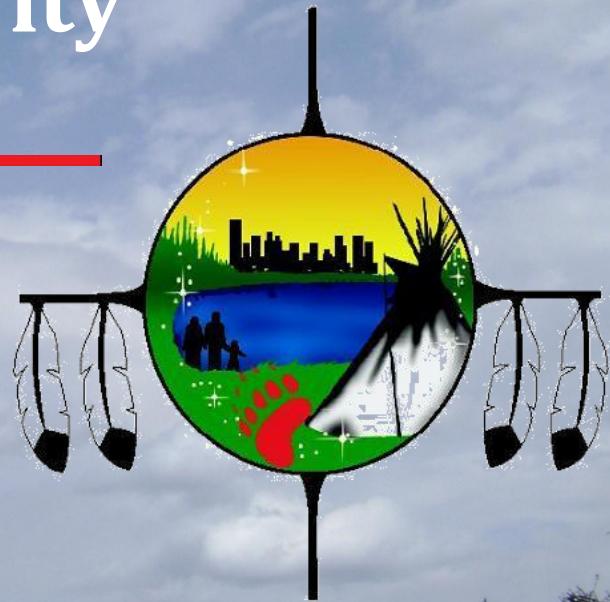
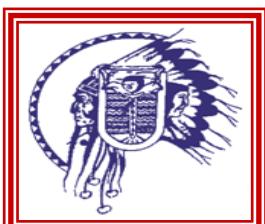


First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority

8th Annual Report 2011-2012



The First Nations Agencies of Northern Manitoba



Ms. Rose McKay, Executive Director
Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba
101-701 Thompson Drive
Thompson, Manitoba R8N 2A2



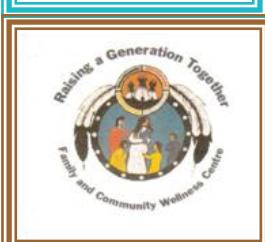
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P.O. Box 10130
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Mr. Alfred Wood, Executive Director
Ms. Shirley Allaire – Associate Executive Director
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Box 10550
Opaskwayak, Manitoba R0B 2J0



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Message from the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors for the First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority (“Northern Authority”) wish to acknowledge the Office of the Grand Chief, the Executive Council and the Child and Family Services Portfolio Chief of Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO) who have worked with us over the past year as we strived to strengthen the Northern Authority. We wish to also acknowledge the Minister of Family Services and Labor who has offered collaboration as we collectively address the challenges to the child and family services system in northern Manitoba.



While our collaborative efforts continue, we have completed a strategic plan which we believe is in line with the vision of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry-Child Welfare Initiative. We have identified eight strategic priorities:

1. Culturally Appropriate Standards;
2. Service Provision/Accreditation;
3. Quality Assurance;
4. Funding and Reporting;
5. Capacity Building;
6. Human Resources and Training;
7. Partnership and Relationship Building; and,
8. Differential Response.

These strategic priorities are in various stages of development and implementation and are summarized within this annual report.

The Minister’s offer of collaboration has resulted in the establishment of the Collaborative Working Group which has representation from the Northern Authority, the Department of Family Services and Labor, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada and others as appropriate given the issue/s for discussion. The Collaborative Working Group has served to improve communication, coordination and focus.

First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority

The Board of Directors recognizes that there is much work to be done. Enhanced system integrity and restored system confidence is a key challenge before all stakeholders. We must set aside our personal and professional interests and place the interests of the children and families we serve first and foremost. We will continue to offer partnership and collaboration as we forge a shared vision for the future. It is in our collective interests to view every challenge before us as yet another opportunity to enhance system integrity and restore system confidence.

Acting Chairperson

Ron Fidler

List of Board of Directors



Opaskwayak Cree Nation Child and Family Services

Ron Fidler

Vice Chair-A/Board Chair

Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba

Walter Wastesicoot

Treasurer

Island Lake First Nations Family Services

Joe Guy Wood

Chairman

Kinosao Sipi Minosowin Agency

Daisy Monias

Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation Family and Community

Wellness Centre

Gail Gossfeld-McDonald

Dr. Sydney Garrioch

MKO Designate

Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency

Currently Vacant

Nikan Awasisak Agency Inc.

Currently Vacant

Message from the Chief Executive Officer

The challenges of the previous year have provided opportunities for partnership and collaboration with First Nation leadership, agencies, and the government departments such as the provincial Department of Family Services and Labour and the federal Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada.



The First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority (“Northern Authority”) has worked with the Office of the Grand Chief, the Executive Council, and the Portfolio for Child and Family Services, Chief Primrose, of Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO), in efforts to strengthen the relationship between the Northern Authority and MKO, which appoints the directors to the board of the Northern Authority. The Northern Authority has worked to ensure that the agencies under its mandate are afforded the respect and support as entrusted to the Northern Authority, on their behalf. It is necessary and desirable that the relationship between the agencies and the Northern Authority mirror the relationship we develop and maintain with the leadership of MKO.

The new mandate of Nikan Awasisak Agency, the restoration of the mandate to Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba and the impending restoration of Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency, demonstrate the Northern Authority’s commitment to an improved relationship within an environment of shared vision, partnership and collaboration. The management and staff of these agencies deserve to be commended for their resolve to persevere, given the many obstacles they have endured and continue to endure as we all move forward.

The Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Summit was a collaborative effort between MKO, the Northern Authority and the agencies. This event was an opportunity to come together to review child and family services and address some serious issues within the current system with a view to affect system change for the betterment of our communities, families and children. It is imperative that these types of forums continue to be made available to us as we forge a shared vision in the spirit of partnership and collaboration.

First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority

The Northern Authority is now engaged in a Collaborative Working Group with the Department of Family Services and Labour and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada. Instead of taking an adversarial approach to the issues that confronted the Northern Authority and the Agencies, we chose to engage them. Through this effort, funding flowed that was held in abeyance pending compliance with the Child and Family Services Information System and the remittance of Child Special Allowances to Manitoba. We will continue to advocate for system confidence through this forum.

Finally, it is in our collective interests we place the interests of the children, families and communities first as echoed in the board chair's message. This is further affirmed in the Northern Authority's Strategic Plan which will be further expanded upon in the following Manager's reports.

Ekosi,

Ron Monias,
Chief Executive Officer

Financial Report

Background

The role of the finance unit is to ensure that accountability processes are in place and fiduciary obligations are met. This role includes such activities as preparing and monitoring the annual budget, preparing monthly and annual financial statements and reports, and ensuring that the general ledger and accounts payable and accounts receivable ledgers are accurate and complete.

The finance unit also oversees its building leases, information technology systems and initiatives, as well as financing activities. Continuing activities are undertaken to determine how and when to further enhance the Northern Authority's presence in northern Manitoba. Funding agreements are negotiated and managed by the Northern Authority with the province through the Department of Family Services and Labour.

The development of Service Purchase Agreements (SPAs) with the agencies is also a major responsibility. These agreements serve to further clarify the funding and reporting requirements and establish clear processes for accountability throughout the CFS system.

The finance unit consists of the Chief Financial Officer, Financial Comptroller and Finance Officer, all of whom are based in the Winnipeg office.

David Thompson (Chief Financial Officer) is a member of the Executive Management Team and has responsibility for the overall financial management of the organization including all aspects related to financial planning, analysis and control. David also provides ongoing expertise, leadership and support in finance-related issues to the seven agencies.

Bethany Ettawacappo (Financial Comptroller) administers payroll and manages the day-to-day accounting operations of the organization which includes regular monitoring and reporting on overall financial performance.

Teddy Wojtowicz (Finance Clerk) performs basic accounting functions for the Northern Authority. Responsibilities include verifying financial records, recording transactions into the organization's computerized accounting system, administering accounts payables, and assisting in the coordination of internal IT systems.

Program Update

Over this past year, significant effort has gone into participation with the province and AANDC with respect to the development and implementation of a new funding model. This model will result in resource allocations that are more in line with actual service needs for First Nations people in the north. The finance unit collaborated with agencies throughout the business plan development process as well as in the business plan review process (in the context of the new funding model and its associated template).

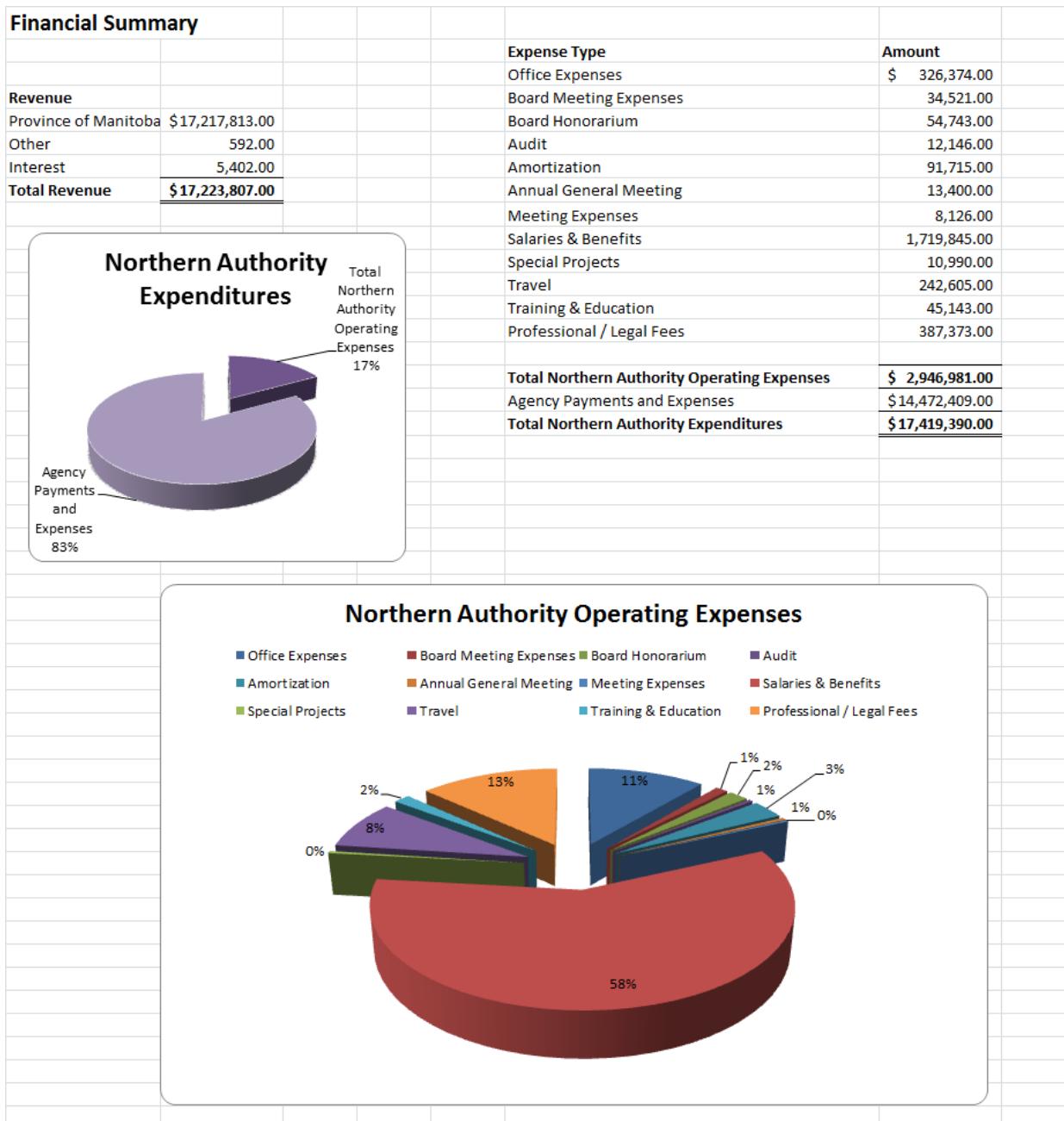
Further to the funding model, the finance unit serves as a resource to the other Northern Authority units and to each of its seven mandated agencies. During the latter part of the year, the finance unit commenced regular meetings with the agencies' finance directors. As well, the finance unit is currently in the process developing new financial policies and procedures. Throughout the year, members of the finance unit has served on numerous committees and working groups within the CFS system.

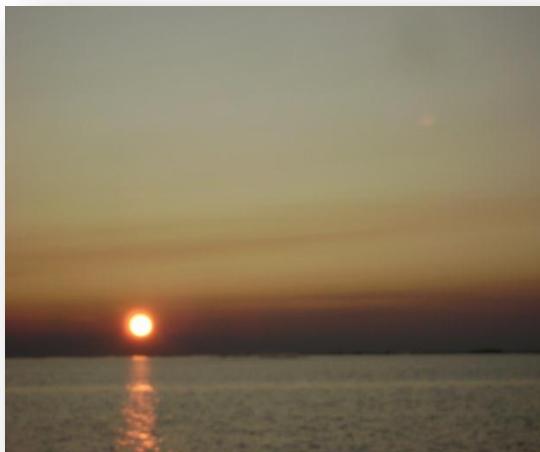
The finance unit looks forward to continuing to serve all seven agencies by providing technical support, transferring "best practices" and advocating for agencies on funding-related issues.

Summary

The tables and graphs on the following page provide a financial summary of the fiscal year's results.

First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority





Mission

**Supporting and
empowering First Nation
child and family services
agencies in northern
Manitoba to enhance
and enrich family life.**

Vision



**First Nation Elders, parents
and extended family
members in northern
Manitoba are restoring
their traditional and
inherent roles and
honouring their sacred
responsibilities to all
children.**

Strategic Plan

The mission statement, vision statement and strategic priorities were developed during the period December 2011 to April 2012. The Board of Directors initiated the process by revising the mission statement and vision statement. This was done in a two day workshop in early January of 2012. In a follow-up session, the Board refined their ideas and identified a number of priority areas with the development of “appropriate cultural standards” being the number one priority.

The development of project plans evolved over a number of management meetings and resulted in the development of separate objectives for each of the eight priority areas. These objectives were then reviewed and approved by the Northern Authority Board of Directors and the Chief Executive Officer.

On April 10, 2012 the strategic plan was presented to all staff of the Northern Authority. Monthly progress meetings will be held where team members report on progress regarding each of the priority area projects.

Priority Area 1: Cultural Standards

Objective 1:

To restore culturally appropriate standards reflecting values of Dene, Oji-Cree and Cree

Objective 2:

To review the work of agency executive directors in identifying provincial standards that need to be made culturally appropriate (authority specific)

Objective 3:

To identify community cultural practices & traditions already in place and formalize or structure them (i.e. develop culturally appropriate practices from the community up)

Priority Area 2: Service Provision

Objective 1:

Develop a relationship with an outside accreditation agency

Priority Area 3: Quality and Assurance

Objective 1:

Ensure implementation and compliance with culturally appropriate standards

Objective 2:

To ensure services are provided that are responsive to the needs of children and in the appropriate language

Objective 3:

To record best practices being implemented in the agencies and share with the agency network

Priority Area 4: Funding and Reporting

Objective 1:

Determine priorities, funding allocations, reporting systems, among agencies

Objective 2:

- (a) To assure capital infrastructure is appropriate for the services provided and that the needs are reflected in agency business plans and
- (b) To resolve the issue of foster care maintenance payments (discrepancy between north and south)

Priority Area 5: Capacity Building

Objective 1:

To conduct an operational review to review core responsibilities of the Authority and re-align job descriptions

First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority

Objective 2:

Develop a system to respond to issues related to inquiries and inquests

Objective 3:

To improve communication among all stakeholders in the agency network

Objective 4:

Consolidate CFS research and identify next steps

Objective 5: Ensure the development of appropriate placement resources and supports

Objective 6:

Assure that children are placed in homes that are respectful of cultural needs

Objective 7:

To improve communication within the Authority

Objective 8:

Identify and track key performance indicators: some examples include: # of 30 day visits, # of kids in care, # of authority specific standards, # of licensed foster care homes

Objective 9:

Develop information management system

Priority Area 6: Human Resources and Training

Objective 1:

To deliver training to Northern Authority and agencies

Objective 2:

To develop plans to train specialist workers or core training (i.e. non-CFS training in finance, management etc.)

Workplace Health and Safety

Objective 1:

To promote safety, security, well-being of children, families and communities

Objective 2:

To promote safety, security, well-being of staff

Priority Area 7: Partnering and Relationship Building

Objective 1:

- (a) To involve MKO, Manitoba and Canada in the development of priorities and objectives for the Northern Authority; and
- (b) Inform and advise the Minister regarding Aboriginal child care issues in northern Manitoba and pro-actively build relationships with MKO and Grand Chief

Objective 2:

To improve relationships between the Authority, the Authority and the agencies and between the agencies

Priority Area 8: Differential Response (DR)

Objective 1:

To stabilize the number of children coming into care

Objective 2:

To provide DR services and develop an action plan for training and implementation of the services

Northern Authority Staff

Executive Staff

Ron Monias, Chief Executive Officer
Cybil Williams, Associate Chief Executive Officer
Cindy Ramsay, Executive Assistant

Policy Analyst

Shirley Allarie, Standards Advisor (Secondment to Island Lake First Nation Family Services)

Finance

David Thompson, Chief Financial Officer
Bethany Ettawacappo, Financial Comptroller
Teddy Wojtowicz, Finance Clerk

Community Relations

Eugene Peterson, Community Relations Manager

Human Resources

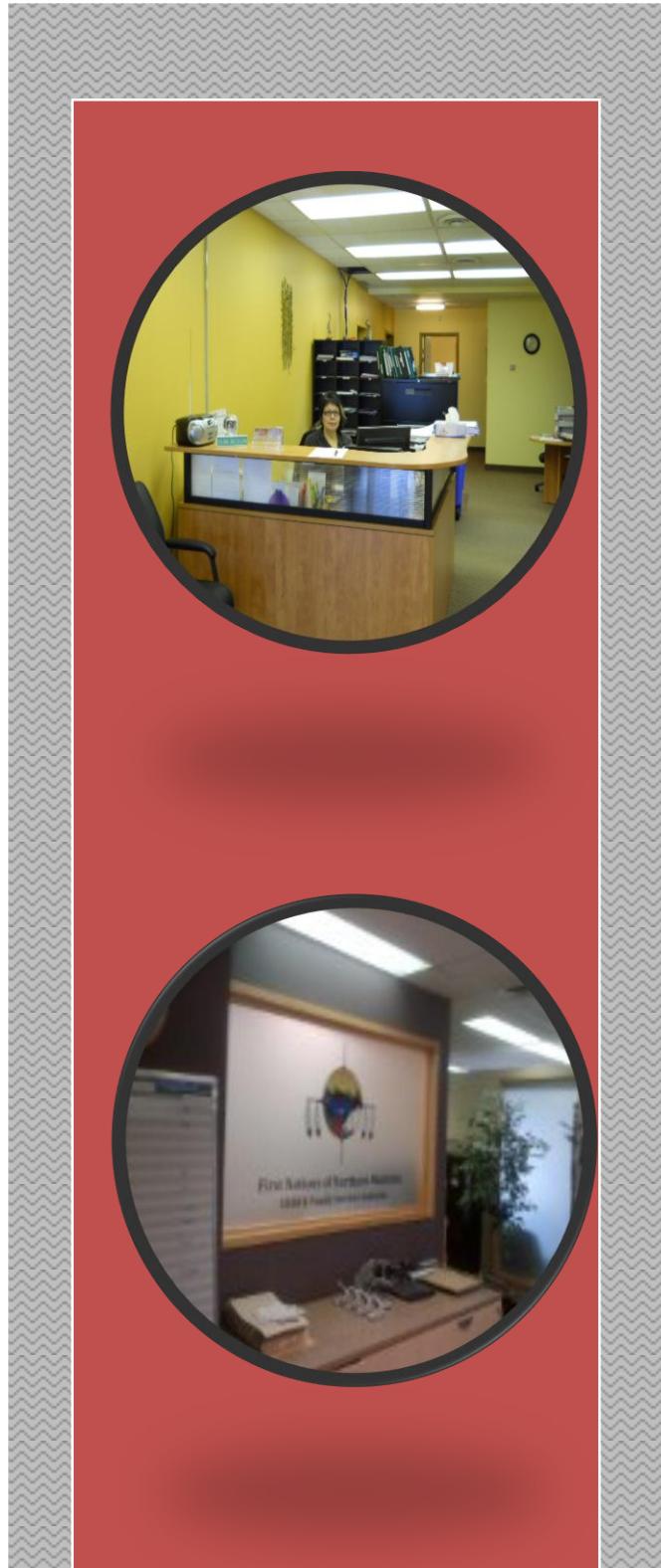
Melissa Morrisseau, Human Resources Manager
Heather Mowatt, Office Administrator
Amanda Hamelin, Administrative Assistant
Edith McKay, Education & Training Coordinator

Quality Assurance and Standards

Shirlene Asham, Quality and Standards Manager
Della George, Intake Coordinator
Terri Sinclair, Quality Assurance Coordinator
Alfred Muswagon, Quality Assurance Coordinator
Charity Martin, Case Management Specialist
Karen McKay, Administrative Assistant

Differential Response

Kathy Jones, Differential Response Manager
Lynn Pierre, Foster Care Recruitment Coordinator
Celina McLellan, Administrative Assistant
Joanne Crate, Resource Development Worker
Margaret Cook, Resource Development Worker
Wilma Sanderson, Jordan's Principle Specialist



Major Highlights of 2011-2012

- Pimicikamak Cree Nation (PCN) successfully achieved its goal of having its own independent CFS agency when Nikan Awasisak Agency Inc. officially received its mandate on October 1st, 2011. PCN had long sought this mandate to provide their own child protection care for their community members.
- In keeping with the renewed commitment to partnerships, the Northern Authority and provincial Child Protection Branch established a Collaborative Working Group (CWG) in which to renew partnerships. The establishment of the CWG was a product of discussions which included the Northern Authority CEO and Board members as well as provincial Minister Jennifer Howard. The goal of the CWG is to negotiate a respectful, reciprocal and meaningful partnership among key stakeholders within the CFS system.
- In November of 2011, the administrative order for Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba was removed by the Northern Authority. The Northern Authority, working in partnership with a special Keewatin Tribal Council (KTC) Chief's Subcommittee, established a new Board of Directors for the agency. The new agency Board has since hired a new executive director.
- Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency (CNCFCA) continued to make strides towards the restoration of its Board of Director. The target date for completion is September 2012.

Human Resources

Background

The Human Resources unit was established as a separate program within the Northern Authority in August of 2009. Prior to this the Northern Authority had maintained a designated human resource position to support the HR activities of the Northern Authority. As the Northern Authority grew in staff compliment and program responsibility a greater need was identified and the Board of Directors committed to establishing the department. The unit is responsible for all HR-related activities, office administration as well as the Northern Training Initiative (an initiative intended to support both the Northern Authority and the seven agencies).

Human Resources Department

Melissa Morrisseau (Human Resources Manager) is a member of the executive management team, Northern Joint Training Committee as well as a number of external HR groups to support the on-going development of the HR unit. Melissa oversees and manages all functions relating to HR activities within the Northern Authority including the areas of recruitment, labour relations, human resource planning, training and development, performance management, employee counselling, HR policies and procedures. Melissa has developed and works to implement the quality assurance framework on HR policies and practices within the seven agencies mandated under the Northern Authority. Melissa also provides ongoing expertise, leadership and mentorship in HR-related issues to the seven agencies upon their request.

Edith McKay (Education and Training Coordinator) is the Chair of the Northern Joint Training Committee and member of the Joint Training Unit (JTU). Edith is a liaison who works in collaboration with the Northern Authority, agencies and collaterals, to identify each individual authority and agency education and training needs, and evaluates child and family services education and training opportunities for staff and foster parents in order to develop a professional, qualified, culturally competent workforce.

First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority

Heather Mowatt (Office Administrator) is the Chair of the Workplace Safety and Health Committee and Administrative Assistance Working Group within the Northern Authority. She is responsible for ensuring the overall administrative operations within the Northern Authority.

Amanda Hamelin (Receptionist) is a member of the Workplace Safety and Health Committee and is the first point of contact for the Northern Authority. Amanda is responsible for a broad range of reception, general office duties and administrative support activities for Northern Authority management and staff.

Program Update/Highlights

The Human Resources unit reviewed, revised and implemented the HR Policy and Procedures Manual in accordance to the legislative requirements under the Employment Standards Code.

A key initiative was to establish a Workplace Safety & Health Committee and provide training to all Northern Authority employees. As well a mandatory annual performance appraisals process was implemented for all employees within the Northern Authority in order to ensure employees have a clear understanding of the expectations of their roles and responsibilities. The Northern Authority also introduced an online leave scheduler system in order to track and maintain each employee's attendance records. The HR unit has provided on-going HR support to the agencies and is in the final stages of a HR review of the Island Lake First Nations Family Services (ILFNFS) agency.

Northern Joint Training Centre

The Training Centre continues to grow since its grand opening in August 2010. In November 2011, Edith McKay was hired as the Northern Authority's new Education and Training Coordinator. As the Education and Training Coordinator she had taken over as the Chair of the Northern Joint Training Committee. This committee continues to meet on a quarterly basis in order to discuss training needs and opportunities for the seven agencies. Edith is also a member of the Joint Training Team (JTT) that is comprised of representatives from all four authorities and the provincial Department of Family Services and Consumer Affairs. As the Northern

First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority

Authority representative, Edith attends these monthly meetings to ensure the Northern Authority has a voice in JTT training initiatives.

Edith continues to develop partnerships with various collaterals to address northern CFS training needs. For instance, in February 28, 2012, the OCA – Bonnie Kocsis, from the Office of the Children’s Advocate (OCA), did a presentation with the NJTC regarding the roles and responsibilities of her office. In March 2012 a draft manual of the Northern Authority’s Northern Joint Training Strategy was finalized in consultation with the NJTC. The strategy manual will require further consultation with the agency executive directors prior to receiving final approval from the Northern Authority.

The training centre also distributes a quarterly training calendar to inform agencies of upcoming training opportunities coordinated by the Northern Authority.



In 2011-2012, the Northern Authority provided training to approximately 326 agency staff and foster parents. Key training areas included Core Differential Response, First Aid/CPR, Mental Health First Aid and the “Triple P” parenting program.

New Office Location

On Monday, January 23, 2012 the Northern Authority relocated its Winnipeg sub-office from 206-819 Sargent Avenue to the 2nd floor on 383 Provencher Blvd. The Northern Authority continues to grow and this move helped to address office space requirements.

Goals

Priority areas identified for the HR unit are to continue to deliver training in the north, finalize the Northern Joint Training Strategy, develop specialist training (i.e. in finance and management) and provide support to agencies in order to address workplace health and safety issues.

Quality Assurance and Standards

Background

The Quality Assurance and Standards department oversees the Northern Authority's core program areas such as intake, case management, quality assurance, data entry and other special projects. Other functions include but are not limited to ADP Resolution, Request for Change in Authority, Child Death Protocol and Section 10 recommendations.

The department provides expert support to agencies regarding issues related to case management. The department gathers, monitors, analyzes and reports on data and trends related to children in care, including up to date information on numbers, locations, movement, serious injury and death, etc. The department also provides support to agencies regarding the interpretation of regulations and standards and in problem-solving difficult situations. Other specific responsibilities include:

- Providing approval for special needs funding
- Providing approval for Inter-provincial transfers (while there is a national protocol, there is nothing specific to the province or Northern Authority)
- Processing one time funding requests and Level 5 funding requests to the Province
- Providing expertise and support to the Differential Response Department
- Receiving and processing complaints arising from the Office of the Children's Advocate
- Receiving and processing Child Death Reviews and Notifications, Notices of Live Births, Notices of Maternity and Annual Child Reviews
- Providing a mechanism for assigning, tracking and monitoring communication with the Northern Authority
- Representing the Northern Authority on the Authority Determination Protocol Committee and the Change Management Implementation Committee

First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority

The Quality Assurance and Standards department includes the Quality and Standards Manager, an Intake Coordinator, Case Management Specialist, two Quality Assurance Coordinators and an Administrative Assistant.

Shirlene Asham (Quality and Standards Manager) is responsible for a broad range of activities which range from the supervision of staff to the development of programs and standards. There is considerable emphasis placed on monitoring and evaluating agency compliance to provincial standards; as to ensure that best practice and effective quality of services are employed.

Linda Dettanikkeaze-Patterson (Intake Coordinator) is responsible for gathering information from clients, agencies and other collaterals when they first call the Northern Authority. Linda records the request gathered from the caller and forwards this intake to the appropriate authority staff that is responsible for ensuring that the caller's request or concern is followed up. Linda keeps a running log of all intakes that come into the Northern Authority. Linda is also responsible for the assignment of all Authority Determination Protocol (ADP) transfers. When a new child welfare file is opened at ANCR (the agency responsible for opening all new cases for CFS in Winnipeg) ANCR sends the file information to the Northern Authority and the Northern Authority assigns the file to one of the seven agencies to provide longer term services. Files are transferred based on the most culturally appropriate agency or the agency that has service in the area the client is residing. It is the client who chooses which authority they want to provide them ongoing services.

Della George (Case Management Specialist) is responsible for responding to all issues that are raised by clients, agencies or other collaterals that relates to a child's well-being or service delivery concerns. This includes:

- Responding to calls and correspondence from agency staff in a timely manner
- Assisting agencies in case planning, resolving conflicts, and networks with appropriate resources
- Providing consultation and/or expert advice on case management issues
- Providing advice to agencies on procedures/legislation

Della is also responsible for processing special needs request for levels I-IV. An assessment and investigation of special needs requests involve the following:

- Assessing and managing cases with children in care and their special needs requests
- Assessing the request to cover the cost for items for the care of a child over the rate
- Assessing the increase in need as the child gets older
- Determining access to medical needs and the validity of a request
- Developing a response to special needs request and obtaining CEO review before sending

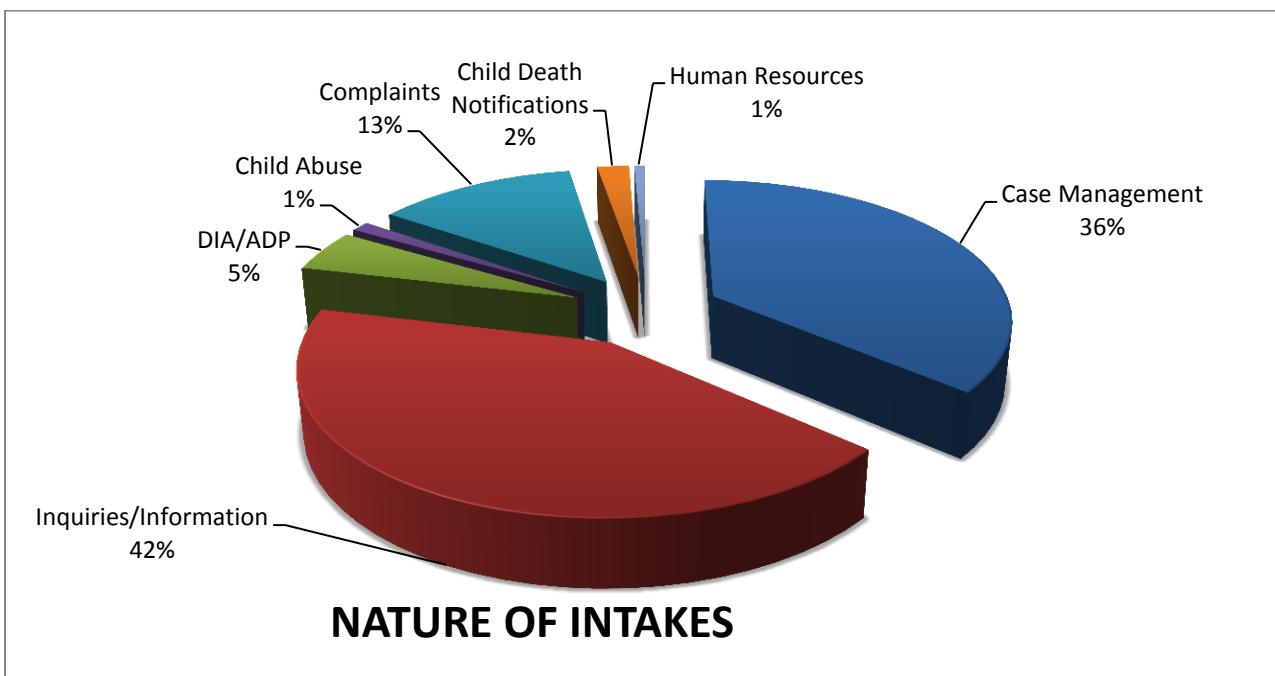
Terri Sinclair and Alfred Muswagon (Quality Assurance Coordinators) are responsible for ensuring quality assurance activities take place within all seven agencies. Terri and Alfred develop the overall parameters for the quality assurance program, including policy considerations, program design, resource requirements, implementation plans, communication strategies as well as a monitoring function. They consult with the senior management within agencies as well as with other stakeholders and facilitates collaboration, partnerships and commitment in the development and delivery of quality assurance programming. This position also develops a framework that is based on the continual defining, measuring and improving of the quality of services. This framework focuses on service coordination, quality outcomes for children and families, effective and efficient systems and processes, relevant indicators and collaborative teamwork with agencies.



Karen McKay (Administrative Assistant) is responsible for a broad range of reception, general office duties and administrative support activities for Quality and Standards management/staff.

Intake Summary

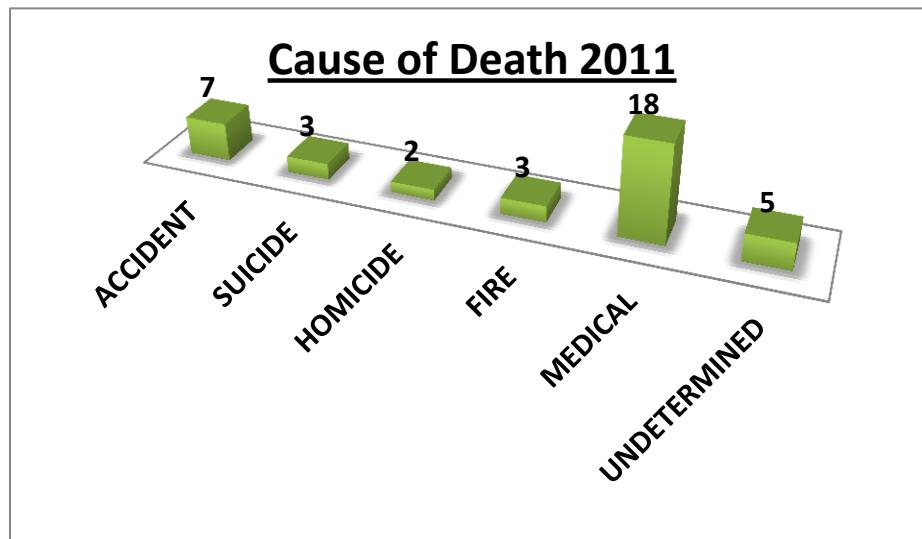
The majority of intake queries were in the area of inquiries and information, as well as case specific consultation on case management issues. The number of intakes has risen steadily as the general public is becoming increasingly aware of the roles and responsibilities of the Northern Authority. During this time, case consultation with community members as well as member agency staff has also increased.



Child Death Reviews

On September 15, 2008 *The Child and Family Services Act* was amended making the Children's Advocate responsible for conducting a review of services after the death of a child who was, or had been, receiving services through the child welfare system. This review is known as a "Special Investigation Review".

The following chart outlines the cause of death for children in the Northern Region.



Child deaths are always a tragic occurrence. Of particular concern is the amount of deaths which occur from medical issues. Another concern is the suicide rate for children in northern regions. Suicide prevention initiatives are required for youth/children who reside in First Nation communities. First Nations communities may not have access to programs and or services as outlined in the provincial youth suicide prevention initiative “Reclaiming Hope”. The Northern Authority is working with external collaterals at the provincial, federal and community levels to address the issues of child deaths related to medical and suicide.

Differential Response and Alternative Care

Background

Differential Response was a key recommendation from the various external system reviews in 2006. The Changes for Children initiative was charged with responding to the recommendation and implementing the paradigm shifting model. Differential Response is a paradigm shift in which families are assessed at the point of intake. The families then are offered services in accordance with the presenting situation of the particular family and their assessed needs. Families which may require little or no long term intervention may be offered community services. Families presenting with longer term or more serious issues are provided services by the agency.

Northern First Nation agencies have long practiced the principles of Differential Response. The key difference with this initiative is the funding component which supports the initiative.

The 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 Wechitowin), 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 was to include the provision of DR services throughout the North and was to begin once the Business Planning process is complete and enhanced/DR funding is available within the region. Agencies in Northern Region received the funding for DR/Enhanced funding in early 2012. To date, not all of the Northern agencies have received the funding for year one of the 5 year funding cycle.

Despite this setback, agencies have continued to train staff in usage of the SDM tool, as well as in case management processes associated with the Differential Response Model.

The Differential Response Unit has historically been responsible for developing child welfare and family support resources for children and families served by the Northern Authority. This includes the development of capacity building supports for northern families, such as the Differential Response Program. The unit also handles foster care complaints and appeals and collects statistics on patterns and trends in the foster care system.



Alternative Care

As of March 31, 2012, there were just over 2,667 children in care with the seven northern agencies (there were 2,451 children in care as of March 31, 2010). This increase is a general trend throughout the child welfare system in Manitoba and can be associated with a number of variables. See the table on the following page for children in care statistics per each of the seven agencies.

First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority

FIRST NATION NORTH AUTHORITY 2011-2012			
Children in Care as of March 31, 2012	Provincial	Federal	TOTAL
Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba	236	401	637
Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency	384	193	577
Island Lake First Nations Family Services	286	161	447
Kinosao Sipi Minisowin Agency	210	159	369
Nikan Awasisak Agency Inc.	55	79	134
Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation Family & Community Wellness Centre	222	170	392
Opaskwayak Cree Nation Child & Family Services	59	52	111
TOTAL	1452	1215	2667

Placement Type

In general, agencies 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 supports due to their high medical, behavioural or social needs.

Foster Home Complaints/Appeals

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

Northern Authority staff is in the process of planning an intra agency foster care summit. Planning committee consists of Authority and agency staff. The targeted date is for September 2012.

Repatriation

The repatriation program provides financial support to agencies so they can assist adults who were adopted or fostered as children and want 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.

Dr. Kathy Jones (Differential Resource Manager) is responsible for leading the differential response unit and resource team. The unit is responsible for defining and implementing the differential response model in a northern First Nations context in order to strengthen the focus on building family capacity and keeping children in the home.

The resource team works cooperatively to assist the agencies in developing placements of all kinds including foster care, places of safety, emergency placements, high risk children's placements, child specific placements, and in developing their support worker programs. Assistance is provided to agencies through the monthly Northern Alternative Care Network Committee meetings as well as other frequent communications. The differential response unit also assists by gathering system information, identifying patterns and making recommendations. An addition resource that was implemented was to ensure effective transitions plans are in place for youth transitioning out of the system.

Lynn Pierre (Foster Care Specialist) is responsible to review and respond to appeals from foster parents. The appeals range from complaints about non-payment of maintenance to appeals regarding the removal of foster children and/or closing of foster homes. Foster care also sits on several committees' in collaboration with the other Authorities.

Joanne Crate (Resource Development Worker) is responsible for working to implement the provincial initiatives to reduce hotel usage by children in care. In collaboration with the Northern Authority's resource team, she contributes to the development of placement resources and culturally appropriate programs for northern First Nation children in care.

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Current major initiatives include being part of a committee on the establishment of the Youth Crisis Stabilization Unit and assists in the development of a young parent's program for the north.

Margaret Cook (Resource Development Worker) worked as part of the Northern Authority's resource team out of The Pas office. Margaret worked with our northern agencies to develop placement resources and culturally appropriate programs for Northern First Nation children in care.

Celina McLellan (Receptionist) is first point of contact for the Northern Authority in the Thompson office and is responsible for a broad range of reception, general office duties and administrative support activities for Northern Authority management and staff.

Wilma Sanderson (Jordan's Principal Specialist) was responsible for providing leadership in the development of a practice model following the Jordon's Principle statement. This included working with agencies to ensure that children and youth with complex medical needs (in and out of care) have the opportunity to live in their community if desired. This position works in collaboration with community collaterals and governments to ensure the seamless delivery of services to affected families.

Community Relations

The Community Relations unit is focused on building strong working relationships between northern Manitoba First Nations, agencies and the Northern Authority.

Eugene Peterson (Community Relations Manager) is responsible for promoting and fostering a collaborative and positive relationship between the Northern Authority and all stakeholders with respect to northern Manitoba First Nation CFS service context.

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. Required changes are implemented through a standards working group that includes northern CFS agency representatives. This process ensures that standards developed by the province take into account the realities and circumstances of northern Manitoba.

Associate Chief Executive Officer

Cybil Williams (Associate Chief Executive Officer) receives direction from the Chief Executive Officer and provides support in the overall leadership of the organization. This includes but is not limited to issues management, occasional and brief coverage, and project oversight. This position is a new position (filled by open competition at the end of February 2012).

Main activities completed to date included developing a coordinated response to the Ministerial Directive as well as to a Provincial Ombudsman whistleblower complaint. Both Northern Authority and agency staff worked as a team to provide the appropriate response level.

The Northern Authority Chief Executive Officer determined that a transition plan be detailed and supported as CNCFCA transitioned towards restoring its Board of Directors. The Associate Chief Executive Officer worked closely with the CNCFCA Administrator and First Nation leadership to achieve this goal.

Acknowledgements

The First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services wishes to acknowledge the commitment and hard work of all Northern Authority and Agency staff, northern Chiefs and Councils, and in particular Chief Primrose (current MKO CFS portfolio holder), as well as the Office of the Grand Chief of MKO.