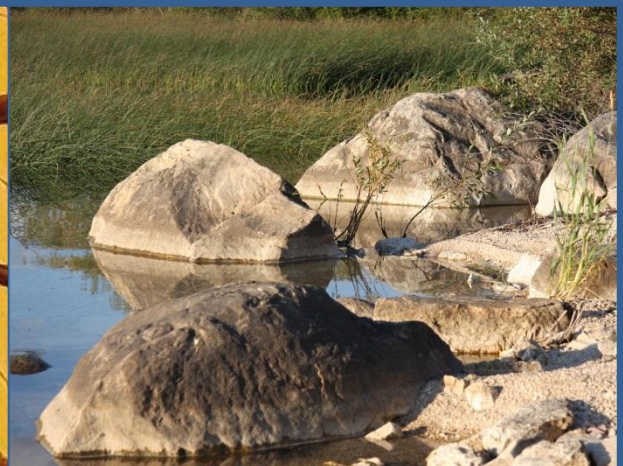
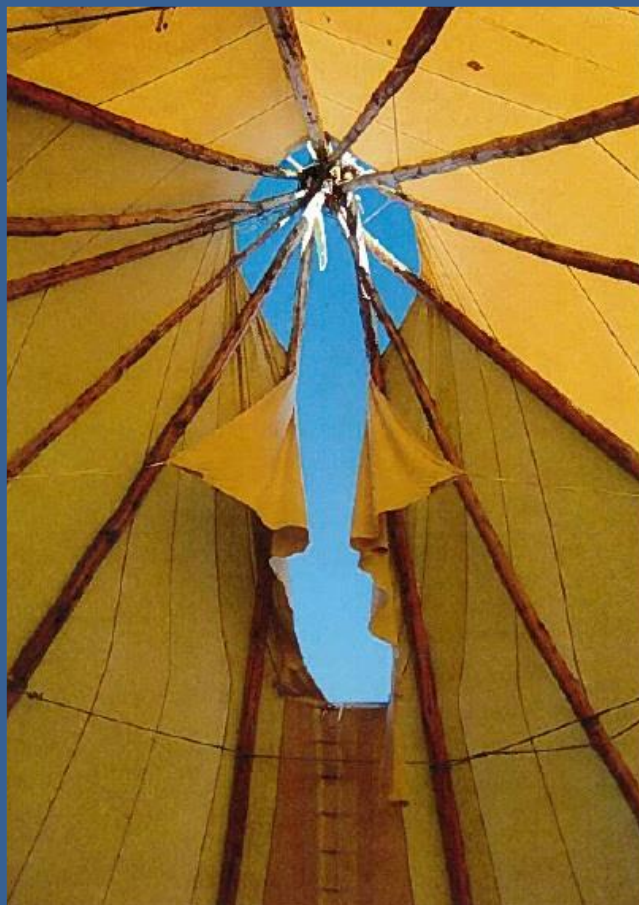




www.northernauthority.ca

2012 - 2013

9TH ANNUAL REPORT



THE FIRST NATION AGENCIES OF NORTHERN MANITOBA



Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba
100-701 Thompson Drive
Thompson, MB R8N 2A2

Rose McKay, Executive Director



Cree Nation Child & Family Caring Agency
Box 10130
Opaskwayak, MB R0B 2J0

Fran Sinclair-Dick, Executive Director



Island Lake First Nations Family Services
General Delivery
Garden Hill, MB R0B 0T0

Alfred Wood, Executive Director



Kinosao Sipi Minisowin Agency
PO Box 640
Norway House, MB R0B 1B0

Joe Anderson, Executive Director



Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation FCWC
PO Box 451
Nelson House, MB R0B 1A0

Felix Walker, Executive Director



Opaskwayak Cree Nation Child & Family
Services
PO Box 10550
Opaskwayak, MB R0B 2J0

Ron Ranville, Executive Director



Nikan Awasisak Agency Inc.
Box 388
Cross Lake, MB R0B 0J0

George McIvor, I/Executive Director

MISSION STATEMENT

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

VISION STATEMENT

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



Elder Madeline Spence, Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation. Member of the Elders Committee on the development of culturally appropriate standards.

*“Every child is a different kind of flower, and all together, make this world a
BEAUTIFUL garden.”
~ Anonymous ~*

ELDERS COMMITTEE



Elder Irene Michel

Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba



Elder Melinda Robinson

Cree Nation Child & Family Caring Agency



Elder Ambrose Wood

Island Lake First Nations Family Services



Elder Frances Queskekapow

Kinosao Sipi Minisowin Agency



Elder Madeline Spence

Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation FCWC



Elder Flora Young

Opaskwayak Cree Nation Child & Family Services



Elder Adrina Blacksmith

Nikan Awasisak Agency Inc.

"Nothing that you can teach them is more important than the love you can give them."

~ Anonymous ~



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*“It’s not enough to love the children, it is necessary that they are aware
they are loved.”
~ St. John Bosco ~*

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors of the First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority (Northern Authority) wish to acknowledge and congratulate Cathy Merrick who was recently elected as Chief for the Pimicikamak Cree Nation. Chief Merrick served the Northern Authority as Vice Chair and Acting Chair since August 2012 until August of this year when she became Chief. Chief Merrick was recently appointed to the Child and Family Services (CFS) Portfolio by the Manitoba Keewatinow Okimakanak (MKO) Executive Council and we welcome her continued support in that capacity. We also acknowledge the continued support from Grand Chief David Harper and CFS Portfolio Chiefs, Chief Jerry Primrose and Chief Jack Dysart.

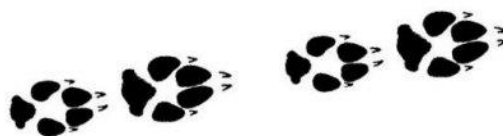
The Board of Directors of the Northern Authority is in a state of transition as we bid farewell to those who have served on the Northern Authority Board of Directors since 2010 and welcome those newly appointed and reappointed Directors who will serve until 2016. We owe a debt of gratitude to Joe Guy Wood, who served as the Chair; Ron Fidler, who served as the Vice Chair; Walter Wastesicoot, who served as the Secretary/Treasurer; Sydney Garrioch, Director; Gail Gossfeld-McDonald, Director; and Daisy Monias, Director. The newly appointed Directors include Duke Beardy, Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba; David McDougall, Island Lake First Nations Family Services; Maria Moore, Opaskwayak Cree Nation Child and Family Services and Denise Packo, Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency. We anticipate that Nikan Awasisak

Agency will select their representative in the immediate future.

The Directors that were appointed in September 2010 worked diligently to restore confidence in the Northern Authority during a turbulent time. They embraced the vision and mission of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry/Child Welfare Initiative (AJI/CWI) and never wavered in their commitment to foster a renewed awareness and understanding of the devolution process that was to have been guided by the AJI/CWI commitments. They worked to restore the mandates of the Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba and Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency and supported a new mandate for Pimicikamak Cree Nation, under Nikan Awasisak Agency.

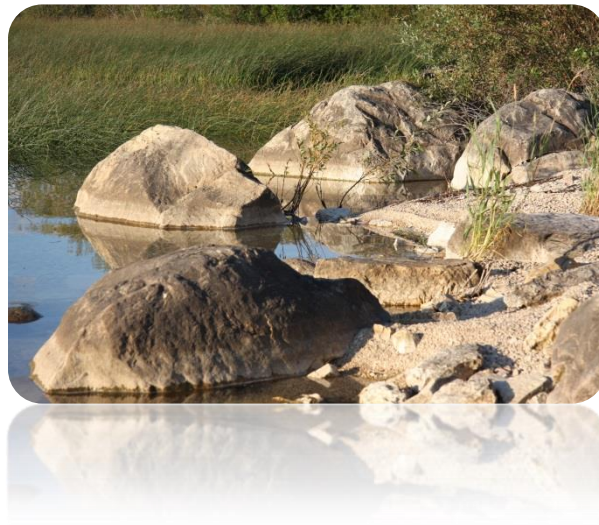
They pursued renewed relationships with the MKO leadership, Agencies and federal and provincial governments and their respective departments. Their work resulted in the Collaborative Working Group comprised of Northern Authority, federal and provincial representatives and others as required and improved working relationships with the MKO leadership and Agencies.

In closing, we are confident that the new Board of Directors reflects a well balanced mix of former and new Directors that will continue to build on the foundational work of the previous three years and strive to accomplish the strategic vision of the Northern Authority.



LIST OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Joe Guy Wood (ILFNFS)	Chair
Walter Wastesicoot (Awasis)	Secretary / Treasurer
Vacant (CNCFCA)	Member
Daisy Monias (KSMA)	Member
Gail Gossfeld-McDonald (NCNFCWC)	Member
Vacant (OCNCFS) Ron Fidler <small>Resigned October 24, 2012</small>	Vice-Chair
Cathy Merrick (Nikan)	Member / Vice-Chair
Sydney Garrioch (MKO)	Member



*“A child seldom needs a good talking to, as a good listening to.”
~ Robert Brault ~*

MESSAGE FROM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Chief Tecumsah stated that *“a single twig breaks, but the bundle of twigs is strong”*. Such is the case for the provision of child welfare services to Northern First Nation Communities. The assurance of safety and well-being of children within their own families and communities are goals to which the First Nations of Northern Manitoba child and family services strives to meet.

It is with these goals in mind that, the Northern Authority continues to foster a collaborative relationship with Leadership in the North, First Nation Northern Agencies, the Department of Family Services and Labour and the federal Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada.

With a combined and coordinated effort we can foster a system which will deliver appropriate, well resourced, and relevant services to children families, and communities.

The previous year has provided continued opportunities for partnership and collaboration. As a result, the First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority (“Northern Authority”) continues to work effectively with the Office of the Grand Chief, the Portfolio Chiefs for Child and Family Services, Chief Primrose and Chief Dysart, of Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO). We continue to strengthen and improve the working relationships with the Department of Family Services and Labour and the federal Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada.

Through the combined efforts of the agencies, leadership and authority, there has been opportunity to host gatherings in the areas of Foster Care and Resource Development and Case Management. Agency staff gathered to review the service areas and had the opportunity to network, and discuss issues surrounding the subject area.

The Northern Authority also had opportunity to host a governance summit which was a preliminary discussion on issues related to governance and First Nation child and family service agencies. Agency Boards had opportunity to discuss and review key issues surrounding the provision of services, and key issues in the field of child welfare.

The restoration of Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agencies mandate demonstrate the Northern Authority’s commitment to an improved relationship within an environment of shared vision, partnership and collaboration. This is consistent with the AJI CWI mission that recognizes the distinct rights and authorities of First Nations to control and deliver their own child and family services that reflects the cultures of First Nations.

The Collaborative Working Group is a means by which key partners dialogue on system issues that impact the north with an emphasis on working together in order to jointly resolve issues. This approach collectively places responsibility and accountability on all partners to restore system confidence as opposed to an adversarial approach.

Through the series of events over the previous year, the Northern Authority continued to make progress on implementing the priority action areas that are contained in the strategic plan. These areas will be further expanded upon within this document as reported in the following manager’s reports.

It is critical that momentum gained is not lost, that we, as collective partners, continue to maintain and enhance communication and coordination for the improvement in the quality of life for those we serve.

Ekosi,
Ron Monias, Chief Executive Officer



“a single twig breaks, but the bundle of twigs is strong”
~ Chief Tecumsah ~

FIRST NATIONS OF NORTHERN MANITOBA CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES STAFF

Executive & Policy Unit

Ron Monias
Cybil Williams
Cindy Ramsay
Jennie Wastesicoot
Ron Fidler
Charlene Ducharme

Chief Executive Officer
Associate Chief Executive Officer
Executive Assistant
Senior Policy Analyst
Community Relations Advisor
ILFNFS Co-Executive Director

Standards Unit

Alice Bignell
Charity Martin
Theresa Henderson
Della George
Linda Dettanikkeaze-Patterson
Candace Donaldson
Lynn Pierre
Karen McKay
Darlene Courchene
Celina McLellan

Standards Manager
Standards Supervisor
Intake Coordinator
Case Management Specialist
Case Management Specialist
Foster Care Recruitment Coordinator
Foster Care Coordinator
Administrative Assistant
Special Rates Coordinator
Administrative Assistant

Quality Assurance Unit

Shirlene Asham
Terri Sinclair
Alfred Muswagon
Ruby Lathlin

Quality Assurance Manager
Quality Assurance Coordinator
Quality Assurance Coordinator
Administrative Assistant

Finance Unit

Bryan Hart
Bethany Ettawacappo
Deanna Pashe

Chief Financial Officer
Financial Controller
Finance Officer

Human Resources Unit

Melissa Morrisseau
Heather Mowatt
Amanda Hamelin
Monica Genaille

Human Resource Manager
Office Administrator
Receptionist/Admin support
Administrative Assistant

The Northern Authority would like to acknowledge the following individuals who were employed at the Northern Authority for part of 2012-2013 fiscal year:

David Thompson (Chief Financial Officer)
Shirley Allarie (Co-Executive Director - ILFNFS)
Kathy Jones (Differential Response Manager)

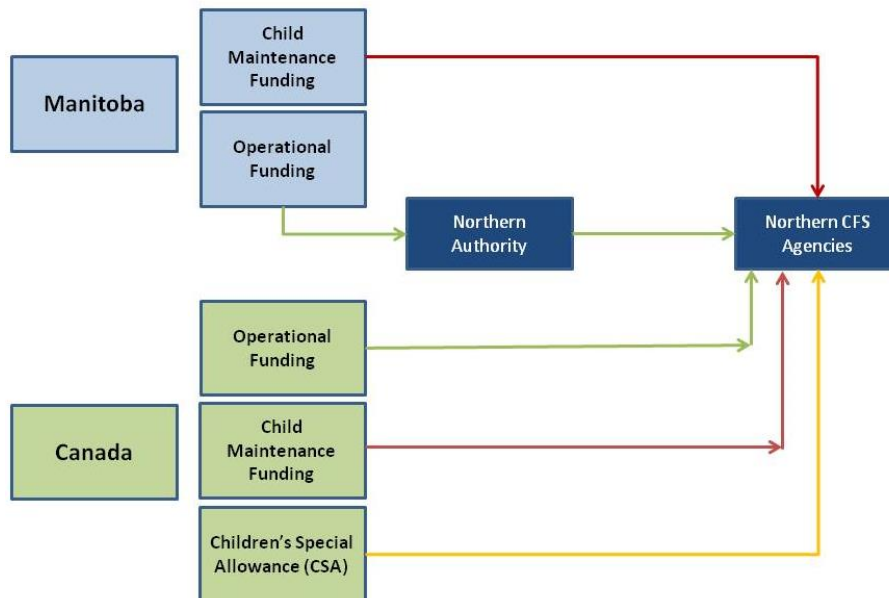
Eugene Peterson (Community Relations Specialist)
Edith McKay (Education & Training Coordinator)
Joanne Crate (Resource Coordinator)

FINANCIAL REPORT

BACKGROUND

Funding for First Nation CFS services in Manitoba is a shared responsibility between Manitoba and Canada. Northern First Nation CFS agencies receive provincial and federal funding each year as follows:

Federal Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aboriginal Affairs & Northern Development Canada (AANDC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides operating funding directly to agencies for on-reserve operations; and Provides child maintenance funding directly to agencies for children in care that are under federal jurisdiction. Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides Children's Special Allowance (CSA) funding directly to agencies.
Provincial Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Province of Manitoba <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides operating funding indirectly to agencies for off-reserve operations (the province flows these funds through the Northern Authority who then transfers these funds to the agencies); and Provides child maintenance funding directly to agencies for children in care that are under provincial jurisdiction.



In 2012-2013, Canada provided approximately 66.7% of the combined agency operational funding. In contrast, the Northern Authority receives all of its operational funding from the province.

PROGRAM UPDATE

Overview of the Northern Authority Finance Unit

The Finance Unit is responsible for ensuring the efficient allocation and accountability of resources within the organization as well as throughout the northern First Nation CFS region. Important tasks include overseeing the organization's accounting system, budget preparation, and financial reporting. The Finance Unit also oversees the Northern Authority's office leases and information technology systems and initiatives.

The Finance Unit consists of the Chief Financial Officer, Financial Controller and Finance Officer.

- *Chief Financial Officer* (Bryan Hart replaced David Thompson in August 2012): The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the overall financial management of the organization and provides finance-related central coordination and support to agencies.
- *Financial Controller* (Bethany Ettawacappo): The Financial Controller administers the organization's day-to-day accounting operations including payroll.
- *Finance Officer* (Deanna Pashe): The Finance Officer performs basic accounting functions with primary emphasis on accounts payables.

Key Highlights

Key highlights for 2012-2013 included the following:

- *Each of the seven agencies received approval for the 5-year business plans and subsequently transitioned into the new funding model:*

- Agencies began receiving enhanced funding (including specific funds for prevention); and
- Agencies received retroactive funding for 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 fiscal years.
- The Northern Authority accessed \$1 million in special project funding from AANDC and oversaw the following:
 - *Regional Information Technology (IT) Needs Assessment*; and
 - Major computer refresh initiative for each of the agencies on-reserve operations.

In 2012-2013, the Northern Authority participated in a number of committees and working groups including attending quarterly meetings with agency finance directors, joint province-authority finance committee meetings, as well as quarterly meetings of the re-established Regional Advisory Committee (i.e. a multi-stakeholder committee focused on providing recommendations for improvements to the agency funding model).

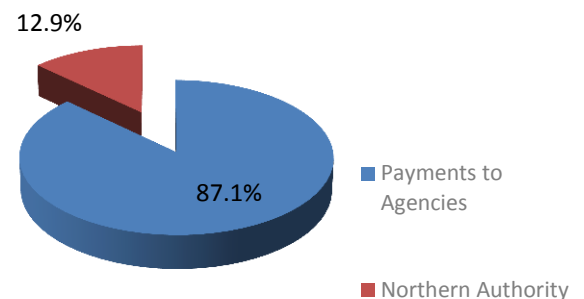


SUMMARY

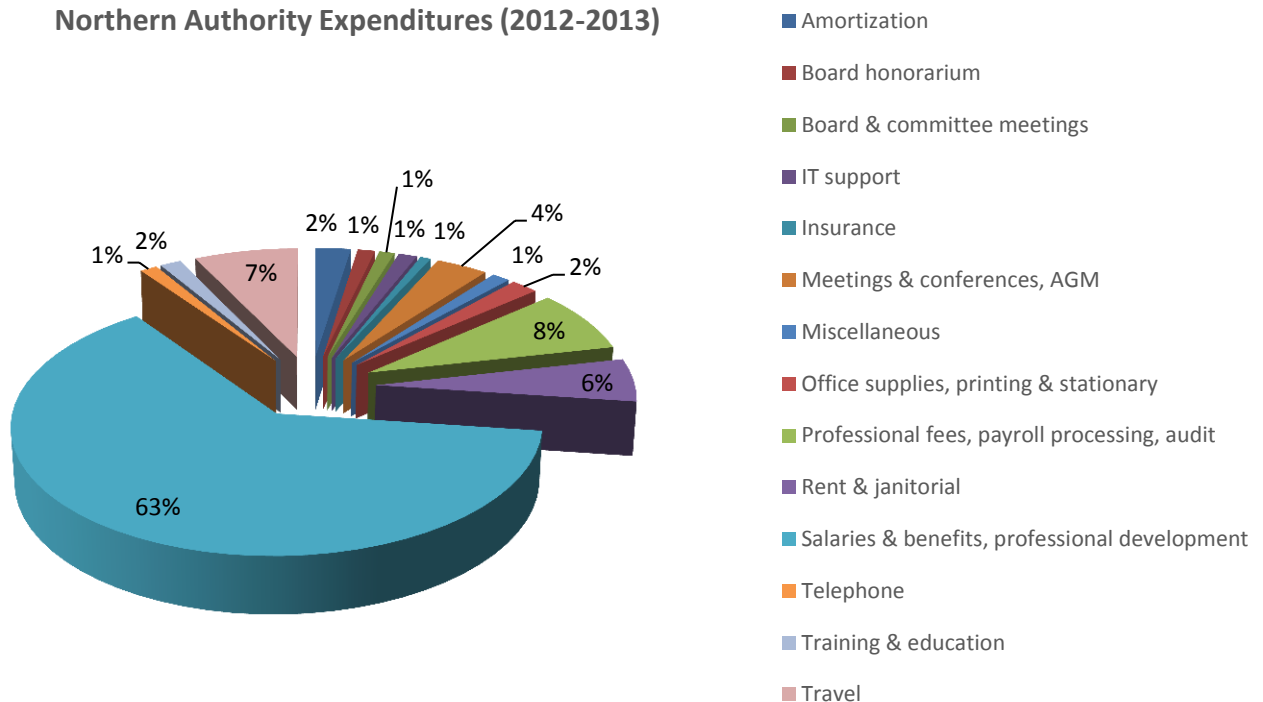
In 2012-2013, the Northern Authority received a total of \$23.1 million from the Province of Manitoba. Of this amount, the Northern Authority transferred \$20.1 million to agencies of which \$19.2 million was for general operations (i.e. core operations, protection services, prevention services and DIA). The Northern Authority also received \$1 million in special project funding from AANDC and transferred \$0.9 million of these funds to agencies.

In addition to payments to agencies, the Northern Authority spent \$3.2 million in order to support its operations in 2012-2013. The following pie chart provides a summary of expenditures.

Allocation of Revenues (2012-2013)



Northern Authority Expenditures (2012-2013)





STRATEGIC PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The Northern Authority continues to make progress on implementing the priority action areas that are contained in the strategic plan.

The eight strategic priorities are:

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
8. Foster Care / Resources

CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE STANDARDS

An Elders Committee has been established to provide advice and direction on the development of culturally appropriate standards. This committee was formed with the participation and collaboration of agencies as well as northern First Nations. The Elders Committee has participated in two major gatherings during the last year and it is anticipated that the Elders Committee will play an important role in future Northern Authority governance.

SERVICE PROVISION / ACCREDITATION

It is imperative that agencies be provided the means to ensure that services are provided to individual First Nations. As such, the Northern Authority is exploring the accreditation process in order to assess whether this is a viable method for northern First Nation CFS agencies

in terms of addressing the goal of strengthening internal capacity. Agencies have participated in planning and the delivery of capacity building gatherings. These gatherings promoted best practices and provided a venue in which agencies can build networking and partnerships.

QUALITY ASSURANCE

The Northern Authority Quality Assurance Unit is tasked with ensuring that quality services are provided by member agencies to families and children in the catchment area. Until such time that culturally appropriate standards are in place, the Northern Authority Quality Assurance Unit relies on provincial standards as benchmark measures for reaching service goals.

FUNDING AND REPORTING

Northern First Nation CFS agencies require adequate funding in order to meet provincial standards and to provide services that reflect best practices in a traditional and cultural capacity. In the previous year, the focus of the Northern Authority was to secure the release of the prevention focus funding for each of the northern First Nation CFS agencies. As of March 31st, 2013, all seven agencies transitioned into the new funding model. The Northern Authority has taken a number of steps towards securing formal annual contribution agreements with each agency.

CAPACITY BUILDING

An important capacity building initiative (i.e. training-based summit) took place in October of 2012 with the purpose of strengthening capacity and fostering renewed partnerships. The planning of this summit was a collaborative effort between the Northern Authority and northern First Nation CFS agencies.

As part of providing specific support to agencies, the Northern Authority has also dispatched its specialists to a number of agencies to provide support in the areas of special rates, resource and foster care. A gathering on case management was also facilitated with the goal of building agency capacity in the area of service provision.

The Northern Authority provides consultation for each agency seeking to build internal resources. Northern First Nations have strongly articulated the need for in-community resources and the Northern Authority has convened meetings as preliminary planning to achieve this outcome. Recently, the Northern Authority has met with agency personnel with the goal of developing a strategy to develop and design specific alternative care programs. Discussions around whether this would be an agency authority venture or individual agency venture remains ongoing.

HUMAN RESOURCES AND TRAINING

In collaboration with northern First Nation CFS agencies, the Northern Joint Training Unit was established by the Northern Authority and is situated in Thompson, Manitoba. Training has been ongoing and topics include core competency areas in child welfare as well as in topics which satisfy various recommendations from reports such as from child death reports.

PARTNERSHIP AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Under the guidance and direction of the Northern Authority Board of Directors, an intra-agency summit on governance is being planned for June 2013. This event will be a collaborative effort between MKO, the Northern Authority and northern First Nation CFS agencies and a preliminary step toward establishing a strong governance relationship between agencies and the Northern Authority. The event will provide an opportunity to come together to review child and family services and address large issues within the current system with a view to affect system change for the betterment of our communities, families and children. Future events are planned which will incorporate the involvement of First Nation leadership and, together, the participants will chart the course for governance in the area of First Nation child welfare.

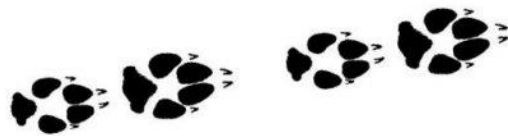


FOSTER CARE / RESOURCES

The purpose of foster care, as defined by Manitoba Family Services and Labour is “to protect and nurture children and to strengthen families”. To achieve that end, the Northern Authority has committed to assisting its’ agencies in the development of appropriate placement resources for children in the care of Northern Authority agencies. This responsibility is shared between the agency foster care workers and the Northern Authority.

As part of developing appropriate placement resources the Northern Authority provides training to new and existing foster parents and to agency foster care workers. The training is developed and coordinated by the Northern Authority’s Training and Education Coordinator and is made available at various locations throughout Manitoba.

The Foster Care/Resource Development Team works closely with the northern First Nation CFS agencies to assist with securing placement resources including referrals to existing resources, emergency placements and the development of placements for children with complex needs. This often includes participation in systems meetings and case conferences with collateral service providers including the Manitoba Child Protection Branch, Manitoba Health, Health/Healthy Child, Justice and Education.



“Kindness is a language that the deaf can hear and the blind can see.”
~ Mark Twain ~

MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS 2012-2013

CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE STANDARDS

Introduction

The Northern Authority is committed to ensure culturally appropriate services to families and children in northern Manitoba are in place. A senior policy analyst was tasked to take lead on work to develop the culturally appropriate standards. This work is guided by a two year strategy which includes the participation of the seven Agencies mandated by the Northern Authority. The agencies are at varying levels of development as regards the provision of culturally appropriate services.

The following summarizes the approach taken to date to develop culturally appropriate programs and services while engaging the Elders, families and children in care and personnel from the agencies. The approach supports the vision of Northern Authority to ensure that *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.*

Background

The Northern Authority receives delegated legislative authority from the Province of Manitoba through the *Child and Family Services Authorities Act* and is responsible for administering and providing for the delivery of child and family services in northern Manitoba.

The *Child and Family Services Authorities Act* outlines the provincial standards to be followed by mandated child and family services agencies and licensed adoption agencies in Manitoba. The Northern Authority falls under this mandate and extends this mandate to the seven northern agencies that include Awasis Agency, Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency, Island Lake First Nations Family Services, Kinosao Sipi Minisowin Agency, Nikan Awasisak Agency, Nisichiwayasihk Cree Nation Family and Community Wellness Centre and Opaskwayak Cree Nation Child & Family Services.


The *Child and Family Services Authorities Act* further sets out the duties of the Northern Authority, including the duty to ensure that “culturally appropriate standards” for services, practices and procedures are developed and that these are consistent with provincial standards, objectives and priorities. It is therefore appropriate that the Northern Authority has identified the development of culturally appropriate standards as their top priority within their strategic framework.

Tracking Progress

There has been much progress made with regard to establishing the collaborative framework for the development of culturally appropriate standards. There is now an agency commitment, a Culturally Appropriate Standards Working Group is now functional, and the Elders Committee has been appointed.

Agency Commitment

As work began to develop culturally appropriate standards, meetings were arranged with each of the agency Executive Directors and presentations were made to some of their Boards and management to secure their



participation and support. While not all agency Boards and management were briefed on the work, those that were, welcomed the work and extended their support. As a result of meetings with the agency Executive Directors, a staff member from each of the agencies was appointed to serve on a Working Group to assist in the work of developing the culturally appropriate standards. As well, each agency committed to provide travel support to their appointed staff member to attend meetings as required.

Culturally Appropriate Standards Working Group

The working group recently met to go over a draft two year work-plan and to seek their input on the approach. This approach involves implementing a survey questionnaire to children in care, parents and guardians and to front line workers. There are three questionnaires, each focuses on how the agencies can meet the cultural needs of clients, families and staff. The questionnaire for the staff and front-line workers will help to identify how the agency supports families in supporting the cultural identity of children in care. This may identify trainings needs required to support the provision of culturally appropriate services. The questionnaire for parents (guardians) will help identify how the home is supporting the child in exploring/understanding their cultural heritage. The questionnaire for children will help to identify how they are supported in learning native values and how the agency/home can support them in meeting their cultural needs. This input is required to ensure the culturally appropriate standards reflect and meet the needs of families and children in care.

The working group will be conducting a test run on the survey questionnaire and will bring back the results at their next scheduled meeting.

Once the test run results have been reviewed the next step is to administer the survey questionnaire to target groups which will likely take several months to complete.

The working group has also been assigned a number of task assignments that include the following:

- An environmental scan of cultural activities that are currently in place at each agency;
- Identifying cultural terminology (language) to incorporate and use in the working document;
- Identify past/existing child rearing practices;
- Conduct search on relevant information and determine projects, past and present from agencies; and
- To review the existing provincial standards document and select sections/areas of interest to review and revise. (Note: The provincial standards document is divided into 8 chapters: Chapter 1-Case Management, Chapter 2-Services to Families, Chapter 3-Child Protection Services, Chapter 4-Children in Care, Chapter 5-Foster Care, Chapter 6-Adoption Services, Chapter 7-Service Administration, Chapter 8 (not available for review)-Agency Operations.

The working group has recommended an all-agency Gathering which they feel is necessary to bring everyone on board with the task ahead. The all-agency gathering is viewed as a means to create dialogue and address concerns and issues individuals may have as relates to the development of culturally appropriate standards.

Elders Committee

An Elders Committee was established to act in an advisory capacity to the Northern Authority and to provide support and guide the work on the culturally appropriate standards. Elders chosen to sit on the Elders Committee were appointed by each agency. The Elders will be meeting to attend two major Northern Authority gatherings where they will be afforded the opportunity to deliver a message to the participants.

The Elders now have in place, a Code of Ethics and Terms of Reference which they reviewed and revised. The Code of Ethics and Terms of Reference will serve to guide the Elders with their roles and responsibilities and how they must conduct themselves both within the community and while serving as the Northern Authority Elders Committee. It is expected that the Elders Committee will be adopted as the Elders Council for Northern Authority. The Code of Ethics and Terms of Reference will carry over into that new role within the Northern Authority governance structure.

Video Production

The Northern Authority Board of Directors of have discussed and recommended that an Elders' video message be developed as part of the work on culturally appropriate standards. Plans are now underway to create this video with input from the Elders. A meeting was held with Elders from the Island Lake region who suggested the video focus on the seven teachings with each Elder selecting one teaching and bringing a message based on that teaching. What the video message will contain as yet to be determined by each Elder.

Conclusion

The work of developing culturally appropriate standards will take time and effort and support from all parties. The two year work plan will be reviewed every three months by the working group to ensure work is on track and to revise the work plan as required. With the proposed all-agency Gathering, it is anticipated suggestions will come forward on how to expedite this work without further delay. A working document entitled *"Improving Access to Culturally Appropriate Services for the First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority: Healthy Families, Healthy Communities and Healthy Nations"* is in draft form. This is work in progress which will eventually roll out as the master document.

In closing, it is important to acknowledge the leadership of the Board of Directors of the Northern Authority, who recognized the importance of culturally appropriate standards, and made them the first priority in their strategic framework. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge the agencies for their overwhelming support and commitment to this process.

COLLABORATIVE WORKING GROUP

Terms of Reference for Collaborative Working Group

Established by Department of Family Services and Labour and the Northern Authority - *March 19, 2012*

Mission Statement

Collaboratively addressing issues to ensure children are safe and families are supported in northern Manitoba.

Vision Statement

The Department of Family Services and Labour, Northern Authority and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada are working together confident in their ability to support each other to jointly resolve issues and improve ongoing mutual support, communications and problem solving.

Principles

1. The Collaborative Working Group will familiarize themselves with and respect the spirit and intent of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry-Child Welfare Initiative.
2. The Collaborative Working Group will respect each other's point of view to achieve a mutual understanding of the issues.
3. The Collaborative Working Group will rely upon facts to develop solutions to identified problems.
4. The Collaborative Working Group will identify and acquire expertise and wisdom to address issues beyond their current knowledge base.
5. Decisions will be by consensus with active participation and deliberation which will not be unreasonably withheld by any party.
6. The Collaborative Working Group will work collaboratively in the best interests of children and families, in mind.
7. The Collaborative Working Group will work to address issues in good faith and in a timely manner.
8. Confidentiality will be respected and preserved at all times.

Purpose

The Collaborative Working Group will address mutual concerns regarding the safety of children in care and services to families.

The Collaborative Working Group participants will present their key areas of concern in writing for discussion at the Collaborative Working Group table. The work plan and any amendments will be confirmed and signed off by the Co-chairs.

Representation

The Director of Child and Family Services pursuant to section 3 of *The Child and Family Services Act*; and section 1(1) of *The Child and Family Services Authorities Act*; and the Chief Executive Officer of the First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority pursuant to section 13(1) of *The Child and Family Services Authorities Act* shall be the Co-Chairs.

The Department and Northern Authority will each assign representatives who will remain committed to the process, remain consistent throughout the process and possess the authority to confirm and implement decisions in a timely fashion.

Representation from Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development of Canada as appointed by the Regional Director General.

Decision Making

Each party will actively participate in resolving issues and mutually providing possible solutions.

- Reviews of issues shall be based on factual information that is mutually shared with each party.
- Each party will have reasonable notice and sufficient time to review information and factual circumstances.
- Each party will have reasonable notice and sufficient time to develop possible solutions for joint discussion.

Co - Chairs

The Co-Chairs will at all times ensure reasonable notice is provided of meetings, agenda, location and will ensure the timely participation of their representatives to support the Collaborative Working Group process.

The Co-Chairs will jointly sign off:

1. The key areas to be discussed.
2. The work plan for the key areas to be addressed.
3. The agreed upon solutions with reasonable timelines.

Documentation and Reporting

- Monthly updates of progress on the work plan will be provided to the Minister and MKO Leadership.
- Formal minutes will be kept to reflect discussion at the Collaborative Working Group table.
- Work plan items will be tracked in writing. Items deemed complete will be signed off by the Co-chairs with evidence attached.

IT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

In 2012-2013, the Northern Authority oversaw the completion of an Information Technology (IT) Needs Assessment for the northern CFS region. All seven northern CFA agencies participated in this study which included a detailed questionnaire, executive interviews and issues identification workshops.

FOSTER CARE SUMMIT – 2012

The Northern Authority held a two day Foster Care Summit in the fall of 2012. Invited participants included: foster care and resource workers from member agencies of the Northern Authority; representatives from the Provincial

Child Protection Branch and Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) and Elders from the Island Lake region. The Elders shared traditional child welfare practice, their perspective on current child welfare practice and their vision on future child welfare practice. The participation of the Elders added an element of enlightenment and laughter as they shared their stories.

The two day summit covered topics as they pertain to foster care included: licensing requirements, standards, variances to foster care licenses, hotel use, emergency placement resources, place of safety, removal of foster children and the appeal process and the special rate protocol were discussed by various members of the Northern Authority and the Provincial Child Protection Branch.

Agency members were invited to participate as they were asked to present on their agency's strengths and the challenges they face as they practice from a holistic perspective while upholding the provincial standards and regulations as set out by the Department of Family Services and Labour and *The Child and Family Services Act*.

REORGANIZATION AT NORTHERN AUTHORITY

In December 2012, the Northern Authority separated the Quality Assurance and Standards Unit into two separate units. The new Quality Assurance Unit specializes in overseeing agency evaluations/reviews and as well as the tracking of responses to recommendations. The new Standards Unit specializes in providing support to agencies to ensure that services are delivered in accordance to legislation, regulations and standards.

HUMAN RESOURCES

BACKGROUND

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

HUMAN RESOURCES UNIT

Melissa Morrisseau, Human Resources Manager, is a member of the executive management team, Northern Joint Training Committee, and actively participated in various HR related external groups in order to support the ongoing development of the Human Resources Unit. The Human Resources Manager is responsible for all aspects of HR related activities with the Northern Authority such as recruitment, selection, training, development, performance management, labour relations, policy and procedures. A key responsibility of the Human Resources Unit is to provide accurate information, recommendations, leadership and mentorship to the seven mandated agencies in Northern Manitoba as

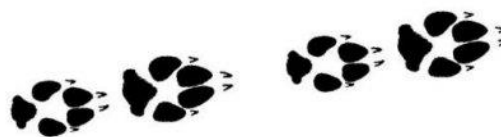
requests are made for assistance in all HR related matters.

The Human Resources Manager works closely with and provides supervision to the Education and Training Coordinator, Office Administrator, Receptionist and Administrative Assistant. The Education and Training Coordinator is the Chair of the Northern Joint Training Committee and a member of the Joint Training Unit (JTU). The Northern Authority encourages its employees to develop their skills and professionalism and the Education and Training Coordinator position acts as the liaison between the Northern Authority, seven First Nations agencies of Northern Manitoba, and collaterals to identify the education and training needs and ensure learning opportunities are made available to staff and foster parents. The Office Administrator and Receptionist continue to be instrumental in the ongoing activities of the Health and Safety Committee and make every effort to create a safe and healthy working environment for the employees.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Revision and updates were made to the Human Resources Policy and Procedures Manual to identify any gaps and ensure best practices and compliance with legislation requirements.

An Orientation Manual for new staff was drafted and will be forwarded to Chief Executive Officer and Executive Management Team for review.



EDUCATION AND TRAINING COORDINATOR

Assisting in the capacity of education and training the Education and Training Coordinator ensures all workshops are advertised via email, training calendar and documentation for statistics. In the April 1, 2012 – March 31, 2013 fiscal year the Northern Authority has provided training to approximately 536 agency staff.



Training provided is as follows: Addictions Training, ASIST (Training for Trainers), Brief Intervention, Building Inclusive Environments (Culture & Diversity), CFSIS, CFS Standards Training, Core 810 –Documentation, Family Violence, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), First Aid/CPR, Foster Care Training, Foster Care Summit - Standards, Investigating Child Abuse, Making Sense of Trauma, Mental Health First Aid, Relation Based Strengths Approach to Discipline (RBSA), Residential School & Trauma, Safety Assessment and Probability of Future Harm T4T, Special Rate & Billings, Structured Decision Making (SDM), Supervisor Competency Based Training, Team Investigation of Child Physical & Sexual Abuse, Triple P Parenting, Understanding & Working with Children & Youth Who Have Been Sexually Exploited, Water Safety (Train the Trainer), Worker's Safety & Communication Strategies, Workplace Safety & Health.

"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."

~ Anne Frank ~

QUALITY ASSURANCE PROGRAM UPDATE

BACKGROUND

History of Program

The Northern Authority established a Quality Assurance (QA) team in 2009, the team consisted of 1 QA Manager, 2 QA Coordinators and 1 QA Administrative Assistant. This team was tasked with the development of a Quality Assurance framework for the child and family services QA reviews that included four components: service delivery, human resource, governance and finance. Three quality assurance areas have been developed; service delivery, human resource and governance. To date all finance reviews have been conducted by external finance firms.

Find and Fix

One of the important developments to the Quality Assurance Framework was the “Find and Fix” approach that has been carried out within the agency review process. The “find and fix” approach provides the agency and staff with a quick response to findings which allows the agency to start to address the findings immediately. The QA team provides the agency a completed find and fix form that outlines that area(s) that requires agency responses and the agency is provided a time-line to address the finding(s). This approach is different than past QA reviews in that agency’s did not have to wait months for the final report to address the findings.

OVERVIEW

Program Update

The Northern Authority is responsible for ensuring its agencies provide child and family services and follow the practices and procedures in accordance with legislation, regulation and standards. The Northern Authority supports and recognizes the importance of taking into consideration the First Nations community cultural and linguistic heritage when conducting annual quality assurance reviews as per the following:

“The parties acknowledge that the delivery of child and family services and programs to First Nations people must occur in a manner which respects their unique status, as well as their cultural and linguistic heritage.” (Memorandum of Understanding with the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO))

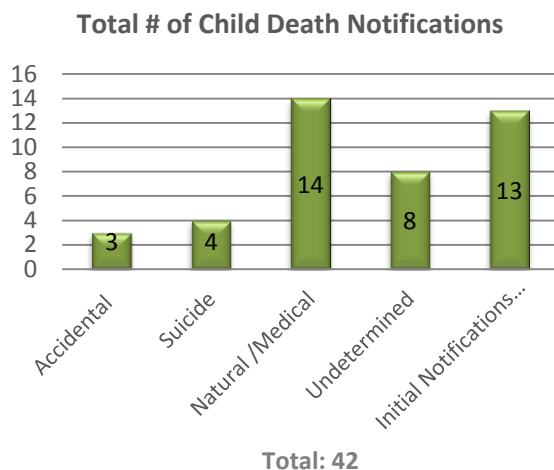
The quality assurance framework utilizes a “find and fix” approach when conducting quality assurance reviews. This approach allows for the agency to address the quality assurance findings quickly instead of waiting for the end report.

CHILD DEATH NOTIFICATIONS

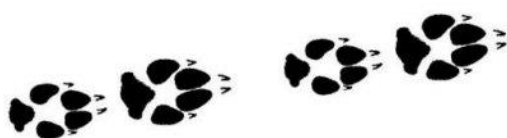
The Quality Assurance Unit of the Northern Authority was tasked to follow up on incoming child death notifications and to record particulars of the child death into a main spreadsheet. All 7 agencies that are mandated under the Northern Authority are required to provide Child Death Reports according to the Standard 1.7.4. The 1.7.4 reports would only be provided by agencies to the Northern Authority when a child in care or if that child’s family had received child and family services within one year prior to the death.

During the fiscal year of April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013, the Northern Authority received a total of 42 incoming child death notifications. Out of these child deaths, a total of 29 of these child deaths had CFS involvement within one year prior to the death. 13 of the initial child death notifications did not require further follow up due to non CFS involvement beyond one year.

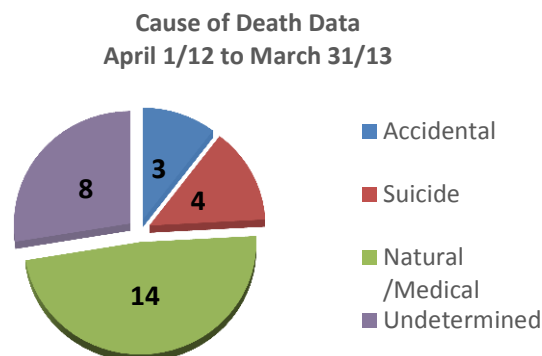
The following table shows the total number of incoming child death notifications:



Of the 29 child deaths that had connection to the Northern Authority, the cause/manner of death was categorized as: accidental in 3 cases; suicide in 4 cases; natural/medical in 14 cases, e.g. prematurity and birth complications; and undetermined in 8 cases, e.g. co-sleeping. The highest percentage on the cause of death was due to natural/medical causes, e.g. Complex Medical Conditions.



The following chart shows the percentage of cause of death under each identified category:



The Quality Assurance Unit had reviewed incoming child death reports, and if necessary, followed up on any required further information and/or inquiries. All reportable child deaths are reported to the Child Protection Branch and the Office of Children's Advocate is notified whether or not the child or family had received services from an agency within one year. The 1.7.4 child death report would not be provided by agencies in cases where there was no CFS involvement and cases that were closed beyond one year.

SPECIAL INVESTIGATION REPORTS (SIR) FROM THE OFFICE OF THE CHILDREN'S ADVOCATE (OCA)

Under subsection 8.2.3(1) of *The Child and Family Services Act*, the Office of the Children's Advocate (OCA) is required to review and conduct the Special Investigation Reviews (SIR) into the services provided by the mandated agencies and any circumstances surrounding the death that relate to the standards or quality of the care and services. Review of child deaths occur when a child has died who was in care of an agency or the child's whose family had received services from an agency within one year prior to the death. Under Standards

8.2.3(2), the purpose of the review is to identify ways in which the programs and services under review may be improved to enhance the safety and well-being of children/youth and prevent deaths in similar circumstances.

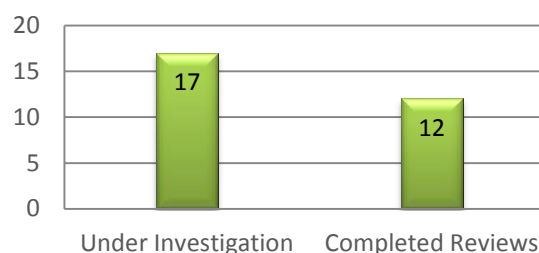
The OCA will review the services provided to the child that would involve the following activities: visits to the community and interviewing key service providers at the agency; review of agency documents; interviewing community collaterals and family members. Once the review is completed by the OCA, a draft report with findings and/or recommendations are provided to the child and family services agency involved and the Northern Authority. According to the “Protocol for the Review of Draft SIR Reports Jointly by the OCA and the Authorities”, the Northern Authority and its agency involved, and the OCA can meet prior to the final version of a SIR. This allows the Northern Authority to discuss and/or provide further information on any draft SIR recommendations with its agencies. Further, the Northern Authority and its agencies can address areas where recommendations would be helpful in improving the quality of services to children and families.

The final version of the SIR report is provided to the Northern Authority and its agency involved. The Quality Assurance (QA) Unit of the Northern Authority is responsible to follow up on the recommendation(s) made in the final version of the SIR report that are directed to its agencies and/or the Northern Authority. The QA Unit continues to work with and support the agencies to ensure that the agency responses demonstrate that the recommendation(s) have been successfully implemented. Once the Northern Authority reviews the agency responses and determines that the recommendation(s) is/are “Complete” or “In

Progress”, a formal response in writing is then provided to the Manitoba Ombudsman. Copies of these formal responses would be provided to the OCA and Child Protection Branch (CPB). The QA Unit continues to follow up with its agencies on the SIR recommendations that are “In Progress”.

The Northern Authority not only receives SIR reports with recommendations, but also receives completed Special Investigations Reviews with no recommendations from the OCA. In 2011, the OCA began conducting reviews of cases that involved child deaths as a result of prematurity, birth complications or medically fragile. The OCA would complete these types of reviews with no recommendations. The chart below provides the number of cases that are under investigation and completed reviews by the Office of the Children’s Advocate (OCA).

**Special Investigations Review
April 1/12 to March 31/13**



During 2012/2013, the Northern Authority received two aggregate reports from the OCA. The OCA completed an aggregate investigation of one group of youth that died by suicide and the other aggregate investigation looked at another group of youth that died by homicide. The purpose of the OCA aggregate investigations was to examine the child and family services provided to the two groups of

youth and to examine how the needs of the youth were provided by the agencies involved.

Current number of staff

The Quality Assurance Unit is comprised of the following staff:

- Quality Assurance Manager
- Quality Assurance Coordinators x 2
- Quality Assurance Administrative Assistant

Location of Program

The Quality Assurance program is located at the Northern Authority Sub-Office in Winnipeg, Manitoba with one Quality Assurance Coordinator that works out of the Kinosao Sipi Minisowin Agency (KSMA) in Norway House Cree Nation (September 2012 to 2013).

Highlights of Program activities in last fiscal year:

- Worked with Northern Authority child and family services agencies to address SIR recommendations;
- Northern Perspective for Recommendations to the Phoenix Sinclair Inquiry;
- Development of Tracking System for Recommendations for Service Delivery, Human Resource, Governance and Finance;
- Development of Process Map for working with Externals for SIR recommendation;
- Participated in the development for the Protocol for addressing Child Death Recommendations from Section 4 Reports pertaining to Multiple Parties;
- Development of Protocol for the Review of Draft Special Investigation Review (SIR) Reports jointly by the OCA and the Authorities;

- Development of form letters for the SIR Process; and
- Further research and development of the Northern Authority Quality Assurance Framework.

Future goals of program:

- To develop a culturally appropriate quality assurance framework;
- To develop a collaborative approach to quality assurance that involves the child and family services agencies under the Northern Authority mandate;
- To develop a quality assurance training for the Northern Authority quality assurance team and the child and family services quality assurance staff, in order to further develop skill and capacity within the Northern Authority and its agencies;
- To develop a database that will track quality assurance reviews, recommendations and child death statistics; and
- To network with Agency based QA Coordinators.

SUMMARY

The QA team continues to research, modify and strengthen the quality assurance tools used in conducting quality assurance reviews. The goal is to work together with the child and family services agencies under the Northern Authority mandate to strengthen services to children and families. This can only be accomplished with the Northern Authority and the child and family services agencies working together to identify what is working and what is not working. Further, the Northern Authority and the child and family services agencies can also work together to strengthen services.

STANDARDS UNIT PROGRAM UPDATE

BACKGROUND

The Standards Unit is the core program that delivers a wide range of child and family services that was established at the Northern Authority on December 2012. Prior to the creation of the Standards Unit, the Quality and Standards Unit supported both programs within the Northern Authority. The structure of the Northern Authority has grown in staff capacity and the program responsibility was identified as a greater need and the Board of Directors committed to approving the development of the new unit. The Standards Unit is responsible for all intakes, case management, foster care, resource development, FASD, special rates, age of majority and other special projects according to provincial standards and *The Child and Family Services Authorities Act*.

STANDARDS MANAGER

Alice Bignell is a member of the executive management team. The Standards Manager supervises and oversees the operation and daily functions of the Northern Authority core programs; provides ongoing expertise, leadership and mentorship to the Unit staff and to the seven agencies if the need arises to intervene to concerns, complaints or other issues generated by external referrals.

STANDARDS SUPERVISOR

Charity Martin is the Standards Supervisor and assists the Standards Manager on the daily

functions of the Unit as required. She is assigned to lead the foster care/resource, special rates and FASD programs, acting capacity and committee work as requested by the Manager/CEO. Charity is responsible to review and respond to appeals from foster parents.

INTAKE COORDINATOR

Theresa Henderson is the Intake Coordinator for Northern Authority. Intake is an integral part of the Northern Authority and the first point of contact. The Intake Coordinator provides consultation and expert advice, assists in identifying outstanding child risks and concerns, and ensures intakes are followed up in a timely manner.

CASE MANAGEMENT SPECIALISTS

Della George & Linda Dettanikkeaze-Patterson are the Case Management Specialists. They are each assigned agencies to oversee the case management core component. Della works with Awasis, KSMA, OCNCFS & Nikan Awasisak. Linda works with the three (3) remaining agencies: CNCFCA, ILFNFS & NCNFCWC. The Case Management Specialists provide expert support and assistance to agencies regarding issues related to case management.

SPECIAL RATES COORDINATOR

Darlene Courchene is the Special Rates Coordinator. The Special Rates Coordinator provides consultation and expert advice to agency staff on a comprehensive range of Child in Care special rate placements and needs assessment activities as well as works with agencies and First Nation communities to coordinate and provide educational and training supports to ensure quality services are consistent with standards and policies

FOSTER CARE COORDINATOR

Candace Donaldson works out of the Northern Training Centre in Thompson. She is responsible for responding to foster care inquiries, complaints and foster care recruitment. Her additional responsibilities include reviewing and processing Support Beyond Termination of Guardianship applications from agencies and coordinating Youth in Care Tuition Waiver applications with participating colleges and universities who offer current and former youth in care tuition waivers. Candace participates in committee work in relation to her position.



ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS

Karen McKay & Celina McLellan are the administrative assistants for the Standards Unit. Karen works out of the Winnipeg location and Celina works out at the Thompson location. They are both responsible for a broad range of reception, general office duties and administrative support for Northern Authority management and staff in both locations. Celina also fulfills an acting role as Education and Training Coordinator and is responsible with various duties: tracking, monitoring, recording and distributing training packages and calendars to the seven agencies and the Northern Authority. Both are expected to participate in the planning of conferences, summits and any other Northern Authority events.

*“No kid is unsmart, every kid’s a genius at something. Our job is to find it, and then encourage it.”
~ Robin Sharma ~*

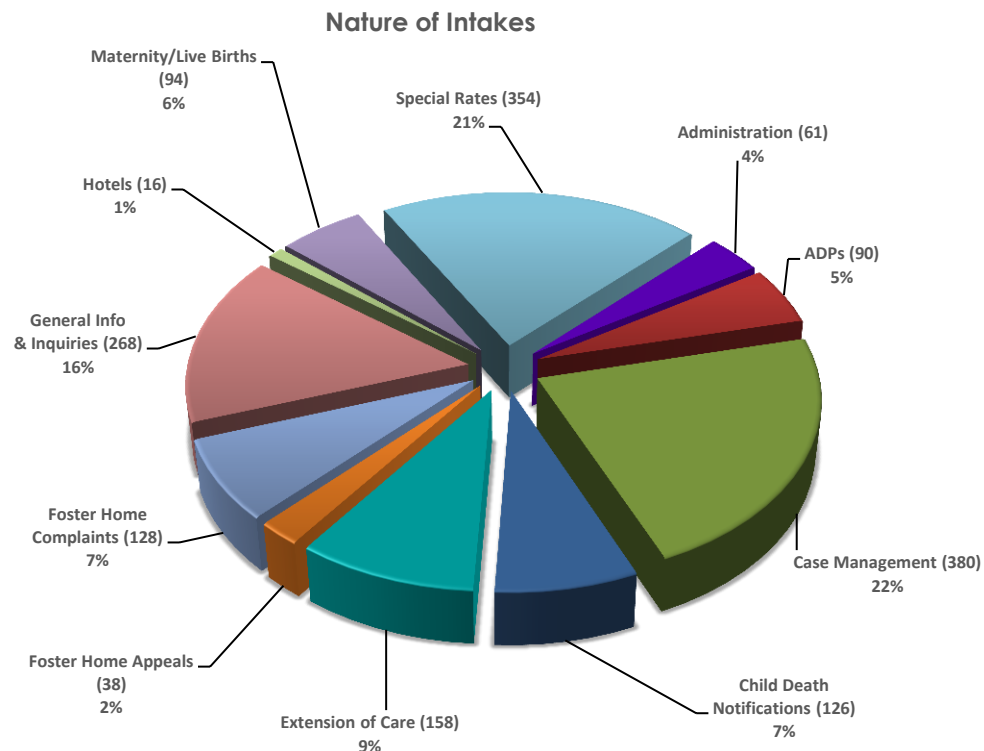
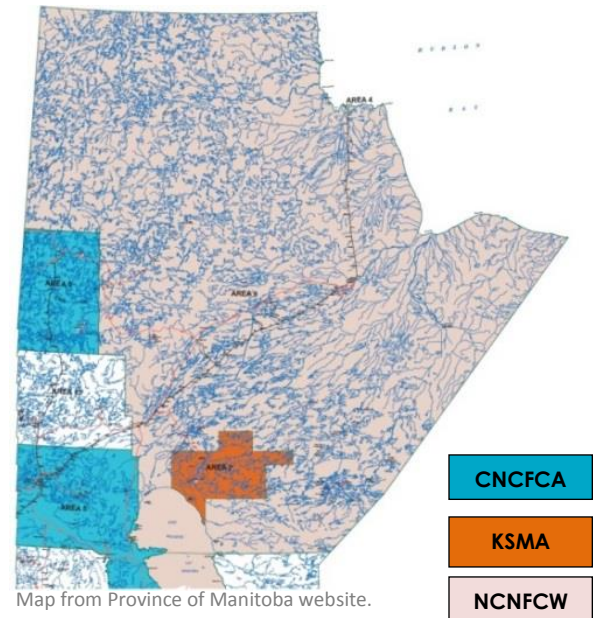
PROGRAM UPDATE

Designated Intake Agencies (DIA)

The Northern Authority oversees two DIAs; one in Thompson, under the mandate of Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation FCWC, and the other in The Pas under the mandate of Cree Nation Child & Family Caring Agency. They provide Intake services to these areas 24 hours a day.

Intake Process

Intake is the first point of contact and the purpose of intake is to provide a mechanism for assigning, tracking and monitoring communication between the source of referral (SOR) and the Northern Authority and the agencies. The Intake Coordinator will receive inquiries, complaints or intakes, where then she/he will assess & prioritize and forward the issue to the appropriate person for follow-up.



Northern Authority received 1713 Intakes from April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2013

Case Management

It is the goal of the Northern Authority to promote a strong foundation on case management practices among their seven mandated northern agencies.

The agencies are mandated to provide a range of services in accordance to *The Child and Family Services Authorities Act* and *The Child and Family Services Act*.

Case management is provided in the following areas but not limited to:

Family Services, Child(ren) in Care, Authority Determination Protocol (ADP), Permanent Wards (Section 42), Change of Authority and Inter-provincial transfers; Age of Majority, Special Rates, Birth Alerts, Notice of Maternity, Child Death Reports (1.7.4), Serious Injury of Child, Transfer of Guardianship, Repartition, Adoption, Foster Care, Resources, FASD, Child Abuse Committees, CFSIS check and monitoring, Case Specifics Referrals from other collaterals; for example; Office of Child Advocate (OCA), Child Sexual Exploitation, Mobile and Stabilization Crisis Unit, Adolescent Mental Health programs, Justice, Education, and Out of Province Intakes.

Services to Families

The agencies provide and offer support services to families, children and minor parents through involuntary and voluntary service agreement either short term or long term basis as per accordance to *The Child and Family Services Act* and *The Child and Family Services Authorities Act*. It also includes early intervention and prevention services through the family enhancement program. The Northern Authority works closely with agencies in building capacity, ensuring quality assurance and maintaining case

management standards based on cultural relevance.

Services to Children in Care

Children coming into agency care either short or long term basis require support services from an agency within their geographic region. Children in Care with special needs require appropriate referrals to various outside resources and or specialized services.

Children In Care As at March 31, 2013

Agency	Federal	Provincial	Total
Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba	456	242	698
Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency	221	413	634
Island Lake First Nations Family Services	236	285	521
Kinosao Sipi Minisowin	165	227	392
Nikan Awasisak Inc.	71	59	130
Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation Wellness Centre	161	256	417
Opaskwayak Cree Nation Child and Family Services	56	76	132
Total	1366	1558	2924

Children In Care (Numbers include Federal and Provincial responsibility)

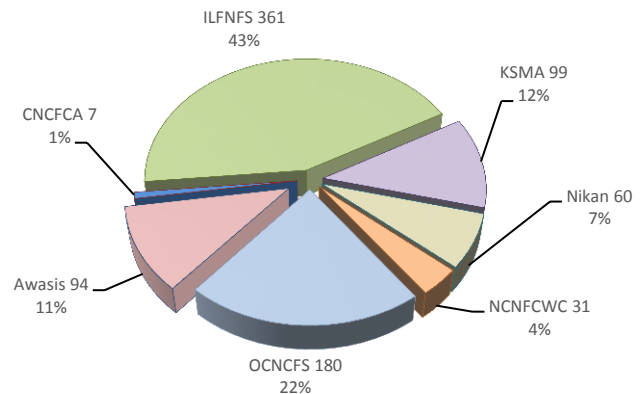
Agency	2009 /2010	2010 /2011	2011 /2012	2012 /2013
Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba	632	718	637	698
Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency	640	659	577	634
Island Lake First Nations Family Services	355	370	447	521
Kinosao Sipi Minisowin	293	357	369	392
Nikan Awasisak Inc.	0	0	131	130
Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation Wellness Centre	414	376	392	417
Opaskwayak Cree Nation Child and Family Services	117	124	111	132
Total	2451	2604	2664	2924

Special Needs / Rates Program

On April 23, 2012 the Deputy Minister of Family Services and Labour informed that their Department is working with the four Child and Family Services Authorities to improve the practices and controls on child maintenance payments. This is the new child maintenance review and protocol effective as of June 1, 2012. The Department, in conjunction with the Authorities, will review high cost individual placements. The review will assess the manner in which these rates were established and ensure they reflect the level of services required by the child. This review will also consider placement costs where multiple high needs children are placed with one care provider.

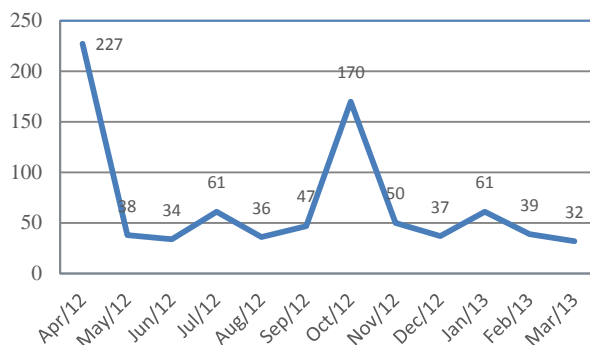
Northern Authority has since worked with special rates committees from each agency to follow the individual rate adjustment protocol known as IRAP. Training and collaborative working groups have met to discuss the process and the existing child maintenance disparities between the Northern and Southern agencies. The Special Needs Coordinator is responsible for processing special needs request for levels I–IV based on the assessment of children in care (CIC); special needs provides information to the Collaborative table; increases in the fees for service, respite and support with supporting documentation to validate each request. The special rates requests are reviewed and signed by the CEO or a designate after a complete evaluation and assessment by the coordinator and other collateral approval.

Special Needs Funding Fiscal Year 2012 -2013



*The number of special needs requests has increased during 2012 – 2013 time period and the peak is highest during the expiry dates in May and October of each year.

Special Needs Requests



The FASD Specialist Role

The Northern Authority FASD Specialist position was developed as part of the “Changes for Children” initiative which was created in response to recommendations made in reviews of the Manitoba CFS system. The FASD Specialist position is part of the Provincially Coordinated FASD Strategy within Manitoba, for supporting children and families dealing with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder. The FASD specific goals for the Changes for Children Initiative were:

- FASD Specialists within the child welfare system;
- Enhanced Public Education and awareness;
- FASD training to improve the existing service delivery system;
- Support for women with addictions; and
- Increased research to guide the development of new programs and policies.

In 2008, each of the four Authorities hired their FASD Specialist to complete work that was guided by two Statements of Work designed to develop provincially approved Provincial FASD case management practice standards and engage the child welfare Authorities in the development of the Provincial FASD Strategy and related initiatives.

The Northern Authority FASD position remained vacant from late 2011 until of April, 2013 at which time; the role was blended into an existing Resource Development position. The current work plan tasks relate to the development of needs assessments for each of the seven Northern First Nation CFS Agencies as well as training curriculum and presentations based upon the existing FASD Standards.

The FASD Specialist's Role

The specialist role was originally designed to research, analyze, develop, implement and evaluate the services associated with the FASD programs and services delivered by the agencies. The FASD Specialist's role included consultation, communication, and work with the Joint Training Unit to promote FASD training in the child welfare system, research, and program and policy development. The role also requires representation in a number of committees including the Provincial FASD Strategy, the Federal FASD Working Group and participation in activities that support the Northern Authority, agencies, and within the FASD community.



*"Truly wonderful, the mind of a child is."
~ Jedi Master Yoda ~*

Foster Care Services

The Northern Authority Foster Care department and its agencies are responsible for responding to various enquiries and/or complaints relating to foster homes, these include:

- Becoming a foster parent;
- Licensing appeals/decisions;
- Grievances by foster child(ren);
- Removal of foster children;
- Customary care;
- Kinship care; and
- Repatriation.

Age of Majority

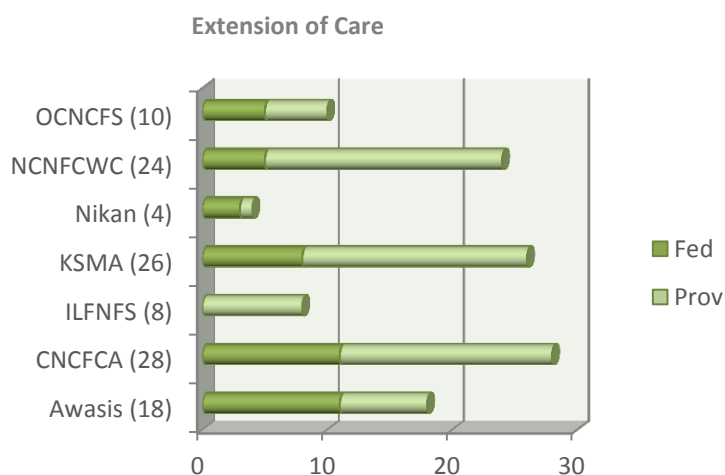
As of March 31, 2013 there were 118 permanent wards on an extension of care, of these 64% were provincially funded, the remainder (36%) were funded by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada as illustrated on the Extension of Care chart. The Northern Authority is required, as per legislation, to consider agency requests to extend the care and maintenance of permanent wards beyond the age of majority. To be eligible for an extension of care the youth must be in care under a permanent order (PO) or voluntary surrender of guardianship (VSG). Youth who are in care, under any other legal status are not eligible to receive an extension of care.

Generally, an extension of care is approved when the youth is in the process of transitioning to adult services, is in the process of achieving an educational diploma or degree or is in the process of developing skills for independent living to ensure the youth will successfully transition out of agency care.

When submitting an application to extend the care and maintenance of a permanent ward the agency requires an application no less than three months prior to the youth reaching the

age of majority. The application process includes a case plan that has been updated within the last three months and agreed to by the youth, a social history and a copy of the PO or VSG. Typically the extension of care is granted for a period of six months; under exceptional circumstances the extension of care may be approved for a period of one year in instances when a youth is attending a post-secondary institution or is in the process of being transitioned into adult services. Agencies are encouraged to start the application process to adult services when the youth is 15 years old as the referral and program eligibility process to adult services can take some time.

At times an agency may request a continuance of care beyond the initial six months or one year extension of care. In these instances the agency is required to remit an updated case plan and a progress report to the Northern Authority at least one month prior to the expiry date of the previous extension of care.



SUMMARY OF CURRENT ACTIVITIES

The following are current programs or committee participation by the Foster Care/Resource/FASD/Special Rates/Case

Management team and attended by assigned Northern Authority staff.

MYTEAM Program - two representatives from Northern Authority are on the selection committee (e-selection committee) which is chaired by the Special Projects Coordinator from Child Protection Branch. MYTEAM Program is a four-year pilot project to support youth who are leaving or who have recently left care of Child and Family Services. MYTEAM will provide a range of services intended to address participant needs in a holistic manner, inclusive of housing, education training, finance, employment and community supports. There will be a maximum of 22 participants in the program in Winnipeg and up to eight in Thompson.

The goal of MYTEAM is for participants to successfully transition to independent living. The project will target youth who meet the eligibility criteria and are deemed to have reasonable potential to achieve the service goals. The MYTEAM e-Selection Committee will review referrals for prospective candidates for MYTEAM and support the recommendations of the service provider wherever possible.

Finance Directors Meetings – attended by Special Rates Coordinator and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) regarding maintenance and special rates.

Standardized Rate Committee – attended by the Special Rates Coordinator and CFO on as needed basis to discuss the structured standardized rates with other Authorities and the Province.

FASD – Linda Burnside/Don Fuchs FASD Research project; Jason Brown (RESOLVE) foster parent research; Stepping Out on Saturdays (Thompson based FASD respite Program) and

meetings with the Authority FASD Specialists to determine the current scope of work involved in the role.

Alternative Care – sub-committee meet bi-weekly; and oversees several working groups and facilitates the completion of recommendations from various CFS reviews and reports. The ACS Committee oversees several tasks and working groups including: emergency placement resource (EPR) working group; placement services team; Foster Parent Curriculum Competencies; Resource Development Working Group (RDWG); Children and Youth with Complex Needs Protocol (CYCNP) development (inter-sectorial group led by Healthy Child Manitoba); foster parent manual; Circle of Care (recruitment and retention focus); kinship care recommendations; and Interdepartmental Protocol for Children/Youth with Severe to Profound Emotional/Behavioral Disorders.

Northern Authority Foster Home Appeals Committee – Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Ad hoc committee was developed to discuss the foster home appeals that come to the Northern Authority. Meetings are held monthly or on a needed basis and include staff from the Standards Unit.

Dream Seekers/Age of Majority – Northern Authority meetings to discuss the on-going planning for the funding for this initiative.

RESOURCE / PLACEMENT DEVELOPMENT

Research, preparation and submission of proposals for Culture Camps.

Research and preparation of proposals for Age of Majority.

Research on existing Provincial, Northern Authority and agency resources and alternative care policies and practices.

Research on existing partnerships and placement resources for the northern agencies.

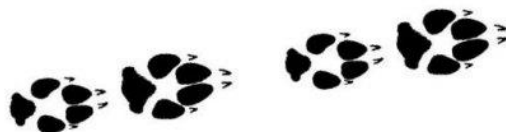
Review and provision of feedback to Lynda Fulton (Provincial Licensing Coordinator) at the Child Protection Branch regarding applications and proposals submitted to the branch for licensing – one proposal was reviewed in May.

Participation in the development of individualized placement resources for several youth with complex needs.

Child Health, Women's Health/CFS Working Group – meets on a monthly basis at the Health Sciences Centre with a membership that includes a representative from each of the four Authorities, CPB, ANCR, Women's, Children, Psychiatric Health Unit. The working group operates similarly to a networking group where information is shared; concerns and issues related to child welfare are addressed in collaboration with the membership.

Child Sexual Exploitation Unit/StreetReach – is a program initiative known as Tracia's Trust: Manitoba Sexual Exploitation Strategy. The CPB Sexual Exploitation Unit is involved with youth who are deemed as high risk victims (HRV); develop an intervention and prevention plan in collaboration with respective agencies/Authorities. HRV is closely monitored and or flagged by ANCR and Police Sexual Exploitation Unit to ensure the CIC's safety and protection.

Provincial Advisory Committee on Child Abuse (PACCA) is a multi-disciplinary, multi-agency, community and cross-government body organized to meet regularly to consider issues related to all forms of child abuse; and to make recommendations to the Executive Director of the Child Protection and Support Services Branch and as appropriate to other Ministries, to improve the well-being of children and families. The purpose of PACCA is to coordinate efforts to eliminate the abuse of children (excerpt of information from PACCA). They meet twice on an annual basis with representatives from the four Authorities as well. The Standards Manager is assigned to attend these meetings and report back to the Authority.



*"A child needs your love the most when she deserves it the least."
~ Anonymous ~*

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The Community Relations Specialist:

- is focused on building strong working relationships between Northern Manitoba First Nations, Northern Authority management and staff to determine issues which need to be communicated to the Northern Authority agencies and government representatives;
- is responsible for promoting and fostering a collaborative and positive relationship between the Northern Authority and all stakeholders with respect to Northern First Nation Child and Family Service context; and
- takes the lead role in designing policies, procedures and protocols to guide the transfer of information from the Northern Authority, and its member agencies to external contacts such as provincial and federal government representatives and other collaterals.

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.

Capacity Building has been another primary focus area for the Northern Authority, there has been plenty of opportunity throughout this past year during a number of meetings or gatherings to establish and improve working relations with Northern Manitoba First Nations and the Northern Agencies, the Northern Authority has recognized the importance of their role and existence in the communities they work with and continue to make improvements in this regard.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child & Family Services Authority

Head Office

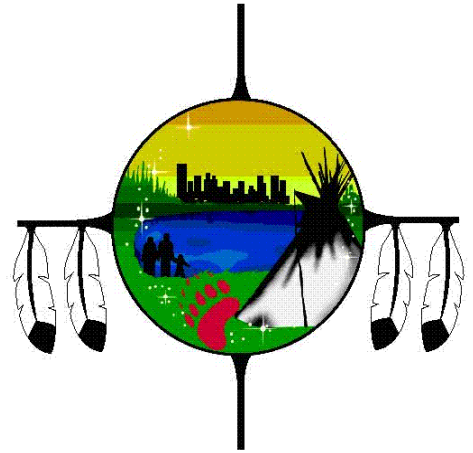
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