

Chiefs of Ontario

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021



Healing for Generations to Come



Artists Statement

"The ladies' jingle dress has been a part of oral stories around Treaty #3 for all my life. Origin stories tell how the jingle dress is a gift from the Creator, gifted through a dream and is meant for healing.

The story, as passed down from generation to generation, Maggie was perpetually ill as a child. Her grandfather offered his tobacco and prayed to the Creator for her improved health. In a dream, the Creator instructed the grandfather to make this dress for her. Once she had the dress, Maggie got better. She would spend the rest of her long life as a jingle dressmaker and dancer, sharing the teachings associated with the Jingle dress. They say people called her "The First Lady of Jingle Dress."

There have been songs, dances and ceremonies that came with the dress through her grandfather's vision. Ultimately, Maggie was healed through wearing and dancing with the dress. Today, Whitefish Bay has generations of Maggie's family members who dance this style and carry forward the jingle dress's legacy throughout the territory and across Canada and the United States.

I used the Ojibway beaded floral pattern to depict the rich history of the beadwork seen throughout Treaty #3 territory."

Written by: Chrissy MacLeod, Onigaming First Nation, Treaty #3 Territory

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Ontario Regional Chief Report

**Wahcheeyay, Aanii, Boozhoo, She:kon,
Shekoli**

It is my pleasure to present my 2020/2021 annual report as Ontario Regional Chief and provide a summary of accomplishments made during my tenure at the Chiefs of Ontario.

I ran for the office of the Ontario Regional Chief with a very specific vision for change. During my first days in office, it became clear that the Chiefs of Ontario organization was in a precarious and unstable position and facing a deficit. By working cooperatively with the Chiefs of Ontario Secretariat staff, we reduced our expenses significantly and moved into a surplus of over \$700,000 after nine months.

Despite those initial setbacks, I began working on my platform priority areas, including developing an overarching strategy to address First Nation priority issues; respecting First Nation and regional organizations by creating a consensus-based agenda for peacemaking through strengthening connections and relationships; economic self-sufficiency through business development; building a positive relationship with Premier Doug Ford and his Cabinet; and women and youth engagement.

Unexpectedly, we were hit with the COVID-19 global pandemic. I found myself having to pivot priorities and work with the federal and provincial governments, health authorities and communities to save lives and protect the health and well-being of our citizens.

Ultimately, the positive changes we've made during my term include:

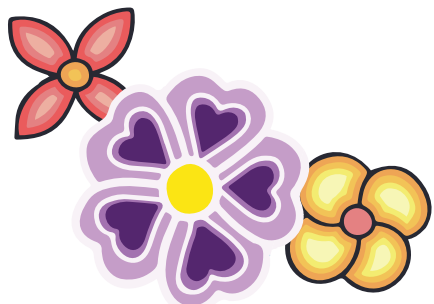
- A restructured and stable advocacy organization at the Chiefs of Ontario;
- An effective pandemic response for First Nations;
- Improved relationships with the federal and provincial governments;
- The creation of the Economic Growth and Prosperity Table;
- The establishment of a Council of Elected Women Chiefs.

I continue to focus on leading with a heart-centred approach and embodying leadership grounded in love and care, and holding space for respect in all my interactions.

As the third wave of the pandemic begins to subside, we have ushered in some significant changes collectively, including ongoing communication and broadband investments; a process to address the enforcement and prosecution of First Nation laws and by-laws; and direct involvement in the vaccination efforts against COVID-19. I am proud to say that we have strengthened our relationships both internally and with external orders of government because we came together in a spirit of cooperation, while also respecting each other's decisions and autonomy.

COVID-19 Pandemic

When the COVID-19 pandemic was declared on March 11, 2020, it forever changed our world. First Nation leaders in Ontario have been at the forefront, adjusting quickly to fluid situations while doing our part to keep First Nation citizens safe from harm through the development of timely information, tools, and resources.



The work in my office continues to be guided by the higher purpose of preserving and protecting the health, well-being, and lives of First Nation citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Minister's COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Task Force

On December 4, 2020, I was formally appointed to the Minister's COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Task Force by the Solicitor General of Ontario to provide advice and recommendations, particularly from a First Nations perspective. Homer Tien now chairs Task Force meetings.

As of May 27, 2021, more than 217,000 First Nation community members have received their first and second doses of the vaccine, with 95,000 on-reserve First Nation members included. It is important to ensure that First Nations are part of the long-term and ongoing vaccination plans not only for COVID-19, but other infectious diseases that may arise in the future.



Regional Chief Archibald Receives COVID-19 Vaccine in April 2021

COVID-19 Initiatives Team

To assist First Nations Leadership in Ontario, the COVID-19 Initiatives Team has been instrumental in developing:

- An information and data tracking system to help Chiefs and health directors make

informed decisions on how best to protect their communities;

- Community surveys to assess community needs, shortfalls, and gaps;
- Land-Based Learning Document to implement land-based learning as a method of educating students during the pandemic;
- COVID-19 Second Wave Research Paper to provide insight into previous pandemics;
- Research paper on food sovereignty and trade systems should supply chain collapse;
- Research paper on the economic impacts of COVID-19;
- A study looking at what we've learned about COVID-19 outbreaks within First Nations communities.
- Successfully advocated for First Nations to receive the 21-28 day dosing schedule;
- Developed infographics and media campaigns/strategies to engage First Nation community members on COVID-19 safety measures, such as promoting mask-wearing (#MaskMonday).

I would like to acknowledge the great work of the COVID-19 Initiatives Team. The success we had in keeping our COVID-19 case numbers in Ontario relatively low was due to the great work of the Leadership Council, Chiefs, councils, technicians, and Political Territorial Organizations.

The Path Ahead

A Strategic Approach to Managing First Nation Priorities

At the All Ontario Chiefs Conference in 2019, we undertook a strategic planning process called the "7 Generations Planning and Implementation Process." A draft Sacred Purpose and the beginnings of a Vision Statement emerged. However, it was decided that a more pragmatic planning process was needed.

The Chiefs of Ontario Secretariat organized two planning sessions to begin charting the path forward. The documents that emerged from those planning sessions were, Towards

a New Relationship: A Discussion Paper of First Nations Election Priorities, a document directed at the federal government for the upcoming federal election, and Standing Together, directed at the Ontario government.

Building Positive Relationships with Our Government Partners

Over my term, I've worked at strengthening positive relations with both levels of government. The Leadership Council has held three meetings with Premier Ford and regular meetings with Minister Greg Rickford and many other members of the Ontario Cabinet.

Throughout my term, we also built and maintained positive relationships with Indigenous Services Canada Minister Marc Miller and Crown-Indigenous Relations Minister Carolyn Bennett. In January 2019, I facilitated a connection between Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and the Robinson-Huron Treaty Chiefs, where they requested that Canada not appeal the Robinson-Huron Treaty Annuities Case. I personally had a one-to-one meeting with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in February 2020.

During my term, I've also had interactions and meetings with many federal ministers, including Deputy Prime Minister Chrystia Freeland, Minister Patty Hajdu, Minister Pablo Rodriguez, Minister Catherine McKenna, Minister Jonathan Wilkinson, Minister Bill Blair and Attorney General David Lametti, Minister Maryam Monsef, Minister Seamus O'Regan, and former Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould. I also have positive relations with key federal public servants, particularly Indigenous Services Canada's Ontario Regional Director General, Anne Scotton.

Economic Growth & Prosperity Table

First Nations will play an essential role as the Ontario government proceeds in rebuilding and strengthening the economy post-COVID-19.

Economic development is not only about growing local economies but also about growing in a manner that benefits greater partnerships.

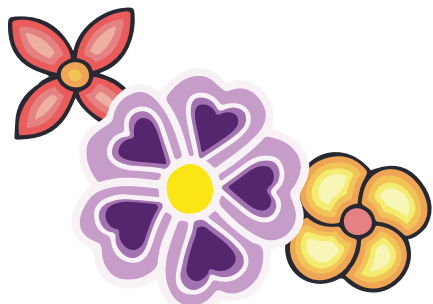
I was proud to host Premier Doug Ford at the Leadership Council meeting on May 11, 2021, where we announced the launch of the Economic Growth and Prosperity Table. This table will be a starting point toward greater economic cooperation between First Nations and the Government of Ontario and a platform to promote economic growth in First Nations communities. As the coordinating body for First Nations in Ontario, the Chiefs of Ontario will seek to achieve the following three objectives through the Prosperity Table:

1. Establish political processes related to economic recovery, growth, and prosperity within First Nations in Ontario and their surrounding economies;
2. Work in partnership with the Government of Ontario to establish three economic growth and prosperity funds to develop the economic capacity of First Nations, help finance largescale economic partnerships between First Nations and private industry, and support First Nation entrepreneurs; and
3. Establish First Nations economic partnerships with industry, private sector businesses, and municipalities.



ORC meets with Premier Ford in November 2020

To ensure the success of the Prosperity Table is realized and First Nations have the support needed to coordinate efforts in the post-pandemic economic landscape, an Economic Strategic Division will be established at the Chiefs of Ontario. Further, a Chiefs Committee on Economic Prosperity will be established to



guide the vision and direction of long-term economic growth and prosperity for First Nations in Ontario and ensure that First Nations play a substantive role in rebuilding Ontario's economy in the post-COVID-19 era.

AFN Portfolios

AFN Women's Council

The Chiefs-in-Assembly ordered an independent, fair, and impartial investigative review of the AFN to end sexual orientation and gender-based discrimination at the December AFN Special Chiefs Assembly. This is currently led by an independent three-member panel of external experts. The process is just getting underway.

AFN Management Committee

This committee functions as a review body before the AFN Executive Committee passes motions on management/administrative matters. My most recent work has focused on conflict of interest mitigation with respect to the awarding of contracts and ensuring transparency through fair and consistent contract evaluation processes. My final task will be to have a positive impact on the AFN financial policy by providing input and recommendations.

AFN Water Portfolio

As lead of the Water Portfolio, I work closely with Regional Chief Kevin Hart, who leads the Housing and Infrastructure Portfolio. Ontario leadership has been participating at the AFN's Chiefs Committee on Housing and Infrastructure (CCOHI) meetings. The AFN CCOHI guides both of our work.

As of May 6, 52 long-term drinking water advisories are in effect in 33 First Nations in Ontario. We have initiated discussion with Indigenous Service Canada Ontario Region to work collaboratively to end all boil water advisories in Ontario by 2023. The Chiefs of Ontario Secretariat will continue to coordinate this vital initiative moving forward.

I continue to support and encourage Autumn Peltier's important work as the Anishinabek

Chief Water Commissioner. Autumn shared her strong beliefs on the environment and water at the Great Lakes Guardian's Council meeting on April 22, 2021. She continues to be an impressive advocate for clean water for First Nations.

End of Mandate Reflections

In my view, leadership is about creating space and working cooperatively and collaboratively with others.

By working alongside Chiefs, Leadership Council, Political Territorial Organizations, my remarkable staff, and the Chiefs of Ontario Secretariat, we accomplished the following:

- Ensured that \$19.6 Million in education funding was maintained for Ontario by pulling the Ontario representatives off the AFN Chiefs Committee on Education;
- Established a Joint Bilateral agreement process on Education to ensure that First Nations receive adequate, predictable, and sustainable funding reflective of the unique needs of our students and communities
- Advocated for CMHC's Rapid Housing Initiative funding to go to First Nations, which resulted in the approval of sixteen on-reserve housing projects out of a total of twenty-one projects for all of Ontario;
- Advocated for community-based COVID-19 relief funds as well as regional funding to respond to COVID-19. This resulted in three rounds of announcements nationally.
- I supported the restructuring of the Chiefs of Ontario and the separation of the Office of the Regional Chief from the Chiefs of Ontario Secretariat by appointing a non-political board of directors and formalizing the establishment of a Leadership Council;
- Directly influenced the creation of the Indigenous Women's Advisory Council. The Government of Ontario created this council to provide advice on human trafficking, family well-being, Ontario's MMIWG Action Plan, and support for children and youth.



Chiefs of Ontario - Council of Elected Women Chiefs May 6

- Received funding to establish a Council of Elected Women Chiefs who will interact with federal and provincial governments on their established priorities. This resulted in the creation of a brand new Women's Initiatives Sector.
- Revitalized and refocused the work of the First Nations Women's Caucus, a technical advisory body that is working on Ontario's contribution to the First Nations chapter of the MMIWG National Action Plan.
- Created an Elders Council at the Chiefs of Ontario that provides gender-balanced representation at Leadership Council and Chiefs meetings.

Acknowledging Community Accomplishments

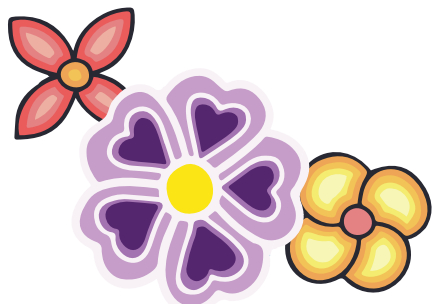
Ipperwash Provincial Park, where Dudley George was killed while defending his claim to his ancestral lands, was returned to Kettle and Stony Point First Nation by the federal and Ontario governments in September of 2020, restoring 45.992 hectares (113.629 acres) of land to the Chippewas of the communities.

Dokis First Nation reached a settlement over timber dues that were misdirected to the Crown in 1912, when the money was deposited in the government's Indian Land Management Fund instead of the community's trust fund. DFN filed the claim in 2015 and received an apology as well as almost \$27 million in compensation.

Grassy Narrows First Nation moved closer to its goal of building a care home on reserve for those sickened by industrial mercury poisoning after the federal government signed an agreement to cover the entire projected cost of construction. The agreement, reached in April 2020 between Minister Marc Miller and Chief Rudy Turtle, commits Ottawa to spend \$19.5 million to build the home.

Beausoleil First Nation is set to benefit from a combined \$16.5 million in federal and provincial grants that will help fund wharf renovations, a new ferry and will help pave the island's dirt roads.

Nicole Ineese-Nash, a youth from Constance Lake First Nation, is the director of Finding our Power Together, which works with youth in three remote First Nations in northwestern Ontario to promote leadership and development.



Construction was completed in October 2019 on the Henvey Inlet First Nation wind project, the largest on a First Nation in the country. The landmark project is the largest single-phase wind facility and the largest on-reserve wind installation in Canada.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I want to acknowledge the strength and resilience of the Leadership, Chiefs and Councils across our region. With a unified approach, we have made our circle stronger.

It has been my great honour to serve with you during this historic time.

Wishing you peace beyond all understanding.
Ninankaskamon!



RoseAnne Archibald
Ontario Regional Chief



Vaccine Task Force - ORC

Chief Operating Officer



Shekoli

On behalf of the Chiefs of Ontario Secretariat, I would like to announce the digital version of our 2021 Annual Report. The theme of the report and our annual All Ontario Chiefs Conference (AOCC) is “Healing for Generations to come.”

Our annual report is a year in review of the accomplishments and work of the Secretariat. It is produced in-house under the guidance of the Policy and Communications Sector.

For those who may not know me, I am Tracy Antone, from Onoyota’ka (Oneida Nation) and, by the appointment of the Board of Directors, I assumed the role of Chief Operating Officer in November 2018. My time as Chief Operating Officer has been very inspiring. With the support of staff at the Secretariat, I have been able to close the circle and realize a better path for communication and gathering input from leadership to support First Nations in Ontario.

After a challenging year of working and living in a pandemic environment, we now see how vital healing will be in our communities. It has been a time to look forward and see the resilience of our communities and our peoples, as sources of health, well-being and renewal.

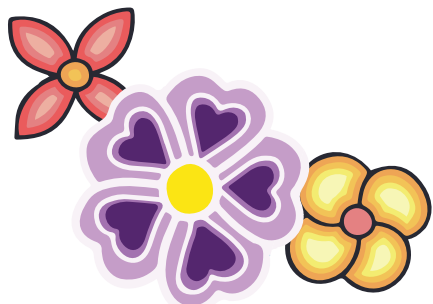
We have heard a lot of frustration and cautiousness in our communities; we have also seen the hearts of people, the generosity, and the focus on helping our children. Families have become more resilient as they could not be together, and communities remembered the importance of our culture and medicines to keep safe.

This past year we have experienced many changes, challenges, and great successes as the Secretariat transitioned to a new Board of Directors in December 2019. The previous Board agreed that member organizations (PTOs) are to appoint representatives to the Board of Directors. The new Board will oversee corporate management while the Leadership Council will continue to be the organization’s political arm under the leadership of Ontario Regional Chief.

As we continue to manage the corporate side of the organization, the Secretariat functions with updated bylaws and policies for Human Resources and Finance. The Board continues to provide the corporate leadership to move the Secretariat to sound financial management processes.

The Board gave a clear mandate to proceed with the recommendations from the HR investigation. I am pleased to report that we have finalized all of the recommendations. The primary recommendation to strengthen our policy regarding harassment has been completed and approved by the Board. The Board, sector Directors, and staff have been trained in the new policy. We introduced a code of conduct for meetings hosted by the Secretariat. This was one of the first documents to be implemented in the restructuring work at the Chiefs of Ontario.

Other administrative measures that have been implemented are the review and cataloguing of all Ontario resolutions and the bringing forward of recommendations for retiring resolutions. We are finalizing this document and will advance a presentation to the leadership in fall 2021. I have been supporting the restructuring committee in the modernization of the Chiefs of Ontario charter, which will be an important document to guide the Secretariat and Leadership in the years to come.





COO Directors

I must also highlight the work of the Secretariat in the COVID-19 environment. The Secretariat has been following all emergency measures and takes the health of all employees very seriously. We work to strengthen the confidence of the staff by being attentive to the needs of our employees and the First Nations we work to support. Consequently, the COO Secretariat office in Toronto has been closed, and the Secretariat staff is working from home. At the same time, we continue to respond to developing issues and the needs of leadership. I am very proud of the Communications staff and how they have pulled together our COVID-19 website to ensure that leadership and First Nations in Ontario are receiving credible and timely communication. I am grateful to our Health Sector and research staff who have consistently produced information to guide leadership in making informed decisions from a science perspective.

This year, all of our meetings have been virtual with great success. The COVID-19 pandemic has strengthened our relationship with government, broadening and galvanizing the circle by developing our collective unity in these unprecedented times. The Secretariat will continue to grow and maintain our relationships for solutions-driven processes.

In keeping with our theme, we will advocate with the government to work with communities to support recovery efforts and address the challenges to improve the lives of the children and the generations to come.

Despite the adversity we have faced this past year, I would like to acknowledge the steadfast dedication of the directors, policy analysts, coordinators and the rest of the COO Team for their commitment, hard work and diligence in strengthening our circle by advancing First Nation issues and Leadership Council mandates. 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 on a scale grander than that of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). 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, its basic purpose is to enable the political leadership to discuss and to decide on regional, provincial and national priorities affecting First Nation peoples in Ontario.

The Chiefs of Ontario has become a vehicle to facilitate relationships between the federal and provincial governments and First Nation peoples in Ontario.

As such, the Chiefs of Ontario supports all 133 First Nations in Ontario and the four political territorial organizations as they assert their sovereignty, jurisdiction, and their chosen expression of nationhood.

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 of the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians; Grand Council Treaty #3; Nishnawbe-Aski Nation; Anishinabek Nation; representatives of the Independent First Nations; and the Ontario Regional Chief.

Mission Statement and Vision Statement of the Chiefs of Ontario

Mission Statement

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

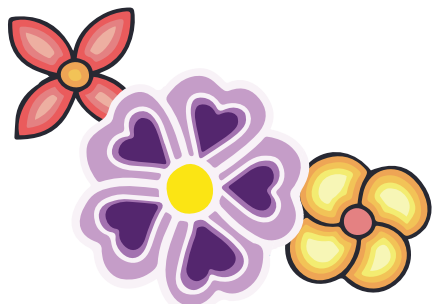
Vision Statement

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.

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 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.

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 an 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 to provide the Ontario Education Portfolio with issues, briefing papers 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 the Political Confederacy, Political Confederacy 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 was set up to support First Nations participation in policy and program development of social services for their regions.
- **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.

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

The Leadership Council

The Leadership Council (LC), formerly known as the Political Confederacy (PC), is the Ontario First Nations political coordination steering committee, authorized by the Chiefs-in-Assembly at the All Ontario Chiefs Conference (AOCC). With their collective wisdom and experience, the Leadership Council provides guidance to the Regional Chief and works to implement the priorities of First Nations communities and mandates of the Chiefs of Ontario.

The Leadership Council's function is to plan and set political priorities for collective action aimed at the betterment of life in First Nations according to the directions of the Chiefs-in-Assembly, as well as to coordinate political positions alongside the Regional Chief on unforeseen and emergency issues between assemblies.

The Leadership Council is intended to create space for leadership to have discussion on nationhood and governance when the AOCC is not in session and their primary responsibility is to oversee the implementation of AOCC resolutions, particularly, but not exclusively, those resolutions that delegate implementation to the Leadership Council. The Leadership Council may adopt strategic plans in order to advance a consolidated approach on issues of concern to First Nations.

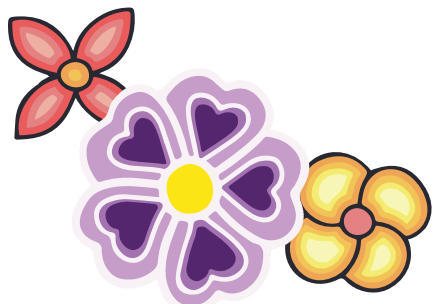
The Leadership Council is comprised of the political executives of the four Political Territorial Organizations (PTOs): Anishinabek Nation, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians, Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Grand Council Treaty #3, as well as the independent First Nations. The Leadership Council holds portfolio responsibilities on extensive mandates such as health, education, environment, and social services.

This portfolio system allows each Grand Chief and Chief to lead and build capacity in a sector. Working alongside political leadership, the Chiefs of Ontario secretariat makes consistent efforts through the Directors to assist each Leadership Counsel portfolio holder. A united voice is achieved through the coordination of the four PTOs and independent First Nations to discuss and decide on priorities affecting First Nations.

Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, the Leadership Council adapted many of its processes and operations to ensure continued collaboration on critical priorities. This included developing bi-weekly virtual meetings alongside First Nations leadership and government partners to ensure immediate action in the response to COVID-19 and address First Nations emergency priorities. Vaccinations in all First Nations are currently underway. Operation Remote Immunity 2.0 has begun and will be vaccinating youth aged 12-17 and any other community members that would like to receive the vaccination.

The Leadership Council appointed three Elders to the AFN Knowledge Keepers Council; Barney Batise (male), Theresa 'Teri' Fiddler (female) and Ma Nee Chacaby (she/her - 2SLGBTQQIA representative) for the Ontario Region. This keeps with AFN's commitment for gender balanced and gender diverse representation on its Knowledge Keepers Council.

We are very grateful to Ed Sackaney for his many years of service representing Ontario on the AFN Elders Council. We are planning to honour him at a future Leadership Council meeting. He was presented with a certificate for his years of service along with a bundle containing sacred items including medicines and an Eagle Feather. The Leadership Council would also like to acknowledge Cam Goodman, representative for the Independent First Nations, for his dedication and work on the Leadership Council. We wish him well on his future endeavours.



Members of the Leadership Council

Members, Organizations and Contact Information



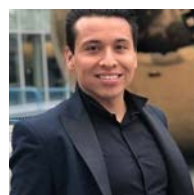
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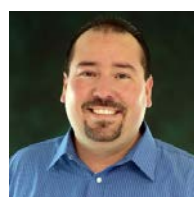
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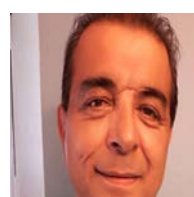
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Board of Directors Report

The Board of Directors is pleased to present a board report for the 2020-2021 annual report. Under the new bylaws approved in June 2019, we have completed the Board of Directors' implementation. Each PTO has appointed a representative for the Board. The Board members include:

- Geoff Stonefish, Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians
- Travis Boissoneau, Nishnawbe Aski Nation
- Gary Allen, Grand Council Treaty 3
- Gary Dokis, Secretary/Treasurer, Anishinabek Nation

The appointed Board of Directors have met a total of 14 times since our last report to the Chiefs-in-Assembly and first meeting in December 2019. Most of these meetings were to be briefed on the management of the staff and office during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Board gave the direction that the office remain closed until the city of Toronto was in a better place. The Board acknowledged that essential staff would go into the office under strict public health protocols. To date the corporation has continued to function in all aspects of their responsibilities and will continue to maintain a level of administrative function for which we have responsibility for.

The Board is pleased to announce that Tracy Antone has been permanently appointed as the Chief Operating Officer. This placement was done after an evaluation by the Board with input from peers internally. As a Board we thank Tracy for continuing to maintain good governance and accountability for our corporate mandate.

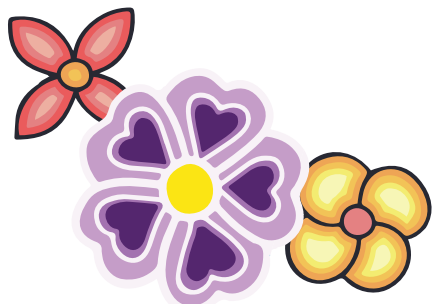
The Board continues to be briefed on the operations of the organization – which have been stabilized – and the recommendations made by the previous Board of Directors in July 2018, which have been enacted and have been implemented or are in the final stages of implementation. A quarterly Board of Directors meeting schedule has been established and the Board continues to maintain oversight of the corporate functions.

Staffing remains stable and funding for all positions is secure. The financial review that was completed recommended that we document the roles and responsibilities, the delegation of authority, and the orientation of Board of Directors members. We have implemented the formal review process for organizational policies and procedures and methods of communicating organizational processes such as budgeting processes. All Directors have presented their annual work plans to the Board as part of the audit process to ensure that the Board maintains a high-level knowledge of the work of the Secretariat.

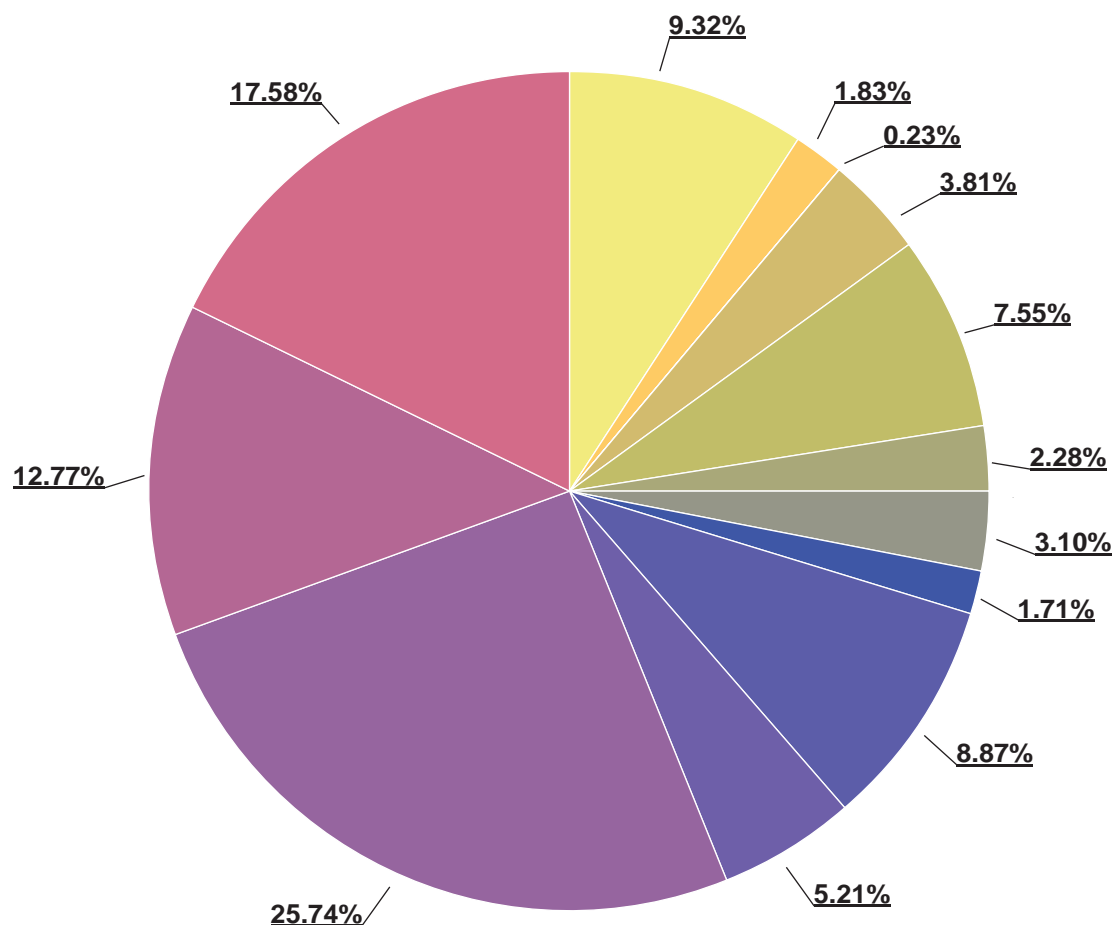
At the time of writing this report the audit will be underway and there will be a presentation to the Leadership at the All Ontario Chiefs Conference. From the review of the financials on a quarterly basis a good audit is contemplated as financial processes, employment contracts, and asset maintenance are in place. It is the expectation that the Chief Operating Officer will maintain the processes to keep the governance of the organization in good standing.

A final note, at the onset of the COVID-19 emergency, the Chief Operating Officer coordinated bi-weekly Board conference calls to give guidance on the recommendations to ensure the health and safety of the employees. The Board resolved to keep the office closed until it was safe for employees to be in the office.

Chiefs of Ontario leadership can be confident that the organization is operating effectively, and the separation of corporation and politics will serve the leadership well.



Financial Overview Chiefs of Ontario April 1, 2020 - March 31, 2021



Chiefs of Ontario - Sector

■ Health - \$2,440,868.48	■ Justice - \$316,940.38
■ Health - Research & Data - \$1,772,587.84	■ Advocacy - \$1,047,457.41
■ Education - \$3,573,741.05	■ Policy & Economic Development - \$529,218.06
■ Environment - \$723,679.37	■ Communication - \$31,750.00
■ Social Services - \$1,230,663.02	■ Finance - \$254,022.00
■ Women's Initiatives - \$237,500.00	■ Administration - \$1,293,198.16
■ Youth - \$430,487.18	

Human Resources Report

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a global COVID-19 pandemic. In the days following this announcement, many Chiefs of Ontario employees were sent home with uncertainty of when they would be returning to the office. In response to this global crisis, the Chiefs of Ontario quickly ensured the continued delivery of services while adhering to the health and safety protocols to manage the pandemic. Working alongside the Chief Operating Officer and COO Directors, the Chiefs of Ontario staff met this challenge and adapted efficiently to the 'new normal' of working-from-home.

As part of this response, the Chiefs of Ontario organized a successful digital transition, which included expanding remote computer access, acquiring equipment, assisting with remote work stipends for internet and other expenses to ensure productivity and improve the employee experience during this unprecedented time.

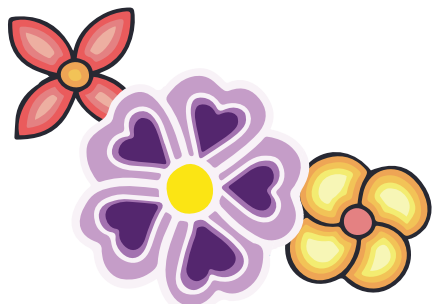
In 2019, the Health and Safety Committee was established. This past year working alongside the Human Resources sector, the Health and Safety Committee met monthly to develop new training, processes, and procedures concerning COVID-19 and oversee the implementation of policies to protect the health and safety of the Chiefs of Ontario employees and their families.

This year, the performance evaluations and the hiring process were adapted to new policies that reflect the remote needs and demands of the Chiefs of Ontario. The Chiefs of Ontario secured an additional thirteen (13) new employees to the Secretariat, bringing the total number of employees to fifty (50). The new hires included the re-introduction of a Justice Director, Sarah-Grace Ross, and five (5) staff within the Ontario Regional Chief's office.

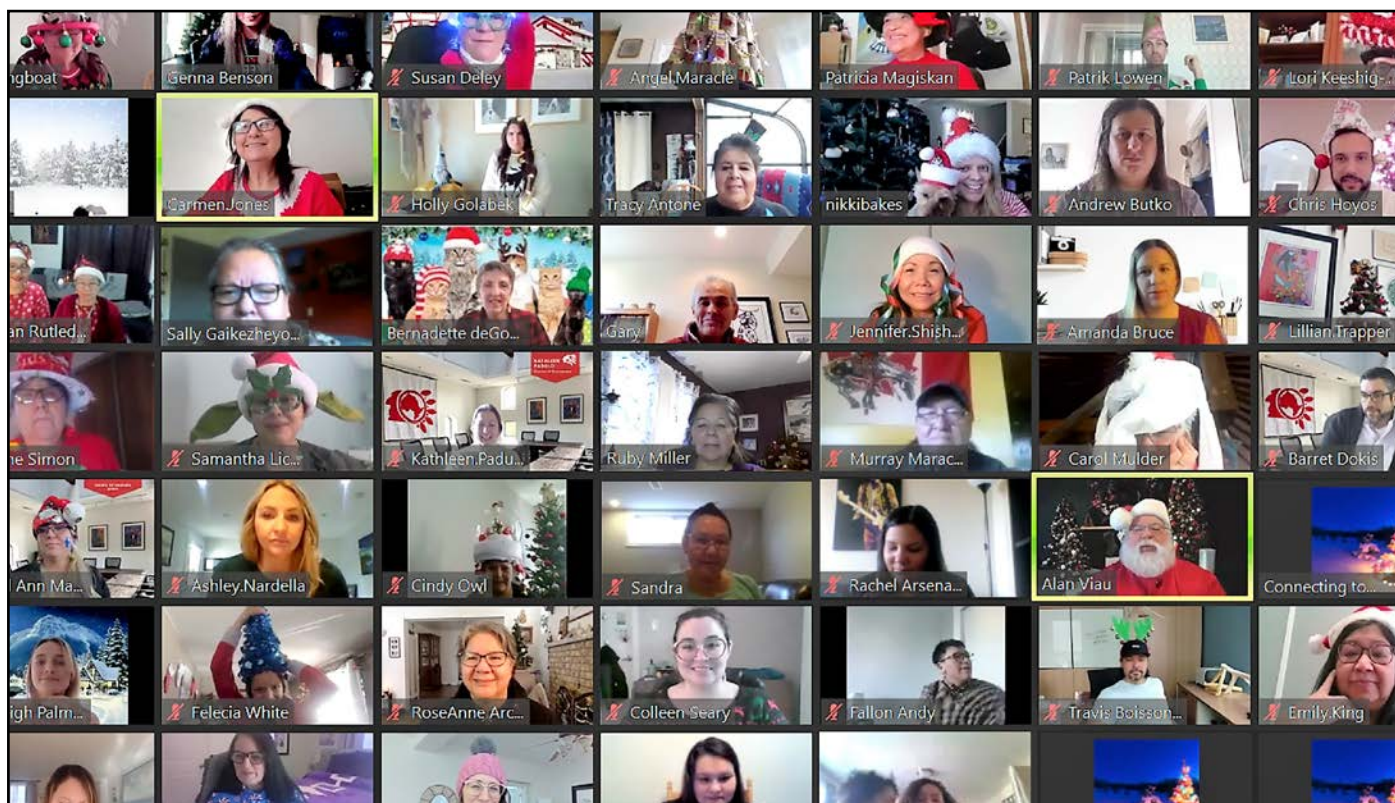
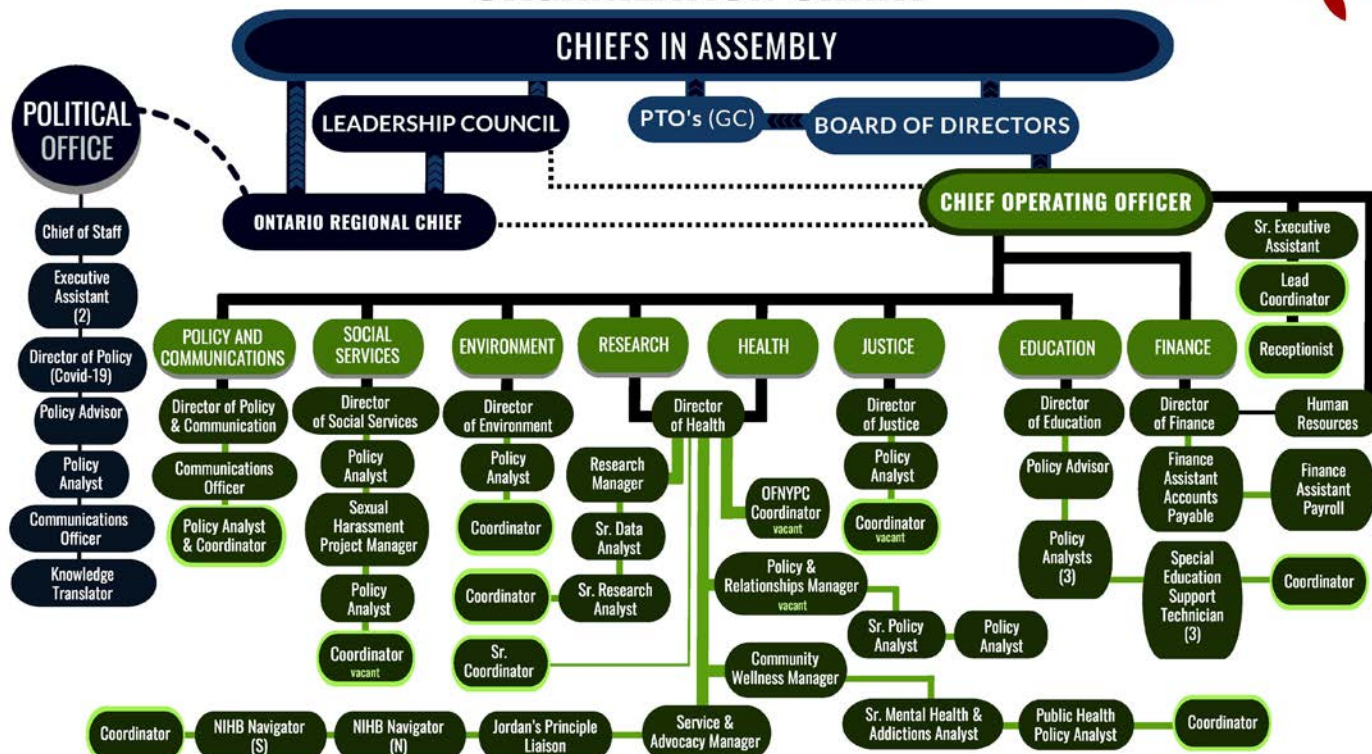
In addition, the Chiefs of Ontario Employee Manual has undergone its annual review. To this effect, the Employee Manual was updated to be flexible and responsive to the new environment while meeting the needs of employees working from home.

The Secretariat also adopted an organization chart that lays out the functional structure of the Chiefs of Ontario that is inclusive of levels within the organization, which aligns accountability in an easy to follow design.

As we continue to navigate the unprecedented times created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Human Resources sector is committed to supporting employees throughout the Chiefs of Ontario. This includes providing internal services related to employee development, employee compensation, pensions and benefits administration, and many other services essential to operate the Chiefs of Ontario.



CHIEFS OF ONTARIO ORGANIZATION CHART



COO Christmas Party 2019

Education Sector

Political Leadership Portfolio Holder/Alternates

Deputy Grand Chief Derek Fox,
Portfolio Holder

Deputy Grand Chief James
Marsden, Alternate

Additional Technicians/ Committees

First Nations Education Coordination Unit (FNECU)

Yolanda Fobister, Grand Council
Treaty #3

Mia Frances/Debbie Terrance,
Independent First Nations

Paige Sillaby/Mindy Taylor,
Anishinabek Nation

Kyla Stonefish, Association of
Iroquois & Allied Indians

Sherry Britton, Nishnawbe-Aski
Nation

Councilor Audrey Powless-
Bomerry, Six Nations of the
Grand River

Wendy Johnson, Indigenous
Institutes Consortium

Nelson Toulouse, Anishinabek,
Mushkegowuk, Onkwehonwe
Language and Culture
Commission of Oniatari':io

Connor Martin, Ontario First Nation
Young Peoples Council

Ontario Technical Committee – Interim Funding Approach (OTTIFA)

Yolanda Fobister, Grand Council
Treaty #3

Mia Frances / Debbie Terrance,
Independent First Nations

Paige Sillaby / Mindy Taylor,
Anishinabek Nation

Kyla Stonefish, Association of
Iroquois & Allied Indians
Sherry Britton, Nishnawbe-Aski Nation

Murray Maracle, COO

Rob St. Pierre/Shelley Knott-Fife/
Owen Zoccole/Ryan Orlando,
Indigenous Services Canada

Other

AFN Chiefs Committee on Languages

Ogimaa Duke Peltier

AFN Technical Committee on Languages

Angel Maracle

Provincial Reciprocal Education Approach Working Group

Patrik Lowen

NAN Autism Action Team

Patrik Lowen

Demonstration School Branch Team

Patrik Lowen

CAMH Violence Youth Prevention Advisory Team

Patrik Lowen

Ontario Library Association- Indigenous Task Group

Angel Maracle

Overview

The Education Coordination Unit facilitates First Nations political and technical processes to respond effectively to First Nations needs and government initiatives. It assists First Nations to develop strategies to attain First Nation control over education within a lifelong learning framework. The Unit works to improve information sharing to develop a strong network of First Nation educators, institutions, and educational support organizations in Ontario.

Education Sector Highlights

Ontario First Nation Bilateral Process on Education:

The Ontario region made the decision to withdraw from the national process due to the implementation of inequitable funding allocation methodologies that resulted in Ontario losing millions of dollars in program funding and unfair voting practices at the AFN national education tables.

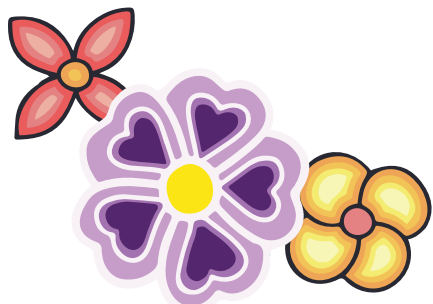
The FNECU and COO are developing a path forward with Indigenous Services Canada HQ on a bilateral process for Ontario First Nation education.

Special Education Capacity Building:

Special Education support provided for educators and parents moved online during the pandemic. COO hosted several webinars on various topics, including:

- Weird And Wonderful: Socially Regulated Learning
- Self Care for Educators
- Math Chats and Using Language Skills to Understand Word Problems
- Fundamentals for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Students Success
- On-Line Learning Strategies

A collaboration between COO and the Ministry of Education gave over 150 First Nation educators access to the Ontario Educator Online Autism Training Program.



The Ministry has committed to additional funding to continue this training for 2021-22.

In partnership with CAMH's Shkaabe Makwa, a curriculum was developed for Strength-Based Strategies for Challenges at School: Tools for Educators who Support At-Risk Indigenous Children and Youth in First Nation Schools

High Cost Special Education Needs Based Process:

The needs-based process for Special Education distributed over \$4M to thirty-three First Nations applicants to support additional special education programming in communities. The Ontario First Nation Special Education Working Group reviews and makes recommendations on applications for Indigenous Services Canada's approval.

Interim Funding Approach (IFA):

The Ontario Technical Table-Interim Funding Approach (OTTIFA) and associated Task Teams continued to meet virtually and were able to provide recommendations for enhancements and adaptations to improve the Interim Funding Approach (IFA) for First Nations education. The following modifications were implemented and injected an additional \$5M into the IFA for the 2020-21 year:

Remoteness a) Refinement of the Urban & Dispersion factors used in the Geographic Circumstances grant to be based on actual locations of First Nation schools in relation to urban service centres

b) Extension of the isolation adaptation, already contained in the model, to distance high schools operated in multiple isolated communities

Private FN Schools Tuition Rate – Adapted a new tuition rate for students attending specific private schools off-reserve, owned and operated by First Nation organizations. Rather than being based on provincial school board rates, the new tuition rate is based on the average rate per full-time equivalency from the proximate First Nation Education Authority in the provincial comparability model to the student's home community.

Federal Regional Education Agreement (REA) Funding:

Indigenous Services Canada allocated funding for the development of Regional Education Agreements. Eligible activities include information sharing on education transformation, technical tables to discuss funding, and preparations for negotiations and development of a REA. ISC and members from FNECU jointly reviewed applications and distributed \$2.8M to twenty-one recipients for 2020-21.



FNECU Meeting April 8, 2021



Post-Secondary Team

Languages:

The selection process to fill the positions of Commissioner and Directors within the Office of the Commissioner of Indigenous Languages started in December 2020 with over 60 applicants for the positions. Heritage Canada aims to have the Office established in spring 2021.

The national language committees assisted in the development of the First Nations Languages Survey that AFN will launch in April 2021. The information gathered will provide insight into the type of language programming and activities currently available in communities and identify gaps for future development.

Post-Secondary Education (PSE):

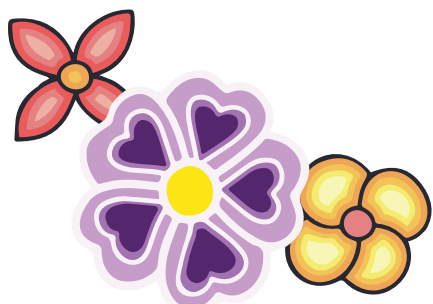
A decision of the National Chiefs Committee on Education in April 2020 resulted in Ontario taking a \$1.6M cut to the Post-Secondary Partnerships Program (PSPP). This program supports established Indigenous Institutes in developing and delivering post-secondary education programming. Lobbying efforts from the Indigenous Institutes and COO resulted in the restoration of the \$1.6M for PSPP for the 2021-22 year.

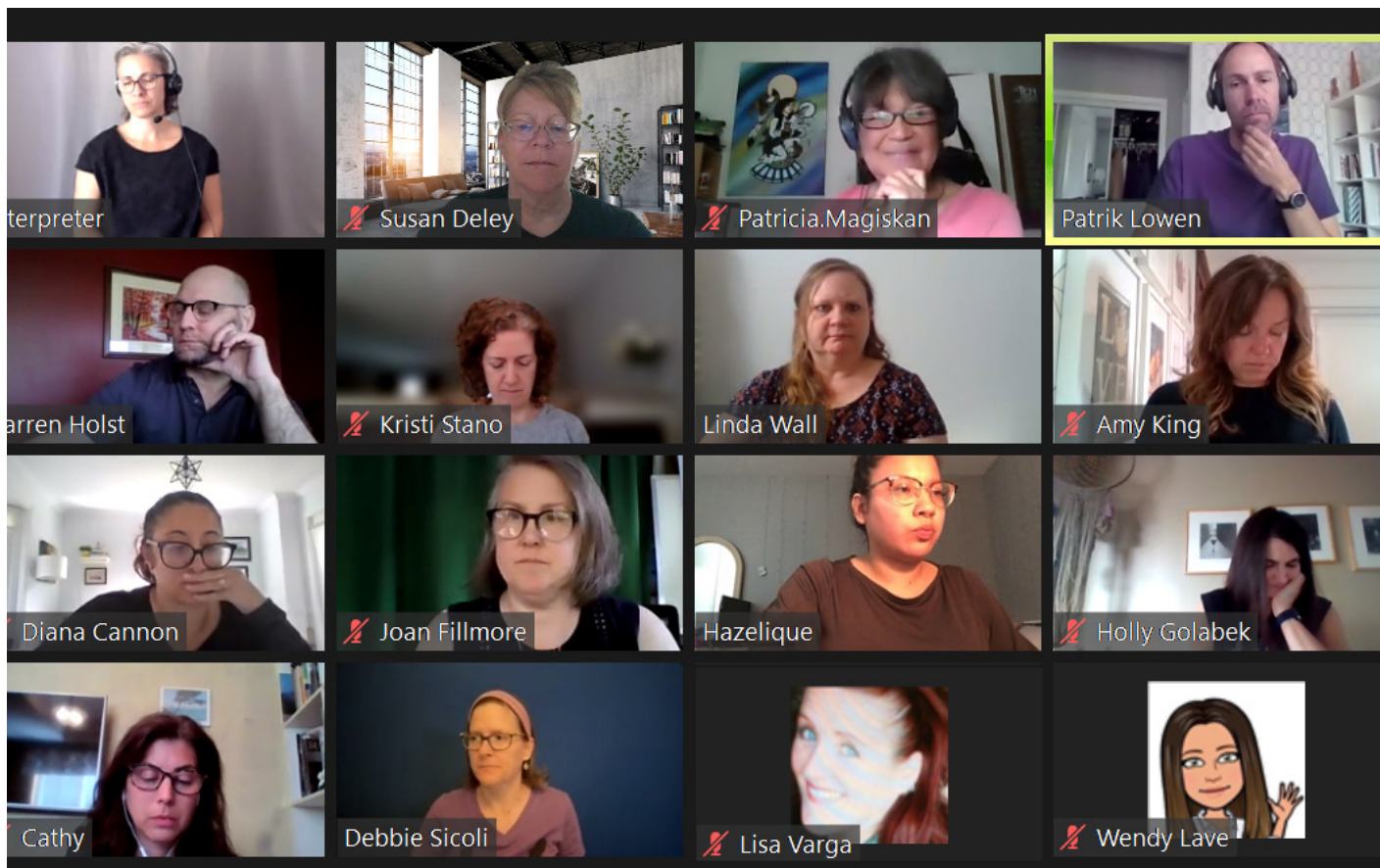
Year two of the post-secondary engagement process transitioned to virtual platforms. COO created a series of presentations on the current state of First Nations post-secondary education that included a detailed analysis of costs, institutions and programs, and undertook research initiatives focused on the experiences of First Nations post-secondary students and other community members. These tools will support PTOs and First Nations as they begin community engagement.

In the Year Ahead – Moving Forward

In the year ahead, the Education sector plans to accomplish:

- Finalization of the MOU for the bilateral process between Ontario First Nations and ISC for First Nation education
- Continued HCSEP capacity building and update the HCSEP Tool Kit
- OTTIFA to recommend additional Interim Funding Approach amendments and enhancements
- Re-establish the First Nations Lifelong Learning Table to address established priority areas for provincial First Nation student supports
- Continued support for post-secondary engagement with stakeholders and development of a final report for Ontario region





Environment Sector

Leadership Council Portfolio Holder/Alternates

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

Grand Chief Jonathan Solomon,
Mushkegowuk Council - Alternate

Chiefs Committee on Environment (CCOE)

Anishinabek Nation (AN)

Ogima Kwe Linda Debassige,
M'Chigeeng First Nation

Chief Gerry Duquette Jr., Dokis
First Nation

Chief Reginald Niganobe,
Mississauga #8 First Nation

Chief Franklin Paibomsai, Whitefish
River First Nation

Chief Dean Roy, Sheshegwaning
First Nation

Northern Superior Regional Deputy
Grand Chief Ed Wawia

Association of Allied & Iroquois Indians (AIAI)

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

Chief Dean Sayers, Ojibways of
Batchewana

Chief Denise Stonefish, Delaware
Nation

Independent First Nations (IFN)

Chief Charles Sampson, Walpole
Island First Nation

Chief Greg Nadjiwon, Chippewas of
Nawash

Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN)

Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler

Deputy Grand Chief Jason
Smallboy

Unaffiliated Independents

Chief Stacey LaForme,
Mississaugas of New Credit

Chief Wilfred King, Kiashke Zaaging
Anishinaabek

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, the Committee members were not able to meet in person this year. We had limited Zoom meetings as Chiefs were dealing with a multitude of issues in their communities, which took precedent. We kept Chiefs regularly informed of any provincial, federal, and other environment-related announcements, requests for engagement and assorted funding opportunities. Throughout 2020, 82 such notices were sent out to the CCOE and in 2021, to date, 65 notices have been sent to this committee and its technicians.

The Chiefs also received Briefing Notes, Updates, and Communiques. Environment staff provided updates at the August 2020 online Assembly and the February 2021 online SCA. The Environment Sector also initiated a Quarterly Newsletter with additional information and events listings that was sent out to this committee and to all Ontario First Nations' Leadership.

Additional Committees/ Technicians

Fuel Tax Surcharge Working Group

This Working Group met a number of times via conference call in April and May 2020 – they have not met since as there have not been any significant developments on this file. However, there were workshops held with Canada and AFN entitled Path Forward on Carbon Pollution Pricing Post – 2022 Virtual Workshops with First Nations January 28 & February 25, 2021. A Communique about the results of the workshops is to be prepared and will be distributed to the Leadership and this working group.

Committees at the AFN Level in which the Environment Department Participates

CCOHI – Chief Committee on
Housing Infrastructure and Water

JCCA – Joint Committee on Climate
Action

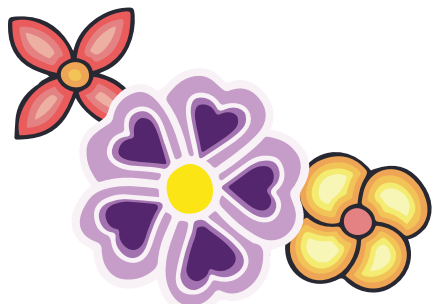
ACCAE – Advisory Committee on
Climate Action and Environment

Overview

The Environment Sector provides advice, guidance and recommendations to the Leadership Council (LC) and COO on water, natural resources, energy, species-at-risk, traditional knowledge, environmental assessments, mining, climate change, and other environmental issues. It is the goal of the Environment Sector 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 and accountable to inherent and treaty rights holders. In order to ensure accountability, 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 the Environment.

The Chiefs' Committee on the Environment is a technical and advisory body operating under the umbrella of the Chiefs of Ontario. The Chiefs Committee on Environment was created in fiscal year 2013-14 as a means to secure resources for leadership to collectively strategize on province-wide policy positions with respect to the environment. The committee is comprised of Chiefs representing the four Provincial Territorial Organizations (PTO) and representation from the Independent First Nations.

Each Chief provides oversight and guidance to specific matters falling within his or her portfolio. The portfolios within the Chiefs' Committee on the Environment are:





Winter sunset in the Boreal forest (courtesy of L.Trapper)

Water:

Topics pertaining to safe potable drinking water, source water protection, Canada-Ontario Agreement, Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, fisheries, water policy and governance including water security, freshwater ecosystems and aquatic habitat, Areas of Concern, lake wide management issues, and First Nations' rights, jurisdiction, authorities and responsibilities to water, and the Human Right to Water.

Land:

Topics pertaining to environmental regulatory gaps on reserves, land use planning, forestry, Far North Act, transportation networks, sustainable development, environmental assessments, biodiversity, greenbelt initiatives – Ontario growth plans, impacts on hunting, trapping, and food gathering in First Nations territories.

Climate Change:

Topics pertaining to a First Nations Climate Change Action Plan; First Nations Climate Change Summit, First Nations Climate Change framework, adaptation, and mitigation plans, Federal Carbon Pricing Backstop Program, Climate Action – local regional climate change

issues; Species at Risk, with a focus on caribou herds.

Legislative, Policy Advocacy & Program Access:

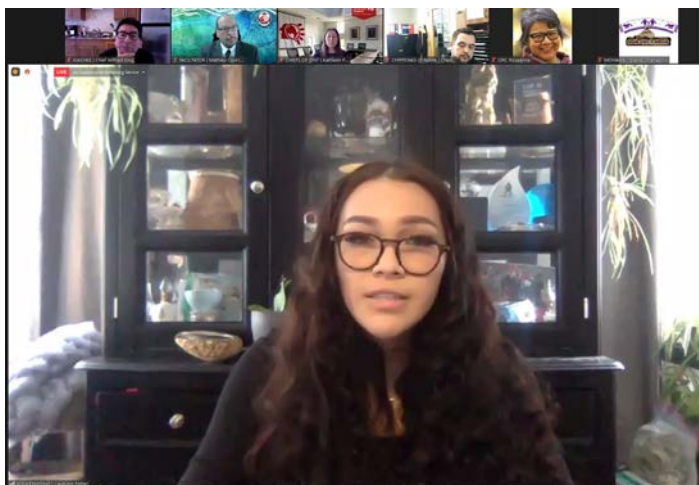
Topics pertaining to emerging legislative and policy areas, strategic legislative and policy for example: Fisheries Act and Invasive Species, Ocean Protection Plans Initiatives, Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act and Operations and Maintenance Reform, Green House Gas Pollution Pricing (Act), Modernization of Environmental Assessments (MECP).

Environment Sector Highlights

Water:

Announcement of Appointment – March 19, 2021:

The Ontario Regional Chief and the Chiefs Committee on Environment were pleased to assist with the formal Appointment of Chief Linda Debassige of M'Chigeeng First Nation as a member of the International Great Lakes – St. Lawrence River Adaptive Management (GLAM) Committee for a three-year term effective March 19, 2021 and ending March 18, 2023. The International Great Lakes –



Autumn Peltier attends AFN 4th Annual Water Symposium

St. Lawrence River Adaptive Management Committee (the Committee) was established to assist the Commission on the exercise of the powers and responsibilities assigned to it. The Committee is comprised of nine members from the United States and nine members from Canada. Members of the Committee serve at the pleasure of the Commission and are expected to be full participants in all activities of the Committee, working towards the resolution of issues and decision-making in the best interests of both countries.

Regional Water Coordinator (RWC) Activities:

The main activities of the Ontario Regional Water Coordinator are to communicate and share information with the Chiefs in Ontario on two issues: Repeal and Replacement of the Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act engagement sessions and the long-term approach to water and wastewater for First Nations engagement sessions.

Throughout the fall of 2020, the AFN Water Unit worked with the Regional Water Coordinators to hold pre-engagements with the purpose of gaining interest and beginning initial discussions regarding region specific and community level issues. These issues will be built upon during two separate 2021 engagement sessions.



Great Lakes Guardian Council - RC April 2021

Regional priorities from the Chiefs of Ontario's perspective support the overall AFN activities through the many resolutions passed by the Chiefs in Ontario and AFN Assemblies outlining direction and priorities on the Water file.

The Ontario Regional Chief holds the water portfolio at the AFN executive, and has provided ongoing support on this file by attending the AFN water symposiums and Ontario regional engagement sessions; providing advocacy support for the Chiefs at the ISC regional and headquarters' offices.

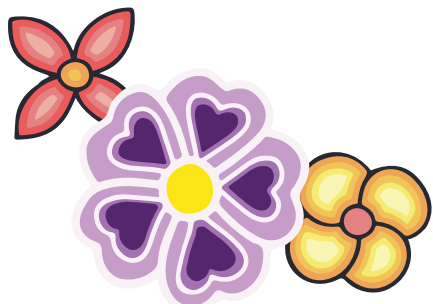
The Ontario Regional Chief's dedication to this file is also reflected in her direction to utilize OFNTSC in providing technical expertise with respect to the First Nation Communities who are listed on the WaterTrax. With more inclusion and understanding of the water and wastewater files the ORC is better positioned to advocate politically to ensure the eradication of BWAs and that LTDWAs in Ontario region are expedited.

Additionally, the ORC has requested quarterly meetings with the RDG of ISC Ontario region and FNIHB with the goal of open dialogue and communication with respect to the LTDWAs and BW's in the Ontario region.

Meetings:

AFN National Water Symposiums:

November 24th, 2020 – Highlights were the numerous presentations, including one from Minister Miller and the Q & A.





Environment Meeting April 2021

February 17 & 18, 2021 – Highlights were a presentation from Tanya Talaga and the videos from the civil society and Human Rights Watch.

Ontario Pre-engagement meetings:

Sessions were held December 1 & 2, 2020 – one session was dedicated to the southern First Nations and one dedicated to the northern communities. The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) launched its Water Engagement Strategy in the fall of 2020 and is proceeding with its continued engagement activities. These sessions were to prepare and provide First Nations with updates and next steps, but also to ensure input and feedback is being incorporated into the fulsome engagement sessions in 2021.

Ontario Engagement meetings:

On March 3 & 4, Engagement sessions were held in Ontario. Each region hosted a session to discuss important items related to (1) the Repeal and Replacement of the Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act, and (2) a long-term approach to water and wastewater for First Nations. The purpose of the 2021 engagements is to receive input and feedback from First Nations to aid the AFN in its advocacy efforts, and to support First Nations in developing “by First Nations for First Nations” approaches.

AFN Regional Water Coordinator (RWC) meetings:

COO attended all the meetings held every Friday organized by AFN with all the RWCs across Canada sharing information regionally on water and wastewater in preparation for the pre-engagement and engagement sessions held in each region.

Regional Activities:

Regionally, the Chiefs of Ontario continue to work with Human Rights Watch (HRW) to advocate for the basic human right to water for First Nations Peoples and Communities. On World Water Day COO and HRW prepared and released a communique highlighting advocacy work over the past 5 plus years requesting that the Government of Canada follow through on the recommendations from the HRW report [Make it Safe: Canada's Obligations to End the First Nations Water Crisis \(2016\).](#)

Most recently, the Auditor General released a scathing report on how Indigenous Services Canada has not adequately addressed First Nations lack of access to safe drinking water. The report recommended 6 key areas for the federal government to immediately implement. The key take-away is that Canada has failed to provide the basic right to water for First Nations.

Finally, recent funding announcements between Canada and Ontario, precipitated the Environment staff to research further answers and explanations from Canada on the many announcements. A Communique was sent to all Ontario First Nation Leadership about these matters.

Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement: Executive Council and Subcommittees:

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the planned Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA) meetings did not take place and efforts to increase First Nations participation in Great Lakes ecosystem restoration, protection, and monitoring have been hampered. The Chiefs of Ontario Environment Sector continues to participate at the Great Lakes Executive Council (GLEC) meetings as observers, providing feedback on matters related to Great Lakes ecosystem health. GLEC member agencies have continued their work through the 2020-21 fiscal year though monitoring activities have been seriously compromised due to the COVID-19. The pandemic has led to the closure of labs, monitoring stations, and the grounding of monitoring vessels, resulting in a major disruption in data collection and ecosystem restoration efforts.

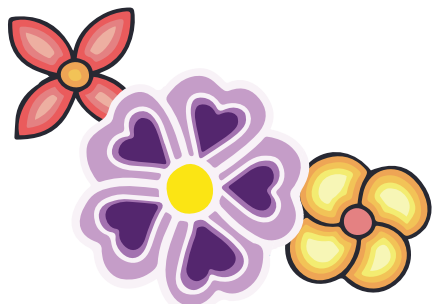
The COO Environment Department attends regular meetings for GLWQA Annex Subcommittees 1-10, with the majority of Subcommittees meeting twice a month. Although data supporting many of GLWQA Subcommittees is incomplete for fiscal 2020-21, a State of the Lakes Highlights Report was released in May 2020 that provides a status update on issues of concern for the Great Lakes. Of particular note are the poor indicators regarding invasive species, a situation which continues to deteriorate, and the unchanging status of algal blooms interfering with aquatic ecosystem health.

Given the results of the 2020 Presidential Election in the United States, the American counterparts of the GLWQA have seen a significant increase in funding and political will for Great Lakes related issues. Further, GLEC's partner agencies in the US have been given significantly more freedom to pursue certain activities, especially related to climate change. An area of renewed focus is that of harmful chemicals finding their way into the Great Lakes, with PFAS and mercury being of most concern. A complete review of the mandate of Annex 3: Chemicals of Mutual Concern is currently underway as a result of the changed mandate from the US Environmental Protection Agency. Environment and Climate Change Canada plans to release a draft Canadian Great Lakes Strategy for PFAS Risk Management in the near term, a development the Chiefs of Ontario Environment Department will monitor closely.

Great Lakes: Review of the DRAFT Canada-Ontario Agreement:

Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC) and the Ontario Ministry of Environment, Conservation, and Parks (MECP) initiated a scheduled redraft of the Canada-Ontario Agreement in fiscal 2020-21. In response to concerns from First Nations, an attempt was made to redraft Annex 13: Engaging First Nations, but many of the same concerns remained. First Nations representatives provided comments via a document titled, Reviewing the Canada-Ontario Agreement: Comments from Ontario First Nations.

In this document, First Nations representatives highlighted the importance of the nation-to-nation relationship as well as the Aboriginal and treaty rights that support their authority, laws, and jurisdiction as it relates to water. Further, it was made clear that the Crown's obligations as they relate to treaty and Aboriginal rights need to be reflected in processes and agreements related to Great Lakes water governance, including the Canada-Ontario Agreement. Lack of capacity and lack of recognition of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) in decision-making were also presented as evidence that the current system is not working.



Six recommendations were made to improve the Canada-Ontario Agreement, including an acknowledgement of First Nations' distinctive relationship with water; emphasis on the Crown's obligations as it relates to treaty and Aboriginal rights; incorporation of capacity funding in the Canada-Ontario Agreement itself; and a move away from First Nation engagement to true partnership, especially regarding decision-making processes. The Chiefs of Ontario Environment Sector is currently waiting for a response from ECCC and MECP and will continue to update leadership on this issue.

Climate Action and Environment:

The implementation of AFN Resolution #05/2019 – Declaring a First Nations Climate Emergency through the Advisory Committee on Climate Action & Environment to develop a Climate Strategy. Climate action webinars were held with Ontario First Nation participation as one approach to provide input to the strategy. Passing of AFN Resolution #17/2020 to support the continuing climate work was achieved in December 2020.

The [Human Rights Watch report](#) released in October 2020 assessed the impacts of climate change on First Nation food security. Two of the four First Nation communities that participated were from Ontario, Weenusk First Nation (aka. Peawanuck) and Attawapiskat First Nation. In general, the report states the failure of Canada to support First Nation rights to food as part of a human right that speaks to an acceptable standard of living.

Roundtable discussion with Canadian Environmental Law Association and Ontario First Nations were held on the "Report of the Special Rapporteur on the implications of human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes". Dialogue included the revision of Canadian Environmental Protection Act and exploring the United Nations complaint mechanism.

A First Nations Chronic Wasting Disease working group was established as per AFN Resolution #58/2018 with the mandate to

develop a position paper on concerns and impacts. Presently, Ontario has no known cases of the spread of CWD in the region.

In the Year Ahead – Moving Forward

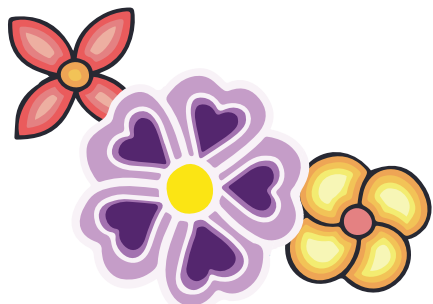
In the year ahead, the Environment Sector plans to accomplish:

- The Chiefs of Ontario will continue to advocate over the next fiscal year 2021-22 for safe potable drinking water for First Nations; repeal and replace the Safe Drinking Water Act for First Nations; and ensure a long-term sustainable water strategy that includes 100% funding for O & M, asset management, replace old formula funding and ensure First Nations have care and control over their water for future generations.
- AFN climate action on developing an AFN National Climate Strategy as per Resolutions #05/2019 and #17/2020 will release of survey as another approach to obtaining First Nation input on April 22, 2021
- Continue with the implementation of related COO Climate action resolution(s)
- Work will continue with a project undertaken with Transportation Canada and the Oceans Protection Plan (OPP). The Objectives of this project are to engage First Nations Communities in long-term, ongoing engagement work and discussions on initiatives undertaken by the OPP as well as develop a clear consensus with regard to OPP initiatives while identifying gaps in these initiatives and strategies to move forward and provide ample opportunity to share information, Indigenous Knowledge and advocate for the needs of First Nations in Ontario.

The plan for 2021-22 is being developed to take a more targeted approach to engagement. This plan may include tools such as a survey to understand what issues and initiatives are of most interest to First Nations. This feedback would be used to plan a virtual First Nations Water Week with virtual workshops to provide information on the feedback gathered from

the surveys. The feedback would be used to continue to provide information to First Nations and make connections into the community.

- We have submitted a proposal to Environment and Climate Change Canada to begin a project to ensure that First Nations in Ontario are prepared to make informed decisions on issues related to the Canada Water Agency (CWA). This project will begin with a two-day information session to provide background on the CWA and seek feedback and recommendations on establishing the CWA First Nations Advisory Council, including its selection process, mandate, roles, and responsibilities. Following the initial two-day meeting, a series of six (6) workshops will be hosted to ensure First Nations are informed on key issues related to the CWA.
- As we begin this new fiscal year, a new staff – Stephanie Allen - joins the Environment team to begin two new projects:
 - One project aims to build relationships between Environment and Climate Change Canada, Indigenous Services Canada, the Provincial Territorial Organizations (PTOs), and the 133 First Nations in Ontario by developing options to address the environmental protection regulatory and capacity gaps that currently exist on reserve lands. This partnership will serve to identify environmental protection gaps, the nature of the environmental protection gaps, options for addressing gaps by using a proposed multiphase approach.
 - Another project aims to support Indigenous communities in Ontario to understand environmental assessment and impact assessment (EA/IA) processes and related issues in order to meaningfully participate in EA/IAs and related engagement.
- The activities will include creating a working group to update the First Nations Environmental Assessment Toolkit, providing training to communities in the use of the Toolkit to assist meaningful participation in environmental assessments and environmental impact assessments.





Labrador tea (courtesy of L.Trapper)

Health Sector

Ontario Chiefs Committee On Health (OCCOH)

Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler, Co-Chair, Political Confederacy Portfolio

Chief Tobin Mitchell, Co-Chair, Political Confederacy Portfolio

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

Vacant, Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Deputy Grand Chief Ed Wawia, Anishinabek Nation

Vacant, Grand Council Treaty #3

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

Health Coordination Unit (HCU)

Georgina Lentz, Nishnawbe-Aski Nation

Suzanne Nicholas, Association of Iroquois & Allied Indians

Lyndia Jones, Independent First Nations

Jamie Restoule, Anishinabek Nation

Tassanee Weese, Grand Council Treaty #3

Lori Davis Hill, Six Nations of the Grand River

Policy and Relationships

Lily Menominee-Batise, Sr. Health Advisor

Megan Logan, Policy Analyst

Community Wellness

CarolAnn Marcoux, Manager

Bernadette deGonzague, Mental Health Policy Analyst

Linda Ogilvie, Public Health Advisor

Charnele Sondezi, Coordinator

Services and Advocacy

Zachariah General, Manager/ Associate Health Director

Jennifer Shisheesh, Northern NIHB Navigator

Miryan Rutledge, Southern NIHB Navigator

Emily King, Jordan's Principle Liaison

Tia Pettit, Coordinator

Research and Data Management

Roseanne Sutherland, Manager

Dr. Pamela Johnson, Senior Research Advisor

Dr. Carol Mulder, Senior Health Data Analyst

Trevor Koostachin, Quality Performance Measurement/ Research Analyst

Cindy Owl, Coordinator

New Business Plan Health Sector

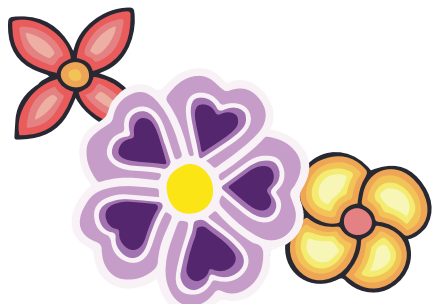
Over the past year, there have been many changes in the Health Sector. In May 2020, the Chiefs of Ontario Board of Directors approved a new business plan for the Health Sector. This business plan recognized that the department needed to streamline its activities to address the needs that were being identified by the Leadership. The following graph outlines the sectors within the Health Sector that addresses the needs.



Management and Coordination includes accountability to leadership, support and direction based on First Nation governance processes; management, coordination and communication within the health team and with other sections of COO; systems and applications that allow for efficient management of information, correspondence, contracts, finances, and scheduling; staff training and development.

The four quadrants in this annual report – Policy and Relationships, Community Wellness, Services and Advocacy and Research and Data Management - are also accountable to the Ontario Chiefs Committee on Health and works with the Health Coordination Unit.

The Health Sector works to honour First Nations' perspectives of health and ensure that we approach health in a way that is inclusive and integrated. Holistic health is a term used to describe First Nations perspectives on health – heart, spirit, mind,





Health Forum - February 2021

and body are all contributing factors to our well-being and living in balance with each other and within Creation.

Health Sector Highlights

COO 15th Annual Health Forum:

The 15th Annual Health Forum was presented this year using a virtual platform, February 23-25, 2021. We had an excellent response with well over 300 individuals registering to participate. The theme of the Forum was Sharing Stories: The True Test of Resilience Amidst a Pandemic. The agenda created an excellent balance of community stories on their response through pandemic plans and crisis response, harm reduction approaches, community successes in land-based programming for Addictions, and Youth Mental Health.

PowerPoints and Videos from the Health Forum 2021 can be accessed by logging into: <https://whova.com/portal/webapp/cooh 202102/>. PowerPoints can also be accessed on the Chiefs of Ontario website.

COVID 19 Journey:

The Health Department continues to meet with First Nations Leadership and government partners in the battle against COVID-19. Since March 2020, we have been through two waves of the pandemic and now in our third wave, we are seeing a dramatic increase in COVID-19 cases. Chiefs of Ontario worked diligently making sure our First Nations

members in community and outside community were a priority in receiving the vaccines in our communities. COO's established research relationship with the Institute of Clinical and Evaluative Studies continues to be strong and we were capable of assisting in the monitoring of First Nations COVID-19 virus through the testing data and linking the Indian Registry System. We continued to work in the areas of ensuring personal protective equipment, COVID-19 testing, food security, enhanced nursing surge capacity, relationship building with Ontario Health and regional tables, pandemic planning, guidance documents and knowledge and information sharing. The Health Department set up town hall meetings with First Nations Health Directors and sent communiques out to leadership to update on the current issues concerning the issues surrounding COVID-19.

Even though this pandemic has made the work difficult, the Chiefs of Ontario Health Department continued to support the communities with their unique challenges and assisted as much as possible with the health and well-being of First Nations communities and their citizen that live in community and outside community.



Policy And Relationships

“Policy and Relationships includes work related to legislative and policy analysis and advice; communications, collaboration, and partnerships with First Nations, PTOs, First Nations organizations, Canada and Ontario, research institutes, health services, academic institutions.”

First Nation Digital Health Ontario:

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 107 First Nations being supported by FNDHO for use of electronic medical records (EMR) within their respective First Nations and health service organizations.

Implementation is still pending on a number of fronts including digital health tool accessibility and broadband access. Negotiations on these matters continue with FNIHB and ISC.

Government Relations and Health Transformation:

The Chiefs of Ontario Health Secretariat 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 or trilateral agreements.

The Health Secretariat continues to respond to requests for support and guidance.

Health System Transformation – Distinction Based Health Legislation:

As part of his campaign promises, Prime Minister Trudeau committed to the creation of a Distinction-Based Indigenous Health Legislation Act which would reexamine how health care services are provided and governed by First Nations and other Indigenous populations in Canada. Work commenced on examining this with the National Chiefs Committee on Health (CCOH). Significant concerns were raised about inclusion with other Indigenous populations such as the Métis and Inuit. At the February 2021 Special Chiefs Assembly, Leadership agreed that more dialogue and background work needs to occur before agreeing and consenting to the Federal proposal. Although important, due to COVID-19, this dialogue has been stalled and still remains open.

Anti-Racism in the Health Care System:

Anti-Indigenous Racism has also risen to the forefront, particularly in the wake of the passing of Joyce Echaquan. Several national meetings were held with the family, medical experts and Leadership to discuss anti-racism in the health care system across Canada. Leadership in





Ontario, and across Canada, are awaiting investigative responses and recommendations as to how to best move forward collectively.

Trilateral Collaborations:

Over the past year and with the COVID-19 pandemic many more trilateral collaborations have happened. The Chiefs of Ontario, Provincial and Federal Governments came together every week during the first wave of COVID-19. The three governments have continued working collaboratively to meet the needs of the communities and moving forward in bringing issues to the table such as Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), funding in communities and vaccines, to name a few.

The Chiefs Committee on Health has also discussed the Trilateral First Nations Senior Health Officials Committee (TFNSHOC) and whether this process will need to be evaluated. The two working groups (Mental Health and Addictions and Public Health) have been meeting. Moving forward in 2021, there will be a review of the process and the development of a lessons learned document. Recommendations will be made on how to work on a trilateral level.

Community Wellness

“Community wellness contributes to health and well-being; determinants of health; young people’s wellness and leadership.”

Registered Nurses Association of Ontario (RNAO)/COO Agreement:

The partnership agreement signed on September 13, 2019 will be coming to an end on June 30, 2021 with RNAO. RNAO and COO have identified key priorities where immediate, substantive and sustained actions can be addressed jointly to improve the lives of First Nations people:

One of the successful deliverables that was completed with RNAO and the Chiefs of Ontario Health Department was the COVID Action Plan Template. This template was developed to assist communities in the development of their pandemic plans. The Action Plan was presented to HCU in September 2020 and copies were sent to each First Nation Health Director.

The Action Plan includes resources and information on Mental Health and Addictions, public health and identify resources that would be useful to communities such as emergency numbers, contacts for government etc.

Collaboration with RNAO, NAN, and CAMH to deliver a series of webinar presentations on Traditional healing and impacts of COVID-19 for health care providers. Three sessions have been presented to date and an extended series is being planned.

Resolution 19/16: Support for First Nations Midwifery in Ontario:

Calls for support of the development of a First Nation's Midwifery Strategy in partnership with the Association of Ontario Midwives (AOM). COO continues to support midwifery and provide advocacy for this important aspect of maternal and child health in collaboration with the AOM and ISC. COO was able to secure additional funding for AOM for fiscal year 2021-22.

Ontario Mental Health and Addictions Virtual Care Collaborative Equipment, Technology & Platforms Team:

This collaborative team is comprised of committed and diverse professionals working together to identify best evidence and practical solutions for virtual care needs across the province for First Nations and Indigenous communities. It is made up of CAMH Provincial System Support along with Shkaabe Makwa, Ontario Branch of the Ministry of Infrastructure Deployment and Digital Connectivity, MOH Digital Health Branch, First Nations Digital Health Ontario, and COO. This team helps First Nations and Indigenous communities with virtual health care, especially the need for Mental Health and Addictions virtual care. The group is a provincial reference group for virtual mental health and addictions healthcare in Ontario.

Mental Health and Addictions

Pandemic Response:

Work with Ontario Health Virtual Care Network to ensure advocate for and facilitate access to virtual care for mental Health and substance use disorders as needed while respecting physical distancing and travel restrictions for in-person treatment. Regular updates are discussed with the MHAWG and OTN on equipment and infrastructure needs as well as options available for both service providers and clients. Regular updates were also provided to the WG on

funding available for MH responses to pandemic needs. Participation at Ontario Health Collaborative on Virtual Care, addressing equipment, connectivity, and virtual platforms.

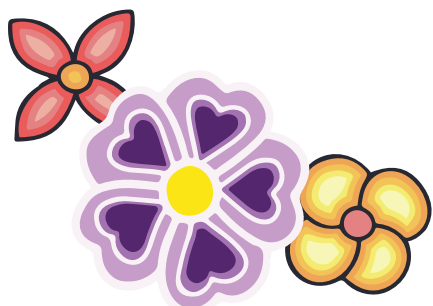
2017 Score Card on the Mental Health of Children and Youth in Ontario:

As part of Ontario's mental health and addictions strategy, ICES developed a baseline scorecard report in 2015 describing the state of the child and youth mental health and addictions system, which was updated in June 2017, followed by the first adult baseline scorecard in March 2018. These reports, which present results for all Ontarians, provide comprehensive trends over time in Ontario's mental health and addictions system, including measures of mental health and addictions-related hospital and emergency department use; access to receiving mental health care; and outcomes such as deliberate self-harm and suicide. However, these provincial scorecards have not presented Indigenous-specific mental health data.

The Mental Health and Addictions Work Group (MHAWG) requested a First Nations-distinct report, which will be the first report assessing mental health and addictions-related performance and contextual-level indicators among Ontario's First Nations population. This report, assessing First Nations mental health and addictions-related service use and outcomes between 2011 and 2017 through linkage with ICES administrative health databases is in progress and completion is anticipated by late Fall 2021.

Resolution 18/18: Health Human Resources Strategy:

The MHAWG discussed the need for a special Cross-sectoral and Cross-government Task Force in order to effectively address this resolution; however the formation of the task force has been delayed due to pandemic priorities. This requires additional advocacy with Social and Education sectors and resourcing with Provincial and federal government, given that we have already seen additional needs for Mental Health Human resources which will grow in the coming year(s) as the trauma, unresolved



grief, and residual effects of the pandemic are felt throughout communities.

The Task force would 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 traditional and western approaches.

Stories from Our Roots:

Follow up on completed Photovoice project, supporting youth Life Promotion: began work on a proposal to expand the project through development of a First Nations Youth-lead suicide awareness program as an alternative to SafeTalk© and expansion of Youth Photovoice training programs in partnership with the COO Ontario First Nations Young Peoples Council (OFNYPC), University of Western Ontario, and the Ontario Brain Institute, to be funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health. Work was interrupted by pandemic issues and vacancy of the Youth Coordinator position.

Public Health

The Public Health Working Group:

PHWG has focused 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.

Continue to have open dialogue within the group and the recent government commitments to Public Health within First Nation Communities.

Identify and explore Public Health services models and/or tools that can be used to enhance public health service delivery for First Nation communities

Finalize work on the cultural competency training modules in the context of applied lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic

in future work planning, and Public Health model discussions.

Services and Advocacy

“Services and Benefits Advocacy focuses on services and benefits, insured and uninsured, provided on and off reserve to First Nations people; services for children and their families as expressed in Jordan’s principle; navigation through the health system; home and palliative care.”

Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) Navigators Activities:

As many will reiterate, 2020-21 was an unprecedented time that brought uncertainty and unique challenges in addressing the health and wellness of First Nations and their citizens. Despite these uncertainties and challenges, the NIHB navigators remained steadfast in supporting 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 through the NIHB program during the pandemic.

In addition to supporting inquiries and assisting with navigating the NIHB program, the NIHB navigators worked on the following initiatives throughout the year:

- Working with the Ontario Renal Network to better support hospital-based dialysis programs with NIHB coordination.
- Working with First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) - Ontario Region on identifying a framework for transferring NIHB cases to Jordan’s Principle for children and youth.
- Coordinated a Medical Transportation Table with service providers and organizations on COVID-19 related issues and to serve as a forum for networking and information sharing.
- Capturing NIHB Provider and Access Issues in all benefit areas.
- Identifying gaps and advocating for changes to the NIHB program in light of ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

- Ongoing participation with the National Navigators Network and Ontario NIHB Networking Group.

NIHB Joint Review:

The NIHB Joint Review is coordinated by Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and FNIHB through a National Joint Review Steering Committee 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 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 will explore each benefit area under NIHB:

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

Progress of the Joint Review stalled as the AFN, First Nations and the Federal government responded to the COVID-19 pandemic throughout 2020-21. As of winter 2021, the AFN has been working to re-initiated discussions on the Joint Review, along with utilizing a COVID pandemic lens. Review of the Medical Transportation Benefit is slowly resuming. Following the completion of the Medical Transportation review, Administration and Operational Irritants will soon follow. The NIHB Navigators continue to participate in these discussions and advocate for changes to improve accessibility to benefits and address ongoing issues within the NIHB program.

Jordan's Principle:

The Chiefs of Ontario were active on the Jordan's Principle file. Throughout the year, the Health Services and Advocacy team can be summarized by the following:

Monitoring the ongoing Canadian Human Rights Tribunal Case to understand and educate how these proceedings impact the implementation of Jordan's Principle in Ontario.

Liaising with FNIHB-Ontario Region Jordan's Principle Team to discuss implementation issues.

Coordinating and chairing the Jordan's Principle Working Group, (Jordan's Principle Navigators from the PTOs/IFNs/Six Nations), to discuss Jordan's Principle implementation matters, networking and knowledge sharing.

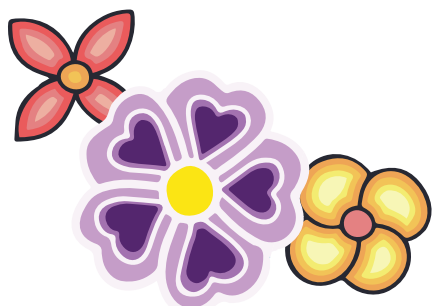
Participating on national level Jordan's Principle technical tables to discuss Jordan's Principle implementation and advocating for a long-term strategy to address service and jurisdictional gaps.

The Year Ahead For The Health Department

The past year has been difficult due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Chiefs of Ontario Health Department is looking forward to the work ahead.

Policy and Relationships Team will focus in the year ahead on the distinction based legislation and making sure that leadership is apprised of the developments and provided with information. The Trilateral work will continue and an evaluation of the process and lessons learned.

Health Services and Advocacy Team will be focusing on improving communications in regards to developments involving Jordan's Principle and establishing a new Jordan's Principle technical table with guidance from the Health Coordination Unit.



Research And Data Management

“Research and Data Management concentrates its efforts on the governance and management of First Nations data at the community and regional levels; First Nations health research; knowledge transfer and evaluation.”

New beginnings for Research and Data Management:

In the fall of 2020, the Chiefs of Ontario was successful in negotiating funding in several areas to address issues in COVID-19 data and research. The Ontario SPOR Unit provided bridge funding for a workshop to discuss the future of the First Nations Research and Data Management in Ontario. COO was also successful in gaining funding from the Federal government to develop a research and data management sector within the Chiefs of Ontario.

Research and Data Management has been working with the First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC) on the national data strategy. This strategy is a framework to assist in developing Information Governance Centres across Canada. As a member of the Board of FNIGC we have been working with the federal government on the Data Strategy and they have now reviewed the strategy and it looks promising that the strategy will be accepted.

Highlights Health Research

Mental Health & Addictions (MHA) Scorecard:

The Mental Health and Addictions Working Group along with ICES scientists assess mental health and addictions indicators, which describe the current state of mental health and addictions service provision among Ontario First Nation communities. Examine trends in performance indicators to assess changes over time in system performance and outcomes among Ontario First Nations people. An interim report will be available late May 2021.

Opioid Surveillance:

In partnership with Dr. Tara Gomes, Principal Investigator, the Chiefs of Ontario has been mandated by a Chiefs resolution on opioid surveillance. Bridge funding has been granted by CIHR for knowledge translation for an interim report to be completed in early Fall 2021.

Resolution 20/18:

Prescription Opioid Surveillance: Mandated continuing work on Opioid 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 submission to 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.

The grant was submitted to CIHR in March 2020. Due to COVID-19, the proposal review process was delayed until fall 2020 and unfortunately was not granted at that time. The Grant was revised as per reviewers' comments and resubmitted to the First Nations Information Governance Committee. This revised grant was successful and work will begin in fall 2021. An interim project with ICES has been undertaken as an AHRQ request to

update the initial study released last year and is in progress with results anticipated by late summer.

Understanding Opioid Use and Harms among First Nations People in Ontario: Integrating Administrative Data with Guidance from Communities:

This project arose out of Resolution 13/10 and Resolution 20/18 from the Ontario Chiefs-in-Assembly, which mandated the conduct and continuation of work aimed to reduce the harms related to opioid use in First Nations communities in Ontario. Dr. Tara Gomes: review patterns & trends, pathways to healthcare use, COVID-19 impacts, and treatment for Opioid use & harms.

First Nations Ontario Aging Study (FNAS):

A 6-month project to understand and advance the impact of FNAS to improve the impact of other First Nation research. Health directors were asked to take a quick survey to give feedback.

The response of provincial health systems to COVID-19:

Service provisions and costs across health sectors, First Nations, and other populations:

This research project looks at clinical outcomes, health service utilization and healthcare costs for people with and without COVID-19 in Ontario, BC and Ontario FN.

Regional Health Survey IV:

The 4th iteration of the RHS is coming up for fall 2021. There have been added questions regarding COVID-19 effects and impacts incorporated in the regional questions. Discussions are taking place regarding the method of deployment while considering the pandemic.

First Nations Quality Performance Measurement Framework:

Chiefs of Ontario is leading the development and implementation of a process to identify indicators to better understand the status of First Nations health and well-being. A 3-year work plan was developed to collaborate with appropriate partners to develop a performance report to inform strategy and policy decisions.

COVID-19 Focus:

COVID-19 weekly report: Develop and produce weekly report of COVID-19 test volume and results for First Nations in Ontario. 51 iterations of the report produced (as of April 7, 2021) with a broad distribution and very positive uptake.

COVID-19 vaccination data: Expanding existing COVID-19 weekly report to include vaccination data in the near future.

COVID-19 analyses: Deeper analyses of the weekly data to understand patterns of COVID-19 in First Nations in terms of geography, chronic conditions and age-sex group distribution.

COVID-19 modelling: Developing First Nations predictive model based on Ontario First Nation data and taking into account considerations of unique importance to First Nations: housing, access to health care, clean drinking water, remoteness etc. Projections to be presented spring 2021 based on publicly available modelling tools.

Other relevant work

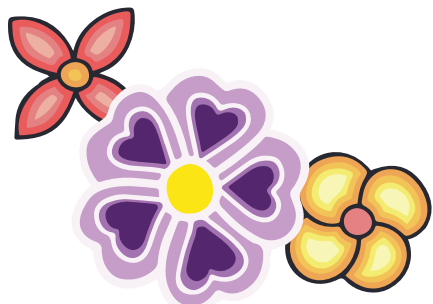
Joint Ministers' Roundtable on Ontario Health Data Platform:

Supporting COO's involvement through membership in the Equity/Engagement working group.

Current analysis of First Nations Labour, Employment and Development survey result for a data and "Peoples' report".

Complete the transfer of updated data from Indigenous Services Canada, as well as Data Governance Agreements relating to FNREES and RHS I, II and III.

Facilitating First Nations research projects: part of research teams for collaboration on several



research projects involving First Nations priorities.

Review relevant Data Governance Models to be presented to leadership and OCCOH.

Developed a business plan for the First Nations Research and Data Management sector and presented to COO Board.

In the Year Ahead – Moving Forward

In the year ahead, the Health Research Sector plans to accomplish:

- The setup of the First Nation Research and Data Management sector at COO. Including consultations with leadership and partners on development. This also includes an engagement session with relevant stakeholders;
- Reach out to Leadership and consult on the development of a Research and Data Management Centre, this would also include engagement sessions and bringing in stakeholders;
- The First Nations Labour, Employment and Development survey data and Peoples' report. The reports should be ready by late summer 2021;
- First Nation Data Governance Committee continue reviewing research applications;
- Fulfill staffing of unit;
- Deploy the Regional Health Survey IV in accordance with FNIGC's schedule of Sept. 2021;
- Set up the Research Sector website outlining reports, projects, applications and useful information.

Youth Sector

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP/ PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Grand Council Chief Glen Hare,
Anishinabek Nation

Grand Chief Joel Abram ,
Association of Iroquois and Allied
Indians

ONTARIO FIRST NATIONS YOUNG PEOPLES COUNCIL

Kathleen Doxtator & Melanie
Gray, Association of Iroquois and
Allied Indians

Janine Frogg, Nishnawbe Aski
Nation

Darryl Hill & Connor Martin, Six
Nations of the Grand River

Winter Lipscombe & Kayla
Morrison, Grand Council Treaty
#3

Jayse Mandamin & Richelle
Ritchie, Independent First Nations

Overview

Within the Chiefs of Ontario, the youth portfolio is supported by the Health Sector under the leadership of the Youth Coordinator who is accountable to the Health Director and is within the Community Wellness Sector of the Health Sector.

The Youth sector provides coordination and advocacy support to the Ontario First Nations Young Peoples Council (OFNYPC) in their mandate of providing youth representation and perspective into COO political and technical processes. OFNYPC works to empower and engage First Nations youth in communities by creating opportunities for youth dialogue, leadership skills development, relationship building, information sharing and capacity building.

Youth Highlights

Youth Council Meetings:

Continuing their mandate, OFNYPC met continually throughout the past year to share, plan and discuss ongoing initiatives, virtual events, meet with partners and stakeholders, and to provide youth engagement. Youth representatives continued to work with their PTO youth councils and on community frontlines to provide ongoing support to youth in various capacities throughout the pandemic.

“COVID Conversations” Town Hall Series:

From December to March, OFNYPC hosted a series of town hall events called “COVID Conversations” that invited various speakers to increase access to pandemic-relevant information amongst First Nations young people.

We hosted youth panelists and speakers, Elders, Healers, Doctors with Indigenous Services Canada, Thunderbird Partnership Foundation, First Peoples Wellness Circles, Dr. James Makokis and Anthony Johnson and the Ontario Regional Chief. We hosted 5 virtual events and 2 paint nights, reaching over 300 youth across Ontario; all planned, coordinated and hosted by youth, for youth.

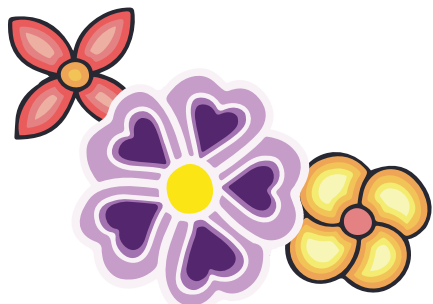
Youth Council Development Toolkit:

Toolkit has been updated and revamped to make it more youth and user friendly. Copies will be printed and mailed out to all 133 communities as well as PTOs and IFNs. Virtual training on the toolkit for youth in communities are to commence in 2021-22.

Niizhaayek 2Spirit Youth Alliance:

Provide mentorship through the secretariat to a grassroots youth group funded by the Youth Opportunities Fund with Ontario Trillium Foundation. This group has a vision for creating and providing safe spaces to share and advocate for LGBTQ2S+ youth in First Nations communities. We provide budget and financial oversight and assist with coordination following COO financial and administrative procedures.

Healing for Generations to Come





Ontario Regional Chief, RoseAnne Archibald joins the OFNYPC Town Hall

Youth Participation in COO Forums and Assemblies:

Provided participation, engagement and updates at the All Ontario Chiefs Conference, Special Chiefs Assembly, Health Forum and provided advisory input to various COO sectors as requested.

Stakeholder Relations:

Participated in an engagement session with Youth Advisors with the Ministry of Labour, Trades and Skills Development to discuss barriers to Indigenous young people entering skilled trades. Continued to meet with partners at Indigenous Services Canada – Ontario Region, providing advocacy on the Ontario Indigenous Youth Strategy and planning for youth governance gathering and capacity building.

Leadership Council:

Representative Lance Copegog continued to be engaged in all matters and business pertaining to the Leadership Council. Though he is a non-voting member he continues to provide youth input, recommendations and representation on the important issues discussed.

Assembly of First Nations National Youth Council:

Representatives Jayse Mandamin and Connor Martin as well as alternate Winter Dawn Lipscombe continue to be engaged at the AFNNYC. They have recently adopted a 2 year strategic plan for the council, participated in UNDRIP roundtable discussions with Minister Lemetti and Minister Bennett, and engaged with Heritage Canada to discuss their State of Youth report; a mandate given from the Prime Minister.

In the Year Ahead Moving Forward

Youth Council Meetings:

Monthly meetings will be held via Zoom to plan and coordinate youth engagement events and initiatives and tend to regular youth council business. This is to include a June meeting to elect members to the Assembly of First Nations National Youth Council.

Vaccine Hesitancy Campaign:

Creation of videos and infographics encouraging youth in communities to do their research and consider getting the vaccine to protect their families and communities.

Youth Town Halls:

Continue to create virtual spaces for youth to come together to share and learn about various topics related to COVID-19, Mental Wellness, Education, Leadership, etc.

Leadership Training:

Capacity Building training through the Indigenous Leadership Development Institute. Utilizing the Zoom platform we will invite youth to participate in 6 sessions covering the following topics: Board Training/Management, Proposal and Grant Writing, Law Making Processes and Planning, Human Resource Management, Team Building and Development, and Facilitator Training.

Youth Governance Gathering:

Virtual youth gathering with a focus on Governance. Invitations will be sent to youth from communities to come together in a virtual space for various speakers, trainings and breakout groups.

Youth Council Development Toolkit:

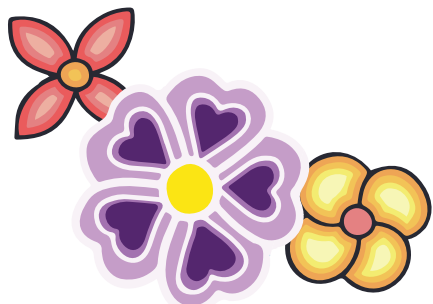
Virtual training for youth in communities interested in starting a youth council, group or collective to walk them through the toolkit and how to maximize usage of the resource. This forum will allow youth to ask questions directly about the toolkit, and work with OFNYPC members and facilitators to create plans for their communities.

Niizhaayek 2Spirit Youth Alliance:

Mentor the youth group in their work in creating safe spaces for LGBTQ2S+ youth to come together and share, create awareness and discuss matters important to them. This will take place through a series of webinars, podcasts and a speaker series until we revert back to in-person gathering.

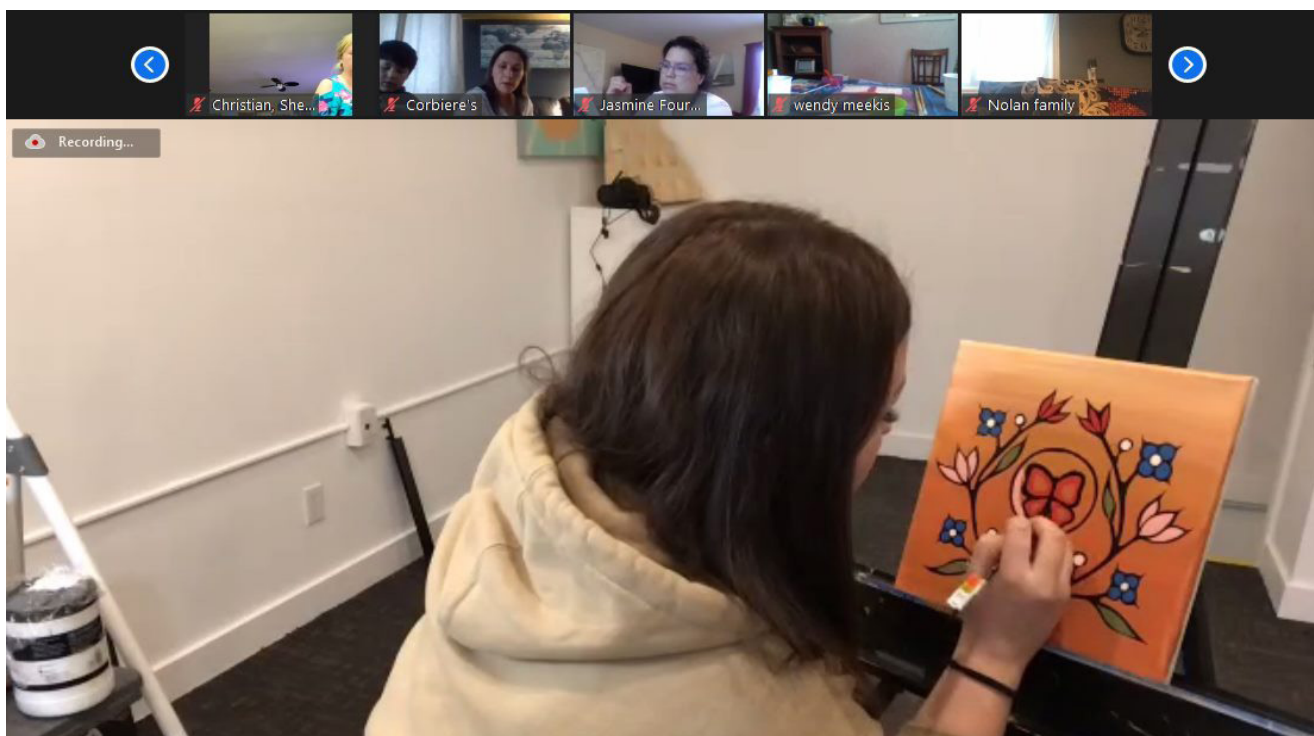
BOKS (Reebok) Initiative:

Reebok (BOKS) made a presentation to the Ontario First Nation Young Peoples Council regarding the BOKS initiative. BOKS have been focused on working with rural and remote communities over the past year. Their next step will be to build and strengthen relationships with First Nations communities. BOKS will be developing BOKS Bursts that will focus on First Nations traditional games and activities. The Youth Council in their town hall meetings have identified BOKS as one of their priority initiatives.





OFNYPC Representatives Raikenkonniedwards, Connor Martin and Brandon Doxtator join the OFNYPC Town Hall



Artist Emily Kewageshig joins the OFNYPC Town Hall

Social Services Sector

Political Leadership Portfolio Holder/Alternates

Grand Chief Joel Abram,
Association of Iroquois and Allied
Indians

Alternates:

Grand Chief Jonathan Solomon,
Mushkegowuk Tribal Council

Chief Theresa Nelson,
Independent First Nations

Chiefs Committee on Social

Chief Mark Hill, Six Nations of the
Grand River

Councillor Nathan Wright, Six
Nations of the Grand River

Grand Chief Joel Abram,
Association of Iroquois and Allied
Indians

Chief Laurie Carr, Association of
Iroquois and Allied Indians

Chief Theresa Nelson,
Independent First Nations

Chief Tim Thompson, Mohawk
Council of Akwesasne

Ogimaa Duke Peltier, Anishinabek
Nation

Chief Reginald Niganobe,
Anishinabek Nation

Deputy Grand Chief Walter
Naveau, Nishnawbe Aski Nation

Chief Brian Perrault, Grand
Council Treaty #3

Social Services Coordination Unit

Justine McCurdy, Association of
Iroquois and Allied Indians

Arliss Skye, Six Nations of the
Grand River

Diane Maracle, Independent First
Nations

Jordan Bertagnolli, Grand Council
Treaty #3

Bobby Narcisse, Nishnawbi Aski
Nation

Adrienne Pelletier, Anishinabek
Nation

Vacant, Mohawk Council of
Akwesasne

Additional Technicians/ Committees

Joint Social Services Table

Daniel Bruyere, Akwesasne First
Nation

Dean Councillor, Grand Council
Treaty #3

Elizabeth Richer, Niigaaniin
Services

Natasha Beckford, Niigaaniin
Services

Norma Albert, Stepping Stones
Support Services Program

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

Sandy Porter, Six Nations of the
Grand River

Kim Jamieson, Six Nations of the
Grand River

Shelley Trudeau, Union of Ontario
Indians

Jessica Nadjiwon, Ontario Native
Welfare Administrators Association

Amy Nadjiwon-Toby, Ontario
Native Welfare Administrators
Association

Overview

The Chiefs Committee on Social (CCOS) provides guidance and support for the work and recommendations that require Chiefs-in-Assembly resolutions. The Social Services Coordination Unit (SSCU) is a technical and advisory body that provides options to CCOS. The Social Service Department 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 for the development of recommendations to the CCOS and Leadership Council on child welfare, social assistance, and early learning and child care.

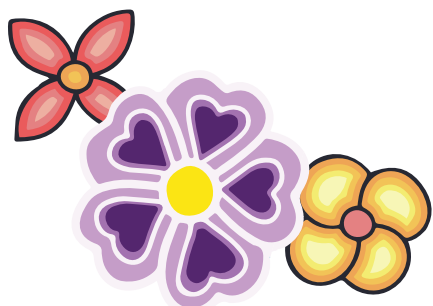
Social Services Sector Highlights:

Technical Table on Child and Family Well-being:

The Technical Table is comprised of Indigenous Services Canada, Ontario Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services, the Social Services Coordination Unit, and the Chiefs Committee on Social. The Technical Table on Child and Family Well-being met six times over the year to discuss the implementation of Bill C-92, An Act Respecting First Nations, Metis, Inuit Children, Youth, and Families, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal Orders implementation, Child and Family Services policy and funding reform, and the 1965 Indian Welfare Agreement.

Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT):

The Tribunal's jurisdiction was intended to end on March 31, 2019, however the court continued the litigation and judicial review process regarding the remaining orders and outstanding motions. Currently, Jordan's Principle eligibility, the eligibility determination process, compensation for victims of discrimination, and the process for compensating victims are under appeal. A



decision regarding prevention funding for non-agency communities has been settled.

We are still awaiting a decision on two motions before the Tribunal. The first is whether the cap on capital expenses imposed by Canada for immediate relief is in compliance with the order. COO has asked for a “me too” regarding the Band Rep capital expenses cap. The second is whether the Tribunal will retain jurisdiction over short and long-term reform decisions and for how long, remains uncertain. Lastly, Nishnawbe Aski Nation and Canada have settled their motions related to the Remoteness Quotient and the restriction of utilizing the OFNLP formula for distribution of community prevention funding.

The Draft Band Representative Services guide has been released and contains a number of items that have raised concerns at the Social Services Department. COO has requested a meeting with the Minister to discuss and action should be taken soon to create alignment and compliance with the Tribunal’s orders.

There is some indication that the Tribunal may be working to end its role of supervising the implementation of its orders and move on to long-term reform. COO has reached out to Canada to discuss Ontario-specific orders that may be agreed to.

For the 2021-2022 fiscal year, \$34 million is available in funding to Ontario First Nations. This includes \$15.9 million in community-based prevention funding and \$23.1 million in community well-being and jurisdiction initiative funding. Currently, Indigenous Services Canada is looking at a needs-based option funding mechanism.

Ontario Special Study:

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 implementation of all 27 recommendations in the OSS. Further, INDsight Consulting is creating a needs-based assessment tool for communities in Ontario and is creating an OSS recommendation implementation strategic plan. The planned

delivery date for the needs-based assessment tool of March 31, 2021 has been extended to May due to delayed community response to the Assessment Tool Development questionnaire.

Joint Social Services Table (JSST):

The JSST is comprised of the Ontario Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services, the Social Services Coordination Unit and First Nation Social Assistance technicians. JSST is going into the second year of a new First Nation directed work plan established in February 2019. The JSST has begun work on creating an Ontario Disability Support Program working group with the intention of rolling out the program to communities who wish to deliver it. Further, the JSST is moving forward on a First Nation specific Social Assistance program that will address relevant issues with First Nation designed services and will focus on Life Stabilization and employment assistance. The JSST continues to advocate for First Nations inherent jurisdiction over social services.

Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC):

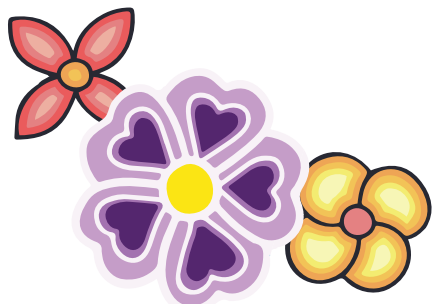
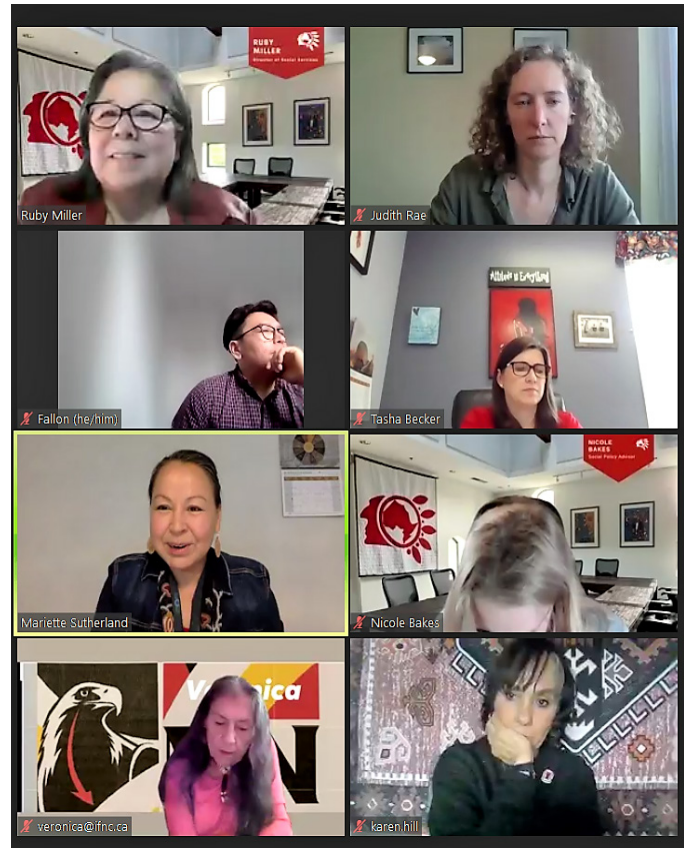
The Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care Framework is heading into the 2021-22 fiscal year and First Nations can expect another \$12.8 million of funding for Ontario. COO has contracted SISCO and Associates to undertake an ELCC Asset Mapping Study. Further, COO has drafted a Terms of Reference (ToR) for an ELCC Regional Table comprised of representatives from the Political Territorial Organizations, Independent First Nations, and Unaffiliated First Nations. The ToR is still in the review and pre-acceptance stages.

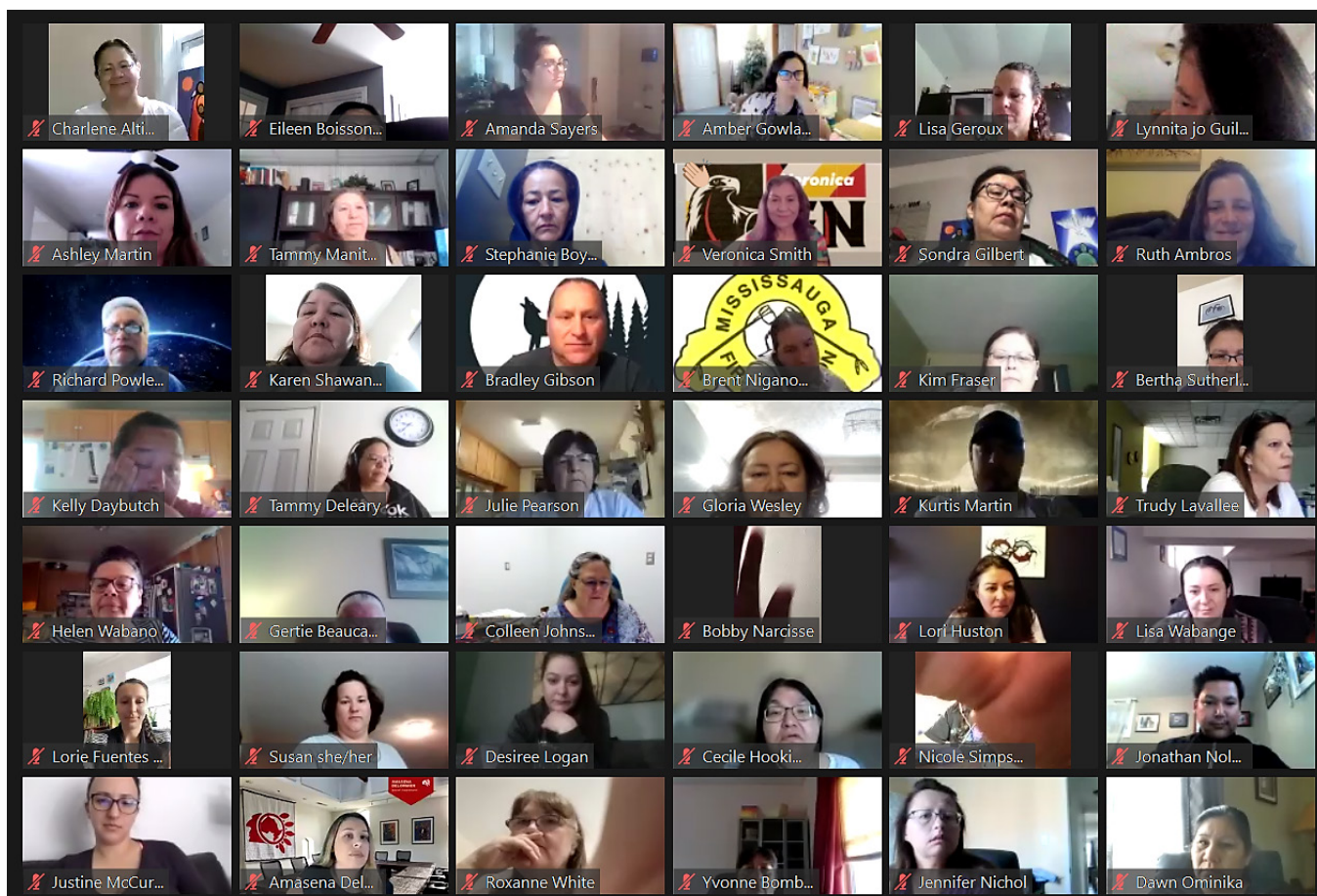
In the Year Ahead – Moving Forward:

In the year ahead, the Social Services Sector plans to accomplish:

- Hosting an Ontario Specific Approach Regional Gathering to implementation of An Act Respecting First Nation, Metis, Inuit Children, Youth and Families, First Nations law development, and required supports
- Acceptance, implementation and utilization of the Community Self-Assessment Needs Based Funding Tool
- Completion of the IELCC Asset Mapping Study
- Continued Joint Social Services Table meetings and piloted ODSP programs on reserve and the Reform of Social Assistance
- Acceptance of the Implementation Strategy of the Ontario Special Study recommendations and initiate the identified recommendation priorities
- Hosting a 1965 Indian Welfare Agreement Symposium that will provide Leadership direction for a coordinated approach to revising and updating the IWA.
- Tentative depending on funding – Development of an IELCC database designed for data collection that First Nation Leadership and communities determine as relevant for their use; development of an IELCC Ontario website/social media/ resource repository that will support and enhance communication and networking; development of a Cultural Competent ELCC Digital Training Curriculum for Practitioners, Families with a focus on Special Needs Children; the development of a IELCC Practitioner Licensing Report for Leadership consideration for local standards

- Continued coordination, technical support and participation at the Tripartite Technical Table, JSST, Ontario Child Technician Table, ELCC Regional Table, and AFN tables: Child Welfare (4), Social Assistance (1) and Jordan's Principle Operations (1).





First Nations leadership and technicians join the Creating a Healthy & Loving Society for our Children Forum

Justice Sector

Political Leadership Portfolio Holder/ Alternates

Grand Chief Alvin Fiddler,
Nishnawbe Aski Nation

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

Chiefs and Technicians Committee on Justice:

The Chiefs and Technicians
Committee on Justice is still in
the process of being finalized and
launched. Please stand-by for
an announcement in the coming
months regarding the final list of
Leadership and Technicians who
will make up this Committee.

First Nations Heritage and Burial Advisory Committee (Knowledge Keepers)

Currently undergoing
reorganization following a period of
reduced activity.

First Nations Heritage and Burial Working Group (Technicians)

Currently undergoing
reorganization following a period of
reduced activity.

Overview

The Justice Sector has been in a rebuilding stage since September 2020, when we obtained funding to hire two staff members that would rebuild the team. Since this time, the Justice Sector has focused on gaining capacity and ongoing funding to ensure long-term stability for the Sector.

The Justice Sector responsibilities are to coordinate the technical and political positions of First Nations Leadership on justice issues affecting First Nations in Ontario. Leading justice priorities throughout 2020 have included First Nations policing, revitalization of traditional justice, jurisdictional issues and treaty rights, consultation and accommodation, and the protection of heritage and burial sites.

Justice Sector Highlights:

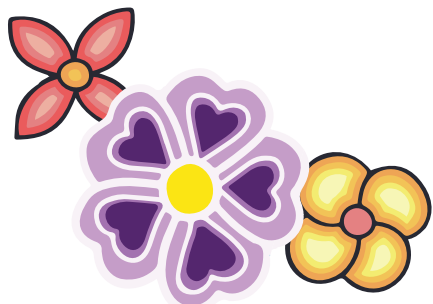
January 2021 Justice Forum:

Chiefs of Ontario held a Chiefs' Forum on Justice in January 2021 in response to calls by Leadership for more opportunities to discuss and collaborate on key issues. The Forum focused on Bill C-15 and the Community Safety and Policing Act. The Forum allowed for open dialogue and discussion among Leadership, featured presentations from Regional Chief Terry Teegee and Chief Wilton Littlechild, and provided Leadership with a chance to directly express their views regarding policing to representatives from the Ministry of the Solicitor General.

Policing:

Policing issues have remained a major focus for the Justice Sector in 2020-21, both federally and provincially. As the provincial Ministry of the Solicitor General began engagements with First Nations policing experts on the regulations of the Community Safety and Policing Act 2019, Chiefs of Ontario has advocated for comprehensive engagements among all First Nations in order to capture the needs of different policing models. Chiefs of Ontario has also engaged in advocacy work on general policing issues in Ontario by providing support to First Nations in their negotiation agreements and providing coordination support to a Chiefs and Delegates working group of First Nations policed under the Ontario First Nations Policing Agreement model (OFNPA).

Throughout March 2021, Chiefs of Ontario held four engagement sessions with First Nations Leadership, technicians, and policing experts to share perspectives about federal essential service legislation on policing. The feedback from these sessions will be used to chart a path forward for direct engagement with Public Safety Canada on the development of the legislation.



Legislation and Regulations:

The Justice Sector plays a role in monitoring and making recommendations regarding new provincial and federal legislation and regulations. This entails reviewing new legislation, determining its interaction with section 35 of Treaty-recognized rights, briefing Leadership, and supporting Leadership in their dialogue with the government. Throughout 2020-21, we performed these tasks on regulations for Bill 156, Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act; Bill 197, which made changes to the Environmental Assessment Act; trap line regulations under the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act; the Community Safety and Policing Act regulations; Bill C-15, An Act respecting UNDRIP; and a family law license proposal by the Law Society of Ontario.

Regarding Bill C-15, Chiefs of Ontario has supported Leadership and technicians through briefing notes, regular updates, presentations, open-format discussions at the January 2021 Justice Forum, and an Information Kit which detailed the legislative process and advocacy opportunities.

Heritage and Burials:

In 2020, the Heritage and Burials file was transferred back to the Justice Sector from the Policy and Communications Sector. During fall 2020, both sectors supported the transfer of historical items and ancestors to a new storage facility. These items are currently being catalogued to allow for their return to their home communities. The Justice team is in the process of reestablishing the Heritage and Burials working group and initiating a new work plan.

Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Project:

This is a five-year project funded by the Department of Justice. During 2020, the project was transferred from the Social Sector into the Justice Sector and completed its second year, which was an information gathering stage. As part of this stage, Chiefs of Ontario hosted two information sessions, one for women and the other for youth, to provide an overview of their

rights in the workplace and obtain feedback on the project. This feedback was used to begin creating further tailored presentations along with toolkit resources for employers and employees, which will be disseminated in year three. In this year, the project has engaged in trauma-informed education that will continue to inform the approaches and delivery of the project.

In the Year Ahead – Moving Forward:

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

- Coordinate regular, ongoing meetings for the Chiefs and Technicians Committee on Justice
- Advance the work at the Collaborative Table on Enforcement and Prosecution of First Nations laws, a tripartite group which aims to study and make recommendations about the obstacles facing First Nations in achieving equal treatment and respect for their laws by police and prosecutors
- Continue to increase the size and capacity of the Justice Sector through additional funding proposals
- Begin a new project funded by the Department of Justice that aims to provide tools and resources to First Nations developing their own laws in child and family well-being
- Reinvigorate the Heritage and Burials file by coordinating regular meetings with the Knowledge Keepers and Technicians groups, as well as designing an updated work plan to achieve concrete milestones in the year ahead
- Maintain advocacy efforts regarding policing issues at both federal and provincial levels for all communities, regardless of policing model

Policy and Communications

Overview

The Policy and Communications Sector is a new sector within the Chiefs of Ontario (COO) that was created by the merging of the Policy and Provincial Affairs and the Communications and Federal Affairs sectors. The main function of the Policy and Communications Sector is to coordinate communications and organize the development of briefing notes, communicate updates, and policy analysis to ensure leadership is kept informed on issues impacting First Nation communities in Ontario.

The Policy and Communications Director provides guidance and support for policy initiatives, provincial relations, program management, and oversees emerging initiatives. Further, the Director provides support to leadership in Ontario and the directors at the COO secretariat related to relationship building with the Ontario Government.

As the COVID-19 pandemic pushed our work out of the office and onto virtual platforms, the Policy and Communications Sector took the lead on hosting meetings over Zoom. This included providing guidance on agenda development, coordination of documentation, and working with the Chief Operating Officer to oversee virtual Special Chiefs Assemblies and leadership meetings. The Policy and Communications Sector also provided assistance to other sectors by hosting and offering technical support and promoting upcoming events on social media to maximize interest and participation.

The Policy and Communications Sector also created and now oversees the upkeep of several new websites, including www.chiefsmeeting.com, which was designed to give Chiefs and technicians a dedicated place to find meeting materials and information on upcoming events, and www.COO-COVID19.com,

which was created to provide First Nations citizens with up-to-date information related to COVID-19 supports and pandemic planning.

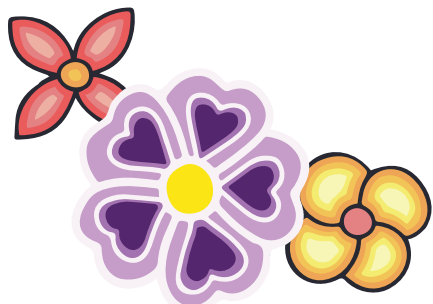
In addition to policy and communications work completed by the sector, the unit actively collaborates with all sectors within the COO. It continues to improve and strengthen internal and external communications related to policy support work, advice, and government relations. The unit also works to ensure that the messages, activities, and priorities of the COO are brought to the public's attention through various mediums such as press releases, social media, speaking engagements, videos, and interviews with media outlets.

The Policy and Communications Sector would like to acknowledge Scott Cavan, former Director of Communications and Federal Affairs, and Barret Dokis, former Director of Policy and Communications, for their outstanding work and dedication to the Chiefs of Ontario.

2020/2021 Accomplishments

The Chiefs of Ontario Communications and Policy Sector provided management oversight for special initiatives and advanced the following projects in 2020/21:

- Launched the newly designed Chiefs of Ontario website
- Ensured that enhanced still photography and video are routinely captured
- Produced a wide range of in-house videos and media materials for distribution
- Provided technical support for COO Departments and acted as a liaison for information sharing, network development, and relationship-building processes
- Developed www.chiefsmeeting.com to provide updates on upcoming Chiefs of Ontario meetings and documentation sharing
- Developed a revised budget and work plan for the Housing and Infrastructure file as well as an engagement plan for the National Housing Strategy





COO meets with Indigenous Affairs Ontario - November 2020

- Transitioned the Heritage and Burials file to the Justice Sector
- Planned and hosted the first-ever online Chiefs-in-Assembly meeting in August 2020
- Organized and implemented the transition to online meetings and webinars for the Chiefs of Ontario
- Hosted the February 2021 Special Chiefs Assembly online
- Provided support to the Ontario First Nations Young Peoples' Council's COVID-19 Town Halls from December 2020 – March 2021.
- Distributed three editions of the Advocate Magazine
- Launched newly designed Health and Education Sector websites

Highlights:

COVID-19 Response:

As the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded, the Chiefs of Ontario Policy and Communications Sector shifted its focus to provide accurate and up-to-date information to support First Nations in their efforts to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 within their communities. This was accomplished through a range of digital initiatives and ensuring continued collaboration between federal and provincial representatives and First Nations leadership in a virtual format.

As part of the PC Sectors digital initiatives, we successfully launched a public health campaign focused on prevention and awareness efforts, including combatting misinformation about COVID-19 and access to funding and pandemic planning resources

with the assistance of the COO Health Sector. We also continued to build on the previously launched comprehensive COVID-19 information database to ensure the health and wellbeing of First Nations communities.

We continue to work closely with First Nations leadership and government representatives on a coordinated response to support First Nations communities in response to COVID-19, including advocating for additional funding and support for community-led initiatives and tools for First Nations in Ontario to adequately respond to the pandemic.

Communications, Outreach and Public Awareness

As part of the Policy and Communications Sector COVID-19 response, a collaborative communications strategy was developed and implemented to provide ongoing, transparent, and reliable communication regarding COVID-19 to coordinate and support the global response.

This includes effectively coordinating virtual events, meetings, and webinars where we facilitated conversations between leadership, communities, and all levels of government. Further, a public health campaign was launched, focusing on three pillars: awareness, prevention, and credibility. This approach has helped ensure the health and wellbeing of First Nations while combatting COVID-19 misinformation.

The previously developed Comprehensive Communications and Media Strategy was expanded upon to address current communication priorities. Over the past year, we have continued to further this strategy to advance the COO's internal and external communications and public awareness initiatives, ensuring the greatest possible impact in supporting First Nations citizens and leadership.

The communications and the tools developed by the Policy and Communications Sector make it possible to reach First Nations directly, support the work of COO and amplifying the initiatives of Political Territorial Organizations, youth, and Indigenous organizations.

Social Media

The PC provides social media content on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn and Instagram with over 36,000 followers across platforms.

Through social media, the Policy and Communications Sector has increased the reach and impact of messaging through sharing events, news, and contributions of First Nations. The Regional Chief has her own Facebook page and Twitter account, which are managed and administered separately from the Chiefs of Ontario accounts.

Our online community continues to grow daily, and it is vital in increasing COO's reach and impact through sharing, liking, and following. Stay current with the latest news and events from the Chiefs of Ontario on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn and Instagram: @ChiefsOfOntario.

The Advocate Magazine

In 2019-2020 the PC produced three 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, environmental and sustainability, health, social services, justice, and youth programming. Over 3,000 copies were printed with an estimated readership of over 10,000, 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.

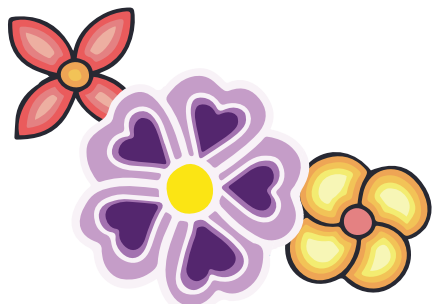


Provincial Relations

After its election in June 2018, the Ontario government's engagement with First Nation leadership and communities was considered nominal. Through 2020-21, the COO Secretariat and the Office of the Regional Chief have worked to increase the interaction of the Ontario government's interaction and engagement with First Nation leadership. Through consistent contact and relationship-building facilitated by the Chiefs of Ontario, First Nations in Ontario have been afforded increased access to provincial ministers and representatives.

This improved relationship has allowed for more significant input into provincial policy development, particularly regarding the COVID-19 response. While concerns with specific policies and legislation remain, First Nations leadership and COO have been active in bringing forward their positions and recommendations to Ontario, including:

1. Securing Leadership Council meetings with the Ontario Premier
2. Securing Indigenous-specific supports in its 2020-2025 Human Trafficking Strategy
3. Relationship-building meetings between the Ontario Regional Chief and various relevant Ministers within the Ontario government





4. Securing several Leadership Council meetings with the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs to discuss concerns related to Bill 156, Security from Trespass and Protecting Food Safety Act, 2020
5. Developing a strong working relationship between the Office of the Regional Chief and offices of the Premier and the Minister of Indigenous Affairs

Housing

The on-reserve housing crisis in Ontario has intensified since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, necessitating immediate funding to address critical First Nation housing priorities. In addition to funding, policy and structural changes are required to ensure First Nations are able to meet their housing needs. This includes ensuring First Nations treaty and inherent rights are respected as well as addressing dated government policies.

The Chiefs of Ontario (COO) was directed via resolution 20/10 to conduct engagement on Ontario's implementation of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) National Housing Strategy (NHS) and the transfer of care and control of housing to First Nations in Ontario. In February 2021, funding was provided by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) for four regional housing workshops and one housing summit to be conducted in spring and summer 2021.

The purpose of the workshops is to prepare Ontario First Nations leadership and technicians for upcoming national processes and to provide important information on a number of housing related issues, including financing models, economic development

opportunities, data collection and storage, and immediate housing needs identified by the Chiefs Committee on Housing and Infrastructure. The housing summit, scheduled for September 2021, will be an opportunity for Ontario First Nations to discuss how they wish to proceed with the transfer of care and control and what kind of resources, policies, and institutional frameworks will be necessary to do so.

To ensure the above processes are data-driven, COO has contracted the First Nations Information Governance Centre to provide a report on Ontario-specific housing and related infrastructure needs as per data collected in AFN's national survey.

In the Year Ahead – Moving Forward:

- Transfer Housing file to relevant sector
- Issue #10 of Advocate will be released in Summer 2021
- Improve document review process
- Assist with Resolution Retirement process
- Support new proposed Economic Development Sector
- Transitional support to political office after election
- Planning of the All Ontario Chiefs Conference 2021 and election of the Ontario Regional Chief

Chiefs of Ontario Host Historic Online Chiefs Meeting

Adapting to a New Normal

A historic day, for the first time ever, the Chiefs of Ontario hosted their Together Apart Chiefs Assembly in August 2020, entirely online with more than 200 attendees, including Chiefs, delegates, and technicians with participation from all regions in Ontario. Those in attendance discussed and provided insight on various topics, including infrastructure, economic development, Bill: 197, the Environmental Assessment Act, and the COVID-19 First Nations Emergency Response.

“During this meeting, we were able to truly listen to our Nations’ leadership in a new way,” said Ontario Regional Chief RoseAnne Archibald. “Our communities have been at the forefront of the COVID-19 emergency since it began and have gone to remarkable lengths to keep our communities and citizens safe.”

The meeting provided those in attendance with an opportunity to foster dialogue and work collectively to move forward on critical priorities and enhance intergovernmental collaboration. Leadership also agreed on the importance of all government levels to continue the COVID-19 support in ensuring First Nations emergency response needs are met.

COVID-19 has changed our world. While it has devastated economies globally, it has also provided the opportunity for First Nations leadership to make dramatic changes to keep communities safe and promote socio-economic recovery. Building on the success of the Online Chiefs Meeting,

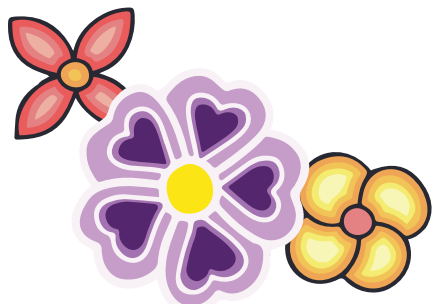
First Nations leadership welcomed the opportunity to resume meeting virtually as a way to continue efforts on high-level priorities for First Nations including COVID-19, policing and justice, climate change, and post-pandemic equitable recovery.

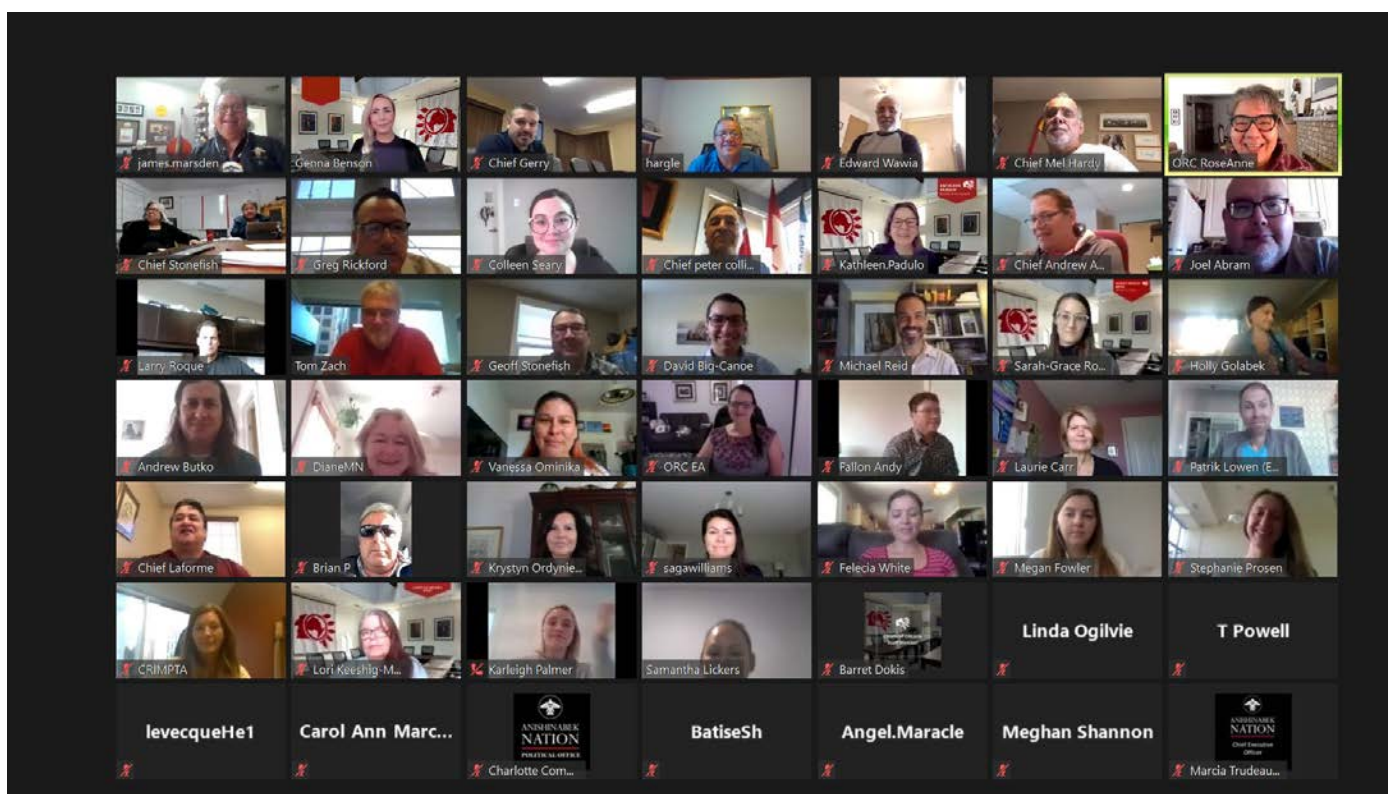
“I want to thank our partners, territorial and community leaders for their attendance and everything they’ve done to ensure this meeting was a success. In this moment of crisis, we have all come together as Nations in the fight against COVID-19,” said Regional Chief RoseAnne Archibald. “I especially wish to acknowledge the efforts of the Chiefs of Ontario staff, political office staff, Harold Tarbell, and Tap Resources in preparing and implementing this online assembly.”

Since the Online Chiefs Meeting, the Chiefs of Ontario has successfully hosted an array of virtual events, workshops and forums including the Chiefs of Ontario Special Chiefs Assembly and 15th Annual Health Forum.

The Chiefs of Ontario is looking forward to working with First Nations leadership to build relationships, create effective strategies, and foster dialogue alongside our partners, stakeholders, and levels of government to ensure First Nations priorities are addressed.

Learn more about upcoming events by visiting: <https://www.chiefsmeeting.com/> or by following the Chiefs of Ontario on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter @ChiefsOfOntario.





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Regional Chief

Joyce Hunter

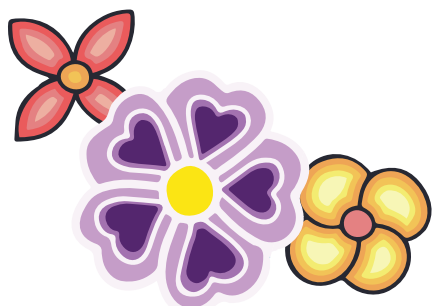
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