



Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs
EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS

ANNUAL REPORT

2022 - 2023

AMC Mandate

The mandate of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, is through the Chiefs-in-Assembly, to devise collective and common political strategies and mechanisms for coordinated action by First Nations and their organizations to:

- Promote, preserve, and protect Aboriginal and treaty rights for First Nation people in Manitoba;
- Preserve and enhance the rights and freedoms of First Nations in Manitoba as distinct peoples;
- Strengthen and restore the foundations of First Nation cultures, traditions, languages, economies, and societies;
- Affirm First Nation rights as peoples to exercise and practice self-determination and self-government;
- Protect the integrity and authority of each First Nation's customs, laws, and practices; and
- Preserve and enhance the role of equal participation of First Nation women within political, economic, and social spheres of First Nation governments and organizations.



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In Memoriam

In solemn remembrance of those we have lost, we dedicate this "In Memoriam" page as a heartfelt tribute within our annual report. This page serves as a poignant reminder of the cherished colleagues, friends, and loved ones who have left an indelible mark on our organization and in our nations. As we honour their memory, we draw strength from the legacies they have left behind, inspiring us to continue our journey with resilience and purpose.



Roger Roulette



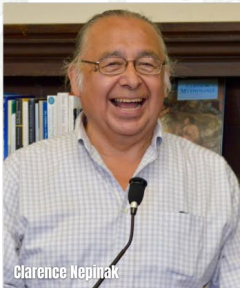
Joseph Irvine Keeper



Jacquie Black



Helen Joy Keeper, 10, Leon Keeper Jr., 9, Big Bear Keeper, 7, and Rowan Thomas, 4



Clarence Nepinak



Charlie Nelson



Ann Thomas Callahan



Janine Highway



Harvey Nepinak

- Helen Joy Keeper, 10, Leon Keeper Jr., 9, Big Bear Keeper, 7, and Rowan Thomas, 4. (October, 2023)
- Roger Roulette (November, 2022)
- Clarence Nepinak (November, 2022)
- Charlie Nelson (November, 2022)
- Joseph Irvine Keeper (January, 2023)
- Jacquie Black (January, 2023)
- Ann Thomas Callahan (January, 2023)
- Janine Highway (March, 2023)
- Harvey Nepinak (April, 2023)

Grand Chief's Annual Report Message



It is with immense pride and honour that I present the 2022-2023 Annual Report of the AMC as we commemorate our 35th anniversary on the ancestral lands of the Brokenhead Ojibway First Nation. As the first female Grand Chief of the AMC, serving our esteemed 62-member First Nations has been a privilege of utmost importance. This report represents not only the end of a productive year but also a comprehensive overview of our collective achievements, unwavering dedication, and challenges faced. I am humbled by the extraordinary commitment demonstrated by our team, and it is my honour to share these accomplishments with you.

Throughout the year, the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs has been at the forefront of advocacy, tirelessly championing for the rights and well-being of our First Nations citizens on and off-reserve. We have engaged in significant advocacy efforts to secure vital resources, foster meaningful partnerships, and effect positive change at all levels of governance, which you will see throughout this report. Our voice has resonated in


legislative forums, policy discussions, and grassroots initiatives, resulting in tangible progress and improved conditions for our people.

I am immensely proud of the strides we have made as an organization. We have strengthened our internal structures, enhanced our capacity to serve our First Nations, and expanded our reach to better address the diverse needs of our growing citizenship within Manitoba. This year, we have witnessed the transformative impact of our initiatives in areas such as education, healthcare, economic development, treaty relations, and cultural preservation, bringing about positive change and opportunities for First Nations to thrive.

I am truly grateful for the opportunity to lead such an exceptional organization, one that has consistently demonstrated resilience, unity, and unwavering commitment. The relentless dedication and passion of our members inspire me daily, and I am honoured to stand alongside each and every one of them.

As we reflect upon our accomplishments, let us celebrate the progress we have made while remaining mindful of the challenges that lie ahead. Together, we will continue to advocate tirelessly, ensuring that the voices of our First Nations in Manitoba are heard and respected.

In closing, I extend my deepest appreciation for the work of each Chief that represents the 62 members of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, for your unwavering dedication to your people, and for the collaborative spirit



you all bring to the tables we gather around. Our collective achievements are a testament to our shared vision and commitment to empowering our First Nations. Let us continue our journey with renewed determination and solidarity, making lasting changes for the betterment of our people.

Ekosani,

Grand Chief Cathy Merrick
Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs



Executive Director Message

As the Executive Director completing my first year in this role, I am privileged to reflect on the pivotal strides the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs (AMC) has made this past year. I am both honoured and humbled to be a part of our collective journey, and I stand with you in our shared commitment to represent, advocate, and support our affiliated 62 First Nations.


We have made meaningful advancements and launched new initiatives that have strengthened our organization. Our focus on human resources, organizational growth, training, and retention has been key to our progress. We've fortified our operational capabilities and enhanced our capacity to serve our 62 affiliated First Nations. Following a strategic review of our operations, the Secretariat has developed an action plan based on the recommendations in the AMC Organizational Review of 2021 and the Human Resource Review of 2022.

We have accomplished notable strides in implementing this plan, with multiple activities currently in progress and more slated for the upcoming fiscal year. One such accomplishment is the 'Talent/People/Skills: Honouring Gifts' initiative, a program developed in partnership with the Asper School of Business at the University of Manitoba to offer a new First Nations MBA program. This endeavour is a testament to our commitment to bolstering education, skills development, and empowering our employees.

Navigating the rapid pace of the technological environment, we are modernizing our core infrastructure, incorporating cloud-based services where appropriate. This has been possible due to secured funding to address shortfalls in our operational infrastructure, demonstrating our proactive commitment to enhancing our communication efficiency with our members and the public. Additionally, we've made significant developments and undertaken transformative initiatives that have strengthened our organization. Our focus on Administration, including Finance, Human Resources, Information Management, Information Technology, Media Relations, and Communications, has been instrumental in this progress. Through these concerted efforts, we have fortified our operational capabilities and enhanced our capacity to serve our 62-member First Nations. Moreover, the modernization of our infrastructure has allowed us to meet our stakeholders' needs better and foster more seamless communication and collaboration within our organization.

Beyond our internal progress, the AMC remains dedicated to supporting ongoing AMC advocacy for essential causes such as First Nations governance, health, land and treaty rights, economic development, social justice, and climate change. Through partnerships and negotiations with key stakeholders, including the Department of Indigenous Services Canada, the Province of Manitoba, and the City of Winnipeg, we foster collaboration for mutual growth, benefitting all First Nations people.





As we embark on another year of service to our affiliated First Nations, we remain steadfast in the central goal of the Secretariat: to support and advocate for the needs and action plans of the affiliated First Nations in Manitoba. With the continuous effort of our dedicated team, we will achieve these goals and create a lasting impact on our communities.

On behalf of the AMC, I express my profound gratitude for the trust and commitment our Leadership members and our staff show. Together, we have achieved significant milestones and will continue to advance our shared mission. As we look forward to another year of service, let us celebrate the monumental progress we have made and embrace the promising future that lies ahead.

Ekosani,

Howard Burston
Executive Director, AMC

Grand Chief's Office

The Grand Chief's Office derives its authority and mandate from the AMC Constitution and resolutions passed by the AMC Chiefs-in-Assembly and the Executive Council of Chiefs. The Grand Chief also provides political advocacy and support for the AMC's member First Nations and their Councils.

Staff

- Grand Chief Cathy Merrick
- Natalie Ballentyne, Senior Political Policy Advisor
- Walter Spence, Senior Political Policy Advisor
- Dennis White Bird, Political Liaison
- Jacob Dorie, Communications Specialist
- Linda Ackegan, Executive Assistant
- Sheleen Daniels, Executive Assistant

The Grand Chief has the executive privilege to participate as an active member of the Chiefs Committees of the AMC and has the mandate to assist in coordinating the planning and operations of the various units of the AMC. The Grand Chief is the principal spokesperson on common issues regionally and articulates regional positions and messages nationally with the Prime Minister, various federal ministers and federal agencies and bodies and accordingly takes a Leadership role in advocating the rights and interests of AMC-member First Nations.

Advocacy and Accomplishments

Throughout the year, the Grand Chief's Office has steadfastly committed to representing the interests and rights of its member First Nations. It has worked tirelessly to advocate for improved services, sustainable development, and the preservation of treaty and inherent rights. The collective efforts have been focused on fostering meaningful partnerships, engaging in constructive dialogue with government bodies, and ensuring the voices of their Leadership and their Nations are heard at every level.

The past year has seen notable achievements in various areas. Progress continues in advancing treaty rights and self-determination, including intervening in various legal cases and policy discussions. Proactive steps have been taken to address social and economic disparities, promoting initiatives that enhance the education, healthcare, and employment opportunities of the people. Over the last year, AMC-member First Nations Leadership gathered to discuss critical issues impacting the Nations, such as Canada's Indigenous health legislation and the ongoing impacts of the Natural Resources Transfer Act (NRTA) on our inherent and treaty rights. At these tables, the Chiefs created unified positions and provided mandates for the Grand Chief's Office and the AMC Secretariat to act upon.

Many opportunities have arisen to assist and advocate for positions specific to the needs of the First Nations in certain nation-based, territorial, or treaty areas. The office has supported several First Nations over the past year to address various states of emergencies concerning suicides in their Nations and a lack of fire protection in their communities, lobby for funds to address the MMIWG2S+ crisis, and hosted the first annual Women's Gathering to promote health and healing.

Key Projects and Initiatives

Over these last several months, while advancing a collective agenda, the Grand Chief's Office has initiated several key projects that will benefit our communities and citizens. These include:

- securing funding from the Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) to finalize the Prairie Green Landfill Feasibility Study to determine the feasibility of conducting the human search and recovery efforts of Mercedes Myran, Morgan Harris and Mashkode Bizhiki'ikwe (Buffalo Woman);
- continued engagement on the First Nations Regional Education Agreement and Funding Model;
- continued work on the Alternative Budget for First Nations in Manitoba that was tabled with several Ministers and the Standing Committee on Finance;
- continued engagement with the Department of Indigenous Services Canada through the establishment of monthly meetings on key files;
- secured funding for engagement in Emergency Management to create a regional First Nations-governed entity to respond to various emergencies; and
- secured a three-year funding agreement for the First Nations Family Advocate Office (FNFAO) to continue their important work.

Unfortunately, despite our best efforts in a time of reconciliation, our efforts to protect our treaty and inherent rights are impacted due to the lack of a faithful nation-to-nation partnership with the federal and provincial governments. Governments continue to draft and pass legislation that has profound and long-lasting impacts on First Nations in Manitoba. AMC continues to monitor all legislation that both Canada and Manitoba table with the view that AMC will judicially intervene when those Bills impact the treaty and inherent rights of First Nations.

Moving Forward

Looking ahead, the Grand Chief's Office has laid out a strategic path to remain vigilant and proactive in addressing the communities' ongoing issues. The plan emphasizes continuing to prioritize the rights and well-being of their people. Key to this strategy is seeking meaningful and sustainable solutions to the challenges ahead, fostering collaboration, and leveraging collective strengths. By implementing these initiatives and working together, they aim to overcome any obstacles and build a brighter, more resilient future for all.

AMC Council of Elders

Elders Message

As the Elders Council, we congratulate the current and former Leadership, Management, and Administration for their unwavering dedication.

We have achieved significant milestones throughout the past three and a half decades, uniting our Leadership and First Nations Peoples in a shared vision for a stronger community. We acknowledge the disclosure of abuses at the Indian Residential Schools and the sombre reality of unmarked graves, reaffirming our commitment to healing and reconciliation.

The Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls Report, and the Manitoba Treaty Land Entitlement exemplify our determination to seek justice and secure our inherent rights. Our efforts in Membership/Citizenship and First Nations Gaming have created new opportunities for prosperity.

Addressing challenges, the AMC mandates recognition of treaty rights, education, healthcare, culture, language preservation, and the well-being of our children and families through Jordan's Principle. We honour the guidance of Elders and Knowledge Keepers from our treaty and Dakota territory and cherish the teachings of those who have passed. These are our Ancestors who never compromised their identity or protection of our spiritual languages and practises to live in a very sacred and traditional way – and to remember that the Great Spirit, our Creator gave us everything we need to survive.

We say thank you to Grand Chief Cathy Merrick for her dedication, strong voice, and Leadership in achieving a very successful first year in office and ensuring the Elders throughout the year are involved in all key meetings and the Chiefs Assemblies, we look forward to working with her and Leadership into the future.

This 35th Anniversary embodies our strength and resilience as united First Nations. Guided by our Elders' wisdom and our Ancestors' spirit, we strive to build a brighter tomorrow for all our Nations and Peoples.

Miigwetch, Kinanaskomitin, Masi-cho, Wopida, Pidamiye,

Respectfully,

AMC Council of Elders, Grandmothers, Knowledge Keepers:

Florence Paynter, Sandy Bay First Nation, Treaty 1

Harry Bone, Keeseekoowenin Ojibwe First Nation, Treaty 2

Sherry Copenace, Ojibways of Onigaming First Nation, Treaty 3

James Cote, Waywayseecappo First Nation, Treaty 4

William Lathlin, Opaskwayak Cree Nation, Treaty 5 (formerly)

Parry Francois, Mathias Colomb Cree Nation, Treaty 6 (formerly)

Katherine Whitecloud, Sioux Valley Dakota Nation

AMC Women's Council

The AMC Women's Council continues to address and advocate for First Nations women's issues, rights, and responsibilities at a political level. The Women's Council has built upon and maintained cultural respect to honour First Nations women and represents the interests of First Nations women living on and off-reserve.

Women's Council Membership

Chair, Chief Betsy Kennedy, War Lake First Nation
Co-Chair, Heidi Cook, Misipawistik Cree Nation
Chief Shirley Ducharme, O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation
Chief Lola Thunderchild, Canupawakpa Dakota Nation
Chief Vera Mitchell, Poplar River First Nation
Chief Angela Levasseur, Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation
Chief Kyra Wilson, Long Plain First Nation
Chief Taralee Beardy, Tataskweyak Cree Nation
Councillor Sophie Lockhart, Fox Lake Cree Nation
Councillor Cindy McKay, Minegoziibe Anishinabe (Pine Creek First Nation)

The AMC Women's Council has dedicated the past year to supporting and uplifting our First Nations through thoughtful endorsements, coordinated initiatives, and cultural celebrations. We proudly endorsed the First Nations Family Advocate Office (FNFAO) 7-Year "Bringing Our Children Home Report." We organized the Sovereign Nations Children and Family Laws Symposium to further advocate for First Nations child welfare. Our partnerships, such as the one with Telus Communications that provided free cell phones to at-risk First Nations women and 2S+ people, have enhanced safety and connectivity for First Nations women, 2S and at-risk youth.

Decision Making and Meetings

On October 18, 2022, the Women's Council appointed Chief Heidi Cook as Vice Chair to assist Chair Chief Betsy Kennedy.

Initiatives and Endorsements

- Endorsed the FNFAO 7-Year "Bringing Our Children Home Report."
- Directed FNFAO to coordinate a Sovereign Nations Children and Family Laws Symposium in November 2022.
- Supported a partnership with TELUS Communications Inc. to provide free cell phones to at-risk First Nations women and 2S+ people.
- Oversaw an artist call on behalf of the AMC Jordan's Principle Implementation Team.
- Assisted and supported the AMC Jordan's Principle Knowledge Translation engagements, activities, and objectives.
- Considered AMC Jordan's Principle Technical Advisory Group (TAG) information brought forward by TAG through meetings and information sharing.
- Hosted "*Iskeww Minwayawin, Grassroots Women, Healing our Spirits Healing our Hearts,*" a successful cultural gathering on March 8 to 10, 2023.

MMIWG2S+ and MMIM Initiatives

Supported the development of various initiatives and plans regarding missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people (MMIWG2S+) and missing and murdered Indigenous men (MMIM). Considered establishing a Youth Advisory Group to inform recommendations related to the provincial inquest into the death of Eishia Hudson.

Regional Collaborations

Considered directing AMC-FNFAO to establish a formal relationship with the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth (MACY) to work on the investigation of death and critical incidents involving First Nations children and youth in care.

Looking Forward

The AMC Women's Council has actively worked to advocate and support various initiatives that align with the interests and well-being of First Nations, with a clear focus on inclusivity, collaboration, and proactive Leadership. Their work continues to be guided by a commitment to cultural respect and the principles of holistic well-being.



**Chief Betsy Kennedy
(Chair)**
War Lake First Nation



Chief Vera Mitchell
Poplar River First Nation



Chief Taralee Beardy
Tataskweyak Cree Nation



Chief Shirley Ducharme
O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree
Nation



Councillor Sophie Lockhart
Fox Lake Cree Nation



Chief Heidi Cook
Misipawistik Cree Nation



Chief Lola Thunderchild
Canupawakpa Dakota
Nation



Chief Kyra Wilson
Long Plain First Nation



Chief Angela Levasseur
Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation



Councillor Cindy McKay
Minegoziibe Anishinabe
(Pine Creek First Nation)

Executive Council of Chiefs Report

Chairperson, Grand Chief Cathy Merrick

The Executive Council of Chiefs (ECC) derives its mandate from the AMC Constitution and Chiefs-in-Assembly certified resolutions. Comprising the Grand Chief and ten Chiefs—five selected by northern First Nations and five selected by southern First Nations—the ECC serves as an authoritative body between assemblies. Below is the current membership of the ECC:

AMC Women's Council

Chief Betsy Kennedy (Chair), War Lake First Nation
Chief Vera Mitchell, Poplar River First Nation
Chief Taralee Beardy, Tataskweyak Cree Nation
Chief Shirley Ducharme, O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation
Chief Heidi Cook, Misipawistik Cree Nation
Chief Lola Thunderchild, Canupawakpa Dakota Nation
Chief Kyra Wilson, Long Plain First Nation
Chief Angela Levasseur, Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation
Councillor Sophie Lockhart, Fox Lake Cree Nation
Councillor Cindy McKay, Minegoziibe Anishinabe (Pine Creek First Nation)

Southern Representatives

Chief Cornell McLean, Lake Manitoba First Nation, Interlake Reserve Tribal Council
Chief Jason Daniels, Swan Lake First Nation, Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council
Chief Derek Nepinak, Minegoziibe Anishinabe (Pine Creek First Nation), West Region Tribal Council
Chief Sheldon Kent, Black River First Nation, SouthEast Resource Development Corporation

Independent Southern Representatives (one vote)

Chief David Crate, Fisher River Cree Nation
Chief EJ Fontaine, Sagkeeng First Nation
Chief Murray Clearsky, Waywayseecappo First Nation

Northern Representatives

Grand Chief Scott Harper, Anishinew Okimawin
Grand Chief Walter Wastesicoot, Keewatin Tribal Council
Chief Nelson Genaille, Sapotaweyak Cree Nation, Swampy Cree Tribal Council

Independent Northern Representatives (2 Votes)

Chief Angela Levasseur, Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation
Chief Larson Anderson, Norway House Cree Nation
Chief Shirley Ducharme, O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation
Chief David Monias, Pimicikamak Cree Nation

Council Functions

The ECC fulfills its mandate by:

- Deliberating and documenting decisions on various issues as mandated by resolutions from Chiefs Assemblies.
- Voting on resolutions carried over from Assemblies when time constraints prevent their passage during those meetings.

- Maintaining linkages to AMC-mandated organizations through the call-for-names process to fill vacant Board of Director positions.

Mandated Organizations

The ECC maintains links with several AMC-mandated organizations, including:

- Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre (MFNERC)
- First Peoples Economic Growth Fund (FPEGF)
- First Peoples Development Inc. (FPDI)
- First Nations Health and Social Secretariat (FNHSSM)
- Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba (TRCM)

Status of Activities

Throughout the 2022-2023 year, the ECC held seven meetings on various dates. During these sessions, the Council addressed multiple issues, including but not limited to:

- Approved the revival and continuation of the First Nations Education Trust (FNET) in Manitoba, subject to provincial corporate law.
- Appointed Chiefs Sidney Ballantyne and Kyra Wilson to the AMC Chiefs Committee on Housing.
- Supported the AMC Women's Council's recommendation for a class-action lawsuit on provincially funded First Nations children in care.
- Directed the Manitoba First Nations Casino Trust to manage an Open Call process for on-reserve candidates seeking appointment as Trustees.
- Approved the development of the Alternative Federal Budget for 2024-2025.
- Supported the Final Settlement Agreement for victims of Canada's discrimination on child welfare and Jordan's Principle.
- Approved various actions related to legal challenges, interventions, and support for compensation and reforms in multiple areas, including climate change, by-laws enforcement, and Treaty 9 claims.

The ECC acknowledges the vital support and guidance the AMC Elders Council provides in advancing its work. The wisdom of the Knowledge Keepers ensures that the spirit and intent of the treaties and agreements negotiated by past leaders endure for generations to come.



Management and Operations

Staff

Howard Burston, Executive Director
Ritchie Arthurson, Finance Director
Trisha Sinclair, Human Resource Director
David Dalglish, IT Manager
Jennifer Storm, Communications Manager



Core Functions

Political Infrastructure: Grand Chief; Executive Council of Chiefs; Personnel and Finance Chiefs Committee; annual, special, and general assemblies; Chiefs Committees; AMC Women's Council; and Council of Elders.

Administration: Executive Director, Finance, Human Resources, Information Management, Information Technology, Media Relations, and Communications.

Strategic Policy Coordination and Analysis: The AMC engages in interdepartmental policy coordination and development, conducting essential research and community engagement to formulate policy positions and documentation. This includes facilitating briefings with Leadership and engaging in policy meetings with federal and, when necessary, provincial departments. Under the guidance of the Grand Chief and the Executive Director, the senior staff are responsible for implementing the decisions reached through the AMC Chiefs-in-Assembly resolutions and Executive Council of Chiefs motions.

Organizational Review and Action Plans

2021 Review and Implementation: The 2021 AMC Organizational Review listed 50 considerations in six areas. A focus on organizational change and improvements is ongoing, with senior management, staff, and Leadership developing action items.

Action Plan Activities: Efforts include reviewing and implementing the 2021 Organization Review, guided discussions, management input into organizational change, change management strategies, prioritizing action plans, and identifying funding opportunities.

Collaboration and Improvements: The Senior Management Team has collaborated to enhance functions, processes, and policies. Fifteen activities have been completed, 15 are in progress, and nine are planned for the next fiscal year. Includes the development of a new First Nations MBA program.

Work Plan of the AMC Secretariat

Includes areas such as:

- First Nations governance
- renewing fiscal relationships
- education and skills development
- early learning and childcare
- health
- lands and treaty land entitlements
- resource benefit sharing
- climate change and the environment
- economic and social development
- children, women, families
- housing and infrastructure

Annual Work Plan Activities

Strategically planned to:

- Facilitate First Nations' right to self-determination.
- Reflect community-level priorities.

- Promote partnerships with Canada and the province.
- Provide timeframes for strategic outcomes, performance, effectiveness, and financial accountabilities.

Communication and Media Relations

Media Outreach: Utilizes the website, social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter), and live streaming of assemblies, rallies, press conferences, events, publications, and appearances on radio and TV.

Engagement: Attends workshops, meetings, and forums with communities, senior officials, working groups, and committees for information gathering and reporting.

Community-Driven Projects: Technical working groups consisting of community or regional representatives develop feedback and report for Leadership and First Nations members.

National Coordination: Monitors regional information on national First Nations and federal government initiatives, including policy, legislation, and issues impacting First Nations women, children, families, urban strategy, and the federal budget.

Status of Activities

Senior Staff Meetings: Regular discussions on management, financial monitoring, AMC Constitution, Chiefs-in-Assembly resolutions, funding agreements, and critical initiatives and projects.

Committee Involvement: Review administrative and financial operations with the Personnel and Finance Chiefs Committee.

IT Enhancements: Embraces modern technology by improving outreach to First Nations and the public with infrastructure upgrades and cloud-based services.

Accomplishments Over the Past Year

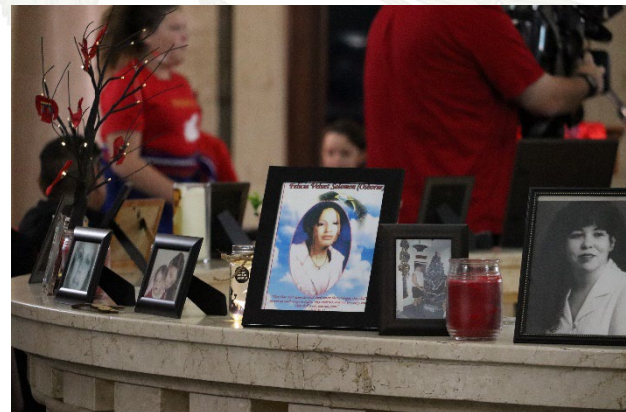
- AMC Annual General Assembly in October 2022.
- Special Assemblies from August 2022, January, and May 2023.

- Implementation of AMC Organization Improvement Plan, September 2022.
- Joint Assembly on Health Legislation, January 2023.

Missing Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit

Staff

Morene Gabriel, MMIWG2S+ Policy Analyst



The AMC has long advocated for missing and murdered indigenous women and girls (MMIWG) on behalf of AMC-member First Nations. With the AMC endorsement of the 2019 report, "Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls," that advocacy included MMIWG and two-spirit plus (MMIWG2S+) individuals and served as validation of the ongoing commitment to confront this growing crisis. The AMC's final submissions to the MMIWG National Inquiry highlighted the profound impact of colonization, which subjected First Nations people to Western ideologies and institutions that conflicted with their laws and ways of being. The AMC emphasizes empowering First Nations to reclaim their governance, traditional medicine, and spiritual practices to address this crisis. AMC believes that achieving a nation-to-nation relationship is essential for meaningful progress.

Emphasizing UNDRIP as a Framework

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) provides a framework for this objective. The AMC stresses that the federal government must fully support First Nations governments and fund initiatives that promote self-determination for First Nations in Canada. The AMC's recommendations to the MMIWG National Inquiry are grounded in UNDRIP, advocating for self-determination and recognizing First Nations' distinct legal institutions.

In December 2022, the AMC resubmitted proposals for regional activities, including establishing an MMIWG2S+ Advocacy Unit for AMC-member First Nations. This unit is accountable to First Nations Leadership and aims to provide culturally appropriate services and support to survivors and family members on their healing journey. The Advocacy Unit's new policy analyst works within the AMC Secretariat to develop protocols addressing the Calls for Justice of the MMIWG National Inquiry, safety, prevention, education, and advocacy concerning MMIWG2S+ in all areas.

Key Activities and Initiatives

Work on the initiative began in June 2023, focusing on developing a work plan, strategy, and ongoing research and policy review. Some key activities include:

1. MMIWG2S+ Community Health Plan and Health Needs Assessment: Undertaking an assessment to identify the health needs of MMIWG2S+ and creating a draft template for the health program plan based on the assessment findings.

2. AMC First Nation Implementation Committee for MMIWG2S+ Families and Survivors: Establishing an internal committee to address the needs of MMIWG2S+ across all program areas and create a formal process for intake and referral for families and survivors.

3. Public Awareness Campaign for MMIWG2S+:

Raising awareness of outstanding and current MMIWG2S+ cases in Manitoba and promoting current AMC projects and initiatives.

4. Occupational Health and Safety: Developing policies to address the unique occupational and health and safety concerns issues for front-line workers supporting MMIWG2S+ survivors and families.



Challenges and Considerations

Numerous families grappling with MMIWG2S+-related issues often encounter a patchwork of services, which frequently fail to accommodate their distinct experiences and needs. Accessing the needs services is particularly challenging for those required to commute or move to Winnipeg. Although First Nation-specific health services provide the same mainstream health options, they often have limited capacity and funding for specialized programs focused on MMIWG2S+. Such programming could include services tailored to First Nations MMIWG2S+ survivors and their families. The services may encompass victim support programs, counselling, a therapy designed explicitly for MMIWG2S+ individuals, and specialized health care to address trauma-related issues like Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), complemented by family therapy.

Moving Forward

The AMC remains committed to addressing violence against First Nations women, girls, and two-spirit+ individuals within the context of a race-based genocide and the implementation of UNDRIP. They continue to advocate for self-determination and recognize First Nations' legal traditions and worldviews. By empowering First Nations and addressing the unique needs of MMIWG2S+ survivors and families, the AMC strives to create meaningful change and healing within their Nations and communities.

Two-Spirit and LGBTQQIA+ People Inclusion

Staff

Albert McLeod, Policy Analyst



The AMC has undertaken the formal inclusion of two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual, and all other sexual orientations and genders (Two-Spirit LGBTQQIA+) individuals, a significant development enacted through AMC Resolution OCT-22.01. This resolution established a Two-Spirit and LGBTQQIA+ Council within the AMC structure. In concert with the Chiefs Committee on Governance Renewal and the Women's Council, the AMC Secretariat has been directed to propose amendments to the AMC Constitution to accommodate this transformative inclusion.



First Nation citizens identifying as Two-Spirit LGBTQQIA+ hold inherent, inalienable, treaty-based, civil, constitutional, and universal human rights. Historical policies and legislations, such as those enforced during the Indian Residential School and Day School era, along with regulations imposed by the Indian Act, have directly contributed to these individuals' social and cultural erasure and exclusion. The intentional disruption of traditional nation structures and the consequent undermining of First Nations gender identities have further exacerbated these societal problems, leading to long-term effects on the Two-Spirit LGBTQQIA+ communities.

Significance of Inclusion: Justice and Equality for All

The AMC, acknowledging *the Calls for Justice of the MMIWG National Inquiry Final Report* in 2019, has recognized the need to include 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals. A comprehensive understanding of their historical roles in First Nations' governance and family structures is essential for cultural restoration and reducing gender-based violence and discrimination. It also calls to advocate and ensure equal access to resources such as education, housing, and cultural practices for First Nation 2SLGBTQQIA+ citizens in Manitoba.

The establishment of the Nichiwakan (my friend) Native Gay Society in Winnipeg in 1986 marked the beginning of the First Nations Two-Spirit and LGBTQQIA+ re-emergence movement. The evolution of this organization into the 2-Spirited People of Manitoba Inc. in March 2006 signified an important milestone. Following Canada's 2017 apology for the colonial oppression of LGBTQ2 communities, seven Indigenous LGBTQQIA+ organizations have been funded by the Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) Department and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC).

Activities

The inclusion initiative commenced in June 2023, with the creation of a work plan and strategy designed to engage AMC-member First Nations. This comprehensive approach encompasses relationship-building, advocacy support, and active participation in the Assembly of First Nations' 2SLGBTQQIA+ Council.

Activities include the establishment of an interim Two-Spirit LGBTQQIA+ Advisory Circle, research and policy development related to Two-Spirit LGBTQQIA+ inclusion, targeted communication efforts, engagement sessions, the creation of a commemorative memorial, and relationship enhancement with regional stakeholders.

Successes

The AMC's inaugural participation in the Pride Winnipeg Rally on June 4, 2023, marked a significant stride towards inclusivity, with Grand Chief Cathy Merrick opening the event. The AMC's vibrant presence in the march, and the sharing of Pride-related information on their online platforms, demonstrated a firm commitment to representation and inclusivity.

Challenges and Moving Forward

Despite significant progress, challenges persist, particularly in understanding the pre-colonial histories and cultural knowledge of Two-Spirit and LGBTQQIA+ people within Manitoba's First Nations.

Much of this heritage has been lost due to past policies and legislation. The initiative is committed to working with First Nations in Manitoba to reclaim this lost knowledge and restore traditions. The goal is to foster a society in which all citizens can thrive. In areas where conservative attitudes persist, education, outreach, and policy training will be employed to foster understanding and cultivate inclusivity.

Women's Coordinator

Staff

Kristin Flattery, Women's Coordinator

The AMC Women's Coordinator is integral to the AMC's efforts to promote justice and well-being for women, children, and families of AMC-member First Nations. Under the guidance of the Executive Director, the Women's Coordinator plays a pivotal role in coordinating comprehensive community research, providing administrative support, and facilitating meetings and gatherings to address a range of critical issues.



Upholding Rights and Sovereignty

Working closely with Morene Gabriel (MMIWG2S+ Policy Analyst) and Albert McLeod (2SLGBTQQIA+ Policy Analyst), the Communications Team, and the Grand Chief's Office, the Women's Coordinator is dedicated to upholding the rights and sovereignty of First Nations women.

Iskwewen Minawayawin - AMC Women's Gathering

A significant initiative of the Women's Coordinator was the first annual *Iskwewen Minawayawin - AMC Women's Gathering*. This grassroots event, organized in collaboration with Rhonda Monkman, brings together First Nations women from across Manitoba for healing, knowledge-sharing, and cultural rejuvenation. The gathering fosters a safe and supportive space where participants can engage with various First Nations health methodologies, ideologies, and traditions, promoting holistic well-being and resilience. Notably, the event serves to preserve and protect First Nations languages, Anishinaabe (Ojibwe), Nehetho / Inineu (Cree), Anishinew (Ojibwe-Cree), Denesuline (Dene) and Dakota Oyate (Dakota) advancing the cultural aspects of the AMC's mandate.

Land Search Feasibility Study and the Final Report of the Technical Subcommittee

Another impactful endeavour involves the Land Search Feasibility Study and the Final Report of the Technical Subcommittee. These efforts aim to



ensure the humane search and recovery of missing loved ones, Mercedes Myran, Morgan Harris, and Mashkode Bizhiki'ikwe (Buffalo Woman). The Women's Coordinator is pivotal in this process, coordinating regular meetings with various stakeholders, including family members, Elders, forensic investigators, governmental representatives, and grassroots organizations. This initiative is not merely logistical but provides critical

support to families during the search process. It aids with mental and spiritual well-being through ceremonies and access to mental health resources. The Women's Coordinator also helps facilitate vital meetings between family members and key government officials, including Ministers and the Premier. These meetings are focused on advocating for stronger legislation against fentanyl trafficking and establishing treatment centres on reserves, ensuring that the needs and voices of affected families are central to the policy-making process.

Supporting Women's Council Meetings

The Women's Coordinator is vital in supporting the Women's Council Meetings, essential gatherings that bring together female Chiefs and Councillors across Manitoba. The Women's Coordinator ensures that these meetings are thoughtfully organized, with careful adherence to protocols, including securing the presence of an Elder and coordinating with other departments for expert input. These meetings are platforms for discussing crucial issues impacting First Nations and promoting dialogue and bonding among female Leadership.



Advocating for Initiatives

Furthermore, the Women's Coordinator actively supports impactful campaigns, such as the "*No Thanks, I'm Good*" initiative, which addresses the dangers of fentanyl-laced substances in recreational drug use. The program successfully organized a march in collaboration with Joseph and Vera Foure, family members who tragically lost their son to fentanyl poisoning. Through press conferences and

government engagements, the Women's Coordinator advocates for preventive measures and increased access to treatment centres on reserves.



Overcoming Challenges

One organizational challenge has been the initial difficulty providing the necessary support to handle the numerous meetings and activities associated with the landfill search. This has been mainly resolved by obtaining additional resources to address this crucial task effectively. Another ongoing challenge pertains to coordinating the busy schedules of the Women's Council, ensuring they have sufficient time to convene and discuss the numerous issues they need to address.

Information Technology

Staff

Dave Dalgliesh, IT Manager
Dakota Jehle-Skeet, Systems Administrator
Keele Thompson, System Analyst

The IT department at AMC, comprising three skilled professionals, operates as an integrated team. Their combined expertise ensures the smooth functioning of AMC's technology infrastructure and services across five office locations, including the FNFAO, Eagle Urban Transition Centre (EUTC), Jordan's Principal, Finance, Human Resources, N'Dinawemak, and Eagles' Nest.

The team guides the evolution of AMC's back-office technology, managing complex systems like the Mitel phone systems, network switches, firewalls, and WIFI. They also oversee the proper functioning of Xerox printers and handle a multitude of

responsibilities, such as network architecture changes, audio engineering, network cabling, meeting setups, equipment transportation, and system security. These functions include user support, device configuration, troubleshooting, staff onboarding, Ethernet installations, door keys maintenance, video camera setup, remote Zoom meeting arrangements, and inventory management.

Areas of Responsibility

- 1. IT Infrastructure and Software:** In 2020, AMC's modernized IT infrastructure introduced new switches, servers, and WIFI capabilities. Upgrades included network switches to expand office space at 275 Portage, enhanced video monitoring with a new Network Video Recorder (NVR), and a second 2TB datastore for proper storage and data management.
- 2. IT Help Desk:** Efficient deployment of electronic equipment streamlines the onboarding process, device configuration, and comprehensive IT service training for new employees.
- 3. Meeting/Event/Press Conference Setup:** Technology support, including configuring laptops, iPads, printers, the Meeting Owl webcam, and Zoom, enables robust meeting capabilities and administrative support.
- 4. Purchasing Equipment:** The systematized tracking of electronic purchases, mainly through the Bamboo user profile, ensures efficiency in item management.
- 5. Service Contract/Licensing Renewal:** Timely payments and relationships with service providers guarantee uninterrupted services and favourable credit terms.
- 6. Interdepartmental Policy/Relations:** Collaboration between IT and departments like Human Resources and Finance enhances efficiency and adherence to organizational policies.

Accomplishments

The IT Operations team's recent achievements include setting up N'Dinawemak computer labs,

infrastructure expansions, technology upgrades, Mobile Device Management (MDM) with Microsoft Intune, and adopting Microsoft OneDrive for the Resolutions Team. They've also implemented cloud platforms and ransomware mitigation measures, enhancing AMC's data security.

Their collaborative approach and unique combination of skills have proven vital in maintaining and enhancing AMC's technological capabilities, allowing the organization to meet its goals efficiently and effectively. In conclusion, the Information Technology department at AMC plays a pivotal role in providing seamless support to its staff and better serving AMC-member First Nations.

Communications

Staff

Jennifer Storm, Communications Manager

Amanda Fredlund, Communications & Social Media Coordinator

Lena Joseph, Communications Editor

Enhancing Communication Standards

The AMC Communications Team recognizes the importance of clarity, coherence, and professionalism in internal and external messaging. To this end, they have incorporated an AMC Communications Style Guide that standardizes writing styles across different communication channels. Recognizing the need to modernize the communications processes with AMC staff, the team provided Grammarly subscriptions to employees, which enhanced their writing accuracy and effectiveness. These measures and the revival of the monthly e-newsletter contribute to streamlined and impactful communication with various.

Effective Information Dissemination

The team effectively disseminated information to key stakeholders, including First Nations Leadership, First Nations citizens in Manitoba, the

media, and the general public. They utilized press releases, media advisories, op-eds, letters, and social media campaigns, as well as conducted media interviews for the Grand Chief and hosted press conferences to ensure comprehensive coverage of prominent issues.



Showcasing First Nations Stories

The Communications Team showcased First Nations stories and news through various mediums, including photography, video, and written content across social media and online platforms. The team successfully implemented impactful campaigns, celebrated graduates from AMC-member First Nations, and provided information on legislative and legal issues impacting First Nations.

Raising Awareness and Advocacy

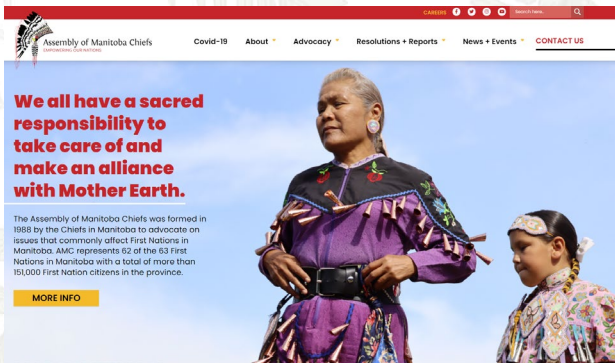
Throughout the year, the team advocated on important issues, shared training opportunities, and raised awareness on special days and events. They express support and compassion by issuing condolence messages and assisting in missing person reports from various law enforcement agencies and First Nations families.

Accomplishments

Highlights of Communications Team achievements include:

- **New User-Friendly Website Launch:** Enhancing accessibility through a redesigned, user-centred website.
- **Comprehensive Style Guide Development:** Standardizing communication with an AMC style guide.

- **Social Media Presence Growth:** Extending reach and influence across platforms.
- **Capacity Expansion:** Meeting the growing needs of the Grand Chiefs Office and the AMC Secretariat through staff expansion.
- **Revival of Monthly E-Newsletter:** Deepening connections with AMC-member First Nations and others through regular updates.
- **Grammarly Subscriptions for Enhanced Writing Skills:** Investing in continuous improvement for both internal and external communication.



Challenges

The Communications Team has faced several challenges, including filling in communications support gaps with the Grand Chief’s Office (GCO) while the GCO Communications Specialist position was vacant. This required the team to quickly adapt and take on additional responsibilities, ensuring that communication remained smooth and effective during the transition. Along with managing a large amount of content across various platforms and ensuring that messages are clear and consistent, they have also worked to connect with a broad audience. The team's ability to handle these challenges with efficiency and dedication has enabled them to continue effectively supporting First Nations in Manitoba. Their commitment to finding innovative solutions illustrates their resilience and vital role within the organization.

Social Media Statistics

From October 1, 2022, to July 1, 2023:

Facebook: Reached 978,662 people, with 82,771 page visits and 1,928 new page likes.

Instagram: Reached 111,378 people, with 11,352 profile visits and 1,595 new followers.

Twitter: Achieved approximately 167,849 impressions and gained 84 new followers.

Moving Forward

These results reaffirm our commitment to innovative approaches in communication. The increased use of Facebook Live sessions has been valuable in sharing our causes, driving engagement, and enhancing our online presence. We will continue to leverage these sessions and explore new opportunities to foster meaningful connections with our audience. Our goal was to create memorable experiences that resonate with our community, ensuring that First Nations' voices, achievements, and concerns are widely recognized and shared. The AMC Communications Team remained dedicated to building an informed and engaged community, advancing our mission, and promoting a deeper understanding of the issues that matter most to our people. Together, we continue strengthening our presence and impact, empowering AMC-member First Nations.

Events

Staff

Rhonda Monkman, Event Planner

The AMC Event Planner organizes and executes various corporate and special events for the organization. The primary focus is planning the Chiefs-in-Assemblies and other significant gatherings that bring together First Nations Leadership, staff, and the general public.

Partnerships and Notable Events

Winnipeg Blue Bombers Partnership for Truth and Reconciliation

One of the notable events was the partnership with the Winnipeg Blue Bombers, Exchange Income Corporation (EIC), and several First Nations organizations to honour Canada's National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. This partnership resulted in 1,000 First Nations citizens being hosted at a Blue Bombers home game, where both teams wore special orange jerseys in recognition of Orange Shirt Day.



34th Annual General Assembly - "Healing and Transformation"

Another significant event was the 34th Annual General Assembly, themed "Healing and Transformation," where a Grand Chief Bi-Election was held, resulting in Cathy Merrick being elected as the Grand Chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. The assembly also certified seven resolutions, contributing to the organization's continued growth.

AMC Annual Jingle Mingle, 2022

The AMC Annual Jingle Mingle, a holiday dinner and dance held each December, brought together 1,000+ guests, including AMC partners, clients, and friends. The event featured an exciting entertainment lineup and included a toy drive, a silent auction, and 50/50 draws to support featured charities.

Special Chiefs-in-Assembly on Health Legislation and UNDRIP

A Special Chiefs-in-Assembly on Health Legislation and UNDRIP was held from January 31 to February

2, 2023. It addressed crucial issues in the realm of health and received eight certified resolutions.

Iskwewen Minawayawin: Grassroots Women, Healing Our Spirits Healing Our Hearts

AMC also hosted a women's gathering, *Iskwewen Minawayawin: Grassroots Women, Healing Our Spirits Healing Our Hearts*, empowering First Nations women through various workshops, cultural teachings, and breakout sessions.



Challenges

Despite the success of these events, the Event Planning Department faces challenges in managing the complexities of organizing gatherings with varying attendance numbers. This ranges from 150-200 attendees at assemblies to over 1,000 at the Jingle Mingle. The team is exploring implementing a year-at-a-glance approach to overcome these challenges for better event planning and coordination.

Looking Forward

The AMC Event Planner continues to play a vital role in bringing together AMC-member First Nations through engaging and meaningful events. These efforts have not only assisted the Leadership to come together at AMC Chiefs-in-Assembly and other events but strengthened bonds with First Nations and others. The Event Planner remains committed to creating successful and empowering gatherings that contribute to the well-being and success of the organization.

Human Resources

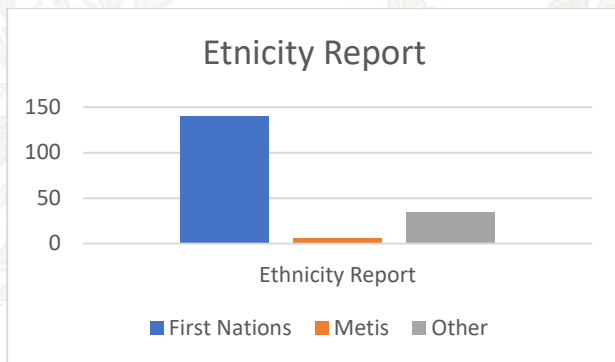
Staff

Trisha Sinclair, Human Resources Director
Ginette Bisson, HR Coordinator
Debbie Ranville, HR Recruitment Coordinator
Jessica Pierre, HR Assistant
Recruitment Coordinator position yet to be filled.

The AMC Event Planner continues to play a vital role in bringing together AMC-member First Nations through engaging and meaningful events. These efforts have not only assisted the Leadership to come together at AMC Chiefs-in-Assembly and other events but strengthened bonds with First Nations and others. The Event Planner remains committed to creating successful and empowering gatherings that contribute to the well-being and success of the management.

Growth and Development

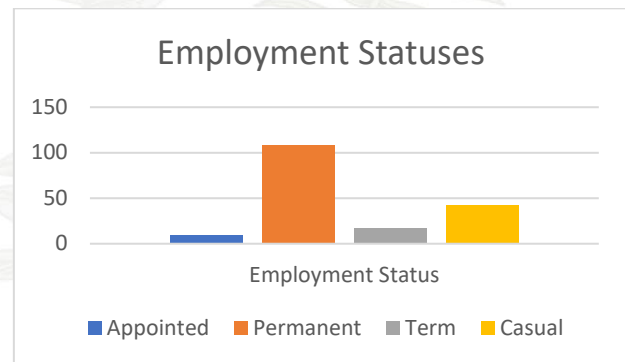
Over the past year, HR has significantly contributed to the growth and development of the AMC. With a fully staffed and functional team, the organization experienced an impressive 84% increase in employee headcount between November 2022 and July 2023, improving operational efficiency across all departments.



Streamlined Processes

Human Resources successfully implemented a Human Resource Information System (HRIS) in September 2022 to enhance operational efficiency. This system streamlined employee data management, recruitment processes, payroll, benefits administration, and performance evaluation, ultimately saving time and resources for the organization.

In April 2023, the department revised the employee terms of employment, offering permanent status to eligible employees. This positive change not only boosted employee morale but also contributed to improved recruitment and retention efforts.



Addressing Challenges

Despite its achievements, Human Resources faces several challenges that demand attention. The HR personnel policy is being revised to provide better guidance, with implementation planned for 2023. Additionally, a revised compensation process is being developed with the assistance of an external organization, expected to be completed by the end of the year. Addressing office space concerns, the AMC leased a new floor at 275 Portage Avenue, encouraging a hybrid work environment where applicable.

Fostering Growth and Success

As a strategic part of the organization, HR continues to focus on supporting its mission and goals, particularly as they relate to the First Nations in Manitoba. By creating a positive employee experience, ensuring representation, and addressing challenges head-on, the department plays a vital role in fostering the growth and success of the AMC and its workforce.



Treaty Relations Coordinator

Staff

Gail Flett, Treaty Relations Coordinator

The AMC actively supported the TRCM to "strengthen, rebuild and enhance the treaty relationship." Funded by Crown-Indigenous Relations (CIR) through a five-year multi-flexible agreement that has now ended, AMC provided political, Elder, technical, and advisory support to various Leadership roles and committees, including the Grand Chief, Chiefs Task Force, Manitoba Leadership, Treaty Commissioner, and TRCM staff. The AMC also ensured representation in TRCM Governance Committees, encompassing various roles such as the Grand Chief/designate, Chiefs Task Force, Council of Elders, and Treaty Relations Coordinator. The coordination and support provided by AMC form an integral partnership with CIR, facilitating various treaty relations initiatives and activities.

Key Issues and Challenges

One of the central challenges lies in maintaining and upholding the current Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that established the TRCM in partnership with CIR. Despite the political will to build nation-to-nation relationships and support self-determination, ensuring adequate funding for meaningful dialogue and strategizing on treaty implementation remains an ongoing challenge. The lack of dedicated funding from CIR for these critical areas also hinders comprehensive, in-depth research on treaty matters and MOA reviews.

Linkages to First Nations

The Treaty Relations Coordinator facilitated the essential involvement of First Nations Elders in AMC committees and all key TRCM activities. The AMC Council of Elders actively participated in various meetings and gatherings, providing invaluable guidance and input. The Elders played a significant role in the 34th Annual General Assembly, where spiritual ceremonies and the Rising Up Ceremony for the newly elected Grand Chief Cathy Merrick were held. The AMC continued to build strong relationships with other Elder and Knowledge Keeper Circles, fostering a rich exchange of wisdom and insights.

Activities

AMC Council of Elders

The Elders Council, consisting of Knowledge Keepers and Grandmothers from various treaty areas, was essential in providing valuable input and assistance to AMC Leadership and staff. Their active participation spans numerous meetings, assemblies, and ceremonial events. The Elders' presence and wisdom remained a guiding force in all treaty and First Nations rights matters.

TRCM Governance Structure - Committees

AMC's participation in the TRCM Governance Committees has been consistent, with joint senior officials and operational management committee meetings. Research meetings focusing on new publications are an ongoing part of the agenda.

AMC Communication with CIR

Maintaining effective communication with CIR remains vital, with key officials being assigned to AMC on TRCM matters. As staff transitions occur within CIR, AMC staff and the Elders provide treaty education and support to new members. Discussions for a refreshed MOA are anticipated to take place this fall.



Communication and Reporting to Manitoba Leadership

AMC regularly communicates with Manitoba Leadership through Briefing Notes to the Grand Chief's Office, Chiefs Task Force, and Executive Council of Chiefs. The annual reporting by staff is included in the AMC Annual Report, Audit, and Resolution Status Report.

Renewal of Treaty Commissions (TRCM)

As the TRCM concludes its third renewal term, AMC continues to engage with the Federation of Indigenous Sovereign Nations (FSIN) on their process for a refreshed MOA and critical timelines. AMC's mandate for TRCM renewal extends to March 2028, reinforcing its commitment to the treaty relationship.



Moving Forward

The Treaty Relations Coordinator and AMC will actively pursue discussions with CIR for a new refreshed MOA, strengthen synergies with Federation of Sovereign Indian Nations (FSIN) and Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC) on Treaty Commissions, and participate in key meetings related to treaty recognition and self-government. Furthermore, AMC will support the National Treaty No. 1-11 Sovereign Movement and Western Treaty Nations in planning their 2023 Gatherings. The coordinator will also monitor the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Lands, Territories, and Resources Sector's dialogue on the National Treaty Strategy for protecting First Nations rights and interests, while assisting Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Knowledge Keeper and other Elder Circles as needed.



Education Directorate

Staff

Lyn Blackburde, Director of Education
Roxanne Meawasige, Policy Analyst
Shirley Jensen, Financial Policy Analyst
Andrew Courchene, Junior Policy Analyst
Schuyler Hunt, Internal Communications Coordinator
Marcia DeCastro, Administrative Assistant

The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Education Directorate aims to advance First Nations' education in Manitoba by promoting, supporting, and advocating for their inherent treaty rights in education. The Directorate collaborates with First Nations Leadership and stakeholders to address crucial issues related to education and facilitate transformative changes across First Nations education.



The Education Directorate is pivotal in advancing First Nations education, with oversight, guidance and direction provided by the Chiefs Committee on Education. Key initiatives include developing regional education funding models, administering post-secondary programs, and advocating for equitable and sustainable funding. The Directorate partners with organizations like the MFNERC, Assembly of First Nations (AFN), National Indian Education Council (NIEC), and ISC to achieve its goals.

Program Initiatives/Services/Activities

1. Research and Learning Innovation Program

The AMC has launched land-based learning initiatives and First Nations language research gatherings to reclaim the history and culture of the Anishinaabe, Nehetho/Ininew, Denesuline, Anishininew, and Dakota Oyate peoples. Through presentations, traditional games, storytelling, cultural teachings, Sweat Lodge teachings, and ceremonies, our aim is to enhance awareness of their Traditional Knowledge and reclamation of our diverse and rich cultures. Working in partnership with these initiatives, the Education Directorate provides support and advocacy at every stage to craft a strategic and interactive learning approach tailored for First Nations learners. Conducted in various locations, these gatherings contribute significantly to the ongoing process of cultural revitalization.

2. Post-Secondary Education Engagement

The government of Canada provided three-year funding, which ended in 2021/2022, to develop the First Nations Post-Secondary Education funding model. The Chiefs Committee on Education and independent consultants conducted research and analysis to establish the necessary financial resources for post-secondary students and create a First Nations post-secondary institution. The resulting recommendations called for the federal government to provide better support for First Nations post-secondary education, including equitable and sustainable funding. The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Education Directorate plans to continue advocating for this funding to become permanent.

3. Post-Secondary Partnerships Program

In 2020, ISC designated the AMC as the regional organization for administering Post-Secondary Partnerships Program funds. The Chiefs Committee on Education (CCOE) established a Selection Committee to implement the program, and the

Directorate successfully managed funding of \$2,228,904.76 for the 2022/2023 fiscal year. This amount was less than in previous years as it did not include COVID-19 funding. A call for proposals resulted in 28 submissions totalling \$10,770,180.55, of which 13 projects were reviewed, approved, and distributed in line with the Chiefs Committee on Education's recommendations.

4. Education Partnership Program – Structural Readiness

The Education Directorate administers the Education Partnership Program - Structural Readiness funding to qualifying AMC-member First Nations. The regional amount provided for 2023/2024 is \$4,327,992.65. The Directorate received 20 Structural Readiness proposals, indicating the continued need for increased financial resources in various areas of First Nations education.

5. Manitoba First Nations Regional Education Agreement

The AMC Technical Task Team has developed the Manitoba First Nations Regional Education Agreement, now renamed the Regional Funding Model. This includes policy changes and funding adaptations to meet the true educational needs of First Nations for elementary and secondary education. The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs is awaiting committed funding from Indigenous Services Canada for the 2023/2023 fiscal year to develop the agreement and support negotiations further. Assistance from Waapihk Research has been commissioned to conduct in-depth research on educational needs, aiming to increase federal funding. The agreement seeks to ensure adequate and predictable funding for First Nations in Manitoba, both in the north and south regions, to achieve the standards of education that their learners deserve.

Moving Forward

The Education Directorate will continue its efforts to advance First Nations education by advocating for equitable funding and supporting transformative changes. Collaborative efforts with various stakeholders will remain instrumental in achieving the vision of quality education as a treaty right for all First Nations learners in Manitoba.



First Nations Family Advocate Office

Staff

Management & Operations

Kayla Frank, Director of Children and Families
Lindy Courchene, Executive Coordinator
Stephanie Sinclair, Executive Assistant
Christa Cooper, Operations Manager
Matthew MacFarlane, Assistant to Operations Manager
Jennifer Roulette, Advocacy Coordinator
Tina McKay, Ganawenim Scaabe (Quality Assurance)
Shirley Frank, N'Dinawemak Manager

Administrative & Scaabe Support

Stephanie Massan, Receptionist
Jessica Thomas, Scaabe
Warren Mowatt, Scaabe

Communications

Jessica Teel, Communications Specialist

Policy & Research

Jennifer Chartrand, Policy Analyst

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Team

Lester Houle, MOU Implementation Coordinator
Taz McKay, MOU Policy Analyst
Kimberley Chaske, MOU Administrative Assistant

FNFAO Legal Services

Max Griffin-Rill, Attorney at Law
Tiffani Sawatzky, Attorney at Law

Family Wellness

Charlotte Boubard, Family Wellness Mentor
Ashley Chartrand, Family Wellness Mentor

Family Reunification

Myrna Thompson, Family Reunification Worker
Elizabeth King, Family Reunification Worker

Assistant Advocates

Tina Robinson, Assistant Advocate
Mearle Monias, Assistant Advocate

Intake

Shaylese Monkman, Data Scaabe
Shelby Ponace, Data Scaabe

Kiipewii'chego (We Come to Help) Prenatal/Postnatal

Lana McKay, Kiipewii'chego (we come to help)
Krista Neepin, Kiipewii'chego (we come to help)

Rites of Passage

Alisha Bigelow, Rites of Passage Scaabe
Joshua Nepinak, Rites of Passage Scaabe
Alex Fidler, Rites of Passage Scaabe
Rodrick Flett, Rites of Passage Scaabe

Mino Bimaadiziwin

Karen Swain, Mino Bimaadiziwin Grandmother
Alvin Henderson, Mino Bimaadiziwin Grandfather

Housing

Michelle Meeches, Housing Coordinator

MMIWG2S+ Database Project

Amber Laplante, MMIWG2S+ Database Coordinator



The FNFAO has been unwavering in its commitment to advocate for the rights and well-being of First Nations children and families in Manitoba. This summary provides insight into the key achievements, initiatives, and impact of the FNFAO in preserving cultural practices, promoting equity, and providing vital support services to families. The following report offers a comprehensive overview to be included in the AMC 2022 Annual Report, highlighting their dedication to empowering families and fostering stronger, healthier Nations.

Guided by its mission to support First Nations families and promote the well-being of children, youth, and families, the FNFAO places significant emphasis on cultural preservation, equity, and access to resources. The office is dedicated to addressing the root causes of inequity and the

disproportionate representation of First Nations children in the Child and Family Services (CFS) system in Manitoba. Their vision is to bring about transformative change, building resilient and thriving Nations.

Collaborative Agreements and Partnerships

The FNFAO operates under the direction and mandate of the membered First Nations of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. In 2017, a significant milestone was achieved when the AMC and Canada signed a MOU on Child Welfare. This MOU is a robust foundation to reclaim First Nations jurisdiction and revive customary laws, traditional practices, and cultural understandings. This partnership promotes meaningful dialogue, knowledge-sharing, and a shared commitment to reform the current provincial child welfare system.

FNFAO Initiatives and Impact

Template Laws and Cultural Preservation

The development of Template Laws, rooted in Traditional Knowledge, marked a major advancement for First Nations laws. These Template Laws emphasize the importance of cultural elements over colonial legal terminology, providing First Nations with the tools to reclaim the sovereignty of children and families. Additionally, the MOU Team was crucial in supporting the completion of the Anishinaabe, Nehethowuk/Ininiwak, Anishinew, Dakota Oyate, and Denesuline Template Laws.

Family Support and Reunification

The FNFAO provided a holistic approach to supporting families involved in the CFS system. Serving as intermediaries, the office advocates for access to essential resources, supports efforts for reunification, and actively works to prevent apprehensions. The positive impact of the FNFAO's work was evident through successful reunifications, kinship care arrangements, and prevented apprehensions.

Cultural Workshops and Holistic Well-being

The FNFAO's cultural workshops, such as *Circle of Sisters* and *Men's Red Road to Healing*, were pivotal in empowering individuals with traditional teachings and fostering healing. Additionally, the Rites of Passage Scaabe's Stream of Services offered holistic support to youth transitioning out of the child welfare system, addressing their diverse needs.

Addressing Housing Insecurity

Recognizing housing insecurity as a significant pathway to CFS intervention, the Housing Coordinator was crucial in providing essential support to families. Paramount to their efforts was advocating with the Residential Tenancies Branch, facilitating access to Rent Assist, and addressing inadequate housing arrangements.

Ongoing Commitment to Equity

The FNFAO continued its unwavering commitment to advocate for policy changes and systemic reforms to eliminate discriminatory practices. Challenging existing norms and promoting cultural understanding, they actively pursued equity and strove to ensure access to essential resources for First Nations families.

MMIWG2S+ Advocacy



The FNFAO strengthened its dedication to advocacy on the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals. Since

2023, the FNFAO has taken the lead in developing a Manitoba-specific MMIWG2S+ Database, established a new role for an MMIWG2S+ Advocate, and entered a partnership with Telus Mobility for the Mobility for Good Program. This program aimed to enhance communication access by providing free smartphones and data plans to those at risk.

Youth Aging Out of Care

At FNFAO, we have recognized a concerning trend where youth aging out of care experience increased vulnerability to homelessness due to housing constraints and the lingering effects of public health measures. The lack of adequate planning, limited housing options, and insufficient financial support for those leaving the CFS system has compounded this issue. Unfortunately, the reduction in services following pandemic restrictions has further exacerbated the problem, leading to more youth experiencing homelessness and living on the streets.

In response to this growing demand for advocacy and support from our youth clients, the FNFAO is actively working to expand its Rites of Passage Stream of Service. This initiative aimed to provide essential resources, guidance, and empowerment for youth transitioning into adulthood, thereby helping to mitigate the risks associated with homelessness.

Moving Forward

The FNFAO's future centred around enhancing services, building capacity within First Nations, and reclaiming jurisdiction over children and families. At the heart of the office's dedication lies the sacred bond between families and children, aiming to foster a brighter future for First Nations and Nations in Manitoba.

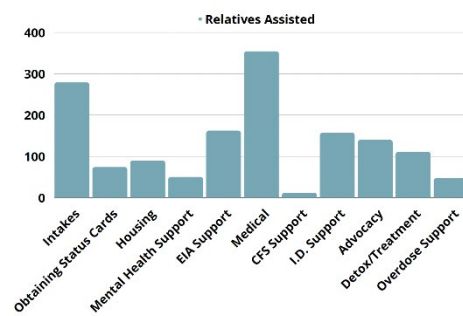
The First Nations Family Advocate Office's unwavering efforts in supporting First Nations families and Nations are truly commendable. This comprehensive summary offered a snapshot of the 2022 Annual Report, showcasing the achievements

and initiatives undertaken to empower families and positively impact the lives of First Nations children and their Nations. The FNFAO's commitment to cultural preservation, equity, and access to resources set a precedent for fostering stronger, healthier Nations for generations to come.

N'Dinawemak – Our Relatives' Place

N'Dinawemak - *Our Relatives' Place* - was a vital initiative that addresses the pressing issue of homelessness during the winter season. As the first Indigenous-led organization, this collaborative effort was made possible through the partnership of AMC-FNFAO, EUTC, End Homelessness Winnipeg, the Aboriginal Health and Wellness Centre (AHWC), Anishinative, the Downtown Community Safety Partnership (DCSP), and Community 204. N'Dinawemak officially opened on December 1st, 2021, where the partner organizations gathered in a meaningful ceremony and were gifted the name N'Dinawemak, meaning "Our Relatives' Place" in Anishinaabemowin.

From May 1, 2022 to January 19, 2023, N'Dinawemak assisted relatives in the following ways:



As a key partner in this endeavour, the FNFAO has taken a leading role in enhancing the services provided at N'Dinawemak to better support First Nations living unsheltered. This included expanding the facility's staff, developing essential policies and procedures, and ensuring the seamless continuity of operations at its location on 190 Disraeli Freeway. The FNFAO remained committed to engaging in strategic planning to envision a future where every

First Nations citizen has access to a safe and healthy living environment.

From May 1, 2022, to January 19, 2023, N'Dinawemak has played a pivotal role in assisting our relatives in various ways, as shown in the chart above.

Health Directorate

Staff

Sara Romelleare, Director of Health
Geeta Cook, Senior Health Policy Analyst
Kim McPherson, Health Policy Analyst
Darlene Spence, Health Administrative Assistant

Mandate and Framework Development

The AMC Health Directorate's main mandate is to aid the Grand Chief in implementing Chiefs-in-Assembly health-related Resolutions. The mandate included creating a tripartite framework for a unified health system in Manitoba and developing a regional First Nations stance on Canada's federal Indigenous health legislation. The unit's work is guided by several historical documents, international instruments like the UNDRIP, the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the Calls for Justice of the MMIWG National Inquiry.

The Health Directorate drafted a 2-year proposal and work plan focusing on unified approaches and political strategies, aimed to restore self-determination, fiscal sustainability, and jurisdiction over sovereign First Nations health care systems. The proposal and work plan included collaboration with various First Nations stakeholders in Manitoba, legislative bodies, and external partners to identify and address urgent and long-standing health issues. The plan emphasizes relationship-building with different stakeholders, including Traditional Healers, Elders and Knowledge Keepers, including all genders, youth, and Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+

individuals, ensuring that healthcare decisions respect First Nations' cultural values and priorities.

2-Year Proposal and Objectives

The 2-year proposal aimed to address disparities and empower First Nations, providing a roadmap to enhance health outcomes through innovative approaches and policy influence. The Health Directorate's approach emphasized inclusivity, acknowledging the interconnectedness of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. It ensured that health initiatives were equitable, sensitive to unique needs, and aimed to create an environment where all individuals could access appropriate healthcare services.

Highlights

- 1. Chiefs Assembly Support:** Assisted the AMC Special Chiefs Assembly on Health Legislation & UNDRIP from January 31 to February 2, 2023. Five health-related resolutions were passed, directing the Health Directorate by the Chiefs-in-Assembly.
- 2. Co-Development of Indigenous Health Legislation:** On May 2, 2023, the Health Directorate and FNHSSM submitted a joint proposal to the federal government to participate in Indigenous Health Legislation - Phase 2. A portion of the proposal may be funded, but efforts will continue to pressure ISC for full funding.
- 3. Knowledge Keepers Gathering:** Held a gathering on Indigenous Health Legislation on June 14, 2023. A report is being drafted to inform a regional First Nations position and legal guiding principles related to First Nations laws.
- 4. First Nations-led Post-Pandemic Review:** Coordinating with the Grand Chief's Office to develop a work plan for a review in 2023-2024. The goal is to identify immediate and long-term solutions to support First Nations' authority and jurisdiction in planning and responding to

future health crises, like the recent COVID-19 pandemic.

5. **Mental Health and Support Initiatives:** Interviewed and provided feedback to Waapihk to prepare a draft of the *2024-25 Manitoba First Nations Alternative Budget – Micro-Report, focusing on Mental Health, Addictions Treatment and Prevention, Trauma Support, and Suicide Prevention.*
6. **Landfill Search Feasibility Study:** Provided policy and administrative support to the Landfill Search Feasibility Study Committee, assisting in submitting two proposals for funding the study and organizational administrative support.
7. **Building Human Resource Capacity:** Collaborated with the Executive Director and HR to enhance the Health Directorate's human resource capacity, resulting in the hiring of a Director and a Senior Health Analyst.
8. **Chiefs Task Force on Health Membership:** Worked with the Grand Chief's Office to update the Chiefs Task Force on Health (CTFoH) membership list, with planning for a CTFoH meeting being the next step.

Challenges

Despite challenges in staffing and securing government funding, the Health Directorate remains committed to advocating for the health sovereignty of First Nations. It faces aggressive timelines for the federal government's Indigenous Health Legislation co-development, which has significant implications for First Nations' treaty rights and laws. The Health Directorate recognized the ongoing inadequate funding and systemic issues that affect member First Nations, impacting health outcomes and decision-making processes.

Looking Forward

The AMC Health Directorate strived for health equity, inclusivity, and cultural sensitivity in health care services. It recognized the importance of diverse voices and perspectives, working tirelessly

to empower communities and address health disparities. The Health Directorate aimed to build a stronger, more resilient health system for AMC-member First Nations through its dedication, collaboration, and advocacy.

Eagle Urban Transition Centre

Staff

Chris Prince, Program Manager
Darlene Littlejohn, Office Manager
Gail Fiddler, Client Intake Resource Coordinator
Robert Swan, Security

The Eagle Urban Transition Centre (EUTC) is a crucial hub of information and resources dedicated to providing transitional support for First Nations children, youth, and families living in and relocating to Winnipeg. Located in downtown Winnipeg, the EUTC offers over 4,000 sq. ft. of office space at 200-275 Portage Avenue, providing a central and wheelchair-accessible location.

Our approach at the EUTC acts as a compass, helping clients navigate the urban support system to address single or multiple transitional challenges. Building trust is paramount, and our non-judgmental and supportive First Nations staff are here to assist and provide guidance. Over time, the EUTC has compiled an up-to-date inventory of resources, programs, and services available to help clients with day-to-day housing, social assistance, addictions, youth resources, and education issues.



Connection with First Nations

As part of our commitment to maintaining a strong connection with First Nations in Manitoba, the EUTC assists clients in communicating with their respective First Nations. Despite residing in Winnipeg, First Nations citizens still retain their rights and options to access their First Nation's resources, uphold their treaty rights, practice their language, and engage in traditional customs.



Remote and Referral Services

The EUTC provides remote services for clients, including access to birth certificates, status cards, mental health resources, and current employment/training information. Additionally, we offer client mail pick-up services. As an assessment and referral office, we connect First Nations clients to service providers and resources to address challenges related to healthy living.

We prioritize providing a safe, positive, and culturally appropriate environment, respecting both First Nations and non-First Nations Western-based healing ways. Strategies are in place to support families and individuals transitioning from their First Nations to an urban environment, ensuring a smooth transition to an adequate standard of living.

Employment, Education, and Networking Opportunities

Clients have the opportunity to interact and receive assistance from First Nations staff, promoting current training, employment, education, and

special events tailored to Winnipeg's First Nations population. We actively foster new working relationships with Winnipeg-based service providers and promote the services and success of the EUTC to Manitoba First Nations.

Comprehensive Assistance and Free Resources

The EUTC strives to support First Nations individuals transitioning from First Nations to urban areas by providing housing information, employment opportunities, and addressing mental health and addiction concerns. Our centre offers free resources such as phone, faxing, photocopying, and computer access. In cases where First Nations people need to relocate due to medical issues, the EUTC assists by navigating clients to proper resources and providing transportation assistance. Being new to the city can be stressful, so our First Nations staff can offer support and guidance.

Key Issues and Challenges:

The EUTC faces challenges related to transportation, particularly in providing bus tickets for clients. Additionally, with the rising cost of purchasing food, the limited availability of gift cards has become a challenge in addressing food insecurity.

New Beginnings (Non-Housing) and Fresh Start (Housing First) Programs

The New Beginnings (Non-Housing) and Fresh Start (Housing First) Programs, operated under the EUTC, have made a significant positive impact on reducing homelessness in Winnipeg and overcoming barriers to accessing appropriate supports. With the valuable support of the Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) Winnipeg and Naatamooskakowin – Coordinated Access System, the EUTC has been able to deliver both Non-Housing and Housing First supports to individuals facing imminent homelessness in a welcoming, confidential, and positive environment.

Staff

New Beginnings Program (Non-Housing):

Leah Spence, Team Lead

Colin Clemons, Manufacturing Transition
Counsellor

Victoria Grisdale, Youth Housing Transition
Counsellor

Miriam Campbell, Mental Health & Addiction
Counsellor

Florence Courchene, Adult Housing Transition
Counsellor

Christopher J. Prince, Community Housing
Transition Counsellor (N'Dinawemak Shelter)

Vacant, Community Housing Transition Counsellor

Fresh Start Program (Housing First):

Corinne Edwards, Follow-Up Support Worker

Teslyn Bigelow, Follow-Up Support Worker

Michelle Ironstand, Follow-Up Support Worker

Vacant, Fresh Start Follow-Up Support Worker

New Beginnings Program (Non-Housing)

The New Beginnings Program is a support system that is composed of several specialized counsellors. The Youth Housing Transition Counselor aids those aged 18-29 at-risk of homelessness, offering housing assistance, essential identification, and personalized support. The Adult Housing Transition Counselor provides a similar role for those aged 30-65, focusing on housing stability, documentation, and removing barriers like damage deposits. The Mental Health & Addiction Counselor offers compassionate support and personalized care for those facing mental health and addiction challenges, guiding them toward healing and recovery. The Employment and Training Transition Counselor empowers job seekers with resume assistance, interview preparation, and financial support for work gear and training. Together, these counsellors address diverse needs, fostering independence, stability, and well-being for individuals of various ages and life situations.

Fresh Start Program (Housing First)

The Fresh Start Program (Housing First) assists First Nations adults aged 18-65 overcome homelessness. It meticulously tracks data on the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) and ensures clients consent to share information with other shelters and coordinate access (Naatamooskakowin). First Nations citizens undergo a coordinated access process for information sharing, making them eligible for acceptance into housing first programs or referrals to non-housing programs like New Beginnings. With a commitment to individualized care, the program accepts a maximum of 42 First Nations citizens, providing ongoing support for up to two years until program completion. Moreover, the Fresh Start Program extends dedicated one-on-one wrap-around supports and offers housing first assistance to those not already accessing such benefits. The program is financially supported through start-up funds, which contribute to furnishing essential furniture items and household necessities.

Success Stories

Professional Development / EUTC- Fresh Start Program

Participant has been with EUTC Fresh Start Program since the fall of 2019. He has successfully secured and maintained his housing since October 1, 2019. Over the years he has been part of our program, he has successfully enrolled with the Eagles Nest Aboriginal Youth Resource and Recreation Program. Once completion of the Eagles Nest Program, his next goal is to register and complete his Grade 12 education.

Employment Opportunities/ EUTC New Beginnings Program

The EUTC played a pivotal role in the career development of an ambitious individual. Initially, she participated in a six-week work readiness program with the Manitoba Building Trades Institute (MBTI), but her thirst for challenge didn't

end there. Next, she enrolled and completed a Flag Person training course, funded by EUTC, which led to a seasonal position as a flagger with Maple Leaf Construction, one of Winnipeg's leading road construction companies. Still not content, she sought further growth and inquired about Heavy Equipment Operator training. With the contact information and financial support provided by EUTC, she completed her training through the Operating Engineers Training Institute of Manitoba (OETIM). She now works contentedly as a Heavy Equipment Operator for Maple Leaf Construction, reflecting a triumphant progression in her career, driven by her determination and the unwavering support from EUTC.

Medical Supports/ EUTC Fresh Start Program

The EUTC Fresh Start Program was vital in addressing the urgent medical needs of a participant who was nearly blind due to recently diagnosed cataracts. Faced with mobility issues and vulnerability, he found support through his follow-up worker at EUTC, who actively advocated for proper care. By coordinating with the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA), the participant's family, and his eye specialist, the support worker ensured that a surgery date was scheduled, and proper transportation was arranged for all appointments. Additionally, assistance was provided through the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) with a walking cane to aid in navigation. The participant successfully underwent eye surgery through the concerted efforts of his support worker, family, WRHA, and EUTC's health team. He is now recovering well with his family, grateful for the comprehensive and compassionate support received from EUTC.

Educational Supports/ EUTC Fresh Start Program

The Fresh Start Program witnessed a remarkable transformation in a participant who joined on January 21, 2015. Facing challenges like high energy, addiction, and housing instability after exiting CFS Care, he embarked on a holistic journey toward self-

improvement. He found a renewed sense of purpose and connection through engaging with cultural awareness, consulting with Elders, and participating in traditional practices such as sweats and ceremonies—including completing his first year at the Sundance Ceremony. Further enhancing his educational and professional growth, he completed the Eagles Nest Program, obtained his Grade 12 education at Urban Circle Training Centre, and completed a 4-week practicum at the Eagles Nest Program. A successful graduate of the Fresh Start Program, he achieved stable housing for two years, symbolizing a triumphant turn-around guided by commitment, support, and cultural enrichment.

Key Issues and Challenges:

Many First Nations citizens are grappling with several key issues and challenges related to housing and well-being. The housing market is fraught with problems, including a glaring insufficiency of affordable housing options and a scarcity of 3-4 bedroom homes suitable for larger families. Landlords are exacerbating the situation by overpricing rent on run-down houses, while some property management agencies are unjustly holding damage deposits or evicting tenants without cause or warning. The situation has led to these citizens finding their names on the Residential Tenancy Branch (RTB) list after taking landlords to the RTB to dispute damage deposit issues. The lack of adequate funding for affordable housing and support programs also compounds these housing challenges. The community has also suffered the tragic losses of three participants due to health and addiction issues, underscoring the urgent need for comprehensive support and reform.

Statistics and Achievements:

New Beginnings/N'Dinawemak:

- Supported 552 First Nations people.
- Assisted 379 First Nations citizens with housing applications.
- Helped 198 First Nations citizens secure Birth Certificate Identification.

Patient Advocate Unit

Staff

Kevin Fontaine, Conflict Resolution Navigator
 Valerie Olson, Patient Navigator
 Ann Thomas, Patient Navigator

In collaboration with Winnipeg Regional Health Authority Indigenous Health (WRHA-IH) and AMC, the Patient Advocate Unit (PAU) at the Eagle Urban Transition Centre offers essential advocacy and navigation in healthcare for First Nations individuals. This includes facilitating medical relocations for complex treatments, addressing medical concerns, and ensuring smooth transitions in care. Beyond medical matters, the unit also guides clients to appropriate organizations for legal and child issues. Its success in medical relocations and commitment to providing a platform for patients' voices underlines its crucial role in improving the quality and continuity of healthcare services for First Nations.

Activities

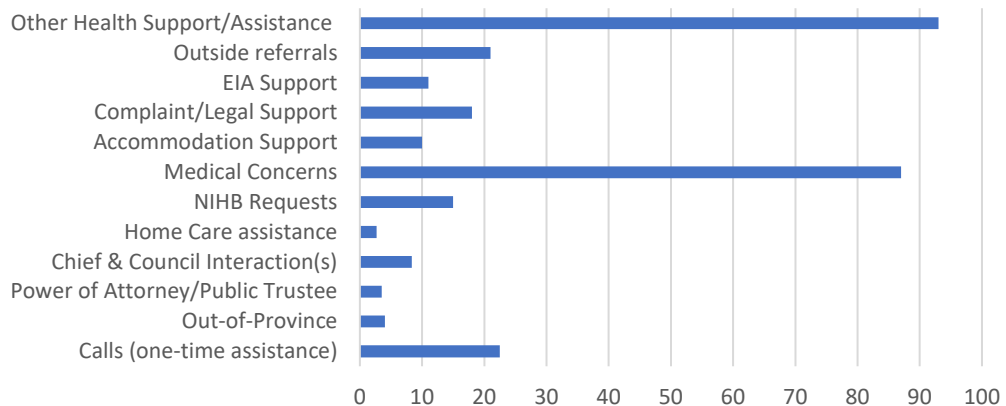
- **Medical Relocation/Mental Health:** A client needing life-saving hemodialysis was relocated to Winnipeg with the assistance of the Patient Advocate Unit. The team helped with

accommodations, meals, and transportation to appointments and provided mental health support through a First Nations therapist. The client completed housing applications, obtained identification, and secured Employment and Income Assistance, ultimately reuniting with family and accessing proper healthcare.

- **Successful Kidney Transplant:** A client who had been living with kidney disease for nine years successfully underwent a kidney transplant with support from the unit. Assistance with pre-transplant exams, tests, and finding a matched donor led to the client receiving a new kidney, allowing them to return home to lead a healthy life.
- **Prosthetics:** Advocacy by the PAU Manager helped a bilateral amputee client secure advanced prosthetics through Non-Insured Health Benefits. The new prosthetics notably improved the client's mobility and daily functioning, enhancing their overall quality of life.

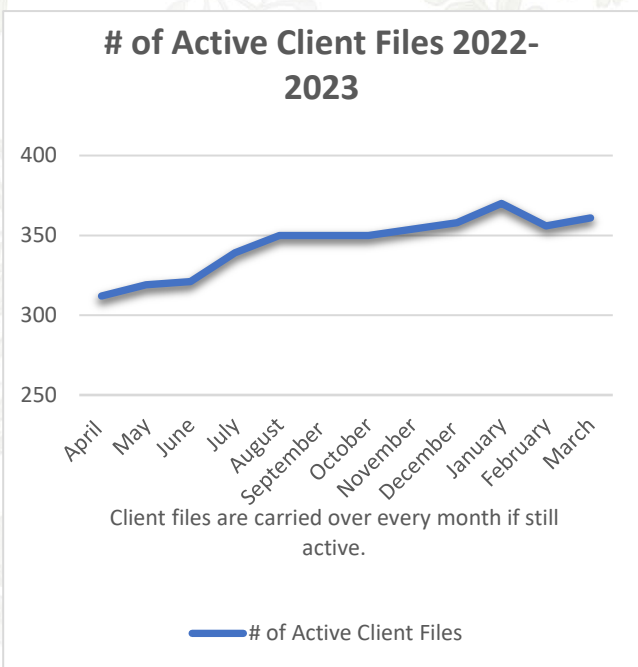
These stories highlight the Patient Advocate Unit's practical support and the real differences they make in the lives of those they assist.

PAU 2022-2023 Yearly Average of Supports and Services



Key Issues and Challenges

The Patient Advocate Unit faces distinct challenges in supporting Elders within the healthcare system. A primary concern is the lack of in-city transportation for Elders, both permanent city residents and former medical relocation clients. Many struggle to afford travel to essential medical appointments, and limited knowledge of the local transit system exacerbates this barrier, leading to missed appointments. Additionally, legal challenges arise when elderly patients are admitted to hospitals and faced with the imposition of certificates that may falsely deem them as incompetent due to language barriers and misunderstandings of medical terminology. This loss of financial decision-making ability, coupled with the high cost of legal representation to challenge these decisions, creates further hurdles for many Elders. These challenges underscore the Patient Advocate Unit's critical role in fostering partnerships, advocating, and coordinating services to ensure quality healthcare for First Nations people, as reflected in the growing number of clients seeking their support.



Status Card Intake Service Program

Staff

Leanna Catcheway, Status Intake Clerk
Dionne Letandre, Status Intake Clerk

EUTC launched the Status Card Intake Service (SCIS) in August 2022. It provides essential status card services to First Nations citizens. The SCIS has successfully assisted 1,652 individuals in obtaining their SCIS cards, along with some registrations.

EAGLE URBAN TRANSITION CENTRE

Secured Certificate of Indian Status Card

In partnership with Indigenous Services Canada, EUTC offers **DAILY SCIS services** such as:

- Renewing expired cards
- Obtaining new cards
- Obtaining replacement cards
- Registration

You must bring a VALID Photo Identification (ID) and Status # to your appointment

200-275 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, MB

The Status Intake Clerks at the program have successfully managed operations efficiently. They handle appointment bookings, inquiries, and existing and new registrations by completing forms, scanning IDs, and providing necessary support and guidance. Their accomplishments include developing close working relationships with the Regional Office and implementing popup/ID clinics, which have proven beneficial to First Nations citizens.

Despite these successes, they face challenges, particularly with applicants who lack valid IDs or Guarantors and complex cases involving absent parents, adoptions, or estate matters. Special attention is needed to navigate these situations,

and they have worked diligently to guide individuals through these difficulties. Regular training and collaborations across Canada contribute to addressing these challenges, and the program continues to explore ways to expand initiatives to better serve First Nations citizens' needs.

Economic Development

Staff

Howard Burston, Executive Director

With the Chiefs Committee on Employment, Economic Development, and Income Security providing oversight, guidance and direction, AMC economic development activities will work toward the development of sustainable economic development initiatives that will ensure generational wealth for the AMC Nations in a manner which also creates education, training and employment opportunities, and ensures AMC-member First Nations play an active and meaningful role in the local, regional and national economy.

Key Initiatives

- *Regional Economic Development Strategic Plan:* Updating and revising the Manitoba First Nations Economic Development Strategy includes identifying regional economic development priorities and developing a regional plan that enhances First Nations' capacity to create, operate and manage economic development projects.
- *AMC Holistic Health & Wellness Lodge:* A Medical Receiving Home Facility planned and operated by AMC-member First Nations to support the holistic health and wellness needs of individuals, families, children, and youth travelling to Winnipeg for medical appointments. The facility offers culturally appropriate care and short-term, long-term, and transitional housing.
- *AMC Governance House:* Exploration of the acquisition of a significant commercial asset to house the AMC Grand Chief's Office, the AMC

Secretariat, AMC-mandated entities, and other First Nations offices.

Importance and Impact

A detailed plan is being developed to use financial resources to enhance the economic health and social well-being of AMC Nations by generating wealth and enhancing local First Nations economies to be self-reliant. The plan will include a strategic approach that involves mentorship and collaboration with other First Nations organizations to improve economic and social outcomes. Through education, training, and job opportunities, this work is vital in building a sustainable and robust future for AMC-member First Nations.

Challenges

Limited funding and revenue sources persist. The Secretariat is committed to using existing resources and seeking new funding and financing to create long-term, sustainable revenue.

Policy and Legal Affairs

Staff

Marcel Balfour, Director of Policy and Legal Affairs

The Department of Policy and Legal Affairs within the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Secretariat is instrumental in promoting and protecting the legal interests of AMC-member First Nations. Adhering to AMC's constitutional principles, the department emphasizes the recognition of First Nations laws and sovereignty and assists members in asserting their legal orders. It actively participates in strategic litigation, regulatory hearings, and commissions to safeguard First Nations' rights, including inherent and treaty rights. Additionally, the department scrutinizes proposed legislation affecting First Nations in Manitoba, advocates for alignment with the UNDRIP and engages in dialogues with various government levels. Overall, Policy and Legal Affairs epitomizes AMC's dedication to upholding First Nations' legal rights and sovereignty.

Activities

Interventions: Supreme Court of Canada

Sharma (Application of Gladue Principles)

The AMC was granted intervener status at the Supreme Court of Canada in the case of His Majesty the King in Right of Canada v Cheyenne Sharma. The AMC argued that removing conditional sentencing perpetuates discrimination against First Nations and hinders the application of Gladue principles, which are crucial in considering First Nations' laws and perspectives.

Restoule (Treaty Annuities)

The AMC was granted leave to intervene in the Restoule appeal, which pertains to the Robinson Huron and Robinson Superior Treaty First Nations' claim for increased annuities based on resource sharing. The AMC argued that Canadian Courts must interpret treaties in a manner that reflects the nation-to-nation relationship between the Crown and First Nations and the recognition of the Crown's unilateral shift from treaty partner to authoritarian. The AMC further argued that the Canadian judicial system could substantively enforce the Crown's treaty promises by recognizing the annuities as cognizable First Nations interests.

Shot Both Sides (Limitations of Treaty-based Claims)

The AMC sought leave to intervene in the Shot Both Sides decision, addressing whether limitations on treaty-based claims start before the enactment of section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982. The AMC maintained that provincial statutes of limitations could not bar First Nations' treaty-based claims.

Interventions: Federal Court

Brunswick House (Métis Government Recognition and Self-Government Implementation Agreement)

The AMC sought leave to intervene in the Brunswick House case at the Federal Court, challenging the decision to enter into the Métis Government

Recognition and Self-Government Implementation Agreement with the Métis Nation of Ontario. The AMC aimed to protect the distinct interests of First Nations in Manitoba.

Interventions: Other Jurisdictions

The AMC intends to intervene in a claim filed by Treaty 9 First Nations in Ontario against the governments of Ontario and Canada, seeking compensation for unpaid annuities.

Regulatory Proceedings: Public Utilities Board, Manitoba Hydro General Rate Application

The AMC advocated for a 0% rate increase in the Public Utilities Board hearing, considering the disproportionate impact of rate increases on First Nations on-reserve residential customers.

Litigation: Manitoba Court of Kings Bench

First Nations Child and Family Class Action Lawsuit

The AMC was involved in the Laplante class action lawsuit filed by the Public Interest Law Centre and McCarthy Tetrault on behalf of First Nations individuals and families affected by CFS. The court granted carriage of the claims to the Fontaine action, which advances the rights of Indigenous people collectively.

Case Development

The AMC received funding from the Court Challenges Program to address issues related to Shelter Allowance and the enforcement of by-laws and BCRs.

Projects

First Nations Court Pilot Project

Please see the update in this annual report's Justice section.

Agricultural Crown Land Leases and Permits

The AMC aims to protect First Nations lands in Manitoba by developing a legal strategy to address

the accelerated sale and lease of unoccupied Crown lands under the Crown Land Dispositions Act.

Natural Resources Transfer Agreement (NRTA) Summit 2023

The AMC presented strategies and a strategic plan at the NRTA Summit to discuss the Natural Resources Transfer Agreements.

United Nations Application

The AMC applied for consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council to contribute to the work of advancing higher standards of living, human rights, and First Nations issues.

Legislation

The AMC reviewed and analyzed several bills, including Bill S-268, Bill S-256, Bill C-29, Bill C-45, Bill 32, Bill 34, and amendments to the First Nations Fiscal Management Act.

- **Bill S-268 – An Act to Amend the Criminal Code and the Indian Act.** This bill proposes amendments to the Criminal Code and the Indian Act, allowing First Nations to conduct and manage lottery schemes on their reserves and giving Band Councils the authority to make by-laws to regulate them.
- **Bill S-256 – An Act to amend the Canada Post Corporation Act (seizure) and to make related amendments to other Acts.** Bill S-256 is intended to combat the trafficking of contraband, including dangerous drugs such as fentanyl and other opioids, firearms, illegal alcohol, and counterfeit items.
- **Bill C-29 – An Act to provide for the establishment of a national council for reconciliation.** Bill C-29 is Canada’s attempt at implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action 53-56 and the UNDRIP.
- **Bill C-45 – An Act to amend the First Nations Fiscal Management Act, to make consequential**

amendments to other Acts, and to make a clarification relating to another Act. Bill C-45

amends the First Nations Fiscal Management Act (FNFMA).

- **Bill 32 – An Act Respecting Child and Family Services (Indigenous Jurisdiction and Related Amendments).** Bill 32 amends several Acts to recognize Indigenous jurisdiction and supports the implementation of the federal Act respecting First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children, youth, and families.
- **Bill 34 – The Police Services Amendment Act.** Bill 34 amends The Police Services Act by introducing standards for police service operations, facilities, and equipment.

Gaming

Staff

Marcel Balfour, Director of Policy and Legal Affairs

The AMC is dedicated to enhancing revenues and opportunities for First Nations in Manitoba through gaming, recognizing it as vital for economic development and self-sufficiency. The Gaming Development team at AMC undertakes activities such as policy development, legal advocacy, and government collaboration to promote First Nations’ interests. Working with consultants and legal advisors, they receive direction from the AMC Grand Chief’s Office, the Chiefs Gaming Committee, and the Sand Hills Casino Board of Directors.

AMC Gaming Committee

The AMC Gaming Committee comprises representatives from different regions, each playing a vital role in shaping gaming initiatives:

- 2 Northern Representatives: Chief Larry Barker, Chief David Monias
- 2 Southern Representatives: Chief Clarence Easter, Chief Jason Daniels
- 1 Aseneskak Casino Representative: Chief Elwood Zastre

- 1 South Beach Casino Representative (Chair): Chief Sheldon Kent
- 1 Sand Hills Casino Representative: Chief Jason Daniels
- 1 VLT Holder Representative: Chief Kyra Wilson
- 1 Non-VLT Holder (Vacant)

Sand Hills Casino Board of Directors

The AMC also provides administrative support to the Sand Hills Casino Board of Directors, consisting of the following members:

- 1 AMC Chiefs Gaming Committee Representative (Vacant)
- Host First Nation Representative: Chief Jason Daniels, Swan Lake First Nation
- Aseneskak Casino Representative: Chief Elwood Zastre, Wuskwi Sipiik First Nation
- South Beach Casino Representative: Chief Larry Barker, Hollow Water First Nation
- 2 Board Appointed Representatives (Vacant)

Activities

Gaming Litigation: Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs et al. v Manitoba and Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries

AMC has actively pursued a lawsuit against the Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation (MLLC) and the Government of Manitoba, alleging breaches concerning provincial gaming. Initiated due to the government's violations and refusal to discuss a new gaming framework, the legal action began with a claim filed on October 17, 2017. After refining and strengthening the claim with new legal counsel, an Amended Statement of Claim was filed on February 27, 2018, followed by a Statement of Defence on June 29, 2018, and the AMC's Reply on September 24, 2018.

Litigation Developments

In the last year, AMC's legal counsel questioned Manitoba's witness Rick Josephson in October 2022, with further questioning of a Manitoba Liquor &

Lotteries (MBLL) witness scheduled for September 2023. Examinations of the AMC's and Sand Hill's witnesses are being actively organized. A brief delay occurred when Manitoba changed litigation counsel, now represented by Taylor McAffrey LLP, as the new team acclimated to the case.

Negotiations with the Province and Federal Government

In conjunction with ongoing litigation, negotiations have intensified between the AMC, Sand Hills Casino Board, and the Province. A Gaming Litigation Steering Committee was established last summer to foster a resolution in the gaming litigation and promote recognition of First Nations' gaming jurisdiction through strategic direction in legislative and regulatory amendments.

The Gaming Litigation Steering Committee

The Gaming Litigation Steering Committee is currently composed of the following members:

- Chief Larry Barker, Sand Hills Casino Board member, and a member of the Board of South Beach Casino
- Chief Jason Daniels, Sand Hills Casino Board member, and Chief of the Host First Nation
- Chief Clarence Easter, AMC Gaming Committee member, and a member of the Board of Aseneskak Casino
- Chief Sheldon Kent, AMC Gaming Committee member, and a member of the Board of South Beach Casino
- Chief Kyra Wilson, AMC Gaming Committee member

Technical Advisors

The committee's technical advisors include:

- Ali Alizadeh, CEO of Hemisphere Capital, the Manager of Sand Hills Casino
- Faysal Tur, longtime Tribal Casino Manager, Hemisphere Capital
- Howard Morry, Legal and Strategic Counsel
- Marcel Balfour, AMC Secretariat

- David Outerbridge and Aria Laskin, Legal Counsel on the Litigation (Torys LLP / JFK LLP)

After years of extensive efforts by the AMC, the Province has finally agreed to enter discussions with the AMC and Sand Hills to resolve disputed gaming issues. The current negotiations are confidential, and details are withheld to protect the privilege of those discussions.

Criminal Code Gaming Provisions

The existing Criminal Code framework limits AMC-member First Nations' jurisdiction over gaming. Canada assumed primary jurisdiction without First Nations' consent, delegating responsibility to the provinces. The AMC continues to assertively seek amendments to the Criminal Code to recognize the gaming jurisdiction of First Nations.

Advocacy

Advocacy in this area focuses on two main aspects:

- Supporting the passage of Bill S-268, a new Senate bill introduced in June 2023 that aims to revise the Criminal Code to recognize the jurisdictions of First Nations gaming.
- Work on regulatory reform arising from the passage of the UNDRIP' Act Action Plan. The AMC actively strives to become one of the First Nations partners engaged in discussions with the federal government regarding legislative reform and First Nations' participation in gaming.

Key Issues and Challenges

Amid easing COVID-19 challenges, gaming initiatives still confront major obstacles due to the Criminal Code's exclusive provincial control over gaming. The Province's restrictions on VLTs, casino development, and refusal to share online gaming revenues exacerbate these difficulties. The AMC is resolute in its commitment to tackle these issues and advocate for reforms that back First Nations' gaming initiatives.

Jordan's Principle Implementation

Staff

Marcel Balfour, Project Manager
 Maryann E. Flett, Senior Policy Analyst
 Corrine Clyne, Policy Analyst
 Christy Hemmerling, Policy Analyst
 Joy Keeper, Knowledge Translation Specialist
 Angela Young, Administrative Support

The AMC Jordan's Principle Implementation Team (JPIT) is dedicated to fully implementing Jordan's Principle by AMC-member First Nations for their citizens. This includes implementing recommendations from "*The Implementation of Jordan's Principle in Manitoba: Final Report (Final Report)*" in partnership with AMC Chiefs-in-Assembly and AMC-member First Nations. The goal is to ensure an approach that respects the rights and meets the needs of First Nations children, youth, and families while honouring their sovereignty and self-determination.



The Implementation of *Jordan's Principle* in Manitoba: Final Report



Overview

The Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT) has linked Jordan's Principle to a standard of substantive equality, defining Canada's human rights obligations. This principle is exemplified by the tragic story of Jordan River Anderson, a Norway House Cree Nation citizen born with complex

medical needs. Federal and provincial disagreements over funding led to his inability to live with family, culminating in his death in the hospital. Since then, the AMC Chiefs-in-Assembly has advocated for First Nations children like Jordan. In the 2016 CHRT decision against Canada, the CHRT ordered the immediate full implementation of Jordan's Principle. The AMC continues to work steadfastly to ensure that Canada collaborates with First Nations to fully realize Jordan's Principle in Manitoba, upholding their sovereignty and self-determination.

The JPIT's ongoing work aligns with the direction of the AMC Chiefs-in-Assembly and the Final Report, which outlines 13 recommendations for implementing Jordan's Principle in Manitoba:

- Ensuring adequate housing and clean water for every First Nations child.
- Providing flexibility for First Nations to develop services according to their needs.
- Developing dedicated physical space for programs and services in each Nation.
- Establishing digital infrastructure.
- Creating communities of practice.
- Implementing capacity enhancement initiatives to support every Nation in achieving a self-determined system of services.
- Establishing a First Nations-owned and controlled program of Jordan's Principle research.
- Extending Jordan's Principle eligibility at least through age 21.

Activities

AMC Jordan's Principle Communications and Knowledge Translation Engagements

The AMC has been implementing Jordan's Principle in Manitoba, following recommendations from First Nations during the Keewaywin Engagements in 2017. They advised the establishment of a First Nations-controlled "centre of excellence."

The JPIT is developing a framework for long-term implementation, with a regional position to be shared at the Assembly of First Nations in December 2023. The process involves the Jordan's Principle Equity Roundtable, including AMC-member First Nations Leadership, leading to the First Nations Jordan's Principle Capacity Enhancement Centre (CEC).

First Nations have guided the regional implementation through ongoing Jordan's Principle Knowledge Translation Engagements (KTEs) since April 2023. These KTEs focus on fully implementing Jordan's Principle for all First Nations in Manitoba, aligning policies, programs, and practices to coordinate on- and off-reserve implementation.

AMC Jordan's Principle Technical Advisory Group

The JPIT holds monthly meetings with Jordan's Principle First Nations case managers via the AMC Jordan's Principle Technical Advisory Group (TAG). The TAG focuses on its Strategic Plan and Terms of Reference, and receives presentations from various entities, such as Function Four Ltd. and Mustimuhw Information Solutions, in addition to presentations on foundational concepts from ISC and AMC-mandated entities.

AMC Jordan's Principle Research

The JPIT held two virtual meetings/symposiums of academic researchers in 2023 to discuss Jordan's Principle research conducted across Canada. The information gathered was shared with the TAG, the AMC Women's Council, and First Nations through the AMC website and KTEs. Future Jordan's Principle research expanding on the Final Report and gathered information is under consideration by JPIT and the AMC Jordan's Principle research team.

Key Issues and Challenges

As the JPIT engages with each AMC-member of First Nations through KTEs, ensuring First Nations Leadership and specialized service providers' involvement in defining long-term funding and implementation for Jordan's Principle remains

crucial. A challenge lies in improving reliable high-speed internet and digital infrastructure for communication between the AMC and First Nations.

Discussions between ISC and the AMC related to the AMC Canada MOU, which includes Jordan's Principle, are unresolved. Despite this challenge, the JPIT is confident in addressing the issue and making significant strides toward an agreement with Canada this year.

Data

Knowledge Translation Engagements

- First Nations visited: 14
- Confirmed upcoming visits: 7
- Visits awaiting confirmation: 24
- Target visits by October 2023: 40

Justice

Staff

Marcel Balfour, Director of Policy and Legal Affairs

The AMC remains steadfast in promoting and facilitating justice-related regional activities for its member First Nations, safeguarding their rights, and amplifying their voices. Numerous past resolutions inform AMC Secretariat activities in the justice sector. Oversight, guidance, and direction are provided by the Chiefs Committee on Justice, which currently includes:

- Chief Larry Barker (Hollow Water First Nation)
- Chief Angela Levasseur (Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation)
- Chief John Thunder (Buffalo Point First Nation)
- Chief Michael Yellowback (Manto Sipi Cree Nation)
- Chief Lawrence Letander (Dauphin River First Nation)

The AMC justice project advocates for the rights and sovereignty of First Nations in Manitoba by addressing legal and policy issues. Its focus is on decolonizing the justice system, fostering self-determination, and establishing a First Nations court system. The department strives to rectify historical injustices, ensure fair treatment, and build a society free from discrimination and systemic barriers.

Activities

First Nation Court Pilot Project

During the October 2022 AMC Annual General Assembly, the Chiefs-in-Assembly passed a resolution supporting and endorsing the development of a pilot project for a First Nations-run court in Manitoba. The Chiefs Committee on Restorative Justice and Policing recommended Nisichawayasihk Cree Nation and Minegoziibe Anishinabe as the two First Nations to participate in the pilot project. The AMC Secretariat is seeking funding for these projects as directed by the Chiefs-in-Assembly through AMC Resolution MAY-23.08.

AMC Justice Strategy and UNDRIP Act Community Engagements

In the upcoming months, the AMC will provide a series of presentations to all interested First Nations. These presentations will cover an overview of First Nations justice in Canada, the AMC's justice strategy, the UNDRIP, and the Federal UNDRIP Act. The Act aims to ensure Canadian laws align with the UNDRIP. Through collective exploration of UNDRIP implementation and addressing gaps and challenges within the justice system, the AMC seeks meaningful and sustainable change that upholds the rights and well-being of all First Nations in Manitoba.

Policing

The AMC continues its advocacy for increased funding and resources for First Nations-led policing initiatives. Efforts are ongoing to enhance

communication between First Nations Leadership, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), and the Winnipeg Police Service through comprehensive MOUs and other agreements. The AMC also actively supports designating First Nations policing as an essential service to guarantee reliable and comprehensive funding. Additionally, the aim is to establish stronger accountability mechanisms, improve data collection on policing practices, and ensure the fair treatment and protection of First Nations individuals within the justice system.

Key Issues and Challenges

Insufficient funding remains a challenge, impeding the ability to address the historical legacy of colonization, revitalize First Nations legal traditions, and ensure comprehensive engagement of First Nations perspectives in policy-making. Despite financial constraints, the AMC justice project remains dedicated to advocating for justice, empowerment, and culturally appropriate legal frameworks.

Wills and Estates

Staff

Micheal Ellis - Policy Analyst

The Wills and Estates Project of the AMC is working to develop a unique regional approach to wills and estate administration that caters specifically to First Nations in Manitoba. Currently, the wills and estates of First Nations individuals who live on a reserve are controlled by the Indian Act and the Indian Estates Regulation, rather than the provincial legislation that governs most other Manitobans. This control by the Indian Act necessitates approval by the Minister of ISC or an Indian Act court for wills created by First Nations individuals.

This framework has led the AMC to address numerous challenges, including jurisdictional issues, discriminatory practices, and the need for an approach to wills and estates driven by First Nations

themselves. In 1971, the AMC began to advocate for transferring jurisdiction over wills and estates provisions from the Indian Act to the Chief and Council, a move that would allow First Nations to manage these matters according to their own laws and traditions.

The subject was again brought to the forefront in April 2017 when the AMC emphasized the importance of consulting First Nations in Manitoba regarding any modifications to the Indian Act, including changes related to wills and estates. This emphasis on collaboration and autonomy is consistent with the AMC's ongoing support for implementing the UNDRIP in the broader context of amending the Indian Act to reflect the rights and self-determination of First Nations in Canada.

Activities

In May 2023, the AMC Secretariat began a focused study on the administration of wills and estates for First Nations in Manitoba, including a review of the Public Guardian and Trustee Office's role. The Secretariat, working closely with the FNFAO, created educational materials on key topics and identified concerns about First Nations' access to their finances.

A formalized work plan was developed, including planned engagement sessions with First Nations and experts such as Band Membership Clerks. Oversight will be provided by AMC Councils and the Chiefs Committee on Citizenship, with findings to be presented to the Chiefs-in-Assembly.

The project emphasizes clear communication and includes visuals to present complex legal information. The AMC remains committed to a First Nations-designed approach to address Manitoba's specific areas of wills and estates administration.

Key Issues and Challenges

The wills and estates initiative seeks to enhance capacity and expertise in wills and estates administration at both regional and local levels

through a First Nations-led process. To achieve this, effective distribution and discussion of technical information are crucial. The AMC will address persistent issues, including the role of Manitoba's Public Guardian and Trustee in managing the financial matters of First Nations. Collaborative efforts with stakeholders, including provincial and federal governments, are essential to address these challenges.

Special Projects and Capacity Enhancement Unit

Staff

Melanie Everette, Special Projects Manager
Maryann Moar, Pathfinder Team Lead
Monique Perrault, Pathfinder
Paige Paupanakis, Pathfinder

This unit operates under the guidance of the Executive Director and provides support for new and upcoming projects and projects requiring assistance. It also responds to requests for capacity enhancement and support from First Nations, offering administrative aid where needed. The team is adept at collaborating with various levels of administration, both internally and externally.

Pathfinder Program

The AMC's Pathfinder Program, supported by secured funding, is designed to train and mentor three First Nations youths in an office environment, focusing on the Special Projects & Capacity Enhancement Unit. This program enables the Pathfinders to develop diverse skills, including research, presentation, writing, administrative tasks, planning, coordination, and special projects. Through hands-on experience and collaboration with team members, they have contributed to successfully completing projects and have provided invaluable support at various AMC events like Chiefs Assemblies, workshops, and gatherings. The

Pathfinders not only demonstrate efficiency and effectiveness in handling tasks but also foster positive relationships within the community. With opportunities for training, professional development, and active engagement in youth gatherings, functions, and committees, the program serves as a platform for them to expand their networks and connect with new individuals, emphasizing personal growth and broader community engagement.

Processes and Procedures

The Special Projects and Capacity Enhancement Team was actively refining several project procedures, focusing on a current review of the conference/assembly checklist. The review included integrating specific checklists for the Chiefs-in-Assembly and aligning all essential templates and documentation.

Ambassador Deployment

Responding to a First Nation's request, AMC Ambassadors were deployed to support security operations. Their mission involved well-being check-ins, relationship-building, assisting local policing, and monitoring addiction-related incidents. They also engaged with the community, hosted a special event for the youth, and successfully completed their mission, returning home for Christmas.

Housing and Infrastructure Office

Staff

Daphne Sinclair, First Nations Housing & Infrastructure Specialist

During the Housing and Infrastructure Summit on November 28-30, 2000, Manitoba Chiefs formulated a Vision Statement to guide their mission. The statement emphasizes the AMC's desire to assume control of housing programs, respecting treaties and the treaty right to shelter,

building quality homes, and establishing a nation-to-nation relationship. The overarching goal is to elevate communities to equal living standards with other Canadians.

The AMC Secretariat's Housing and Infrastructure office delivers technical support in areas like capital, infrastructure, public works, and housing policy. Striving for a regional approach to on-reserve and urban housing, the department focuses on developing home-grown solutions and a First Nation-led strategy to address the critical need for adequate housing for AMC-member First Nations citizens residing on and off-reserve.

Activities:

The Housing and Infrastructure Office at the AMC plays a dynamic role in addressing housing and infrastructure needs for First Nations in Manitoba. Activities include engaging in discussions with First Nations leaders to collaboratively identify specific needs and challenges and partnering with the Federal Housing Advocate to address on-reserve and urban housing shortages. The department also actively advocates for a regional housing strategy, aligning with the aspirations of First Nations leaders for long-term solutions. Participation in significant events like the *First Nations Housing Professional Association's Housing Conference* fosters the exchange of ideas and knowledge. At the same time, dedicated efforts to build relationships with urban First Nations groups concentrate on collaborative solutions for housing and homelessness. These comprehensive efforts aim to promote and establish sustainable and equitable housing conditions across the region.

Key Issues and Challenges

Housing and Infrastructure are critical challenges for First Nations. The urgent need for more staffing within First Nations organizations and reserves and sufficient financial resources is vital for managing and addressing these issues. Overcoming these hurdles is key to significant progress in meeting the

housing needs of AMC-member First Nations and urban populations.

Road Safety

Staff

Dennis Ballard, First Nations Road Safety Coordinator

During the fiscal year 2022-23, the AMC First Nations Road Safety Project continued its collaborative efforts with the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation (MPI) to address road safety issues impacting First Nation citizens in Manitoba. Regrettably, First Nations citizens continue to experience higher rates of motor vehicle accidents and traffic violations than non-First Nations individuals in the province.

Activities

MPI committed to funding a two-year road safety project for First Nations, supporting immediate activities such as:

- Researching Regional, National, and International First Nations Road Safety Strategies to incorporate best practices.
- Engaging with international experts to gain insights.
- Monitoring existing strategies to ensure consistent data across all government levels.
- Collaborating with MPI to address data collection and funding policies.
- Establishing a Chiefs Technical Advisory Committee for information relay and oversight.

Successes

The AMC, MPI, and Safety Services Manitoba (SSM) jointly implemented several successful initiatives to address the unique road safety concerns of member First Nations. Collaboration with Tribal Councils led to on-reserve all-terrain vehicle (ATV) and off-road vehicle (ORV) training, enhancing safety awareness for off-road vehicle users. Working with MPI, the

program supported installing speed boards on-reserve to control speeding incidents. Visibility improvements were made in Peguis First Nation, reducing the risk of accidents involving pedestrians. Efforts were made to increase awareness of existing road safety policies and legislation, ensuring First Nations citizens were well-informed about essential safety regulations. Addressing the lack of access to MPI driver testing and licensing services was a significant focus, with collaboration between AMC and MPI improving access for all class licenses, both on and off reserves. Additionally, through the Safe Roads Partnership, the AMC worked with stakeholders to identify and address road safety concerns both on and off reserves, furthering the goal of safer transportation for First Nations.

Challenges

Many First Nations are situated in rural and isolated areas. Limited accessibility to essential MPI services such as driver training, licensing, and vehicle inspections burdens First Nations citizens with unnecessary travel and additional costs.

The AMC First Nations Road Safety Project continues to work with partners like MPI to enhance road safety for First Nations citizens, addressing challenges, promoting awareness, and improving access to essential services, contributing to safer road conditions across Manitoba.

Clean Energy

Staff

Chantel Henderson - Clean Energy Coordinator


The AMC's stance on clean energy is based on the wisdom of the Elders, as expressed in the document "*Ogichi Tibakonigaywin Kihche'othasowewin, Tako Wakan: The Great Binding Law.*" This statement came into being as a response to Canada's 2017 National Energy Board (NEB) "modernization" efforts. Within this context, the AMC emphasizes that Western laws and practices have failed to

honour First Nations' legal systems, safeguard the environment, and address the effects of climate change. The foreign decision-making bodies guided by these Western laws deeply affect First Nations, impacting their role as caretakers of the Earth. In September 2020, the AMC took a significant step by intervening at the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC). The AMC argued for an analysis beyond mere federal and provincial jurisdiction, pushing for recognizing First Nations' legal traditions and treaties. Ultimately, the AMC is dedicated to investigating clean energy possibilities and intends to establish a First Nations Energy Authority to explore sustainable energy solutions.

Activities and Accomplishments

In November 2023, the Clean Energy Coordinator began developing a work plan and strategy to engage AMC-member First Nations, forge new relationships, and bolster advocacy efforts in clean energy and environmental matters. Collaborations have been established with various organizations such as the Indigenous Clean Energy Network, Efficiency Manitoba, Kisik Clean Energy, ORPC, Manitoba Hydro, Government of Manitoba representatives, and more. Partnerships also extend to the federal government, including Crown-Indigenous and Northern Affairs Relations and Environment and Climate Change Canada. Specific accomplishments include follow-up on the decision by the Chiefs Committee on Employment, Economic Development, and Income Security to return fuel charge proceeds to First Nations in Manitoba and enhance their capacity to handle carbon offsets and markets.

In line with the ECC's May 2023 decision, efforts are being made to support AMC's participation in the First Nations Climate Leadership Process and formulate a regional strategic plan on climate change. Collaboration with Efficiency Manitoba is underway to explore energy-saving measures in AMC offices and entities and discuss a proposed MOU for their 2024-27 Efficiency Plan. Participation



in a national gathering hosted by the AFN has helped contribute to a national climate Leadership agenda and foster regional climate action projects. An inventory of clean energy projects within Manitoba has also been created, reflecting the comprehensive efforts undertaken in this domain.

Key Issues and Challenges

A prominent challenge facing AMC-member First Nations was the limited availability of funding, restricting full access to federal and provincial clean energy opportunities. This financial shortfall necessitates additional fiscal and HR to comprehensively review and analyze proposed clean energy projects. Navigating the complexities of these opportunities may also require Leadership oversight equipped with specialized knowledge in clean energy and environmental matters.

Despite these challenges, the AMC remains resolute in its commitment to addressing these hurdles, nurturing clean energy initiatives, and cultivating sustainable economic opportunities to benefit all AMC-member First Nations.



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EMPOWERING OUR NATIONS

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