2025 - 2026

Annual Report

Nishnawbe Aski Nation
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NISHNAWBE ASKI NATION
UNITY • STRENGTH • SUCCESS

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ABOUT **NISHNAWBE ASKI NATION**

Nishnawbe Aski Nation 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, Anishininiimowin 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
2. Mishkeegogamang
3. MoCreebec Council of the Cree Nation
4. Sandy Lake
5. Apitipi Anicinapek Nation
6. Weenusk (Peawanuck)

Independent First Nations Alliance

7. Lac Seul
8. Muskrat Dam
9. Pikangikum

Keewaytinook Okimakanak

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

Matawa First Nations

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

Mushkegowuk Council

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

Shibogama First Nations Council

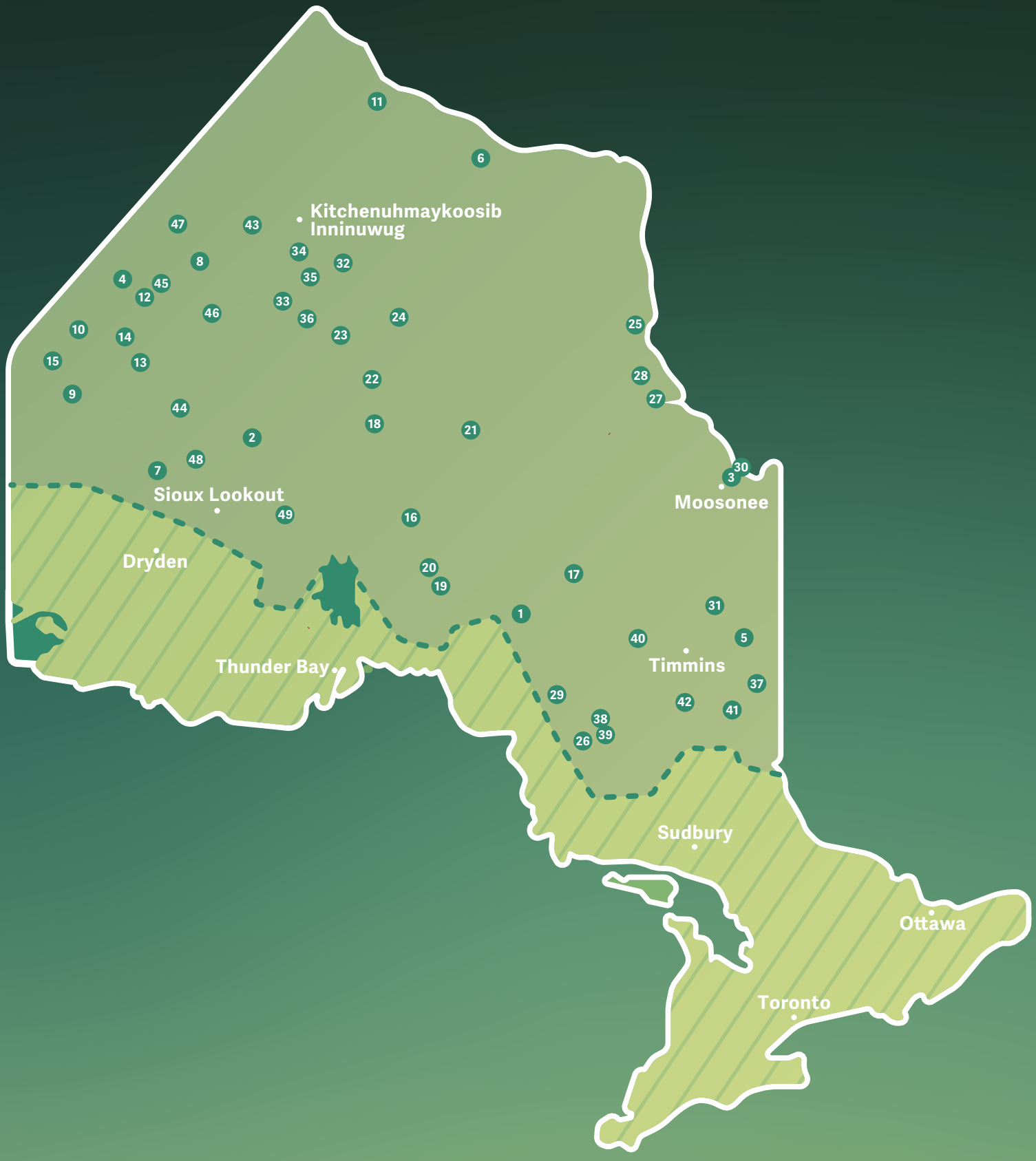
32. Kasabonika Lake
33. Kingfisher Lake
34. Wapekeka
35. Wawakapewin
36. Wunnumin Lake

Wabun Tribal Council

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

Windigo First Nations Council

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


Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug
Sioux Lookout
Dryden
Thunder Bay
Moosonee
Timmins
Sudbury
Ottawa
Toronto

Alvin Fiddler

GRAND CHIEF



This past year has tested our strength. It was a difficult year, one that challenged us as a Nation. And yet, in the face of those challenges, we stood together and made historic progress. We continued to fight for our rights, for our children, for our languages and for our future.

One of our biggest achievements was NAN Leadership's endorsement of the $8.5 billion Ontario Final Agreement for the Long-Term Reform of Child and Family Services, which is an unprecedented opportunity to shift the power back to our nations to serve their children. The work to finalize this agreement continues at the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, and our Leadership remain united in ensuring this change is real and lasting for our children, families, and communities.

We also made history with the Nishnawbe Aski Police Service becoming the first legislated Indigenous police force in Ontario. After years of dedicated collaboration, the Solicitor General approved the constitution of the NAPS board and entered into a funding agreement to support it. This milestone represents a powerful step forward in Indigenous policing and public safety, and we extend our gratitude to everyone who made it possible.

And in a moment of cultural pride and resilience, our friend and colleague MPP Sol Mamakwa of Kingfisher Lake First Nation, addressed the Ontario Legislature in Anishininiimowin - the first time an Indigenous language was officially spoken in the provincial house. That moment, rooted in the voices of our Elders, reminded us that our languages are still here, still strong, and still vital to our identity.

These milestones are not just wins, they are signs of what becomes possible when we lead with unity, purpose and courage.

To our Leaders and community members who continue the work every day, miigwetch. To our youth, your voices are powerful and necessary. To our Elders, your teachings guide every step we take.

Finally, to the staff of NAN, thank you. Your dedication and tireless work behind the scenes make it possible for us to support our communities and drive this important work forward.

As Grand Chief, I am honoured to walk this path with all of you. We are not just responding to today's challenges, we are shaping a better future for all. Together, we continue to move forward.



Alvin Fiddler

Anna Betty Achneepineskum

DEPUTY GRAND CHIEF



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

Each year, we report on the organization's performance, and we hope this year's annual report is informative and reflects the hard work and commitment of everyone in the organization who has contributed to advocacy efforts and milestones achieved for the First Nations people of Nishnawbe Aski.

My advocacy areas are focused on "Healthy Communities" and advancing strategic priorities with support from the NAN departments (including Health Policy & Advocacy, Education, Early Years, and Women's Policy & Advocacy). First Nations want to build healthy, thriving, and prosperous communities, and we are here to assist them by advocating at the political level to ensure they have the resources they need and to build the systems that help their people.

First Nations people have a long history of harm to overcome. The Ontario Final Agreement is a shared achievement that First Nations leadership should be proud of. This agreement marked a historic step toward reforming child welfare services in NAN territory and giving First Nations the authority to govern, design, and deliver their own culturally grounded child and family services. I look forward to the positive outcomes that communities will achieve and to seeing fewer First Nations children in systems where First Nations children and youth have historically been overrepresented.

The political landscape also changed significantly. The federal government implemented austerity measures, redirected investments, and refocused policy areas in response to global economic challenges and to grow the Canadian economy. Last summer, the governments of Ontario and Canada also passed legislation: Bill 5 and Bill C-5. All of these factors together impact First Nations in NAN territory and alter fiscal realities. At NAN, we are starting to see the impact of these government actions on the organization's activities. We are responding as necessary to minimize risk to the essential work that NAN is mandated to implement and will hold the government accountable to the Crown's fiduciary obligations to First Nations.

Despite the challenging environments in which we operate, we support First Nations Leadership when they reach out to us. Some First Nations have issued declarations of states of emergency due to escalating social issues. Others have raised the alarm about their community members' timely access to health care being hindered by ineffective policies and programs that don't work for their people. Two areas of note include: 1) the opioid epidemic and associated violence that First Nations are increasingly experiencing with little to no support to prevent it, and 2) a medical transportation system that keeps failing First Nations clients accessing health care services off reserve. Both of these areas have sadly resulted in unnecessary and preventable loss of life. These are priority areas of concern that need substantial investment in the NAN territory.

I remain committed to advancing strategic priorities in education, health transformation, and in early years and child care, alongside the Executive Council and First Nations Leadership, while also tackling priority areas of concern as they arise. Addressing immediate needs requires advancing the longer-term vision of creating First Nations-controlled systems in education, health, and child care for NAN territory, and we will do our part towards achieving these changes.

Miigwech, egwa, ninanâskomon,



Anna Betty Achneepineskum

Mike Metatawabin

DEPUTY GRAND CHIEF



It has been an honour to serve the people of Nishnawbe Aski Nation and carry forward the mandates entrusted to me by the Chiefs in Assembly.

Throughout 2025–2026, my work has been guided by the priorities of our 49 member First Nations and focused on advancing Treaty Implementation, Justice and Research, Housing and Infrastructure, and Reclamation and Healing. Across each of these portfolios, one message has remained clear: our Nations must exercise their inherent and Treaty rights by leading the decisions that affect our people, our lands, our waters, and our future.

This past year, the Special Chiefs Assembly on Treaty reaffirmed the importance of protecting and implementing the spirit and intent of our Treaties. Chiefs provided clear direction that Treaties are living agreements that continue to define our relationship with the Crown and must be fully honoured. As governments advance legislation and resource development initiatives across our territories, NAN remains steadfast in advocating for the recognition of Treaty rights, First Nations jurisdiction, and true Nation-to-Nation relationships founded on respect, accountability, and the free, prior, and informed consent of First Nations.

Housing and infrastructure remain among the most urgent priorities facing our communities. Overcrowding, aging infrastructure, limited housing, and the high cost of construction in remote First Nations continue to affect the health, safety, and well-being of our people. Guided by the mandates of Chiefs in Assembly, we have continued to advocate for sustainable investments that support First Nations-led solutions and recognize the unique realities of Nishnawbe Aski Nation communities.

In the area of Justice and Research, we continued to support First Nations-led approaches that address systemic inequities, strengthen community safety, and advance our inherent jurisdiction. Research remains an essential tool in ensuring our advocacy is informed by the realities of our communities and strengthens our collective voice as we pursue meaningful and lasting change.

Reclamation and Healing remains central to rebuilding strong, healthy Nations. Healing is rooted in reclaiming our languages, cultures, governance systems, and identities while supporting Survivors, families, and future generations. Chiefs have consistently affirmed that healing must be community-led, culturally grounded, and supported through long-term commitments that restore the strength and resilience of our people.

While each portfolio carries its own priorities, they are united by a common purpose: strengthening the rights, well-being, and self-determination of Nishnawbe Aski Nation. The guidance provided by Chiefs in Assembly continues to shape our work and reminds us that lasting progress is achieved when our communities lead the way.

Meegwetch to the Chiefs, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, the NAN Women's Council, the Oshkaatisak Council, community members, and NAN staff for your leadership, wisdom, and unwavering commitment throughout the year.

Together, we will continue to uphold our Treaties, advance the priorities of our Nations, and build a stronger future for
all the people of Nishnawbe Aski Nation.

Mike Metatawabin

Mike Metatawabin

Bobby Narcisse

DEPUTY GRAND CHIEF



I am honoured to serve my second term as Deputy Grand Chief for the Nishnawbe Aski Nation territory and to welcome you as we come together as leadership to advance the priorities of our Nations.

Across the Nation, we are seeing important progress. The implementation of the Ontario Final Agreement is underway, with communities leading the development of Multi-Year Plans and working in collaboration with our First Nation Agencies to co-develop the Child and Community Well-Being Plans. This work reflects our collective direction to reclaim jurisdiction and ensure that decisions impacting our children, youth, and families are made by our own people, grounded in our laws, values, and ways of life.

We know this work must continue to be driven by our communities, with the proper supports and resources in place. In that regard, we are also preparing for the 1965 Indian Welfare Agreement Reform negotiations. This remains a key priority as we push for fair, sustainable funding and service delivery that reflects the realities in our communities. We must continue to speak with a unified voice to ensure these long-standing gaps are addressed.

This is about more than systems it is about restoring our responsibility to our families, strengthening our kinship systems, and ensuring our children grow up connected to who they are.

I also want to recognize the continued strength of the Choose Life program, which continues to support our communities in meaningful ways. The work through the Family Well-Being Program and the collaboration within the Youth Department and the Oshkaatisak Council reflect the efforts being made across our Nation to support our people.

Jordan's Principle continues to be an important tool in supporting communities to access funding and respond to the needs of our children. We are also seeing the importance of men's healing initiatives, and the continued need for strong advocacy to ensure these efforts are properly supported and resourced.

The Community Wellness Department continues to provide direct support to each of our communities, working alongside leadership and community coordinators to ensure services reflect local priorities and needs.

As we move forward, it is critical that we continue to stand together, support one another, and ensure our collective voice remains strong in all areas of this work.

Welcome, Chiefs. It is good to be together again, and I look forward to our discussions as we continue to move this work forward in unity.



Bobby Narcisse

Gary Dokis

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE



I am pleased to present the 2025/2026 Nishnawbe Aski Nation annual report and the audited financial statements for Nishnawbe Aski Nation Corporate Services.

The 2025/2026 NAN Corporate Services Audit will be presented at Keewaywin. The audit presented will show that NAN Corporate Services ended the 2025/2026 fiscal year in a positive financial position, ending the year with a small fiscal surplus. The funding that NAN Corporate Service receives supports the events and initiatives that NAN staff coordinate during the year.

The annual report includes a report from each of the NAN departments. I encourage you to read each report. The reports provide a good synopsis of the initiatives that each Department plans and coordinates. It is impressive to see the amount of work that each Department is able to complete on behalf of NAN First Nations. I acknowledge the NAN staff for the work that they accomplished in 2025/2026.

NAN Corporate Services have several departments that provide key corporate services for Nishnawbe Aski Nation. These services include Human Resources, Finance, IT, and Communications. Although these Departments do not have individual reports within the annual report the services that they provide are vital to ensure that NAN Corporate Services meets their objectives and obligations.

Nishnawbe Aski Nation has been coordinating an important initiative during the past year. The NAN Comprehensive Review started in January and is still in the process of conducting research and engaging with key stakeholders within NAN. The resolution mandated a comprehensive review of NAN governance and management structure and the development of sovereign and incorporated entities.

I have to acknowledge the contributions of the staff within the Chief Administrative Officer's office. Charlene Yerxa, Senior Administrative Coordinator to the CAO, takes the lead in coordinating the activities of the office and is the lead Conference Coordinator for Keewaywin and Special Chief Assemblies. Sarah Kerr, Administrative Assistant provides administrative support to the office of the CAO.

Although I will no longer be the Chief Administrative Officer when the Keewaywin Conference is held in Apitipi Anicinapek this year, I do appreciate the many people that I have had the opportunity to interact with during my time with NAN Corporate Services.

Miigwetch



Gary Dokis

NAN Advisory Councils

Nishnawbe Aski Nation is supported by three Advisory Councils that advise and contribute to the work of the Executive Council and staff.

NAN Elder's Council

The Nishnawbe Aski Nation 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.

Oshkaatisak (All Young Peoples) Council

The Oshkaatisak (All Young Peoples) Council represents the youth of Nishnawbe Aski Nation. 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.

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

Tikinagan Child and Family Services, Sioux Lookout
www.tikinagan.org

Payukotayno: James and Hudsons Bay Family Services, Moosonee
www.payukotayno.ca

Education

Oshki-Pimache-O-Win: The Wenjack Education Institute, Thunder Bay
www.oshki.ca

Media & Culture

Ojibway Cree and Cultural Centre, Timmins
www.occc.ca

Wawatay Native Communications Society, Timmins-Sioux Lookout
www.wawataynews.ca

Economic Development

Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund, Thunder Bay
www.nadf.org

Policing & Justice

Nishnawbe Aski Police Service, Thunder Bay
www.naps.org

Nishnawbe Aski Legal Services Corporation, Thunder Bay
www.nanlegal.on.ca

Health

Ka-Na-Chi-Hih Special Solvent Abuse Treatment Centre, Thunder Bay
www.kanachihih.ca

Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority, Sioux Lookout
www.slfnha.com

Weeneebayko Area Health Authority, Moose Factory
www.waha.com

Administration/Human Resources

Our full-time equivalent staff level is at 153 employees.

Our staff complement is approximately 52% First Nation overall. Approximately 57% 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

The Department has five staff members, with each position tailored to address the work needed to advocate for and support our communities. Currently, the positions in the department include:

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 &/or high-level
- Lead major projects & long-term initiatives that require a sustained effort

Digital Communications Manager

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

Communications Coordinator

- 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

Multimedia Designer (x2)

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

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 E-store continues to offer a wide range of products designed by NAN artists. These items include hoodies, t-shirts, ball caps, pride shirts, toques, polo shirts, water bottles, NAN flags, NAN's pride flag, and stickers. All profits flow back into the e-store to produce new products.

To help meet the demand and increase accessibility, the NAN e-Store has also been set up at assemblies, allowing community members and the public to view and purchase merchandise in person while learning more about the products and artists behind them.

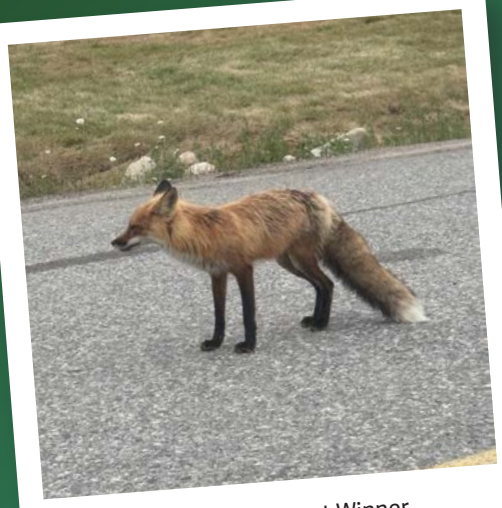


NAN Social Media

Facebook was our primary social media platform for community engagement and outreach. Our content achieved exceptional reach, generating 9,543,565 views and significantly expanding awareness of our programs, services, and initiatives. Audience engagement remained strong, with 103,520 interactions, including reactions, comments, shares, saves, and replies.

In addition, our Facebook presence grew substantially, with more than 2,500 new followers joining our online community. These results reflect the effectiveness of our digital communications strategy and the strong interest and engagement of our audience with the stories, updates, and information we shared throughout the year.

We held three monthly community contests that received a total of 342 photo submissions across NAN territory.



July Photo Contest Winner
Chelsea Tremblay - Apitipi Anicinapek Nation
152 Photo Submissions



September Photo Contest Winner
Ciarra Roy - Constance Lake First Nation
66 Photo Submissions



August Photo Contest Winner
Colby Harman - Matachewan First Nation
124 Photo Submissions

NAN Website

The NAN website (nan.ca) provides information on NAN advocacy, programs, departments, history, and culture, along with reports, photos, videos, and publications. The website also includes 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.

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.

Information Technology

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

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.

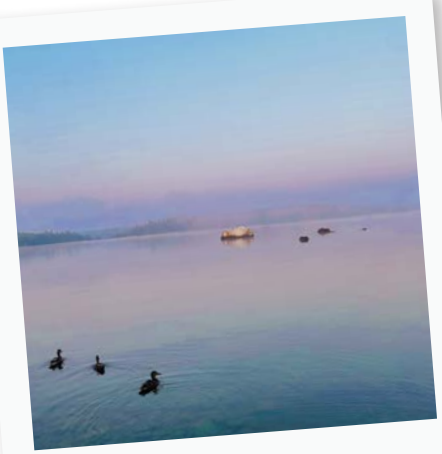
Highlights

Supported NAN youth and Leadership at Queen's Park during the 'Our Rights are Not for Sale' rally opposing Bill 5.

Supported leadership at Parliament Hill during the press conference and rally opposing Bill C-5.

Supported NAN youth and other Okinawak members at Queen's Park during the rally against Bill C5.

Supported leadership with the Final Settlement Agreement on the Long-Term Reform of the First Nations Child and Family Services Program.



Monthly Photo Contest Submission
Missanabie Cree First Nation

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Governance and Treaty Implementation

OVERVIEW

The programs and activities of the department include the 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 as well as monitoring the hunting and fishing, trapping, and harvesting activities of its member communities.



The main objective is to protect Treaty and Aboriginal rights held by the communities and community members of Treaty No. 9 and No. 5 and to ensure these rights are not infringed upon. It is also intended to move beyond programming and focus on assisting Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) First Nations move beyond the Indian Act governance systems to become self-governing Nations.



PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Treaty Table Discussions

The mandate for this work comes from Resolutions: 14/04: Treaty Implementation, "to explore a process to reconcile the Treaties" and 14/38: Treaty Implementation and Treaty Community Tables, "to set-up a Treaty table and/or community Treaty tables with our Treaty partners".

In December 2024 Canada put an embargo from signing on all preliminary type agreements, including halting all negotiation tables. The reason given was that the funding program was under review, and the RIRSD policy required a new cabinet mandate. As of March 31st the embargo was still in place.

The negotiation funding was revamped. The level of funding that each table is funded is now determined by stages. There are four stages and each stage has a maximum amount.

We updated the NAN Treaty website. We have added NAN Elders' interviews and biographies of Chiefs that signed the original Treaties. More historical information and oral history will be added.

Several major cases that will have Treaty wide impacts are underway, including a class action on Treaty 9 annuities. Treaty interpretation cases have a wide impact because the courts decide or interpret what the Treaty means. We continue to monitor these cases and report them to our leadership.

Specific Claims

The specific claims research program is 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 policy deals with the historical grievances of First Nations between the Crown (Canada). It is a negotiations process rather than litigation.

What we do:

Assist NAN First Nations in research and submission of specific claims. Help fund for the research and legal costs related to the development of a claim.

Ten claims in our research work plan:

- TLE claims
- flooding
- reserve surrender
- illegal surrender of timber
- agricultural benefits (cows and plows)
- education promise
- reserve land (delay or promise)
- reserve boundary

Research funding is over subscribed and a threat of funding reduction for 2026-2027. We were advised that only $4 million would be available. This would be a drastic reduction from $12-$16 million over the last four years.

NAN First Nations have had success in reaching their settlements with a range from $14 million to $150 million. Four of the NAN First Nations are currently in negotiations with their Treaty Land Entitlement (TLEs) claims and experiencing delays.

NAN Licensing and Fur Management Agreement

The NAN Fur Management and Licensing program is responsible for administering and issuing Fur Harvesters licenses to NAN fur harvesters. The program also provides technical support with access to private and crown lands, trapline allocation, and building trap and/or incidental cabins for member First Nations. We also continue to assist NAN members that had issues related to accessing their traplines due to resource use conflicts by third parties.

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 auction sale held in March 2026 produced excellent results. Sable (marten) achieved 100% clearance and averaged $172.23 USD ($240.00 CAD), with top lots reaching $310.00 USD ($433.00 CAD). Note that medium to small marten brought in an average of $78.35 USD ($109.00 CAD). A premium was paid for paler colours. Beaver, otter and muskrats all increased and cleared at levels close to 100%. All wild foxes sold well at increased levels. Even the smallest, ermine (weasel) did exceptionally well, averaging $12 USD and $21 USD.

The table below was extracted for the North Bay Fur Auctions held in March 2026 in North Bay. The sales were reported using the United States currency. For more accurate results, refer to the weblink: www.furharvesters.com

Overall, NAN trappers' main catch was the marten and fox, and all did exceptionally well at the auction this season. We continue to see some trappers sell their furs to private fur buyers. With the auction prices, those trappers that sold privately lost out big time. We encourage trappers to utilize the fur auction as a means of marketing their furs and can bring good results.

We continue to provide trapper training for NAN trappers that wish to take the courses.

Species	% Sold	Average		Top	
Marten (sable)	100%	$172.00 US	$240.00 CAD	$310.00 US	$433.00 CAD
Beaver	100%	$29.00 US	$40.00 CAD	$220.00 US	$307.00 CAD
Wild Mink	100%	$45.00 US	$63.00 CAD	$60.00 US	$84.00 CAD
Otter	100%	$48.00 US	$67.00 CAD	$82.00 US	$115.00 CAD
Muskrat	94%	$3.94 US	$5.50 CAD	$9.50 US	$13.00 CAD
Lynx	100%	$352.00 US	$490.00 CAD	$560.00 US	$782.00 CAD
Red Fox	100%	$32.00 US	$44.00 CAD	$100.00 US	$139.00 CAD
Ermine (weasel)	100%	$12.00 US	$17.00 CAD	$21.00 US	$29.00 CAD

Canada Ontario Resource Development Agreement (CORDA)

CORDA is a partnership program between Federal, Provincial, and First Nations in Ontario. The First Nation partners include Grand Council Treaty #3, Anishinabek Nation, Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians, and Independent First Nations.

Purpose: to assist the First Nation people of Ontario to utilize renewable natural resources to their economic benefit. It supports projects that foster economic development and natural resource management for future generations.

Annual CORDA budget: $1,065,000.00
Total funding allocation for 12 NAN projects: $240,000.00

Challenges: The program is oversubscribed. Increased number of good applications but insufficient funds to allocate. Costs of equipment supplies has increased due to inflation. Recipients do not always utilize the funds provided (variety of reasons i.e., health, find lower cost items, and delays in receipt causes inability to make purchases). Funding cap of $35K per project is a barrier to projects. PTO administration fee is only 5%. Accessibility and demands to open to other groups.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Return of Ancestors Project

NAN continues to participate in the Kee: Way committee that oversees the work of the return of ancestors and associated burial items. The "Return of the Ancestors" is a joint initiative between the Province of Ontario, Chiefs of Ontario and First Nations in Ontario. The purpose of the initiative is to respectfully return Ancestors (Indigenous human remains) and burial items in the care of the Province of Ontario to appropriate descendant communities. This work was one of the key recommendations from the Ipperwash Inquiry. The Kee-Way project will impact about four NAN First Nations. The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Gaming is responsible for contacting First Nations and providing funding for the repatriation.

HIGHLIGHTS

The Knowledge Keepers and Elders Gathering on Treaty, convened by Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) on March 10–11, 2026 in Thunder Bay, created space for reflection on the meaning, responsibilities, and future direction of Treaty. Participants came together in dialogue grounded in oral teachings, lived experience, language, and land-based knowledge. Discussions considered Treaty through historical, legal, political, and community perspectives while remaining guided by the knowledge carried within Nations and communities.

Participants consistently affirmed that Treaty continues to guide governance, rights, and responsibilities. Teachings emphasized that Treaty relationships live through the knowledge held by people and through responsibilities practiced within families and communities. Stories, language, and land-based practice were described as essential pathways through which Treaty understanding is carried forward across generations and sustained within daily life.

A full report is now available and will be posted on our website.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Health Policy and Advocacy

OVERVIEW

The Health Policy and Advocacy Department continued to advance community-driven health priorities, system-level advocacy, and Health Transformation work across Nishnawbe Aski Nation territory. Over the past year, the department supported engagement with communities, Chiefs, Health Directors, Elders, youth, service providers, Tribal Councils, health authorities, and government partners to ensure health policy and planning remain grounded in the lived realities, rights, and priorities of NAN First Nations.

Health Transformation remained a central focus of the department's work. This included continued planning toward a First Nations-led health system rooted in self-determination, Treaty rights, local governance, cultural knowledge, community control, and accountability. The department also advanced major work in mental health and addictions, NIHB and medical transportation, continuum of care planning, diabetes programming, research, data governance, communications, and community engagement.

Together, these efforts reflect the department's ongoing commitment to supporting health systems that are community-informed, culturally grounded, equitable, and responsive to the urgent and long-term health needs of NAN First Nations.



PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Health Transformation

The department continued to support the advancement of NAN Health Transformation through engagement, governance planning, partner coordination, research, and communications. This work included supporting the Chiefs Council on Health Transformation, advancing the Agreement in Principle, contributing to discussions on future governance structures, and helping ensure that Health Transformation remains guided by Chiefs-in-Assembly and informed by community voices.

Key discussions focused on First Nations-led governance, Treaty implementation, local and regional planning, accountability, the proposed Ombudsperson function, health system coordination, and the need to avoid simply transferring existing colonial health structures into a new model. The department also supported work to identify immediate system pressures, including NIHB, medical transportation, mental health, infrastructure, workforce shortages, youth safety, and culturally safe care, while continuing to plan for long-term transformation.

Chiefs Council on Health Transformation

The Chiefs Council on Health Transformation continued to provide leadership guidance on NAN's Health Transformation process. Meetings supported discussion on governance, accountability, roles and responsibilities, the Agreement in Principle, and the need for a clear mandate from Chiefs-in-Assembly.

The Council also helped keep Health Transformation connected to urgent community realities, including medical travel barriers, lack of local services, systemic racism, infrastructure gaps, workforce shortages, mental health and addictions crises, and the need for culturally safe and compassionate care.

NAN Health Transformation Website

The department advanced the development of the NAN Health Transformation website as a public-facing communication and engagement tool. The website is being designed to help communities, leadership, Health Directors, partners, and NAN citizens better understand Health Transformation, including governance, the Chiefs Council on Health Transformation, the proposed Ombudsperson Office, community and regional health planning, resources, events, and contact information. Once launched, the website will support transparency, plain-language communication, engagement opportunities, and ongoing reporting back to communities.

Community Engagement and Community Visits

Throughout the year, the department carried out community visits to create space for direct dialogue with community members, leadership, front-line workers, Elders, youth, and families. These visits supported two-way engagement on Health Transformation, community wellness, mental health priorities, the Agreement in Principle, and broader health system change.

Common themes included the need for stronger mental health and addictions supports, improved access to counselling and crisis response, better medical transportation processes, stable local care capacity, youth and family supports, and greater investment in culture, language, land-based healing, and community-driven wellness programming.

Feedback from these visits is helping guide future advocacy, planning, standards development, and reporting back to communities.

Health Directors Meetings

Health Directors meetings provided a regular forum for community and regional health leadership to identify service gaps, emerging priorities, and areas where NAN advocacy is needed. Key issues raised included NIHB and medical transportation delays, funding gaps, workforce recruitment and retention, hospital discharge planning, palliative care, home care, food security, housing, infrastructure, data governance, and service coordination.

Feedback from Health Directors helped shape department priorities, including working groups, surveys, service mapping, partner discussions, evidence gathering, and advocacy related to NIHB, discharge planning, palliative care, data management, and the NAN Recovery Network.

Mental Health and Addictions

The department advanced significant work toward a coordinated, culturally grounded mental health and addictions system across NAN territory. This included continued development of a NAN Mental Health Position Paper, the NAN Conditions of Wellness, the NAN Mental Health Plan, and Standards of Care in areas such as suicide prevention, trauma and PTSD, acute mental health care, addictions, grief and community support, and interpersonal violence.

The department also supported the Flex Funds initiative, including review of existing services such as NAN Hope and Matawa Outreach, community wellness proposals, and preparation for a formal RFP process to expand access to mental health services. In March 2026, NAN co-hosted a Mental Health Forum with SLFNHA and Matawa to support service mapping, community dialogue, and stronger coordination across partners.

The NAN Addictions Recovery Network Preliminary Design Project also continued, with a focus on developing a First Nations-governed recovery network that is culturally appropriate, trauma-informed, wholistic, and community-led.

NIHB, Medical Transportation, and Continuum of Care

The department continued to advance work related to NIHB, medical transportation, palliative care, emergency response, renal care, cancer screening, digital health, primary care, and broader continuum of care planning.

A major focus was NIHB medical transportation. The department worked with Waapihk Research to study the current NIHB Medical Transportation system and estimate costs for a new and improved medical transportation model for NAN territory. HPA also participated in NIHB advocacy discussions with Chiefs of Ontario and other Provincial Territorial Organizations to support regional advocacy for improvements to NIHB in Ontario.

The department also participated in partner tables and discussions with Ontario Health, the Ontario Renal Network, Ornge, First Nations Digital Health Ontario, Indigenous Primary Health Care Council, the Regional Indigenous Cancer Lead, and others to explore opportunities to strengthen care pathways and support community members to age in place with appropriate supports.



Ontario Diabetes Strategy

The department supported the Ontario Diabetes Strategy through funding coordination, reporting, engagement, and partnership development. More than $2.4 million was allocated to NAN Tribal Councils and participating First Nations for the 2025-2026 fiscal year.

The department also partnered with Vision Loss Rehabilitation Canada and Indigenous Diabetes Health Circle to purchase diabetic retinopathy scanning equipment and support training for community health workers. Next steps include exploring an ad hoc committee to support a territorial diabetes strategy and developing coordinated diabetes information, outreach, and programming.

Waapihk Research Projects

The department continued working with Waapihk Research on several key projects supporting Health Transformation, mental health and addictions planning, NIHB reform, and data governance.

This included the NAN Recovery Network Preliminary Design Project, NIHB Medical Transportation Research, and development of a NAN Data Management Framework. These projects are helping build the research, evidence, and planning tools needed to support advocacy, system design, future negotiations, and First Nations data sovereignty.



OTHER ACTIVITIES

The department also supported and participated in several forums, partner meetings, committees, and cross-sector discussions throughout the year. These included:

- United in Health: A New Path Forward Summit, held June 3 and 4, 2025, at Killarney Mountain Lodge.
- Partners in Health Meeting, held in Thunder Bay in December 2025.
- Timmins Partners in Health Visioning Exercise, held in October 2025.
- Mapping the Way to Mental Wellness: Mino Pimatisiwin Mamow Onahchiikewin, co-hosted by NAN and SLFNHA.
- Ontario Health Advisory Circle on palliative care for First Nation, Inuit, and Métis people.
- Joint Ontario Indigenous Health Committee meetings.
- Discussions with Ontario Health teams on digital excellence, quality standards, and regional care planning.
- Chiefs of Ontario NIHB advocacy discussions.
- Cross-departmental work with NAN Justice regarding the Moses Beaver Inquest.
- Cross-departmental work with NAN Housing and Infrastructure regarding northern airport infrastructure and medical travel impacts.

These activities supported information sharing, partner accountability, service mapping, system planning, and continued advocacy on urgent and long-term health priorities across NAN territory

HIGHLIGHTS

- Advanced NAN Health Transformation planning through Chiefs Council, Health Directors, community engagement, partner meetings, and governance discussions.
- Continued work on the Agreement in Principle and future Health Transformation governance options.
- Supported community visits to hear directly from leadership, front-line workers, Elders, youth, families, and community members.
- Advanced foundational mental health documents, including the NAN Mental Health Position Paper, Conditions of Wellness, Mental Health Plan, and Standards of Care.
- Co-hosted a Mental Health Forum with SLFNHA and Matawa to support service mapping, coordination, and regional planning.
- Supported continuation and review of mental health services through the Flex Funds initiative.
- Continued the NAN Addictions Recovery Network Preliminary Design Project.
- Worked with Waapihk Research on NIHB Medical Transportation research and cost analysis for an improved model.
- Participated in regional NIHB advocacy with Chiefs of Ontario and other PTOs.
- Developed service standards for emergency first response and palliative care.
- Supported Ontario Diabetes Strategy funding coordination, including more than $2.4 million allocated to NAN Tribal Councils and participating First Nations for 2025–2026.
- Partnered to purchase diabetic retinopathy scanning equipment and support community health worker training.
- Advanced development of the NAN Health Transformation website as a public-facing communication and engagement hub.
- Supported research and planning related to data governance, First Nations data sovereignty, service mapping, and future negotiations.



DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Infrastructure and Housing

NAN Housing Strategy

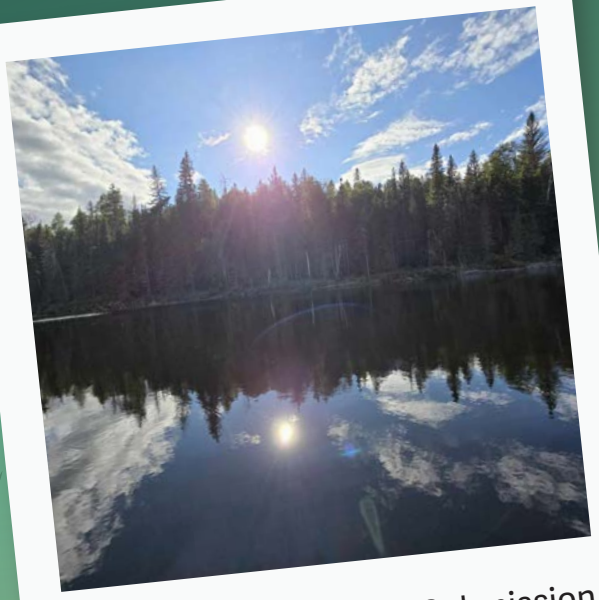
Mandates: Resolution 22/12 Acceptance and Implementation of NAN Housing Strategy Roadmap

The key objectives in developing the NAN Housing Strategy included:

- Working 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.
- Creating a community-led approach for data collection and problem identification.
- Supporting of NAN First Nation's right to self-determination in their housing systems.
- Encouraging flexibility and creation of design solutions rooted in local lived experience.

The findings from this project led to the creation of NAN Housing Strategy in 2021, which outlines a roadmap of seven themes for action: advocating for inclusive housing systems, addressing health impacts of housing, appropriate and sustainable design and materials, integrated infrastructure planning, improving funding structures, governance and policy reform, and capacity development and training. In 2022, Chiefs-in-Assembly passed Resolution 22/12 accepting the NAN Housing Strategy roadmap and its plan for implementation over a five-year period. To date, the Strategy includes various sub-projects that support each of the seven themes and work towards supporting community self-determination in housing.

The NAN Housing Strategy will need to be updated in 2027. The Housing and Infrastructure department will update the NAN Chiefs at a future NAN Chiefs Assembly to update the strategy.



Monthly Photo Contest Submission
Matachewan First Nation



Monthly Photo Contest Submission
Kasabonika Lake First Nation

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The following sub-projects supporting the NAN Housing Strategy are listed below with updates:

Community Led Designs for Specialized Housing in the North (CDLSHN)

Community Led Designs for Specialized Housing in the North (CLDSHN), has completed its goal of creating seven shovel ready housing designs. The designs include, full blueprint packages, mechanical, electrical and structural drawings that are free for NAN Communities to use. The designs will be available through the Housing and Infrastructure department. NAN Communities who are interested can book a meeting to review all the designs and receive a copy of the blueprint package(s). An information booklet will be available in the fall of 2026.

In April 2025, NAN hosted its live Tendering and Procurement course. A free course open to all NAN First Nation members to take. The course was hosted in partnership with Wahsa Distance Education Centre and Together Design Lab. It offered an overview and introduction to important concepts related to Tendering and Procurement, tailored to NAN First Nations using examples from the community level. A self-directed version of this course can be found on the NAN Housing Strategy website: https://www.nanhs.ca/housingcourses

In March 2026, the department launched its live Project Management course (running from March 5th, 2026–April 30th, 2026) which also supports the NAN Housing Strategy theme of Capacity Development and Training in NAN Territory. This was the second time hosting the live Zoom course for NAN community members. Due to the success of this course, NAN plans to host more courses in the fall and winter of 2026. A self-directed version of this course is available for all NAN community members to take on https://www.nanhs.ca/housingcourses

In September of 2025, NAN applied to the CMHC Indigenous Skills and Training Fund. The intent was to support more online course development. NAN was successful in this application and is working towards the development of a Blueprint Reading course. Following the same structure as previous courses, it will be hosted in a live format online and free for all NAN members to participate in. The course is anticipated to start in Fall/Winter 2026 to avoid overlap with the building season in community. This will ensure that people will have the opportunity to participate while missing a minimum amount of classes.

Creating a Home for Our Youth (CAHFOY)

The report reviews challenges faced by NAN Youth in accessing safe and reliable housing and includes a series of recommendations that are addressed to Canada, Ontario, surrounding municipalities and Nishnawbe Aski Nation. The NAN Infrastructure and Housing department has received approval to develop an interdepartmental working group made up of all NAN Departments, to address the recommendations in the report. As several of the recommendations touch upon areas in education, justice, housing, health and other areas, the goal of the interdepartmental working group is to support the work other departments are doing to address the recommendations. The working group meets monthly to provide updates, share funding opportunities, and collaborate on areas of work that address the report's recommendations.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Build Canada Homes

NAN's Infrastructure and Housing Department continues to follow updates on Build Canada Homes and how the new Federal program will affect NAN First Nations. By attending webinars hosted by Build Canada Home's Federal team, NAN has been able to ask questions, seek clarity and provide updates to NAN First Nations and Tribal Councils. Further advocacy will be determined.

Creative Financing Options

In December 2025, the Chiefs Committee on Housing and Infrastructure requested the department to investigate creative financing options for housing, outside of the regular funding options provided by Indigenous Services Canada and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. This will include looking at alternative funding sources from private and public streams. Research into this alternative funding strategy will be shared back with the NAN Chiefs Committee on Housing and Infrastructure and NAN Chiefs in Assembly for feedback and further direction. NAN will also look into hiring a quantitative surveyor to complete a feasibility assessment for the region.

Events and Presentations

NAN Housing Conference 2025 – November 19th and 20th 2025

NAN's Infrastructure and Housing Department hosted its annual conference in November of 2025, bringing together approximately 125 NAN Members, Tribal Council Representatives and First Nation organizations and businesses. The theme of the conference was Capacity Development and Training, one of the NAN Housing Strategy's themes. Presentations from NAN Housing Professionals, Industry partners and First Nation Training Organizations shared a wealth of knowledge with participants at the conference. Networking opportunities were provided at the tradeshow, with 15 First Nation organizations and businesses.

NAN Ontario Final Agreement – January 13th, 14th, 15th, 2026

The Housing and Infrastructure department attended the Ontario Final Settlement Gathering to learn more about how this agreement will support community housing and infrastructure. The department also hosted a booth to share information on its seven shovel ready designs and the NAN Housing Strategy.

Early Years Autism Forum – January 20th, 21st, 22nd 2026

The Housing and Infrastructure department attended the NAN Early Years Autism Forum to host an information booth about the NAN Housing Strategy and its related projects. Talking to a diverse audience who may not know about the NAN Housing Strategy allows for more input, engagement and participation in future projects.

AFN National Housing Strategy Engagement Session – February 3rd and 4th 2026

NAN's Housing and Infrastructure department was invited to attend the AFN's engagement session to update their 10-year Housing Strategy. Utilizing the NAN Housing Strategy to provide feedback and ensure that NAN Communities' voices were captured within the session, the NAN Team also made sure that AFN make the effort to expand their invite list and to engage with NAN Communities directly.

NAN Education Directors Gathering – February 18th, 2026

The Housing and Infrastructure department was invited to present at the NAN Education Directors Gathering. The department shared the development of the Project Management and Tendering and Procurement courses and their success.

First Nation Housing Conference 2026 – February 24th, 25th and 26th 2026.

The Housing and Infrastructure department attended the First Nation Housing Conference to learn from the presenters and network with NAN Housing Professionals.

Nuclear Waste

OVERVIEW

The Nuclear Waste Management Organization's (NWMO) proposed Deep Geological Repository (DGR) project entered the federal Impact Assessment process on January 5, 2026, with the release of an Initial Project Description (IPD) for the DGR. This release started the clock on the first Planning Stage of the Impact Assessment Process, with the first submission deadline of February 4, 2026.

Program Activities

NAN reconvened the Chiefs and Technical Action Committee (CTAC) on Nuclear Waste in early January to provide input on NAN's submission on the IPD and approve the submission in advance of the deadline.

NAN provided a submission on February 4, 2026, to the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada on the proposed DGR project, highlighting several concerns with the Initial Project Description (IPD):

- it improperly excludes the input of Indigenous people from a project that stands to have direct and longstanding impacts on their constitutionally protected rights;
- the IPD does not meet the minimum legislated requirements for initial project descriptions;
- it runs contrary to legislative purpose and intent;
- the "alternative" processes put forward by the Proponent are not appropriate substitutes for a comprehensive federal impact assessment; and
- it fails to uphold the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples ("UNDRIP") commitments.

NAN requested that the Agency require the NWMO to revise the IPD appropriately to include:

- complete transportation routes, not just the access roads.
- a detailed and feasible retrievability plan.
- to recognize the true scope of potentially impacted Indigenous groups by recognizing that watershed boundaries are not static before this assessment proceeds further.

Other Activities

NAN provided an update to the Chiefs-in-Assembly on March 25th, 2026, in Toronto on the status of the Impact Assessment Process for the proposed DGR.

NAN will continue to monitor the Impact Assessment Process for the proposed DGR project and continue to engage the CTAC for input at each stage of the process. NAN will also continue to provide updates to the NAN Chiefs-in-Assembly at each regular Assembly.



Monthly Photo Contest Submission
Pikangikum First Nation

Emergency Management

OVERVIEW

The lack of determined level of service standards for First Nations Emergency Management in Ontario perpetuates systemic inequities and enables restrictive government oversight on decision making approvals. Development of a framework for the delivery of emergency management supports/services to First Nations in Ontario is necessary to address deficiencies and ensure First Nations emergency management is at minimum equitable to municipally assured standards.

For NAN First Nations to be adequately represented and resourced within the field of emergency management there is the foundational need for at minimum one full-time, permanently funded, Community Emergency Management Coordinator position within each NAN community. Indigenous Services Canada's Emergency Management Assistance Program funds these positions in communities they consider having a high hazard rating; NAN continues to advocate that based on remoteness, socio-economic disparities, growing impacts of climate change, and limited infrastructure, resources and capacity, all NAN communities are high hazard.

An EM multilateral stakeholders meeting was held March 6, 2026 in person at the Superior Inn in Thunder Bay.

NAN multilateral EM advocacy priorities include:

- Development of a framework for the delivery of emergency management supports/services to First Nations in Ontario to establish the basic level of service standards.
- Social crisis and critical infrastructure failure to be permanently included in the definition of emergencies under the EMAP program despite the causation of the initiating hazard.
- Core emergency management funding for capacity and operations at communities and tribal councils that is not application based.
- Pre-identified hosting capacity in Ontario, with Provincial oversight on host locations capacity, and requirement for pre-planned transparent information on the supporting agreements and site plan for provision of full wrap around services prior to activation.
- Ontario region First Nations specific Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment data collection to support the necessity for all the prior asks.

Emergency Monitoring continues throughout the duration of community emergency declarations. This ensures that up-to-date information is consistently gathered to maintain internal situational awareness, which plays a critical role in advocacy efforts allowing for accurate communication of community needs.

NAN Territory Emergency Management Discussion Table continues virtually on a bi-monthly basis, bringing together representatives from Tribal Councils and communities who are actively engaged in the field of emergency management. These meetings allow for open dialogue around persistent challenges, best practices, and recent experiences which helps identify common needs and shape NAN's advocacy strategies.

Transportation

OVERVIEW

The transportation network in Northern Ontario remains a lifeline for NAN member First Nations. Across the region, remote airports, winter roads and provincial highways are not simply infrastructure assets; they are essential connections to healthcare, food security, education, emergency services, economic opportunity and family. For many First Nations in Treaty 5 and 9 territories, these transportation systems represent the only reliable access to the rest of the province for much of the year.

Air transportation continues to play a critical role in sustaining northern communities. The Ontario Ministry of Transportation operates 29 remote airports in the northernmost region of the province, many of which directly service First Nation communities that do not have permanent year-round road access. These airports support passenger travel, medical evacuations, delivery of essential supplies, emergency response, policing, wildfire operations, and access to government and social services.

At the same time, winter roads remain a vital seasonal transportation corridor for many NAN member First Nations. The winter road network connects dozens of remote First Nations to the provincial highway system for a limited period each year, allowing communities to transport fuel, construction materials and other essential goods at a lower cost than by air. Increasingly unpredictable winter conditions, and the growing impacts of climate change continue to shorten the operational season and reduce both safety and reliability. Warmer temperatures, unstable ice conditions and changes in snowfall amounts have resulted in delayed openings, reduced load capacities, temporary closures and rising transportation costs for remote First Nations.

Throughout 2025-2026, transportation challenges also extended to the provincial highway network. Northern highways remain critical as economic and social corridors, connecting communities across vast distances. Despite this, concerns regarding road safety, winter maintenance, and commercial vehicle volumes have increased. Severe weather events, prolonged highway closures, and fatal collisions highlighted the unique risks faced by northern drivers and communities that rely on limited transportation routes. Public concern surrounding highway safety and the number of serious and fatal collisions on northern highways remained prominent throughout the year, reinforcing the need for continued investment, collaboration and advocacy to improve transportation safety and reliability across the North.

Against this backdrop, NAN has continued to advocate for safe, reliable and equitable transportation systems for northern and remote First Nations in Ontario. Through engagement with First Nations, government partners and transportation stakeholders, NAN remains focused on advancing infrastructure priorities, strengthening relationships and ensuring northern voices and lived experiences inform transportation policy and decision making.



Monthly Photo Contest Submission
Ginoogaming First Nation

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Met with the Provincial Ministries of Transportation, Natural Resources and Northern Economic Development and Growth to discuss several winter roads and the possibility of an ongoing relationship table between NAN and the province regarding transportation.

Continued discussions with ISC on funding to support the development of a Northern Road Authority and secured funding that will support engagement on sustainable transportation solutions for remote First Nations.

Installed Micro Weather Stations (MWS) in Wunnumin Lake First Nation, Weenusk First Nation, Fort Albany First Nation and Deer Lake First Nation to progress the NAN Winter Roads Monitoring project which will support the ability for First Nations to utilize climate data in advocacy for improved winter road policy and programs.

Received funding for a project that will support the Canadian Centre for Climate Services in developing a climate tool that can be used by First Nations for winter road initiatives. This project also includes climate knowledge mobilization that will support bridging First Nation and Eurocentric ways of knowing about climate.

Continued to attend Northern Ontario Aviation Committee (NOAC) meetings which included representation from remote air carriers as well as provincial and federal government representatives.

Stayed up to date on aviation regulation updates by attending a Transport Canada information session on upcoming approach ban regulations and meeting with the Transport Canada Civil Aviation Regional Director to discuss various regulatory issues such as aerodrome standard exemptions that may be necessary during remote airport upgrades, Flight Duty Time regulations and upcoming approach ban regulations.

Finalized and distributed the updated NAN Aviation Needs Assessment. Letters were written to both federal and provincial ministries, including:

- Transport Canada regarding the stalled implementation of flight duty time exemptions.
- Ontario Ministry of Transportation regarding increased need for collaboration between the MTO and NAN on remote airport initiatives.
- Canadian Transportation Safety Board requesting an investigation into aviation safety in northern Ontario.

Began collaboration with Chiefs of Ontario on an Aviation Communications project which will highlight the lived realities of First Nations that rely on remote airports. This project includes support from various regional health services to highlight the health impacts of unreliable transportation in remote First Nations.

Included remote airport infrastructure in NAN's federal pre-budget submission, and both remote airports and winter roads in NAN's provincial pre-budget submission.

Resolution 25/32 Remote Community Airfare Subsidy Program for NAN First Nations passed at the NAN Spring Chiefs Assembly. Housing and Infrastructure staff developed a workplan to progress the mandate and began meetings with regional carriers to begin developing subsidy models.

Published a statement on Aviation Regulations ahead of the 2026 Transportation Council of Ministers meeting.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

- Shibogama First Nations Council worked with Maheegan Armstrong Legal Services to conduct legal review of winter roads in Ontario
- NAN staff attended the Matawa Winter Road gathering in Thunder Bay
- KGS held virtual engagement sessions with Keewaytinook Okimakanak regarding their winter road bridge project
- The Northern Policy Institute is pursuing projects on winter roads and remote airports
- The National Research Council of Canada included NAN's winter road projects in their annual report
- The Chair of the Northern Ontario Aviation Committee presented at the 2026 provincial pre-budget hearing in Thunder Bay. MPP Sol Mamakwa attended and asked questions in response to the presentation that support NAN's remote airport advocacy initiatives

Wildland Fire

Wildland Fire-related activities for this year include:

- A Wildland Fire Gathering was held in-person at the Superior Inn on March 4-5, 2026. Attendees and presenters from across NAN territory, including government partners, were present to share, network and discuss the previous and current wildland fire season, and opportunities for increasing firefighting capacity in NAN communities.
- Distribution of the remainder of smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors to NAN community members as a part of the Amber's Fire Safety Campaign.
- The NAN Wildland Fire and Fire Safety Coordinator supports Emergency Management initiatives and Provincial Emergency Operation Centre (PEOC) evacuation coordination calls.

Nine forest fire evacuations in 2025:

- Fort Albany First Nation
- Attawapiskat First Nation
- Kashechewan First Nation
- Deer Lake First Nation
- Sandy Lake First Nation
- Keewaywin First Nation
- North Spirit Lake First Nation
- Webequie First Nation
- Pikangikum First Nation

NAN's Wildland Fire coordinator participates on the Ishkode Coordination table, hosted by the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), which also includes Emergency Management Ontario (EMO) and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) as partners.

The coordinator has also been invited to join the national First Nations Wildfire Evacuations Partnership (FNWEP) Advisory Committee, and EMO's Amethyst sector meetings.

Indigenous Early Learning and Childcare (IELCC) Infrastructure

In February 2025, NAN received flow through funding for 47 NAN communities to support Early Years infrastructure.

The value of flow through funding for each community was based on the OFNLP formula.

NAN has identified community contacts in 45/47 communities, will continue to reach out to the remaining communities to inform them of the available funding.

Since February 2025, NAN has distributed the 2024-25 IELCC capital funds to 31 communities and the 2025-26 IELCC capital funds to 20 communities.

To date, communities have used their funds to repair/renovate existing building, purchase modular units, vehicles, appliances, equipment, resources and supplies.

2026-27 fiscal year will be the final year of the 3-year funding commitment.

Attended the Early Years Technical Working Group meetings that occur on a bi-monthly basis.

Held a co-design workshop in March 2026 with NAN community members and L'OEUF Architects to design what a potential daycare space could look like in NAN territory.

Travelled to 12 communities to meet with Chief, Council and staff. Those communities include: Kasabonika Lake, North Caribou Lake, Sachigo Lake, Weenusk, Deer Lake, Wunnumin Lake, Matachewan, Mattagami, Taykwa Tagamou, Flying Post, Apitipi Anicinapek and Ginoogaming.



Monthly Photo Contest Submission
Sandy Lake First Nation



Monthly Photo Contest Submission
Mattagami First Nation

Starlink

Continue to procure and deliver replacements for outdated Starlink units and hardware to NAN communities as needed.

Continue to work with communities to ensure that Starlink units are installed in a secure, safe, and sustainable manner.

Continue to provide communities with the resources to properly install Starlink units.

Continue to work with community Education Directors and education authorities to prioritize and plan IT architecture upgrades for NAN schools.

Provided direction regarding using Jordan's Principle and choose life funds to offset Starlink service costs

Water

NAN Water Education Fairs

The NAN Water Education Fairs Project is funded by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC). The project's purpose is to bring NAN specific water education content into community schools to educate NAN youth.

The Water Fair is a one-day program designed by NAN and EcoSuperior to provide hands-on learning opportunities about the water cycle, drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater management.

Included in the program is a potential tour of the community water treatment plant that can be hosted by the Tribal Council or OCWA if additional support is required.

The Water Fairs are typically held in the school gymnasium or cafeteria, where students are invited to engage in hands-on activities and demonstrations throughout the day. While the programming is primarily designed for students in grades 1 to 8, it can be adapted for students up to Grade 12.

NAN and EcoSuperior staff divide students into groups and guide them through interactive, hour-long sessions. Each session explores different topics, including the importance of fresh water, the impact of pollution on wildlife such as birds, watersheds and groundwater systems, invasive species, and the process of water treatment.

Date	First Nation	School
June 7, 2023	Aroland First Nation	Johnny Therriault School
June 13, 2023	Bearskin Lake First Nation	Michikan Lake School
November 21, 2023	Fort Severn First Nation	Wasaho Cree Nation School
May 15, 2024	Kingfisher Lake First Nation	Kingfisher Lake Education Centre
October 1, 2024	Chapleau Cree First Nation	Our Lady of Fatima Catholic School
October 2, 2024	Chapleau Cree First Nation	Chapleau Public Elementary & Secondary School
May 22, 2025	Eabametoong First Nation	John C. Yesno Education Centre
October 23, 2025	Mattagami First Nation	Mary Jane Naveau Memorial School
November 7, 2025	North Caribou Lake First Nation	North Caribou Lake Elementary School
June 2, 2026	Long Lake 58 First Nation	Migizi Wazisin Elementary School

We also have several fairs scheduled for the upcoming school year. If your community is interested in hosting a Water Education Fair, we would love to hear from you!

Please contact Jamie Saunders at jsaunders@nan.ca for more information or to express your interest.

Water Advocacy

NAN continues to advocate for Bill C-61- An Act respecting water, source water, drinking water, wastewater and related infrastructure on First Nation lands. NAN staff met 10 times in 2025 with Tribal Council, Independents and government representatives to discuss ongoing water operation & maintenance concerns and collaborate on legislation and regulation advocacy. NAN staff continue to collaborate with Chiefs of Ontario with respect to work on Bill C-61.

Water Utility

NAN has been working with member tribal councils on the development of a regional water utility as a solution to the current water and wastewater issues facing First Nations.

The areas where a water agency could provide support to Nishnawbe Aski Nation communities are:

- Setting priorities and gauging funding needs.
- Monitoring and evaluating government performance.
- Information sharing.
- Data collection.
- Legal risk mitigation.
- Networking.
- Licensing of operators.
- Laboratory management.
- Coordination.
- Standards setting.
- Advocacy.
- Creating efficiencies of scale.
- Asset management services.
- Promoting innovative technologies.
- Providing support for capital projects.

NAN staff continue to work with the ISC Infrastructure Reform Directorate to understand what water and wastewater transfer would look like for NAN communities and continue to escalate the initiative to other provincial and federal partners.

In the first half of 2026, 10 booths promoting the water utility were set up at different events and workshops to engage with leadership and community members about the process.

Shibogama, Windigo, KO and IFNA Tribal councils recently signed an agreement to collaborate and share resources and information to further this work.

Water Summit After Actions Meeting

A follow up meeting to discuss the progress since the NAN Water Summit in February was held virtually on October 28th, 2025.

All participants of the 2025 Water Summit were invited to hear updates on the work undertaken since the Water Summit and have a discussion on the next steps and implementation of the recommendations from the Water Summit Report.

During the two-day summit in February, five key recommendations for NAN to consider were identified:

1. Begin a water declaration process through broad based, inclusive processes with communities, youth, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and leaders.
2. Develop a process for creating community-based, NAN source water protection plans.
3. Develop the concept for a regional water authority or authorities based on a hub and spoke delivery model.
4. Draft First Nations-led regulations for water management.
5. Create a strategy to build and maintain a sustainable water and wastewater operations workforce.

These recommendations were ratified by leadership at the Spring Chief's Assembly in 2025, where NAN infrastructure and housing staff began the work in implementing the recommendations.

The follow up meeting featured a panel, presentation, and feedback period for participants to share their ideas about the ongoing work.

Participants came together to continue the discussions from the water summit, which included:

- The ongoing lack of safe, reliable drinking water;
- Honoring water as sacred and our responsibility to protect it;
- The First Nations Clean Water Act and First Nations-led regulations for water;
- Diving into the five key recommendations from the water summit;
- Hopes for the future where NAN communities have access to safe, clean, and reliable water.

The recording for the meeting can be accessed with the following link: https://www.nan.ca/resources/water-initiatives/

Ogoki and Longlac Diversion Project

The Infrastructure and Housing department has begun a multi-year research project on the Ogoki and Longlac Diversions that were built in the 1930s and 1940s. These dams divert large amounts of water away from the James Bay Watershed and instead toward the Great Lakes Watershed. This project involves gathering Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) about the changes to the rivers and watersheds downstream of the diversions.

In addition, the project will involve gathering baseline, scientific data to develop a report and database of information to be used by communities to create source water protection plans and support reparations for impacted communities and the environment.

On October 21 and 22, 2025, Deputy Grand Chief Mike Metatawabin presented information about the diversions at the COO Great Lakes Water Gathering in Niagara Falls, ON. This presentation received a great deal of interest, questions, and dialogue amongst the delegates.

On November 10 and 11, 2025, staff from Infrastructure and Housing, Tanya Talaga, and Deputy Grand Chief Mike Metatawabin visited Fort Albany to discuss the changes that have occurred on the Albany River since the creation of the diversions. An information brochure about the diversions and the Fort Albany visit can be accessed with the following link: https://indd.adobe.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Community Wellness

OVERVIEW

The Community Wellness department hosts programs that provide support to NAN member First Nations to build capacity and sustain culturally appropriate services that address crises impacting its members both on- and off- reserve, while continuing to promote a model of wellbeing and highlighting the spirit and resiliency of NAN members.

Historically, NAN Chiefs-in-Assembly have passed many Resolutions for advocacy to support community wellness. The department has identified 15 Resolutions going as far back as 1991 that guide the work to seek resources to support capacity with NAN member First Nation to respond to crisis that impact its membership, that includes advocacy for programming that promotes men's healing and wellbeing throughout the stages of an abuse survivor's healing journey. Most recently direction from leadership is represented through:

1. Resolution 23/04 Advocacy and Support for the NAN Community Crisis Response Team Program, and;
2. Resolution 24/13 Support and Advocacy for Funding and Resources for the Scouts Canada Apology Project and Programming Enhancements to the MHI Survivors Circle.

Community Wellness aims to foster the creation of community-based programs in the areas of prevention and intervention, with a focus on self-efficacy and self-determination. Community Wellness looks to NAN member First Nations, Tribal Councils, and partner organizations to collaborate on the issues that affect communities and work towards advocacy to elect change for funding and policy-related barriers. The Community Wellness department supports NAN member communities through the following programs and initiatives:

- NAN Crisis Response Team.
- Community Wellness Training Team.
- Men's Healing Initiative.
- Health Emergency and Management.



Monthly Photo Contest Submission
Nibinamik First Nation

NAN Community Wellness receives funding through five (5) funding sources:

- Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, under the Indigenous Healing and Wellness Strategy umbrella (MCCSS-IHWS),
- Ministry of Health, under the Child and Youth Mental Health (MOH-CYMH),
- Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) under First Nation and Inuit Health Branch ON (FNIHB – ON),
- Ministry of the Attorney General (MAG) under the Indigenous Justice Division, and
- Scouts Canada Cultural and Enabling Services that supports these initiatives.

Advocacy priorities include securing stable funding for community crisis response programs, addressing wage and service gaps for crisis workers, access to funding for training and self-care, and building stronger coordinated pathways between Tribal Councils, Ontario, and Canada to improve access to supports all phases of social crises.

Additional advocacy efforts and supports provided through NAN Community Wellness are outlined in the Program Activities and Highlights section.

On December 19, 2025, correspondence was sent by NAN Deputy Grand Chief Bobby Narcisse to Assistant Deputy Minister Raj Dhir, to address on ongoing concerns related to social emergencies and crisis response in Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Territory and to request support to strengthen coordination among funded partners to address these challenges as identified through engagements with crisis coordinators, Health Directors, Tribal Council representatives and NAN Leadership, the letter requested the re-establishment of the technical working group that developed the Social Emergency Protocol Guide in 2019.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Prepared in optional section below to provide program activities, other activities and highlights by program area, as follows:

- NAN Crisis Response Team.
- Community Wellness Training Team.
- Men's Healing Initiative.
- Health Emergency and Management.

Community Wellness Training Program

The Community Wellness Training Program champions excellence across NAN territory by investing in the personal and professional growth of front-line workers who play a vital role in community well-being. Through targeted learning opportunities, mentorship, and specialized training initiatives, the Program strengthens workforce capacity and empowers workers to enhance their knowledge, skills, and leadership potential.

By delivering responsive, community-informed education and professional development opportunities, the Community Wellness Training Program addresses evolving workforce needs at both the community and Tribal Council levels. These initiatives support the development of a highly skilled, confident, and culturally grounded workforce, ultimately contributing to stronger services, improved outcomes, and healthier, more resilient NAN communities.

The Community Wellness Training Program Offers the following certification courses:

- Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)
- Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)
- Opioid Poisoning and Nasal Naloxone Response
- Physical First Aid

Building our Roots of Resilience: Connecting with Nature – August 8-10, 2025

This three-day gathering provided a powerful opportunity for participants to reconnect with the land, strengthen cultural knowledge, and explore healing through the natural medicines found throughout the beautiful landscapes of Northern Ontario. Guided by Anishinaabeg traditional knowledge and the expertise of Mr. Jeordi Pierre, owner and operator of the School of Indigenous Learning, participants were immersed in a safe, culturally grounded learning environment that celebrated the deep connection between people, the land, and wellness. The gathering was designed to foster healing, resilience, and self-reliance through hands-on, land-based experiences and traditional teachings.

Throughout the event, participants engaged in a variety of enriching activities, including:

- Opening introductions, Elder teachings, and a traditional opening drum ceremony.
- Harvesting Medicine Binder orientation and instruction.
- Traditional teachings from a land-based perspective.
- Medicine harvesting practices and teachings.
- Survival, hunting, and trapping skills.
- Traditional teepee teachings and construction.

Together in Wellness – Building Individual and Community Strength for the Crisis Response Program – September 9 & 10, 2025

The Community Wellness Training Program hosted a two-day gathering that brought together Front-line Crisis Response workers from across NAN Territory. The event provided an opportunity for the Department to engage directly with participants and discuss the strengths, challenges, barriers, and service gaps being experienced in communities. Through collaborative discussions and knowledge sharing, attendees explored ways to strengthen crisis response services and enhance community wellness. The event also supported the personal and professional development of front-line workers by providing opportunities for networking, learning, and capacity building.

Honoring Our Helpers: Rest, Resilience and Renewal – December 2-4, 2025

This event brought together participants to explore wellness, resilience, and self-care through cultural teachings, medicine teachings, and discussions on healing, burnout prevention, and healthy boundaries. The gathering provided a supportive space for learning, reflection, and connection, while recognizing the important work of those who serve their communities. Participants gained practical tools and insights to strengthen their personal well-being and professional resilience. Strong collaboration between facilitators and attendees created an engaging and welcoming environment that encouraged open dialogue and meaningful participation. Thoughtful discussions and the sharing of personal experiences fostered deeper connections and a sense of community among participants.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Crisis Response Program – Funding Agreement Package Update

Crisis Response Program funding is provided to NAN which is subsequently distributed to 49 First Nations and organizations by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. Following a review of the transfer payment process, it was determined that updates were needed to streamline and simplify the reporting requirements for recipients. Going forward, each site will receive a more comprehensive Crisis Response Program – Funding Agreement Package tailored to their funding allocation, which includes the following documents:

- Letter of Agreement.
- Letter from the Community Wellness Director.
- Forecasted Budget, Estimated Activities and Estimated FTE Information.
- Contact Information Form.
- Crisis Response Program Guidelines.
- Payment Schedule and Reporting Timelines.
- Service Data Definitions.

Partnership and Collaboration

Program staff actively extended their impact beyond the Program by collaborating with other departments, initiatives, and communities across the organization and region. They played a key role in supporting conferences and events, sharing expertise, strengthening partnerships, and helping to build capacity throughout the region.

HIGHLIGHTS





"The Crisis Response Training Coordinator set up a booth to create awareness and share information about opioid poisoning emergencies and how to incorporate nasal Naloxone as part of a rescue at the Matawa Education Harm Reduction Event on April 9, 2026, hosted by Matawa Education and Care Centre. "

Men's Healing Initiatives

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Survivor Engagement and Advocacy

Throughout the 2025–2026, the Men's Healing Initiative continued to provide trauma-informed support and advocacy to men from NAN communities who are survivors of historical childhood sexual abuse. This includes one-on-one support, counselling referrals, legal process navigation, and access to Men's Healing peer support network.

MHI also continued to advocate for survivor-centered and healing-centered approaches across legal, justice, health, and social service systems. This advocacy emphasized the need for trauma-informed processes, and long-term healing support for survivors, families, and communities.

Ralph Rowe Class Action Support

MHI continued to support survivors throughout the Ralph Rowe class action process by assisting with claims process navigation. MHI also supported survivors in identifying and communicating concerns to class counsel where required.

Debwe Boonendamowin Apology Project

MHI continued to support the Debwe Boonendamowin Apology Project as a survivor-led process focused on truth-telling, acknowledgement, accountability, and healing. Engagement continued with the Anglican Church of Canada and Scouts Canada concerning the impacts of Rowe's crimes and their responsibilities in supporting long-term healing.

On February 28, 2026, MHI supported engagement in Muskrat Dam First Nation. The engagement included survivors, community members, Chief Carla Duncan, Anglican Church leadership including Primate Shane Parker, and NAN leadership including Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler. Discussions focused on apology, accountability, survivor voice, community impacts, long-term healing, and the connection between apology work and future men's healing structures.

MHI also continued support of survivor discussions with Scouts Canada and The Anglican Church of Canada on how they can support the development and operation of the Men's Advocacy and Advisory Council for Healing as part of long-term accountability and healing.

Men's Advocacy and Advisory Council for Healing

During the 2025–2026 year, MHI continued the development of the Men's Advocacy and Advisory Council for Healing (MAACH). MAACH grew from survivor-led discussions connected to the Debwe Boonendamowin Apology Project and is being developed as a survivor-led structure focused on healing promotion, peer support, advocacy, and community engagement.

MHI continued to advance MAACH framework, intended to support the restoration of men's roles in families and communities while creating pathways for men with lived experience to contribute to healing, mentorship, advocacy, and leadership.

On November 5, 2025, MAACH was supported by Chiefs-in-Assembly through a formal resolution. The resolution supported the continued development of MAACH as a survivor-led movement to support healing, advocacy, peer support, and advisory work for men across NAN territory.

Nimbaabaa: My Father's Gathering

MHI supported the delivery of the 2nd Annual Nibaabaa: My Father's Gathering from May 13–15, 2025, at Lakehead University in Thunder Bay. The gathering focused on men's healing, identity, fatherhood, parenting, trauma, cultural connection, family roles, and community responsibility.

The gathering also included participation connected to the Moose Hide Campaign walk. Sessions supported men in reflecting on healing and wellness, violence prevention, family safety, fatherhood, responsibility, community leadership, and the restoration of men's roles within families and communities.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Partnership and Collaboration

MHI continued to collaborate with internal and external partners to support healing and long-term program development. Key partners include NAN communities, NAN Family Wellbeing and NAN Early Years, the Anglican Church of Canada, Scouts Canada, Elders, survivor and community representatives. Relationships are actively being pursued with relevant external health and social organizations to advance MHI and MAACH objectives.

NAN Crisis Response Coordination Team & Flexible Crisis Funding

The Community Wellness department has a team of six (6) that respond to requests for support during social crisis in an event or situation that carries risk to human health/life, mental wellness, or to the social fabric and well-being of the community and exceeds the resources and capacities of a community and requires the immediate response and support of governments, external agencies, and service providers, while long-term support is being determined.

The team networks and coordinates with the First Nation, Tribal Councils, health authorities, and social service agencies in conjunction with provincial and federal governments to ensure continuity of services, address identified gaps and barriers, map out resources and promote cost-effectiveness.

The NAN Crisis Response Coordination Team is available to:

1. Provide assistance for Community Crisis Coordinators during influx of crisis situations in community.
2. Provide coordination for referrals and assistance for crisis related situations (Mental Health supports, funerals, food and supplies, emotional support, transportation, etc.).
3. Provide Respite for Community Crisis Coordinators when they need to remove themselves from community due to compassion fatigue/burnout.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Types of services provided include, but are not limited to:

- Crisis response planning and coordination – arranging planning calls with several levels of partners.
- Assist with on the ground assistance in city for supplies and materials needed in community.
- Navigate services and resources based on need, make referrals.
- Collaborate with affiliated organizations, service providers and government partners.
- Track needs and gaps, provide advocacy measures as required.
- Support provided is based upon need and at the direction of the community. If there are available and existing resources those services will be accessed first.

Further, the NAN Crisis Response Coordination team support the First Nation to carry out traditional community practices and needs, such as, gatherings, feasting, comfort supports (gospel singers, bands, etc.), vigils, with an importance on bringing impacted family together, available access to traditional medicines and the associated expenses, to access resources from neighboring communities for assistance (cooks, people to prepare firewood, people to provide assistance and comfort during crisis, etc.). Charters to bring family in or out of community as well as to bring in cargo for communities during crisis.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

- Assisting with missing person searches by setting up command centres, providing necessary tools and equipment, and coordinating efforts 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.



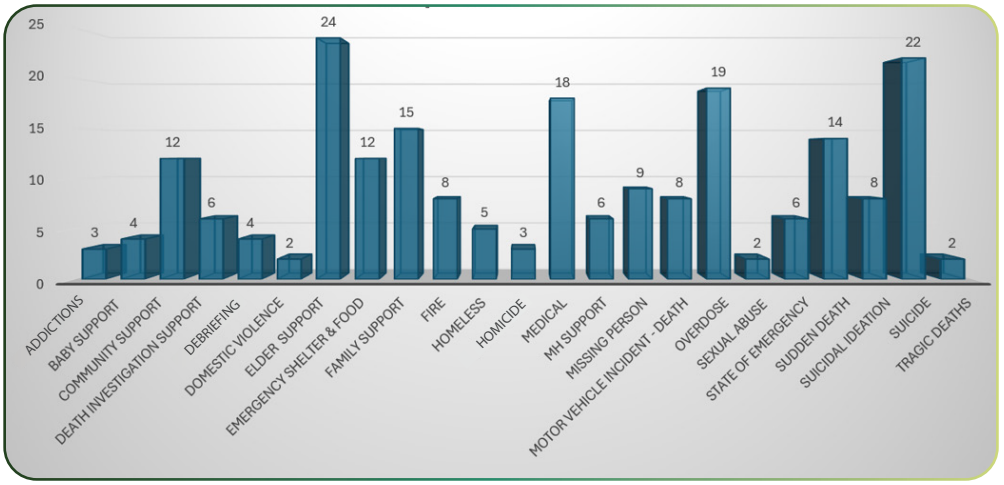
Monthly Photo Contest Submission
Attawapiskat First Nation



Monthly Photo Contest Submission
Apitipi Anicinapek Nation

HIGHLIGHTS

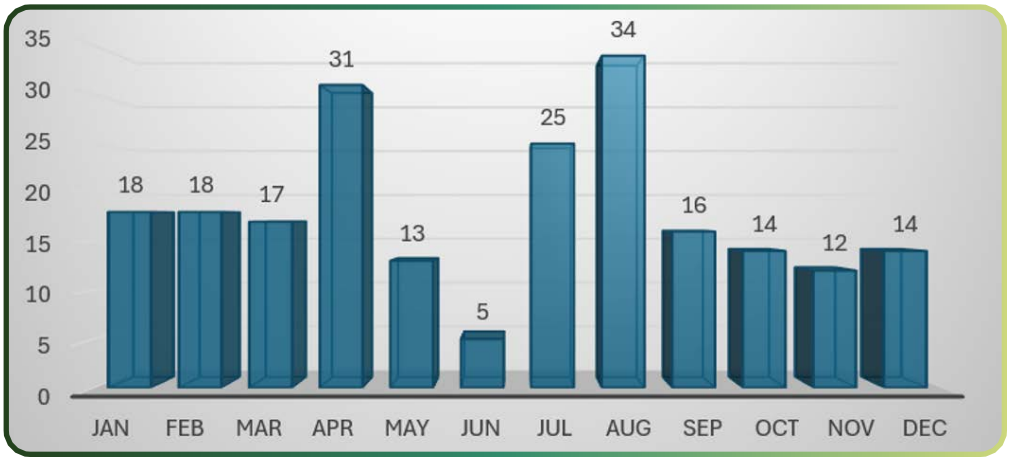
NAN Crisis Team
Crisis Team Manager, 1 Administrator Support, 1 Logistical Response Coordinator, 2 Crisis Response Worker, one Vacant Crisis Response Coordinator position.
Response to Tasks received from Community Wellness Director and NAN Executives receives from NAN Leadership, Health Director and Crisis Coordinator Work collaboratively with Tribal Council Health Director and Crisis Programs.
Work with Mental Health Partners and other Crisis Response Agencies working with NAN Communities.
Crisis On Call - Weekend and After-Hours Coverage
Seek appropriate supports for Communities in Crisis. Provide Coordination to bring Crisis Support Requested. Collectively, Deliver and Ship Emergency Equipment and Food requested
Aftermath support to be streamed to community and family along with Tribal Council and Programs funded to support NAN Communities.
Participate and learn coping skills in Self Care, Practicing Safe Protocols and Debriefing.



NAN Crisis Response Stats Incidents 2025

Requests received for one incident can take 3 days to 10 days, sometimes more, due to the type of Crisis. It could be any of the listed categories.

NAN Crisis Response Monthly Stats 2025



Health Emergency Management

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

NAN accesses funding through Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) for the Emergency Management Assistance Program (EMAP) to support First Nations with emergency management coordination, capacity building, and mitigation efforts.

NAN Community Wellness has an active role in supporting NAN member First Nations while navigating crisis situations throughout the coordination process to ensure necessary and adequate supports are identified and accessible in responding to health and social emergencies. A further goal of this initiative is to support First Nations to develop emergency preparedness plans.

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 or cause, has the potential to result in health emergencies thus it is of the utmost importance to collaborate with other department programs to support NAN communities.



Monthly Photo Contest Submission
Cat Lake First Nation

OTHER ACTIVITIES

- Staff attend a HEM monthly meeting coordinated by ISC technical staff. These meetings provide an opportunity for regional coordinators to come together to bring awareness of current situations and efforts in progress. These meetings also create an opportunity to learn about Ministry resources available to respond in emergency situations.
- Staff participate in EPOC meetings where a NAN member First Nation has declared or advised of social crisis impacting its citizens. Since January 2026, there have been six (6) NAN members First Nations that have been recognized through this process as a means of coordinating supports.
- Staff attend NAN leadership forums as observers to document priorities and issues relevant to health and social emergencies.

HIGHLIGHTS

ISC acknowledged that the objectives of the NAN Comprehensive Crisis Review Forum held on October 18-20, 2022, directly related to health and social emergencies - mitigation and preparedness, and that the funding retained for the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 fiscal years could apply to the cost of the forum and report with Queen's University.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Early Years and Women's Policy and Advocacy

OVERVIEW

The Early Years Department works with NAN First Nations, Tribal Councils and federal and provincial governments to advance equitable, sustainable and inclusive early years policies and programs. The department supports community-led direction and initiatives that enhance capacity, advocacy, policy changes and mentorship to meet the needs of families and children. The department works collaboratively with regional, provincial and national organizations to ensure NAN First Nations are informed and meaningfully engaged in the design, and implementation of policies, services and programs that impact families, particularly regarding neurodiversities, such as autism and fetal alcohol spectrum disorder.

The department engages diverse people across NAN territory, including Elders, Knowledge Keepers, parents and caregivers, community workers, NAN councils, academia and experts in the early years field to provide the direction and guidance in implementing priorities and actions as mandated by NAN Chiefs-in-Assembly.



Women's Policy and Advocacy

The Women's Policy and Advocacy department is responsible for mandates specific to Women's Issues including family violence prevention, ending violence against Indigenous women, the implementation of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) Calls for Justice, and the empowerment of NAN women. The Women's Policy and Advocacy department works closely with the NAN Women's Council and received ongoing guidance and input from its members.

Women's Council Overview:

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 Advocacy and Policy 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.

Early Years

Advocacy and Support for Children with Neurodiversity

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

Mamow Sakinichinitoonanoowan Awashishaak Onci - Together Holding Hands for the Children Regional Working Group

The members continue to guide the work, identifying key priorities and actions to support children and families. The members provided direction on the planning of the NAN Autism Forum held in January and reviewed and provided recommendations to ensure NAN's inclusion in the development of Canada's Autism Strategy. Members provided input into the Looksee child developmental checklist for community-based workers to ensure it was culturally relevant and safe and reflective of the traditional knowledge, languages, and community-based approaches to supporting children and families.



Pediatric Indigenous Rehabilitation Assistant-PIRA

The Pediatric Indigenous Rehabilitation Assistant (PIRA) One-Year Aide Certificate Program and Two-Year Assistant Diploma Program will be delivered by Oshki-Pimache-O-Win Wenjack Institute once accreditation is obtained through the Indigenous Advanced Education and Skills Council (IAESC). Work is currently underway to prepare the required documentation, curriculum, and course materials to support the accreditation process, and preliminary discussions with key partners have begun.

Graduates of the PIRA program will have the knowledge and skills needed to work as part of a child's rehabilitation team under the direct supervision of speech-language pathologists, occupational and physio therapists under regional Children's Treatment Centres. PIRA graduates will provide culturally responsive support to children and families and assist with implementing and monitoring follow-up activities and therapy recommendations as directed by clinicians.

Person Centered Approaches Training

Person-Centered Approaches training was provided to community-based workers. The training focused on building the knowledge and skills needed to support children and families through a strengths-based, family-centered lens. Participants learned how to place the individual and family at the center of planning and decision-making by recognizing their unique strengths, needs, goals, values, and cultural identities. The training strengthened participants' ability to provide culturally responsive, holistic support that empowers families and promotes positive outcomes for children.

Child Development Tool

The Indigenous Healthy Babies Healthy Children (IHBHC) community-based workers identified the need to have a child development checklist tool to assist in supporting children's growth and development. The LookSee Checklist is a user-friendly developmental screening tool designed to help identify age-appropriate development and potential areas that may require further assessment. Revisions were made to ensure it reflected communities' cultures, languages and practices.



Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

Community based workers were supported to attend the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Conference hosted by NorWest Community Health Centre in Thunder Bay. The conference provided opportunities to enhance knowledge, explore current research and promising practices, and strengthen capacity to support individuals and families affected by FASD and individuals within the criminal justice system.

Community based workers were also supported to attend CANFASD in Toronto. The conference brought together internationally renowned researchers, physicians, clinicians, and practitioners from across Canada and around the world to share the latest developments in FASD research, diagnosis, intervention, and support services, highlighting culturally grounded and community-driven practices that support individuals and families affected by FASD.

The conference provided valuable opportunities for professional development, knowledge sharing, and networking with leaders in the field, helping to strengthen our understanding of current best practices and emerging trends in FASD care and support.

Indigenous Disability-Affirming Early Learning (IDAEL) Partnership, a SSHRC-funded project led by Toronto Metropolitan University to collaboratively design disability-affirming and culturally grounded training modules for early years educators across six diverse community sites in Ontario.

Indigenous Healthy Babies/Healthy Children (IHBHC)

Monthly virtual meetings for community IHBHC workers to strengthen collaboration, provide ongoing support, identify training needs and build networks. Guest speakers included representatives from Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA), Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority (SLFNHA), and Anishnawbe Mushkiki.

Nitotem Gathering



Early Years hosted a provincial gathering for IHBHC/FASD, Health Directors and Crisis community workers. This was an opportunity to learn, collaborate and build networks across First Nations in Ontario to strengthen community-based programs and services. An electronic yearbook was emailed to all participants as a unique way to share photos and highlights of the event.

Sioux Lookout First Nation Health Authority (SLFNHA)- Walking Together

The Early Years team continues to build its relationship with SLFNHA and jointly hosted a gathering with their Developmental Services team and IHBHC workers. The focus was to connect clinicians to the IHBHC workers to strengthen connections, enhance learning opportunities, and share knowledge related to prenatal, infant, and family well-being to better support families and early childhood development initiatives.

Crisis Training

The team collaborated with the NAN Community Wellness department to host the Building Capacity for NAN Crisis Coordinators: Understanding Mental Health and Substance Use. The gathering enhanced participants' understanding of mental health and substance use through shared learning, dialogue, and collaborative discussions. As part of the event, attendees completed training and received certification in Trauma-Informed Approaches through the Crisis & Trauma Resource Institute, further strengthening their capacity to support individuals, families, and communities.

IHBHC/FASD Reporting Support

The staff have been successful in building relationships with the IHBHC community workers and Health Directors. The staff provide ongoing support and technical assistance to facilitate completion and submission of required quarterly and annual program reports. This included proactive outreach, guidance on reporting requirements, clarification of documentation processes, and individualized support to ensure accurate and timely reporting.

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

The 11th Annual Canadian Autism Leadership Summit

Canadian Autism Leadership Summit 2025 focused on moving Canada's National Autism Strategy from "Strategy to Action – Elevating Every Voice". The summit provided a platform for Autistic persons, advocates, and researchers to discuss critical priorities, including lifelong well-being and community inclusion. Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum provided a keynote address highlighting the realities and challenges families continue to face and importance of inclusion of families in the North in shaping the National strategy.

NAN Autism Forum

The NAN Autism Forum brought together community members, families, professionals, Elders, and service providers from across the NAN territory. The forum provided an opportunity to share experiences, challenges, and wise practices related to Autism services and support within First Nation communities. Discussions focused on improving access to screening, diagnosis, interventions, and community-based support, while highlighting the barriers that many families face when navigating complex service systems. Throughout the forum, participants heard powerful perspectives from professionals, parents, and Elders who emphasized the importance of viewing Autistic children through a strengths-based and culturally grounded lens. Elders shared teachings that recognize Autistic children as gifts, each bringing unique strengths, perspectives, and contributions to their families and communities. These discussions reinforced the need to create safe, inclusive, and supportive environments where children and families feel valued, understood, and empowered. Participants also highlighted the importance of culturally relevant services, increased awareness and acceptance of Autism, and stronger collaboration between communities, service providers, and families to ensure children can thrive and reach their full potential.



NEXT STEPS

To continue to advocate and support the proposed Bill S-234 a National Framework for FASD; to bring NAN's voice, awareness and advocacy, to the ongoing issues affecting NAN First Nation communities.

To host a Neurodiversity Conference in the fall of 2026; to further explore the outcomes and expressed needs discussed at the Early Years Autism Forum that was held in January 2026.

To complete the accreditation application to successfully implement the Pediatric Indigenous Rehabilitation Assistant Program in partnership with Oshki-Pimache-O-Win: The Wenjack Education Institute. To help bridge the gap of services and follow up with a specialist.

Early Learning and Child Care

Resolution 14/09: Nishnawbe Aski Nation Early Learning Framework

$23,979,585.20 in IELCC Program and Services funding was released directly to NAN First Nations via Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) contribution agreements in Fall 2025. NAN received $1,432,340 in Partnership and Governance funding to support the ongoing development of NAN systems and structures required to support First Nation ownership and control of IELCC and $6,845,097.83 in Capital funding and $356,337 under the Transformative Action Fund. NAN Housing and Infrastructure will continue to flow all infrastructure funds to NAN communities and will continue to offer community support for infrastructure project implementation in collaboration with the Early Years. This is the second year that infrastructure funding has been available under IELCC.

NAN Child Care Facility Capital Needs Assessment report prepared by First Nations Engineering Services Ltd. was finalized in May 2025 and distribution is ongoing. It is estimated that $424,785,519 is needed for capital costs across the NAN territory with an additional $21,963,242 projected as annual operating costs.



Engaged with Indigenous Community Engagement to conduct a Gaps Analysis to better understand how NAN ELCC programs are funded and supported compared to mainstream systems. Held an initial tripartite meeting between NAN, Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) and Ministry of Education Child Care and Early Years Branch technical staff. Initial meeting was to share information and provide the Ministry with a better understanding of the challenges and barriers facing current daycare centers and early year programs.

A sub-committee, of the NAN ELCC Technical Working Group- Wiichi-Bimosemik Awaashishag, was formed under The Quality Improvement Project and is developing a generative curriculum to create college accredited micro courses on land-based learning in the early years. Callouts were made in Fall 2025 to find NAN youth curriculum writers and artists to support this work.

Keeping Our Children Safe subcommittee formed to work towards First Nation licensing as part of the Quality Improvement Project. The group of NAN ELCC supervisors and experts are drafting sample templates and tools to support NAN First Nations who are interested in developing their own Health and Safety Regulations.

As part of the Quality Improvement Project, NAN ELCC launched Wise Practices Grants program. Ten NAN communities received $15,000 to develop a solution to any ELCC need in their community. Community representatives were invited to join Technical Working Group meetings every two months to support projects.

The Annual NAN Wise Practices Gathering held in Thunder Bay July brought together 123 ELCC staff from 29 NAN communities and focused on language and culture as program pedagogy.

The private Facebook Group "NAN Early Learning and Child Care Gathering Place" is a resource library and open forum with live events and opportunities to connect and engage as well monthly meetings for all NAN ELCC staff began in March with a beading session and cultural flower teaching.

Hosted 11 community staff from 7 NAN First Nations at the National Child's Day Conference in Edmonton, Alberta and together visited three First Nation early years programs.

The Early Learning and Child Care Professional Network monthly meetings continued for IELCC coordinators and managers. These meetings were opened to Health Directors and Education Directors in Fall 2025. There was increased engagement from supervisors and directors.

Early Years and 16 community delegates traveled to Toronto for the Infant and Early Mental Health conference. Surveys and interviews were conducted before and after to support future training for the workforce.

Nimbaabaa: My Father's Gathering was held at Lakehead University in May. Over 30 men attended to discuss healing, traditional parenting, fire safety and traditional life skill games. This event is hosted by NAN's Men's Healing Initiative and supported by Early Years.

Presented work to Chiefs Committee for Children, Youth and Families; Chiefs Committee for Education; NAN Education Director Forum; Matawa Education Conference; NAN Chiefs of Ontario Early Learning Gathering; Child Care for All.

NEXT STEPS

Present Draft NAN Early Learning and Child Care Community Approach and Priorities to NAN Chiefs at Keewaywin in August for input and approval.

Complete gap analysis report and continue advocacy efforts towards equitable funding for NAN First Nations.

Continue to work with funders and government partners to support NAN First Nations to access consistent and reliable funding with clear reporting processes.

Support NAN First Nations to complete Wise Practices Grant projects and complete 10 community site visits.

Finalize and prepare a report on the Quality Improvement Project which ends 2026.

Host two Wise Practices in Early Learning Gatherings in April and June for all NAN childcare staff, supervisors, Health Directors and Education Directors with a focus on providing input into program design templates, land-based generative curriculum and licensing work.

Apply for a second Quality Improvement Project Grant to continue the work and implement priorities.

Launch the IELCC website in Fall 2026. The website will be a secure location for NAN educators to find training and resources relevant to their programs. Project content to be added as directed.

Continue to develop resources to support the workforce in their work with young children and families. Focus on a two-eyed seeing approach for supporting children with autism.

Development of a toolkit to support IELCC staff to facilitate land-based learning for 0-6.

Campaign on the importance of the early years and the role IELCC programs play in preservation and revitalization of language and culture and community wellbeing.

Women's Policy and Advocacy

The Women's Policy and Advocacy department is responsible for mandates specific to Women's Issues including family violence prevention, ending violence against Indigenous Women, the implementation of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) Calls for Justice, and the empowerment of NAN women. The Women's Policy and Advocacy department works closely with the NAN Women's Council and received ongoing guidance and input from its members.

The CARE (Children at Risk of Exploitation) Engagement Sessions and report on key findings and recommendations have been completed. In partnership with internal departments, a domestic violence social media campaign was developed and implemented. This initiative was followed by the workshop, Breaking Cycles: Let's Start the Conversation to End Abuse, to promote awareness, education, and dialogue on preventing violence and supporting healthy relationships. Supported the family of Corey Belesky during a Press Conference on marking the third anniversary of his unsolved homicide. The family and NAN leadership voiced frustration with ongoing communication gaps and the pace of the investigation.

Women's Policy and Advocacy department continues to become visible within community by setting up booths at various events such as the Mamokawok "Coming Together" Youth Conference, NAN Student Orientation, MMIWG Pow Wow, and the Educators as 2SLGBTQQIA+ Allies event. NAN Fill a Purse Campaign was completed for a third year in Thunder Bay and Timmins. We have received generous support from communities and successfully delivered donations to local women's shelters right before the Christmas holidays. Department participated in a Women's Policy and Advocacy Strategic Planning Session in Toronto on February 17-18, 2026.

The Women's Policy and Advocacy Department alongside the Women's Council continue to strengthen partnerships with police services across the NAN territory through a series of collaborative meetings with NAPS, Timmins Police Service, Ontario Provincial Police, and the Thunder Bay Police Service. These meetings provided an opportunity to build and strengthen relationships, enhance communication, and identify areas for ongoing collaboration. Key discussions focused on Missing and Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP), human trafficking prevention and response, the recruitment and retention of First Nation women within policing and advancing the implementation of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Calls for Justice.

Through these partnerships, the department continues to advocate for improved outcomes, increased accountability, and culturally responsive policing services for NAN communities.

The department continues to raise awareness by participating in commemorative events and public education initiatives, including social media outreach on the following days:

MMIWG Women's Memorial March	February 14
National Human Trafficking Day	February 22
International Women's Day	March 8
Red Dress Day	May 5
Sisters in Spirit Day	October 4
International Day of Eliminating Violence Against Women	November 25

The department continues to participate in both provincial and federal councils and committees to support ongoing advocacy work specific to violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people via membership on the following councils or committees:

- Ontario Indigenous Women's Advisory Council (IWAC).
- Chiefs of Ontario First Nations Women's Council (COO FNWC).
- Assembly of First Nations Women's Council (AFN WC).
- The Thunder Bay Coalition to End Human Trafficking.
- The Regional Anti-Human Trafficking Committee for the Cochrane-Temiskaming Districts (including the James Bay Coast).
- Naadmaagewin Violence Against Women Coordinating Committee (NVAWCC).



HIGHLIGHTS

Dolly Parton Imagination Library, 714 children across NAN communities are enrolled in the program and 2,813 books have been distributed.

Parent Support Network Membership currently has 175 members, with 34 active and regular participants. This is a caregiver led initiative, however, the program staff continue to monitor and post on this social media platform weekly, to share resources, information and community webinars.

The ELCC team supported Apitipi Anicinapek Nation with their first preschool graduation in August. A short video documentary chronicling the development of Apitipi's first childcare centre, the opening of their new location and their first graduation was developed.

The NAN IELCC Community of Practice has grown to 219 members.

In July Early Years and NAN Housing and Infrastructure staff traveled 2,300 km in 4 days to visit 5 communities (Taykwa Tagamou, Apitipi, Mattagami, Matachewan, & Flying Post).

The NAN IELCC workforce has more than doubled since the inception of IELCC funding in 2018, from approximately 90 to 250 community-based staff.

Women's Policy and Advocacy Department continued its commitment to ending gender-based violence by co-hosting the annual Moose Hide Campaign Awareness Walk in Thunder Bay on May 15, 2025. The event was held in partnerships with numerous organizations and community partners and brought together more than 100 participants to raise awareness about violence against women and children and to promote healthy, respectful relationships. The event was a great success, demonstrating strong community support and collaboration.



DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Justice Research and Policy

OVERVIEW

Nishnawbe Aski Nation's Justice Research and Policy (JRP) work advances practical, community-informed approaches to justice transformation across NAN territory, in partnership with First Nations leadership, communities, and key justice sector partners, including Nishnawbe-Aski Police Service, Nishnawbe-Aski Legal Services Corporation, Tribal Councils, and the Law Foundation of Ontario. This work aligns with the objectives of the Indigenous Justice Strategy (IJS) and supports the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), including the recognition and exercise of First Nations' inherent rights and jurisdiction.

NAN applies a systems-based policy approach to justice, recognizing that community safety and access to justice are interconnected to broader social determinants, including housing, health, mental health, education, and child and family wellbeing. Consistent with IJS priorities, effective reform requires coordinated, distinctions-based policy, legislative, and funding responses that address these interconnected factors and support long-term community wellbeing.

This work is guided by the principle of Two-Eyed Seeing, bringing together Indigenous knowledge systems and Western legal and policy frameworks in a manner that is practical, respectful, and grounded in coexistence. This approach affirms respect for Indigenous legal traditions and reinforces NAN's position that First Nations-led solutions must be central to justice system transformation in the North.



Monthly Photo Contest Submission
Fort Albany First Nation



Monthly Photo Contest Submission
North Caribou Lake First Nation

NAN maintains a system-level focus, addressing both program gaps and structural barriers that contribute to inequitable justice outcomes. This includes analysis of policing, courts, transportation, infrastructure, mental health and addictions services, and community-based justice options, reflecting priorities to address systemic discrimination and improve access to culturally appropriate justice services.

JRP activities are currently supported primarily through short-term project-based funding rather than stable core resources. Continued reliance on short-term funding undermines NAN's ability to sustain long-term policy development, respond effectively to emerging justice and public safety needs, and implement community-driven solutions.

This funding model is inconsistent with Canada's IJS and UNDRIP commitments to support sustained, Indigenous-led capacity development and limits the ability of NAN to advance the full implementation of First Nations jurisdiction, including the development, enforcement, and administration of First Nations laws. It also constrains long-term planning, reduces responsiveness, and hinders progress toward equitable and culturally appropriate justice systems.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Anti-Racism

NAN JRP received Anti-Racism Directorate funding for the 2023–2024 and 2024–2025 fiscal years, ending on March 31, 2025. During this period, the Anti-Racism Policy Analyst led cross-departmental research and policy analysis on anti-racism issues while also supporting broader departmental priorities. The project also contributed to the development of the JRP website as a platform to share anti-racism initiatives and other key departmental work. While funding for this position has ended, the department will continue to incorporate related learning and outcomes into its ongoing work.

First Nations rights and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

To advance understanding and practical application of First Nation rights, and international and domestic human rights, section 35 (1) of the Constitution Act, 1982 and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Key Work includes:

- Monitoring developments in UNDRIP-related jurisprudence and federal and provincial implementation.
- Supporting alignment with broader policy frameworks, including the Indigenous Justice Strategy.
- Developing accessible materials to support leadership decision-making, staff, and public awareness.

Enforcement and Prosecution of our laws

The NAN, NAPS, and NALSC Working Group (WG), is positioned as a practical mechanism to move from concern to coordinated action. Its mandate links community safety, enforcement, prosecution, diversion, wellness support, research, and inter-organizational engagement into one shared table

This is especially important because of the NAN DECLARATION OF A STATE OF EMERGENCY AND PUBLIC SAFETY CRISIS OVER ILLEGAL DRUGS AND DRUG-RELATED VIOLENCE IN NAN FIRST NATIONS, on October 9, 2025, recognizes that illegal drugs and drug-related violence are creating urgent and escalating risks for NAN First Nations, and that no single organization can address these risks alone.

The WG continues to meet without dedicated funding to develop practical, coordinated, First Nations-led pathways for enforcing and prosecuting First Nations laws and bylaws across NAN territory

Membership of the WG also includes Tribal Council participation from Matawa with an open invitation for other Tribal Councils to join. This work advances interorganizational communications on issues like community safety, local governance, and addresses longstanding legal and structural gaps that have limited the effective exercise of First Nations jurisdiction. It also supports broader justice transformation by identifying approaches that are legally sound, operationally feasible, and responsive to the realities and priorities of NAN First Nations

The membership remains committed to continuing this collaborative work together, strengthening coordination across organizations, and advancing practical solutions that support the safety, wellbeing, and jurisdiction of NAN First Nations.

Law Foundation of Ontario

JRP received a two-year grant through the Law Foundation of Ontario's Responsive program for the period October 1, 2025, to September 30, 2027. This funding supports unmet needs among nonprofits, charities, and Indigenous organizations working to improve access to justice across Ontario. Through this project, JRP is advancing education and awareness for NAN Chiefs, Councils, citizens, and the broader Ontario public.

In the first year, the project focuses on Indigenous law and Aboriginal law; Two-Eyed Seeing, legal pluralism, and worldview; UNDRIP 101, including key information on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples; and the Indian Act. Year two will build on the first year's work and identify additional research areas to support ongoing education and awareness. Project materials will be shared through the existing NAN JRP website, with new pages added to highlight this initiative.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Recommendation 8 of the Inquest Jury verdict into the death of Moses Beaver (Amik) called for NAN, in consultation with and funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health, to develop a public health campaign to reduce stigma related to mental illness, including bipolar disorder, improve understanding of the role of psychiatric medication in treatment, and address mistrust of the colonial health care system among First Nations people.

With funding from the Ontario Ministry of Health, NAN launched a public health initiative to address stigma related to mental illness, including bipolar disorder. Through NAN's Health Policy and Advocacy department, JRP received funding to complete a literature review that informed a five-day social media campaign. Launched on March 30, 2026, in recognition of World Bipolar Day, the campaign aimed to increase public understanding of stigma and bipolar disorder through education and awareness, while promoting compassion, inclusion, and supportive behaviour.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Secured and currently working on a two-year Law Foundation of Ontario responsive grant supporting justice research and public education.
- Strengthened collaboration with key justice partners, including NAPS and NALSC.

Reclamation and Healing

OVERVIEW

The Reclamation and Healing Department at Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) supports survivor-led initiatives focused on truth, healing, commemoration, and the identification of missing children and unmarked burial sites related to Residential Schools. The department advances culturally grounded, community-driven approaches through engagement, coordination, and partnership development across NAN territory.

A key focus is the Site Search Forum and Residential Schools Missing Children – Community Support Funding initiative, including the 4th Annual National Site Search Forum held March 24–26, 2026, in Toronto. The forum brought together 184 delegates from 62 communities nationwide to share knowledge on reconciliation, policy, funding, research, and healing practices.

The department supports participation of Survivors, Nikanigawbowin Council members, and NAN representatives in national and regional gatherings, strengthening partnerships with the seven NAN Lead Communities and external academic and technical partners. Activities also include development of engagement materials, a dedicated website, and participation in Survivor, intergenerational, and cultural events such as Orange Shirt Day.

The department also supports awareness of related settlement and healing initiatives, including the First Nations Child and Family Services and Jordan's Principle Settlement (in collaboration with Deloitte) and the Indian Boarding Homes Program, by sharing information and supporting community access to services.

Overall, the department strengthens coordination, survivor engagement, and community capacity while advancing NAN's commitment to truth, reconciliation, and healing.



PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Site Search Forum and Residential Schools Missing Children – Community Support Funding

This fiscal year, NAN continued to advance survivor-driven efforts related to Residential Schools Missing Children and unmarked burial sites through community engagement, strategic planning, research collaboration, and participation in national gatherings. A key highlight was the 4th Annual National Site Search Forum, held March 24–26, 2026, at the Chelsea Hotel in Toronto. The forum brought together 184 delegates representing 62 communities from across Canada, providing a national platform to explore cross-jurisdictional experiences, reconciliation, commemoration, funding sustainability, policy development, and community-led approaches to healing. Sessions focused on lived experiences, traditional cultural practices, allyship, research strategies, storytelling, and emerging opportunities to support communities undertaking site search and commemoration work.

The initiative supported the participation of the Nikanigawbowin Council, Survivors, and NAN representatives in national and regional gatherings, ensuring survivor perspectives remained central to discussions on missing children, unmarked burial sites, and community healing. These engagements strengthened relationships with Indigenous organizations, technical experts, academic institutions, and international partners, while creating opportunities to share knowledge and learn from similar experiences globally.

Throughout the year, the program worked closely with the seven NAN Lead Communities, supporting peer-to-peer collaboration, information sharing, and access to emerging resources and expertise. Partnerships with organizations such as Queen's University helped explore culturally grounded and trauma-informed research approaches, while continued strategic planning advanced NAN's broader IRS Response Strategy.

Additional activities included the development of a dedicated website, production of educational and engagement materials, attendance at Survivor and intergenerational gatherings, and participation in cultural and healing events that honoured Survivors and missing children. These efforts improved access to information, strengthened community connections, and reinforced survivor-led priorities. Despite staffing transitions that created temporary delays, the onboarding of a new program lead helped stabilize operations and resulted in the completion of a draft engagement and response strategy.

Overall, the initiative strengthened community capacity, expanded networks of support, and maintained alignment with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action through respectful, community-driven approaches to truth, healing, commemoration, and the identification of missing children.

Orange Shirt Day

On September 30, 2025, Nishnawbe Aski Nation hosted an Orange Shirt Day event in Thunder Bay to honour Residential School Survivors, remember the children who never returned home, and recognize those who remain missing. The event brought together community members, leaders, and supporters for opening remarks at City Hall, followed by a commemorative walk and gathering at Vickers Park. The day provided an opportunity for reflection, remembrance, education, and collective healing while reaffirming the ongoing commitment to truth and reconciliation.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Trauma-Informed Health and Cultural Support Program – Activities Summary

Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) supports trauma-informed health and cultural initiatives linked to the Indian Residential Schools (IRS) response, the Site Search Forum and Residential Schools Missing Children – Community Support Funding, and related settlement and healing initiatives. This work strengthens culturally grounded supports for Survivors, families, and communities engaged in site search, commemoration, and healing activities across NAN territory.

The initiative helps ensure access to mental health and cultural supports during gatherings, forums, and community-led events, while also strengthening frontline capacity to respond to grief, trauma, and intergenerational impacts associated with residential schools and missing children work. This includes support connected to the First Nations Child and Family Services and Jordan's Principle Settlement, which opened its first claims period on March 10, 2025, allowing eligible members of the Removed Child Class and Removed Child Family Class to apply for compensation. NAN works closely with Deloitte, the Court-appointed Claims Administrator, to support outreach, information sharing, and community engagement, helping increase awareness and improve access to the claims process across remote and northern communities.

This program also supports awareness and community assistance related to the Indian Boarding Homes Program, which provides compensation to First Nations and Inuit individuals placed in federally approved boarding homes while attending school, where many experienced cultural disruption, separation from family, and harm. NAN supports communities through the application process by sharing information, providing guidance, and helping Survivors understand eligibility and claims procedures. This support strengthens access to the settlement process and ensures individuals across NAN territory can connect with available resources.

NAN does not receive funding for the Indian Boarding Homes Program itself.

HIGHLIGHTS

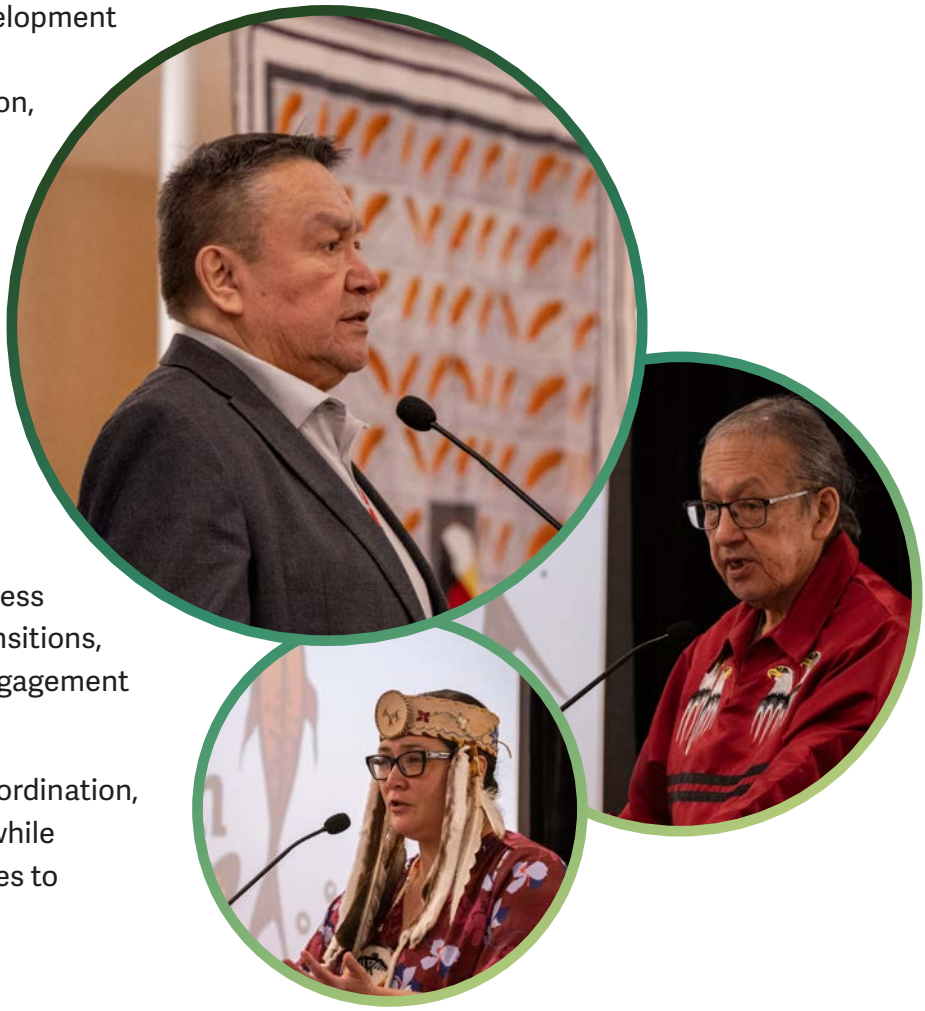
The Reclamation and Healing Department advanced survivor-led initiatives focused on truth, healing, commemoration, and the identification of missing children and unmarked burial sites related to Residential Schools. A major highlight was the 4th Annual National Site Search Forum, held March 24–26, 2026 in Toronto, which brought together 184 delegates from 62 communities across Canada to advance dialogue on reconciliation, funding, research, policy, and community-led healing.

The department supported participation of Survivors, Nikanigawbowin Council members, and NAN representatives in national and regional gatherings, ensuring survivor voices guided site search and commemoration work. Collaboration with the seven NAN Lead Communities strengthened peer-to-peer learning and coordination, while partnerships with academic institutions such as Queen's University supported culturally grounded, trauma-informed research approaches.

Key achievements also included the development of a dedicated website and engagement materials to improve access to information, and participation in Survivor, intergenerational, and cultural healing events, including Orange Shirt Day activities in Thunder Bay.

The department further supported awareness of the First Nations Child and Family Services and Jordan's Principle Settlement in collaboration with Deloitte, and assisted communities with information related to the Indian Boarding Homes Program to support access to claims processes. Despite staffing transitions, operations were stabilized and a draft engagement and response strategy was completed.

Overall, these activities strengthened coordination, partnerships, and survivor engagement while advancing culturally grounded approaches to truth, reconciliation, and healing.





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 and the NAN Chiefs Committee on Education.

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), the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), Chiefs of Ontario (COO), and other relevant ministries, organizations, and initiatives as required.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Chiefs Committee on Education

2022-04 re: Re-establishment of Chiefs Committee on Education and Approval of Terms of Reference for the Chiefs Committee.

The new NAN Chiefs Committee on Education (CCOE) held its first meeting on March 18, 2026. With the re-establishment of the committee, the educational needs of NAN students and education organizations will have strong leadership advocacy, which is especially necessary during the current fiscal climate in government.



Monthly Photo Contest Submission
Ginoogaming First Nation



Monthly Photo Contest Submission
Matachewan First Nation

Chiefs of Ontario Tables

1. OTTIFA

The purpose of the Ontario Technical Table - Interim Funding Approach (OTTIFA) is to provide a forum for technicians from both Ontario First Nation and Indigenous Service Canada to continue discussions on the development, implementation, and ongoing evaluation of the Interim Funding Approach for First Nations in Ontario.

While NAN continues to participate at the OTTIFA table, there was very limited movement this year. The meetings were mostly focused on restructuring the task teams to better provide recommendations to ISC for funding enhancements to support the unique needs of First Nations students and schools on reserve. New task teams were established that aligned with the new Core Education Funding Formula used by the Ontario Ministry of Education, which replaced the prior Grants for Student Needs (GSN) formula.

2. Ontario Bilateral Education and Learning Table

The Ontario Bilateral Education and Learning Table (OBELT) was established to create a dedicated space for discussions between First Nations in Ontario, the provincial Ministry of Education (Indigenous Education Office) and Indigenous Services Canada on education and lifelong learning priority areas. OBELT aims to advance holistic, community-driven approaches within education that respect First Nations' jurisdiction, priorities, and needs.

The table was created after COO withdrew Ontario's participation from the Assembly of First Nations' education committees, namely the National Indian Education Council (NIEC) and the Chiefs Committee on Education (CCOE). This decision stemmed from concerns over the lack of consideration for the specific funding needs of First Nations in Ontario and a flawed decision-making process at the national level. NAN participates in the OBELT meetings and advocates for the unique needs of our region.

3. Chiefs and Technicians Committee on Languages and Learning

In 2025-2026, the Chiefs and Technicians Committee on Languages and Learning (CTCLL) focused on advocacy for stable and equitable First Nations education funding, language revitalization initiatives, and ensuring First Nations voices were reflected in provincial and federal education policy decisions. NAN remains committed to advocating for NAN communities' needs at the CTCLL.

4. First Nations Life-Long Learning Table

The First Nation Life-long Learning Table (FNLLT) is a bilateral process that works collaboratively with the Ministry of Education, Chiefs of Ontario (COO), Political Territorial Organizations and independent Nations to share and discuss key educational priorities for First Nation students in Ontario. The FNLLT looks to identify priorities, challenges, and opportunities to support the educational success and well-being of First Nation students, particularly within the provincial education system.

The FNLLT is comprised of two circles that work in collaboration to increase access to culturally relevant academic and wellbeing supports, and increase First Nations representation in teachers, education staff, board staff, and senior leadership throughout the education system. Additionally, the FNLLT strengthens relationships with First Nations partners and supports First Nation students in the transition between provincially funded schools and First Nation operated schools.

Curriculum

First Nation communities have emphasized the importance of a collaborative approach to developing, implementing, and reviewing curricula that are culturally appropriate, historically accurate, and serve the unique needs of First Nation students and communities. The NAN Education Curriculum Task Team has completed and submitted 12 Ministry of Education curriculum reviews and is currently evaluating 5 additional upcoming Ontario curricula. The Task Team is currently expanding membership to include educators in NAN communities.

Mental Health and Student Wellbeing

NAN supported 52 youth through the 2025 Land-Based Learning Gathering's annual art contest. This allowed NAN students to submit their ideas of Zaagi'idiwin Miinawaa Bimaadiziwin - Love and Life Art for Wellness and Renewal to support mental wellness. The contest winner's art was used as the branding for all Land-Based Learning Gathering materials. The youth joined educators as they engaged in meaningful, educational, and holistic workshops that supported student wellness and learning.

Language

NAN continues to advocate for additional funding for the revitalization of language initiatives and to assist language experts, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and First Nation language speakers in obtaining provincial accreditation through the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT). NAN is working collaboratively with the FNLLT, Chiefs of Ontario (COO), and NAN partners to review the qualifications required for language keepers to become a member of the OCT.

Land-Based Learning Gathering 2025

Akii-Miigwewin (Earth's Gift) Celebrating the Teachings of the Land was the guiding theme of the Land-Based Learning Gathering at the Best Western Plus Nor'Wester Hotel and Conference Centre. Approximately 204 participants attended, including educators, youth group members, presenters, tradeshow vendors, and NAN staff. The high level of participation highlighted the eagerness to explore and embrace land-based education. Attendees engaged in outdoor land-based programs that educators could share and build capacity with their home communities and schools.

Language Strategy

Resolution 18-07: NAN Language Strategy
The NAN Language Strategy focuses on language revitalization. Two language sessions were provided to all interested NAN members in 2025-2026. Sessions were provided in Cree, Anishininiimowin, and Ojibwe. The Dagwaagin language series had 176 participants and the Pipoon language series had an amazing 457 participants. In addition to the language sessions, NAN is also working to develop a children's language series called Little Speakers.



Monthly Photo Contest Submission
Cat Lake First Nation

STUDENT SAFETY PROGRAMMING

Continuity of Care

Seven Youth Inquest 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.

The NAN Student Safety Working Group (SSWG) is working in collaboration with HarpLabs to restructure the NAN Continuity of Care APP that is currently available on both iPhone and Android devices. The APP was originally designed to help student support workers connect students to resources and information to support their educational journey. The redesign will incorporate a holistic framework that will also support students, teachers, parents, and communities in ensuring students have access to up-to-date resources and essential services.

Student Safety

Resolution 17/49: Chiefs Special Emergency Meeting Action Plan

Resolution 16/78: Implementation of the Seven Youth Inquest Recommendations

The Student Safety Working Group focuses on strengthening safety, well-being, and supports for First Nation students, particularly those transitioning from remote communities to attend school in urban centres.

Through regular meetings and collaboration with Tribal Councils, District School Boards (DSBs), education organizations, youth, and Elders, the working group identifies key safety concerns and works toward practical, sustainable solutions.

Key priorities include increasing student safety during transitions between First Nation, federally operated, and provincially funded school systems; supporting student mental health and well-being; re-engaging students who may have become disconnected from school; and sharing resources and best practices across communities.

Student Transitions Workbook Series

Seven Youth Inquest 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, four workbooks have been created and distributed to schools to help prepare students for life in an urban centre:

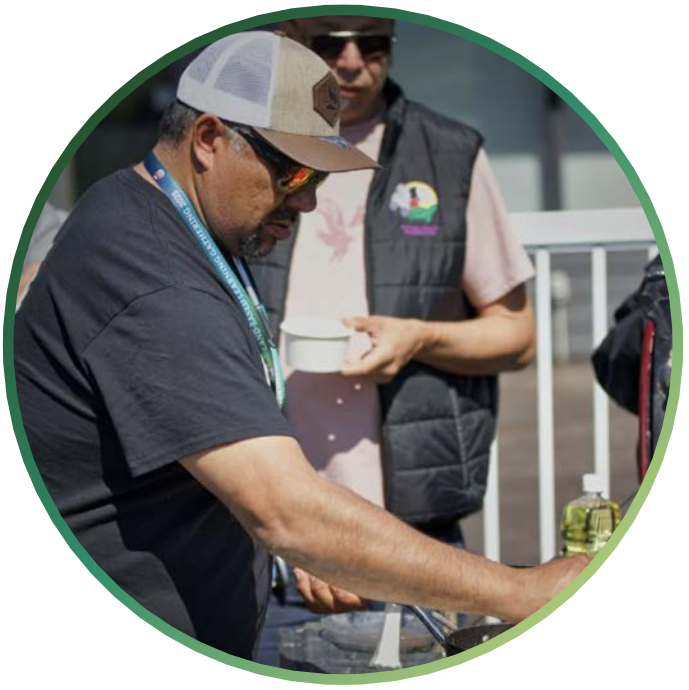
1. Boarding Homes - focuses on the various aspects of living in a boarding home.
2. Mental Health and Self Advocacy - includes the concepts of what mental health is, dealing with grief, anxiety and depression, substance use/abuse, and more.
3. Life in the City and Independent Living - focuses on a variety of skills, knowledge, and practical tools that enhance student learning. This includes budgeting, money management, city living, racism, gangs, public transit tips, ways to support students living independently, and navigating comfortably around an urban city environment.
4. Harm Reduction Principles & Practices - focuses on what harm reduction is, student wellbeing, harm reduction strategies, and tips to assist learners in developing effective and healthy coping strategies.

NAN is currently developing a NAN Student Transition Workbook Guide to support teachers, parents, and support workers in navigating the activities found throughout the workbook series.

Community Building Campaign

Seven Youth Inquest Recommendation 126 – Through the Ministry of Education, continued work regarding supports for students experiencing racism and continued 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 it was first displayed at the 2021 Northern Nishnawbe Education Council's (NNEC) Wake the Giant event. It consists of sixteen informational panels, four art panels, four rounded panels, and four seating areas. The 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 environment. The panel campaign continues to be successful and has been displayed in schools, Truth and Reconciliation Day celebrations, Indigenous Peoples Day celebrations, Thunder Bay Police Service training, and Thunder Bay Regional Health Science Centre at their Indigenous Awareness Week event to promote community awareness.



OTHER ACTIVITIES

Education Directors' Forum

The NAN Education Department has been hosting an Education Directors' Forum twice a year since 2023, as requested by NAN Education Directors. The 2025 Siigwan Education Directors' Forum was held from May 21 to 22 at the Delta Waterfront Hotel in Thunder Bay. It addressed budgeting, education priorities, using AI in education, project-based learning, mental wellness, cyberbullying, opioid poisoning awareness and response, and a presentation by Spirit North.

We had education directors and other delegates from Pikangikum, Lac Seul, Aroland, Eabametoong, Ginoogaming, Nibinamik, Webequie, Attawapiskat, Kashechewan, Kasabonika, Kingfisher, Wapekeka, Wunnumin, Mattagami, Bearskin Lake, North Caribou, and Slate Falls communities.

The Dagwaagin 2025 Education Directors' Forum was held on December 10 to 11 at the Best Western Nor'Wester in Thunder Bay in partnership with the Early Years' Early Learning and Child Care team. It provided information and presentations from OSAP, Queens University's STEM program, Oshki Pimache-O-Win, Queens/Pikangikum's B.Ed. program partnership, Ronny Musikitele, updates on the funding and reporting of community early learning childcare centres, and the Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) and Finding our Power Together (FOPT) research teams.

We again had an excellent turnout with delegates from Apitipi Anicinapek Nation, Missanabie Cree, Ginoogaming, Webequie, North Caribou Lake, Bearskin Lake, Wunnumin, Brunswick House, and Pikangikum.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Distribution of Student Transition Notebook #4 - Harm Reduction Principles and Practices.
- The NAN Continuity of Care APP is growing to provide support to student support workers, parents, teachers, support workers, and students.
- Ongoing promotion and advocacy of language revitalization.
- The NAN Curriculum Task Team completed and submitted 12 curriculum reviews to the Ministry of Education.
- The NAN Dagwaagin & Pipoon Language Series had an increase in NAN community participation.
- The Student Panel at the Dagwaagin 2025 Education Directors' Forum, where post-secondary students shared their perspectives and stories.





Education Jurisdiction

OVERVIEW

Education Jurisdiction is mandated to improve First Nations education for participating First Nations through the development of an education system that meets or exceeds provincial school system standards. Since the NAN-Canada Agreement in Principle (AIP) was signed in 2018, the education jurisdiction team has continued to provide management and administrative services to education governance negotiations between the First Nations of Nishnawbe Aski Nation and Canada.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Negotiations

The negotiation team has reached a substantively completed draft of the Education Agreement, with negotiations ongoing with Canada on the Fiscal Transfer Agreement and the Interim Fiscal Financing Agreement.

The Interim Fiscal Financing Agreement will provide one-time implementation funding effective for two years immediately following the successful ratification of the Education Agreement by participating First Nations. When ready, this agreement will undergo a review process that includes the NAN Education Committee, Chiefs Committee on Education, Education Directors, educators, community members, and leadership.

The Implementation Planning Working Group is responsible for developing the guidelines on how the new education system will be implemented in participating First Nations. The implementation chapter of the main Education Agreement is substantially completed and will be undergoing the NAN review process that includes the NAN Education Committee, Chiefs Committee on Education, Education Directors, educators, community members, and leadership.

The Fiscal Working Group Table is responsible for negotiating and determining how much funding Canada will provide to support communities' new education system. The Fiscal Working Group table was established at the end of 2023 to start working on the Fiscal Agreement, and the fiscal chapter of the main Education Agreement. The Fiscal Agreement determines the amount of funding Canada will provide to a First Nations-led education system. Due to the variety of factors that play a role in education in our communities, NAN works diligently to ensure that communities' needs are reflected in the agreement.

Data Sharing Agreements are currently being requested from NAN First Nations. The NAN Education negotiations team requires information from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) to support the Fiscal Negotiations process and the development of costing models to accurately reflect communities' needs to deliver high-quality education programs, services, and governance for participating First Nations. Data in this release includes: 10 years of population statistics, five years of programs and services funding, 20 years of student enrollment statistics, and five years of infrastructure funding. All information will remain confidential and will only be used by the fiscal analysts to provide aggregated costing models in support of the negotiations.

Community Engagement Initiatives

Community engagement initiatives support the in-community preparatory work of implementing a self-governed education system. This work involves supporting community capacity and awareness to create a well-informed membership for the Final Education Agreement ratification vote. The NAN Education Team spent a total of 27 days in NAN communities, including Bearskin Lake, Marten Falls, Sachigo Lake, Nibinamik, North Caribou Lake, Neskantaga, Slate Falls, and Wunnumin. Community engagement activities include community visits, meetings with local Education Authorities, working with a Community-Based Coordinator, attending the Leadership Summit, and other Education Jurisdiction-related events.

Community-Based Coordinators (CBC) are community members who help promote and coordinate communication between the NAN Negotiations team and their community. The Education Jurisdiction team has been actively promoting awareness of the funding and resources available to interested First Nation communities for the Community-Based Coordinator position and community engagement and consultation activities. In the 2025-2026 period we currently had 9 active CBC positions in NAN communities.

NAN has engaged with the following 30 communities, and the bolded 26 communities have signed data-sharing agreements:

Marten Falls	**Bearskin Lake**
Constance Lake	**Aroland**
Matachewan	Lac Seul
Apitipi Anicinapek	**Eabametoong**
Mattagami	Slate Falls
Missanabie Cree	**Webequie**
Kasabonika	Nibinamik
Muskrat Dam	**Sandy Lake**
Wunnumin Lake	**Kashechewan**
Kingfisher Lake	**Brunswick House**
Attawapiskat	**Cat Lake**
Chapleau Cree	**Fort Severn**
Ginoogaming	**Keewaywin**
Neskantaga	**North Caribou Lake**
Mishkeegogamang	**Flying Post**



Structural Readiness

Structural Readiness (SR) activities aim to assist First Nations participating in the Education Jurisdiction process through capacity-building training, leadership professional development, development of Local Education Codes, and preparation for meeting ratification requirements before the voting process. In addition, this role will help communities obtain detailed feedback to ensure that any new structure created through the negotiation process reflects the values and beliefs of community members.

Local Education Codes – The proposed education system currently under negotiation will require participating First Nations to establish a Local Education Code (or constitution) that defines their relationship within the Territory-Wide Education System (TWEB). To prepare communities for this responsibility, NAN has been providing resources, training, and engagement opportunities to support Local Education Code development. This year, NAN delivered the law-making component of the toolkit to a diverse range of participants, including high school students, educators, Education Directors, and leadership.

Capacity Building and Professional Development - Capacity-building activities focus on strengthening community readiness for the implementation of the Education Jurisdiction Agreement. Key initiatives included leadership and staff training, Local Education Code development, governance and administrative planning, community engagement, and implementation planning to support a smooth transition to full implementation. This fiscal, NAN refined our tools to guide communities through this process, including presentations, brochures, and the Education Agreement Toolkit.

NAN-Carleton Youth Leadership Program 2026
This year's First Nations and Inuit Youth Employment Strategy (FNIYES) program saw 12 youth delegates from across NAN territory travel to Ottawa to attend a career-building retreat in partnership with Carleton University. This event breaks down barriers to post-secondary education by providing youth with firsthand experience at a university and showcases options for a path forward in their education journeys. Some of the opportunities provided include a lecture on the psychology of confidence, career services workshopping, as well as tours through sites such as the Canadian Museum of History, Parliament, and the Canadian Agriculture and Food Museum. Along with leisurely activities in a week-long agenda and meeting new people, this was another successful experience in career building that the Education Jurisdiction team was able to provide NAN youth.



OTHER ACTIVITIES

NAN hosted engagement sessions for high school students at Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School, Pelican Falls First Nation High School, and Matawa Education and Care Centre. These sessions introduced the students to Education Jurisdiction, then had them complete the Build Your School activity. This activity invited students to envision what their ideal school would offer, provide real-life examples and experiences, and drive discussions on the youths' vision for education under a First Nations-led education system.





HIGHLIGHTS

- CBCs Training and Orientation Retreat – Winnipeg April 11-13, 2026
- Community Visits - Nibinamik, Bearskin Lake, Sachigo Lake, North Caribou Lake, and Slate Falls
- NAN-Carleton University Youth Leadership
- Engagement sessions at MECC and NNEC high schools





Seven Youth Inquest

OVERVIEW

Mandate: Resolution 16/78: Implementation of The Seven Youth Inquest Recommendations.

The Seven Youth Inquest examined the tragic circumstances surrounding the deaths of seven Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) youth while they were attending high school in Thunder Bay. The inquest resulted in 145 recommendations aimed at preventing similar tragedies and improving the educational outcomes, health, and safety of NAN students. The Seven Youth Inquest Project remains a priority initiative and a core commitment to advancing the safety, wellbeing, and educational success of NAN youth.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Quarterly Seven Youth Inquest Coordinators Calls The Seven Youth Inquest Coordinators Calls continue to support direct engagement among Seven Youth Inquest Education partners and representatives from Ontario and Canada. During this fiscal period, NAN and Inquest partners held two meetings to advance implementation of the recommendations and identify opportunities for governments and partners to collaborate more effectively.

Seven Youth Inquest Education Table

The Education Table supports the implementation of strategies related to education programs and services under the Inquest recommendations. In 2025–2026, two meetings were held to discuss current issues, successes, implementation challenges, and identify priorities for collaboration. In January 2025, the Table agreed to restart its three task teams to improve coordination and strengthen implementation efforts.

Seven Youth Inquest Task Team Meetings

Under the Education Table, the three task teams - Infrastructure; Programs, Services and Funding; and Student Well-Being, were restarted in September 2025 with updated workplans. Each task team focuses on related recommendations and works collaboratively with representatives from all Inquest Partners, to advance shared implementation goals. All three task teams met in September 2025 and January 2026. Members of each task team have agreed to meet quarterly, in accordance with their respective Terms of Reference, to advance implementation priorities and strengthen coordination among partners.

Seven Youth Inquest Political Table

The annual Political Table brings together First Nation partners, political leaders, and decision-makers to review progress, address barriers to implementing the Seven Youth Inquest recommendations, and identify key priorities. Due to unforeseen circumstances (the proroguing of government and subsequent federal election), the Political Table and Partners Planning Meeting scheduled for this fiscal year did not take place.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Ongoing Seven Youth Inquest Resource Development and Distribution

NAN continues to develop and distribute Seven Youth Inquest specific resources to support the implementation of recommendations addressing the health, safety, and wellbeing of NAN youth.


Inquest
Nishnawbe Aski Nation
Continuity of Care


Continuity of Care
HARPER



HIGHLIGHTS

Intergenerational Trauma Resource in Development

A new resource booklet for youth ages 13 to 18, or Grades 8 to 12, was developed to address intergenerational trauma and support healing. The booklet aligns recommendations focused on student mental well-being, awareness, and safety. It was developed and printed during this fiscal year and is now being distributed to communities and schools based on identified need.

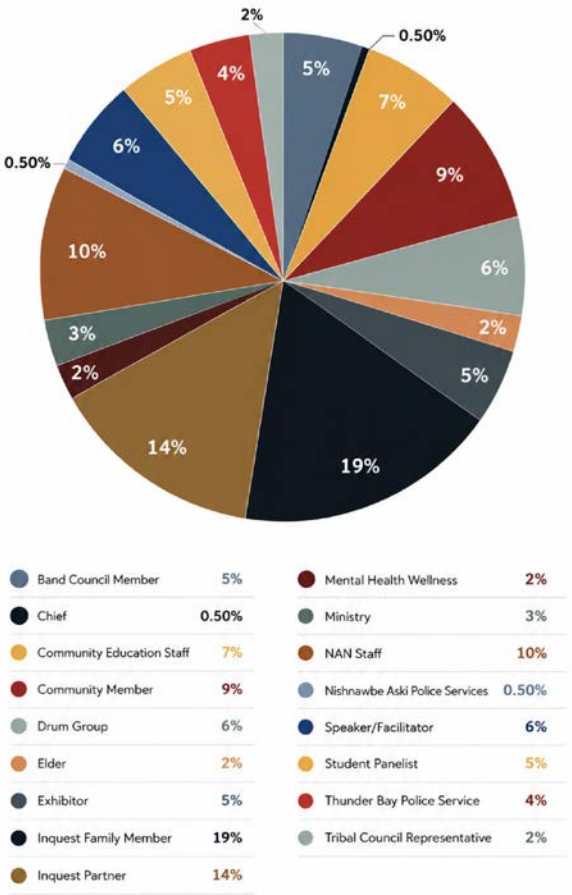
The Seven Youth Inquest, Continuity of Care Forum

Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) hosted its fourth Annual Continuity of Care Forum at the Best Western Plus Nor'Wester Hotel & Conference Centre on February 25 and 26, 2026. This year's theme, "Our Journey Continues: Ten Years of Healing, Supporting & Remembering," reflects the strength, resilience, and shared commitment that bring communities together. Key highlights included impactful presentations by keynote speaker and powerful discussions led by student panelists, Inquest Partners, and Inquest families.

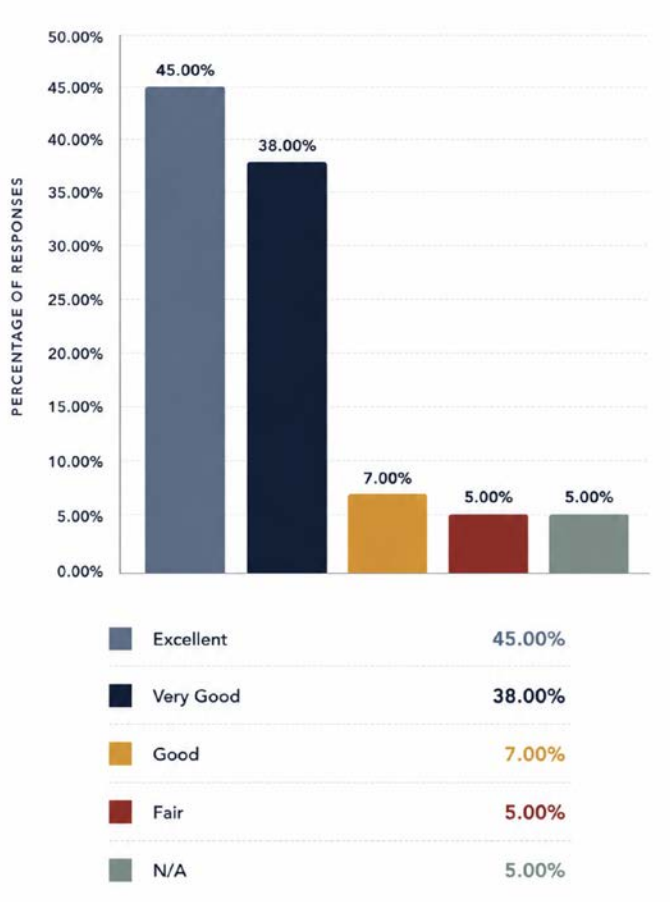
NAN Advocacy for Dedicated Funding for Seven Youth Inquest Initiatives

NAN continues to advocate for predictable, sustainable, and adequate stand-alone funding to support the implementation of the Seven Youth Inquest Recommendations. Dedicated long-term funding is essential to ensure recommendation-related initiatives can be implemented, maintained, and delivered effectively, while supporting ongoing efforts to improve outcomes for First Nation students and communities.

Overall Attendees at the 2026 Continuity of Care Forum



Rating of Participants on the Content of the 2026 Continuity of Care Forum



Education Partnerships Program Initiatives

OVERVIEW

The Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Education Partnerships Program (EPP) is a tri-partite partnership between NAN, Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), and the Ontario Ministry of Education that supports First Nation student achievement across First Nation, provincial, and independent school systems. Building on 17 years of collaboration, the program fosters strong partnerships among NAN First Nations, the provincial education system, and key stakeholders. A Joint Implementation Workplan is developed and implemented annually in partnership with NAN-affiliated education organizations, Tribal Councils, and the EPP Steering Committee.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

NAN EPP continues to deliver initiatives that support students, educators, and education partners across the NAN territory. Through collaborative efforts focused on student safety and success, the Joint Implementation Workplan is carried out in partnership with Keewaytinook Okimakanak Board of Education, Matawa Education and Care Centre, Independent First Nations Alliance, Northern Nishnawbe Education Council, Windigo First Nations Council, Shibogama First Nations Council, and Wabun Tribal Council. An EPP Liaison works within each Tribal Council and partner organization, meeting with the NAN EPP team twice annually and collaborating throughout the year on Joint Implementation Workplan priorities.

In 2025–2026, the NAN Education Partnerships Program (EPP) successfully implemented the following activities in support of the workplan priorities.

EPP Activity for Students

This activity was designed for NAN students attending high school. Local community service providers were invited to share information and resources with students at the following event:

- NAN Student Orientation Sessions in Thunder Bay and Sioux Lookout.

EPP Activities for Educators

The following initiatives were delivered during the year to support educators from NAN communities and partner District School Boards:

- NAN Educators as 2SLGBTQQIA+ Allies
- NAN Best Practices in First Nations Education Forum
- NAN - KPDSB New Teacher Induction Program
- NAN - KPDSB Principal Leadership Program
- NAN - KPDSB Mental Health Champion Program
- NAN First Nation Resource Sharing
- NAN First Nation Curriculum Sharing

EPP Activity for Student Accommodation Providers

An appreciation dinner was held to recognize the valuable contributions of boarding home parents who support NAN students. The event also featured presentations on student safety and a review of the Student Accommodation Guide:

- NAN Student Accommodation Providers Appreciation Dinner

EPP Activities for Partners

These activities were organized for EPP partner organizations and participating District School Boards to foster collaboration and share progress on EPP-related initiatives:

- NAN Indigenous Liaison and EPP Liaison Worker Meetings
- NAN EPP Liaison Collaborative Working Group Sessions
- NAN On-Call Worker Training Sessions

In 2025–2026, Tribal Councils and Partner Education Organizations successfully implemented their workplan initiatives, focusing on the identified priority areas. Examples include:

- EPP Liaisons at each partner Tribal Council and Education Organizations
- IFNA Parental Engagement
- Matawa Indigenizing Curriculum
- Matawa – Lakehead DSB MOU
- Matawa Transition workshop
- KOBE Transition Teacher Coach
- Windigo Student Transition Opportunities
- NNEC Secondary Transitions - Community Visits
- NNEC Student Transitions Coordinator

Looking ahead, NAN EPP will continue to work with partners to deliver initiatives that support NAN students and promote positive educational outcomes.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

The NAN EPP has continued to provide administrative support for the joint NAN–Keewatin Patricia District School Board initiatives, including the Mental Health Champion Program, New Teacher Induction Program, and Principal Leadership Program. These programs are designed for teachers and education staff working in NAN community schools. Participants engage in a range of professional learning opportunities, mentorships, and program retreats.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Approximately 350 secondary students attended the NAN Thunder Bay Student Orientation; and about 100 secondary students attended NAN Sioux Lookout Student Orientation session.
- Thunder Bay high school students participated in the Educators as 2SLGBTQQIA+ Allies and Best Practices Student Panel. Student panels provide educators across NAN territory with meaningful insights into student experiences and perspectives.



DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Social Services

Social Services Strategic Advancement

OVERVIEW

The Social Services Strategic Advancement (SSSA) Department provides advocacy, coordination, strategic planning, and support to assist NAN First Nations and Tribal Councils to achieve their community family wellness and social services goals. The SSSA department interfaces with the federal, provincial, and municipal governments in its advocacy role. The work involves negotiations, policy development, program implementation and evaluation. A key priority is ending discrimination for Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) members and promoting substantive equality in social service-related funding, policy, and legislation.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Resolution 24/06: Approval of Revised Terms of Reference for Chiefs Committee on Children, Youth and Families

The scope of work of the Chiefs Committee on Children, Youth, and Families (CCCYF) has expanded since its establishment through Resolution 13/06: Ontario Aboriginal Child and Youth Strategy. Its role was further defined as an interim coordinating body for children and youth initiatives through Resolution 17/67 Children and Youth Coordinating Body.

Resolution 24/06: Approval of Revised Terms of Reference for Chiefs Committee revised the CCCYF Terms of Reference (TOR) and reaffirmed the Committee as the dedicated body responsible for overseeing and providing direction on social service matters affecting children, youth, and families.



Monthly Photo Contest Submission
Moose Cree First Nation



Monthly Photo Contest Submission
Constance Lake First Nation

ACHIEVEMENTS

During the reporting period, CCCYF convened virtually on an as needed basis. The use of virtual meetings has enhanced accessibility and facilitated efficient communication and decision making among Chiefs, proxies, technicians and department staff. The committee met in person twice, October 29, 2025 and February 18 – 19, 2026 to discuss files and provide direction on a range of strategic advancement priorities, including but not limited to:

- Implementation planning for the Final Agreement on the Long-Term Reform of First Nations Child and Family Services Program in Ontario ("OFA").
- Resolution 26/04: Support NAN to Seek Leave to Intervene in B.M. V. Ontario to Support Off-Reserve Indigenous Children and Families.
- Jordan's Principle and Choose Life Resolution 25/22: Support for Long-Term Sustainable Funding for Jordan's Principle and Choose Life.
- Bill C-92 implementation and engagement.
- Operational changes to Choose Life and Jordan's Principle.
- The Memorandum of Agreement Respecting Welfare Programs for Indians ("1965 Indian Welfare Agreement").
- Ontario Reform Implementation Committee ("ORIC").
- Remoteness Secretariat.

NEXT STEPS

The CCCYF will continue advising the SSSA department on matters related to Child and family well-being.

25/07 Approval of the Ontario Final Agreement on the Long-Term Reform of the First Nations Child and Family Services Program.

The Final Settlement Agreement on Long-Term Reform of the First Nations Child and Family Services ("FNCFS") Program was approved by NAN Chiefs in Assembly and the Chiefs of Ontario ("COO") in October 2024; however, it was rejected at the Assembly of First Nations on October 19, 2024. The rejection of the Final Settlement agreement resulted in COO passing the resolution "Exploring a Final Agreement on the Long-Term Reform of the First Nations Child and Family Services", directing that a regional Final Agreement be pursued for Ontario through negotiations among NAN, COO, and Canada.

In December 2024, Canada received a mandate to negotiate a regionalized agreement on long-term reform in Ontario, aligned with the draft National Final Agreement with NAN and COO. Negotiations between NAN, COO, and Canada resulted in a draft Ontario Final Agreement on Long-Term Reform of FNCFS in Ontario that committed $8.5 billion in funding to support reform in Ontario.



Resolution 25/07 directed the NAN Executive to sign the OFA and to bring forward, or support, a motion before the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ("CHRT") seeking its approval of the OFA. Resolution 25/07 also called upon NAN Chiefs-in-Assembly and COO Chiefs-in-Assembly to support and approve the Ontario Final Agreement. The Agreement was subsequently approved by COO Chiefs-in-Assembly through resolution the following day.

This Resolution replaces these previous resolutions:

- 24/08 Final Settlement Agreement On Long-Term Reform Of The First Nations Child And Family Services Program.
- 24/40 Approval Of The Final Agreement On The Long-Term Reform Of The First Nations Child And Family Services Program.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- NAN, COO, and Canada signed the OFA, securing $8.5 billion in funding to reform the FNCFS program in Ontario. This historic agreement was a pivotal moment in healing, advancing community well-being, and creating a strong future for NAN communities, children, youth, and families.
- On March 7, 2025, the Parties filed a joint motion with the CHRT seeking approval of the OFA Agreement.
- February 26 and 27, 2026, the Parties to the OFA provided their final submissions to the CHRT in Ottawa.
- Visited communities across NAN territory to share information, learn about their strengths and needs, and identify opportunities for NAN, COO, and ISC to provide additional support.
- Engaged with CCCYF members and delegates to better understand the ongoing challenges related to First Nations Band Representative Services both on- and off-reserve
- The Ontario Final Agreement was approved by the CHRT on March 30th, 2026. NAN Executive and Leadership convened in Toronto to mark this historic milestone.
    - The approval of the OFA by the CHRT marked a significant advancement in the long-term reform of the First Nations Child and Family Services Program in Ontario and enabled the Agreement to proceed toward implementation, sustainable funding, and First Nation inherent jurisdiction over children, youth, and families.
    - The CHRT identified the following: the OFA rightly puts First Nations in the seat of authority for decisions concerning their own children, satisfactory built-in safeguards and the commitment to co-develop a successor program following the OFA's expiry, recognized that the OFA supports both First Nations and FNCFS Agencies and does not force an either/or choice between them, and affirmed the remoteness quotient as an important, ground-breaking, innovative and valuable tool to ensure FNCFS funding reflects the real costs of delivering services in remote and northern communities.
- Hosted the Ontario Final Settlement Agreement Gathering January 13-15, 2026.
- Hosted virtual information and engagement sessions and conducted community visits to support a better understanding of the OFA.
- Developed and distributed information materials to communities to support implementation efforts. These materials included the Ontario Final Settlement Agreement Gathering binder, NAN-specific weaving wellness documents, ISC-created supports, and COO developed materials.

- Continue supporting Agencies in the development of their Child and Community Wellbeing Plans, due November 30th, 2026.
- Support the successful operational implementation of the OFA within NAN territory.
- Continue supporting the implementation of reformed funding approaches and policy changes.
- Provide guidance and support related to OFA work plans and implementation activities for OFA.
- Continue supporting NAN communities as they implement the FNCFS program reform outlined in the OFA.
- Finalize the ORIC.
- Finalize the Remoteness Secretariat.
- Finalize Alternative Dispute Resolution Process.
- Work with COO to finalize the additional Post Majority Support Services required under the OFA.



25/08 Non-Interference with the Approval of the Ontario Final Agreement on Child and Family Services

Resolution 25/08 Non-Interference with the Approval of the Ontario Final Agreement on Child and Family Services discouraged the interference or contestation of parties that may further delay the CHRT's approval of the OFA.

The resolution reaffirms the sacred responsibility and inherent jurisdiction of First Nations to act wholistically in the best interests of their children, youth, families, and communities. It further states that actions taken by parties that intentionally delay the OFA disregarded these sacred responsibilities and hinder the timely implementation of reform intended to benefit First Nations children, youth, and families.

Ultimately, concerns were raised by the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, Taykwa Tagamou Nation, and Georgina Island First Nation, who intervened in opposition to the OFA. February 26 and 27, 2026, the Parties to the OFA presented their final submissions before the CHRT. As a result of these proceedings, approval of the Ontario Final Agreement shall be delayed beyond the anticipated effective date of April 1st, 2026. In their decision, the CHRT "was satisfied that the OFA's reforms are evidence-based and, in some respects, go beyond what the research recommended."

ACHIEVEMENTS

- February 26 and 27, 2026, the Parties to the OFA provided their final submissions to the CHRT in Ottawa.
- The Ontario Final Agreement was approved by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal on March 30th, 2026.
- The Effective Date of the OFA will be May 29th, 2026.

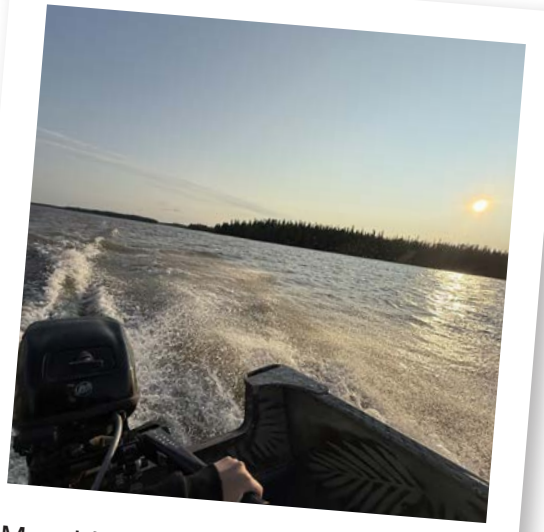
NEXT STEPS

- No next steps required for this resolution, as the Ontario Final Agreement is expected to be passed, pending any judicial reviews, in its entirety on May 29, 2026.

26/04 Support NAN to Seek Leave to Intervene in B.M. V. Ontario To Support Off-Reserve Indigenous Children and Families.

CCCYF passed a motion on February 18, 2026, recommending that NAN Chiefs support seeking leave to intervene in B.M. v. Ontario. As context, class actions have been initiated in multiple jurisdictions, including Quebec, British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and the Federal Court, on behalf of Off-Reserve Indigenous Children and families who were either apprehended or denied essential services. The class action was certified in Quebec, British Columbia, and Manitoba.

The class action in Ontario was dismissed at the certification stage on the basis that the plaintiffs' claims largely challenged broad legislative and policy decisions.



Monthly Photo Contest Submission
Muskrat Dam First Nation

NAN's involvement is intended to assert its position on the urgent need for equitable treatment of all Indigenous children, regardless of residence. NAN also seeks to clarify the narrative and ensure that the Court fully understands the lived realities of NAN members.

This resolution is supported by and references the following resolutions:

- 24/40: Approval of the Final Agreement on the Long-Term Reform of the First Nations Child and Family Services Program.
- Resolution 16/14: First Nation Inherent Jurisdiction over Children Wherever they Reside, and Resolution.
- 17/61: Inherent Rights and Responsibilities for Our Children.
- 16/13: NAN Development of a Rights of the Child Charter.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Received support, guidance, and approval from CCCYF on February 18, 2026, to bring forward NAN's intervention in B.M v. Ontario to the NAN Chiefs in Assembly.
- This resolution was passed at NAN's Spring Chiefs' Assembly on March 25, 2026.

NEXT STEPS

- Virtual intervention hearing scheduled for May 8th, 2026.
- Once the court's decision is received, department will seek input from CCCYF regarding next steps.

Resolution 24-07: Approval of a Coordination and Oversight Team: First Nations Child and Family Services

Resolution 24/07: Approval of a Coordination and Oversight Team: First Nations Child and Family Services identifies the significant flow of settlement and reform funds into NAN communities. This includes the $19.8 billion in new funding for the long-term reform of the First Nations Child and Family Services program and Jordan's Principle, which was reached on December 31, 2021.

The resolution acknowledges that the substantial influx of funding associated with remedial measures and program reform creates an increased need for proactive planning and coordination to ensure reform objectives are achieved and sustained. It further recognizes NAN's unique role in providing coordination and oversight to support communities and address implementation challenges as new funding streams and reform initiatives are introduced.

As a result, the Band Rep Advisory committee was developed by NAN to play a key role in guiding portions of long-term reform implementation. The Committee provides input and recommends reform initiatives related to Band Representative, Prevention, Post-majority Support Services, and capital planning. Additionally, the Committee offers valuable support in the development of the Anokiitaagan: First Nation Representative Services Toolbox. Anokiitaagan received its name from the late Elder Aaron Therriault.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- The First Nations Child and Family Services and Jordan's Principle Settlement First Claims Period for the Removed Child and eligible Caregiving Parents and Caregiving Grandparents opened on March 10, 2025.
- Continued to provide Deloitte, the Settlement Administrator, with opportunities to share information and updates directly with NAN communities. Responsibility for coordinating these efforts has since been assumed by the Reclamation and Healing department.
- Maintained regular monthly meetings with First Nation Representatives, Prevention, Post Majority Support Service workers, and the Band Rep Advisory Committee.
- See OFA achievements above.
- Attend Ontario region tables: First Nations Technical Table and Joint Social Services Table.
- Development of data collection methods and information gathering roadmaps for asset mapping of services available at the Federal, Provincial, Tribal Council, and community level.



Monthly Photo Contest Submission
Moose Cree First Nation

NEXT STEPS

- Continue advocating for positive remedial measures and implementation supports to assist communities in managing the impacts and opportunities associated with the ongoing influx of reform and settlement funding.
- Advocate for the release and implementation of the additional claimant classes established under the FNCFS Program and Jordan's Principle Settlement.
- Continue the collaboration with Deloitte and First Nation Liaison to receive updates regarding outreach activities, support services, and claim application progress.
- Continue supporting the Band Representative Advisory Committee in providing guidance on implementation priorities related to prevention services, post majority support services, and capital planning.
- Continue supporting communities through information sharing, engagement activities, and implementation planning related to FNCFS reform initiatives.
- Completion of an asset mapping roadmap to inform advocacy efforts on barriers and limitations to service and to support communities in building upon existing strengths.

Resolution 25/22 Support For Long-Term Sustainable Funding For Jordan's Principle and Choose Life

The Choose Life Initiative is currently funded under Jordan's Principle and was developed in response to the tragic deaths by suicide of two young girls in Wapekeka First Nation. Following these events, the Choose Life Working Group was mandated by the CHRT through its 2017 CHRT 7 Orders.

Resolution 18/36: Support for Choose Life Pilot Project recognized significant gaps in funding and resources for mental health and suicide prevention services for First Nations youth across NAN territory. The resolution further acknowledged that culturally relevant, community-specific, and wholistic programming is crucial to the wellbeing of NAN youth. As such, NAN Chiefs-in- Assembly demanded the Government of Canada provide permanent, annualized funding for existing and future expansions of the Choose Life Pilot Project, now known as the Choose Life Initiative.

The Choose Life Initiative continues to be negatively impacted by the February 2025 Jordan's Principle Operation Bulletin. Changes to eligibility and funding criteria have created unnecessary barriers to the delivery of community-specific mental health services, including culturally competent, land-based, and prevention-focused supports for First Nations children and youth. This directly goes against the CHRT's rulings to expand the interpretation and implement the full meaning and scope of Jordan's Principle.

Resolution 25/22 Support for Long-Term Sustainable Funding for Jordan's Principle and Choose Life calls on Canada to abide by their legal obligations in implementing Jordan's Principle, commit to the long-term reform of Jordan's Principle, and provide confirmation they will continue to fund the Choose Life Initiative. The resolution further affirms that the Choose Life Initiative is a NAN-specific program that must have long-term sustainable funding, unaffected by operational changes to Jordan's Principle.



ACHIEVEMENTS

- The Choose Life Table met on September 26th, 2025 and December 8th, 2025
    - September meeting – Update on the impact of the Jordan's Principle Operation Bulletin on the Choose Life Initiative and emphasized the need to distinguish Choose Life's prevention and life-promotion approach from the needs-based lens of Jordan's Principle.
    - December meeting – Update to ISC on NAN Chiefs-in-Assembly mandate to pursue a NAN regional approach to Jordan's Principle reform at the Choose Life Table through Resolution 25/45 Support for Reform of Jordan's Principle in Nishnawbe Aski Nation.
- Resolution 25/45 Support for Reform of Jordan's Principle in Nishnawbe Aski Nation.
- Continued work through the Choose Life Table to advance sustainable and annualized funding, service collaboration, governance, and capital assets.
- Maintained the Choose Life Table Terms of Reference, originally approved on September 28, 2022.
- Developed a Draft Choose Life Working Group Terms of Reference.

NEXT STEPS

- Update the Choose Life Table negotiations schedule.
- Re-initiate Choose Life Table meetings and determine feasibility of pursuing a NAN-specific regional model for negotiating Choose Life and Jordan's Principle matters at the Choose Life Table per Resolution 25/45 Support for Reform of Jordan's Principle in Nishnawbe Aski Nation.
- Negotiate a Choose Life Final Settlement Agreement.
    - Continue advocating for sustainable, long-term funding for the Choose Life Initiative as per the Long-Term Reform of the First Nations Child and Family Services (FNCFS) Program and Jordan's Principle ("Agreement-in-Principle on Long-Term Reform") that was signed December 31, 2021.
    - Finalize governance options for the Choose Life Initiative.
- Finalize draft Choose Life Working Group Terms of Reference.



Monthly Photo Contest Submission
Moose Cree First Nation



Monthly Photo Contest Submission
Moose Cree First Nation

Resolution 23/19 NAN's Role in 1965 Indian Welfare Agreement Renegotiations

In addition to the CHRT's findings that Canada discriminated against First Nations through the FNCFS program, the CHRT found that Canada and Ontario's cost-sharing within the 1965 Indian Welfare Agreement was also discriminatory and required renegotiation.

Through Resolution 23/19, NAN Chiefs-in-Assembly directed NAN to engage in discussions with Canada, Ontario, and COO regarding the renegotiation of the 1965 Indian Welfare Agreement on behalf of NAN First Nations.

As part of Resolution 25/07, NAN reaffirmed its mandate to pursue the renegotiation of the 1965 Indian Welfare Agreement, consistent with the direction provided under and as stated in Resolution 23/19.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- On March 7, 2025, NAN and COO filed a joint motion with the CHRT seeking approval of both the OFA and the Trilateral Agreement in Respect to Reforming the 1965 Agreement.
- On January 28, 2026, a joint letter was sent to the Government of Ontario regarding participation in negotiations to reform the 1965 Indian Welfare Agreement. The letter requested a response by February 15, 2026. NAN, COO, and Canada continue to await a response.
- Collaborated with Ontario Native Welfare Administrators Association ("ONWAA") to begin hosting Social Assistance outreach.
- Through regular meetings, the Trilateral Table provided opportunities for all parties to identify and negotiate priority areas for reform, while ensuring the incorporation of NAN-specific priorities, including considerations related to remoteness.
- Conducted consultation with sector-specific experts to ensure that NAN-specific priorities and community realities were reflected in the renegotiation workplan. Engagements occurred with CCCYF, First Nation Child and Family Services agencies, and interdepartmentally for sector-specific considerations and priorities such as day cares, social assistance, child and family services, and homemaking services.
- Secured approval of a negotiation workplan from NAN leadership, COO leadership, and ISC to guide future negotiations.
- Issued a Trilateral letter and invitation to the Government of Ontario, requesting that Ontario become a formal party to the negotiations and participate in the reform process.
- Supported the establishment of the Trilateral Table to begin pre-planning for the renegotiation.
- The CHRT identified and was satisfied with the commitment of COO, NAN, and Canada in the OFA to advance reform of the 1965 Agreement.

NEXT STEPS

- Continue extending invitations to the Government of Ontario to participate in negotiations and advance the reform of the 1965 Indian Welfare Agreement.
- Continue to advocate for funding for First Nation Representative Services Off-reserve.
- Work with ONWAA to further host social assistance outreach.
- Resume interdepartmental collaboration and engagement with agencies to further identify and respond to community needs and priorities.

Social Services Support and Implementation

OVERVIEW

The Social Services Support and Implementation Department works alongside NAN First Nations to support community-led approaches that strengthen the well-being of children, youth, families, and communities across NAN territory. Through Jordan's Principle, Choose Life, the Family Well-Being Program, and Youth Initiatives, the department provides coordination, implementation support, advocacy, training, and guidance to support community-based programs and priorities.

The department's work is grounded in the priorities and realities of NAN First Nations. Communities continue to respond to complex needs related to child and family wellness, youth mental health, suicide prevention, access to services, family violence prevention, emergency and crisis impacts, land-based programming, cultural connection, and youth leadership. Staff support communities in navigating funding processes, reporting requirements, service barriers, program delivery challenges, and systems that do not always reflect the realities of remote and northern First Nations.

Across the department, the work is rooted in relationship-building, advocacy, and community implementation support. Jordan's Principle, Choose Life, and the Family Well-Being Program focus on supporting, training, and advocating alongside community-based programs, while Youth Initiatives also provides direct youth programming in NAN communities and the urban hub cities of Thunder Bay and Timmins.

During the 2025–2026 reporting year, the department continued to support prevention and wellness work, respond to changes affecting Jordan's Principle and Choose Life, strengthen Family Well-Being programming, and expand youth engagement opportunities. The department remains committed to supporting NAN First Nations in ways that reflect community strengths, cultural values, local priorities, and self-determined solutions, while keeping wellness, prevention, youth leadership, and advocacy at the centre.



Monthly Photo Contest Submission
Fort Severn First Nation



Monthly Photo Contest Submission
Missanabie Cree First Nation



Monthly Photo Contest Submission
Chapleau Cree First Nation

Jordan's Principle

OVERVIEW

Nishnawbe Aski Nation continues to support the delivery of Jordan's Principle across its member communities. Jordan's Principle, as directed by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, is intended to ensure that First Nations children receive the products, services, and supports they need, when they need them, without denial, delay, or disruption due to jurisdictional disputes.

Funding through Jordan's Principle, administered by Indigenous Services Canada, has previously supported NAN communities in accessing a broad range of health, mental health, wellness, social, and educational supports for children and families.

In February 2025, the implementation of ISC's Jordan's Principle Operational Bulletin significantly affected access to Jordan's Principle supports across NAN territory. The new requirements and restrictions created additional barriers for families, communities, and service providers, including increased documentation requirements, delays in decisions, higher rates of denials, limited approvals, National Review delays, and added pressure on community staff already working with limited capacity.

The Operational Bulletin also impacted NAN's regional Jordan's Principle work. With reduced funding and staffing limitations, NAN's role focused heavily on advocacy, issue identification, communication with communities, participation at regional and national tables, and ensuring that the concerns of NAN First Nations were brought forward to ISC and other partners.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The 2025–2026 workplan focused on continued support and advocacy for NAN First Nations. NAN Jordan's Principle worked to identify and bring forward community concerns related to ISC's Operational Bulletin, application delays, denials, escalation processes, funding limitations, supporting documentation requirements, and service access barriers.

NAN continued to engage with Jordan's Principle Coordinators, community leadership, and community service providers to gather information on issues affecting access to Jordan's Principle. Discussions took place through leadership meetings, coordinator engagement, and issue-specific follow-up with communities experiencing challenges related to applications, reporting, approvals, and service delivery.

Meetings and discussions included NAN First Nations leadership meetings and targeted engagement related to concerns raised by Wapekeka First Nation, Attawapiskat First Nation, Wunnumin Lake First Nation, Kasabonika Lake First Nation, Bearskin Lake First Nation, Chapleau Cree First Nation, Pikangikum First Nation, and others.

NAN Jordan's Principle also supported presentations, information sharing, and discussions to help families and communities better understand eligibility, supporting documentation requirements, and the changing process for accessing Jordan's Principle supports.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

NAN Jordan's Principle continued to participate in regional, national, legal, and operational discussions related to Jordan's Principle implementation and reform. This included participation in Jordan's Principle committees, caucuses, technical tables, CHRT-related discussions, community and coordinator engagement, ISC funding discussions, and briefing support related to NAN's political direction.

NAN participated in several key forums, including the Jordan's Principle Operations Committee, Jordan's Principle Action Table, Jordan's Principle Cross-Sectoral Technical Committee, Ontario Region Jordan's Principle Caucus, CHRT-mandated mediation-related discussions, and AFN Jordan's Principle engagement. These tables provided opportunities to raise community-level concerns, identify application and reporting challenges, contribute to regional discussions, and ensure NAN First Nations' realities were reflected in operational and reform-related discussions.

Issues raised through these spaces included the impacts of ISC's Operational Bulletin, application denials, requests for additional information, frustration with resubmissions, lack of communication once files were escalated to National Review, backlog and invoice processing concerns, appeals process concerns, staffing and capacity pressures, and the need for clearer ISC leadership, communication, and timelines.

NAN Chiefs-in-Assembly also provided important political direction through Resolution 25/45, Support for Reform of Jordan's Principle in Nishnawbe Aski Nation, which supports a NAN-specific approach to long-term Jordan's Principle reform. NAN formally raised this direction with Canada/ISC through the December 8, 2025 NAN–Canada Choose Life Table and proposed using the existing Choose Life Table framework to support Jordan's Principle discussions. Canada acknowledged the discussion; however, a substantive response remains outstanding and the Table has not reconvened.

NAN Jordan's Principle also supported broader organizational initiatives, including support to the NAN Crisis Team during the Sandy Lake evacuation in Kapuskasing and the Indian Residential School Knowledge Gathering Forum, Words to Way.



HIGHLIGHTS

The year 2025 marked 20 years since Jordan's Principle was first recognized. This anniversary is not only a milestone, but a reminder of why the work remains urgent. Jordan's Principle was created so that First Nations children would not be denied, delayed, or disrupted in accessing the services and supports they need. Two decades later, NAN First Nations continue to raise serious concerns about barriers that prevent Jordan's Principle from being implemented as intended.

During this reporting period, ISC's Jordan's Principle Operational Bulletin significantly affected access to supports across NAN territory. Communities experienced increased administrative requirements, delays, denials, limited approvals, National Review delays, and additional pressure on community-based staff and service providers. These challenges made it more difficult for children, families, and communities to access timely, needs-based supports.

In response, NAN Jordan's Principle continued to bring community concerns forward through regional, national, legal, and operational discussions. Despite reduced regional capacity, NAN maintained participation in key tables related to Jordan's Principle implementation, reform, appeals, and accountability to ensure the realities of NAN First Nations remained visible in decision-making and policy discussions.

NAN will continue to advocate for Jordan's Principle to be implemented in a way that reflects its original purpose and the realities of NAN First Nations. This includes sustainable funding, stronger coordination, clearer communication, reduced service backlogs, an accessible appeals process, and continued advancement of Resolution 25/45 and a NAN-specific approach to long-term Jordan's Principle reform.





Choose Life

OVERVIEW

The NAN Choose Life Program was launched in April 2017 to support the wellness of NAN children and youth under the age of 18 who may be at risk of suicide. The program is community-driven and designed to provide culturally relevant supports that promote mental wellness, life promotion, and resilience through land-based, cultural, recreational, and mental health-focused activities tailored to local priorities.

Funding for Choose Life is provided through Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) under Jordan's Principle. Originally introduced as a pilot initiative, the program has evolved into a key support for NAN First Nations, helping communities develop and deliver services that address the unique needs of their children, youth, and families.

Choose Life supports national and regional efforts related to suicide prevention and youth wellness. Through flexible community-based programming, the initiative promotes mental health, safety, harm reduction, and positive life outcomes while enabling each community to design and deliver services that reflect its cultural values, strengths, and identified needs.



PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The NAN Choose Life Team continued to support communities both in person and virtually with program implementation, fiscal applications, fiscal forecasting, carry-forward requests, re-profiling, reporting requirements, and training. Community visits, meetings at the NAN Syndicate office, and virtual support included Ginoogaming, Matachewan, Chapleau Ojibwe, Kingfisher Lake, Muskrat Dam, Sachigo Lake, Deer Lake, Long Lake #58, Flying Post, Taykwa Tagamou, Moose Cree, Shibogama, Beaverhouse, Bearskin Lake, North Caribou Lake, Marten Falls, McDowell Lake, Mattagami, Wunnumin Lake, Fort Severn, Kasabonika Lake, Wapekeka, Neskantaga, Poplar Hill, MoCreebec, Lac Seul, Mushkegowuk Council, Brunswick House, Chapleau Cree, Apitipi, Weenusk, Wawakapewin, Fort Albany, Webequie, Nibinamik, Sandy Lake, and others.

In-person community support visits provide opportunities to engage directly with communities to better understand their specific needs, concerns, and suggestions related to fiscal activity planning. These visits also support communities with funding applications, reporting requirements, carry-forward requests, and re-profiling processes. The NAN Choose Life Team continues to strengthen relationships with communities and Chiefs through this ongoing engagement. Community Chiefs are encouraged to participate in visits, networking calls, and application and reporting processes throughout the fiscal year to support collaboration and informed decision-making.

At the end of the 2025–2026 fiscal year, a Coordinator training event was held in Thunder Bay at the Best Western Nor'Wester Hotel in partnership with ISC. The session provided practical, hands-on support with applications and reporting for Choose Life community program staff responsible for submitting annual funding requests and reports. ISC's reporting team and Senior Manager attended the event and offered one-on-one support to communities requesting assistance. Throughout the event, ISC worked alongside the NAN Choose Life Team to present information and respond to questions and concerns.

Monthly networking calls continued with Community Coordinators on the third Wednesday of each month. These calls provide a consistent forum for sharing updates, identifying challenges, resource sharing, and addressing questions. Each session is organized around targeted topics and is intended to strengthen peer learning, collaboration, and program coordination. Chiefs and Health Directors are also encouraged to participate to support ongoing awareness and engagement in Choose Life program activities and discussions.

Communities are encouraged to share successes, challenges, suggestions, and concerns during the calls. Following these discussions, the NAN Choose Life Team may contact ISC to request a meeting on behalf of a community to present concerns, discuss specific requests, provide rationale for reconsideration of funding application decisions, or seek clarification regarding Choose Life programming. The NAN Choose Life Team participates in these discussions to provide ongoing support.

On September 10, 2025, the NAN Choose Life Team partnered with the Choose Life Team in Sachigo Lake First Nation to host the first annual World Suicide Awareness Day Walk in a NAN community. Although the funding request for the event was not approved, the walk proceeded through collaboration between Sachigo Lake First Nation and the NAN Choose Life Team. Students, school staff, and community members participated in the walk and gathered for a community feast and activities focused on mental wellness, anti-bullying, and positive life promotion.



OTHER ACTIVITIES

The NAN Choose Life Team continues to maintain a strong rapport and connection with Indigenous Services Canada to ensure that outreach and advocacy are understood and respected on behalf of the children and youth of NAN First Nations. The team values the relationship developed through advocacy and remains committed to working in good faith with ISC while offering guidance and support to NAN communities and affiliated organizations.

The Director and Choose Life Manager participated in the NAN/Canada Choose Life Table, which is directly overseen by the Strategic Advancement Department. The Table met on September 26, 2025, and December 8, 2025. Through this forum, the Choose Life team supported discussions related to the impacts of the February 2025 Jordan's Principle Operational Bulletin on the Choose Life Initiative, including the need to protect Choose Life's prevention and life promotion approach as a NAN-specific, community-led initiative.

The Choose Life team also supported discussion related to Resolution 25/22, Support for Long-Term Sustainable Funding for Jordan's Principle and Choose Life, and the need for Choose Life to have long-term sustainable funding that is not negatively impacted by operational changes to Jordan's Principle. While progress through the Table has been limited and the Table has not reconvened since December 2025, continued follow-up remains important to support funding stability, program flexibility, and community-based delivery.

The NAN Choose Life Team participated in staff development opportunities throughout the year to support continued learning in areas relevant to youth mental health, wellness, suicide prevention, harm reduction, and trauma-informed practice.

The Choose Life Manager actively participated in key meetings, crisis calls, committees, and other program-related activities, including the Chiefs Committee on Children, Youth and Families, ISC/NAN community meetings, internal and external presentations regarding Choose Life, notetaking duties at Chiefs Assemblies, and the Annual 7 Youth Inquest Table. This supports effective coordination and advocacy for the Choose Life program at various levels.



HIGHLIGHTS

As of May 26, 2026, 48 applications were submitted by NAN First Nations. This number does not include Tribal Council or organizational applications. Of those applications, 2 received full approval, 40 received partial approval, 5 went to full escalation to the Working Group, and 1 application for 2025–2026 was still awaiting a decision. This amounts to $134,397,053.00 in requested funding and $79,922,613.04 in approved funding.

As of May 26, 2026, approximately 15,200 children were being supported through Choose Life within NAN communities.

The World Suicide Awareness Day Walk in Sachigo Lake First Nation was an important highlight for the NAN Choose Life Team and demonstrated the strength of community collaboration, student participation, and local leadership in supporting mental wellness, anti-bullying, positive life promotion, and awareness for children and youth.

Choose Life continues to be a critical NAN-specific initiative for youth wellness, life promotion, suicide prevention, and culturally grounded community programming. Continued advocacy through the Choose Life Table and follow-up on Resolution 25/22 remain important to protect the intent of Choose Life and support long-term sustainable funding that reflects the needs of NAN children, youth, families, and communities.





Youth Initiatives

OVERVIEW

The Nishnawbe Aski Nation ("NAN") Youth Initiatives program provides engagement opportunities specific to support the needs of First Nations youth aged 12-29. The NAN youth team provides programming to youth across the NAN territory, working to provide programs both in our urban hub cities as well as directly in community. 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 to 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 within NAN communities.

Both the Youth Initiatives team and the Oshkaatisak Council operate on 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.

The Youth Initiatives team has developed 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. Year over year the Youth Initiatives team has continued to expand the level of outreach; while also increasing the frequency and variety of new partnerships we provide Nishnawbe Aski Youth with a deeper and long-lasting range of holistic opportunities to engage, learn for themselves, teach others and ultimately develop a healthy and strong group of young leaders.



PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Anishnawbe Watisiiwin Program

The Anishnawbe Watisiiwin Program (AWP) supported cultural engagement activities such as drum nights, regalia workshops, land-based walks, pow wow dance teachings, and sports camps. Grounded in traditional teachings and offered both in-person and online, these events fostered pride, healing and cultural identity. Continued partnership-building across Ontario and beyond played a vital role in broadening the program's reach and responsiveness.

Land-Based Camps Program

The Land-Based Camps program delivered culturally rooted, youth-specific programming aimed at building leadership, knowledge, and healthy risk-taking. Camps focused on inclusion, skill development, traditional knowledge, and Elder/youth connection. Programming encouraged language use, spirituality, and land-based practices as foundations for holistic wellness and community strength.

Youth Leadership Development

Youth across NAN territory continue to face increasing mental health crises, underscoring the need for stronger, community-based supports. In response, the youth leadership program delivered targeted training, mentorship, and peer-led initiatives that empower youth to support one another and advocate for change at all levels of government.

By focusing on leadership development, skill-building, and celebrating youth achievements, the program creates space for young people to grow into confident leaders. Rising travel and shipping costs have impacted reach; however, youth leadership remains a vital long-term strategy for wellness, capacity-building and self-determination. Continued investment ensures youth are equipped to lead meaningful changes across NAN territory.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Community Visits

The Youth Initiatives team and Oshkaatisak Council delivered in-person programming in numerous communities and hub cities, including Thunder Bay, Timmins, Matheson Missanabie Cree, Mattagami, Eabametoong, Long Lake #58, Marten Falls, Wunnumin Lake, Moose Factory, and Attawapiskat.

Community Drum Socials

Between April 2024 and April 2025, Community Drum Night in Thunder Bay engaged over 323 participants, while the Women and Youth Hand Drum Social in Timmins welcomed 126 participants. These events continue to foster intergenerational learning, cultural pride, and healing through sustained community engagement.

Oshkaatisak Council Advocacy Work

The Oshkaatisak Council remains central to all Youth Initiatives programming, serving as a critical platform for youth advocacy at local, provincial, and national levels. Council members ensure youth voices are not only heard but meaningfully included in decision-making across NAN.

Oshkaatisak members regularly contribute to meetings, workshops, and initiatives led by other NAN departments and maintain active representation on Chiefs Committees, Executive Council, and NAN's Governance Council, ensuring youth perspectives shape the direction of organizational and political priorities. The Oshkaatisak Council also represents the voices of NAN Youth at Chiefs of Ontario through the Ontario First Nations Youth Peoples Councils as well as the Assembly of First Nations National Youth Council.

Engagement Packages

The Youth Initiatives team put together several participant packages for youth to engage directly on the land. This included 30 hunting/trapping packages for the fall hunt season, 20 ice fishing kits with enough supplies to support minimum four fishers per kit. In addition, the youth team provided 200 stockings directly to youth for the holiday season to promote peer to peer connections, personal skill development, as well as physical and mental wellness.

Youth Leadership and Skills Development

The Youth Initiatives team alongside the Oshkaatisak Council hosted or supported several engagement opportunities centered around the development of leadership, program provision, budgeting, capacity building skills etc. Events hosted included youth leader engagement sessions, proposal and grant writing training, land-based activity licensing opportunities, resume and cover letter training, Youth worker training sessions, youth council development and support, mental health trainings, first aid trainings, sports clinics, land-based camps, as well as cultural programming, and training opportunities. This was all done with the aim to build capacity in NAN youth to organize and directly lead peer to peer specific programs that would in turn create more leaders and more youth-led programs across the territory and in hub cities.

HIGHLIGHTS

The Youth Initiatives team hosted 38 programs ranging from one to five days long, offering a multitude of programming to 1400+ Youth aged 12-29.

In the spring of 2026, the Youth Initiatives team began hosting monthly Regional Connections calls to continue breaking down silos at the regional, provincial, and national levels. These calls bring together partners from across NAN territory to share youth-focused engagement opportunities, programming updates, and skills development opportunities delivered in communities, hub cities, online, and through self-led formats.

The Youth Initiatives program continues to support programming in both Timmins and Thunder Bay, with a focus on strengthening access to youth programming across NAN's eastern and western catchment areas.



Family Well-Being Program

OVERVIEW

The Family Well-Being Program began in 2017 and is delivered in 47 NAN First Nations with funding from the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. The program is a prevention-based initiative aimed at eliminating family violence, reducing the number of children entering child welfare, decreasing youth involvement in the criminal justice system, and improving overall health and well-being.

Family Well-Being is a grassroots, community-led initiative with 51 Coordinators providing support, programs, activities, and events for all age groups, from infants to Elders. The program supports safe spaces, land-based activities, and community wellness. NAN staff provide training, guidance, and support to Family Well-Being programs in community.

Prevention-Focused Customary Care funding is also provided to First Nations to support families with alternative care arrangements where there are no protection concerns. This funding aligns with the overall goals of the Family Well-Being Program.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Training and Workshops

The Family Well-Being Program delivered several in-person training opportunities throughout the year. Youth Justice and Domestic Violence training was held September 16–17, 2025, in Timmins and November 18–19, 2025, in Thunder Bay, with 35 participants representing 18 NAN First Nations.

Iskweywuk and Napayaowuk training was held January 20–22, 2026, in Timmins, with 18 participants representing NAN First Nations. The annual Family Well-Being Conference, Honouring and Protecting Indigenous Life, was held March 4–6, 2026, in Toronto, with 85 participants representing 31 NAN First Nations.

A one-day hybrid Domestic Violence workshop was hosted on November 20, 2025, in collaboration with the NAN Women's Initiative and Men's Healing Initiative. The workshop included 20 participants and presentations from Beendigen, NAN Legal, personal stories, and Elders speaking on roles and responsibilities.

Four Family Well-Being Coordinators were trained in Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training in partnership with the NAN Crisis Department. Three NAN staff also received Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training.



Virtual Presentations and Coordinator Support

Coordinator drop-ins were held on the second Wednesday of each month, with virtual training offered on the last Tuesday of each month. Presentations included Ka-Na-Chi-Hih Healing Centre, Jordan's Principle, Pre-Charge Diversion with Nokiiwin Tribal Council, NAN Legal, Choose Life, Youth Initiatives, Men's Healing Initiative, Reclamation and Healing, Children's Help Phone, and self-care with Ester McKay. These sessions provided ongoing opportunities for Family Well-Being Coordinators to access information, training, resources, and support related to their work in community.

Partnerships and Collaboration

The Family Well-Being Program partnered with the Timmins Native Friendship Centre to deliver a self-care group for women, with 10 participants, and a Seven Grandfather Teachings group, with 11 participants.

The program also collaborated with the Attawapiskat and Fort Albany Band Representative programs, engaging in 8 sessions with an average of 10 participants per session.



Monthly Photo Contest Submission
Aroland First Nation

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Family Well-Being Week was held July 7–11, 2025. Wawatay advertisements were submitted for June and July, and Family Well-Being Coordinators planned activities, events, and gatherings for families in their communities.

New program binders were distributed to all Family Well-Being Coordinators to support program delivery and organization.

In November 2025, the Family Well-Being Program launched a Domestic Violence Awareness social media campaign on Facebook in partnership with the NAN Women's Initiative and Men's Healing Initiative. Posts included information on types of domestic violence, as well as available resources and supports.

The Policy Analyst continued the review of the Family Well-Being Program and conducted 13 interviews with Coordinators, partners, and stakeholders from NAN First Nations. The review focused on the impact of the program within communities, challenges and barriers, how communities are overcoming challenges, feedback from community members, and whether the program is meeting community needs. Key themes identified through the review included the need for safe spaces for men's programming, increased funding for program spaces, transportation and childcare for families to participate in programming, men's mental health programs tailored for fathers, and addictions programming for parents to help alleviate the opiate family crisis.

The Family Well-Being Program also provided support to 31 families requesting assistance with accommodations, travel, bereavement, food, resources, and supplies following emergencies and crises related to flooding, water, forest fires, and house fires. Support was also provided to 12 initiatives involving homelessness, domestic violence, conferences, youth programming, and community gatherings.

HIGHLIGHTS

The Family Well-Being videography project highlighted community-based programming and included travel to Moose Cree First Nation and MoCreebec Council in Moose Factory, Missanabie Cree First Nation's land-based camp, and Constance Lake First Nation.

The Family Well-Being team, together with Sandy Lake First Nation, delivered a presentation on the Family Well-Being Program at the Indigenous Child and Family Wellbeing Conference held December 2–4, 2025, in Toronto.

Community engagement and visits took place with Flying Post, Moose Cree, MoCreebec Council, Missanabie Cree land-based camp, Constance Lake, Chapleau Cree, Taykwa Tagamou Nation, Beaverhouse, Matachewan, Deer Lake, Muskrat Dam, Apitipi Anicinapek Nation, and Fort Albany. Family Well-Being Community Coordinators provided over 1,800 supports to individuals, families, and group sessions focused on wellbeing approaches, healing activities, and skill building.

Through community-based programming, Family Well-Being reached over 21,000 community members from infants to Elders.

Family Well-Being Coordinators hosted over 625 large community events, reaching over 76,500 community members.



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Lillian Suganaqueb
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Courtney Mamakeesic
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Destany Johns
Crisis Response Coordinator

Amanda Desaulniers
Logistical Crisis Response Coordinator

Tina Scocchia
Crisis Support Administrative Coordinator

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Crisis Coordinator

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Crisis Coordinator

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Tara Pedersen
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Lena Shawinimash
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Marla Murray
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Joyce Spence
Jordan's Principle Manager

Joseph Carew
Youth Engagement Manager

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Ann Magiskan
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