



# Chiefs of Ontario

*Moving Forward: Strengthening Relationships for Future Generations*

**ANNUAL REPORT  
2022-2023**



## Artist's Statement

**Betty Albert** is an Artist and Painter.

This painting was inspired initially by personal changes in my life. I'm preparing to move from my home Territory. This is where I was born and lived the majority of my life. I know the forest, the rivers, the sky. I'm familiar with the medicines. This is where my healing journey began.

This is where I find the perseverance of my ancestors and all my relations. The land finds my soul here. But I am being called to the sundance tree. My sundance and ceremonial family where my grandchildren live.

I'm the process of uniting all my family in the same time zone. Change is not always easy but necessary. I see change all around me; The earth changes, the water changes. But I know that with change comes with rebirth. I hold my ancestors within me where I go. The land promises new adventures new challenges and I accept that with open arms, and a beautiful place.



**Winds of Change by Betty Albert**



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## Ontario Regional Chief Report

The Chiefs in Ontario mandated our office to continue to work on issues that are important to the Ontario Region as a result of concerns raised at the July Assembly of First Nations Special Chiefs Assembly. We have been working hard to address issues and concerns and to meet with regions, and we have been working on the co-development of Water Legislation. As we advised that the current process was not true co-development, and I am happy that Indigenous Services Canada heard our concerns and challenges. We also asked questions surrounding co-development on Health Legislation, and concerns will be brought back to the AFN Chiefs Committee on Health. We received a charitable donation from Barry Green, who wanted to assist with our communities' needs throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We have provided donations to three fly-in communities consisting of food and COVID-19 supplies. We have also provided three communities with homeless food support: Thunder Bay, Sudbury and London.

I am pleased to present my 2022/2023 annual report as Ontario Regional Chief and provide a summary of accomplishments made during my tenure at the Chiefs of

Ontario, which include the following:

- Christmas gifts to fly-in communities, partnered with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC);
- Delivery of a firetruck to Peawanuck, ISC has advised that this will be done;
- Donations to homeless shelters in the north, central and south of the province. We have advocated for the need to focus on holistic needs – not just a house. We also must consider the mental, emotional, spiritual and physical needs of those who are homeless;
- Numerous resolutions implemented this year and work on continual implementation of recent and ongoing mandates;
- Relationship building with Premier Ford's office and the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs (IAO);
- Meeting with the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) on the topic of education – working on fixing the resolution that was added in error and approved by the AFN Executive – rescind the motion and seek to add the resolution to the AFN SCA in April 2023;
- Advocated for true co-development of Water Legislation at AFN and meaningful engagement and consultation with First Nations;
- Address co-development of the Health Legislation and meaningful consultation with First Nations;



- Tackling border crossing issues and Treaty Recognition;
- Status Card and border issues, as wait times have been backlogged over a year due to the pandemic;
- Robinson Huron Treaty and Robinson Superior Treaty are still in negotiations. We have provided updates to First Nations to ensure they are informed of the process and outcomes of the negotiations;
- Update on the AFN July 2022 SCA Resolutions #03-22 and the Chiefs Committee on Charter Renewal has been requested.

Aanii, Boozhoo, He, Kwekwe, Shekoli, Sekoh, Waachiyaa

## Activities/Initiatives Overview

### Managing First Nation Priorities

At the Fall Chiefs Assembly (FCA), held in November 2022, we followed the Chiefs' request to deliver a message to Premier Doug Ford at the Reception that he and his team had planned for the evening. We identified a new process to establish an ongoing relationship and address First Nation priority issues. It was recommended that we meet regularly, as we are not stakeholders, we are Rights Holders of both Treaty and Inherent Rights.

### Leadership Council/ Portfolio Holder/Alternates

- Grand Chief Joel Abram, Association of Iroquois & Allied Indians,
- Deputy Grand Chief Stacia Loft
- Ogichidaa Grand Chief Francis Kavanaugh, Grand Council Treaty #3,

- Grand Chief Derek Fox, Nishnawbe Aski Nation DGC Bobby Narcisse,
- DGC Anna Betty Achneepineskum, DGC Victor H. Linklater
- Grand Council Chief Reg Niganobe, Anishinabek Nation, Deputy Grand Council Chief
- Joe Miskokomon, Deputy Grand Council Chief James Marsden, Deputy Grand Council Chief Melvin Hardy, Deputy Grand Council Chief Travis Boissoneau
- Chief Mark Hill, Six Nations of the Grand River
- Grand Chief Abram Benedict, Mohawks of Akwesasne
- Grand Chief Alison Linklater, Mushkegowuk Tribal Council
- Chief Theresa Nelson, Independent First Nations, left in April 30, 2023
- Chief Dan Miskokomon, Independent First Nation, Dianne Maracle

## AFN Portfolio Overview:

### AFN Health Portfolio

As we were navigating the third wave of COVID-19 at the time of my election, the variants continued to evolve, and we are now currently navigating the eighth wave. It is not unexpected to see a rise in COVID-19 occurrences, as we move activities indoors, we are seeing waning vaccine uptake, healthcare industry human resources shortages, and the end of public health measures, which included mandatory isolation periods and masking. We were also advised of the increasing risk of high influenza rates in the winter months. We continue to meet with Indigenous Services Canada and NIHB every two weeks to keep updated on COVID -19 in Ontario.

We participated on ISC's Indigenous Health Legislation Working Group to co-analyze First Nations engagement reporting. The Final Report was released November 1, 2022. The COO NIHB Senior Policy Analyst will work on the Joint Review Steering Committee, focusing on Medical Transportation and will advocate to reopen previous committee review work such as dental care, prescriptions.

With the deadline of the Indian Day Schools having passed, we have seen an increase in mental health issues, compounded with the mental health concerns of the pandemic. We also see an increase in drugs, overdoses, suicides and mental health effects in our communities. Plans are being developed to work on distinction-based conversations with First Nations to highlight priority areas in their mental health needs. Indigenous Services Canada hosted a Mental Wellness



Summit on September 23, 2022, and focused on sharing what is working to improve mental wellness. We are creating a mapping process within regions to support an efficient mental wellness network and workforce. We are looking to launch a three digit number for suicide prevention ensuring a culturally appropriate service is available to First Nation citizens. FNIHB is renewing budget request for the tuberculosis (TB) envelope for Budget 2023 and the TB standards continue to get traction as seen with Public Health Network presentations. The Accessible Canada Act is problematic and offers no funding nor considerations of liability on First Nations. We continue to advocate to Employment and Social Development Canada to secure funding to engage First Nations on accessibility legislation. A recommendations report is being developed to consider the concerns of long-term care, home and community care and palliative end-of-life care. ISC has engaged First Nations, and 45 final reports are expected on policy recommendations and options to improve

long-term care.

### AFN Water Portfolio

As the portfolio holder of the Water file at the AFN level, I attended the 50th Annual 2022 Great Lakes Public Forum, held from September 27-29, 2022. AFN is planning sessions on Marine Indigenous Protected and Conserved areas (IPCA) to inform First Nations on potential legal tools and solutions for establishing Marine IPCA's.

A meeting of the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity is scheduled for December 1-2, 2022 in Montreal, QC. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was mandated through Resolution 44/2021: "Support for a First Nations led pathway to the Sustainable Development Goals", which calls on Canada to work in full partnership with First Nations to support their self-determination and participation related to SDGs. AFN completed an initial environmental scan, which will form the basis of future engagements on nuclear waste management of used nuclear fuel, the evolutions of nuclear waste, and

discussed Adaptive Phased Management and nuclear waste storage in Deep Geological Repositories (DGRs). A motion was developed at the AFN Chiefs Committee on Housing and Infrastructure in support of Safe Drinking Water. The new legislation is to be co-developed. It is expected that other opportunities will arise to include Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and nuclear waste management as part of the new legislation.

Bill S-5 was expected to proceed to the House of Commons in September, and the AFN Legal Sector provided support in the analysis. AFN sectors have jointly developed a communications document to share information on CEPA modernization, and recommendations to First Nations in recognition of the fact that many likely do not know details regarding parliamentary advocacy on Bill S-5. For example, Tataskweyak First Nation has been affected by blue-green algae, and have submitted to the Senate Committee on Bill S-5.

As lead of the Water Portfolio, I work closely with Manitoba Regional Chief Cindy Woodhouse, who is the portfolio holder for Housing and Infrastructure. Ontario leadership has been participating at the AFN's Chiefs Committee on Housing and Infrastructure (CCOHI) meetings. The AFN CCOHI guides the work being undertaken at the regional level at the COO-CCOHI.

### In the Year Ahead – Moving Forward:

I want to conclude with highlighting my supportive and collaborative work advocating for progressive and visionary First Nations leaders across the region, as was outlined above in my overview of the year.



In the year ahead, as Ontario Regional Chief, I will continue to focus on:

- Co-development of Water Legislation that will adequately meet the needs of First Nations;
- Co-developing Health Legislation, and ensuring an understanding of Treaty and Inherent rights;
- Providing updates regarding AFN Resolutions, specifically those concerning policing, Child Welfare, UNDRIPA, Métis Rights Assertions and governance;
- Attending and participating in an education meeting at the AFN level;
- Advocating for policing as an essential service and advocating for funding for policing in First Nations;
- Advocating for adequate mental health supports in all First Nations;
- Providing updates to Chiefs surrounding the ongoing Human Resources investigation at the AFN.

### Conclusion

I am honoured to be part of the Chiefs of Ontario. I want to thank all the Leadership for their support. I acknowledge you and your Councils have many decisions you must make on a day-to-day basis for your communities. We will

continue to navigate any challenges ahead of us as we begin to implement changes and improve the quality of services in our communities. COVID-19 impacted our communities in ways that has altered the ways in which services are now provided to our communities. I believe that in the case of another major crisis, such as COVID-19, we will be prepared and resilient in our navigations. Chi miigwetch to the Leadership Council for working together as we listen to the issues our communities are facing and actively searching for solutions to the issues to advocate and lobby the governments together. I want to thank the political and secretariat staff in your work to gather data, set up meetings, draft briefing notes and ensure we have the most up-to-date information to assist us in making informed decisions to fulfill our mandate. I want to also thank the Chiefs who have acknowledged our staff and their dedication to providing briefing notes and speaking notes to my office, and to all those who are responsible for chairing our many committees. I have always considered the staff to have the expertise, which is evident as I am continuously provided me with the most accurate and efficient information possible.

Baa maa pii.

Ontario Regional Chief Glen Hare





## Chief Operating Officer

Shekoli,

On behalf of the Chiefs of Ontario Secretariat, I invite you to peruse the Annual Report from the Chiefs of Ontario. The theme of this report and the 2023 Annual Chiefs Assembly (ACA) is "Moving Forward, Strengthening Relationships for Future Generations". The Chiefs of Ontario Annual Report is produced in-house under the guidance of the Policy and Communications Sector, and is a year-in-review of the accomplishments and work of the Chiefs of Ontario Secretariat.

Over this past year, the Board of Directors has continued to oversee corporate management, and the Leadership Council continues to provide political direction supported by Ontario Regional Chief, Glen Hare. The Secretariat is functioning professionally with updated bylaws and policies in human resources and finance, while the Board of Directors continues to move the Secretariat toward sound financial management processes.

The Chiefs of Ontario continues its work on improving communications processes to ensure Ontario First

Nations Leadership are provided with the information necessary to make political decisions and support their Nations. The COO has continued to provide hybrid meeting options for many of our functions. Although virtual meetings come with their own set of challenges, they have allowed for a flexibility in how Chiefs and technicians attend gatherings and meetings.

As per the Board of Director's mandate, we have updated our employment manual to maintain an alliance with any new or updated employment standards. Among other updates, a modified a Vaccine Policy was implemented in January 2023 that requires all staff to provide proof of vaccination against COVID-19 and to follow all public health guidelines. The modified policy allows for in-person meetings, while the wearing of masks is optional for staff and anyone attending meetings. The modified policy remains in place until December 31, 2023. The office is fully opened and staff are returning to the office on a staggered approach. In-office work is not mandatory, as we still offer virtual offices. Our boardroom is open for Chiefs and Committees to have meetings.

Other administrative measures include streamlining our financial processes with the implementation of Electronic Funds Transfers (EFT), and an upgraded Purchase Order (PO) system. Our registration platform to be used for large meetings and assemblies is now online and has improved efficiency significantly by ensuring that we have up-to-date numbers of participants and that materials can be accessed through a QR code.

The Chiefs of Ontario Charter is now being implemented and proves to be an essential document to guide the Secretariat and Leadership for years to come. The next

review of the Charter will be following the 2024 election process.

As approved by the Chiefs-in-Assembly, the Charter has been reviewed by the Leadership Council and the Board of Directors. This review has identified several areas of the Charter that needed to be strengthened. Over the fall and spring, we worked on these improvements, which were advanced at the 2022 Fall Chiefs Assembly. Included in these improvements are a strengthened Terms of Reference for the Leadership Council and a new Terms of Reference for the Board of Directors. Importantly, the Charter also strengthens the financial accountability to the Chiefs-in-Assembly.

As Chief Operating Officer, I want to acknowledge the staff at the Secretariat who have stepped up and continued their work in a virtual environment. The staff compliment has outgrown our current space in Toronto, however, the virtual space continues to be a prosperous option.

This year, our assemblies were held in a hybrid format, as this enabled Chiefs to attend via Zoom or in-person. The June 2022 Annual Chiefs Assembly was the first opportunity for many Chiefs to meet with colleagues and staff which was a welcomed opportunity.

It has been a very busy year for the staff as many meetings became in-person events. Getting back to our normal roster of events demonstrates the hard work of the staff and dedication to provide opportunities for communities to learn and participate in events such as the Education Forum, Health Forum, Women's Initiatives Summit, Justice Dialogue Sessions, Child Welfare meetings, Youth Gathering, and the Environment Engagement sessions. The new fiscal year will provide



continued opportunities to be informed and updated on the various priorities and work of each sector.

The Secretariat continues to grow and maintain our relationships for solution-driven processes. In keeping with our theme, we will advocate with all levels of government to work with First Nations communities to support recovery efforts and address the challenges to improve the lives of the children and the generations to come.

I would like to acknowledge the unwavering dedication of the Sector Directors, Policy Analysts, Coordinators, and the rest of the COO Team for their commitment and hard work. I also wish to thank the Board of Directors for their continuing support, guidance, and direction.

Yaw^ko

**Tracy Y Antone**

**Chief Operating Officer**



## History

*In the very heartland of Turtle Island (known today as North America) around the Great Lakes and James and Hudson Bays is the bounty of creation that provided a homeland for the original peoples—the 15 Nations in the province now known as Ontario. Living by sacred laws given to us by the Creator, we were – and continue to be – sovereign Nations.*

We governed ourselves according to our own constitutions and exercised inherent jurisdiction through our systems of governance. Using the expansive ancient trails and the waterways of the western hemisphere, we established social, economic, cultural, and political relationships. Many of these networks were formalized into treaties, alliances, and agreements of the highest order of international relations. The establishment of political organizations is rooted in the inherent freedom of association and the power of First Nations to create alliances.

In March of 1975, at the first annual All Ontario Chiefs Conference, a joint Indian Associations Coordination Committee was formed, constituting a federation of four First Nation political territorial organizations in Ontario.

The purpose of the Committee was to provide a single Ontario representative to the Assembly of First Nations (then, the National Indian Brotherhood). From this Committee emerged the Chiefs of Ontario. The Chiefs of Ontario's basic purpose is to enable the political leadership to discuss and decide on regional, provincial, and national priorities affecting First Nations peoples in Ontario.

The Chiefs of Ontario has become a vehicle to facilitate relationships between the federal and provincial governments and First Nations peoples in Ontario. The activities of the Chiefs of Ontario are mandated by the Chiefs-in-Assembly and guided by the Leadership Council (LC), which is comprised of the Grand Chiefs and representatives of the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians; Grand Council Treaty #3; Nishnawbe-Aski Nation; Anishinabek Nation; Mushkegowuk Council; Mohawks of Akwesasne; Six Nations of the Grand River; Independent First Nations; and the Ontario Regional Chief.

### Mission Statement

The Chiefs of Ontario supports all First Nations in Ontario as they assert their sovereignty, jurisdiction and their chosen expression of nationhood.

### Vision Statement

First Nations in Ontario are united towards self-sufficiency and vibrancy while never forgetting who we are; this unity is facilitated through the Chiefs of Ontario. We envision a future where our inherent laws, lands, and traditions are recognized and respected by governments, industry and the general public.

### Chronology of Ontario Regional Chiefs

1. **Peter Tobasonakwut Kelly** - June 1982 to Spring 1983
2. **Patrick Madahbee** - Spring 1983 to June 1983
3. **Wally McKay** - June 1983 to June 1985
4. **Gordon Peters** - June 1985 to June 1997
5. **Tom Bressette** - June 1997 to June 2000
6. **Charles Fox** - June 2000 to June 2005

7. **Angus Toulouse** - June 2005 to June 2012
8. **Stan Beardy** - June 2012 to June 2015
9. **Isadore Day** - June 2015 to June 2018
10. **RoseAnne Archibald** - June 2018 to June 2021
11. **Glen Hare** – June 2021 to Present

### Organizational Objectives

The main objective of the Chiefs of Ontario office is to facilitate the discussion, planning, implementation and evaluation of all local, regional and national matters affecting the First Nations people in Ontario. The intention of basing the central office in Toronto is to maintain a presence for First Nations in Ontario that is non-government and non-political in order to communicate with government officials on an urgent basis.

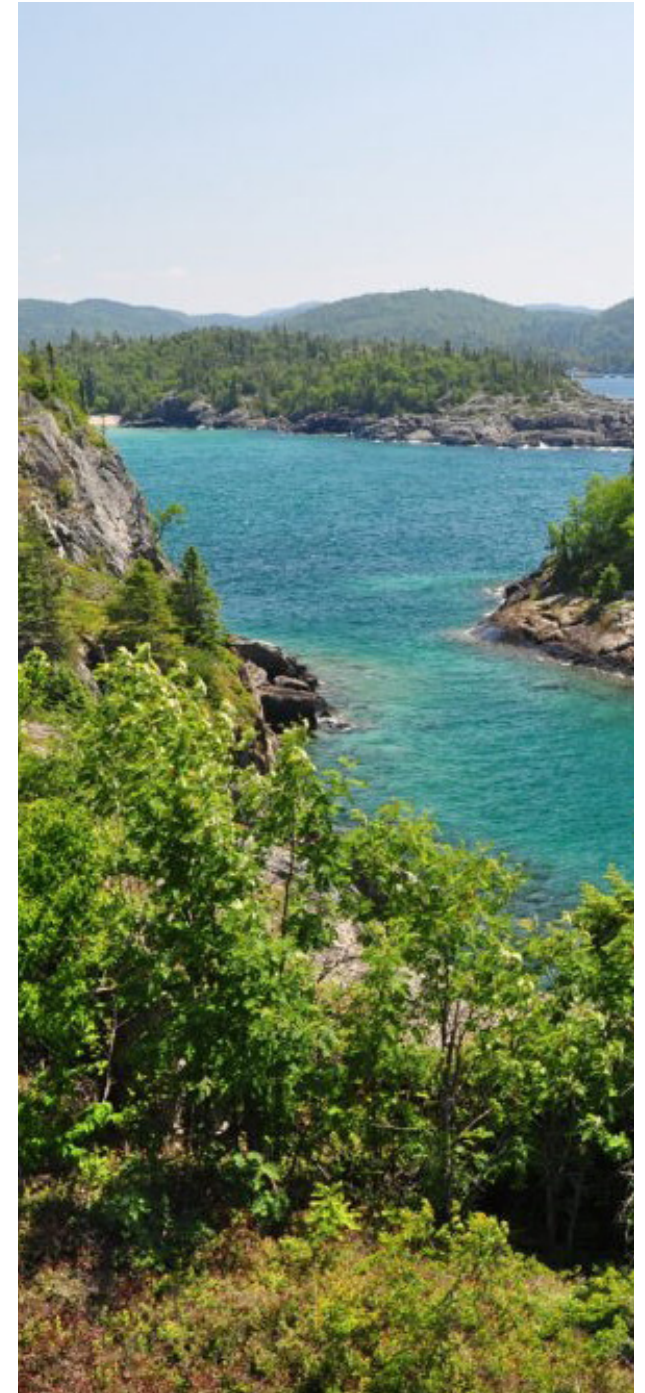
In accordance with its role as a coordinating body, the Chiefs of Ontario office carries out its responsibility by ensuring that all information on matters affecting and/or impacting First Nations is disseminated to the communities, Tribal Councils and Political Territorial Organizations. (Analysis of these issues is conducted through the various committees and/or councils, and is then raised to the Leadership Council (LC) for implementation).

This initiative is accomplished through the development of a portfolio system which designates specific areas of responsibilities to our Coordinators. Each Coordinator is then assigned to a Leadership Council member based on their respective area.

## Priorities

Chiefs of Ontario initiatives have been organized into a number of different priority areas:

- **Education:** The Education Sector is responsible for providing the Ontario Education Portfolio Holder information on issues, briefing notes, and specific strategies for political action.
- **Environment:** The Environmental Sector works in the following areas: water, climate change, species at risk, contaminants, traditional knowledge and intellectual property - protecting our “collective knowledge systems,” and environmental assessments.
- **Health:** The mandate of the Chiefs Committee on Health is to protect and maintain our Treaty and Aboriginal Rights to health and to provide advice, guidance, and recommendations to the Ontario Regional Chief, Health Portfolio of Leadership Council, and the Chiefs-in-Assembly on matters pertaining to First Nations health.
- **Justice:** The Justice Sector was established in response to the growing need for representation and advocacy on issues relating to justice for First Nations in Ontario.
- **Social Services:** The Social Services Sector works to support First Nations participation in policy and program development of social services for their regions.
- **Research and Data Management:** The Research and Data Management Sector works to conduct research that is First Nations driven, advancing data sovereignty, and First Nations ways of knowing.
- **Economic Development:** The Economic Development Sector works to support the development of healthy, prosperous, and sustainable First Nations communities in Ontario through information sharing, guidance, and recommendations to the Leadership Council (LC) and Chiefs of Ontario on economic development issues.
- **Women’s Initiatives:** The Women’s Initiatives Sector provides support and coordination to the First Nations Women’s Council and works to promote the safety, well-being, and empowerment of Ontario First Nations women and girls, Two Spirit, and gender diverse people in Ontario.
- **Policy and Communications:** The Policy and Communications Sector develops, organizes, and oversees the progress and direction of communications and policy matters as mandated by the Chiefs-in-Assembly.
- **Youth:** The Ontario First Nations Youth Peoples Council is a regional youth council that represents the youth of all First Nations in Ontario by being a voice for youth issues at all levels of government.



## Leadership Council

### Leadership Council Portfolio Holder/Alternates

Grand Chief Joel Abram, Association of Iroquois & Allied Indians,  
Deputy Grand Chief Stacia Loft  
Ogichidaa Grand Chief Francis Kavanaugh, Grand Council Treaty #3,  
Grand Chief Derek Fox, Nishnawbe Aski Nation DGC Bobby Narcisse,  
DGC Anna Betty Achneepineskum, DGC Victor H. Linklater  
Grand Council Chief Reg Niganobe, Anishinabek Nation, Deputy Grand Council Chief  
Joe Miskokomon, Deputy Grand Council Chief James Marsden, Deputy Grand Council Chief Melvin Hardy, Deputy Grand Council Chief Travis Boissoneau  
Chief Mark Hill, Six Nations of the Grand River  
Grand Chief Abram Benedict, Mohawks of Akwesasne  
Grand Chief Alison Linklater, Mushkegowuk Tribal Council  
Proxy Dianne Maracle, Independent First Nations

### Overview

The Leadership Council (LC), formerly known as the Political Confederacy (PC), is the political coordination and steering committee for First Nations in Ontario. Mandated by the Chiefs-in-Assembly, the LC works with the Ontario Regional Chief to implement priorities put forward by Ontario First Nations leadership. Furthermore, the LC and Regional Chief are mandated to address unforeseen and emergency issues between Assemblies. The Leadership Council is comprised of the political executives of the four Political Territorial Organizations (PTOs): Anishinabek Nation, Association of Iroquois

and Allied Indians, Nishnawbe Aski Nation, and Grand Council Treaty #3, and includes representation from the Independent First Nations, Six Nations of the Grand River, Mohawks of Akwesasne, and Mushkegowuk Council.

To complete their work, the Leadership Council uses a portfolio system to delegate broad responsibilities in sector areas such as health, education, environment and social services. Members of the Leadership Council take responsibility for a select portfolio, ensuring that each sector has a dedicated advocate and a strong leader.

The Leadership Council relies on the support of the COO Secretariat and works closely with sector directors to ensure that they have the most up-to-date analysis and information. This relationship between the Leadership Council and sector directors allows them to focus on good governance and navigate the organization through the federal and provincial political landscape.

The Leadership Council plays a vital role in the Chiefs of Ontario and provides a source of strength, wisdom and leadership. Through their dedication and hard work, the Leadership Council will continue to provide guidance to First Nations in Ontario.

### Department Accomplishments

In 2022/23, the Leadership Council provided guidance and support on a variety of policy initiatives, managed federal and provincial government relations, and provided oversight on emerging initiatives from the COO Secretariat and Political Office as requested. The Leadership Council has also been successful in ensuring follow-up on a variety of resolutions passed by Chiefs-in-Assembly and continue to support First Nations in

Ontario.

The Leadership Council has been instrumental in advocating for a number of critical initiatives, including:

#### **Motion #22-02.23.1 – Special Chiefs Assembly on Child Welfare Decisions**

THAT, the Leadership Council direct Chiefs of Ontario Secretariat to host a Special Chiefs Assembly to consider the two questions around the Child Welfare funding formula that the Leadership Council could not come to a decision on.

#### **Motion #2022-05-25.1– Duty to Consult**

As authorized by Appendix B, (2) of the Chiefs of Ontario Charter, the Leadership Council supports the Chiefs of Ontario with proceeding in using the following documents: Minimum Standards and Principles and Engagement Checklist, to support conversations with Ontario Ministries to improve consultation and engagement processes with First Nations.

#### **Motion #2022-06-19– Special Chiefs Meeting**

THAT, the Leadership Council direct Chiefs of Ontario Secretariat to host an All Chiefs meeting to address the ongoing concerns regarding the Assembly of First Nations.

#### **Motion #2022-07-19.3 – Special Chiefs Assembly – Metis Assertion**

As authorized by Appendix B, (2) of the Chiefs of Ontario Charter, the Leadership Council supports the Chiefs of Ontario in hosting a virtual Special Chiefs Assembly on September 6 and 7, 2022, focused on the assertions of the

Métis Nation of Ontario.

**Motion #2022-07-19.6 – Chiefs Committee on Charter Renewal**

As authorized by Appendix B, (2) of the Chiefs of Ontario Charter, the Leadership Council appoint Chief Dean Sayers and Chief Scott McLeod as Ontario representatives for the Chiefs Committee on Charter Renewal.

**Motion #2022-08-23.6 – Second Justice Portfolio Holder**

As authorized by Appendix B, (2) of the Chiefs of Ontario Charter, the Leadership Council approves the appointment of Regional Deputy Grand Council Chief Travis Boissoneau as the second Justice Portfolio Holder.

**Motion #2022-09.01.3 – Special Chief Assembly**

THAT, the Leadership Council directs the Chiefs of Ontario to host a Special Chiefs Assembly on November 15-17, 2022, with Day 1 dedicated to the mining and Trans-Canada Pipeline compensation issues.

**Motion #2022-09-20.4 – Veterans Council Representatives**

As authorized by Appendix B, (2) of the Chiefs of Ontario Charter, the Leadership Council approves the Ontario Veterans Representatives as follows:

- Female - Wendy Jocko and Carmel Bressette as Alternate
- Male - Gerald McGregor and Armand Jourdain Sr. as Male Alternate

**Motion #2022-11-14.5 – Chiefs Committee on Languages**

As authorized by Appendix B, (2) of the Chiefs of Ontario Charter, the Leadership Council approves Ogimaa Kwe Rachel Manitowabi, Wiikwemkoong to the Chiefs Committee on Languages at AFN.

**Motion #2022-11-14.7 – Indian Resource Council**

As authorized by Appendix B, (2) of the Chiefs of Ontario Charter, the Leadership Council appoints Chief Edward Roundpoint and Regional Deputy Grand Chief Melvin Hardy to the Indian Resource Council.

**Motion #2022-11-30.3 – Chiefs Committee on Economic Development**

As authorized by the Chiefs of Ontario Charter, Appendix B, (2), the Leadership Council hereby approves nominating Chief Edward Roundpoint to the AFN Chiefs Committee on Economic Development as recommended by COO Chiefs Committee on Economic Development by consensus in a meeting held on November 28, 2022.

**Motion #2023-01-17.3 – Special Chief Assembly – Charter Renewal**

THAT, the Leadership Council direct Chiefs of Ontario Secretariat to host a Special Chiefs Assembly to address the ongoing concerns regarding the Assembly of First Nations Charter Renewal Terms of Reference. The Special Chiefs Assembly will be virtual, however, resources will be reviewed for possibility of hybrid and will be held before March 1, 2023.

**Motion #2023-02-21.1 – Heritage and Burial Portfolio Holder**

Leadership Council approve the appointment of Grand Council Chief Reginald Niganobe as the Heritage and

Burials Portfolio Holder.

**Motion #2023-04-02.6 – Healing Path Forward**

As authorized by Appendix B, (2) of the Chiefs of Ontario Charter, the Leadership Council call for a proper process for engagement by the Assembly of First Nations in relation to the Healing Path Forward and it be completed by July 28, 2023.

**Motion #2023-04-28.3 – Emergency Special Chiefs Assembly In-Camera**

As authorized by Appendix B, (2) of the Chiefs of Ontario Charter, the Leadership Council move to have an in-camera Emergency Special Chiefs Assembly on May 10, 2023, for an Assembly First Nations Human Resources Investigation Update.

In addition, the Leadership Council has worked to support transparency and accountability of the Chiefs of Ontario and provided advocacy in establishing relationships and networks with all levels of government. The Leadership Council has continued to meet regularly to move forward on a variety of issues affecting First Nations in Ontario and looks forward to meeting in person in the coming months.

## Members of the Leadership Council



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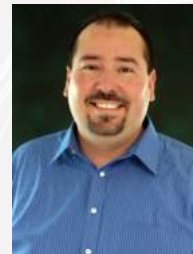
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Website: <https://saugeenfirstnation.ca/>

## Board of Directors Report

The Board of Directors is pleased to present a board report for the 2022-23 Annual Report. Under the new bylaws approved in June 2019, we have completed the Board of Directors implementation. Each Political Territorial Organization (PTO) has appointed a representative for the Board as follows:

- **Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians** – Geoff Stonefish
- **Nishnawbe Aski Nation** – Michelle Sanderson
- **Grand Council Treaty #3** – Gary Allen
- **Anishinabek Nation** – Gary Dokis

The appointed Board of Directors (the Board) has met nine (9) times since our last report to the Chiefs-in-Assembly in June 2022. Most of these meetings were briefings on the management of the staff, COVID-19 pandemic policy, securing a permanent office, researching charitable status, and updating policies. The Board continues to search for property for a permanent office in the Northern Region of the province.

The Board has revised the COVID-19 policy to reflect the new public health policies. Remaining in the Policy is that all staff must have a minimum of two vaccines against COVID-19. The office is fully open.

The Board continues to work with Tracy Antone, Chief Operating Officer, to maintain good governance and accountability for our corporate mandate. To date, the corporation has continued to function in all aspects of its responsibilities and will continue to maintain a level of administrative function for which we have responsibility. The Board continues to receive briefings

on the operations of the organization, which have been stabilized. A quarterly Board of Directors meeting schedule has been established, and the Board maintains oversight of the corporate functions.

As you may recall, Resolution 21/22 provides a provision for accountability to Ontario First Nations Leadership. This resolution has been implemented, and we have reached out to Independent and unaffiliated First Nations for Board presentations on the financial activity of the Secretariat. To date, there has been no response. A Terms of Reference for the Board have also approved by the Chiefs-in-Assembly and are attached to the Charter. This will maintain accountability and information to the Leadership Council.

Staffing remains stable. Funding for all positions is secure and yearly evaluations have been completed. The Board of Directors has implemented a salary grid with a review to be conducted every two (2) years. We have implemented the formal review process for

organizational policies and procedures and methods of communicating organizational processes, such as budgeting processes. All Sector Directors have presented their annual work plans for approval to the Board as a part of the audit process to ensure that the Board maintains a high-level knowledge of the work of the Secretariat.

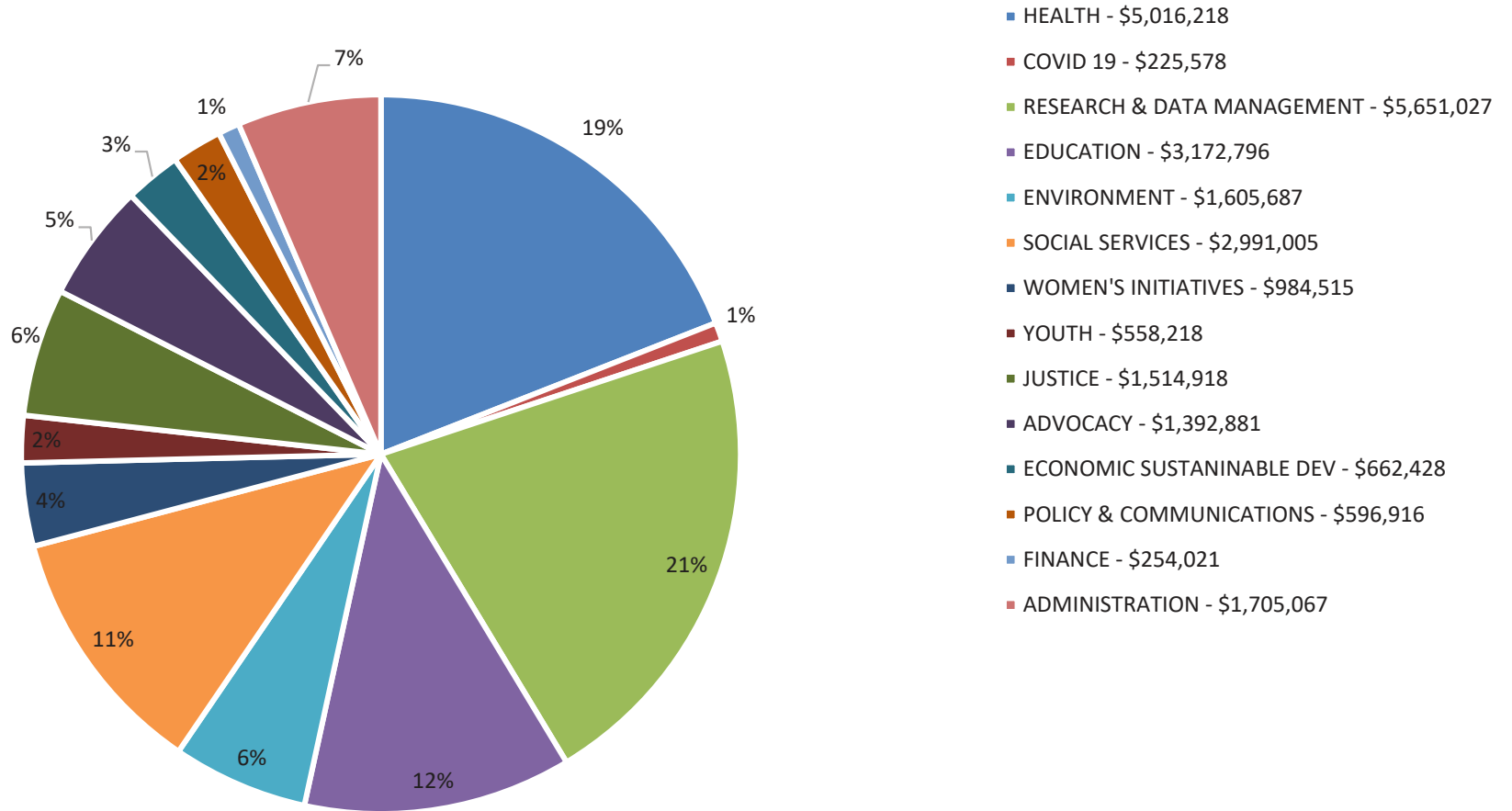
The audit will be underway at the time of writing, and there will be a presentation to Ontario First Nations Leadership at the Annual Chiefs Assembly in June 2023. From the quarterly review of finances, a good audit is contemplated as financial processes, employment contracts, consultant contracts, and asset maintenance are in place. It is expected that the Chief Operating Officer will maintain the processes to keep the organization's governance in good standing.

First Nations Leadership can be confident that the organization is operating effectively and that the separation of the corporation and politics will serve all



# Financial Report

April 1, 2022 - March 31, 2023





## Human Resources Report

2022-2023 brought the most new hires that the Chiefs of Ontario (COO) has seen in a single year. We took new recruiting approaches, including attending job fairs and advertising open postings at various COO events and assemblies. COO has welcomed 22 new employees, including five in Health, two in Economic Development, two in Women's Initiatives, two in Social Services, three in Education, four in Research and Data Management and three in Administration. Among the new employees, we brought on two Associate Directors—Michael Staruck in Education and Earl Nowgesic in Research and Data Management. The total number of employees at the Chiefs of Ontario is now 78. We continue to recruit for

several available positions.

We introduced a return to the office process in April 2022. While we still offer hybrid working arrangements, we have seen a significant increase in in-person meetings. As COVID-19 is still prevalent, we are maintaining the policy that all new employees must be fully vaccinated, and plan to reevaluate this policy at the end of 2023.

Throughout 2022-2023, COO implemented a process where all independent contracts, regardless of size, were preceded by a Requests for Proposals (RFP) method to ensure fair and equal opportunity for all. Using the RFP method, COO has completed 27 independent contracts.

Chiefs of Ontario underwent a full legal review of our employee policies. We introduced a Work-Life Balance

policy to ensure employees get the rest and energy needed to maintain a productive work path. We also added a perk for employees who have worked for COO for ten consecutive years, who will now receive additional vacation time. All employees will also be receiving a paid day off for their birthday.

At our holiday celebration, COO acknowledged its long-term employees for their work and dedication to the organization and the betterment of First Nations in Ontario. COO celebrated 13 employees who have completed over five years of service, five who have completed over ten years, one who has completed 15 years, three who have completed over 20, and one who has been with us for over 25 years!



## Education Sector

### Leadership Council Portfolio Holder/Alternates

#### Education

Deputy Grand Chief James Marsden, Anishinabek Nation  
Deputy Grand Chief Stacia Loft, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians

#### Languages

Ogimaa Kwe Rachel Manitowabi, Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory

#### First Chiefs and Technical Committee on Languages and Learning

Deputy Grand Chief James (Jim Bob) Marsden - Portfolio Holder – Co-Chair, Anishinabek Nation  
Deputy Grand Chief Staci Loft - Portfolio Holder – Co-Chair, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians  
Chief Shelley Moore-Frappier, Independent First Nations  
Councillor Audrey Powless-Bomberry, Six Nation of the Grand River  
Councillor Veronica King-Jamieson, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation  
Katelyn Peters, Ontario First Nations Young Peoples Council  
Ariel Strength, Ontario First Nations Young Peoples Council  
Mindy Taylor, Anishinabek Nation  
Kyla Stonefish, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians  
Sherri Kabatay, Grand Council Treaty #3  
Sherry Britton, Nishnawbe Aski Nation  
Diane Maracle-Nadjiwon, Independent First Nations  
Patti Barber, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation  
Alice King, Mohawks of Akwesasne  
Claudette Fournier, Sagamok Anishnawbek  
Jennifer Owl, Sagamok Anishnawbek

#### Additional Advisory Committees

##### Leadership Committee on Languages

Rachel Manitowabi, Ogimaa Kwe Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory – Portfolio Holder, Chair  
Loretta Assinewai-Fox, Chiefs of Ontario

Donna Debassige, COO Elders Council  
Barb Nolan, Paige Sillaby, Ali Darnay, Leah Boissoneau, Anishinabek Nation  
Ashley Timothy, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians  
Sarah Johnson, Martha Sutherland, Nicole McKay, Ivan Buskirk, Arlene Ash, Cassandra Spade, Matthew Angees, Nishnawbe Aski Nation  
Debbie Terrance, Independent First Nations  
Karen Sandy, Six Nations Language Commission  
Angela Noah, Delaware Nation  
Anne Taylor, Curve Lake First Nation  
Alice King, Mohawks of Akwesasne  
Mary Elijah, Olive Elm, Oneida Nation  
Monty McGahey, Chippewas of the Thames  
Nancy Cada, Sheshegwaning First Nation  
Nelson Toulouse, Sagamok Anishnawbek  
Rhonda Hopkins, Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory  
Veronica King-Jamieson, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation  
Luke Jeffries, Tyendingaga  
Julie Williams, Chippewas of Rama First Nation  
Jeannette Lavell, First Nations with Schools Collective  
Amos Key Jr, Ian Martin, David Leitch, Andrea Bear-Nicholas, Language Defenders Group

#### Ontario Technical Table – Interim Funding Approach (Federal Bilateral)

Julia Candlish, Chiefs of Ontario  
Kyla Stonefish, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians  
Debbie Terrance, Independent First Nations  
Mindy Taylor, Anishinabek Nation  
Sherri Kabatay, Grand Council Treaty #3  
Sherry Britton, Nishnawbe Aski Nation

#### First Nations Lifelong Learning Table

Patrik Lowen, Chiefs of Ontario  
Ashley Timothy, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians  
Natasha George, Anishinabek Nation  
Sherri Kabatay, Tracey Councillor – Grand Council Treaty #3

Mia Francis, Independent First Nations  
Vacant, Nishnawbe Aski Nation (temporary Sherry Britton)

#### Post-Secondary Education Engagement Committee

Angel Maracle, Chiefs of Ontario  
Sherri Kabatay, Grand Council Treaty #3  
Sherry Britton, Nishnawbe Aski Nation  
Omushkego Education Department, Nishnawbe Aski Nation  
Paige Sillaby, Mindy Taylor, Jacinta Shawanda, Anishinabek Nation  
Claudette Jones, Sagamok Anishnawbek  
Audrey Powless Bomberry, Justine Bomberry, Sam Grey, Six Nations  
Jen Elgie, Kyla Stonefish, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians  
Chief Shelly Moore-Frappier, Deborah Terrance, Mia Francis, Independent First Nations  
Jake Jamieson, Indigenous Institutes Consortium  
Bernadette O'Grady Bomberry, Patti Barber, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation

#### AFN Committees

##### Chiefs Committee on Education:

Deputy Grand Chief Stacia Loft, COO Education Portfolio Holder – Observer, AIAI  
Deputy Grand Chief James Marsden, COO Education Portfolio Holder – Observer, Anishinabek Nation

##### Chiefs Committee on Languages:

Ogimaa Kwe Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory Rachel Manitowabi – Portfolio Holder

##### National Indian Education Council:

Julia Candlish, Director of Education – Observer

##### Technical Committee on Languages:

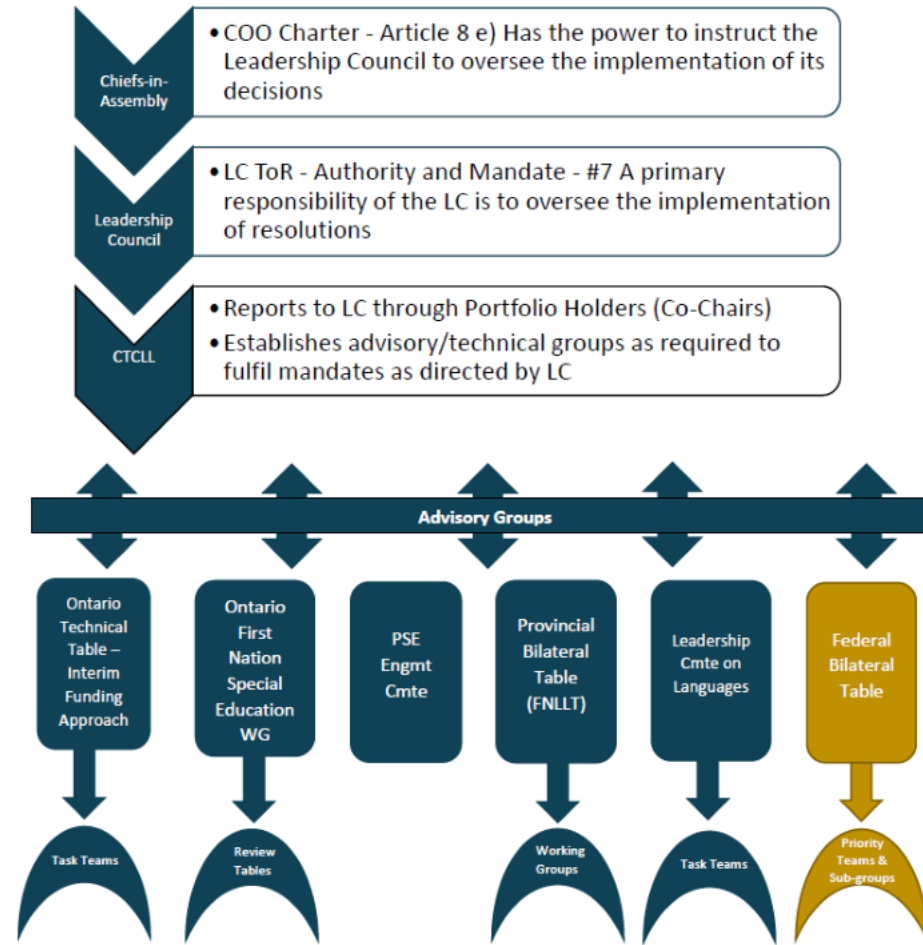
Angel Maracle, Education Program Lead

## Overview

The Education Sector at the Chiefs of Ontario provides coordination and technical support for the various education and languages advisory committees and associated sub-committees to facilitate and inform the work of the Chiefs and Technical Committee on Languages and Learning (formerly known as the Chiefs Committee on Lifelong Learning and the First Nations Education Coordination Unit) (CTCLL). The CTCLL is mandated by the Chiefs-in-Assembly to facilitate the discussion, planning, implementation and evaluation of all local, regional, provincial, federal and national matters affecting the First Nations languages and education in Ontario. The CTCLL reports to and obtains direction from the Leadership Council and the Chiefs-in-Assembly through the portfolio holders on languages and education.

The following chart (right) outlines the lines of authority as it pertains to the work of the COO Education Sector and the CTCLL. Note – the Federal Bilateral Table is depicted in a different colour as the establishment of this table has not been finalized.

COO Education Sector – Lines of Authority



## Education Sector Highlights

### COO Language & Education Forum 2023

The Education Sector, with the support of the CTCLL, held a very successful and well-attended forum in February 2023 that featured select priority areas for languages and education. The forum was delivered in a hybrid format to accommodate those unable or unwilling to travel. The forum provided a long-awaited opportunity to unite Knowledge Holders, Leadership, educators, and language

and education champions to share information and lift one another up for their work in their communities, schools, groups and organizations.

### Federal Bilateral Process

A flawed decision-making process at the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) on various education-related activities resulted in the decision to withdraw COO representation from participation in AFN national tables on education. This resulted in a Chiefs-in-Assembly

mandate for the CTCLL to develop recommendations to establish a bilateral process on education with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC).

As the Education Sector finalizes recommendations on a bilateral process on education with ISC, the sector continues to work with the CTCLL, the Leadership Council and the Ontario Regional Chief’s Office to repair relations with the AFN to re-establish participation at the national committees on education.

The CTCLL also continues to establish Interim Bilateral Task Teams directly with ISC to ensure work continues until the bilateral process is finalized. We currently have Interim Bilateral Task Teams on post-secondary education, the Education Partnerships Program and Education Infrastructure that have provided input and recommendations on various associated programs, evaluations and analyses.

### Provincial Bilateral - First Nations Lifelong Learning Table (FNLLT)

Resolution 45/16 provides the mandate for the CTCLL to work with the province on jointly determined priority areas. The main deliverable of the FNLLT is to strengthen relationships between First Nations and the provincial school boards and the Ministry of Education to improve programs, policies, processes and services to better meet the needs of First Nation learners in the provincial education system.

The FNLLT made significant strides in several focus areas, including:

- Conducting engagement with First Nation communities and organizations to determine the efficacy of Jordan's Principle in school boards
- Exploration and information sharing regarding language and culture for learners in the provincial education system, including but not limited to:
  - Discussions with the Ontario College of Teachers on alternative accreditation paths for Indigenous Language teachers
  - Indigenous Education Office – Elder's Endorsement

#### Model

- Establishing a Curriculum Task Team to work with the Curriculum Division of the Ministry of Education to develop recommendations to ensure First Nations are fully involved in every phase of curriculum review and development
- Re-establishing the Data Sharing Agreement with the Ministry of Education to obtain aggregate data on First Nation learners to inform evidence-based recommendations on improvements to the provincial education system
- Conducting analysis and provided recommended changes to the Board Action Plan on Indigenous Education reporting tool to enhance public school board reporting on Indigenous programming
- Developing and distributing a graphic video to accompany the release of an Education Agreement template for First Nation communities to use in negotiating with provincial school boards

#### First Nation Languages

The COO Leadership Council mandates the Leadership Committee on Languages (LCOL) to guide all activities that support First Nation languages in Ontario. Over the past year, the LCOL has been focused mainly on elevating the idea of implementing Article 14 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and undertaking research on language immersion programs and models.

The LCOL provided guidance and support at the regional and national levels to obtain mandates from the Chiefs-in-Assembly to promote the implementation of UNDRIP Articles related to First Nations language rights

as priority actions under the federal United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act. COO Resolution 22-18A was passed at the COO Chiefs Assembly in June 2022, and the AFN Resolution 47-2022 was passed by the AFN Executive Committee in February 2023. The LCOL is currently working towards implementing the following recommendations from a recent environmental scan of immersion and bilingual learning models:

#### Areas for Advocacy Recommendations

1. Use lobbying power and influence at provincial and federal levels
2. Advocate for self-determination in Indigenous language programs
3. Advocate for more immersion program funding
4. Work to educate governments, institutions, and communities on the urgency of language preservation
5. Advocate for more alternative language programs

#### Community - Level of Support Recommendations

6. Work more with new and smaller programs
7. Work to foster collaboration between programs
8. Work with communities to preserve, document, and archive Indigenous languages
9. Help Indigenous communities develop evidence-based language curriculum
10. Help Indigenous communities incorporate healing into language curriculum
11. Help Indigenous communities develop guidelines to respect their intellectual property

## Education Transformation

Resolution 51-18 mandates the Ontario Technical Table on the Interim Funding Approach (OTTIFA) to continue examining and refining the Interim Funding Approach to identify and address gaps and underfunded areas for First Nation students and schools. The main component

of the Interim Funding Approach (IFA) is the formula that generates funding allocations to communities and organizations for education.

OTTIFA recommendations require approval from the CTCLL and the Leadership Council before submission to ISC for approval and implementation. The OTTIFA

establishes Task Teams, which include individuals with specific experience and expertise, to focus on priority areas within the IFA. Current Task Teams include:

- Systemic Gaps
- Students Over 21 (Adult Education)

Task Team	Recommendation	Status	Federal Response
Funding Protection	Funding protection should continue in most areas as it funds vital services to learners	Approved by COO Leadership Council Submitted to ISC Headquarters for final approval	While ongoing work from the OTTIFA table, and the Funding Protection Task Team, was taken into consideration for the decision regarding the future of the time limited Funding Protection program, the new national approach to funding protection based on gradual funding stabilization was finalized before the recommendation was submitted.
Provincial Student Supports	Change current \$541/FTE student supports amount in the IFA to reflect the base amounts to support a position comparable to the Indigenous Lead Position in provincial school boards.	Approved by COO Leadership Council Submitted to ISC Headquarters for final approval	This recommendation was approved conditionally, pending ISC receiving a new mandate for regional engagement implementation, which is currently being considered by central agencies but is not currently available.
OTTIFA	It is recommended that all First Nation schools be classified as Supported Schools under the Geographic Circumstances Grant and gain the benefit of that classification regardless of their distance to another FN school. It is recommended that there is no rounding up or down of the calculations.	Approved by COO Leadership Council Submitted to ISC Headquarters for final approval	This recommendation was approved and will be implemented in the 2023-24 IFA.
Special Education	In order to continue with the needed HCSEP Needs-Based process in Ontario, it is recommended that a separate allocation for a HCSEP Needs-Based Application Process be provided by ISC that is outside of the "Incremental Pot" and be maintained at a minimum level of \$6M annually. It is also recommended that ISC provides an annual escalator that is based on the current Consumer Price Index (Statistics Canada)	Approved by COO Leadership Council Submitted to ISC Headquarters for final approval	This decision was deferred, due to an on-going national review of the HCSEP, and it is recommended work continue at the OTTIFA table on high cost special education, to be re-submitted at a later date.

- Special Education
- Provincial Student Supports
- Transportation
- Operations and Maintenance
- Language and Culture
- Funding Protection
- Before and After School
- First Nation Education Authority (used as proxies within the funding model) Groupings

The following chart (p.21) outlines recommendations for enhancements and refinements to the Interim Funding Approach the OTTIFA put forward in the past year, along with the response from ISC and the status

### Post-Secondary Education

Resolution 16/18 mandates the CTCLL to coordinate and facilitate engagement and review the ISC programs that support post-secondary education. COO established a Post-Secondary Education Engagement Committee to guide this collective work, which has resulted in a final report with recommendations for improvements to the way post-secondary education is supported by the federal government.

An overarching recommendation within the final report requires all recommendations be implemented in a manner that is consistent with the following:

- the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- First Nations Inherent, Treaty, and Aboriginal rights;
- First Nations control of First Nations education;
- the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation

Commission’s final report; and,

- First Nations principles of lifelong learning, including holistic, whole-student approaches to well-being and any preexisting and future education agreements.

Explicit recommendations in the final report fall within these five categories:

#### 1) Post-Secondary Costs Funding

#### 2) Transitional Programming

#### 3) Administration

#### 4) Informational

#### 5) Relationships

The Committee is developing a work plan for implementing the recommendations for ratification by First Nations Leadership in Ontario, along with the final report.

### Special Education

Resolution 20/16 supports the Ontario First Nation Special Education Working Group (OFNSEWG), a joint technical and advisory body of the Chiefs of Ontario and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), as an advisory group to the CTCLL. The OFNSEWG oversees the Special Education Needs-Based Process, which provides additional funding to First Nation communities and organizations based on need. In July 2022, there were 19 applications received with a total request of over \$8 million. However, there was only \$3 million available to distribute. In October 2022, another 18 applications were received, and only five received funding from the \$450,000 available for this round.

This resolution also supports the Special Education Support Technicians (SESTs) to assist First Nation communities, organizations and institutions in meeting the needs of learners requiring extra support. The SESTs continue to develop and distribute the quarterly newsletter (Our Gifted Children) that provides updates and helpful information for families and educators in our communities that are involved in meeting the needs of our learners.

The SESTs also hosted several capacity-building and information-sharing webinars such as:

- Completing your HCSEP Report – May 2022
- Decolonizing Mathematics – September 2022
- Mobilizing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action – 4-part series March – May 2023



## In the Year Ahead – Moving Forward

In the year ahead, the Education Sector plans to:

- Continue to work with the experts within First Nation communities and organizations to bring recommendations forward on enhancements and refinements to the Interim Funding Approach for education;
- Continue to provide capacity-building and information-sharing sessions for First Nation communities that wish to move beyond the Interim Funding Approach;
- Continue to strengthen both federal and provincial bilateral processes and build new relationships as required;
- Engage First Nations in Ontario in various ways (forums, surveys, focus groups, etc.) to determine and confirm lifelong linguistic and educational needs and ensure we have the right staff, committees and sub-committees in place to undertake required analysis and evaluation to produce sound solutions that address these needs;
- Conduct research and review existing and emerging research and data to understand and assess the impacts on First Nations learners and communities;
- Identify Special Education funding gaps to influence a draft report on advocacy plans for sustainable funding;
- Establish working groups to develop a First Nation Student Wellness Toolkit based on the Student Wellness Framework.



## Environment Sector

### Leadership Council Portfolio Holder/Alternates

Grand Chief Abram Benedict, Mohawk Council of Akwesasne – Portfolio Holder

Grand Chief Alison Linklater, Mushkegowuk Council – Alternate

### Chiefs Committee on Environment (CCOE)

#### Anishinabek Nation (AN)

Ogimaa Kwe Linda Debassige, M'Chigeeng First Nation

Chief Gerry Duquette Jr., Dokis First Nation

Chief Reginald Niganobe, Mississauga #8 First Nation

Chief Alana Endanawas, Sheshegwaning First Nation

Northern Superior Regional Deputy Grand Chief Mel Hardy

#### Association of Allied & Iroquois Indians (AIAI)

Chief R. Don Maracle, Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte

Chief Dean Sayers, Ojibways of Batchewana



### Independent First Nations (IFN)

Chief Charles Sampson, Walpole Island First Nation

Chief Veronica Smith, Chippewas of Nawash

### Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN)

Deputy Grand Chief Victor Linklater

### Unaffiliated First Nations

Chief Stacey LaForme, Mississaugas of the Credit

Chief Wilfred King, Kiashke Zaaging Anishinaabek

### Additional Committees/Technicians

#### Fuel Tax Surcharge Working Group

This Working Group has not met virtually or in person this past year.

### Committees at the AFN Level in which the Environment Sector Participates

CCOHI – Chiefs Committee on Housing Infrastructure and Water

JCCA – Joint Committee on Climate Action

ACCAE – Advisory Committee on Climate Action and Environment

### Overview

The Environment Sector provides advice, guidance, and recommendations to the Leadership Council (LC) and Ontario First Nations leadership on water, natural resources, energy, species-at-risk, First Nations Knowledge, environmental assessments, mining, climate change, and other environmental issues. The Environment Sector's goal is to promote active dialogue and facilitate coordinated efforts to support the Inherent and Treaty rights of First Nations in Ontario in ways respectful of each sovereign Nation. To ensure accountability to First Nations in Ontario, the Environment Sector's work is guided by resolutions passed by the Chiefs-in-Assembly, with advice and

oversight by the Leadership Council (LC) and the Chiefs Committee on Environment. The Chiefs Committee on Environment is a technical and advisory body operating under the umbrella of the Chiefs of Ontario. The Chiefs Committee on Environment (CCOE) was created in the fiscal year 2013-14 as a means to secure resources for leadership to strategize collectively on province-wide policy positions with respect to the environment. The committee is comprised of Chiefs representing the four Political Territorial Organizations (PTO) and the Independent First Nations. Each Chief provides oversight and guidance on specific matters within their portfolio.

## Environment Sector Highlights

### Water

#### Canada Water Agency (CWA)

The Canada Water Agency (CWA) is a proposal from Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC), with support from Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, intended to improve freshwater management practices and coordination across Canada.

The Chiefs-in-Assembly passed a Resolution to support Phase 2 engagement on First Nation's priorities in the creation of the Canada Water Agency (CWA). Phase 2 is expected to see the COO Environment Sector support workshops conducted in communities in conjunction with Provincial Territorial Organizations (PTO) and Independent First Nations. The COO Environment Sector was not able to come to an agreement with Environment and Climate Change Canada on funding in time to carry out Phase 2 from March 21, 2023, to March 31, 2023, but



there will likely be support going forward.

The recently announced 2023 federal budget commits \$21 million to support the creation of the CWA, which will be headquartered in Winnipeg, MB. By the end of 2023, the Government of Canada will introduce legislation that will fully establish the CWA as a standalone entity. This funding should support our Phase 2 engagement on CWA as this will be crucial for First Nations' input before legislation is drafted.

### **First Nations Drinking Water Legislation:**

The Government of Canada initially provided a 30-day review period of proposed draft legislation. Chiefs of Ontario (COO) organized two consultation sessions in Thunder Bay, ON, on March 1-2, 2023 and Toronto on March 6-7, 2023. Participants felt at the time that 30 days was not enough time and we are grateful for the extension until April 23, 2023.

The proposed legislation is intended to replace the 2013 Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act, which was repealed in 2022. As noted in the [government's background and complete timeline](#), this was done after repeated calls by the Assembly of First Nations and the settlement of a class action lawsuit. Included in the settlement was the need for the government to provide reasonable efforts to repealing and replacing the legislation.

[The Proposal for An Act respecting drinking water](#), wastewater and related infrastructure on First Nations lands was initially put forth for a 30-day consultation period, beginning on February 17, 2023. After having been co-developed with First Nations, this is the first time that

such an opportunity for feedback has been provided at the federal level.

The engagements organized by COO were among a number of such regional consultations organized in conjunction with the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) to hear from First Nations on the proposed legislation.

The Minister extended the feedback period to receive more information from more communities. Now that the period has expired, it is expected that the federal government will edit the proposal after having received the feedback before then presenting it in Parliament. There will be further opportunity for First Nations to provide feedback and speak to the bill once it is introduced.

With the extension of the engagement period, COO hopes to be able to organize additional consultations in person and remotely for First Nations communities, organizations and water technicians. To do so, additional resources will be required to allow their voices to best be heard.

### **Next Steps**

Most attendees at these consultations were interested in a question-and-answer online seminar with ISC.

The goal would be to get specific answers relating to technical elements of the bill from knowledgeable staff empowered to give them. Now that an extension has been granted to the engagement process by ISC, COO will work with ISC to set up further engagements.

COO submitted a list of concerns and questions to ISC at the conclusion of the consultations.

It is expected that the government of Canada will introduce a revised version of the proposed legislation later this spring that hopefully takes into account the feedback. It will then flow through the parliamentary process. There will be a number of opportunities for COO and First Nations can provide additional commentary in the hopes of having the legislation amended if further necessary.

### **Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA):**

The Great Lakes Executive Council (GLEC) met online in June and in December of 2022, and Annex subcommittees conducted online meetings through 2022 to present. The GLEC and subcommittee meetings were attended by Chiefs of Ontario Environment Sector staff. The COO Environment Sector regularly circulated information, provided briefing notes when necessary, and updated the Chiefs Committee on Environment on GLWQA issues. The COO Environment Sector, alongside other organizations, pressed the federal government to significantly increase their investment in the Great Lakes, and ORC Hare wrote to Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland about this issue as well. The commitment by Prime Minister Trudeau during President Biden's recent visit of \$420 million on Great Lakes clean up and restoration is a clear response to that pressure.

Canada Ontario Agreement (COA):

This agreement supports the GLWQA by outlining how the governments of Canada and Ontario will cooperate and coordinate their efforts. First Nations participation in this agreement is largely guided though Annex 13 that outlines a number of commitments for the federal and provincial governments.

The Seventh Annual First Nations and Canada Ontario Agreement (COA) Executive Committee Meeting took place on March 8, 2023, in Toronto, ON, and was a return to an in-person event. This event was organized by the COO Environment Sector, with Clint Jacobs and Naomi Williams from Walpole Island First Nation acting as Co-Chairs for the meeting attended by approximately 18 First Nations representatives and federal and provincial government officials. A significant outcome of the meeting was an agreement among First Nations, Canada and Ontario representatives to pursue co-developing tools that support better reporting on commitments to First Nations that stem from the COA. Incorporating progress on recommendations put forth by First Nations – in particular, recommendations from last year’s First Nation’s Priority Setting meeting hosted by COO – will also be a component of improved reporting. A full summary report of the meeting is currently being edited and will be available shortly.

### **The Great Lakes Public Forum:**

The Great Lakes Public Forum, held in Niagara Falls, Ontario, on September 27-29, 2022, was a successful event that benefited greatly from the contributions of First Nation’s representatives. First Nations participation was facilitated by the COO Environment Sector, with the event highlighted by ORC Hare’s participation in a discussion panel with the Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada, Steven Guilbeault, and the Regional Administrator for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Debra Shore. The event also featured a screening of the COO produced documentary Water.

## **Land**

### **Accomplishment: Impact Assessment Toolkit**

After much anticipation, the New Impact Assessment Toolkit will be launched at the Chiefs Assembly in June 2023. The new electronic toolkit will be shared with First Nations upon request. The Chiefs of Ontario plan to seek further resources to host workshops on the New Impact Assessment Toolkit. Further details will be available in the near future.

The new toolkit includes focus on Indigenous Knowledge, Indigenous Laws, UNDRIP & Free Prior Informed Consent. However, the following notes are to be taken into account when using the new toolkit:

- This toolkit is not meant to act as “Environmental Assessment (EA) 101” – the Canadian and Ontario EA laws are always changing. The toolkit ought to provide general tips and tools that will remain useful as laws change;
- The focus of the toolkit is to provide the tools needed to get the most for your First Nation out of the EA process;
- Provision of practical tools (i.e.: checklists, infographic summaries); and
- Provision of real case studies.

### **Indigenous Knowledge (IK) and EA Toolkit:**

- Support governance of your own knowledge;
- Prepare IK studies and work in your community;
- Guidance to develop your own IK protocol; and
- Work with IK and science in support of decision making.

### **Indigenous Laws EA Toolkit:**

- Discuss and explore the assertion and revitalization of First Nation laws (First Nations’ own legal systems, processes and protocols);
- Rely on expertise of Indigenous law scholars and experience of First Nations and Indigenous knowledge holders; and
- Learn how First Nation laws can be asserted and enforced through an EA process.

### **Technical Tools:**

- Overview of new federal Impact Assessment Act and key stages;
- Scoping of the Impact Assessment Statement;
- Valued Ecosystem Components, Cultural Keystone Species, Species At Risk;
- Environmental, health, social and economic impacts including gender-based impacts;
- Cumulative effects and strategic EAs; and
- Ongoing monitoring.

## **Air**

### **Climate Change**

#### **COO SCA APRIL 2019 - RESOLUTION #4/19 First Nations Tax Immunity.**

#### **STATUS**

Legal counsel was hired to assist with this difficult issue. After a number of letters sent to the Federal government since June 20, 2019, an open letter to the Prime Minister was sent on January 16, 2023. We have followed up and are presently awaiting a response from the Federal government.



## COO AOCC - RESOLUTION #21/28 First Nations Climate Leadership on Energy

### STATUS

We have secured funds from Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) for high level First Nations engagement to explore solutions for the return of a portion of federal fuel charge proceeds. We will be implementing the project activities in the coming year.

We have also secured funds in partnership with EcoTrust Canada to create awareness on the entire carbon landscape, including carbon rights for a 2-year period, where work has begun on increasing human resource capacity to execute the work plan. An initial carbon presentation will be planned for the Chiefs-in-Assembly this coming year.

### In the Year Ahead – Moving Forward:

We have three exciting new projects that the Chief of Ontario's Environment Sector will be working on as we begin the new fiscal year. Please see a brief outline of each of the projects below for review. We look forward to providing regular updates on these priority areas as they become available.

#### 1. First Nations Youth and Conservation

In June 2022, Chiefs-in-Assembly passed Resolution 22/10 to update existing Resolution 8/10 in order to renew support for the Environment Sector to support First Nations in Ontario in relation to Species At Risk and addressing the Biodiversity Crisis, including advocating for greater involvement of and direct support for First

Nations and their work in relation to Species At Risk.

As part of COO's biodiversity mandate, we have sought funding to address a priority challenge in the Carolinian zone. This project is a pilot to increase knowledge and awareness of the biodiversity challenges in this region and respond to them through targeted training of youth. It has also been designed to provide a forum for the 10 First Nations located in this specific area to work together on biodiversity issues and with the broader conservation community working in this region. The expectation is to engage the 10 First Nations in this region specifically and to develop a program that could be used by First Nations throughout Ontario.

The goal of this project is to provide intensive training to First Nations youth within Ecoregion 7E on the identification and assessment and monitoring of Species at Risk (SAR) and build a collaborative network to address biodiversity issues in this region.

#### 2. Carbon in First Nations Homelands Toolkit:

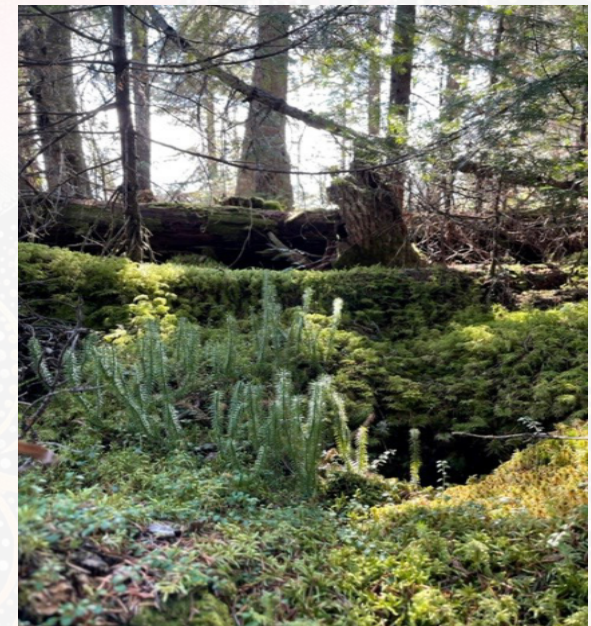
This project aims to take action on climate change by supporting First Nations in Ontario to understand the entire carbon landscape from the chemical element to greenhouse gas emissions to environmental and economic benefits of carbon offset systems. With the understanding of the carbon landscape, the educational intent is to assist in the development of First Nations capacity to engage on carbon pollution as stated by the Environment Climate Change Canada (ECCC) discussion paper titled, "[Carbon Pollution Pricing: Considerations for Facilitating Indigenous Participation in the Federal Greenhouse Gas Offset System](#)" and other future related

documents. In facilitating engagement and building relationships between First Nations and the federal government, Chiefs of Ontario (COO) will strive to make links between the Political Territorial Organizations' (PTOs), current initiatives in Ontario and to build capacity in First Nations communities on the possible benefits and opportunities. The proposal has two objectives: 1) To educate Ontario First Nations on carbon, and 2) To facilitate First Nations participation on ECCC carbon pollution document development.

#### 3. First Nations Climate Leadership:

Objectives and Potential Themes:

A renewed, long-term relationship between First Nations and Canada on climate change where important decisions regarding national climate policy are made together and First Nations have the resources necessary to take climate action.



**Overall Objective:** Indigenous Peoples and Canada collaborate to build a better system for partnership; one where important decisions about national climate policy are made together, and the resources necessary to take climate action are easy to access.



## Health Sector

### Ontario Chiefs Committee on Health (OCCOH)

Grand Council Chief Reg Niganobe, Co-Chair, Leadership Council Portfolio Holder

Chief Tim Thompson, Co-Chair, Leadership Council Portfolio Holder

Chief R. Donald Maracle, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians

Deputy Grand Chief Victor Linklater, Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Deputy Grand Chief Mike Hardy, Anishinabek Nation

Vacant, Grand Council Treaty #3

Vacant, Independent First Nations

Sherry-Lyn Hill-Pierce, Six Nations of the Grand River

### Health Coordination Unit (HCU)

Georgina Lentz, Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Suzanne Nicholas, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians

Lyndia Jones, Independent First Nations

Jamie Restoule, Anishinabek Nation

Michael King, Grand Council Treaty #3

Alana Hill, Six Nations of the Grand River

### Health Sector Staff

Tobi Mitchell, Director of Health

Zachariah General, Associate Director & Manager of Services & Advocacy

Alice Longboat, Sr. Health Coordinator

Lily Menominee-Batise, Sr. Health Advisor

Alexxis Kydd, Policy Analyst

Megan Logan, Policy Analyst

Bernadette deGonzague, Sr. Mental Health Policy Analyst

Sacha Bragg, Opioid Research Communications and Project Liaison

Linda Ogilvie, Public Health Advisor

Nicole Hare, Coordinator

Jennifer Shisheesh, NIHB Navigator

Trudy Maness, NIHB Navigator

Brenda Owl, NIHB Navigator

Tasha Toulouse, NIHB Navigator

Emily King, Jordan's Principle Liaison

### Overview

The Health Sector continues to meet with First Nations Leadership, and government partners in adjusting to life post-pandemic. Throughout the pandemic, the Chiefs of Ontario has worked diligently to ensure our First Nations members both inside and outside their communities were prioritized in receiving vaccines and subsequent boosters. The Health Sector has distributed Health Communiqués for Leadership, including a summary of highlights at provincial, federal and First Nations-level on all further developments as they arose.

The Health Sector has added a number of staff over the last year, including a Policy Analyst, 3 NIHB Navigators (bringing the sector's total to four), an Opioid Project Liaison, a Coordinator, as well as a Health Human Resources Project Lead.

The Health Sector has also been working with the Health Coordination Unit and the Ontario Chiefs Committee on Health to develop a set of identified working priorities to focus on. The Health Sector hosted an initial meeting regarding this development, and we will continue to work on this and have first steps developed during this fiscal year.

### Registered Nurses Association of Ontario (RNAO) and Chiefs of Ontario (COO) Agreement

The partnership agreement signed on September 13, 2019, with RNAO ended on June 30, 2021. RNAO and COO have begun work to renew this agreement and continue working towards agreed upon priorities, including

continuing webinar presentations for health care providers.

### COO 17th Annual Health Forum

The 17th Annual Health Forum was presented in a hybrid format from February 28 to March 2, 2023. There was an excellent response with over 350 individuals registering to participate in person, and approximately 50 participants registered virtually. The theme of the Forum was "Time to Reconnect, Restore and Refocus." The agenda created an excellent balance of research and firsthand stories on a variety of topics as we begin to reset health policies and priorities in a post-pandemic environment.

### First Nation Midwifery

In 2023-2023, the Health Sector and the Association of Ontario Midwives (AOM) worked together to advocate for increased supports for AOM and their work in advancing First Nation Midwifery.

Resolution 21/42, Prioritizing Midwifery Education for First Nations, passed by the Chiefs-in-Assembly in 2021, calls for funding to support the implementation of an Indigenous Midwifery Education Plan and continued advocacy for additional funding and resources to First Nation midwifery. With this resolution, in February 2022, the Chiefs Committee on Health supported the recommendation to allocate First Nation Midwifery funding to AOM to support work on an Indigenous Midwifery Education Plan in 2022-2023. This funding came from Federal Budget 2021 and is an initiative in Indigenous Services Canada's (ISC) Anti-Indigenous Racism Initiative.



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In late March 2023, COO and the AOM were successful in securing additional capacity funding for ISC to support the AOM's Indigenous Midwifery Education Plan. With this additional capacity funding, the AOM is expected to continue working on developing and implementing their midwifery education plan.



### **First Nation Digital Health Ontario (FNDHO) and First Nation Digital Health Advisory Committee (FNDHAC)**

First Nation Digital Health Ontario (FNDHO) is an arms-length body created to assist in the promotion and support of digital health tools to First Nations throughout Ontario. There are currently over 110 First Nations being supported by FNDHO for use of Digital Health, EMR, Telemedicine and associated tools within their respective First Nations and health service organizations.

The Health Sector maintains representation at the national level on the First Nation Digital Health Advisory Committee (FNDHAC), which is co-chaired by AFN and ISC.

A national business case is currently underway to provide a plan that is responsive to the unique needs of all First Nation regions and jurisdictions. A First Nation legal advisor has been retained to review and support this work regarding cross-jurisdictional matters and how they may be applied to a national initiative. An upcoming planning session has been scheduled for mid-May 2023.

### **Distinction Based Indigenous Health Legislation (DBIHL)**

As part of his campaign promises, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau committed to create a Distinction-Based Indigenous Health Legislation Act, which will re-examine how health care services are provided and governed by First Nations and other Indigenous populations in Canada. Work has commenced on examining this with the AFN Chiefs Committee on Health (CCOH). Significant concerns were raised regarding inclusion and the government taking a pan-Indigenous approach.

In 2022-23, the Health Sector hosted a number of in-person and virtual information and dialogue sessions with First Nations Leadership, Health Directors as well as ISC Headquarters and Regional ISC representatives regarding DBIHL. Recommendations that came from these sessions were that more communication is required to ensure that First Nation citizens are able to make informed decisions about how this legislation should be rolled out.

The Health Sector is currently in the process of responding to these requests as they are submitted.

### **Government Relations and Health Transformation**

The Health Sector remains committed to work with our member PTOs, Independent and Unaffiliated First Nations, including health provider organizations, to support and provide assistance, as requested. Most have chosen to engage in direct bi-lateral and trilateral agreements. The Health Sector continues to respond to requests for support and guidance

### **Anti-Racism in the Health Care System**

Anti-Indigenous Racism has risen to the forefront, particularly in the wake of the passing of Joyce Echaquan in 2020. Several national-level meetings were held with the family, medical experts and First Nations Leadership to discuss anti-racism in the health care system across Canada. Leadership in Ontario and across Canada are still awaiting investigative responses and recommendations as to how to best move forward collectively.



## **Holistic Continuum of Long Term Care Services**

Indigenous Services Canada has conducted engagements over the past year to obtain information and guidance from First Nations in Ontario Region to inform policy and program change relating to Holistic Continuum of Long Term Care Services. Engagement reports have been completed, including a National process to “validate” the reports’ contents. A process to explore and “co-develop” policy options is set to begin in spring 2023, with the intent of returning to cabinet with a submission in early 2024

## **Home and Community Care**

Work is underway to renew the terms and conditions of the Ministry of Health home and community care funding agreements with First Nations communities. In December 2022, home care coordinators met with the Ministry of Health to receive an overview on why the update is necessary in light of the new legislation and regulation on home and community care services in Ontario. Several communities volunteered to participate in a working group to provide insight on a number of key issues informing the updated terms and conditions. The Ministry of Health is currently working with communities to share the results of those discussions and to propose next steps.

## **Trilateral First Nations Health Senior Officials Committee**

The Trilateral First Nations Health Senior Officials Committee (TFNHSOC) is a regional trilateral table

comprised of First Nations, federal and provincial senior officials, created to strengthen government-to-government relations and address First Nations health challenges. The primary focus of TFNHSOC meetings are to focus on mutually identified priority areas. Consulting Matrix was the Consultant hired to perform a review on the efficacy and relevance of the TFNHSOC. A report with options for moving forward was presented to the Health Coordination Unit and the Ontario Chiefs

The Trilateral First Nations Health Senior Officials Committee (TFNHSOC) is a regional trilateral table comprised of First Nations, federal and provincial senior officials, created to strengthen government-to-government relations and address First Nations health challenges. The primary focus of TFNHSOC meetings are to focus on mutually identified priority areas. Consulting Matrix was the Consultant hired to perform a review on the efficacy and relevance of the TFNHSOC. A report with options for moving forward was presented to the Health Coordination Unit and the Ontario Chiefs Committee on Health, and a motion was passed to revitalize the mandate and activities of TFNHSOC in March 2023.

## **Mental Health and Addictions Working Group (MHAWG)**

The MHAWG is co-chaired by COO, Ministry of Health, and Indigenous Services Canada. Technical membership includes representatives from the Ontario First Nations Young Peoples Council, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians, Independent First Nations, Anishinabek Nation, Six Nations of the Grand River, and Nishnawbe Aski Nation who participates as an observer.

To date, there have been no formal meetings or activities undertaken, as we await clarification on moving forward in light of recommendations from the Review Report, and clarification on membership from the Ontario Chiefs Committee on Health.

Collaboration between the RNAO, NAN, and CAMH is continuing, and there are plans to deliver a series of webinar presentations on traditional healing and the impacts of COVID-19 on health care providers. Three sessions were hosted in 2022-2023 and the series has been extended into the following fiscal year.

A renewed Partnership Agreement between COO and RNAO is in development and will provide direction and support on working together on mutually agreed upon priorities to advance First Nations health.

## **Stories from our Roots**

As a follow-up to expand the Stories from our Roots Youth Life Promotion project, which was concluded in March 2020, initial conversations between the COO Health and Youth Sectors have begun to discuss the development of a proposal for a First Nations Youth Lead Suicide Awareness and Prevention Program as an alternative to SafeTalk®. During the initial launch of Stories from our Roots, SafeTalk® was used to provide suicide prevention training to participants. Many found the inclusion of the training to be beneficial, however, participants expressed a need for a First Nations Youth specific training program to replace SafeTalk®.

Progress on this initiative was interrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the vacancy of the Youth Coordinator position. However, work has begun on a

proposal for funding to develop a First Nations Youth Suicide Prevention and Awareness training curriculum that will be used to expand and re-launch the Stories from our Roots Life Promotion project. Further conversations and engagement with First Nations Youth across the region will follow, as it is imperative that they be central to the development of this curriculum. The OFNYPC will also be engaged with to take part in this development process, and to help determine the needs of Ontario First Nations Youth as it relates to suicide awareness and prevention.

This process will allow for First Nations Youth to build skills and capacity in life promotion and suicide awareness and prevention and will allow for the Stories from our Roots Life Promotion project to expand and re-launch in a new and improved way.

### **Resolution 20/18: Prescription Opioid Surveillance**

The Health Sector is continuing work on Opioid Use surveillance previously conducted under the mandate of Resolution 13/10. The COO Opioid Steering Committee, formed under Resolution 13/10, continued to work with the Ontario Drug Policy Research Network and the Institute for Clinical and Evaluative Sciences on a grant from the Canadian Institutes for Health Research for a 4-year research project: Understanding Opioid Use and Harms among First Nations People in Ontario: Integrating Administrative Data with Guidance from Communities, approved on March 3, 2021. Bridge funding allowed an interim project to begin in 2020. Two reports were completed and released in December 2021 available at <https://chiefs-of-ontario.org/priorities/health/>. We have

secured an Opioid Research Communications and Project Liaison, who has begun work on an annual update to the initial report, and has begun work on recruitment and engagement for a Lived Experience Advisory Committee of individuals who have experience with Substance Use to advise the Research process.

### **2017 Score Card on the Mental Health of Children and Youth in Ontario**

As a part of Ontario's mental health and addictions strategy, ICES developed a baseline scorecard report in 2015, which described the state of the child and youth mental health and addictions system that was then updated in June 2017, followed by the first adult baseline scorecard in March 2018. These reports present results for all Ontarians, including comprehensive trends over time in Ontario's mental health and addictions system. Upon request by the MHAWG for a distinct First Nations report in 2020, collaboration between ICES, the First Nations Advisory committee specific to the scorecard report, and the COO Research and Data Management Sector resulted in an [interim report](#) on the first set of indicators, released in November 2021. The final report included the second and third set of indicators that had been completed and has been presented to the Leadership Committee prior to public release, which is anticipated to occur in late spring 2023. This will be accompanied by a technical chart pack to be provided by request to COO. This is the first report assessing First Nations mental health and addictions-related service use and outcomes between 2011 and 2019, including performance and contextual-level indicators among

Ontario First Nations populations.

### **Resolution 18/18: Health Human Resources Strategy**

The MHAWG has discussed the need for a special cross-sectoral and cross-government Task Force to effectively address this resolution, which will require additional advocacy with both Social and Education Sectors, and resourcing with the provincial and federal government. Communities have identified additional needs for Mental Health Human resources as the trauma, unresolved grief, and residual effects of the pandemic are felt throughout communities. Formation of a task force has been delayed due to pandemic priorities. Upon discussion from the Ontario Chiefs' Committee on Health, there was agreement that a Task Force be developed to identify needs and advocate for training resources to help develop a comprehensive and responsive First Nations workforce to address mental health and addictions in communities through both traditional and western approaches. A two-year proposal was submitted to Indigenous Services Canada in February 2022, and was approved in March 2022. Work was stalled due to a lack of capacity to take on this project, however the position was recently filled and work will begin on this project in 2023-24.

### **Public Health Working Group (PHWG)**

The PHWG focuses on both system and local level changes and improvements to help facilitate better coordination of public health service delivery for First Nations communities. While operating under the



direction of the Trilateral First Nation Health Senior Officials Committee (TFNHSOC), the work has been guided by a set of relationship principles agreed upon in 2012, which has laid the foundation for a mutual understanding of how the PHWG will work together. The TFNHSOC committee did not meet in 2022-23, pending an evaluation of these processes. With the release of the TFNHSOC final report and the decision by Chiefs Committee on Health to continue with the TFNHSOC process, public health mandates will be highlighted and strengthened in the 2023-24 Work Plan.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the PHWG's activities had been reprioritized into the First Nations Trilateral COVID-19 Committee. Monthly virtual calls were held with PTO Health Directors, Provincial Leads and Federal Community Medicine Specialists for information sharing on specific COVID-19-related topics.

**Emergency Management: Spring Flooding and Forest Fire Health Sector Planning Group**

Chiefs of Ontario provides representation to this committee with the focus being to provide status

updates to the Ontario Regional Chief on the situations in northern Ontario with regards to spring flooding and forest fires.

The Health Sector planning group is made up of representatives from First Nations, Tribal Councils, Ontario Health, Public Health Units, Home and Community Care Support Services (HCCSS), federal partners, Ministry of Health, Emergency Management Ontario, EMAT, Orange Air, host community representation, and other health partners.

## Non-Insured Health Benefits and Jordan's Principle

### Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) Navigators Activities

In 2023-2024, NIHB navigators continued to support First Nations and their citizens with navigating the NIHB program by working with federal government partners, service providers and other groups in ensuring that First Nation citizens had access and supports for the NIHB program.

The NIHB navigator team has expanded from two to four navigators in total. Our current NIHB Navigators team include the following staff:

- Brenda Owl
- Jennifer Shisheesh
- Tasha Toulouse
- Trudy Maness

Our NIHB navigators are available to provide support to all First Nations in Ontario and all possess a strong understanding of the intricacies of how NIHB is accessed and applied in various contexts.

Moving forward, the NIHB navigators are available to:

- Provide support and advocacy for First Nation community and organizations workers to better assist their clients in accessing benefits under the NIHB program;
- Improve awareness among First Nations, First Nation

Organizations, health care providers, provincial and federal health partners on the scope and accessibility of the NIHB program; and

- Liaise and advocate with Health Care Providers, provincial and federal health partners on behalf of First Nations communities and organizations to resolve NIHB accessibility and coordination issues.

The NIHB navigators worked on the following initiatives throughout 2022-23:

- Capturing NIHB Provider and Client access issues in all benefit areas;
- Identifying gaps and advocating for changes to the NIHB program in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic;
- Working with Ontario Renal Network to better support hospital-based dialysis programs with NIHB coordination;
- Working with the Ontario First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) and the Ontario Region Jordan's Principle team to facilitate the coordination of the NIHB and Jordan's Principle supports for children and youth; and
- On-going participation with the AFN's National Navigators Network.

### NIHB Joint Review:

The NIHB Joint Review is coordinated by the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and FNIHB through a National Joint Review Steering Committee, which is comprised of regional First Nation representatives and FNIHB Senior Management. The overall purpose of the joint review is to identify and implement changes to the NIHB benefit

areas, such as to:

- Enhance client access to benefits;
- Address gaps within benefits;
- Streamline service delivery to be more responsive to client needs; and
- Increase program efficiencies.

This comprehensive review explored each benefit area listed below under NIHB:

- Vision;
- Dental;
- Medical Supplies and Equipment;
- Pharmacy and Mental Health Counselling; and
- Medical Transportation.

The AFN re-initiated the Joint Review in fall 2022.

The AFN is hoping to complete the review of Medical Transportation and Operational Irritants in 2023.

As per Resolution 21/25, Non-Insured Health Benefits Program Improvement, the Chiefs of Ontario have given written notice to the AFN and Indigenous Services Canada calling for immediate changes to the NIHB program, the Joint Review process and the establishment of an Ontario region review process.

As of March 2023, the AFN has acknowledged COO's withdrawal from the Joint Review process, but has not attempted to address issues raised by the COO Health Sector on the Joint Review's lack of progress and outstanding process issues. ISC has acknowledged COO's request for a regional table to discuss NIHB benefits as of late fall 2022. The COO Health Sector will be working with ISC and FNIHB Ontario Region on establishing the

Ontario Region NIHB table in spring 2023.

## Jordan's Principle

The Chiefs of Ontario remain active on the Jordan's Principle file. Throughout the year, the Health Services and Advocacy team's work on the file is summarized in the following manner:

- Presentations were provided to First Nation communities, Political Territory Organizations (PTOs), various Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations, hospitals and Health Access Centres.
- Continuing to monitor the ongoing Canadian Human Rights Tribunal Case to understand and educate how these proceedings impacts the implementation of Jordan's Principle in Ontario.
- Continuing to liaise with ON-FNIHB and Ontario Region Jordan's Principle Team to discuss implementation issues.
- Continuing to coordinate and chair the Jordan's Principle Working Group, to discuss Jordan's Principle implementation matters, networking and knowledge sharing.
- Participating at a national level on Jordan's Principle technical tables to discuss Jordan's Principle implementation and advocating for a long-term strategy to address service and jurisdictional gaps.

As of March 2023, work on the final settlement agreement on the long-term reform of the First Nations Child and Family Services Program and Jordan's Principle continues to be ongoing. The Health Sector has provided support to the Social Services Sector in the final settlement

discussions with respect to matters involving Jordan's Principle. The COO Health Sector is optimistic that the Jordan's Principle initiatives from the final settlement agreement work will lead to long-term reform and continued work to improving operations and policy on Jordan's Principle.

With Special Chiefs Assembly Resolution 21/05 Ontario First Nation Jordan's Principle Operations Committee, the Health Sector held its first technical meeting with First Nations delegates and ISC Ontario Region on establishing an Ontario Region Table on Jordan's Principle in late November 2022. COO Health will be coordinating a follow-up meeting in spring 2023 to continue discussion and identifying priorities for the technical table to work on.

## In the Year Ahead – Moving Forward

- The Health Sector will focus in the year ahead on the distinction-based legislation and ensuring that Leadership is apprised of the development and providing information. Discussions have begun with our federal and provincial partners on reviving the Trilateral work, following direction of the OCCOH.
- The Mental Health and Addictions Working Group will continue to look at Opioid use research, especially when factoring in the COVID-19 pandemic. Collaboration with OFNYPC will continue on the youth project, "Stories from our Roots", and initial work has begun on a health human resource environmental scan and strategy development, now that we have filled the position of Health Human Resources Coordinator this work will pick up in the upcoming year.

• The Public Health Working Group will continue to support communities as we continue to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic by looking at lessons learned, and will continue to support the work in the area of Emergency Management Planning within First Nation communities.

• The sector will also be focusing on assisting First Nations clients as they navigate the NIHB system. They will develop informational materials on NIHB and its benefit areas, and will work toward establishing an Ontario NIHB Table.

• As for Jordan's Principle, we will focus on establishing more Ontario Regional Jordan's Principle meetings and identifying First Nation priorities regarding Jordan's



## Youth Sector

### Youth Sector (Ontario First Nations Young Peoples Council)

Lance Copegog, OFNYPC Facilitator

### Ontario First Nations Young Peoples Council

Katelyn Peters, Anishinabek Nation

Pierre Debassige, Anishinabek Nation

Rebecca Mandamin, Independent First Nations

K. Chanice Johnston, Independent First Nations

Janine Frogg, Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Tehya Quachegan, Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Paul Porter, Six Nations of the Grand River

Taysha Fuller, Six Nations of the Grand River

Ariel Berwick, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians

Kathleen Doxtator, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians

Winter Dawn Lipscombe, Grand Council Treaty #3

Kieran Davis, Grand Council Treaty #3

### Assembly of First Nations – Ontario Youth Representation:

Janine Frogg, AFN National Youth Council (Ontario)

Winter Dawn Lipscombe, AFN National Youth Council (Ontario)



## Overview

The Chiefs of Ontario Youth Sector provides coordination and advocacy support to the Ontario First Nations Young Peoples Council (OFNYPC). The OFNYPC is made up of representatives from each of the Political Territorial Organizations, the Independent First Nations, and Six Nations of the Grand River. The OFNYPC serves as the official youth advocacy body for the 133 First Nations in Ontario.

The Youth Sector also provides support to the Niizhayek Alliance, a First Nation youth organization that aims engage youth in informative workshops and amplifying 2SLGBTQ+ voices.

## Youth Highlights

### Youth Advocacy

The OFNYPC remains active at various levels and technical tables to provide youth perspectives on emerging issues.

OFNYPC representatives Winter Dawn Lipscombe and Janine Frogg continue to attend meetings of the COO Leadership Council to remain informed and provide advice. They also attended meetings and functions at the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) as Ontario's representatives to the AFN National Youth Council. Ministry partners from Canada and Ontario also engage the OFNYPC on a variety of youth-related matters.

The OFNYPC attends Chiefs of Ontario assemblies and conferences, where they speak to issues of importance to young people, such as education and the creation of

economic opportunities.

### Governance

The Chiefs of Ontario Youth Sector led a youth gathering focused on governance from March 24-26, 2023, at the Best Western Nor'Wester Hotel in Thunder Bay, ON. The gathering provided young people from Ontario First Nations communities with the opportunity to learn about governance, provide input on governance initiatives, and expand their network with other like-minded young leaders.

The Youth Sector also led engagement on the Youth Council Development Toolkit, which is a resource created



by the OFNYPC to assist First Nations communities with establishing community-based, youth-led advocacy groups. This resource is available on request by contacting the Chiefs of Ontario office in Toronto, ON.

## UNDRIP

In collaboration with the Justice Sector, the Chiefs of Ontario Youth Sector delivered a webinar focused on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This webinar served to inform First Nations youth in Ontario on UNDRIP and its implementation in Canada.

## In The Year Ahead – Moving Forward

In the year ahead, the Youth Sector plans to:

- Secure sustainable, long-term funding and resources to support the initiatives and engagement work of the Chiefs of Ontario Youth Sector;
- Complete an update of the OFNYPC Terms of Reference; and
- Create a strategic plan, with the assistance of a facilitator, to guide the OFNYPC's advocacy work.



## Research and Data Sector

### Overview

The mission of the First Nations Research and Data Management (RDM) Sector is to:

- Build a research and data management system that respects the principles of OCAP®, the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Report, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP);
- Conduct research that is First Nations driven and that advances First Nations ways of knowing and data sovereignty; and
- Create an environment of cooperation and partnership in First Nations research, data management and governance.

This past year, the RDM Sector completed its first full year of operation. It has been an exciting year with many inquiries about what work the sector undertakes. There is increased interest in First Nations data, and while the government has been pushing to develop relationships with First Nations based on the TRC recommendations and UNDRIP, it has strained the RDM Sector. However, we have successfully compiled a RDM strategic plan that will assist First Nations Leadership in planning for communities.

The Research and Data Sector team consists of:

- Carmen R. Jones, Director of Research and Data Management
- Dr. Earl Nowgesic, Associate Director of Research and Data Management
- Dr. Pamela Johnson, Senior Research and Policy Advisor

- Dr. Carol Mulder, Senior Scientist
- Roseanne Sutherland, Senior Lead of Research and Data Management
- Cindy Owl, Surveys Lead
- Zachary Smith, Senior Research Navigator
- Dr. Benjamin Wald, Research Analyst
- Trevor Koostachin, Research Analyst
- Cal Stewart, Research Assistant
- Sally Hare, Senior Coordinator
- Courtney Cada, RHS Coordinator
- Emily Harding, Research Navigation Coordinator

### Research and Data Management Strategic Plan

In the past year, the RDM Sector completed its first Strategic Plan to guide the sector's work. This strategic plan includes five Strategic Directions noted as follows:

1. Assert First Nations data sovereignty
2. Strengthen and expand capacity in research and data management
3. Expand the impact of First Nations knowledge on research and data management practices
4. Foster a collective approach to research and data management within the COO
5. Advocate for sufficient and sustained funding as directed by the Leadership

## Research and Data Sector Highlights

### First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC):

#### FNIGC Board of Directors Update

Members of the Board of Directors of the First Nations Information Governance Committee (FNIGC) include COO Director of Research and Data Management, Carmen R. Jones, and Leadership Council Member, Grand Chief Abram Benedict, Mohawk Council of Akwesasne. In the past year, former FNIGC Chief Operating Officer, Dr. Jonathan Dewar, stepped down, and the FNIGC Board of Directors conducted an executive search for a new Chief Operating Officer and announced Mr. Jonathan Plante as the successful candidate. Mr. Plante is the former Director of Finance at FNIGC and a First Nation member of the Mohawks of Akwesasne.

### Ontario First Nation Information Governance Centre Project

In June 2021, the COO Chiefs-in-Assembly passed Resolution 21/27 to create the Data Champions Advisory Committee to advise the planning and development of a Regional First Nations Information Governance Centre in Ontario. This new committee is accountable to the Leadership Council. In December 2022, the COO received the funding to move forward with the development of the Ontario First Nations Information Governance Centre. The Data Champion Advisory Committee met periodically over the past year to provide advice on how to move forward. In December, the COO hired a project lead to advance the development of the Centre. COO is pleased to announce





that Mariette Sutherland is the successful individual. Mariette has a Bachelor of Engineering (Chemical Engineering) and a Master of Public Health.

### **First Nations Data Champion Advisory Committee Members**

Vera Pawis Tabobondung, Elder

Dr. Jennifer Walker, Advisor

Dr. Darrel Maniwabi, Advisor

Abram Benedict, Grand Chief, Mohawk Council of Akwesasne

Gary Allen, Advisor

Dr. Emily Faries, Advisor

Larry Sault, Advisor

Shelly Moore-Frappier, Chief, Temagami First Nation

Dr. Chris Mushquash, Advisor

Dr. Michael Schull, Advisor

Carmen R. Jones, Director, RDM, Support

Dr. Pamela Johnson, Senior Research and Policy Advisor, RDM, Support

Sally Hare, Senior Coordinator, RDM, Support

Executive Project Lead, Mariette Sutherland

### **First Nations Feasibility Study on Biobanking and Genomic Research**

This project supports the capacity of First Nations to lead, control, own and govern biobanking research in accordance with their interests, rights and data sovereignty. The intent of the project is to increase the understanding of the relevance and priority of biobanking and genomic research for First Nations. The

research findings will support the development of best practices and provide tools, guidelines and protocols that address consent, governance, ownership, use and storage.

### **Partnerships and Government Relationships**

#### **Ontario Health Data Council**

Appointed by the Ontario Minister of Health, COO Director of Research and Data Management, Carmen R. Jones, is a member of the Ontario Health Data Council (OHDC). In 2022, OHDC Chair Dr. Jane Philpott presented to the Leadership Council. Dr. Philpott presented the OHDC report that recognized UNDRIP Act stating, “In accordance with the UNDRIP, the Council recognizes and respects First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples’ rights to self-determination, including self-governance, and their respective rights to health data sovereignty.” The report can be found [online](#) on the Ontario website.

#### **Ontario Strategy for Patient Oriented Research Support Unit**

The RDM Sector successfully negotiated funding to support Elders and youth to participate in the upcoming COO First Nations People’s Conference on Research and Data Management.

#### **Building Capacity**

##### **Research Navigation**

A key focus of the RDM Sector’s 2022-24 plan is to build capacity for its research navigation initiative. To this end, the RDM Sector recruited a Senior Research Navigator in October, a Research Analyst in January and a Coordinator in February. Moving forward, the sector aims to recruit

two additional research navigators to the Research Navigation team. Research Navigation will seek funding to discuss research needs with communities.

The Research Navigation unit will initiate an OCAP® education plan to increase understanding of First Nations data sovereignty and First Nations’ self-determination in research. This plan aims to increase the understanding of OCAP® in different situations with First Nations and researchers.



to recruit for positions within the sector that will become vacant due to those retiring.

## Research and Data Management Projects

### First Nations Regional Health Data Landscape Plan

This project aims to identify where First Nations health data is held and how it is managed. This project will facilitate future work on promoting OCAP® principles and provide a resource for First Nations seeking health information.

### Alliance Model

The Ontario Health Data Council has discussed setting up a new Ontario health data authority to manage and facilitate access to health data in Ontario. The purpose of this project is to explore a possible relationship and organizing structure(s) between First Nations in Ontario and a provincial health data authority based on the First Nations tradition of governance through alliance.

### First Nations and Artificial Intelligence

The purpose of this project is to examine First Nations issues and concerns regarding artificial intelligence (AI), with attention being given to AI and ethics.

### The Great Footstep: A First Nation Language Translation Project

When we return to First Nation languages to understand

concepts identified in the English language, a shift in understanding can occur. That shift can be an important alignment in cultural perspectives. In this language translation project, a translation of the words “data governance” was sought from an Elder on the COO Data Governance Committee.

### COVID-19 Responses and Research

#### The Response of Provincial Health Systems to COVID-19

This project explores the cost of COVID-19 for individuals infected with the virus and the cost to the health system as a whole in British Columbia and Ontario. Work is still in progress on the Ontario First Nations component of the study, which is set to be complete by 2024.

The First Nation Simulation Model was created to help First Nations communities plan for changes to the level of COVID-19 transmission. The model, which users populate with community-level data, shows the potential impact of actions taken against the virus. A presentation was made at the February 2023 COO Health Forum to showcase how the model works. Video series and training sessions are being planned for this upcoming year.

### COVID-19 Lessons Learned Study

In 2022, the RDM Sector engaged Dr. Robyn Rowe to study

### COVID-19 First Nation Simulation Model



and develop a lessons learned document outlining health systems, policy and advocacy recommendations. The COVID-19 Lessons Learned Study is an evaluation of the lessons learned (e.g., pandemic preparedness), from the COVID-19 pandemic between March 2020 and December 2021, for First Nations in Ontario. The study findings were presented at the February 2023 Health Forum, where delegates provided feedback. The study document will be further developed, and a final report will be presented to First Nations Leadership and First Nations.

### **Research Projects and Reports**

#### **Intergenerational Impacts of Diabetes among First Nations Mothers and Children**

This study, which builds on the Ontario First Nations diabetes study completed in 2019, looks at whether or not a First Nation mother's diagnosis of diabetes will impact the risk of diabetes to her children. The project is led by co-investigators Dr. Baiju Shah, Dr. Carol Mulder, and Carmen R. Jones, and is guided by an advisory group of First Nations women with lived-experience. A community liaison position is funded until September 2025.

#### **Mental Health and Addictions (MHA Scorecard)**

This report's second and final installment, looking at mental health and addictions services for First Nations in Ontario, is complete. The report outlines indicators within the access to care and outcome categories. Once the Leadership Council reviews the report, it will be posted on the COO website alongside the first installment of the report.

#### **Understanding Opioid Use and Harms among First Nations People in Ontario**

This study is a joint effort among staff from the Health Sector and the RDM Sector, researchers and a First Nation Steering Committee, and is funded until March 2026. The project will review patterns and trends, pathways to healthcare use, and treatments for opioid use and harms. Two reports on the use, harms, treatment and the impacts of COVID-19 are available [online](#).

### **Surveys**

#### **First Nation Regional Health Survey**

The First Nation Regional Health Survey will include responses from youth, adults, and Elders from 47 urban, rural and remote First Nation communities. The next survey is planned for spring 2023 and will include questions relating to COVID-19. Surveys were also gathered online to maximize data collection, allowing individuals to complete surveys during COVID-19 restrictions. Promotion and engagement occurred throughout the year during various COO meetings, the 2023 Health Forum, and the 2023 Little Native Hockey League (LNHL).

#### **First Nation Regional Social Survey**

The Regional Social Survey is in its preliminary stages of development. It is expected to be launched in late 2024 as the third and final portion of two series of surveys: (1) First Nation Regional Early Childhood, Education and Employment survey, and (2) First Nation Labour and Employment Development survey. The First Nations

Information Governance Centre is spearheading this survey, and a timeline for the work is in progress.

### **Data Governance and Sovereignty**

#### **First Nations Data Governance Committee**

The First Nations Data Governance Committee will continue reviewing research applications. There were no applications in 2022. The next intake for applications will be on May 15, 2023. The Data Governance Committee reviewed the Knowledge to Action document, which is there to guide researchers.

#### **Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences (ICES)**

The RDM Sector continues working with ICES on the Data Governance Agreement, which has been signed for another ten years. The RDM Sector is also working with ICES and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) to secure the transfer of the Indian Registry System.

### **Monitoring**

The RDM Sector will continue to monitor governments and organizations in their use and collection of First Nations data and bring to the attention of First Nations Leadership, for example, Statistics Canada and Census data, whenever possible.

### **Information Sharing**

The RDM Sector continues to share various relevant reports. In this regard, the RDM Sector plans to host a people's report event next year through a people's conference

## In the Year Ahead – Moving Forward

Next year, the RDM Sector will continue various initiatives that move First Nations research priorities forward and advance First Nations data sovereignty. This will involve developing research materials, guides and templates to assist First Nations in being engaged in community-based research. The RDM Sector website will be updated to showcase reports, projects, and valuable information, such as application processes. Initiatives will include continuing work in planning, partnerships and capacity, research, surveillance and knowledge mobilization, information and data governance, and data infrastructure.

The RDM Sector will continue to support other sectors and leadership through data sovereignty and by building an understanding of COO protocols and policy relating to First Nations research and data management. This will help to foster a collective approach to research and data management efforts within the organization. The work led and supported by the RDM Sector will continue to secure sufficient and sustained funding and human resourcing to achieve its strategic priorities, plans, objectives and activities.



## Social Services Sector

### Social Services Sector Staff

Ruby Miller – Director

Fallon Andy – Social Sector Lead

Nicole Bakes – Policy Advisor

Victoria Caravaggio – Policy Analyst

Isak Vaillancourt – Communications Coordinator

Amasena Delormier – Coordinator

### Leadership Portfolio Holder/Alternates

Grand Chief Joel Abram, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians

Grand Chief, Abram Benedict, Mohawk Council of Akwesasne

Chief Theresa Nelson, Independent First Nations (Alternate)

### Chiefs Committee on Social

Grand Chief Joel Abram, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians

Chief Laurie Carr, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians

Chief Mark Hill, Six Nations of the Grand River

Councilor Nathan Wright, Six Nations of the Grand River (Alternate)

Chief Theresa Nelson, Independent First Nations

Chief Vanessa Adams, Mohawk Council of Akwesasne

Grand Council Chief, Reg Niganobe, Anishinabek Nation

Deputy Grand Chief Bobby Narcisse, Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Chief Brian Perrault, Grand Council Treaty #3

### Social Services Coordination Unit

Sydney Lockwood, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians

Arliss Skye, Six Nations of the Grand River

Molly Miskokomon, Independent First Nations

Diane Maracle, Independent First Nations

Jordan Bertagnolli, Grand Council Treaty #3

Debbie Lipscombe, Grand Council Treaty #3 (Alternate)

Adrienne Pelletier, Anishinabek Nation

Stan Cloud, Anishinabek Nation

Robin Quachegan, Nishnawbe Aski Nation

### Early Learning and Child Care

Sherri Kabatay, Grand Council Treaty #3

Patti Barber, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation

Wendy Arsenault, Nishnawbe Aski Nation

SSCU members until Regional Table Terms of Reference are approved

### Joint Social Services Table

Sandy Porter, Six Nations of the Grand River

Kim Jamieson, Six Nations of the Grand River

Shelley Trudeau, Union of Ontario Indians

Amy Nadjiwon-Toby, Ontario Native Welfare Administrators Association

Jessica Nadjiwon, Ontario Native Welfare Administrators Association

Cindy George, Kettle & Stony Point First Nation

Daniel Bruyere, Mohawk Council of Akwesasne

Joseph Morin-Lauzon, Mohawk Council of Akwesasne

Diane Maracle, Independent First Nations

Elizabeth Richer, Niigaaniin Services

Johnpaul George, Grand Council Treaty #3

Dean Councillo, Grand Council Treaty #3

Natasha Beckford, Niigaaniin Services

Norma Albert, Stepping Stones Support Services Program

Sam Maracle, Min-O-Qwe-Ke-Ga-Bwe'in Social Services Initiative Program

Stan Cloud, Anishinabek Nation

Robin Quachegan, Nishnawbe Aski Nation

### Tripartite Technical Table Child Youth and Family Wellbeing

Sydney Lockwood, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians

Arliss Skye, Six Nations of the Grand River

Shelley Hachey, Six Nations of the Grand River

Diane Maracle, Independent First Nations

Jordan Bertagnolli, Grand Council Treaty #3

Adrienne Pelletier, Anishinabek Nation

Ronnie George, Anishinabek Nation

Stan Cloud, Anishinabek Nation

Robin Quachegan, Nishnawbe Aski Nation

### Final Settlement Agreement Advisory Committee

Adrienne Pelletier, Anishinabek Nation

Amber Crowe, Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag

Anne Iserhoff, Mushkegowuk Council

Arliss Skye, Six Nations of the Grand River

Aurora Smith, Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Christa Piscopo, Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Robin Quachegan, Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Christopher Rapson, Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Falconers LLP

David Schwartz, Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Falconers LLP

Natalie Posala, Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Falconers LLP

Diana Maracle, Independent First Nations

Molly Miskokomon, Independent First Nations

Grand Chief Joel Abram, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians, Social Portfolio

Sydney Lockwood, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians

Grand Chief Abram Benedict, Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, Social Portfolio

Joanne MacMillan, Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Kennedy Ling, Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Kerry Francis, Nogdawindamin FCS

Stan Cloud, Anishinabek Nation

Leanna Farr, Anishinabek Nation

Michael Miller, Association of Native Child and Family Services Agencies of Ontario

John Paul George, Grand Council Treaty #3

Debbie Lipscombe, Grand Council Treaty #3

Molly Churchill, Grand Council Treaty #3

Sara Mainville, Grand Council Treaty #3

Brianna McCann, Grand Council Treaty #3

### Expert Advisory Committee on ISC Reform

Fallon Andy, Technician

## Assembly of First Nation Committees

### Chiefs Committee Child and Family Services and Self Determination

Grand Chief Joel Abram  
Ruby Miller, Technician

### Consultation Committee on Child Welfare

Ruby Miller, Technician

### Jordan's Principle Operations Committee

Ruby Miller, Technician/Observer

### Technical Working Group on Social Development

Ruby Miller, Technician

### National Expert Working Group on First Nations Early Learning and Child Care

Arliss Skye, Technician  
Fallon Andy, Technician

### National Advisory Committee

Grand Chief Joel Abram  
Ruby Miller, Technician

## Overview

The Social Service Sector's mandate is to protect and maintain our Rights and jurisdiction over the social well-being of our communities and to secure resources for leadership. It also provides coordination, support, technical information, and updates to the Chiefs Committee on Social, Social Services Coordination Unit, and Leadership Council on child welfare, social assistance, and early learning and child care.

## Social Services Sector Highlights

- Increased Prevention Funding for First Nation Child and Family Services (FNCFS) delivery;
- Increased First Nation Representative Funding for First Nation Child and Family Services delivery;
- Capital Funding available at Actuals through Canadian Human Rights Tribunal Order CHRT 2022;
- Supported the Final Settlement Agreement for FNCFS Compensation. This motion is currently at the review of the CHRT;
- Currently negotiating a Final Settlement Agreement for Long Term Reform of the FNCFS Program;
- Completed Ontario-specific FNCFS community-based indicators;
- Supporting the delivery of the Ontario Disability Support Program on-reserve with continued partnership

with MCCSS;

- Advocated for Life Stabilization services for on-reserve delivery for First Nation citizens. Life Stabilization is now in the Ontario Works legislation;
- Supporting the roll-out of Early Learning and Child Care major capital and infrastructure funding; and
- The launch of the Early Learning and Child Care Regional Table is soon to be complete.

### Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT)

In 2022, the CHRT undertook many decisions, and the parties collectively completed work on the reform of the First Nation Child and Family Services (FNCFS) Program. On January 18, 2022, the Tribunal issued the reasoning for the major capital decision and amendments to the decision based on the consent of the parties. On March







24, 2022, the Tribunal ordered Canada to fund the actual cost of post-majority care to youth aging out of care and to young adults who were formerly in care up to and including age 25. On June 20, 2022, the Compensation Class Action parties filed their legal motions for three class actions to settle under one compensation settlement. Ten days later, the parties, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), and the Government of Canada reached a Final Settlement Agreement for compensation. On August 24, 2022, the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN) requested interested party status on AFN's motion to the Compensation Final Settlement Agreement and was granted status on September 2, 2022, by the CHRT. On September 1, 2022, the Institute of Fiscal Studies and Democracy released a final report on Jordan's Principle regarding substantive equality. From September to October 2022, legal motions were filed regarding the AFN, Canada, and Party Compensation Final Settlement Agreement. On October 14, 2022, the Federal Court of Appeal ordered that Canada's appeal of the Federal Court's September 29, 2021 order on compensation will continue to be held in abeyance until the earliest of January 30, 2023, and the date 45 days following the release of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal's decision on the compensation final settlement agreement. On October 25, 2022, the CHRT provided a letter-decisions with reasons to follow regarding the Compensation Final Settlement Agreement. On November 23, 2022, Canada and the AFN filed notice of application for judicial review of the Tribunal's letter-decision on the class action Final Settlement Agreement. On December 8, 2022, the AFN passed two (2) resolutions regarding the long-term reform of the FNCFS Program

and Jordan's Principle and compensation.

On December 20, 2022, the CHRT released the decision that the final settlement agreement on Compensation does not fully satisfy the CHRT orders. The CHRT noted that the FSA completely disentitles some victims who are already legally entitled to \$40,000 in compensation, reduces the amounts for others, or makes their entitlements uncertain.

Over the last year, the COO Social Sector has worked towards a final settlement agreement on the Long-Term Reform of the FNCFS program. This includes increased investments in prevention, band representatives, remoteness, emergency, capital, housing, information and technology, infrastructure, Jordan's Principle, and post-majority support services. Some of these funding investments will continue to roll out without a final

settlement agreement on long-term reform, and some of the investments are dependent on an agreement. The COO Social Sector will continue to push for self-determination and First Nation jurisdiction over First Nation Child and Family Services and Jordan's Principle.

### **Bill C-92**

On October 7, 2022, Chiefs of Ontario was granted intervener status by the Supreme Court of Canada regarding the Quebec Court of Appeal's judicial review of An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families. The COO Social Sector will continue to keep political and technical leadership involved in the intervener case.



## **Ontario Special Study - Needs Assessment Tool Knowledge Mobilization**

The Ontario Special Study (OSS) was accepted by the Chiefs-in-Assembly by Resolution #20/14. Currently, the Tripartite Technical Table on Child and Family Well-Being is working on the implementation of all 27 recommendations in the OSS. Further, INDSight Consulting has created a needs-based assessment tool for communities in Ontario and is creating an OSS recommendation implementation strategic plan. The needs-based assessment tool is available for communities to start planning for a ground-up approach to their First Nation Child and Family Services Programs. In addition to the tool, COO is working with INDSight to develop knowledge mobilizing assets to share with First Nations to ensure all can maximize the use of the needs assessment tool and create equitable child and family programs. INDSight has produced downloadable digital tools, tutorial videos, and webpages for First Nations to access the tools and materials. This will be launched in the Spring/Summer of 2023.

## **Joint Social Services Table (JSST)**

The JSST is comprised of representatives from the Ontario Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services (MCCSS); the Social Services Coordination Unit (SSCU); and First Nation Social Assistance technicians. The JSST is entering its third year of a new First Nation-directed work plan, originally established in February 2019. The Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) Working Group is continuing to work on developing an Expression of Interest, a draft guide to the Expression of Interest Application Process, and a Pilot Self-

Assessment. These materials will be used to begin drafting an ODSP Pilot Project. Further, the JSST has worked on the Canadian Emergency Response Benefit response in Ontario and new legislative changes to the Life Stabilization programming. First Nations in Ontario envision life stabilization as a wraparound service to ensure holistic well-being.

## **Ontario Indigenous Child and Youth Strategy**

The Child, Youth and Family Services Act (CYFSA) is going into its first five-year review since being passed in 2018. The Ontario First Nation Technical Table is reviewing many policy and program priority areas. The MCCSS is increasing engagement to discuss the following program areas: youth justice, customary care, prevention, quality improvement standards, information and data infrastructure, post-majority support services, adoption, and police record checks.

## **Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC)**

The Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework is currently in the 2022-23 fiscal year and can expect a provincial allocation of \$40,831,152 for programs and services. COO has completed the ELCC Asset Mapping Study and is in the final stages of implementation. COO has drafted a Terms of Reference for an ELCC Regional Table comprised of representatives from the Political Territorial Organizations, Independent First Nations, and Unaffiliated First Nations. The Terms of Reference has been reviewed and accepted by the SSCU.

## **In the Year Ahead – Moving Forward**

Next year, the COO Social Services Sector plans to accomplish the following:

- Conclude a Final Settlement Agreement on Long-Term Reform of the First Nations Child and Family Services Program and Jordan’s Principle;
- Conclude the Soft Wind Project, including:
  - o Development of an IELCC database designed for data collection that First Nations Leadership and communities;
  - o Development of an IELCC Ontario website, social media, and resource repository to support and enhance communication and networking;
  - o Develop a Culturally Competent ELCC Digital Training Curriculum for Practitioners, Families with a focus on Special Needs Children.
- Post Majority-Support Services Gathering – to assist and support First Nations and Agencies to access funding for this services at Actual Costs from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC);
- Reform all sections of the 1965 Indian Welfare Agreement;
- ELCC Worker Conference – Professional Development;
- Ontario Disability Services Program delivery by First Nation communities; and
- CYFSA 5-Year-Review Engagement.

## Protecting and maintaining the social well-being of our communities

The Chiefs of Ontario's Social Sector has worked diligently over the last year to strengthen and sustain the social well-being of Ontario First Nation communities through strategic advocacy and partnerships. This includes working on pertinent files such as child welfare, social assistance, and child care and early years. Together, these three files ensure a floor of social services available to the some of the most vulnerable individuals in our communities. The Social Sector's goal is to support First Nations in Ontario as they assert their sovereignty, jurisdiction, and their chosen expression of nationhood. Below, we will discuss the Social Sector's accomplishments over the last year, all of which we were able to complete with the support of the Social Sector Coordination Unit, the Chiefs Committee on Social, and Grand Chief Joel Abram. Thank you all for your support.

### Child Welfare

In January 2022, an Agreement-in-Principle (AIP) regarding the Long Term Reform of the federal First Nation Child and Family Services (FNCFS) and Jordan's Principle was reached with the Government of Canada, the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society, the Assembly of First Nations, the Chiefs of Ontario, and Nishnawbe Aski Nation. A separate AIP was reached regarding compensation for children and families who suffered harm while involved with the FNCFS Program and a narrow application of Jordan's Principle. This separate AIP included additional class action claimants and as a

result, amalgamated eligibility for compensation. The Agreements jointly total over \$40 billion, pending a final settlement agreement and Canadian Human Rights Tribunal approval.

Chiefs of Ontario is focused on the Long Term Reform of the FNCFS Program and the implementation of the commitments made in the AIP. One commitment from the AIP is increased funding for service provision under the FNCFS Program, including prevention, First Nation representative services (formerly Band representative services), post-majority support services, capital funding, Jordan's Principle, a number of top-up funding, remoteness funding, emergency, information and technology, infrastructure, and a one-time housing fund. Outside of the funding commitments within the AIP, COO is monitoring the implementation of new policies including an Expert Advisory Committee on Indigenous Services Canada reform, cultural competency curriculums, FNCFS indicators, FNCFS Terms and Conditions, and a reallocation policy. Lastly, the AIP includes research funding to strengthen the evidence of calls for increased funding in contentious areas including, remoteness, needs assessments, Jordan's Principle, and for First Nation communities without a First Nation agency. Further, the AIP propels the Mandate for Canada to reform the 1965 Indian Welfare Agreement. A number of these commitments in the AIP are dependent on a Final Settlement Agreement, while others, which are ordered by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, will continue without a final agreement. As for compensation to those who have been harmed by discrimination as a result of the FNCFS Program and the narrow application of Jordan's Principle, Chiefs of Ontario will share

resources as they become available. Provincially, COO is working on the Child Youth and Family Services 5-year review and a number of regulatory roll-outs.

### Social Assistance

Under the Provincial Ontario Works Program, the COO Social Sector has assisted in Life Stabilization services to be increased under the program for First Nations to provide life stabilization services that meet their unique needs. COO has also been working with the Joint Social Services Table (JSST) to provide the Ontario Disability Support Program on reserve. To date, two First Nations in Ontario are undergoing an early implementation phase of development. These early implementation sites will assist the JSST in assessing service needs and gaps, policy needs and adjustments, and funding evidence for long-term sustainability of the programs delivery. The Social Sector believes that this is an important step to ensuring disability inclusion in our communities. By ensuring people with various abilities can access the financial assistance they need, we can ensure that everybody has the same opportunities to participate in every aspect of life to the best of their abilities and desires. As an initial step to disability inclusion, the vision is to ensure people with disabilities are enabled to benefit from all aspects of inclusion including friendship, peer role models, positive self image, respect, dignity, and health.

## Child Care and Early Years

In the previous years, COO has supported the implementation of funding commitments gained by the 2018 Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework. The work under this framework is being implemented by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC). COO's partnership with ESDC ensures that First Nations can receive information on important programs, including capital, before and after schools, and programs and services. COO will be hosting an early learning and child care gathering on June 26-27, 2023, which will give front-line supervisors working in early learning and child care an opportunity to share best practices and network.

### Resources:

- <https://www.nan.ca/news/nan-statement-on-historic-deal-for-long-term-reform-of-first-nation-child-family-services/>
- <https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/afn-assembly-child-welfare-resolution-1.6678108>





## Justice Sector

### Justice Sector Staff

Jackie Lombardi – Director

Samantha Restoule – Policy Analyst

Michael Mommersteeg – Policy Analyst

Shelby Sinclair – Policy Analyst (Part-time)

### Leadership Council Portfolio Holder/Alternates

#### Justice Portfolio Holders:

Deputy Grand Chief Stacia Loft, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians

Regional Deputy Grand Council Chief Travis Boissoneau, Anishinabek Nation

#### Heritage & Burials Portfolio Holder:

Grand Chief Reginald Niganobe, Anishinabek Nation

#### Chiefs and Technicians Committee on Justice:

Chief Dave Mowat, Anishinabek Nation

Technician Laura Mayer, Anishinabek Nation

Technician Crystal Head Stevens, Anishinabek Nation

Chief Laurie Carr, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians

Chief Dean Sayers, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians

Technician Sara Monture, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians

Chief Lynn Indian, Grand Council Treaty #3

Chief Jeffrey Copenace, Grand Council Treaty #3

Technician Arthur Huminuk, Grand Council Treaty #3

Technician Diane Maracle, Independent First Nations

Chief Julie Phillips-Jacobs, Mohawk Council of Akwesasne

Chief Cindy Francis-Mitchell, Mohawk Council of Akwesasne

Chief Sarah Lee Sunday-Diabo, Mohawk Council of Akwesasne

Chief David Nakogee, Mushkegowuk Council

Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum, Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Technician Natalie Binguis, Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Technician Martha Loon, Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Technician Tim Bucci, Six Nations of the Grand River

Technician Leidy Cano, Six Nations of the Grand River

### Additional Committees

#### Heritage and Burials Technical and Advisory Working Group - Kee:Way

Getzit Donna Debassige, Anishinabek Nation

Niigaanibines (Elder Don Jones), Grand Council Treaty #3

Miptoon (Councillor Anthony Chegahno), Independent First Nations

Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum, Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Councillor Sherri-Lyn Hill, Six Nations of the Grand River

Kevin Restoule, Anishinabek Nation

Arthur Huminuk, Grand Council Treaty #3

Diane Maracle, Independent First Nations

Luke Hunter, Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Lonny Bomberry, Six Nations of the Grand River

Tanya Hill-Montour, Six Nations of the Grand River

Paul Porter, Youth Rep, Six Nations of the Grand River

#### Technical Committee on Rights Assertions

Grand Chief Reginald Niganobe, Anishinabek Nation

Chief Andy Rickard, Anishinabek Nation

Chief Scott McLeod, Anishinabek Nation

Jason Laronde, Anishinabek Nation

Kristy Jones, Anishinabek Nation

Nikki van Oirschot, Anishinabek Nation

Chief R. Don Maracle, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians

Tina Powell, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians

Chief Brian Perrault, Grand Council Treaty #3

Chief Vernon Copenace, Grand Council Treaty #3

Dan Morrisseau, Grand Council Treaty #3

Lucas King, Grand Council Treaty #3

Chief Shelly Moore-Frappier, Independent First Nations

Chief Edward Roundpoint, Mohawk Council of Akwesasne

Cactus Cook-Sunday, Mohawk Council of Akwesasne

Chief Keith Corston, Mushkegowuk Council

Elder Barney Batise, Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Luke Hunter, Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Sam Manitowabi, Robinson-Huron Waawiindamaagewin

Jason Batise, Wabun Tribal Council

## Overview

The Justice Sector's responsibilities are to coordinate the technical and political positions of First Nations Leadership on justice-related issues affecting First Nations in the Ontario region. Over the past year, the end of many COVID-19 protocols has transitioned how the Justice Sector operates. It has been a priority for the sector to travel in-person to advance advocacy priorities and assist in coordinating efforts. This priority reflects the sector's focus on strengthening and building relationships and trust with First Nations and First Nations organizations as the sector develops into sustainable operations.

Leading justice priorities throughout 2022-2023 included:

- Addressing the lack of enforcement of First Nations laws;
- Ensuring community safety;
- Implementing a strategy to advance First Nations rights in the Ontario region;
- Completing and distributing valuable law-making and preventing-harassment resources;

# Chiefs of Ontario

...a Nation • Algonquin Nation • Pottawatami Nation • Odawa Nation • Ojibway Nation • Cree Nation • Seneca Nation • Cayuga Nation • Onondaga Nation • Oneida Nation • Mohawk Nation

...aongashling • Aroland First Nation • Asubpeeschoseewagong First Nation (Grassy  
...of Georgina Island • Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point First Nation • Chippewa  
... Kasabonika Lake First Nation • Kashechewan First Nation • Keewaywin First Nat  
... Mishkosiminizibling First Nation (Big Grassy River) • Missanabie Cree First N  
... Bay) • Neskantaga First Nation • Netmizaaggamig Nishnaabeg (Pic Mobert First  
... Nation • Poplar Hill First Nation • Rainy River First Nation • Red Rock Indian Bar  
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... Atikameksheng Anishnawbek • Attawapiskat First Nation • Aundeck Omni Kaning First Nation • Bearskin Lake First Nation • Beausoleil First Nation • Beaverhou  
... Rama First Nation • Chippewas of Saugeen • Chippewas of the Thames • Constance Lake First Nation • Couchiching First Nation • Curve Lake First Nation • Deer Lak  
... Klashke Zaaging Anishinaabek • Kingfisher Lake First Nation • Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug • Koocheching First Nation • Lac des Mille Lacs First Nation • Lac La Cro  
... Mississauga #8 First Nation • Mississaugas of Scumwago First Nation • Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation • Mitaanigaming First Nation • Moccreebec Council  
... ) • Neyaashinigming First Nation (Chippewas of Iroquois) • Nibnamik First Nation • Nigigoonsiminikaaning First Nation • Nisaaachewan Anishinaabe Nation  
... higo Lake First Nation • Sagamok Anishnawbek First Nation • Sandy Lake First Nation • Seine River First Nation • Serpent River First Nation • Shawanaga First Nation  
... Nation • Wahta Mohawks • Wapekeka First Nation • Wasauksing First Nation • Washagamis Bay First Nation • Wauzhushk Onigum Nation • Wawakapewin First Nation  
... Territory • Wunnumin Lake First Nation • Zhilbaan First Nation

Supporting all First Nations in Ontario to exercise their sovereignty, jurisdiction and their chosen expression of nationhood.



sector has provided capacity resources to the PTOs, IFN, and Unaffiliated First Nations to support region-led processes about the development of the legislation, as well as hosted a dialogue session to provide access to a policing expert and support collective dialogue on the legislation. The Justice Committee also nominated regional representatives to the AFN Policing Taskforce, each representing the policing models in the region, to contribute to national discussions on policing reform.

### United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act

Throughout the year, the Justice Sector has provided support to First Nations through engagement processes with the Department of Justice on the implementation of the federal United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act. The sector hosted a series of dialogue sessions to create space for information sharing, discussion, and access to legal counsel and Justice Canada officials. In December 2022, the sector hosted a session on reviewing the Act's first year as law and discussing the next steps in the implementation process. The sector also hosted targeted discussions for First Nations Youth in August 2022 and First Nations Governance and Consultation Workers in March 2023.

### Legal Information Projects

#### Anti-Racism Awareness and Education

- The Justice Sector stays committed to ensuring that anti-racism awareness and education remain a focus
- The Justice Sector developed a public education and

awareness campaign on systemic racism based on the input from three dialogue sessions hosted last fiscal and in consultation with the Justice Committee. This campaign is focused on increasing public awareness about manifestations of systemic racism through policy choices and collective ways to push for the implementation of solutions. The campaign will be disseminated and promoted in 2023-2024.

#### First Nations Law Making Project

- The Child and Family Well-Being Law Making Resource Bundle was completed to support and enhance First Nations' capacity in exercising their jurisdiction over child welfare.
- The bundle was released in March 2023 and will continue to be disseminated through various channels.

#### Preventing Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Project

- The Project launched a Toolkit and Website to provide information on preventing and addressing harassment in the workplace and educate employees and employers on their rights, protections, and obligations regarding safe and healthy workplaces.
- Work was undertaken to disseminate and gather feedback on these resources to inform the Project's next phase.

### In the Year Ahead – Moving Forward

In the year ahead, the Justice Sector plans to accomplish the following:

- Continue to provide collective space for First Nations to discuss information and processes as the UNDRIP Act's Action Plan is drafted, validated, and finalized.
- Continue to advocate directly with the Government of Ontario for consultation and engagement practices that reflect the standards and expectations of First Nations.
- Continue momentum on immediate solutions and long-term initiatives to ensure that First Nations laws are consistently and reliability enforced and prosecuted across the region.
- Continue to provide collective coordination and support for First Nations Leadership, technicians, and police on their various community safety and policing needs.
- Support the return of Ancestors and artifacts and lobby for legislative and policy reform in the heritage and burials space.
- Support First Nations as they assert their inherent and treaty rights over their ancestral and treaty territories.
- Host information sessions and workshops and provide accessible resources in the area of law-making and preventing harassment in the workplace.





## Women's Initiatives

### Chiefs of Ontario First Nations Women's Council (FNWC)

Elder Donna Debassige

Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum,  
Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Chief Sarah Sunday Diabo, Mohawk Council of Akwesasne  
Lyndia Jones, Independent First Nations

Debbie Lipscombe, Grand Council Treaty #3

Deputy Grand Chief Stacia Loft, Association of Iroquois  
and Allied Indians

Sydney Lockwood, Association of Iroquois and Allied  
Indians

Sandra Montour, Six Nations of the Grand River  
Loretta Sheshequin, Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Chief JoAnn Swamp, Mohawk Council of Akwesasne  
Rebecca Timms, Anishinabek Nation

### Overview

#### First Nations Women's Council and Women's Initiatives

The Chiefs of Ontario First Nations Women's Council was established in 2011 as an advisory council to the Chiefs-in-Assembly on community strategies for ending violence against First Nations women and girls in Ontario. The First Nations Women's Council (FNWC) is a permanent entity within the Charter of the Chiefs of Ontario.

The First Nations Women's Council (FNWC) receives support and coordination from the Chiefs of Ontario Women's Initiatives Sector, which was established in 2021. The Women's Initiatives Sector is focused on the safety, well-being and empowerment of First Nations women, girls and gender-diverse people.

In 2022-23 the sector coordinated 12 FNWC meetings, including a joint meeting with women Chiefs and Ontario Regional Chief Hare at the November 2022 Special Chiefs Assembly. The Terms of Reference for the FNWC were updated to reflect a broader focus on community safety, well-being and empowerment of First Nations women, girls and Two Spirit and gender-diverse people (2SLGBTQIA+ or 2S) and gender-diverse leadership in First Nations.

Sector priorities include missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and Two Spirit and gender-diverse people (MMIWG2S+), gender-based violence, community supports, including victim services, healing, awareness and prevention, and First Nations women's leadership.

#### Assembly of First Nations Women's Council

The sector provides technical support to the Ontario First Nations representative on the Assembly of First Nations Women's Council, Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum, Nishnawbe Aski Nation. In 2022-23 there were 11 AFN Women's Council meetings and a Council retreat.

#### Indigenous Women's Advisory Council

The sector also participates on the Indigenous Women's Advisory Council, which was established by the Government of Ontario in 2020, to provide advice to the Ontario Associate Minister of Women's Social and Economic Opportunity regarding ending violence against Indigenous women. In 2022-23, the Indigenous Women's Advisory Council focused on the implementation of Pathways to Safety, the Ontario government's response

to the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

#### MMIWG2S: Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two Spirit and Gender Diverse People, LGBTQIA+

Further to Chiefs-in-Assembly Resolution 39/18, the Women's Initiatives Sector conducted a Family Gathering on MMIWG2S for Ontario First Nations families, survivors and front-line workers in January 2022. Feedback from participants highlighted the ongoing need for awareness and resources to support community efforts to prevent MMIWG2S and promote family healing.

In 2022-23, the sector began gathering statistics related to MMIWG2S and produced a fact sheet profiling First Nations gender-based violence to share with First Nations Leadership and communities at assemblies and on the COO website.

Ontario First Nations families and survivors raised concerns regarding the link between resource extraction and violence against Indigenous women. According to [data](#) presented to a Standing Committee on the Status of Women, there is increased violence and exploitation of Indigenous women in areas near mines and other "man camps" (resource extraction worksites). The sector drafted a statement recommending strategies for resource extraction companies to mitigate the adverse impacts of their worksites on First Nations community safety.

The sector also participated on a roundtable comprised of federal, provincial, and territorial representatives and Ministers, alongside Indigenous representatives. The roundtable focused on urban Indigenous issues. The federal government is currently in discussions with provinces and territories regarding funding for the implementation of the MMIWG2S National Action Plan

### **Gender-Based Violence Action Plan**

Further to Chiefs-in-Assembly Resolution 29/19, which calls for an Ontario-based implementation plan, the sector drafted an Ontario First Nations Gender-Based Violence Action Plan which was approved by Leadership Council in April 2022. The Action Plan sets out sector priorities for assisting communities in preventing violence against First Nations women, girls, Two Spirit and gender-diverse and vulnerable groups. These include providing information on gender-based violence,

awareness and toolkits on human trafficking and Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ identity and gender diversity, promoting safe space in First Nations communities by launching the Safe Space campaign, and advocacy for men's healing supports. The Sector established a communications function and created a webpage to provide information to communities online and via social media.

### **Risk Assessment and Danger Assessment Tools (RADAT) Research Project**

In keeping with Chiefs-in-Assembly Resolution 29/19, which calls on governments to support Indigenous-led research, the sector completed the initial phase of a research project in support of First Nations victim services. This included a literature review on risk indicators of intimate partner violence against First Nations women, Two Spirit and gender-diverse people. By April 2023, a total of 278 front-line individuals

working with First Nations victims of violence had received training on mainstream tools for risk and danger assessment and safety planning. The project will ultimately create First Nations-specific assessment tools and templates that reflect indicators unique to First Nations communities. The project receives guidance from a working group of professionals in the field of gender-based violence, including academics, First Nations shelters and Indigenous women's victim service providers.

### **Human Trafficking Awareness**

Further to Chiefs-in-Assembly Resolution 08/19, the sector hosted two online Lunch and Learn presentations on human trafficking to raise awareness in First Nations communities. A toolkit on human trafficking was also drafted for the use of Ontario First Nations.





## First Nations Women's Leadership Summit

Further to Resolution 41/18, the sector conducted a First Nations Women's Leadership Summit in March 2023 to provide an opportunity for First Nations women leaders to share their challenges and successes and to network. Over 100 First Nations women attended the Summit, which was held in a hybrid format.

## In the Year Ahead – Moving Forward

In 2023-24, the sector will continue to monitor federal and provincial discussions regarding the implementation of the MMIWG2S National Action Plan and will advocate for long-term, sustainable First Nations-specific community funding. A discussion paper will be drafted on First Nations MMIWG2S statistics, and an initial cost estimate for implementing the MMIWG National Inquiry Calls for Justice to meet the needs of Ontario First Nations as a starting point for Leadership discussions with Canada and Ontario. The sector will support First Nations families and communities through online information and strategies to support healing.

The Women's Initiatives Sector will work in collaboration with other sectors on various strategies for implementing the MMIWG2S Calls for Justice. The sector will support the Ontario First Nations Young Peoples Council in co-hosting a First Nations Gathering on Human Trafficking to promote awareness and prevent human trafficking of First Nations youth.

The sector's research project will utilize feedback from training sessions and focus groups to create First Nations-specific templates for the assessment of risk and danger in support of First Nations victim services.

The First Nations Women's Leadership Summit presentations will be shared as videos on the Women's Initiatives Sector's webpage and the Chiefs of Ontario YouTube page. Awareness sessions will be hosted on empowering First Nations women and decolonizing power dynamics and promoting women's financial well-being.

Awareness sessions on Two Spirit and gender-diversity and decolonizing gender identity will be hosted online. The sector will promote and support the establishment of a new 2SLGBTQIA+ Council as a permanent entity within the Charter of the Chiefs of Ontario, working in collaboration with the First Nations Women's Council.



## Economic Development

### Economic Development Sector Staff

Director: Arvind Sharma

Policy Analysts: Jey P. and Stephen K.

### Leadership Council Portfolio Holder/Alternates

Grand Chief Joel Abram, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians

### Chiefs Committee on Economic Development (CCoED):

Chair - Grand Chief Joel Abram - Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians

Deputy Grand Chief Victor Linklater - Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Chief Edward Roundpoint- Mohawk of Akwesasne

Councilor Greg Frazer - Six Nations of the Grand River

Regional Deputy Grand Chief Joe Miskokomon - Anishinabek Nation

Steve Williams - Independent First Nations

Chief Jason Gauthier - Mushkegowuk Council

### CCoED Alternative Representatives

Councilor Jeff Loucks - Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians

Grand Chief Abram Benedict - Mohawk of Akwesasne

Councilor Sherri-Lyn Hill - Six Nations of the Grand River

Chief Chris Plain- Anishinabek Nation

### CCoED Technical Representatives

Jennifer Constant - Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Kylee Tarbell - Mohawk of Akwesasne

Jill Hill - Six Nations of the Grand River

Brandon Manuel - Anishinabek Nation

Darlene Solomon - Anishinabek Nation

Diane Maracle - Independent First Nations

Albalina Metatawabin - Mushkegowuk Council

Gary Allen - Grand Council Treaty #3

### Employment Table Working Group

Sandy Porter - Six Nations of the Grand River

Polly Bobiwash - Anishinabek Nation

Russel Roundpoint - Mohawk of Akwesasne

Jeff Loucks - Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians

Carol Turner - Mushkegowuk Council

### Overview

The Chiefs Committee on Economic Development (CCoED) oversees the Prosperity Table and the Banking and Taxation Sub-Table. The Prosperity Table was established to promote economic growth in First Nations communities and to respond to the provincial policy initiatives related to Ontario's government's post-COVID-19 economic recovery strategy. The Economic Development Sector at the Chiefs of Ontario works with the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs (IAO) to ensure that the CCoED is aware of current government programming and policies. The sector analyzes legislation relevant to First Nations' economic development and strategically identifies action items to advocate for the economic rights of First Nation communities. Further, the sector tracks research and development from like-minded organizations pertaining to First Nations' economic development. The sector also circulates relevant grant information and funding opportunities to PTOs and IFNs.

The Economic Development Sector provides support to the Employment Table Working Group (ETWG). The ETWG meets each month and is mandated by a Terms of Reference. The ETWG provides the Chiefs of Ontario Leadership Council and Ontario First Nations Leadership with recommendations to design an Employment Services Model that will tend to the needs of Ontario First Nations both on- and off-reserve. The Table also

brainstorms improvement ideas for employment, training, skills development services, programming, and relevant processes.

## Economic Development Sector Highlights

### 2022 Ontario Budget – Economic Development

Funding for Indigenous Economic Development from Indigenous Affairs Ontario (IAO) has begun to be released. \$6.8 million has been allocated to the Ontario First Nations Economic Developers Association (OFNEDA). These funds will be distributed through community capacity agreements and are intended to benefit Ontario First Nations. These funds will also provide support mechanisms for Economic Development Officer training and capacity building.

In March 2023, the COO and IAO signed a Transfer Payment Agreement to begin a two-year supply chain and procurement study. The study will map out First Nations supply chains, develop a portal for First Nations and expand procurement opportunities available to First Nations businesses. This study will also collaborate with OFNEDA's procurement table to gather information on procurement issues for First Nations businesses.

### Prosperity Table Extension

On March 2, 2023, Greg Rickford, Minister of Indigenous Affairs, confirmed the extension of the Prosperity Table in the Prosperity Table meeting. COO and IAO signed a Transfer Payment Agreement was signed on March 31, 2023. As a result, the CCoED will continue to address

priorities relevant to economic development, capacity building, and access to capital.

### **Creation of the Banking and Taxation Sub-Table**

In 2022-23, the CCoED created the Banking and Taxation Sub-Table. Meetings are held each month, where presentations are provided by invited experts in the economic development space with a focus on banking and taxation. Critical discussions are held on excise tax sharing options and creating a financial entity resolution.

### **Resolution Update**

The Economic Development Sector continues its work on Resolution 22/19A: Fighting Rising Inflation in Communities by Matching Federal Funding with Inflation, and Resolution 20/12: Cannabis Capacity Building.

### **Resolution 22/19A - Rise in Inflation**

The Economic Development Sector has held inter-sector meetings to discuss Resolution 22/19A and has also brought Resolution 22/19A to the CCoED and the Leadership Council for discussion. Input gathered indicated food security and access to essential day-to-day necessities as top priorities to be discussed with the Government of Ontario.

These priorities were conveyed to the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs and the sector is now in the process of engaging with the Ministry of Finance, Macroeconomics

and Revenue Branch, and the Business Intelligence and Data Analytics Team at the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs.

### **Resolution 20/12 – Cannabis Capacity Building**

The Economic Development Sector plans to circulate the Chiefs of Ontario – Minimum Standards and Principles for Consultation and Engagement to the Ministry of Health to ensure First Nations Leadership are engaged directly on potential amendments to cannabis regulations. The Economic Development Sector plans to engage with Ministry of Health once the economic development component becomes the focus of discussion and funding is available from the Ministry of Health to carry out the consultation.

The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Cannabis Committee has been contacted to understand the progress made on this file.

### **Supply Chain and Procurement**

A Transfer Payment Agreement (TPA) was signed with the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs on March 6, 2023, to hire a policy analyst and a consultant to begin a Supply Chain and Procurement Study. A Scope of Work and Request for Proposal was developed to gather interest from consultants in this field. Award of Work to a consultant will be finalized in May 2023. The study will help identify how First Nations supply chains are disadvantaged and provide risk management tools for optimization. The study will create a geographic map of supply chains in Ontario First Nations and a business portal that will be

hosted on the COO website. The study will also provide recommendations to reach the 5% minimum provincial procurement contracts for First Nations businesses.

### **Employment Table**

Design principles have been finalized for the First Nations Employment Services Model through meetings between ETWG, Niigaaniin, and Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Agreement (ISETA) holders, held on January 16, 2023. Terms of Reference for the Employment Table Working Group were created and approved during this term.



## In the Year Ahead – Moving Forward

In the year ahead, the Economic Development Sector seeks to accomplish the following:

- Coordinate with organizations receiving funding from the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs Indigenous Economic Funding, including Ontario First Nations Economic Developers Association (OFNEDA), Aboriginal Funding Institutions in Ontario, and the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development;
- Gather information from relevant organizations to circulate to PTOs and IFNs to ensure all grant information is available and accessible;
- Coordinate with the Ontario Ministry of Finance representatives to resolve issues relevant to Point of Sale Rebate;
- Drive forward the goals of the Banking and Taxation Sub-Table;
- Gain consensus on the next steps to the financial entity resolution;
- Identify the next steps to Resolution: 22/19A and action items;
- Oversee and participate in the Supply Chain and Procurement Study and coordinate meetings between the Supply Chain Policy Analyst, the Consultant, and the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs, as set out by the Supply Chain and Procurement TPA; and
- Continue to report to the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs as set out by the Prosperity Table TPA.

In the year ahead, the Employment Table plans to accomplish the following:

- Organize a conference in Thunder Bay, Ontario, in May 2023 with First Nations leadership and employment services organizations to set priorities for the First Nations employment model work;
- Hold regular meetings with the ETWG to design the First Nation Employment Services Model and inform Employment Services Transformation (EST) developments;
- Develop a communications protocol for distributing information directly from the Economic Development Sector; and
- Draft a strategic plan in designing an employment services model for Ontario First Nations that will effectively serve their needs.



25M Indigenous Economic Development Funding - 2022 to 2025	
Area	Priority/Action
Interest loans and business and	Funding will be provided to Ontario's Aboriginal Financial Institutions (AFIs) to administer loans and grants through the Indigenous Economic Development Fund (IEDF), Business and Community Fund (BCF) program, eligible indigenous communities and persons can access 5M funding through their local AFI.
and e-	AFIs will administer financial support for Indigenous e-commerce development, to help improve online presence through website re-portal building, supports for social media and marketing and to transition from paper to electronic records. AFIs will also provide training to enhance understanding of e-commerce (technology, social media, etc.), Indigenous business and entrepreneurs can access this funding through their local AFI.
ocial barriers for (34-09)	Administered through the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development of Ontario, funding will be used to enhance and create new opportunities for training and skills development focused on Indigenous youth and apprenticeship. Funding will be made available through MLTSD program application processes.
Economic (200) and capacity in economic s in First Nations	The Ontario First Nations Economic Developers Association (OFNEDA) will deliver a variety of in person and online training for Indigenous EDOs, some of which will provide certifications. Funding will also be provided to 16 Indigenous First Nation communities to provide supports for their economic departments, including to hire/train staff, enhance training and to support their programing needs for economic development. Communities and business can receive these supports through agreements coordinated by OFNEDA.
an understand loan sector supply chain s to increase (50,800)	The Chiefs of Ontario will procure a consultant to undertake research and engage with Ontario's First Nation communities and businesses to provide recommendations on First Nation supply chain and procurement challenges and opportunities and will develop an entire First Nation Supply Chain map and business portal. Both the findings of this work as well as the new online portal will be shared broadly with participating First Nation communities and PTOs.
ity Economic Growth (0,9M)	The Chiefs of Ontario will help to deliver continuation of the work of the Prosperity Table to help support economic advancement and well-being of First Nation communities from 2022 to 2025.



## Policy and Communications Sector

### Department Coordination Unit

Chris Hoyos – Director

Genna Benson – Communications and Public Affairs Manager  
(Former)

Hayley Lucas – Policy Analyst

### Overview

The Policy and Communications Sector provides support on a wide variety of initiatives, including policy, communications, and government relations. This sector works to improve internal and external communications, streamline policy and procedures, develop processes for inter-sectoral collaboration, and ensure transparency and accountability to Ontario First Nations Leadership.

The Policy and Communications Sector provides quality assurance and technical support on all internal and external communications products and information materials. This includes the design and delivery of high-quality reports, position papers, letters, policy statements and other documents in all policy areas. Further, this sector coordinates with the Chief Operating Officer, Political Office, Leadership Council members, and other sectors on the planning and implementation of Chiefs of Ontario events, including Chiefs assemblies, workshops, strategy sessions, and engagement sessions.

The Director of the Policy and Communications Sector provides support and recommendations to the Chiefs of Ontario Secretariat and Office of the Regional Chief regarding relationship building with First Nations, Political Territorial Organizations, federal and provincial ministries, and non-governmental organizations. Additionally, the Director provides a liaison function between the Government of Canada, Government of Ontario, and First Nations Leadership in Ontario.

In addition to its core responsibilities, the Policy and Communications Sector manages a number of additional files including housing and infrastructure, energy, Additions to Reserve Policy, Specific Claims Policy, Comprehensive Claims Policy, fire services, emergency management, sports, and tourism.

### Sector Highlights

#### Policy and Secretariat Supports

##### Housing and Infrastructure

The Chiefs of Ontario is directed via Resolution 20/10 to conduct engagement on Ontario's implementation of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Housing Strategy and the transfer of care and control of housing to First Nations in Ontario. A report for Ontario First Nations Leadership was developed on Ontario-specific housing and related infrastructure needs, and will inform our approach to the National Housing Strategy. This report outlined five (5) potential options for consideration in implementing the Transfer of Care and Control of Housing for First Nations.

At the Fall Chiefs Assembly, held in November 2022, the Chiefs-in-Assembly voted via Resolution 22/43S on the Transfer of Care and Control of Housing that three (3) of the five (5) options be further investigated and costed out for consideration, as detailed below:

- Regional Housing Organizations – Board of Representatives Model
- Regional Housing Organizations – Resource Hub Model
- Regional Housing Organizations – Decentralized Approach

Following the passing of this resolution, the Policy and Communications Sector submitted a housing and infrastructure budget proposal to Indigenous Services Canada. The proposal was success and the Policy and Communications Sector is now able to continue working on the Transfer of Care and Control file, as well as hire additional staff to allow for focus on files such as Closing the Infrastructure Gap by 2030, Energy, Broadband, and Emergency Management.

The Policy and Communications Sector will also continue work on advocating for Ontario to begin funding on-reserve housing. In January 2023, Premier Doug Ford committed to updating Ontario's mandate on housing funding to include on-reserve housing. The Policy and Communications Sector has been actively working on an advocacy strategy and engaging with both provincial and federal level officials to establish a Tripartite Table to discuss this matter.

The sector will also be undertaking a research project relating to the Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy for First Nations living off-reserve in Ontario, and is in the midst of finalizing a funding proposal to be submitted to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation for their consideration to fund this project.

##### Broadband

In April 2023, the Policy and Communications Sector met with representatives from the Ministry of Infrastructure regarding an update on First Nations Connectivity Data and Ontario's launch of the [Ontario High-Speed Internet Access Map](#). The map is intended to allow Ontarians to learn about provincially funded high-speed internet projects, the ability to search for and view ongoing project details, show the locations of pending, active and completed projects, as well as where in Ontario high-



speed internet is available. The Ministry is expected to give an update to Leadership Council in the near future regarding how First Nations high-speed internet access will be improved over the coming years.

### **First Nations Delivery Credit Working Group**

In 2017, the Chiefs Committee on Energy (CCoE) was established and worked with the Ministry of Energy to establish and implement the First Nations Delivery Credit. The First Nations Delivery Credit Working Group (FNDCWG) is continuing the work of the CCoE by negotiating an extension of the delivery credit to include band buildings, on-reserve businesses, and off-reserve First Nations residential accounts.

In 2022, the Policy and Communications Sector, members of the FNDCWG, Minister Todd Smith, Ministry of Energy, and ENERGY representatives met virtually to discuss expanding the FNDC to include Band-owned buildings through an amendment to existing regulations.

In the year ahead, the Policy and Communications Sector will continue to support the FNDCWG and work in partnership with Hydro One, the Ontario Ministry of Energy, Ontario Energy Board, and other partners to expand the First Nations Delivery Credit.

### **Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Chiefs Committee on Lands, Territories and Resources (CCOLTR)**

The Director of Policy and Communications actively participates on the AFN Chiefs Committee on Lands, Territories and Resources (CCoLTR) and related technical committees. The CCoLTR supports First Nations' self-

determination over lands, territories, and resources through work on the Additions-to-Reserve (ATR) Policy, Specific Claims Policy, Comprehensive Claims Policy, and federal approaches to the recognition of First Nations rights and title. The Director provides recommendations and reports directly to the Leadership Council on these issues.

### **Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Chiefs Committee on Emergency Management (CCoEM)**

The Director of Policy and Communications provides support for the AFN Chiefs Committee on Emergency Management (CCoEM) and related technical committees, as well as provides support to properly inform First Nations Leadership and provide recommendations as necessary, including on upcoming national engagement on the National Risk Profile.

## **Intergovernmental Affairs**

### **Maintaining the Federal and Provincial Relationship**

The Policy and Communications Sector is responsible for building relationships and networks with all levels of government and, in particular, maintaining our ongoing relationship with Indigenous Affairs Ontario (IAO). This work includes tracking priority issues for Chiefs of Ontario Secretariat; ensuring ongoing communication between the Secretariat Directors and IAO staff; following-up on priority issues brought forward by Ontario First Nations leadership; and arranging meetings between First Nations representatives and IAO representatives as requested. Further, the Policy and Communications Sector works to ensure timely and effective information dissemination to all internal and external partners as a key component of the



the communications process at the Chiefs of Ontario.

### **Leadership Advocacy Strategy**

In fall 2022, the Policy and Communications Sector developed a new Leadership Advocacy Strategy in an effort to create a more results-oriented advocacy process with the Government of Ontario on key priorities as identified by the Leadership Council. The Leadership Advocacy Strategy is an all-of-government approach, designed to strengthen the relationship between First Nations and the Provincial Crown by ensuring ongoing and focused discussions on priority issues.

As part of this process, the Leadership Council, Minister Greg Rickford, and Premier Doug Ford, met on January 17, 2023, and committed to quarterly leadership level meetings with the Leadership Council to discuss matters of shared priority. Premier Ford also committed to ensuring Cabinet colleagues will participate in these meetings when matters to be discussed fall within their policy areas.

The first-ever Leadership Quarterly Meeting took place on June 5, 2023, to discuss First Nations health and education. This included discussion on increasing long-term care beds for First Nations, ensuring fulsome engagement occurs with First Nations on the implementation of the Ontario Health Teams, and ensuring First Nations input in provincial curriculum, among other topics.

The Policy and Communications Sector looks forward to providing valuable opportunities to

move forward on key priorities between the Government of Ontario and First Nations leadership in a mutually beneficial and constructive manner

### **Provincial Affairs – Creating a New Legacy**

On March 3, 2022, the Policy and Communications Sector hosted a political strategy session for Ontario First Nations Leadership to discuss their needs and challenges leading up to the 2022 Ontario general election. *Creating a New Legacy: Building a Strong Foundation for Future Generations* is the product of that session.

The issues outlined in this document came out of collective discussions with First Nations' leadership, namely, the Chiefs of the 133 First Nations in Ontario. Much of the included substance stems from resolutions passed by the Chiefs-in-Assembly at the annual All Ontario Chiefs Conferences or previously held Special Chiefs Assemblies. The issues identified in this document are not intended to reflect the full range of First Nation priorities. It is critical that the Ontario government work directly with First Nations leadership in Ontario to develop solutions that meet their individual and diverse needs.

*Creating a New Legacy: Building a Strong Foundation for Future Generations* is now a foundational tool to address First Nations key priorities. The Policy and Communications Sector continues to these priorities to top of the legislative agenda to ensure they are met with concrete action and an all-of-government approach to create a strong foundation for First Nations and all Ontarians.

## **Communications and Media Relations**

### **Media Relations**

The Policy and Communications Sector works to advance Chiefs of Ontario's internal and external communications and public awareness initiatives, ensuring the greatest possible impact on issues of importance to First Nations citizens and leadership. This includes developing and releasing political statements on high priority issues and maintaining close relationships with representatives from major media outlets. The Chiefs of Ontario is also responsible for coordinating joint statements with Political Territorial Organizations, Government of Ontario, and First Nations communications departments.



The sector coordinates public relations and increases exposure of First Nations' priorities through an array of media engagement channels, including press releases, media scrums, radio engagements, and live interviews with major media outlets. The Policy and Communications Sector is the point of contact on matters of special interest and actively participates in meetings and working groups to ensure the timely and accurate dissemination of Chiefs of Ontario communications updates.

### **Social Media**

The Policy and Communications Sector works to develop and disseminate social media content on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Instagram with over 40,000 followers across platforms. Through social media, the Policy and Communications Sector increases its reach and impact of messaging through sharing events, news, and contributions of First Nations. Stay current with the latest news and events from the Chiefs of Ontario on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn and Instagram: @ChiefsOfOntario.

### **Product Development**

The Policy and Communications Sector works to ensure that the messages, activities, and priorities of the Chiefs of Ontario are brought to the forefront of public attention. To this effect, the communications team develops, organizes, and oversees the progress and direction of communications content from Chiefs of Ontario Secretariat sectors. Further, the Policy and Communications sector ensures outgoing communications are professionally formatted and adhere

to the Chiefs of Ontario communications policy and brand guidelines. These products include newsletters, advertisements, annual reports, video recordings, and more.

### **Advocate Magazine**

In 2022-2023, the Policy and Communications Sector produced two editions of the COO's Advocate, a bi-annual glossy magazine that advocates for First Nation issues and provides an excellent medium of communication through compelling storytelling. Articles focus on a wide range of issues, including economic development, environment and sustainability, health, social services, justice, and youth programming.

Over 10,000 copies were printed and distributed from coast to coast to coast to all 633 First Nations across Canada with a significant focus on Ontario, friendship centers, Provincial Territorial Organizations, and various

government agencies and advertisers. The publication is sent via direct mail and is available through social media outlets.

### **In the Year Ahead:**

The Policy and Communications Sector will:

- Work with IFSD and conduct engagements to complete "transfer of care and control" project deliverables, including compilation of existing research and data; development of a housing models paper; review and engagement on recommendations; development of a final report; and presentation to Chiefs-in-Assembly;
- Work directly with provincial and federal government officials on establishing a Tripartite Table in an effort to hold Ontario accountable to its commitment to update its housing mandate to include on-reserve housing under provincial funding;
- Work towards undertaking a research project



- regarding First Nations living off-reserve, including a literature review and an environmental scan of current programs in place for First Nations off-reserve facing homelessness, a feasibility study for First Nations to take greater role in addressing off-reserve homelessness, and recommendations for COO's next steps to address off-reserve homelessness.
- Continue to support our very active Chiefs Committee on Housing and Infrastructure by hosting meetings, providing follow-up on priorities issues, developing communications and information materials, securing meetings with ministry representatives;
- Host our first Annual Ontario First Nations Housing and Infrastructure Summit this fall and will work with the Chiefs Committee to conduct our first housing and infrastructure lobby on Parliament Hill in early winter;
- Continue to support the FNDCWG and work in partnership with Hydro One, the Ontario Ministry of Energy, Ontario Energy Board, and other partners to expand the delivery credit at the direction of the FNDCWG;
- Continue to work directly with Ministry of Infrastructure representatives regarding broadband initiatives and advocating for full connectivity for all Ontario First Nations;
- Host the Annual Chiefs Assembly in June 2023 and Fall Chiefs Assembly in the fall of 2023;
- Assist in developing a strong working relationship between the Chiefs of Ontario and federal and provincial ministries, including Indigenous Affairs

- Ontario, Indigenous Services Canada, and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada;
- Continue to support COO Sectors, acting as a liaison for information sharing, facilitation of networking, meetings and support regarding issues such as Bill 23, Bill 60 and Bill 71; and
  - Continue to coordinate and set the table for the meetings with various government officials – including Senators and Ministers – alongside COO sectors and First Nations leadership as needed.



# Map of First Nations in Ontario

## Political Territorial Organizations

- Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians (AIAI)
- Grand Council Treaty #3 (GCT #3)
- Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN)
- Anishinabek Nation (AN)
- Independent First Nations (IFN) and Non-affiliated

For a detailed map, please visit <https://chiefs-of-ontario.org/map/>.



## Staff of the Chiefs of Ontario

### Political Office

#### Glen Hare

Ontario Regional Chief

#### Charlotte Commanda

Chief of Staff

#### Lynn Bowerman

ORC Communications

#### Julie Hill

ORC Executive Assistant

#### Ted Nolan

Political Advisor

#### Holly Hughes

Coordinator/Policy Analyst

### Secretariat Staff

#### Tracy Antone

Chief Operating Officer

#### Lori Keeshig-Martin

Senior Executive Officer

#### Ashley Nardella

HR Manager

#### Kimberley Perreault

HR Coordinator

#### Dianne (Simon) Mishibinijima

Lead Coordinator

#### Lance Copegog

OFNYPC Facilitator

#### Jim Varga

IT Manager

#### Miranda Whiteloon

Receptionist

### Economic Development

#### Arvind Sharma

Director of Economic Development

#### Stephen Kanagratnam

Policy Analyst

#### Jey Pakeerathan

Policy Analyst

### Education Sector

#### Julia Candlish

Director of Education

#### Michael Staruck

Associate Director of Education

#### Angel Maracle

Education Program Lead

#### Patrik Lowen

Education Program Lead

#### Patricia Magiskan

Special Education Support Technician

#### Susan Deley

Special Education Support Technician

#### Joanna Mouseau-Krahn

Education Policy Analyst

#### Holly Golabek

Education Coordinator

#### Natalie Snow

Education Data Lead

#### Karleigh Palmer

Policy Analyst

#### Terri Kuula

Coordinator

#### Loretta Assinewai

Language & Culture Strategist

### Environment Sector

#### Kathleen Padulo

Director of Environment

Ryan Bowie

#### Program Manager

#### Lillian Trapper

Ontario Regional Climate Change

Coordinator

#### Sally Gaikezhayongai

Coordinator

### Finance Sector

#### Melvin Thompson

Director of Finance

#### Sergey Sayadyan

Finance Comptroller

#### Sandra Williams

Accounts Payable Administrator

#### Julie Altman

Payroll Administrator

### Health Sector

#### Tobi Mitchell

Director of Health

#### Zachariah General

Associate Health Director

#### Bernadette deGonzague

Senior Mental Health Addictions

Analyst

#### Lily Menominee-Batise

Senior Health Advisor

#### Linda Ogilvie

Public Health Advisor

#### Emily King

Northern NIHB Navigator/Jordan's

Principle Liaison

#### Jennifer Shisheesh

Northern NIHB Navigator

#### Tasha Toulouse

Southern NIHB Navigator

#### Megan Logan

Policy Analyst

#### Alice Longboat

Senior Health Coordinator

Trudy Maness

NHIB Navigator

#### Brenda Owl

NHIB Navigator

#### Alexxis Kydd

Policy Health Analyst

#### Nicole Hare

Health Coordinator

#### Frances Pine

Project Lead for Health Human

Resources Strategy

#### Sacha Bragg

Opioid Research Communications &

Project Liaison

### Justice Sector

#### Jackie Lombardi

Director of Justice

#### Samantha Restoule

Anti-Racism Policy Analyst

#### Michael Mommersteeg

Policy Analyst

#### Shelby Sinclair

Policy Analyst (Contract)

### Policy and Communications

#### Chris Hoyos

Director of Policy and

Communications

#### Hayley Lucas

Policy and Communications Analyst

### Research and Data Management Sector

#### Carmen Jones

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Management

#### Earl Nowgesic

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#### Carol Mulder

Senior Scientist

#### Pam Johnson

Senior Research & Policy Advisor

#### Sally Hare

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#### Trevor Koostaschin

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#### Cindy Owl

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#### Courtney Cada

RHS Coordinator

#### Cal Stewart

RDM Research Assistant

#### Zachary Smith

Senior Research Navigator

### Social Sector

#### Ruby Miller

Director of Social

#### Fallon Andy

Sector Lead, Policy Analyst

#### Nicole Bakes

Policy Analyst

#### Victoria Caravaggio

Policy Analyst

#### Anangōns Johnson-Owl

Policy Analyst - Early Learning and

Child Care

#### Isak Vaillancourt

Communications Coordinator

#### Amasena Delormier

Coordinator

### Women Initiatives Sector

#### Nancy Johnson

Director of Women's Initiatives

#### Barbara General

Program Lead

#### Kelly Patrick

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