

First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority

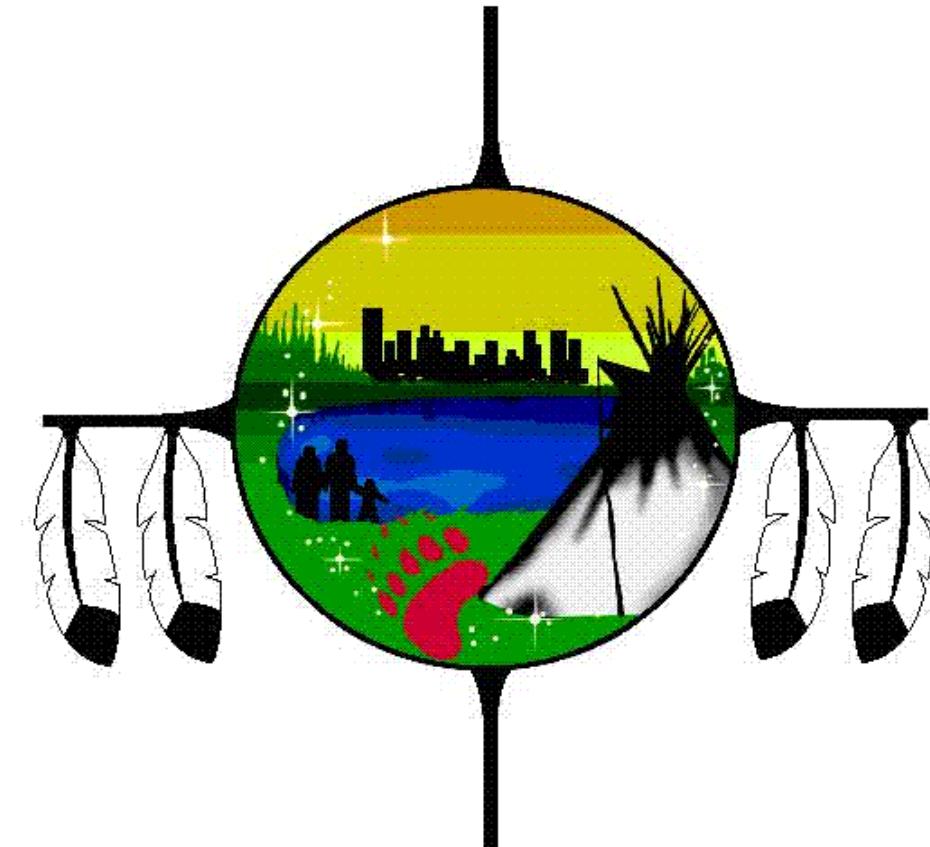
CONTACT INFORMATION

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7th Annual Report 2010 - 2011



ABOUT THE NORTHERN AUTHORITY

First Nation leaders negotiated with Canada and Manitoba to overcome delays in implementing the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry recommendations for First Nation jurisdiction and control of child welfare. As a result, the First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority (Northern Authority) was established through the Child and Family Services Authorities Act, proclaimed in November 2003.

Six agencies provide services to 27 First Nation communities and people in the surrounding areas in Northern Manitoba. They are: Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba, Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency, Island Lake First Nations Family Services, Kinosao Sipi Minosowin Agency, Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation FCWC and Opaskwayak Cree Nation Child and Family Services. There are two Designated Intake Agencies operated by Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency and Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation FCWC that support Intake and After Hour Services in Northern Manitoba.



Board of Directors

Island Lake First Nation Family Services
Joe Guy Wood—Chair

Opaskwayak Cree Nation Child and Family Services
Ron Fidler—Vice-Chair

Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba
Walter Wastesicoot—Secretary/Treasurer

Kinosao Sipi Minosowin Agency
Daisy Monias

Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation Family and Community Wellness Centre
Gail Gossfeld-McDonald

Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency
Vacant

Dr. Sydney Garrioch
Member

FIRST NATION AGENCIES OF NORTHERN MANITOBA



AWASIS AGENCY OF NORTHERN MANITOBA

Cross Lake, Barren Lands, Fox Lake, God's Lake Narrows, God's River, Northlands, Oxford House, Sayisi Dene, Shamattawa, Tataskweyak, War Lake & York Factory First Nations



CREE NATION CHILD AND FAMILY CARING AGENCY

Chemawawin, Misipawistik, Marcel Colomb, Mosakahiken Cree Nation, Mathias Colomb, Sapotaweyak & Wuskwi Sipihk First Nations



ISLAND LAKE FIRST NATIONS FAMILY SERVICES

Garden Hill, Red Sucker Lake, St. Theresa Point & Wasagamack First Nations



KINOSAO SIPI MINISOWIN AGENCY

Norway House Cree Nation



NISICHAWAYASIHK CREE NATION FCWC

Nelson House & O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation



OPASKWYAK CREE NATION CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES

Opaskwayak Cree Nation



SERVICE TO AGENCIES

Repatriation

The Repatriation program provides financial support to agencies for repatriation of adults who were adopted or fostered as children who wanted the opportunity to be reunited with their birth family. Often this is the first opportunity for these adults to meet their lost families and learn more about their First Nation community. Requests for funding through the Repatriation program were down this year with only one funding request.

Jordan's Principle/FASD Program

The Jordan's Principle position was introduced in July, 2010 to provide ongoing consultation and support to northern agency workers who have children in their care with medical issues or disabilities. The goal of the program is to build skills with workers so that these children can stay closer to their families and communities.

In the fall, the Jordan's Principle position was expanded to take on some of the roles of the FASD position. This allowed the position to provide a broader level of service to families.

Highlights of this position over the past year:

FASD

- Continuation of the Stepping Out on Saturday program in Thompson with up to 20 families attending the monthly program
- Development of provincial standards regarding children and families affected by FASD
- Involvement in provincial meetings with Authority FASD specialists

Children with Complex Medical Needs

- Seven consultations
- Ongoing support offered to agencies
- Development of training modules in a variety of childhood medical conditions to be offered in the fall, 2011

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors now serving the interests of the Northern Authority are in tune with the vision of the AJI-CWI and the right of First Nations children to develop within safe and healthy families and communities, and recognizes that First Nations have unique authority, rights and responsibilities to honour and care for their children. We support the development of a child and family services system that recognizes the distinct right of First Nations to control and deliver their own child and family services throughout the province; that is community-based; reflects and incorporates the cultures of First Nations.

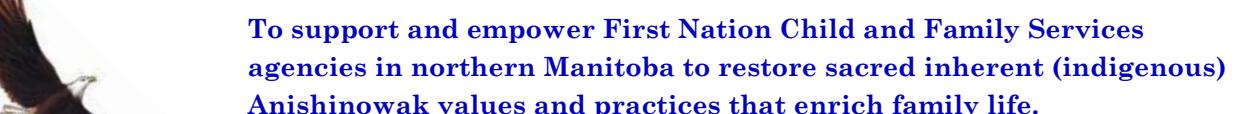
Significant changes have been made to stabilize the Northern Authority through governance instruments and policies that reflect the achievement of a shared vision to realize the implementation of the vision and mission of the AJI-CWI, through collaboration and partnership. This has included making sure lines of responsibility with the province of Manitoba, MKO, agencies, and communities are clarified and intended relationships are adhered to.

The board is in the process of completing a strategic plan in which the vision and mission statements are nearing final form and the next focus will be upon strategic objectives. While these important steps reflect progress, we acknowledge further work is needed to improve communications with First Nations to restore balance to the CFS system. Improved communications will facilitate moving towards full jurisdiction exercised by First Nation people in partnership.

We remind the readers of the wisdom of the Elders who quoted the treaty terms, “*for as long as the sun shines, the grass grows and the water flows*”. We recognize the sacredness of this phrase to reflect that the sun represents the Creator, the grass represents Mother Earth and the water represents our Children. The first thing that happens during child birth is water begins to flow, commonly referred to as a water break. Hence it is with reverence for the Creator, our father; the earth, our mother; and the water, our children, that we humbly submit this, our annual report.”

Joe Guy Wood
Chair

MISSION



VISION

The voice for our children a voice for our people. *under revision



THE STAFF OF THE NORTHERN AUTHORITY

(As of April 1, 2010—March 31, 2011)

Ron Monias, Chief Executive Officer

Shirlene Asham, Senior Policy Analyst
Pamela Friesen, Executive Assistant

Bethany Ettawacappo, A/Chief Financial Officer

Teddy Wojtowicz, A/Finance Comptroller
Bryan Hart, Special Projects Coordinator

Melissa Morrisseau, Human Resource Manager

Heather Mowatt, Office Administrator
Ruby Lathlin, Administrative Assistant
Delores Osborne, Education & Training Coordinator

Cybil Williams, Quality & Standards Manager

Della George, Intake Coordinator
Mary Werba, Quality Assurance Coordinator
Terri Sinclair, Quality Assurance Coordinator
Charity Martin, Case Management Specialist
Karen McKay, Administrative Assistant

Kathy Jones, Differential Response Manager

Steve Melville, Age of Majority Specialist
Joanne Crate, Resource Development Specialist
Lynn Pierre, Foster Care Specialist
Cindy Ramsay, Administrative Assistant
Margaret Cook, Foster Care Specialist
Wilma Sanderson, Jordan's Principle Specialist
Celina McLellan, Administrative Assistant

Shirley Allarie, Co-Executive Director (ILFNFS)

Eugene Peterson, Community Relations Manager

CONGRATULATIONS

The Nikan Awasisak Agency Board of Directors on their work to establish the Pimicikamak Cree Nation CFS mandate.

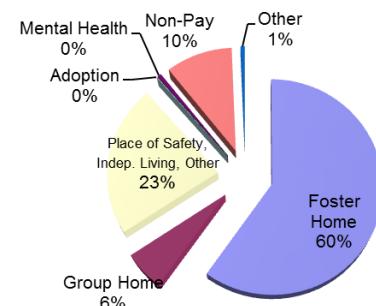
To the members of the Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba for their diligent work to restore their mandate, as evidenced by their recent board recruitment and selection process.

To Chief Harold Turner for his leadership on behalf of Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency communities, in working with the Northern Authority to restore the mandate of CNCFCA.

SERVICE TO AGENCIES

Placement Type

In general, the agencies within the Northern Authority try to maintain children in family foster home settings as these represent the best possible type of support for children and youth. In some cases, youth may need a higher level of support due to their high medical, behavioural or social needs. The breakdown of placement types within the Northern agencies is noted in the chart on the right.



Foster Home Complaints/Appeals

The alternative care (foster care) department continues to be involved in the development of resources for agency foster care departments. This includes responding to appeals from foster parents. These appeals range from complaints about non-payment of maintenance to appeals regarding the removal of foster children and/or closing of foster homes.

In the past year, the Northern Authority has responded to 27 appeals regarding nonpayment of foster care fees, with an additional 19 calls, expressing concerns about issues within the foster home. A vast majority of these calls were followed up to the satisfaction of the caller and agency. Further, the Northern Authority has heard appeals on the removal of foster children in six homes and two appeals on foster care licensing. All but two of these appeals were handled informally to the satisfaction of the agency and the foster parent.

Age of Majority Specialist

In 2006 the Office of the Children's Advocate published an "Aging Out Report", that expressed concerns regarding poor outcomes for youth turning 18 years of age without identified adult support.

One of the responsibilities of the Northern Authority, is to approve requests for extension of care and maintenance for youth wanting to stay in care past the age of majority. In the past, these extensions were only offered to youth that were finishing up high school or waiting for placements in an adult support program. All other youth were expected to leave care at 18 without identified adult support.

In 2010, the Northern Authority Age of Majority Specialist assisted agencies to develop stronger plans for youth aging out of care. This worker engaged with agencies to help them find resources for these children and ensuring that age of majority plans were filed for all children aged 16-18 years. It is hoped that this will result in better outcomes for these youth in the coming years.



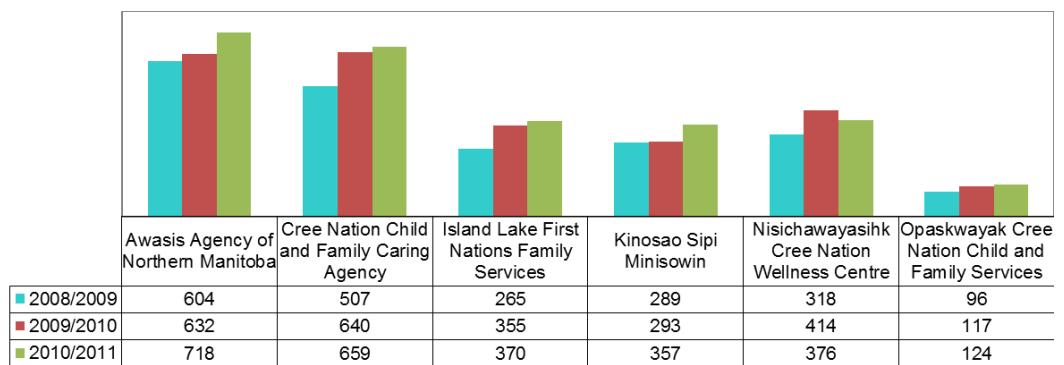


SERVICE TO AGENCIES

Alternative Care

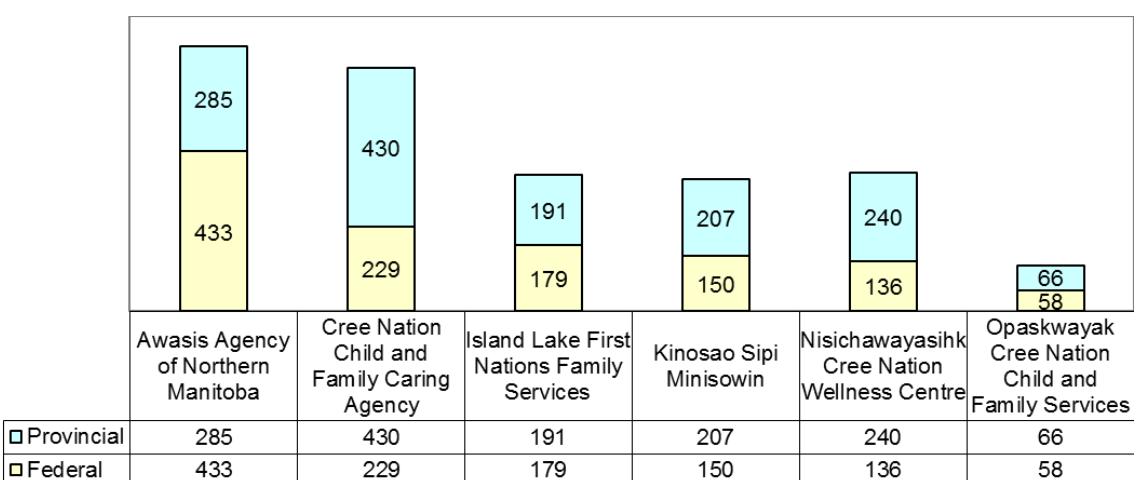
In total there are just over 2,600 children in care with Northern agencies as of March 31, 2011. With the exception of Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation Family Caring Wellness Centre, Northern Authority agencies have experienced a slight increase in children in care over the past year. This is a 25% increase over the past three years and is similar to other agencies in Manitoba.

Children in Care, 2008/2010



Federal / Provincial Children in Care

Funding responsibility continues to be split between federal and provincial with some agencies showing a higher number of children deemed federal responsibility and others a higher number of children deemed provincial responsibility with an overall trend of 48% federal children and 52% provincial children.



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

As we release the 2010/2011 Annual General Report it is important to reflect on the vision of the AJI report. This report recognized the importance of ensuring community control over child welfare services through services provided by our own people.

What is in the best interests of the child is a healthy community. Removing children, as was done in the past, cannot produce healthy communities. Solutions are needed that protect Aboriginal children, while sustaining the health of the communities. Aboriginal agencies believe it is not possible to "choose" between the best interests of the child and the best interests of the community; the one profoundly affects the other. (AJI Report, Chapter 14)

This vision underlines the tremendous changes that the child welfare system has undertaken over the past nine years with the proclamation of the Authorities Act and the complete re-organization of the child welfare system in Manitoba. As the AJI report reminds us, we all have a role in building healthy children, families and communities.

Over the past year the Northern Authority has worked towards refining and redefining the relationship between ourselves, MKO, the Province of Manitoba and Aboriginal leaders resulting in increased clarity for the Authority in its work. The Authority has also strengthened their relationship with cultural leaders through the development of an Elders Council for the ongoing development of culturally appropriate standards for Northern Agencies.

The Northern Authority has also worked towards building stronger relationships with its agencies by working with them to ensure that their agencies have the resources they need to undertake the important work that they do. This has included working with agencies to develop business plans that will eventually result in increased funding for prevention services and supporting agencies in advocating for the children in their care.

Building a strong system also includes evaluating our work on a regular basis. In the past year, the Northern Authority has completed a Quality Assurance review of AWASIS and began a review of Island Lake Child and Family Services. AWASIS is currently working on implementing the recommendations of the AWASIS report. While this is sometimes a difficult process for the agencies that are involved, the results of these reviews will strengthen the whole system and provide better overall care for Northern First Nation Families.

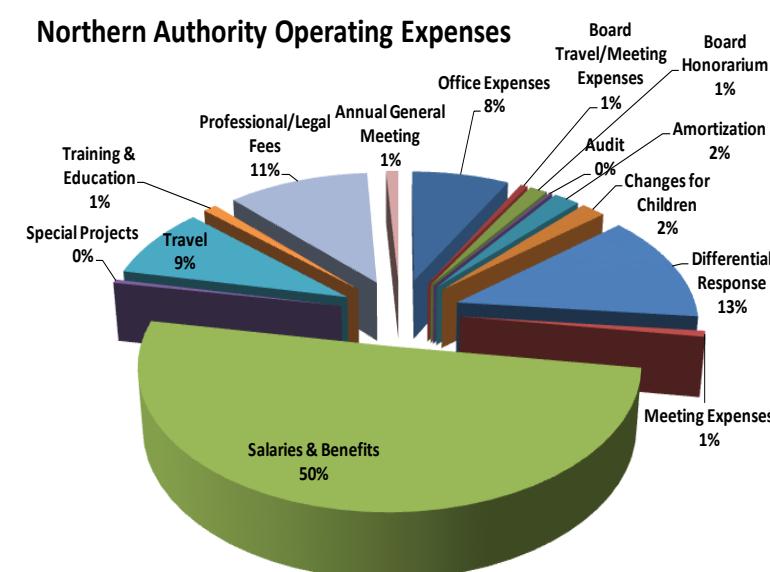
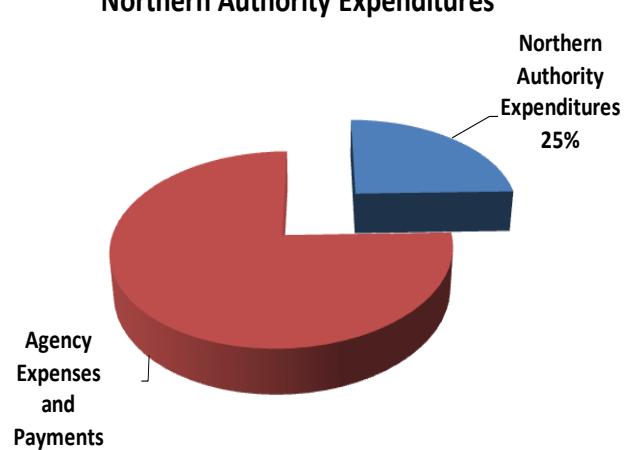
In closing I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the staff for their diligent work and board of the Northern Authority and Agency Directors for their continued support and leadership.

Ekosi,

Ron Monias, Chief Executive Officer



| <u>REVENUES</u> | <u>EXPENDITURES</u> |
|---|---|
| Province of MB \$ 15,101,596.00 | Office Expenses \$ 295,267.00 |
| Other \$ 250,836.00 | Board Travel/Meeting Expenses \$ 21,877.00 |
| Interest \$ 4,623.00 | Board Honorarium \$ 54,520.00 |
| Revenue Deferred from Prior Period \$ - | Audit \$ 9,878.00 |
| | Amortization \$ 78,379.00 |
| \$ 15,357,055.00 | Changes for Children \$ 74,280.00 |
| | Differential Response \$ 500,995.00 |
| Northern Authority Expenditures | Meeting Expenses \$ 27,394.00 |
| | Salaries & Benefits \$ 1,959,758.00 |
| | Special Projects \$ 16,575.00 |
| | Travel \$ 333,736.00 |
| | Training & Education \$ 41,022.00 |
| | Professional/Legal Fees \$ 429,054.00 |
| | Annual General Meeting \$ 37,543.00 |
| | Agency Expenses and Payments \$ 11,920,277.00 |
| | |
| | \$ 15,800,555.00 |



Differential Response

Differential Response is a new initiative offered through a federal/provincial partnership. Funding from this program will allow agencies to provide early intervention and support to families before their situation becomes so intense that child protection services are necessary.

Differential Response uses a casework model to determine eligibility for services. Families are streamed into the program through intake and are deemed eligible through the use of assessment tools that determine risks to children. Once eligibility is determined, families are assigned a DR worker who will work with families to reduce their dependence on the child welfare system.

The Northern Authority has recently completed Phase Two of the Differential Response Initiative. Phase Two included; launching and evaluating three demonstration projects (Lynn Lake, Leaf Rapids and Wechihitowin), the development and training in assessment tools including the SDM- Probability of Future Harm tool and a Risk and Family Strengths tool and determining the model for diverting intakes for ongoing services.

Phase Three will include the provision of DR services throughout the North and will begin once the business planning process is complete and enhanced/DR funding is available within the region.

Progress

- Ongoing support to the three demonstration projects (Lynn Lake, Leaf Rapids, Wechihitowin)
- Evaluation of the three demonstration projects
- Training in the SDM Probability tool in Thompson, the Pas, Island Lake and Winnipeg
- Consultation with agencies on Intake and Diversion models
- Research and consultation on appropriate Risk Assessment models for the North

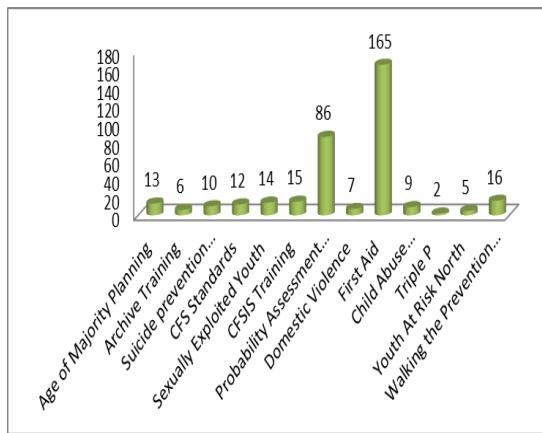


SERVICE TO AGENCIES

Along with Quality Assurance and Standards, the Northern Authority provides a number of support services to agencies serving Northern Manitoba. These include:

- Training agency workers
- Assisting agencies in the development of human resource policies
- Assisting agencies on Differential Response
- Coordinating placement resources with agencies

More recently, the Northern Authority has advocated for enhanced funding from the Federal and Provincial Governments in order to increase opportunities for the agencies to provide family enhancement and support services to families. Services offered through the Northern Authority are provided to agencies who in turn, provide front line services to families.



Education and Training

The Northern Training Centre (located in Thompson) opened in the fall of 2010. Since that time the Northern Authority has provided training to approximately 360 agency staff and foster parents. Training focuses for 2010/11 included First Aid/CPR and Probability Assessment training. Future plans include training in Suicide Prevention, Risk Assessments and CFSIS Training.

Human Resources

The Human Resources department provides consultation and support to agencies regarding issues related to hiring and retaining staff. This includes the development of the Northern Training program, workplace Health and Safety programs, workforce planning and workforce organization. A particular focus this year was supporting and developing a training strategy for the North. This will include core training in CFS standards as well as specialized training in issues such as suicide prevention and Risk assessments.

Progress

- Development of Thompson office and Northern Training Centre
- Development of a Northern Training Committee
- Ongoing negotiations with the Province regarding the development of a CFSIS training program in Thompson
- Support to agencies regarding necessary staffing levels for the Business Planning process
- Development of templates for Human Resource component of Quality Assurance reviews
- Introduction of enhancements to benefits package for Northern Authority staff

FINANCE

Finance ensures financial responsibility and accountability of the Northern Authority. Activities include: preparing and monitoring the annual budget, providing monthly financial statements, reconciling the general ledger, accounts payable and accounts receivable. This includes the responsibility of receiving and dispersing provincial operating dollars for the six agencies in Northern Manitoba. The unit also maintains an inventory control system for the organization. Lease management, the negotiation of funding agreements and the organization's information technology systems are also managed by the finance unit.

One of the major activities was regarding the new funding formula announced by the federal and provincial governments July 2010. This has been a time consuming process but will lead to enhanced funding for Northern First Nation agencies. As of the year end, four of six agencies have submitted business plans and are currently working through the joint approval process.

Progress

- Hired Business Plan Specialist to facilitate development of agency business plans leading to enhanced funding for Northern First Nation agencies
- Development of a Feasibility study, lease negotiations and equipment for the Northern Training Centre in Thompson
- Installation of new computers and servers for all offices



QUALITY & STANDARDS

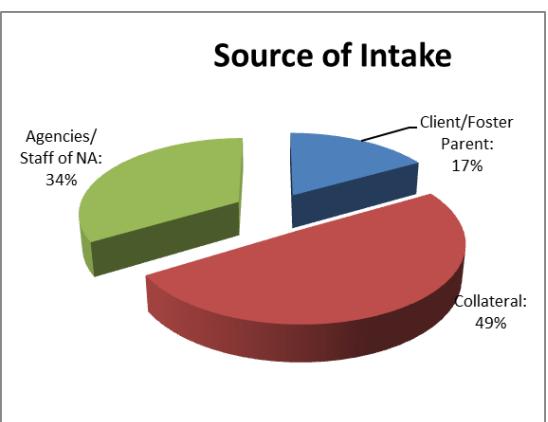
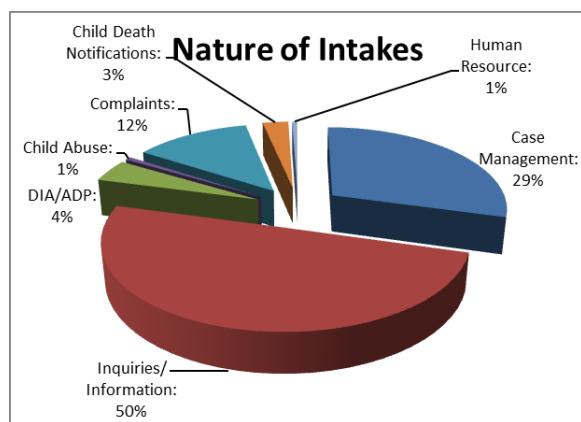
The Quality and Standards unit of the Northern Authority, in collaboration with staff across the agencies, works to ensure agencies comply with standards in accordance with subsection 4(2) of the Child and Family Services Act and under section 25 of the Child and Family Authorities Act. This compliance monitoring benefits First Nation children and families and is done on behalf of First Nation communities, families, children and the general public.

In practice, the Northern Authority takes a proactive approach to assist agencies in addressing concerns before critical issues arise. Quality Assurance reviews are not desk audits to find blame. For example: in Island Lake First Nation Child and Family Services, direct support was provided to the Executive Director to assist in addressing issues, rather than executing legislative authority for the reviews. Professional support on case management issues is provided regarding complaints or concerns from agencies, the government and the public. They also provide respectful responses to general inquiries and requests for information.

Intake

The intake function in the authority screens all service intakes, provides a response where possible, completes initial documentation, and forwards the file for further follow-up when required. Over the 2010/11 year the Intake department answered 1084 requests for information. About 50% of the calls were related to inquiries or asking for general information with case management concerns forming an additional 29% of the calls.

When looking at the source of intake: about half of the calls are from collateral agencies, 34% are from NA agencies and 17% of calls are from clients or foster parents.



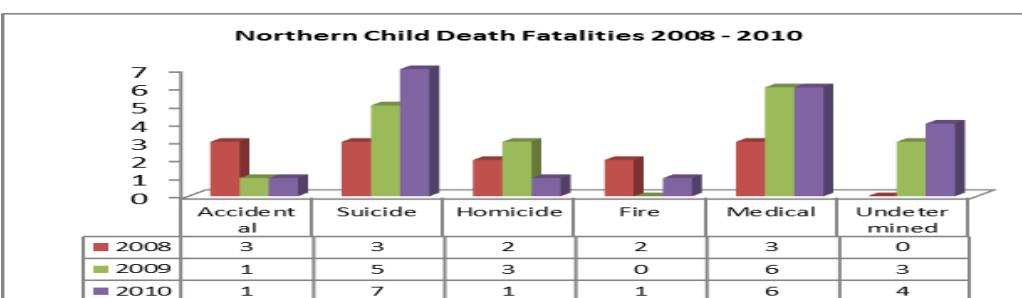
Quality Assurance Reviews

During the past year the Northern Authority reviewed issues with Island Lake CFS. As stated above, the Northern Authority took a proactive approach by providing direct support to the Executive Director of ILF NFS to collaboratively address issues. Awasis Agency and Cree Nation CFCA continue under administration. During the past year the Quality Assurance department has been working toward reinstating the mandate for each agency. In both situations the Authority worked in collaboration with the agency staff to ensure that issues related to the unique nature of working in northern First Nation Agencies were noted. The Northern Authority Board also met with community leaders to resolve issues while respecting the applicable legislation, spirit and intent of the AJI-CWI.

QUALITY & STANDARDS

Child Deaths

This year Northern Authority agencies experienced a slight rise in deaths of children, with a particular rise in suicides. In response to this concern, in September, 2011 the Northern Authority will be increasing its suicide prevention training including the launch of the *Mental Health First Aid* program in the North.



Pimicikamak Cree Nation

In the fall of 2010 the Board of Directors directed the Northern Authority to move towards mandating a CFS agency for Pimicikamak Cree Nation. This process requires the Authority to undertake a 'community capacity' review. This was undertaken in the winter and spring with a final report expected in the late spring.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

A strong working relationship between communities, agencies and the authority is needed so that the CFS system can provide programs and services needed by families and to work with family support systems in the communities. The Northern Authority meets with communities and agencies as much as possible to understand the community needs so the CFS system can be changed to meet the needs. The changes can be implemented through a standards working group that includes northern CFS agency representatives to get their input when proposed standards are being developed. This process is to ensure that standards being developed by Manitoba take into account the realities in northern Manitoba.

More interesting changes can be implemented through the development of culturally appropriate standards. Terms of Reference were approved by the Board of Directors for community input, elders input and legal input.

The Culturally Appropriate Standards process relies upon the agency and community to work together through the local child care committee. Proposed cultural standards would be reviewed by an elders council comprised of a representative from each linguistic group. To date elders have been suggested from each agency. The elders council will meet in September 2011. This process will also look at prior research completed by MKO and other organizations as well as suggestions for standards received directly from local child care committees and other community sources.

