executive has met several times to address administrative matters and plan future events. Diane Dunford of Silver Foam Consulting Incorporated was recently appointed as the Administrator of NARC to manage the administration and financial affairs of the organization. Work is underway to coordinate a “Think Tank” strategic planning event for leadership from the NARC members this fall. Plans are also in development for a second NARC Symposium later this year to bring members of remote communities together again.

**NEXT STEPS**

With respect to the CHRT proceeding on child welfare, negotiations continue toward a Final Settlement Agreement on Long-Term Reform. In those negotiations, NAN is working to build on the commitments in the AIP on Long-Term Reform for structural changes to address remoteness issues. This includes the commitments ensuring FNCFS funding accounts for the increased costs of delivering child and family services in remote communities across the country.

There will be continued regular updates and engagement with the Chiefs Committee on Children, Youth and Families. These updates are given to the Committee during updates on Remoteness Quotient work in the CHRT.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

**Social Services**

**OVERVIEW**

The Social Services Department has been focused on several key initiatives throughout the 2022/23 year, including: Long-Term Reform of First Nations Child and Family Services (FNCFS) Final Settlement Agreement (FSA), National Assembly of Remote Communities (NARC) and other Social Services activities.

The Social Services Department is comprised of the following programs and initiatives:

- Jordan’s Principle
- Family Well-Being Program (FWBp)
- Choose Life Program
- Youth Initiatives

The Chiefs Committee on Children, Youth and Families (CCCYF) is mandated by Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Resolution 13/06: Ontario Aboriginal Child and Youth Strategy. The mandate of the CCCYF is to develop NAN specific approaches in respect to social services, child welfare, jurisdiction and other areas as identified through the Strategy, while providing guidance and direction to the Department.

Currently, the CCCYF has been overseeing the following activities:

- Bill C-92 ‘An Act respecting First Nation, Inuit and Métis Children, Youth and Families’.
- First Nations jurisdiction over child welfare (federal and provincial processes).
- Implementation of the FWBp.
- Implementation of the Choose Life Program.
- Jordan’s Principle.
- Youth initiatives.
- NAN as Intervener in the First Nations Caring Society Case with the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal.
- Remoteness Quotient.
- NAN-Ontario Bilateral process.
- NARC.





## LONG-TERM REFORM OF FIRST NATIONS CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES FINAL SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

The Family Services Final Settlement Agreement (FSA) Team was established in the summer of 2022 as part of the Agreement-in-Principle (AIP) reached in December 2021. The AIP was reached by the Parties to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal case that found Canada is racially discriminating against First Nations children in their delivery of the FNCFS Program and Jordan's Principle. The AIP provides a framework for the Parties to negotiate a FSA.

The FSA Team acts as technicians and has two primary functions: engaging with NAN leadership and communities and advocating for NAN communities at various negotiation tables and related committees.

Negotiations toward a national FSA made substantial progress in 2022/23 and encountered barriers that resulted in delays in reaching a deal with respect to long term reform. A draft FSA is expected to be completed by December 2023.

### PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

#### NEGOTIATIONS

- Advocate consistently for a timely resolution and a needs-based FSA, accounting for the costs and unique circumstances of NAN communities due to remoteness.
- Work with the Chiefs of Ontario (COO) and Canada to develop a draft of an Ontario-specific portion of the FSA.
- Work with Canada on a NAN-specific portion of the FSA.
- Advocate for NAN-specific, community-based resources to support the recipients of the Compensation Settlement Payouts expected at the end of 2023 or early 2024.
- Support NAN's work as a national leader in the development of a Remoteness Quotient Adjustment Factor (RQAF) to account for the additional costs of delivering services in remote communities.

#### ENGAGEMENT

- Hosted a three-day Child and Family Services Forum on September 20-22, 2022 in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The Forum had one-day dedicated to engagement with NAN Chiefs to receive direction on the negotiations on the FSA on long-term reform. A report on the Forum and a specific Chief-engagement paper was provided to Chiefs.
- Provided technical briefings for NAN leadership and Tribal Councils in communities and virtually.
- Provided NAN leadership with information on the current funding opportunities related to the anticipated FSA as well as updates on the negotiations.
- Acted as a technical resource to NAN leadership and service providers in the implementation of the new funding opportunities. Created awareness of funding opportunities through social media platforms.
- Published the Remoteness Quotient Phase 2 report that addresses additional costs and other issues related to remoteness for use by NAN leadership and service providers.

#### OTHER SOCIAL SERVICES ACTIVITIES

The NAN Social Services Team sits on the following tables:

- COO Social Services Coordination Unit
  - ▶ 1965 Indian Welfare Agreement Reform
- Joint Social Services Table
  - ▶ Ontario Works and Social Assistance Reform
- First Nations Technical Table
  - ▶ Child, Youth and Family Services Act ("CYFSA") Amendments
  - ▶ Customary Care
  - ▶ Youth Justice Division

## JORDAN'S PRINCIPLE

The Jordan's Principle Team provides information to NAN community members about Jordan's Principle and what it encompasses. The Team works with Community Coordinators supporting access to knowledge of Jordan's Principle, how to proceed with the Jordan's Principle processes and overcoming barriers that arise. The objective of the work is to build longstanding capacity and empowerment in the community.

### PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

NAN continues to work towards the long-term reform of Jordan's Principle and achieving substantive access to equitable, culturally appropriate services. With the passing of the CHRT 41 amendment, NAN's Jordan's Principle Team offers information on requests for capital funding to applicants. The NAN Team has been working with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) focusing on positive outcomes with the implementation of Back to Basics in Jordan's Principle's approaches.

NAN provided opportunities for Jordan's Principle Coordinators to create a network of support and a community of practice. Jordan's Principle drop-in and networking calls were held monthly where the NAN Team and Coordinators discussed relevant subjects while building upon community expertise. The drop-in sessions supported community and Tribal Council Jordan's Principle Coordinators.

The Jordan's Principle Team at NAN provided information, support and advocacy efforts to assist with access to group requests and funding for the purchase of capital assets. The Team provided training to new Jordan's Principle Coordinators and continued to support the navigation of requests and the data reporting process.

### OTHER ACTIVITIES

NAN Jordan's Principle hosted a two-day in-person training event in March, at the Nor'Wester Best Western in Thunder Bay. The event exceeded expectations with over 90 individuals registered. Jordan's Principle Community Coordinators,

navigators and Health Directors gathered for the in-person training. Featured training included: Lateral Violence and Self Care by Nicole Richmond and Jordan's Principle Reporting, Finance and the Application Process provided by ISC.

In December 2022, the Jordan's Principle Team hosted an online Christmas training event that brought together over 70 attendees. Presenters included Wesway and Jordan's Principle – ISC.

NAN Jordan's Principle Team is an active member on the Jordan's Principle Operations Committee facilitated by ISC. This Committee ensures that there is full implementation of Jordan's Principle. The Team also sits on the Jordan's Principle Working Group facilitated by COO.

### HIGHLIGHTS

NAN supports Jordan's Principle Community Coordinators and Navigators in NAN communities by:



Delegates participating in the Jordan's Principle Coordinator engagement game at the in-person Jordan's Principle training.



## FAMILY WELL-BEING PROGRAM

The Family Well-Being program (FWBp) was created to reduce violence against Indigenous women and its impacts on youth, families and communities. First Nations designed their program based on the unique needs in their community. Program goals consist of: eliminating violence in families, reducing the need to bring Indigenous children into the child welfare system, reducing the need to bring Indigenous youth into the youth justice system and improving the overall health and well-being of communities. A range of programs and services are being delivered at the community level focusing on, but not limited to; healthy relationships, family violence prevention, connection to land, culture, language and land-based healing programs, parent supports, creating safe spaces, life skills, one-on-one supports, family needs, group supports and community events.

### PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The Family Well-Being Coordinators were invited to attend multiple in person and virtual training sessions. These included: Mother Encouragement and Father Engagement Sessions (focused on men's and women's roles and responsibilities), grief and loss information sessions, a virtual support group for parents to begin discussions about mental health and addictions and weekly Coordinator drop in calls to network, provide support and to train. Focus groups were held in Timmins, Thunder Bay and Sault Ste. Marie with the purpose of gathering information on women's and men's wellness, roles and responsibilities and the importance of programing tailored to that.

The Annual Conference theme was Reawakening of the FWBp Roots. Program visions, missions and goals were reviewed while honouring the important work that is happening in NAN First Nations.

The All-Regional Gathering focused on Keeping our Medicine Alive. This gathering provided FWBp Coordinators space to share land-based stories and teachings while also focusing on prevention, Alternative Dispute Resolution and mental health and addictions.

The NAN FWBp Team visited communities and met with Coordinators in person and virtually to provide support for their community's program and any reporting needs.

Family Well-Being Week was July 3-9, 2022, with the purpose of honouring and celebrating families. Community Coordinators planned programs and activities for families to: come together, strengthen family bonds, build healthy relationships and celebrate life. The NAN FWBp Team hosted a virtual gathering July 5-7. The theme of the gathering was, "Family-Love-Celebration". The gathering focused on Youth Empowerment, Mother Encouragement, Father Engagement and Elder Teachings.

Prevention Focused Customary Care Funding is intended to subsidize customary care in cases where a child would benefit from an alternative caregiver arrangement but where there are no protection concerns. The FWBp organized two in-person meetings in Thunder Bay and Timmins. The meetings focused on the purpose of the funding, expenditures and reporting requirements.

### OTHER ACTIVITIES

The FWBp provided assistance and support at the Reclaiming Our Lives Residential School Survivors Gathering, Building Nations - Youth and Elders Cultural Connection Gathering, Ginoogaming Elder and Youth Gathering, and the Timmins Indigenous Friendship Centre Family Day Youth event.



The graphic artist at the Family Well-Being program, Annual Conference captured Coordinator's vision of FWBp.

## CHOOSE LIFE PROGRAM

The NAN Choose Life Program began in April 2017 and was initiated as a two-year pilot project under Jordan's Principle to address the urgent and long-standing need to promote wellness among NAN youth. Through continued advocacy efforts, Choose Life is included in the AIP with the Government of Canada on compensation and long-term reform of First Nation Child and Family services. These discussions have led to include a provision for the long-term sustainability of the NAN Choose Life Program.

Choose Life is intended for youth, 18 and under, who are at risk of suicide and provides funding to access mental health professionals or services and addresses well-being through land-based programing and cultural activities. The funding streams from ISC's First Nations and Inuit Health Branch through the Jordan's Principle Child First Initiative.

Choose Life responds to the Seven Youth Inquest Jury Recommendations #36 (suicide prevention) and #81 (harm reduction) directed at improving accountability, safety and education outcomes for all NAN students.

### PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

#### CHOOSE LIFE ALL - PARTNER ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 1st Annual Choose Life All-Partner Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held in Ottawa on September 28-30, 2022. Those attending the AGM celebrated the accomplishments and successes to date.

Partnerships between Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), NAN and communities were strengthened while developing a collaborative path forward for the successful future of the Choose Life Program. ISC and NAN hosted a panel session that provided an opportunity for leadership and Community Coordinators to ask questions regarding the Choose Life Program. NAN and Canada had a joint signing of the Choose Life Terms of Reference which will guide the Choose Life program moving forward.

Individuals who were on the Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug Kings hockey team in 2017 were invited to attend the AGM. These are the players that raised awareness of the suicide crisis and inspired the naming of Choose Life. The players were honoured for the significant role they played in the creation of Choose Life and were presented with versions of their original hockey jerseys displaying CHOOSE LIFE on the back.

Key items were identified at the AGM which will guide the support that the NAN Choose Life Team provides to communities going forward. These include: the need for education about effects of bullying and lateral violence, celebrating the success of Choose Life Programs in communities, learning how to become connected and stay connected to traditional culture and practices, and initiating, navigating, and embracing change.

#### CHOOSE LIFE TRAINING - REPORTING, RE-CONNECTING AND RELAXATION

A two-day training event for Community Coordinators and workers was held November 27-28, 2022, in Thunder Bay. At the event, 65 attendees had an opportunity to reconnect and develop skills to support community services and programming. Training was focused on the reporting process that is required from ISC, facilitating a meeting or function for youth, and the importance of self-care to ease anxiety/stress and prevent burnout.

#### CHOOSE LIFE APPLICATIONS

As of March 31, 2023, 96 Choose Life applications were submitted for the 2022/2023 fiscal year. There were 89 applications approved by ISC while 6 applications were suspended. Choose Life has received funding for services and support benefiting an estimated 25,093 youth across NAN territories for 2022-2023.



## OTHER ACTIVITIES

NAN Social Services Department will continue to work with the NAN Choose Life Team and Canada to establish the high-level Choose Life Table.

Regular discussions between the NAN Choose Life Team and ISC Choose life Focal Point occur to review the Choose Life Application Process.

The NAN Team hosts monthly networking calls with the Community Coordinators. Each networking call is themed based on information and resources to bring to their community youth for Coordinators.

Workshops and training for Community Coordinators, workers and NAN youth are held to support Choose Life initiatives and build capacity. These events also provide a platform for youth and Coordinators to share successes and brainstorm ideas to identify and bridge gaps.

The Choose Life Team is currently developing a Cultural Helper Database which will assist in identifying knowledge carriers across NAN territory.

The NAN Choose Life Team also partners with other files under Social Services and departments within NAN to provide support when needed.



*DGC Narcisse, Dr. Valerie Gideon (ADM, ISC), DGC Linklater, then GC Derek Fox and The Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister ISC at the Choose Life AGM, Ottawa ON, on September 28, 2022.*



*Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug Kings hockey team from 2017 (who inspired the naming of Choose Life), presented with Choose Life jerseys at the Choose Life AGM on September 28, 2022.*



*DGC Narcisse, NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh and Choose Life Coordinators, youth and NAN staff at the Every Child Matters walk in Ottawa, on September 30, 2022.*

## YOUTH INITIATIVES

The NAN Youth Initiatives program provides engagement opportunities specific to support the needs of First Nations youth aged 14-29. The NAN Youth Team provides programming to youth across NAN territory, in both our urban hub cities and directly in communities.

The Team strives to provide new and unique opportunities with the hope of developing a collective of NAN Youth leaders able to advocate for a better and brighter future.

In partnership with the Oshkaatisak Council, the Youth Initiatives Team continues to identify gaps in current programming, coupling this knowledge with the development of new programming related to: mental and physical health, educational awareness, gender identity and inclusivity, cultural connectivity, as well as anti-bullying and activism opportunities.

Both the Youth Initiatives Team and the Oshkaatisak Council operate by a model based on the teachings of the Medicine Wheel. The Youth Initiatives team does this by engaging in programming that targets the mental, physical, spiritual and emotional connections that are integral to the successful development of NAN youth. By providing a mix of in person, online and indirect programming, Youth Initiatives continues to extend its capacity, furthering the areas in which programming can be effectively delivered.

## PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

### YOUTH AND ELDERS NATIONS BUILDING CONFERENCE

The 1st Youth and Elders Nations Building Gathering was held in Thunder Bay, Ontario. The Gathering brought together 127 NAN community members who were able to support one another, share stories and engage in a NAN-wide healing opportunity.

Those attending the Gathering:

- Learned new and traditional skills related to the land.
- Strengthened the partnerships between communities, Elders and youth working to inform one another as a way to start collaborating on the best path forward for Nishnawbe Aski Youth.
- Participated in a community wide Round Dance.

### NAN COMMUNITY HOCKEY TOURNAMENT

Youth Initiatives, in partnership with McKellar Park School, Sherbrooke School and Anishnawbe Mushkiki, came together to host a youth indoor hockey tournament for over 120 students. The students were invited to attend a Round Robin style tournament that saw them learning team building, leadership and problem-solving skills.

These teachings were led by former NHL Coach, Ted Nolan, and NHL hockey superstars Jordan and Brandon Nolan. Youth were also encouraged to attend one of several additional workshops hosted at this event, most notably, Indigenous Language Bingo. Post tournament, the families of the participants were invited to a Players and Parents Dinner to celebrate the young people and all their accomplishments throughout the day. The dinner saw 250 plus attendees with keynote speeches, once again being delivered by the Nolan's.



## 2SLGBTQIA+ SUPPORT WORK

In the fall of 2022 the Youth Initiatives Team, in partnership with the NAN Women's Initiatives Team and Indigenous Affairs Ontario (IAO), began work related to the histories, stories and current realities of First Nations Youth and Elders as they navigate the world of being a member of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. Youth Initiatives also hosted the first Joint 2SLGBTQIA+ Gathering with Grand Council Treaty #3 (GCT#3). This Gathering saw 25 plus attendants invited to share their experience, learn the stories and provide comments and direction to relevant members of NAN, GCT#3 and IAO staff. Members of the GCT #3 Two Spirit Council were also invited to provide advice on how to respectfully engage in 2SLGBTQIA+ focused work as well as the future development of a 2SLGBTQIA+ specific youth council. Affirmation kits and resource boxes were also developed and distributed as part of this initiative. A co-run program was developed with a local 2SLGBTQIA+ support group the Niizhaayek Alliance.

## CULTURALLY FOCUSED PROGRAMMING

Throughout the 2022/23 year, the Youth Initiatives Team sought to increase the access and variety of cultural programs traditionally offered by the Youth Initiatives Department. The Youth Team worked with Knowledge Keepers, Elders, drummers, teachers, educators, crafters, dancers, story tellers and others, to provide over 20 unique programs that offered opportunities to learn and engage with cultural opportunities unique and relevant to Nishnawbe Aski territory.

## REGIONAL MULTICULTURAL YOUTH CENTRE SUPPORT WORK

The NAN Youth Initiatives Team has continued its partnership with the Regional Multicultural Youth Centre (RMYC) based in Thunder Bay, Ontario. The RMYC acts as an advocating body for NAN youth in several spaces. Youth Initiatives has partnered with the RMYC in four key areas: education/ educational opportunities, 2SLGBTQIA+ youth programming, cultural programming, and advocacy, as many of the members of the RMYC are NAN youth boarding in Thunder Bay for school.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

This year, the NAN Youth Initiatives Team partnered with six internal departments to run programming or provide an opportunity for engagement. Externally, the NAN Youth Initiatives Team has partnered with 33 organizations to increase the variety of current programming, in addition to extra programs able to be run due to the increase in support. Partnerships included: schools, First Nations youth organizations, sports organizations, friendship centres, mental health outreach programs, fashion designers, drum groups, gyms and many more.

The NAN Oshkaatisak Council has permanent seats on the COO First Nations Young People Council, which has allowed the Oshkaatisak Council to champion the voices of NAN Youth at the regional, provincial and national level. In addition to the Oshkaatisak Council attendance at COO and the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), the Council has seats on or has attended meetings to represent NAN on the:

- Oshki-Wenjack Governing Council
- First Nations Climate Leadership National Meeting
- Registered Nurses Association of Ontario
- Ontario Trillium Fund
- Inherent Rights Youth Initiative
- Nishnawbe-Aski Legal Services Corporation
- Nishnawbe Aski Police Services
- National Assembly on Remote Communities



## HIGHLIGHTS

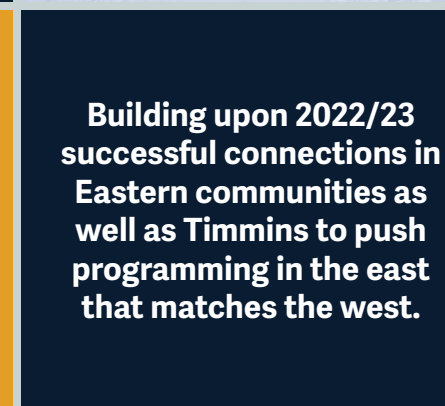
The NAN Youth Initiatives Team, in partnership with the Oshkaatisak Council, will continue to work with NAN youth as well as community partners to continue to implement:

**Programming for youth with a focus on increasing the mental, physical, spiritual and emotional wellbeing of NAN youth.**



**Holding monthly calls with the Oshkaatisak Council, community partners and NAN leadership to ensure continued inclusion of the youth voice at all relevant tables.**

**Training opportunities for NAN youth, Oshkaatisak Council and staff to continue to build capacity.**



**Building upon 2022/23 successful connections in Eastern communities as well as Timmins to push programming in the east that matches the west.**

**Increasing sports and recreation activities to promote healthy lifestyles, goal setting and inter-community connections.**



**Providing programming throughout the 2022/23 year for over 1000 youth.**

**Developing a multitude of partnerships across Northern Ontario, expanding to incorporate healthy Indigenous role models beyond the bounds of the NAN territory, in some cases stretching across Turtle Island.**

Top row centre: Snowshoeing at the Youth Gathering (March 9-11, 2023). Middle row right: Hockey Tournament on January 9, Youth skill development by NHL Coach Ted Nolan and NHL players Jordan and Brandon Nolan.



## DEPARTMENT UPDATES

# Health Transformation

## OVERVIEW

Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Health Transformation (HT) continues to be guided by the Charter of Relationship Principles Governing Health System Transformation in Nishnawbe Aski Nation Territory (the Charter). In 2022-2023, under the leadership of Deputy Grand Chief Victor Linklater and HT Lead Negotiator, Alvin Fiddler, NAN HT worked in collaboration with the NAN Chiefs Council on Health Transformation (CCHT) to design a Two Pathway approach to advance the work of Health Transformation:

1. Pathway One: Aggregated Governance Model
2. Pathway Two: Health Management and Resourcing

The Two Pathway approach is a deliberate and measurable plan to bring decision-makers together to implement the foundational Charter principles and achieve optimal health outcomes. Respect for the sovereignty and autonomy of NAN First Nations is built into all aspects of this approach. The Two Pathways are guided by the overall vision of Pamihitowin (Working Together) and builds upon the work done under the previous HT internal process model (the Five Pillars of Health Transformation), the lessons learned through the COVID-19 pandemic, the information gathered through the community participation process and the mandates given by NAN Chiefs-in-Assembly.

Important to this work is the understanding and recognition that the HT process must be driven by community voices at the grassroots-level. With a focus on strengthening partnerships, NAN HT has developed the Two Pathways to strategically align the efforts of all partners in this work as we move forward, including: NAN HT, Tribal Councils, First Nations Health Authorities/Co-Op and provincial and federal governments.



## NAN CHIEFS COUNCIL ON HEALTH TRANSFORMATION (CCHT)

The HT Team would like to express sincere gratitude to the CCHT for going above and beyond in 2022-2023. In addition to related work planning efforts, the CCHT guided and supported the work undertaken to produce the Two Pathway approach. NAN HT gathered virtually and in-person with the CCHT in April, August, October, February and March to engage in focused strategic planning discussions and obtained direction from the Leadership on proposed activities and concepts. NAN CCHT Leadership committed significant time to collaborate with and inform the work of the HT Team, sharing invaluable insights and stories from NAN communities that shaped the design of this approach.

## THE HEALTH TRANSFORMATION TWO-PATHWAY APPROACH

### PATHWAY ONE: AGGREGATED GOVERNANCE MODEL

The focus of HT is to shift the authority, control and oversight of health care to a First Nations-led health entity. This will connect NAN communities and existing health entities and bring back First Nation governance principles. Aggregated Governance contemplates sustainable fiscal, policy and legislative changes to address historical inequities and create space for NAN First Nations to define optimal health outcomes and solutions with governance as the central element in this pathway.

Along with government and First Nation health partners, this pathway emphasizes local control and authority over health care services. The intention is that this pathway is supported by an aggregated governance body with the incorporation of First Nations ways and practices, having flexibility, efficiency and accountability at its core. This concept contemplates a tri-governmental political oversight process designed to implement this work and will include all ministries involved.

## PATHWAY TWO: HEALTH MANAGEMENT AND RESOURCING

The intention for this pathway is to shift to an opportunity-focused approach to address immediate health needs and priorities for NAN communities in a collaborative manner. NAN First Nations and service providers will be engaged, with an emphasis on including community workers, Elders and youth to ensure their voices are heard and incorporated into any health solutions. Pathway Two is ultimately about transitioning from emergency management to routine practice, prioritizing urgent health needs and implementing a joint action table with decision-makers as well as an evaluation program for transparency.

## PAMIHITOWIN (“WORKING TOGETHER”) VISION

The Pamihitowin (“Working Together”) vision has been discussed as a guide to the work undertaken within the Two Pathway approach. Within communities across NAN territory, there is a collective value system of helping one another. This concept was demonstrated very clearly throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. NAN Leadership, Tribal Councils and First Nations Health Authorities encountered countless health gaps within NAN First Nations and demonstrated the strength of community-led approaches to community-identified needs. Relationships evolved to support one another in achieving safety and health for NAN First Nations. We must continue to promote community-led approaches to community-identified needs beyond the pandemic and throughout the HT process with NAN Leadership, Tribal Councils and community members driving this work.

Broadly speaking, the Pamihitowin (“Working Together”) vision reflects:

- The importance of the shared value of helping one another and working as a collective.
- The creation and establishment of health systems and community-driven services through community-led initiatives for NAN territory.

The Pamihitowin (“Working Together”) vision has been developed through engagement with NAN Elders, NAN Woman’s Council, NAN Oshkaatisak (Youth) Council, NAN Health Transformation Advisory Council (HTAC) and language translators. This work was guided by two NAN Resolutions:

1. **NAN Resolution 16/44:** Exploration of Health System Transformation Models
2. **NAN Resolution 19/10:** NAN Health Self-Determination

A Pamihitowin Working Group collaborated to support the development of this concept on a bi-weekly basis until the end of January 2023. In February 2023, NAN HT hosted an in-person Elders Gathering on Pamihitowin. NAN HT would like to thank the Elders who gathered with us to share their knowledge as this important work would not be possible without their guidance.

## NURSING SERVICES WORKING GROUP (NSWG)

Over the past year, the focus of the Health Human Resources-NSWG has been on recruitment and retention, advanced practice education and impacts of nurse staffing shortages. Highlights include:

- Success in securing funding from Ministry of Health (MOH) for 50 public health nurses for Health Authorities and Tribal Councils for the past two years. Continued advocacy for this funding to become permanent.
- Collaboration with Oshki Wenjack to develop a curriculum for advanced practice nursing, community health representatives (CHR) and cultural awareness. This is in addition to the curriculum development work on paramedicine and midwifery that is already underway.
  - ▶ The advanced practice nursing curriculum came from a need to have nurses in northern communities be able to provide an advanced level of care because of a lack of physicians and other health services in remote communities.
  - ▶ A concern with nurses practicing advanced level service is with the licensing body for nurses as it is deemed outside their current approved scope of work. Discussions and advocacy are envisioned to have the advanced practice nursing accepted by the provincial governing bodies.
- Discussion on orientation and nurses training shared among NSWG members. Orientation and cultural exposure can be enhanced through programs that the Health Authorities are implementing. Potential for shared orientation training between Health Authorities.
- Discussions on the difficulties and disparities recruiting and retaining nurses among the Health Authorities. Disparity among nurses’ salaries: ISC, Agency and Health Authorities among other challenges. Health Authorities have shared their strategies for recruitment and challenges.
- Success with ISC to increase recruitment and retention bonuses to ISC employed nurses (August 2022 announcement). Proposals are being received by ISC for Health Authorities and Tribal Council employed nurses for similar bonuses.
- Registered Nurses’ Association of Ontario Indigenous Focused webinars were provided quarterly, primarily to nursing and health care workers, over the past two years. These have been well received and additional sessions have been requested.



## TRANSFER PAYMENT ACTIVITIES

### HEALTH TRANSFORMATION THIRD PARTY AGREEMENTS

As NAN HT is a grassroots-driven initiative, community engagement is integral. Funding is allocated to Tribal Councils, First Nations Health Authorities/Co-op and Independent First Nations to support NAN HT planning and community information sessions.

### DIABETES

Tribal Councils received \$129,800 for regional planning and programs and communities received \$25,000 to support any immediate needs. For the 2022-2023 fiscal year, \$1.7 million of the funding has been flowed out with the receipt of signed Letters of Agreements and completed reporting.

### SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED BLOOD BORNE ILLNESSES, HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUSES, HEPATITIS C & TUBERCULOSIS

Through funding from ISC, NAN was able to divide and transfer approximately \$475,187 to Health Authorities and communities not affiliated with a Health Authority to support programming for sexually transmitted blood borne illnesses, human immunodeficiency viruses & hepatitis c & tuberculosis for the 2022-2023 fiscal year. This funding is intended to support activities from screening, support services, education and culturally appropriate access to care and treatment.

## RECLAMATION OF INDIGENOUS LAWS

NAN communities continue to be supported in the exercise of their jurisdiction over health and the development of their own laws. This includes building upon traditional laws, as well as developing contemporary laws and exploring options for a legislative basis to establish a legally embedded system in NAN territory.

- NAN will continue to seek guidance from Elders on how to move forward on gathering existing traditional laws, protocols and guidelines. Direction will be sought on how to capture the laws and how to protect the knowledge while also building a foundation for developing contemporary laws in respect to health. This will include the development of a law-making process that could be adopted or adapted by each First Nation.
- Options for a legislative basis will also be explored in order to establish a legally embedded system in NAN territory. This will ensure longevity and sustainability of the system, regardless of changes in governments.
- The Working Group on the Reclamation of Indigenous Laws will continue to meet to determine the path towards achieving the work outlined above. This group will work as a cohesive unit in partnership with the Community, Environment & Traditional Health Working Group under the NAN Health Commission work.
- The Social Services and Education Departments at NAN will be included on this work moving forward as it ties into reform processes under those sectors.

## PARTNERSHIPS

As stated in the Charter, "health transformation is a community-driven process that engages the expertise of First Nations communities and health care professionals and collaboratively increases the involvement of First Nations to ensure decision-making concerning health services for communities is at the local level". In 2022-2023, NAN HT focused extensively on strengthening relationships and aligning efforts with all partners undertaking the work of health transformation, including health partners at NAN Tribal Councils and First Nation Health Authorities/Co-op.

In February 2023, NAN HT hosted a facilitated, two-day Partners meeting in Toronto as part of a push for an improved and regularized communication process with health providers and leaders in NAN communities. This was a unique opportunity for NAN HT, executive/leadership level representatives from NAN Tribal Councils and First Nation Health Authorities/Co-op to gather together in-person for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic to discuss shared health priorities and lessons learned from the pandemic and also discuss the complex work of aligning and coordinating HT initiatives. Guidance and feedback from our partners at gatherings, such as this, are critical to ensure the work of HT.

Through enhanced collaboration with partners, NAN HT has worked diligently to build stronger coordination and communication processes and to have greater understanding of each partner organization's priorities. This is to ensure that the overall HT process moves forward in a coordinated manner, informed by priorities, as defined by Tribal Councils, Health Authorities and community-level voices. NAN HT continues to strengthen our working relationships and communication channels with our partners and supporting one another as we collectively move forward in this important work.

## HEALTH POLICY & ADVOCACY

### HEALTH ADVISORY GROUP

**Mandate: Resolution 10/39:** Establishment of a NAN Health Advisory Group mandated NAN to establish and operate the Health Advisory Group (HAG) to be the main planning and advisory entity for NAN on health-related matters.

During the 2022-2023 fiscal year, a greater focus was placed on "returning to normal" following the pandemic. This meant a return to in-person meetings for the HAG, including two HAG Regular Business meetings held in August, in Toronto, and November 2022, virtually. The August 23-24, 2022 meeting was the first NAN HAG Regular Business meeting since the pandemic began. Recognizing that COVID-19 remained a concern, and taking lessons learned from the pandemic, a hybrid approach was taken to ensure everyone could participate in the meeting to discuss shared health priorities. At HAG Regular Business meetings, First Nations Health Authorities provided updates on any current and evolving issues relevant to the table and Tribal Councils while Independent First Nations provided updates specific to their regions and voiced any concerns requiring follow-up action by NAN HT. As part of ongoing communication strategies, information and resources are shared frequently to the HAG via email for further dissemination. This ranges from information about important events, service updates impacting NAN First Nations, funding opportunities, resources and any other information that may be beneficial to the ongoing work of HAG members.

HAG meetings are also an opportunity to strengthen partnerships with external organizations. For example, Cancer Care Ontario, the Indigenous Cancer Care Unit and Ontario Health attended the August HAG meeting to speak with the HAG on issues, including the importance of cancer screening in the region, along with an update on the "Catching Cancer Early Project" that works in tandem with the Joint Ontario Indigenous Cancer Care Committee.

## FEDERAL DISTINCTIONS BASED INDIGENOUS HEALTH LEGISLATION

At the August 2022 Keewaywin Conference, NAN HT presented an update to NAN Chiefs-in-Assembly on the Federal Distinctions-Based Indigenous Health Legislation (FDBIHL). Based on this dialogue, NAN HT continued to monitor developments in the process during 2022-2023 through regular attendance at meetings with partners, including Chiefs of Ontario (COO) and the Assembly of First Nations (AFN).

During this fiscal year, ISC formed a national Co-Analysis Working Group who met virtually from Spring 2022 through Fall 2022. Membership of the Co-Analysis Working Group included First Nations, Inuit and Métis groups from across Canada. The stated intention of the Co-Analysis Working Group meetings were to collectively review themes identified in various engagement reports and determine how to present themes discussed in a report. This resulted in the release of ISC's "What We Heard Report", which summarized input received from regional and national First Nations, Inuit and Métis.

Following the Co-Analysis phase, the Co-Development of Legislative Options phase began to roll out. NAN HT attended gatherings with ISC, COO and the AFN to remain informed on all process developments and reported back to the NAN CCHT with updates. NAN HT would like to thank the CCHT for their assistance in navigating this process.

The Minister of Indigenous Services launched the FDBIHL process in 2021 further to the Minister of Indigenous Services' mandate letter which commits to, "fully implement Joyce's Principle and ensure it guides work to co-develop distinctions-based Indigenous health legislation to foster health systems that will respect and ensure the safety and well-being of Indigenous Peoples".

## NAN PARAMEDIC SERVICES

Paramedics and paramedicine are immediate priorities for NAN HT. As part of this important file, NAN HT met and worked with our partners

in Fall 2022 to progress the work. NAN HT has been working in partnership with the Northern First Nations Paramedic Task Force (NFNPTF) since November 2019 to develop a business case to implement paramedic services in NAN First Nations that do not have a First Nations operated paramedic service.

NAN HT developed a draft business case in collaboration and direct partnership with Weeneebayko Area Health Authority, Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority, Cochrane District Social Services & Administration Board - Paramedic Services, Paramedic Association of Canada, Ornge, Indigenous Services Canada - First Nations Indigenous Health Branch, Ontario Ministry of Health, and Ontario Ministry of Indigenous Affairs.

The NFNPTF met most recently on December 13, 2022 and our partners provided updates on their work for paramedic services in NAN communities. Presentations were done by First Nations Engineering Services Ltd. (FNESL), Oshki-Pimache-O-Win: The Wenjack Education Institute (Oshki-Wenjack), ISC, Ministry of Health (MOH) and Independent First Nations Alliance (IFNA).

FNESL was hired in 2020 to complete the Paramedic Services Infrastructure Needs Assessment: Phase 1 - Existing Infrastructure and Phase 2 - Capital and Operation & Maintenance Assessment. The drafts have been completed and have been reviewed by the NAN HT Team. The purpose of the Needs Assessment was to determine the existing infrastructure in communities to outline what capital infrastructure will be required to implement paramedic services.

NAN HT has met with the IFNA to receive an update on their work regarding Paramedic Services within IFNA communities. Follow up with IFNA will continue with support and advocacy to develop a package submission to the federal and provincial governments to fund their paramedic service.

NAN HT has been supporting Oshki-Wenjack on the development of the Indigenous Community Care Emergency Medical Technician and Indigenous Community Paramedic programs and operating budgets. Follow up with Oshki-Wenjack will continue as they make progress.

## MENTAL HEALTH

NAN HT continued to advocate in support of mental health initiatives by partner organizations serving NAN territory, such as NAN HOPE. NAN HT also participated in bi-weekly meetings of the Mental Health and Substance Use Working Group, attended by health care professionals and community-level service providers. In 2022-2023, this group continued to gather and discuss the impacts of COVID-19 on mental health and substance use in NAN territory and shared information on emerging needs and important developments.

At the May 2022 NAN Chiefs Spring Assembly, the NAN Executive Council were directed to host a solutions-based summit on mental health and addictions. NAN HT hosted a NAN Mental Health Summit on July 12-14, 2022, and invited NAN Chiefs and Community Health Workers. There were numerous breakout sessions at the summit that focused on the following areas of discussion among invited guests:

- Identifying priorities for different areas related to addictions, suicide prevention/life promotion, grief and loss
- Harm reduction (land-based and detox programs)
- Continuum of Care
- Grief support, services and tools
- Brainstorming specific ways or potential solutions to reach that priority
- Education and prevention
- Intergenerational and family healing
- Utilizing traditional ways of being
- Resource and capacity building
- Youth led/youth empowerment (E.g., peer counselling)
- Developing guiding principles for NAN Mental Health Strategy
- 7 Grandfather teachings to be used as a guide to develop a NAN Mental Health Strategy

The Mental Health Summit also highlighted the strengths of NAN communities through presentations and information sharing on numerous innovative, community-driven mental

health initiatives that have been developed and implemented to serve NAN members. The Two Pathway approach and related workplans developed by NAN HT will incorporate Mental Health into work activities as an immediate priority. NAN HT will continue to work with communities and partner organizations to promote and elevate community-led solutions and initiatives in this critical area.

## LONG-TERM CARE (CONTINUUM OF CARE)

**Mandate: Resolution 18/20:** Elder Care Planning mandates NAN HT to examine a planning process that looks at community-based services and infrastructure options. In response to this mandate, NAN Health Transformation Team has undertaken a research project in partnership with Together Design Lab (TDL) at Toronto Metropolitan University, a long-term partner of NAN with technical expertise in planning and architecture. TDL has completed Phase 1 and 2 of the project, Identifying and Codifying a Continuum of Care for NAN: A Systems Approach, which includes the following phases:

- Phase 1: Definitions and Typology Development
- Phase 2: Case Study Analysis
- Phase 3: Presentation of Findings and Creation of Engagement Material

Findings from these completed phases highlighted the specific breakdowns in the existing Continuum of Care and the ways that policy, health care delivery and existing infrastructure leave NAN members without access. Project findings to date indicate two primary avenues forward:

- Advocacy for specific policy changes to better serve NAN members; and
- A need for transformative change to create a Continuum of Care in NAN communities.

TDL is completing a final report that will include identification of short-term actions and policy changes recommended for immediate advocacy. Discussions are ongoing to confirm how NAN HT and TDL will move forward transforming the research completed into engagement tools and strategies.



## OTHER ACTIVITIES

- Attending the Centre for Education and Research on Aging and Health (CERAH) - Lakehead University, workshops and seminars.
- Attending St. Joseph's Care Group - NorthWest LHIN Regional Palliative Care Program bi-monthly meetings.
- Participating in the Community Rehabilitation Facilitator (CRF) project advisory team meetings as they occur.
- Working with Toronto Metropolitan University - Together Design Lab.
- Participating in the First Nation, Inuit, Metis and Urban Indigenous Palliative Care Partners quarterly meetings.



## DEPARTMENT UPDATES

# Housing and Infrastructure

## OVERVIEW

As mandated by NAN Chiefs-in-Assembly, the Infrastructure and Housing Department is working on various plans, initiatives and projects, while providing advocacy and support, involving infrastructure, water, transportation, fire protection, emergency management and housing needs and issues.



## PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

### NAN HOUSING STRATEGY

**Mandate: Resolution 18/18:**  
NAN Housing Strategy

In 2014, NAN Chiefs-in-Assembly declared a Collective Housing Emergency, describing existing conditions as “deplorable” because of limited housing lifespans, overcrowding and extreme mold growth amongst other factors.

In 2018, Chiefs-in-Assembly reaffirmed the ongoing housing emergency and mandated the “development of a modern NAN Housing Strategy, focused on supporting community-defined need and NAN communities’ self-determination in their housing systems” and “mandated [the NAN Executive Council] to advocate with the provincial and federal governments and other partners, for the resources required to develop the Housing Strategy”.

Development of the NAN Housing Strategy began in September 2018 with the release of a NAN Housing Position Paper written in response to First Nations National Housing and Infrastructure Strategy. In early 2019, NAN successfully applied to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)’s National Housing Strategy – Solutions Lab funding to develop NAN Housing Strategy over a three-year project that proposed a path forward for creating community self-determination in housing. NAN partnered with Toronto Metropolitan University’s (formally Ryerson University) Together Design Lab (TDL) in developing the strategy. This project began to define the scope of housing needs across NAN First Nations identified through workshops and seminars in communities to develop housing metrics and overall support First Nation self-determination of their housing systems. The findings from the NAN Housing Strategy will provide community advocacy tools that reflect the priorities and values of each community.

Upon completion of this project in 2021, a roadmap to implement the NAN Housing Strategy was developed with seven themes for action. The implementation of the NAN Housing Strategy was presented to NAN Chiefs-in-Assembly in 2022 and a mandate was passed to continue work on addressing the housing emergency in NAN First Nations.

**Mandate: Resolution 22/12:** Acceptance and Implementation of the NAN Housing Strategy

Objectives in developing the NAN Housing Strategy include:

- Work at the community and regional level to develop housing solutions and action plans that recognize the unique needs, geographies and cultures of NAN First Nations.
- Create a community-led approach for data collection and problem identification.
- Support of NAN First Nation’s right to self-determination in their housing systems.
- Encourage flexibility and creation of design solutions rooted in local lived experience.

### KEY ISSUES

- Existing standard housing solutions have not met immediate need, have not addressed future needs and have not promoted or created wellness in the communities.
- Existing assessments of housing needs are conducted using national-level indicators not relevant to the climate, geographic and cultural needs of NAN members.
- Without appropriate indicators, the ongoing housing crisis cannot be properly defined and solutions cannot be created addressing the mental, physical and psychological needs of community members.

## KEY ACTIVITIES

- NAN’s project entitled, “Developing Appropriate First Nation Housing Metrics: Nishnawbe Aski Nation” funded by CMHC National Housing Strategy - Solution Labs was completed in 2021, resulting in the development of the NAN Housing Strategy and a roadmap for implementation.
- NAN applied to CMHC’s National Housing Strategy - Housing Supply Challenge Round Two in 2021 for a project entitled “Community-Led Designs for Specialized Housing in the North”. This project was successfully shortlisted in the Stage 1 application process and was successful in the Stage 2 application submitted on June 15, 2022. As the Stage 2 application was successful, NAN is working in partnership with First Nations, Tribal Councils and will be working with licensed architectural firms to develop “shovel ready” housing plans for community members identified as in greatest need of specialized housing: single adults, those in need of supports (Elders, people living with disabilities, etc.) and those in need of emergency housing.
- NAN hosted the 1st Annual Housing Summit in Thunder Bay November 15-16, 2022. This marked the official launch of the NAN Housing Strategy and brought together 125 delegates from across NAN Territory. NAN community members were provided the opportunity to present and share their housing ideas and experiences. CMHC and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) representatives were also in attendance. Moving forward, this will be an annual event which hopes to bring in new presenters, trade show booths and other housing related activities.
- NAN continued work in its subprojects supporting the development of the NAN Housing Strategy.

## NEXT STEPS

- Continue to work on subprojects that address the NAN Housing Strategy’s seven themes.
- Search for new funding opportunities that will assist in the implementation of the NAN Housing Strategy across NAN territory.

## ACTIVITIES SUPPORTING NAN HOUSING STRATEGY

During the development of the NAN Housing Strategy, the Project Team began subprojects that support the housing and infrastructure needs identified by NAN First Nations.

The following subprojects supporting the NAN Housing Strategy are listed below with updates:

### Community-led Designs for Specialized Housing in the North

- CMHC’s Housing Supply Challenge is a national challenge that aims to remove or reduce barriers that hinder housing supply across Canada. Over the next five years, \$300 million in funding will be awarded to projects.
- NAN applied to CMHC’s National Housing Strategy – Housing Supply Challenge Round Two’s Getting Started Round: Pre-development Process and was successful in its Stage 2 application that was submitted June 15, 2022.
- Round Two of the Housing Supply Challenge pre-development activities include everything that brings a housing project from idea to the start of construction.
- NAN’s project aims to develop “shovel ready” housing toolkits tailored to specific NAN populations identified as experiencing the greatest housing need:
  - ▶ Single Adults
  - ▶ Housing with Supports
  - ▶ Emergency Housing



- For each specific population, Co-Creation Teams have been created and are comprised of NAN members with lived experience and professional frontline workers that are specifically tailored to the needs of the target populations. These teams will co-create these “shovel ready” housing toolkits for NAN First Nations to use in constructing specialized housing in the north.
- Throughout the first Co-Creation Workshop, it was identified that the three target populations required similar housing models which led to the development of four housing typologies. Typologies include: 1-2 bedroom home, 4+ bedroom home (or family home), living and gathering as well as a group home model.
- A technical team will then provide support in ensuring that the designs are easy to implement and flexible to NAN’s climates, cultures and geographies. This technical team is made up of four Tribal Council representatives and a few NAN housing professionals.
- The first Workshop was hosted on February 9, 2023, with approximately 40 NAN community members in attendance. The Workshop provided NAN community members an opportunity to contribute to housing design ideas and voice their concerns about housing in their communities.

*Housing design activity completed by NAN community members to help with the Co-Creation process.*



### True Cost of Housing in the North

- Following recommendations from community workshops and Chiefs and Councils, the NAN Housing Strategy is seeking to identify the true cost of building and completing housing projects across NAN territory.
- Numerous housing professionals have identified that there is a growing gap between government funding and the total cost to build an adequate home. Within this sub-project the Project Team is working with Tribal Councils and individual communities to identify housing costs from the last few years to advocate for increased funding that recognizes the growing materials, freight and labour costs experienced by First Nations.
- In March 2022, a short survey was sent to all communities to identify current housing wait lists, types of future housing planned, number of existing or serviceable lots and future growth plans.

### Creating a Home for Our Youth

- Creating a Home for Our Youth is a response to the overwhelming feedback of NAN Housing Strategy participants that found our youth facing the least equitable housing outcomes.
- This project will focus on the experiences of NAN youth (age 14-29), their interactions with institutions and their journey to access safe housing. Both on-and off-reserve youth are struggling to secure adequate and appropriate housing and it is having significant impact on their well-being. This project looks to understand, from the perspective of youth, what solutions are most needed and desired.
- In particular, there will be a co-examination of the housing being provided through a number of institutions (education, healthcare, child and family services, policing) which force youth out of their communities and look to understand how it can be evaluated and improved.
- The interviews began in May 2021 and have been completed virtually. To date, 20 interviews have been completed with youth, aged 14-29, and five interviews were completed with service providers.
- NAN and its partners at TDL participated in the NAN Youth Gathering in March 2023. The NAN and TDL teams worked together to facilitate a small-scale workshop with NAN Youth who worked to identify their housing needs and how they would like to see housing done in their communities. Youth from across NAN territory contributed their ideas and feedback on housing through workshop activities.



### Recording Our Truth

- Recording Our Truth began in Fall 2021 and looks to trace how understandings of home have changed in NAN territory and document how the concept of home can be an important tool in building community wellness moving forward.
- Through a series of interviews with NAN Elders, Knowledge Keepers and other members with special lived experience, we will document changes to the concept of home that have taken place over their lifetime, as it relates to the histories of the current housing emergency.
- Creating maps and other visual tools across a variety of scales, the learnings from this project will:
  - ▶ Record and map individual and community experiences of landscape change resulting from increased government intervention in housing and land use systems.
  - ▶ Identify the values, objectives and processes that led to the changes between built forms, home and physical environments historically and currently.
  - ▶ Demonstrate how the built environment and landscape can become part of a long-term plan towards community well-being and self-determination.
- Participant interviews will contribute to demonstrating the need for locally based understandings of home to guide the housing system. Six personal history interviews have been completed with Elders thus far, with more planned for 2023.



## IMMEDIATE HOUSING & INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS TECHNICAL REPORT 1.0

- In 2019, NAN Chiefs-in-Assembly requested that NAN develop an immediate housing needs proposal as the development of the NAN Housing Strategy was a longer, three-year project.
- An initial model of current housing needs in NAN territory was developed in partnership with Together Design Lab and presented to NAN Chiefs at the Spring Chiefs Assembly in May 7-8, 2019. Feedback was given at the time to further develop the immediate needs model to include housing-related infrastructure.
- In 2020, a review and analysis of existing data was undertaken to generate an aggregated estimate of current housing and infrastructure need in NAN territory. Findings of the current model include current and target average housing densities, replacement need of existing housing units, family characteristics, linear infrastructure estimates, water, wastewater and waste management upgrades and emergency housing units. Together, these variables are used to provide a base estimate of housing and infrastructure need across NAN territory.
- This 2020 review was refined in 2021 and was presented to NAN Chiefs-in-Assembly in 2022 as a living document to be updated on an annual basis.
- Findings from the calculations present a range of estimated needs for housing and infrastructure in NAN territory. Housing estimates include the number of replacement units needed plus additional new units. Using ISC data, housing need ranges across NAN Territory from 4,481 to 7,588 housing units whereas Statistics Canada data yields 2,434 to 4,613 housing units. While each data source provides a range of numbers, the analysis demonstrates a significant and immediate need.
- Additionally, current infrastructure for water and wastewater was evaluated using scores from ISC Annual Performance Inspection Results Report and age of infrastructure. Waste management infrastructure was tested based on General Condition Rating and age using the NAN Waste Management Infrastructure Asset and Practices Assessment Final Report. Through these tests, 16 water, 22 wastewater and 11 waste management systems were identified as needing replacement. The tests assume that if a system is currently in need of replacement, it will not be able to accommodate future growth, suggesting a minimum level of investment is required.
- Further study through an infrastructure needs assessment is required to understand the full infrastructure gap.



NAN community Elder providing guidance and direction to the project.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

### NATIONAL FIRST NATIONS HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

- In 2018, a position paper was submitted to the Assembly of First Nation (AFN) as part of the development of the "First Nations National Housing and related Infrastructure Strategy" to ensure that NAN First Nations' views and needs are properly represented and incorporated into the national strategy. The creation of this position paper launched the NAN Housing Strategy development.
- During 2019, AFN undertook a national housing data gathering exercise which was led by Chiefs of Ontario (COO) in the Ontario region. COO reported that 109 First Nations (81%) participated in this exercise. The data analysis resulted in a 2020 report titled, "Ontario First Nations On-Reserve Housing and Related Infrastructure Needs Technical Report" which identified key findings about Ontario First Nations on-reserve housing and infrastructure-related needs.
- In 2021, NAN requested aggregate data from AFN and First Nations Information Governance Centre, of the NAN First Nations that participated and completed the survey to help support the development of the NAN Housing Strategy and support modelling for immediate housing and infrastructure needs on-reserve.
- In early 2022, NAN acquired aggregate data from the AFN housing survey completed in 2019-2020 as 34 NAN First Nations responded. The data supplemented the work of the Immediate Housing & Infrastructure Needs Technical Report 1.0.
- A key finding from the survey identified that only 106 serviced lots were available in the 26 communities that responded. With only 106 lots available and housing need of up to 7,588 units identified in Immediate Housing & Infrastructure Needs Technical Report 1.0, there is a severe shortage of available lots and related infrastructure.

### CHIEFS OF ONTARIO, CHIEFS COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- The Director of Housing & Infrastructure, sits on the committee as an observer on behalf of NAN. The COO Chiefs Committee on Housing and Infrastructure meets every month to review First Nations housing and infrastructure needs in Ontario.
- NAN Hosted a webinar with Infrastructure and Housing Chiefs Committee on October 19, 2022, where Chris Hoyos presented to the Chiefs Committee on the Transfer Care and Control of Housing.





# Infrastructure

## PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

### SpaceX Starlink Connectivity Project

As mandated by NAN Chiefs-in-Assembly, the Infrastructure and Housing Department is working towards the completion of the SpaceX Starlink Connectivity Project, providing 1 year of internet service to students in NAN communities.

**Mandate: Resolution 20/11:** Support for Broadband Upgrades COVID-19 Global Pandemic

## KEY ISSUES

- The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the inequity faced by First Nation children living on-reserve in accessing broadband for online education. Online learning became mandatory during the pandemic and without a proper broadband connection, students on-reserve could not participate.
- Broadband connections are also necessary to remotely monitor community infrastructure systems, such as water treatment plants.
- The current fiber network serving NAN territory has exceeded its capacity. Significant upgrades are required to improve connection speeds for NAN communities and achieve the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commissions Universal Service Objective of 50 Mbps download and 10 Mbps upload speeds.



## KEY ACTIVITIES

- NAN Executive Council are updated upon request.
- Frequent meetings and calls are scheduled with all NAN communities and leadership and external partners including: FSET, K-Net, Western James Bay Telecom Network (WJBTN), Ministry of Education and others.
- Each community requires a slightly different process to get participation started. A collaborative system has been created to track and document community participation online.
- Each NAN community determines how they would like to engage with the project based on community need.
- 40 out of 49 NAN communities and Pelican Falls First Nation High School are currently engaged in some element of the project.
- To date, NAN has ordered approximately 2019 Starlink units to 37 NAN communities. Each Starlink unit was shipped to community with a Pipe Adaptor, Cable Kit and J-mount to securely and safely mount the dishes to each home.
- NAN will continue to procure and deliver Starlink units until the end of the project timeline.
- As NAN communities continue to sign up for the Starlink Service, units, accessories and mounting hardware are being delivered to the community. Deliveries are made through Northstar Air, Wasaya, Canada Post and Purolator.
- NAN is currently working with project partners to begin the initial steps of upgrading IT architecture required to improve remote learning access for NAN schools.
- NAN staff continue to liaise with K-Net and WJBTN to maintain working relationships and ensure that impacts to community revenue streams are minimized wherever possible.

## NEXT STEPS

- Deploy Starlink units to NAN communities.
- Work with communities to ensure that Starlink units are installed in a secure, safe and sustainable manner.
- Ensure that communities are provided resources to properly install Starlink units.
- Work with community Education Directors and education authorities to prioritize and plan IT architecture upgrades for NAN schools.
- Develop advocacy plan for maintaining funded service for Starlink units past the initial one-year service agreement provided by the Starlink Angel Accounts.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

- Work directly with communities to get individuals signed up for Starlink deployment.
- Work with tribal council and technology partners to develop cloud-based IT solutions for NAN schools.

## HIGHLIGHTS

Community	Number of home Starlink unit orders	Number of education building Starlink orders
Fort Severn FN	57	3
Mattagami FN	38	2
Marten Falls FN	60	0
Brunswick House FN	35	3
Ginoogaming	60	0
Eabametoong	60	0
Aroland FN	60	3
Deer Lake FN	59	1
Keewaywin FN	60	2
Weenusk FN	60	3
Muskrat Dam FN	60	1
Mishkeegogamang FN	60	3
Sandy Lake FN	53	6
Attawapiskat	60	3
Slate Falls FN	55	2
Fort Albany FN	30	2
Moose Cree FN	60	5
Kasabonika Lake FN	56	5
Kingfisher Lake FN	60	1
Wapekeka FN	60	4
Wunnumin Lake FN	60	4
North Caribou Lake FN	61	3
McDowell Lake FN	4	1
North Spirit Lake FN	60	1
Cat Lake FN	26	2
Nibinamik FN	60	0
Wahgoshig FN	22	1
Sachigo Lake FN	50	2
Bearskin Lake FN	60	4
Neskantaga FN	60	0
Matachewan FN	12	3
Poplar Hill FN	56	4
Lac Seul FN	60	0
Webequie FN	60	0

## WATER PROJECTS

### Mandates:

**Resolution 20/09:** Support for Clean Drinking Water Class Action

**Resolution 22/07:** NAN Infrastructure Needs Assessment

**Resolution 23/05:** Increased Involvement in Federal Water Legislation Process

### KEY ISSUES

- The Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Class Action Settlement Agreement commits Canada to making all reasonable efforts to introduce legislation repealing the 2013 Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act (SDWFNA) by March 31, 2022 and to introduce replacement legislation "in consultation with" First Nations by December 31, 2022.
- The SDWFNA was repealed in June 2022, but the replacement legislation was not introduced by December 31, 2022. No updates have been provided regarding an updated timeline for the replacement legislation.
- Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) has moved forward by working with the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to co-develop a draft framework for proposed new water legislation through the Joint Technical Working Group on Safe Drinking Water and Wastewater for First Nations Legislation. Communication on the AFN process and participation of NAN communities has been limited.
- There continues to be an ongoing shortage of qualified water and wastewater operators serving NAN communities.

### KEY ACTIVITIES

- Meet regularly with Tribal Council water leads, OFNTSC and ISC to discuss issues related to water operations, maintenance and governance within NAN territory.
- Work with First Nations Engineering Services Limited to develop a comprehensive Water and Wastewater Needs Assessment for all NAN communities.
- Work with a consultant to prepare an overview of potential water and wastewater governance options for NAN territory.
- Work with EcoSuperior to present Water Education Fairs to NAN communities (2 completed).
- Attend events organized by Chiefs of Ontario (COO) and AFN to receive information on the ongoing development of new First Nations water legislation.

### NEXT STEPS

- Continue to monitor developments in drafting of water and wastewater legislation.
- Continue regular meetings with Tribal Council and other partners on water projects.
- Complete water and wastewater needs assessment with FNESL.
- Complete remaining two Water Education Fairs in NAN communities.
- Facilitate water governance discussions with NAN Chiefs.



## REMOTE NORTHERN AIRPORTS

**Mandate: Resolution 16/48:** Aviation Safety in First Nation Communities

In 2016, Chiefs-in-Assembly passed Resolution 16/48 that stated, “NAN is committed to the improvement of safety standards for public and commercial air service in NAN First Nations by upgrading current radar systems in remote airports to meet the Canadian standard”.

- NAN has been lobbying both the federal and provincial governments for essential upgrades to the infrastructure at remote northern airports.
- The airports require additional staff and an on-call provision to guarantee service as well as Localizer Performance with Vertical Guidance (LPV) approaches coupled with high intensity runway lighting.
- Achieving these goals would result in safer air travel in northern Ontario and a guarantee of service for remote communities dependent solely on-air travel.

### KEY ISSUES

- Remote First Nation communities are solely dependent on-air travel for transportation of people and goods.
- Airport staff must provide Medevac carriers with a visual runway condition report before dispatching and many of these flights land outside the regular airport hours of operation.
- Geographic location of the airports results in a low ceiling height for a large part of the year and without LPV approaches, NAN remote communities will continue to face challenges with accessing remote airports during inclement weather conditions.
- Transport Canada (TC) has introduced new Pilot Flight Duty Regulations for smaller aircrafts that came into effect on December 12, 2022; the new regulations, combined with a national pilot shortage, have resulted in limited flight availability, shorter hold times in community and higher flight costs.

### KEY ACTIVITIES

- NAN, through the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs Relationship Table, has requested the cooperation of the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) in conducting a Capital Needs and Operation and Maintenance Assessment of all 29 remote northern airports to identify deficiencies and future upgrades required to meet the needs of the communities they serve.
- The Ontario MTO implemented seasonal (winter) stand-by pay for remote airport staff in November 2022. This will provide proper compensation to staff who work after hours to provide service. It will be a rotational basis between MTO airport staff at each airport and they will earn half their hourly wage while on-call. This will improve serviceability at the airports and improve work-life balance for the staff.
- NAV Canada has received funding to begin designing LPV approaches for all remote airports across Canada and will begin with the MTO Remote Northern Airports in Ontario, as preliminary survey work was already completed. To utilize the new LPV approaches, the MTO must recertify the runways at each airport which involves widening and lengthening of the runways.
  - ▶ The first four NAN communities in the queue for NAV Canada are Kasabonika First Nation, Kashechewan First Nation, Fort Severn First Nation and Peawanuk First Nation.

- NAN participated in the MTO's Northern Ontario Transportation Task Force (NOTTF) to inform the ongoing implementation of and updates to the Northern Ontario Transportation Plan. The forum allowed NAN to raise issues unique to NAN territory such as remote northern airports and winter roads and provided input that will improve the safety of transportation in northern Ontario. The final report was submitted to the Ontario Minister of Transportation, Caroline Mulroney, in March 2023.
- NAN has written multiple letters to the Federal Minister of Transportation, Omar Alghabra, regarding the impacts of the new Pilot Flight Duty Regulations and national pilot shortage, requesting an interim exemption to allow time for small carriers to work with TC on a prescriptive application of the new regulations. NAN met with TC's Regional Director and Associate Director of Civil Aviation in February 2023, along with Wasaya Airways and North Star Air, to discuss the impacts on NAN communities and the need for an immediate solution.

## MTO REMOTE AIRPORT EMPLOYEE TAXATION SUPPORT

### OVERVIEW

- NAN has been working with employees from airports located off-reserve or partially off-reserve to address the longstanding issue of payroll taxation.
- 11 remote airports in NAN communities are located off-reserve or partially off-reserve and their staff have been subject to payroll taxation since the airports were constructed.

### KEY ISSUES

- The affected employees should not be subject to payroll taxation since the airports were constructed in those locations simply because the geography was more suitable.
- The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) applies the “Connecting Factors Test” to determine if an employee’s wages can be placed on-reserve and therefore, not subject to taxation.
- The key components of the Connecting Factors Test include:
  - ▶ status Indian under the Indian Act;
  - ▶ live on-reserve;
  - ▶ employed by the MTO;
  - ▶ duties performed both on and off-reserve;
  - ▶ proximity of the airport to the reserve;
  - ▶ creation and use of the airport in relation to the reserve community.
- The affected employees met the requirements of the CRA's Connecting Factors Test, placing 100% of their income on reserve for the year objected to.
- The CRA will only review 10 years previous from the date the objections were filed to apply the ruling.

### NEXT STEPS

- Utilize the MTO's NOTTF Report in advocacy efforts to gain additional funding for remote airports and winter roads.
- Continue advocacy at both levels of government for the funds needed to support remote airport infrastructure improvements, additional staffing and improved navigational technology.
- Continue to monitor capital projects and maintenance at remote northern airports and continue advocacy for a comprehensive Capital Needs and Operation and Maintenance Assessment of the airports.

## KEY ACTIVITIES

- In March 2023, the CRA made a ruling to exempt the staff from payroll taxation moving forward.
- The MTO provided all staff with a CRA form to change the status of their income tax to place 100% of their time “on reserve” for tax purposes.
- Staff can file an Objection to their previous tax year and an Adjustment Request for tax reimbursement for a maximum of ten years retroactively.

## COMMERCIAL VEHICLE SAFETY

**Mandates: Resolution 19/46:** Commercial Vehicle Safety and Improved Driver Training

- Identified key areas of focus to improve commercial vehicle safety:
  - ▶ Standardization of driver training across Canada.
  - ▶ Implementation of dash cameras be required for all commercial vehicles.
  - ▶ Addition of pedestrian crosswalks along provincial highways adjacent to First Nation communities.
  - ▶ Winter road safety, driver training and enforcement.

## KEY ISSUES

- Currently, commercial driver training is not standardized across Canada and requirements vary provincially.
- Dash cameras are not currently required by commercial vehicle operators.
- Commercial vehicles 25 years old or newer have in-vehicle monitoring systems and a fatality must occur for law enforcement to obtain the device for evidence.
- First Nation communities located adjacent to provincial highway networks require pedestrian crosswalks to allow safe crossing.
- School buses in remote First Nations are not consistently receiving semi-annual safety inspections.

## NEXT STEPS

NAN will support the staff in filing the remaining CRA paperwork for reimbursement.

## KEY ACTIVITIES

- NAN participated in the MTO’s NOTTF to inform the ongoing implementation of and updates to the Northern Ontario Transportation Plan. NAN has provided input to the MTO’s NOTTF regarding improvements to commercial vehicle safety and highway maintenance as it relates to our mandates.
- As a member of the MTO NOTTF, NAN was able to provide input on the Class A Commercial Truck Driver Training in an effort to enhance the MTO’s Entry-Level Training requirements.
- Transport Canada has mandated commercial drivers be required to have electronic logging devices on their vehicles as of June 12, 2021. The system will now allow the MTO to track driver’s hours accurately and ensure regulations are being followed.
- The MTO has increased inspection frequency of buses, school purpose vehicles and accessible vehicles to semi-annually, rather than annually.

## NEXT STEPS

- Utilize the MTO NOTTF Final Report and Class A Commercial Truck Driver Training revisions as a tool in advocating for improved highway safety.
- Continue advocacy to ISC and Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines (MENDM) regarding improvements to commercial driver training to include a winter driving component and safety improvements to winter road travel.

## WINTER ROADS

**Mandate: Resolution 12/67:** Winter Road Standards in Nishnawbe Aski Nation Territory

## KEY ISSUES

- Ontario does not have a winter road standard and long-term funding program that is reflective of the actual needs.
- Climate change is shortening the winter road season in NAN territory and there is a need to explore alternative access options and future jurisdiction.
- Inflation has resulted in increased maintenance costs due to fuel prices, equipment maintenance and a lack of capacity.

## KEY ACTIVITIES

- NAN continues to advocate for increased, long-term winter road funding, permanent water crossings and the development of a winter road standard.
- As a member of the MTO’s NOTTF, NAN was able to deliver a community presentation (Muskrat Dam First Nation) to the Task Force on winter roads in NAN territory, identifying the urgent need to increase capacity for winter roads.
- In March 2023, the MENDM announced an additional \$5 million in funding in addition to the base funding for winter roads.

## NEXT STEPS

- Advocate for increased capacity for winter roads and the development of a winter road standard.
- Explore funding options to host a Winter Road Forum with both levels of government present.
- Monitor how the additional \$5 million in funding announced will be allocated.

## NUCLEAR WASTE

**Mandate: Resolution 22/13:** Opposition to Nuclear Waste Management Organization’s (NWMO) Proposed Deep Geological Repository

## KEY ISSUES

- The location of the proposed Deep Geological Repository (DGR) is within the watershed that flows north and west through NAN territory.
- Transportation of the high-level waste across vast distances poses serious risks to NAN communities along the Provincial Highway network.
- NAN has serious concerns about the potential negative environmental impacts during transport of the nuclear waste, during the repackaging of the waste on site and from the underground DGR itself.
- NAN is currently not recognized by the NWMO as a “host” and the NWMO has not sought NAN’s free, prior, and informed consent for the proposed site location of the project near Ignace, ON.

## KEY ACTIVITIES

- NAN has retained JFK Law to represent the organization on this file.
- JFK Law has prepared a legal strategy to approach the NWMO and the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) about recognition of NAN as a “host” and therefore requiring NAN’s free, prior and informed consent to move ahead with the proposed Ignace site location.
- NAN is developing a Terms of Reference to establish the Chiefs and Technical Action Committee.



## NEXT STEPS

- NAN will be meeting with both the NWMO and the CNSC to discuss our concerns.
- NAN will explore capacity options to support the work in learning about the project, potential risks and impacts from the proposed DGR site near Ignace.
- NAN will provide education to the communities on the project and identify credible risks to NAN territory.
- NAN will advocate for Treaty Rights to be honoured in recognizing the need for NAN's free, prior consent to move ahead with the proposed site location near Ignace.
- NAN will continue to advocate for the "Proximity Principle" in storing nuclear waste as close to the site of generation as possible to eliminate exporting problems to other regions and allow for continuous monitoring of the waste.
- NAN will establish the Chiefs and Technical Action Committee to support the work and provide an avenue for keeping leadership updated on the file.



## Fire Safety and Emergency Management

### OVERVIEW

Fire safety is one of Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN)'s top priorities. The Infrastructure and Housing Department has been working diligently with Resolutions to address concerns from Chiefs about the devastating fire-related losses the people of NAN experience. NAN has been working closely with both levels of government, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority (SLFNHA) and is seeking guidance from the communities and Tribal Councils to determine the best way to increase fire safety within NAN territory.

NAN is in the process of developing a trilateral table with both levels of government with the goal of creating a NAN-wide Fire and Emergency Management Service that will reduce many of the current service gaps as well as education, prevention and suppression capabilities.

The Department continues to build off the interest created by Amber's Fire Safety Campaign (AFSC) and are looking to increase the effectiveness of the Campaign.

The Woodstove Exchange Program is underway in six NAN communities and offers homes a more energy efficient and safer source of heat.



## PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

### AMBER'S FIRE SAFETY CAMPAIGN

**Mandate: Resolution 16/35:** Amber's Fire Safety Campaign

On May 19, 2016, NAN Chiefs-in-Assembly launched Amber's Fire Safety Campaign (AFSC) to increase fire safety and help prevent tragic house fires that have devastated NAN communities and claimed far too many lives. AFSC continues to promote the campaign in NAN First Nations through four pillars:

1. Education
2. Training
3. Capacity Building
4. Partnerships

### KEY ISSUES

- Within NAN territory, tragic house fires continue to devastate families due to the chronic lack of firefighting services, incident reporting system, consistent funding, and substandard housing.
- On March 29, 2016, a house fire in Pikangikum First Nation resulted in the tragic loss of nine lives.
- In 2019, a house fire in Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug Nation claimed the lives of a family of five.
- In June 2020, another house fire in Muskrat Dam First Nation resulted in severe burn injuries to two adults.
- On January 13, 2022, a house fire claimed the lives of three children ages: 4, 6 and 9 in Sandy Lake First Nation.
- The most recent house fire occurred on January 28, 2023, claiming the life of a 10 year old girl.

## KEY ACTIVITIES

- At the launch of the Campaign in 2016, NAN developed a three-year plan and received a letter of support from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) dated July 8, 2016, stating, "Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada will partner with NAN on this important three-year initiative to promote awareness and education of Fire Prevention in NAN communities". This three-year initiative ended March 31, 2019.
- NAN continues to coordinate the Amber's Fire Safety Campaign Working Group that consists of: ISC, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), Tribal Councils, Ontario First Nations Technical Services Corporation, Ontario Native Fire Fighters Society, Aboriginal Fire Fighters Association of Canada, Ontario Office of the Fire Marshal, as well as the Fire Chiefs of Sioux Lookout, Greenstone, Timmins and Thunder Bay.
- In 2022-2023, NAN successfully received funding from CMHC to continue to run the Campaign. The funds were utilized to purchase fire safety-related educational materials, ship several hundred smoke alarms to families in various NAN communities and set up booths at trade shows and conferences, including the First Nations Housing Conference, the Focus First Emergency Preparedness Forum and various NAN events.
- The campaign develops and prints multiple fire safety education resources available online at: <https://www.nan.ca/resources/fire-safety/>. This year, all AFSC related social media content was re-designed and print materials were updated.
- The AFSC's partnership was strengthened this year as NAN supplied a large quantity of educational materials that were distributed to SLFNHA communities.
- AFSC educational events were held in Nibinamik First Nation on January 31, 2023 and Kingfisher Lake First Nation on March 21, 2023.
- During these events, AFSC's Fire Prevention Officer, Shane Ferguson, hosted education sessions for students and a Q&A session on the radio. Educational materials and smoke alarms were distributed.

## NEXT STEPS

- NAN re-submitted a previous proposal to ISC to support the AFSC which successfully received funding for 2023-2025.
- This funding will allow NAN to further develop the Campaign and also provide additional education and fire prevention resources in more communities across NAN territory.
- Plans are in place to deliver fire prevention education in at least six communities each year. A large quantity of smoke and CO2 alarms and educational materials have been procured.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES SUPPORTING AMBER'S FIRE SAFETY CAMPAIGN

- AFN Resolution 89/2017: Support for the Creation of the Indigenous Fire Marshal Office (IFMO) mandated the Aboriginal Firefighters Association of Canada (AFAC) to create a national Indigenous Fire Safety Office to support First Nation communities in their efforts to improve fire safety and protection of people, property and the environment.
- NAN participated in AFAC's consultation process to develop IFMO on November 27, 2018, and October 24, 2019, in Thunder Bay, ON. In May 2020, the IFMO Project transitioned into the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council Project (NIFSC) which will continue work on improving fire safety through development of capacity-building and risk-mitigation programs and services.
- In 2021, NAN met with NIFSC to review fire safety programs currently offered by NIFSC and has provided some input into programming relevant to NAN First Nations.
- For more information: <https://indigenousfiresafety.ca/>.

## NAN FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SERVICE

**Mandate: Resolution 23/07:** CHRT Complaint Regarding Lack of Fire Safety and Prevention Capacity in NAN.

NAN First Nations, particularly remote communities, should have a level of fire safety and protection comparable to municipalities of similar sizes. A lack of training opportunities, failing infrastructure and little to no funding to support a local fire department is a growing threat to the safety of families living on-reserve.

At the 2023 Winter Chiefs Assembly, NAN Chiefs-in-Assembly directed the Executive Council to proceed in preparing to submit a complaint to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT) regarding the lack of fire safety and prevention capacity in NAN communities. Falconers LLP provided NAN Chiefs-in-Assembly with a comprehensive legal review on the issue.

## NEXT STEPS

- Begin the process of filing a CHRT complaint. Support from Chiefs-in-Assembly and Tribal Councils will be required.
- Continue to seek feedback and guidance from Tribal Councils and communities and ensure all voices are heard.



### **Mandate: Resolution 19/30:** NAN Fire and Emergency Management Service

NAN Chiefs-in-Assembly directed the Executive Council to seek resources and funding in partnership with governments to advance emergency management training and capacity at the First Nations level equivalent to that offered elsewhere in the province. The Executive Council was also directed to complete and assess historic emergencies and emergency management resources within NAN territory and develop a culturally appropriate and accessible training program and platform that meets provincial standards. Furthermore, the Executive Council was directed to review emergency management policies, including the NAN 1997 Protocol Agreement, focusing on the development of more resilient communities. They were also directed to work with existing Emergency Management Coordinators and initiatives at the First Nations and Tribal Council levels. Finally, the implementation of this Resolution is to be used to inform and develop the basis for a NAN Fire and Emergency Management Service.

### **KEY ISSUES**

- According to a report by the AFN First Nations Emergency Management Think Tank written in March 2019, on-reserve First Nations are 18 times more likely to be evacuated due to natural disasters than the general population.
- Emergencies, such as the James Bay Coastal Evacuations in April 2023, have highlighted the gaps in emergency management within NAN territory.
- These emergencies are only increasing in frequency, severity and duration with the compounding effects of climate change.

### **UPDATE ON NAN RESOLUTION 19/30**

To potentially establish a NAN-wide Fire and Emergency Management Service, NAN is in discussions with both the federal and provincial governments to create a First Nations Emergency Management Trilateral Table. This Table would allow for open dialogue and accountability

between NAN and both levels of government regarding First Nations fire safety and emergency management. The creation of a First Nations-led emergency management service is a crucial part of saving lives and property in NAN First Nations. NAN will ensure that proper engagements and consultation will occur with NAN First Nations and partners to identify their priority areas within NAN territory once the First Nations Emergency Management Trilateral Table has been established.

### **NEXT STEPS**

- Continue discussions with the federal and provincial governments to establish the First Nations Emergency Management Trilateral Table.
- Establish the First Nations Emergency Management Trilateral Table.
- Begin engagements with communities and partners to identify priority areas for fire safety and emergency management on-reserve.
- Submit funding proposal to ISC.
- Seek input from communities and tribal councils to ensure this proposal will suit the needs of all parties.
- Continue work on developing a culturally appropriate and accessible training program and platform for emergency management education in NAN communities, with input provided by emergency management subject matter experts from four different NAN communities.
- Continue discussions with Emergency Management Ontario to redesign the Basic Emergency Management course, to ensure that it is more culturally appropriate and relevant to First Nations communities.

## **GROWING BIOHEAT IN NAN PROJECT**

### **Mandate: Resolution 16/35:** Amber's Fire Safety Campaign

Building upon the success of NAN Woodstove Exchange Pilot Project of 2018-2019, this project has expanded to six additional communities and built upon existing bioheat programs, training and capacity.

### **KEY ISSUES**

- This project captures NAN's vision of building a stronger local economy, energy efficiency and independence, fire safe practices as well as lessening community impact on the environment.
- This project also aims to increase community capacity for wood harvesting and provide additional infrastructure for harvesting, processing, curing and storing firewood.

### **KEY ACTIVITIES**

The following activities have been completed so far:

- All letters of agreement have been signed with six communities: Wapekeka First Nation, Nibinamik First Nation, Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug Nation, Kingfisher Lake First Nation, Sachigo Lake First Nation and Neskantaga First Nation.
- All woodstoves and related components, Quonsets and other necessary building materials have been delivered to the communities.
- WETT training and a week of hands-on woodstove training was delivered in Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug Nation and Wapekeka First Nation in December 2022.
- Wood harvesting equipment including: chainsaws, maintenance equipment, axes, personal protective equipment and wood splitters were procured and shipped up to Wapekeka First Nation, Nibinamik First Nation, Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug Nation, Kingfisher Lake First Nation and Sachigo Lake First Nation by both winter road and air.
- Superior Strategies was hired to deliver first aid training and Mitigoog Solutions was hired to deliver wood harvesting and chainsaw training.



- All training was completed in Wapekeka First Nation, Nibinamik First Nation, Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug Nation, Kingfisher Lake First Nation and Sachigo Lake First Nation between January-March 2023.
- The Kasabonika First Nation addition of the project, funded by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), saw 22 of 25 woodstoves successfully installed in December 2022 by Winnipeg Chimney Service and a local laborer.
- The agreement between NAN and Natural Resources Canada was amended to allow for the project to continue into 2024-2025 in lieu of the COVID-19 restrictions.

## NEXT STEPS

The following items are anticipated to be of highest priority between 2023-2025:

- Deliver WETT training and hands-on training in Kingfisher Lake First Nation, Nibinamik First Nation, Nestantaga First Nation and Sachigo Lake First Nation. All training will be conducted by Winnipeg Chimney Service.
- Complete final woodstoves inspections in Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug Nation and Wapekeka First Nation by Winnipeg Chimney Services. In addition, the remaining four communities will receive inspections once WETT Training is completed.
- Conduct first aid, wood harvesting and chainsaw training in Neskantaga First Nation.
- Construct Quonsets in all six communities.
- Assist communities in site selection and hiring of local labor to complete structures.
- Offer first aid, wood harvesting and chainsaw training in the six communities that participated in the 2018-19 Woodstove Exchange Program.
- Send out offer letters to establish contact with community project leads and tentative dates.
- Ensure all flow-through funds have been sent to all participating communities.

## NAN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

**Mandate: Resolution 20/10:** First Nations Emergency Management

### KEY ACTIVITIES

- The NAN Infrastructure and Housing Department worked with ISC to negotiate a three-year agreement for two capacity positions, Emergency Management Advisor and Emergency Management Officer to provide additional emergency management advocacy, supports, training and education to communities. These positions will report to the Housing and Infrastructure Director and work will be based upon the four pillars of emergency management:
  - 1) Mitigation,
  - 2) Preparedness,
  - 3) Response and
  - 4) Recovery.

These additional positions will complement existing supports that NAN has in place for communities in crisis.
- Work will take place to complete an assessment on the emergency response infrastructure and capacity; the level of operations and maintenance funding, a data history of emergencies and hazard occurrences in NAN communities, complete a review of the current emergency management system in Ontario, and establish standards of the same or higher quality as elsewhere in Canada that are culturally appropriate to the unique needs of NAN communities.
- This baseline data will be used to develop a NAN Fire and Emergency Management Service for NAN First Nations that will build on current Amber's Fire Safety Campaign partnerships to ensure continued support through the development stages. A Trilateral Terms of Reference inclusive of a high-level steering committee and technical level working group will be established to guide all work under this mandate.

- NAN's currently active Trilateral Agreement, "Emergency Response and Evacuations Protocol Agreement" was established in 1997 and outlines specific NAN First Nations concerns and issues which remain relevant to this day. The development of a new Protocol Agreement presents the opportunity to revise the agreement based on the pillars of preparation, mitigation, response and recovery to include all types of situations that would be covered by Emergency Management including natural disasters, failure of critical infrastructure and pandemics, as well as highlight and reconcile ongoing First Nation concerns from the original 1997 "Emergency Response and Evacuations Protocol Agreement" document.
- NAN attends all NAN community emergency related teleconferences and participates on emergency planning tables such as: the NAN Specific Trilateral Table, Evacuation Site Facility Table, Hudson and James Bay Spring Flood Situational Awareness, JEMS 2021 Review, and Hosting Criteria Development Working Group.
- In February 2021, NAN virtually hosted the 1st Annual First Nations Emergency Management Conference that had over 150 participants. The Conference was a two-day orientation to First Nations Emergency Management in Ontario and all the parties who are involved in the work with emphasis on preparation, mitigation and youth initiatives.
- In February 2023, NAN participated in a First Nations-led emergency management conference held by the First Nations Emergency Response Association (FERNA), the continuation of the Northwestern Ontario First Nations Emergency Management Working Group. NAN contributed towards the event, as FNERA is an organization in the process of establishing itself. The Focus First: Emergency Preparedness Forum was attended by over 25 NAN delegates, comprising over 10% of total attendance.

## NEXT STEPS

- NAN is developing, under the title of, "Nishnawbe Aski Emergency Awareness Initiative", an emergency management website that will provide a platform for resource sharing, networking, updates as well as a NAN developed Emergency Management training course that will be free to access.
- Also in development, with Tribal Council support, are promotional materials inclusive of evacuation checklist fridge magnets and flood, forest fire and evacuation awareness posters for distribution to NAN communities. NAN will also begin posting emergency awareness messages on social media platforms.
- NAN is working on youth initiatives in partnership with Northern College and Preparing Our Home to expose and recruit First Nations youth to careers within emergency management and services.



## OTHER ACTIVITIES

### FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSED EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT RESPONSE MODEL

The federal government, through Indigenous Services Canada, has developed a new response model for First Nations Emergency Management in Ontario. This model may allow for multiple options on emergency response during First Nation emergencies. Several First Nations, as well as the provincial and federal government, are available to lead an emergency at the request of the community, as resources permit.

NAN is seeking input on this proposed response model provided by ISC. NAN was not involved in the creation of this response model and has not provided any input on this response model since it had been introduced to NAN. As well, NAN is unaware if ISC has consulted with any of the groups included in this response model.

### NEXT STEPS

- Discuss the response model created by ISC.
- Prepare feedback, responses or any other information provided by NAN Chiefs, communities and partners to communicate to ISC regarding their proposed response model.

Attendees at the Housing Summit, 2022.



## DEPARTMENT UPDATES

### Sustainable Initiatives

#### KEY ACTIVITIES

The Sustainable Initiatives (SI) Department met twice with the Indigenous Affairs Ontario (IAO), on December 5, 2022, and March 22, 2023, to discuss IAO's funding that supports indigenous businesses and job specific skills training, NAN's proposed economic summit, NAN's business case for funding food security, and working with NAN's SI Department moving into the future.

In discussing NAN's food security focus and activities, and IAO's interest in the social development aspect of the work, IAO was informed that NAN had drafted a proposal to continue work with Nutrition North Canada on food sustainability in the territory through local and regional knowledge transfer and economic development. IAO was excited about the possibilities in partnering with this project and suggested having a proposal ready if funding is made available. They also suggested a larger partnership with Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) and the SI Policy Advisor also suggested pursuing a Public-Private Partnership.

#### RESOURCE EQUITY

The Sustainable Initiatives Department is moving forward with a proposal to examine equity issues pertaining to lands and resources within NAN territory. Guided and led By Elder Wallace McKay, the project examines historical and present economic impacts of the resources and financial contributions First Nations throughout NAN. This work will identify how income generated by land and resource development has economically impacted, and disproportionately benefitted Ontario and Canada while excluding NAN First Nations. The work will further focus on the relationship of resource and economic sharing with respect to federal and provincial Treaty obligations. Ultimately, the work will expand to create a NAN Resource Economic Council consisting of Chiefs and experts in the field.

#### NAN SUSTAINABLE INITIATIVES SUMMIT

A funding proposal for a NAN-wide SI Summit was submitted and is currently under review awaiting approval. The Summit intends to be an international meeting on economic and food security, resource development, and initiate the development of a regional strategy. In addition to building and strengthening knowledge networks throughout NAN, the Summit will serve as a framework for a report that includes a NAN economic and resource literature review, the latest climate change information, the current regional economic state, a NAN food strategy and resource development.





## DECLARATION OF A CLIMATE CHANGE EMERGENCY

**Resolution 19/29:** Call for Declaration of Climate Emergency stated that Chiefs-in-Assembly mandate the Executive Council to declare a climate change emergency on behalf of the First Nations across NAN territory. The Resolution further directs the Executive Council to collaborate with existing First Nation, Tribal Council and regional organization climate change emergency declarations, to grow and build on their respective initiatives, and ensure a cohesive approach. NAN is in the process of gathering a full compliment of members for the Chiefs' Committee to continue efforts in addressing the current climate change crisis.

## WOODSTOVE PILOT EXCHANGE PROJECT

April 2023 saw the completion of the Woodstove Pilot Exchange Project by NAN and the Ontario Climate Change Solutions Deployment Corporation, currently known as Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP). The project aimed to help reduce green house gases by retiring approximately 195 older model woodstoves in exchange for new high-efficiency woodstoves in six remote First Nation communities: Deer Lake, Sandy Lake, North Caribou, Wunnumin Lake, Poplar Hill and Eabametoong. Delays in visiting the communities during the COVID-19 pandemic, staff changeover, and limited winter road access prolonged the intended timeline for completion of this project. Through discussions with the SI Policy Advisor and Climate Change Coordinator, and MECP's Senior Program Advisor and Policy Manager/Executive Assistant to the ADM, it was determined that the decommissioned stoves would be repurposed and recycled for other uses in the communities.

## AFN CLIMATE GATHERING

From September 27th to 29th, the SI Climate Change Coordinator (CCC) and SI Policy Advisor attended the AFN 2nd National Climate Gathering in Fredericton, New Brunswick. The Climate Gathering brought together First Nation experts, leadership, youth, women, Knowledge Keepers and other professional across Turtle Island

to discuss impacts, concerns, and solutions to Climate Change. During the event, the SI Policy Advisor and SI CCC networked with non-government and government officials to discuss potential funding opportunities and the mitigation of climate change impacts on NAN communities.

## FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

### NUTRITION NORTH CANADA (NNC)

The SI Food Sovereignty Coordinator continues to sit in these NNC committees:

- Indigenous Working Group
- NNC Compliance Review Committee
- NNC Research Guidelines Panel

Nutrition North Canada hosted an all-day workshop event in Ottawa, on February 21st and 22nd, 2023, for an in-person guideline panel introduction meeting. During this workshop, the SI Policy Advisor advocated for the general needs and realities of food sovereignty and security issues in NAN communities.

September 2022, The SI Policy Advisor and the SI Food Sovereignty Coordinator (FSC) met Mangers and Policy Analysts for Harvesters Support Grant from Nutrition North Canada. During this meeting, the NNC team gave a background and updates on their Harvesters Support Grant and Community Food Programs Fund programing. A Letter of Intent was submitted by the SI department following the meeting and was successful, advancing NAN to the proposal stage. NAN has received the proposal package, the SI FSC ensured it was prepared for the February deadline. The grant would be delivered mostly up front in April 2024.

### HOMELAND FOODS AND FOOD SYSTEMS (FAFS) STUDY

The SI Department was successful in securing a two-year, \$250,000 grant through NNC. This grant will allow NAN to build on the small sample research project through FedNor, that will include participation with NAN communities. This research funding could support a food bank network as mandated in Resolution 05/18: Support for a Food Bank For Traditional Foods, and create support documents for the communities, such as community food systems plan tool kits that align

with the NAN food security strategy. This work intends to include community-based solutions, addressing issues related to positive food and health outcomes as mandated in Resolution 11/40: Support for Development of Food Security Strategy For Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Territory, and Resolution 12/72: Approval of Nishnawbe Aski Nation Food Strategy.

The FAFS Study will bring in other NNC eligible NAN communities that want to take a wholistic short- and long-range look at food sovereignty to develop plans and strategies to increase food security. Continuing the research will allow us to examine existing food price subsidy policies, determine their effectiveness, and make recommendations as mandated in Resolution 19/47: NAN Food Self-Determination. It will also give NAN and their communities a better understanding of the issues regarding food security, and help us to advocate for sustainable funding which will in turn, enable the development and implementation of collaborative and/or community-led food self-determination initiatives.

### MODULAR HYDROPONIC FARMING

December 7, 2022, SI staff met with Growcer™ Modular Food Solutions to discuss the possibility of developing a pilot project for NAN First Nations. The intent of the pilot project would be to determine the viability and capability of modular hydroponic farms with respect to the varied climates within NAN territory. Hydroponic farming has the potential to improve food security within communities and provide sustained economic opportunities to NAN First Nations by growing and distributing produce throughout the region. Spin-off benefits of the project include providing meaningful employment and educational opportunities for youth in communities. The initial meeting with Growcer™ Modular Food Solutions included discussions to identify 3 locations that represent the diverse geographic realities within NAN territory. Ideally, the pilot would be run in a western First Nation, an eastern urban hub, and a northern location.

The SI Department is currently awaiting mandates to pursue this work.

## NAN LAND-BASED YOUTH GREENHOUSE

NAN SI Food Sovereignty Coordinator has been collaborating with NAN's Infrastructure Advisor on the Youth Life Promotion's Land-based Youth Greenhouse project. They plan to work with local food-related organizations to create partnerships that support NAN Youth and local food production in NAN communities. In addition to improving food security in communities, other anticipated benefits include building resilience and improving mental health of youth through teachings, giving back to community, and meaningful work.

## NEXT STEPS

### NAN FOOD DAY

Building on the success of last year's NAN Food Day event, NAN SI Department has set September 20, 2023, for the next NAN Food Day. Last year, this social media campaign received 68 photos from 28 participants showcasing NAN members hunting, gathering, growing, or preparing a meal with indigenous foods. (i.e., wild rice, corn, beans, squash, berries, moose, fish, goose, etc.). The event encourages food security and sovereignty in NAN Communities and strengthens community connections.



## NAN-IAO Relationship Table

### OVERVIEW

The Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Chiefs-in-Assembly mandated the NAN Executive Council, through numerous resolutions to sign a Treaty Relationship Agreement with the province, and to establish a bilateral Relationship Table process to collaborate on key issues.

#### Mandates:

**Resolution 09/58:** Strengthening First Nation Ontario Bilateral Process

**Resolution 16/16:** Structural Process for Engaging the Provincial Government

**Resolution 16/53:** Far North Act NAN-Ontario MOU

**Resolution 16/74:** NAN Position on the Ontario Political Accord

**Resolution 17/35:** Ontario Treaty Relationship Agreement

**Resolution 18/09:** Bilateral Table with Province of Ontario)

On April 17, 2018, the Treaty Relationship Agreement was signed and NAN and the province, in partnership with Indigenous Affairs Ontario (IAO), have developed a bilateral process known as “the Relationship Table”.

### OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the Relationship Table is to establish consistent government-to-government relationships and effective channels for ongoing communication on matters of importance to NAN First Nations.

Other important objectives include:

- Establishing and maintaining a process for NAN and IAO to work collaboratively to develop solutions to issues and challenges impacting NAN communities.
- Jointly working towards the realization of tangible goals and deliverables.
- Providing flexible capacity for NAN to support Advisor Council participation in Chiefs Meetings
- Engaging in dialogue on emerging issues, initiatives, opportunities and policies of interest.



## PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Using a hybrid meeting style, NAN and IAO have been able to maintain consistent communication and regular Relationship Table meetings throughout 2022-2023.

Three Relationship Table meetings were held during the year, as per the meeting schedule set out in the workplan. Participants included senior officials and technical representatives from NAN and various provincial government ministries. Ministry representatives are invited to attend Relationship Table meetings as appropriate, based on the jointly developed meeting agendas, to ensure productive discussions and identify appropriate next steps to address issues. NAN directors have utilized the Relationship Table process to raise pressing issues relevant to their departments and to promote greater awareness of specific issues experienced by NAN communities.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### Meeting #1 – Key Discussions

The first Relationship Table meeting between NAN and the Province was held virtually on June 29th, 2022. Key agenda items and discussions related to the following topics:

- Ministry of Transportation Ontario (MTO): Capital Needs Assessment and Maintenance Assessment of MTO Airports
- MTO: Remote Airport Employee Taxation
- National Trade Corridor Fund to NAV Canada for LPV approaches at MTO Remote Airports

### Meeting #2 – Key Discussions

The second Relationship Table meeting for this year was held in Toronto on September 8th, 2022. Agenda topics included:

- IAO Update
- NAN Mental Health and Substance Abuse objectives and future work
- NAN Language revitalization
- NAN presentation on Sustainable Initiatives Department
- Youth Council Presentation
- NAN Emergency Management Strategy
- NAN Housing Strategy
- Follow up on MTO Taxation and Airport Assessment Discussion
- Treaty signage

### Meeting #3 – Key Discussions

The third Relationship Table meeting was held virtually on December 14th, 2022, covering the following issues:

- Ontario update on \$25 Million Dollar Economic Development Funding Announcement
- NAN Presentation on Treaty Education in NAN Territory
- OMAFRA Introduction
- NAN Presentation – Social Crisis Report
- NAN Update on Mental Health Summit
- NAN Presentation with Muskrat Dam on Winter Roads in NAN Territory
- MOT Status update on previous NAN requests

A planned NAN-IAO winter road trip to Sachigo Lake First Nation and Muskrat Dam First Nation, that was cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances, will be rescheduled this upcoming winter road season.

NAN continues to collaborate with IAO and other key ministries to address these issues and will continue to prioritize this ongoing work into the next fiscal year.

# NAN Offices

## HEAD OFFICE

100 BACK STREET UNIT 200

THUNDER BAY, ON

P7J 1L2

## ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

200 SOUTH SYNDICATE AVENUE

THUNDER BAY, ON

P7E 1C9

## BALMORAL OFFICE

600 BALMORAL STREET

THUNDER BAY, ON

P7C 5G9

## EASTERN OFFICE

145 WILSON AVENUE

TIMMINS, ON

P4N 2T2





**Nishnawbe Aski Nation Corporate Services**  
**Financial Statements**  
For the year ended March 31, 2023

	<b>Contents</b>
<b>Independent Auditor's Report</b>	2
<b>Financial Statements</b>	
Statement of Financial Position	4
Statement of Revenue and Expenses	5
Statement of Changes in Net Assets	6
Statement of Cash Flows	7
Notes to Financial Statements	8

## Independent Auditor's Report

### To the Board Members of Nishnawbe Aski Nation Corporate Services

#### Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of Nishnawbe Aski Nation Corporate Services (the "Organization"), which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2023, and the statements of revenue and expenses, changes in net assets and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Organization as at March 31, 2023, and its results of operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

#### Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the Organization in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

#### Other Matter

The financial statements for the year ended March 31, 2022 were audited by another auditor who expressed an unmodified opinion on those financial statements on August 3, 2022.

#### Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Organization's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Organization or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Organization's financial reporting process.

## Independent Auditor's Report (cont'd)

### Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Organization's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Organization's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Organization to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Chartered Professional Accountants, Licensed Public Accountants

Thunder Bay, Ontario  
TBD



4

### Nishnawbe Aski Nation Corporate Services Statement of Financial Position

As at March 31	2023	2022
<b>Assets</b>		
<b>Current</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 38,098,148	\$ 41,548,355
Accounts receivable (Note 2)	10,830,216	14,478,849
Prepaid expenses and deposits	215,560	470,897
	<u>49,143,924</u>	<u>56,498,101</u>
Tangible capital assets (Note 3)	9,699,459	8,628,560
	<u>\$ 58,843,383</u>	<u>\$ 65,126,661</u>
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>		
<b>Current</b>		
Accounts payable and accruals (Note 4)	\$ 28,121,827	\$ 28,156,161
Deferred contributions (Note 5)	15,645,870	22,027,968
Current portion of long-term debt (Note 6)	327,388	571,365
Current portion of capital lease obligations (Note 7)	331,818	362,458
	<u>44,426,903</u>	<u>51,117,952</u>
Capital lease obligation (Note 7)	526,350	858,168
	<u>44,953,253</u>	<u>51,976,120</u>
<b>Net assets</b>		
Unrestricted net assets	5,570,336	6,093,912
Internally restricted	300,000	-
Investment in capital assets	8,019,794	7,056,629
	<u>13,890,130</u>	<u>13,150,541</u>
	<u>\$ 58,843,383</u>	<u>\$ 65,126,661</u>

On behalf of the Board:

\_\_\_\_\_ Grand Chief

\_\_\_\_\_ Director

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

5

### Nishnawbe Aski Nation Corporate Services Statement of Revenue and Expenses

For the year ended March 31	2023	2022
<b>Revenue</b>		
Government of Canada		
Indigenous Services Canada	\$ 30,409,420	\$ 28,176,960
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation	2,342,797	103,462
Province of Ontario		
Ministry of Attorney General	350,000	300,000
Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services	12,548,057	12,835,823
Community Service (IHWS)	8,555,364	11,787,213
Ministry of Education	6,984,479	12,248,071
Ministry of Health	5,719,193	5,700,616
Indigenous Affairs	1,394,628	704,616
Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry	149,632	225,102
Ontario Trillium Foundation	-	27,800
Other Grants	1,393,735	1,125,770
Interest	1,536,923	240,389
Amounts repayable to funders	-	(760,422)
Other Income	490,859	383,344
Net change in deferred contributions	-	(10,434,067)
	<u>71,875,087</u>	<u>62,664,677</u>
Funds transferred for First Nations operations (Note 9)	(29,667,334)	(32,512,664)
	<u>42,207,753</u>	<u>30,152,013</u>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Amortization	854,982	735,625
Bank charges and interest	160,480	130,651
Conferences, workshops and reports	13,569,416	6,278,074
Consulting and professional fees	4,967,597	3,988,216
Public relations	310,109	112,418
Rent and utilities	1,284,701	365,695
Salaries and benefits	12,822,003	10,220,606
COVID-19 Response	-	445,193
Supplies and resources	4,167,748	4,254,013
Travel	3,331,128	1,504,144
	<u>41,468,164</u>	<u>28,034,635</u>
<b>Excess of revenue over expenses</b>	<u>\$ 739,589</u>	<u>\$ 2,117,378</u>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

6

**Nishnawbe Aski Nation Corporate Services  
Statement of Changes in Net Assets**

Year Ended March 31

	Unrestricted	Internally Restricted	Investment in Tangible Capital Assets	2023	2022
Balance, beginning of year	\$ 7,056,629	\$ -	\$ 6,093,912	\$ 13,150,541	\$ 11,033,163
Excess of revenue over expenses for the year	739,589	-	-	739,589	2,117,378
Balance	7,796,218	-	6,093,912	13,890,130	13,150,541
Investment in capital assets	(1,925,882)	-	1,925,882	-	-
Transfers (Note 10)	(300,000)	300,000	-	-	-
<b>Net assets, end of year</b>	<b>\$ 5,570,336</b>	<b>\$ 300,000</b>	<b>\$ 8,019,794</b>	<b>\$ 13,890,130</b>	<b>\$ 13,150,541</b>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.

7

**Nishnawbe Aski Nation Corporate Services  
Statement of Cash Flows**

For the year ended March 31

	2023	2022
<b>Cash flows from operating activities</b>		
Excess of revenue over expenses Item not involving cash	\$ 739,589	\$ 2,117,378
Amortization of tangible capital assets	854,982	735,625
	<u>1,594,571</u>	<u>2,853,003</u>
Changes in non-cash working capital balances		
Accounts receivable	3,648,633	(10,470,853)
Prepaid expenses and deposits	255,337	(444,127)
Accounts payable and accruals	(34,334)	7,694,640
Deferred contributions	(6,382,098)	10,434,067
	<u>(917,891)</u>	<u>10,066,730</u>
<b>Cash flows from financing activities</b>		
Repayments of capital lease obligations	(362,457)	(351,303)
Repayments of long-term debt	(243,977)	(232,482)
	<u>(606,434)</u>	<u>(583,785)</u>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>		
Purchase of tangible capital assets	(1,925,882)	(460,062)
<b>Increase (decrease) in cash during the year</b>	<b>(3,450,207)</b>	<b>9,022,883</b>
<b>Cash resources, beginning of year</b>	<b>41,548,355</b>	<b>32,525,472</b>
<b>Cash resources, end of year</b>	<b>\$38,098,148</b>	<b>\$ 41,548,355</b>

The accompanying notes are an integral part of these financial statements.



## Nishnawbe Aski Nation Corporate Services Notes to Financial Statements

March 31, 2023

### 1. Significant Accounting Policies

<b>Nature and Purpose of Organization</b>	Nishnawbe Aski Nation Corporate Services (the "Organization") is a First Nations political organization that advocates and operates projects to protect and promote the government and socio-economic interests of its member First Nations. The Organization receives funding through contribution arrangements and contracts with various funding bodies and First Nations. The Organization was incorporated in Ontario on February 19, 2009 as a not-for-profit organization without share capital. The Organization is dependent on grants and transfer payments from various government agencies to finance its continued operations.
<b>Basis of Accounting</b>	These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.
<b>Cash and Cash Equivalents</b>	Cash and cash equivalents include balances with chartered banks and short-term investments with maturities of three months or less.
<b>Leases</b>	Leases are classified as capital or operating leases. A lease that transfers substantially all of the benefits and risks incidental to the ownership of property is classified as a capital lease. At the inception of a capital lease, an asset and an obligation are recorded at an amount equal to the lesser of the present value of the minimum lease payments and the property's fair value at the beginning of the lease. Assets recorded under capital leases are amortized on a straight-line basis over the term of the lease, which is the estimated useful life of the assets.
<b>Revenue Recognition</b>	<p>The Organization follows the deferral method of accounting for contributions.</p> <p>Government funding provided to the Organization is accounted for as a contribution. Restricted contributions are recognized as revenue in the year in which the related expenses are incurred. Unrestricted contributions are recognized as revenue when received or receivable if the amount to be received can be reasonably estimated and collection is reasonably assured.</p>

## Nishnawbe Aski Nation Corporate Services Notes to Financial Statements

March 31, 2023

### 1. Significant Accounting Policies (cont'd)

<b>Tangible Capital Assets</b>	<p>Purchased tangible capital assets are recorded at cost less accumulated amortization. Expenses for repairs and maintenance are expensed as incurred. Betterments that extend the useful life of tangible capital assets are capitalized.</p> <p>Amortization based on the estimated useful life of the asset is calculated as follows:</p> <table border="0" style="margin-left: 40px;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><b>Method</b></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><b>Rate</b></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Buildings</td> <td>Declining balance</td> <td>4%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Computer equipment and software</td> <td>Declining balance</td> <td>30%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Furniture and equipment</td> <td>Declining balance</td> <td>20%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Artwork is not subject to amortization. Amortization on tangible capital assets in the year they are acquired is recorded using the half-year rule.</p>		<b>Method</b>	<b>Rate</b>	Buildings	Declining balance	4%	Computer equipment and software	Declining balance	30%	Furniture and equipment	Declining balance	20%
	<b>Method</b>	<b>Rate</b>											
Buildings	Declining balance	4%											
Computer equipment and software	Declining balance	30%											
Furniture and equipment	Declining balance	20%											

10

## Nishnawbe Aski Nation Corporate Services Notes to Financial Statements

March 31, 2023

### 1. Significant Accounting Policies (cont'd)

**Tangible Capital Assets (cont'd)** When a tangible capital asset no longer contributes to an Organization's ability to provide goods and services, or the future economic benefits or service potential of the tangible capital asset is less than its carrying value, the excess of its net carrying amount over its fair value or replacement cost is recognized as an expense in the statement of operations. Any unamortized deferred contribution amount related to the tangible capital asset is recognized in revenue in the statement of operations, provided that all restrictions have been complied with.

**Financial Instruments** Financial Instruments are recorded at fair value at initial recognition. In subsequent periods, financial instruments are reported at cost or amortized cost less impairment. Transaction costs on the acquisition, sale or issue of financial instruments are expensed for those items measured at fair value and charged to the financial instrument for those measured at amortized cost.

Financial assets are tested for impairment when indicators of impairment exist. When a significant change in the expected timing or amount of the future cash flows of the financial asset is identified, the carrying amount of the financial asset is reduced and the amount of the write-down is recognized in net income. A previously recognized impairment loss may be reversed to the extent of the improvement, provided it is not greater than the amount that would have been reported at the date of the reversal had the impairment not been recognized previously, and the amount of the reversal is recognized in net income.

Related party financial instruments quoted in an active market or those with observable inputs significant to the determination of fair value or derivative contracts are recorded at fair value at initial recognition. All other related party financial instruments are recorded at cost at initial recognition.

11

## Nishnawbe Aski Nation Corporate Services Notes to Financial Statements

March 31, 2023

### 1. Significant Accounting Policies (cont'd)

**Use of Estimates** The preparation of financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements, and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the reporting period. Actual results could differ from management's best estimates as additional information becomes available in the future. Significant estimates in these financial statements include the estimated useful lives of tangible capital assets and accruals.

### 2. Accounts Receivable

Government of Canada	2023	2022
Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)	1,419,295	830,120
FedNor	42,732	42,732
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation	146,425	175,845
Department of Natural Resources	11,105	147,809
<b>Province of Ontario</b>		
Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry	71,927	12,305
Ministry of Indigenous Affairs	108,000	69,723
Ministry of Education	5,861,740	11,429,614
Ministry of Environment and Climate Change	-	61,000
<b>Other</b>		
IESO	366,918	423,463
Other	488,728	391,662
Government remittances receivable	\$ 2,313,346	\$ 894,576
	<b>\$ 10,830,216</b>	<b>\$ 14,478,849</b>



12

### Nishnawbe Aski Nation Corporate Services Notes to Financial Statements

March 31, 2023

#### 3. Tangible Capital Assets

	2023		2022	
	Cost	Accumulated Amortization	Cost	Accumulated Amortization
Land	\$ 396,681	\$ -	\$ 396,681	\$ -
Buildings	8,249,174	736,787	7,030,048	505,545
Computers	1,034,018	795,027	879,691	636,757
Furniture, fixtures and equipment	3,121,053	1,596,655	2,575,172	1,131,184
Artwork	27,002	-	20,454	-
	<b>\$ 12,827,928</b>	<b>\$ 3,128,469</b>	<b>\$ 10,902,046</b>	<b>\$ 2,273,486</b>
Net book value		<b>\$ 9,699,459</b>		<b>\$ 8,628,560</b>

#### 4. Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities

	2023	2022
Trade payable	\$ 16,646,617	\$ 18,701,830
Wages and benefits payable	594,333	413,416
Repayable to funders	10,696,866	8,968,460
Government remittances payable	184,011	72,455
	<b>\$ 28,121,827</b>	<b>\$ 28,156,161</b>

13

### Nishnawbe Aski Nation Corporate Services Notes to Financial Statements

March 31, 2023

#### 5. Deferred Contributions

Deferred contributions reported represent restricted operating funding received in the current period that is related to expenses of a subsequent period. Changes in the deferred contributions balance are as follows:

	Balance March 31, 2022	Funding Received 2023	Revenue Recognized 2023	Repayable to Funder	Balance March 31, 2023
<b>Federal Government</b>					
Indigenous Services Canada ("ISC")	\$12,442,256	\$30,499,520	\$(30,409,420)	(237,313)	\$12,295,043
Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation	545,170	1,879,294	(2,342,797)	-	81,667
<b>Total Federal</b>	<b>12,987,426</b>	<b>32,378,814</b>	<b>(32,752,217)</b>	<b>(237,313)</b>	<b>12,376,710</b>
<b>Provincial Government</b>					
Ministry of Attorney General	-	350,000	(350,000)	-	-
Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services	989,062	12,532,128	(12,548,057)	-	973,133
Community Service (IHWS)	-	8,555,364	(8,555,364)	-	-
Ministry of Education	6,762,524	1,491,373	(6,984,479)	-	1,269,418
Ministry of Health	-	5,719,193	(5,719,193)	-	-
Indigenous Affairs	394,629	1,773,907	(1,394,628)	-	773,908
Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry	149,632	284,067	(149,632)	(136,704)	147,363
Other Provincial	744,695	1,404,347	(1,393,735)	(649,969)	105,338
<b>Total Provincial</b>	<b>9,040,542</b>	<b>32,110,379</b>	<b>(37,095,088)</b>	<b>(786,673)</b>	<b>3,269,160</b>
	<b>\$22,027,968</b>	<b>\$64,489,193</b>	<b>\$(69,847,305)</b>	<b>\$(1,023,986)</b>	<b>\$15,645,870</b>

14

### Nishnawbe Aski Nation Corporate Services Notes to Financial Statements

March 31, 2023

**6. Long-term debt**

	2023	2022
RBC term loan	\$ 327,388	\$ 571,365
Less: current portion	327,388	571,365
	<u>\$ -</u>	<u>\$ -</u>

The term loan payable has terms of monthly instalments of \$9,406 plus interest of prime plus 2% - 8.70% (2022 - 4.70%). The loan matured on August 2022 and the Organization is making monthly instalments to pay off the remaining portion.

**7. Lease Obligation**

	2023	2022
Scotiabank lease obligation payable	\$ 858,168	\$ 1,220,626
Less: current portion	331,818	362,458
	<u>\$ 526,350</u>	<u>\$ 858,168</u>

The lease obligation payable has terms of monthly installments of \$32,958 including interest at 3.13%, due July 2025. Furniture and equipment having a net book value of \$1,828,291 (2022 - \$1,348,873) is pledged as collateral.

**8. Related Party Transactions**

The Organization remuneration for the year for elected officials and senior management totalled \$659,433 (2022 - \$743,440). to the members of the Board. Amounts paid to elected officials and senior management for reimbursed corporate expenses amounted to \$47,690 (2022 - \$18,400). The Grand Chief and Deputies are provided salaries of \$151,200 and \$145,600 respectively plus 12% pay in lieu of vacation. Travel allowances include mileage reimbursed at \$0.575 per kilometre and meals/incidentals at \$104.10 per day. Specific salary, benefits and reimbursements were:

14

### Nishnawbe Aski Nation Corporate Services Notes to Financial Statements

March 31, 2023

**8. Related Party Transactions (cont'd)**

	Salary and Benefits	Reimbursed expenses	2023	2022
Grand Chief Derek Fox	138,237	12,012	150,249	96,146
Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum	128,138	6,188	134,326	93,681
Deputy Grand Chief Bobby Narcisse	130,090	9,917	140,007	95,347
Deputy Grand Chief Victor Linklater	130,492	13,276	143,768	89,747
Alvin Fiddler (former Grand Chief)	-	-	-	67,545
Derek Fox (former Deputy Grand Chief)	-	-	-	67,789
Walter Naveau (former Deputy Grand Chief)	-	-	-	64,381
Chief Administrative Officer	103,926	6,297	110,223	127,053

**9. First Nations flow-through**

The Organization receives funding as agents for distribution to member First Nations and First Nation organizations for specific projects and initiatives. The First Nations and specific organizations report on the expense of these funds. During the year, \$29,667,334 (2022 - \$32,512,664) was transferred to member First Nations and specific organizations.

	2023	2022
<b>Indigenous Services Canada</b>		
First Nation Student Success Program	\$ 307,443	\$ 307,443
Education Partnerships Program	2,844,748	2,342,929
Canada Ontario Resource Development Agreement	-	121,235
National Assembly of First Nations	2,000,000	-
Wesway Respite Services	6,511,553	5,416,741
Health Transformation - Tribal Councils	2,056,590	2,000,804
Sexually Transmitted and Blood-Borne Infections	428,932	475,467
Independent First Nations Alliance	-	450,000
Treaty Five Group	55,920	-
	<u>14,205,186</u>	<u>11,114,619</u>
<b>Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services</b>		
Family Well-being	5,764,531	7,053,008
Customary Care	1,068,436	1,158,967
Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder	680,909	733,757
Crisis	2,422,266	4,967,515
Healthy Babies Healthy Children	1,423,268	1,477,288
Ginoogaming/Bearskin	41,767	600,000
	<u>11,401,177</u>	<u>15,990,535</u>



15

### Nishnawbe Aski Nation Corporate Services Notes to Financial Statements

March 31, 2023

**9. First Nations flow-through (cont'd)****Ministry of Education**

Emergency Education Action Plan	-	406,664
Mental Health & Addictions	-	884,590
Skills Advance Ontario	462,929	-
Tribal Council Flow-Through	359,485	138,000
Virtual Learning Environment	-	250,000
Windigo	-	71,250
	<u>822,414</u>	<u>1,750,504</u>

**Ministry of Health**

Diabetes	1,949,552	2,178,596
Matawa First Nations Management	-	100,000
Health Transformation	925,000	1,025,000
	<u>2,874,552</u>	<u>3,303,596</u>

**Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry**

Canada Ontario Resource Development Agreement	198,570	121,235
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**Miscellaneous**

FedNor	-	182,421
First Nation Request	165,435	49,754
	<u>165,435</u>	<u>232,175</u>

<u>\$ 29,667,334</u>	<u>\$ 32,512,664</u>
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16

### Nishnawbe Aski Nation Corporate Services Notes to Financial Statements

March 31, 2023

**10. Restrictions on Net Assets**

Council has internally restricted net assets of \$300,000 (2022 - \$Nil) for contingencies. This internally restricted amount is not available for other purposes without approval of Council.

**11. Contingencies**

The Organization has entered into contribution agreements with various federal and provincial government departments. Funding received under these contribution agreements is subject to repayment if the Organization fails to comply with the terms and conditions of the agreements.

In addition, in the normal course of operations, the Organization becomes involved in legal actions. Some of these potential liabilities may become actual liabilities when one or more future events occur or fail to occur. To the extent that the future event is likely to occur, and a reasonable estimate of the loss can be made, an estimated liability is accrued and an expense recorded on the Organization's financial statements. As of March 31, 2023, no contingent liabilities have been recorded in the financial statements.

**12. Commitments**

The Organization has entered into a building lease agreement at \$9,677 per month plus HST. The lease commenced July 1, 2022 and expires June 30, 2032.

The Organization has entered into another building lease agreement at \$6,689 per year plus HST with annual increases for operating costs each year. The lease commenced May 1, 2021 and expires April 30, 2026.

The Organization's approximate obligations for the next five years, under the various operating leases are as follows:

2024	\$ 123,000
2025	123,000
2026	123,000
2027	116,000
2028	<u>123,000</u>
	<u>\$ 608,000</u>

17

## Nishnawbe Aski Nation Corporate Services Notes to Financial Statements

March 31, 2023

### 13. Financial Instruments

#### Interest Rate Risk

Interest rate risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market interest rates. The Organization is exposed to interest rate risk on its floating interest rate financial instruments. Floating rate instruments subject the Organization to a cash flow risk.

A substantial portion of the Organization's cash equivalents bear interest at a floating rate. Rate fluctuations will impact the investment income received in the future.

#### Credit Risk

Credit risk is the risk that one party to a financial instrument will cause a financial loss for the other party by failing to discharge an obligation. The Organization is exposed to credit risk resulting from the possibility that a customer or counterparty to a financial instrument defaults on their financial obligations; if there is a concentration of transactions carried out with the same counterparty; or of financial obligations which have similar economic characteristics such that they could be similarly affected by changes in economic conditions. The Organization's financial instruments that are exposed to concentrations of credit risk relate primarily to its accounts receivable and cash.

The Organization maintains all of its bank accounts with one financial institution and therefore all deposits are not covered by the Canadian Deposit Insurance Corporation (CDIC). The Organization is subject to credit risk on the excess deposits over CDIC coverage.

#### Liquidity Risk

Liquidity risk is the risk that the Organization encounters difficulty in meeting its obligations associated with financial liabilities. Liquidity risk includes the risk that, as a result of operational liquidity requirements, the Organization will not have sufficient funds to settle a transaction on the due date; will be forced to sell financial assets at a value, which is less than what they are worth; or may be unable to settle or recover a financial asset. Liquidity risk arises from accounts payable. Management believes they are not exposed to significant liquidity risk.

It is management's opinion that that Organization is not exposed to significant currency or other price risks arising from the financial instruments except as otherwise noted.

18

## Nishnawbe Aski Nation Corporate Services Notes to Financial Statements

March 31, 2023

### 14. Economic Dependence

Approximately 87% (2022 - 91%) of the Organization's funding comes from two government organizations, Ministry of Education and Indigenous Services Canada. The loss of a significant amount of funding from these organizations could have a material adverse effect on operations.

### 15. Comparative Amounts

The comparative amounts presented in the financial statements have been reclassified to conform to current year's presentation.





