

Panel Agencies



Our Children Our Way Society

Webinar

Video and Resources

Developing and Expanding Indigenous Child And Family Services Agencies/Societies

February 19, 2025

With Q&A

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**Our Children Our Way
Society**

Meet our Panel!



Carrier Sekani
Family Services

**Joan Conlon,
Director of Child Safety
&
Stephanie Konefall,
Jurisdiction Governance
Advisor**



Denisiqi Services
Society

**Christa Smith,
Executive Director**



Island Métis Family &
Community Services
Society

**Melanie Hudson,
Executive Director
&
Kim Adamek,
Director of Practice**



Nezul Be Hunuyeh Child
and Family Services
Society





Cindy Ghostkeeper, Executive Director

Cindy is the Executive Director at Nezul Be Hunuyeh Child and Family Services (NBHCFSS) located in Fort St James and a satellite office in Prince George. She is a proud Cree woman on her father's side and Irish on her mother's side. Cindy is also a mother of six beautiful adult children. She is a passionate advocate for systemic change and the rights of Indigenous children and families.

**Moderator:
Cindy
Ghostkeeper**



Nezul Be Hunuyeh Child
and Family Services
Society



**Our Children Our Way
Society**

Developing and Expanding Indigenous Child and Family Service Agencies

Indigenous Child and Family Service Agencies deliver essential well-being, child safety, and family support services to over 120 of the 204 First Nations in British Columbia. These Indigenous Nations have opted to collaborate with Delegated Agencies for the provision of child and family well-being services, instead of engaging with the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

Delegated Agencies receive their mandate to provide culturally based child and family well-being services to their member communities through Band Council Resolutions, Métis approvals, and Urban Aboriginal community endorsements. This model allows them to provide services that are deeply rooted in the cultural, social, and historical contexts of the communities they serve

C3 -
delegated authority -Information gathering and sharing service requests, support services, respite services, resources (foster parents), kith and Kin placement support

C4 -
delegated authority - legislative guardianship responsibilities, fiduciary responsibilities, placement, care plans, permanency planning

C6-
delegated authority - legislative Child Safety responsibilities

Adoption Delegation-
(adoption/permanency branch)





Joni Conlon

Joni Conlon is a Tsay Keh Dene Nation member, with paternal ties to Treaty 6 Territory – Muskeg Cree Nation. Joni is a social worker who focuses on building her practice and academic learning by decolonizing social work practice. Joni started work with CSFS on a special contract addressing sexualized violence. She has worked with CSFS as a youth coordinator, guardianship social worker, and as Manager of Prevention Services. Currently, Joni is the Director of Child Safety at CSFS. Joni's practice is rooted in prevention work. She has worked with pregnant women in maternal child health, supporting women in the community for over 20 years, adding to her practice (medicine bundle) and appreciating that good prevention work begins at the beginning of the life cycle.



Stephanie Konefall

Stephanie is a Jurisdiction Governance Advisor for Carrier Sekani Family Services, specializing in Indigenous child welfare governance, mediation, policy analysis, and frontline practice. With over 17 years of experience, she has led evaluations of child welfare frameworks, managed social work teams, and developed culturally informed well-being assessments. She consults on Indigenous-led projects, guiding federal legislation implementation through training, project design, and service delivery. Stephanie has co-authored research papers, designed curriculum, and instructed child protection courses in the Aboriginal Social Work Program.



Carrier Sekani
Family Services



Our Children Our Way
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SkakH'aB'hahHut -ChotLe

Looking After Children Well

NAVIGATING THE JOURNEY TOWARDS INDIGENOUS CHILD & FAMILY WELL-BEING

Presented by:

Joni Conlon, Director –Child Safety

StephanieKonefall–Jurisdiction Governance Advisor



CARRIER SEKANI
FAMILY SERVICES

Carrier Sekani Family Services History and Context

1985

Creation of an organization focused on intervening on the struggles faced by Carrier and Sekani children and families

1996

CSFS commenced work on the readiness criteria for C3 & C4 Delegation

2003

CSFS achieves C4 Delegation

2005

CSFS lifecycle approach design for service delivery

2020

CSFS commences Jurisdiction journey pursuant to the An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families and 30 years of readiness preparation

2023

CSFS commences C6 delegation expansion as a process towards jurisdiction capacity development

Identify the Approach

- Understand the context of the community including the history, socio-economic circumstances, cultural context and community intentions
- Build relationships
- Follow a plan to ensure the process is “by design”
- Evidence every step by cultural and western research processes

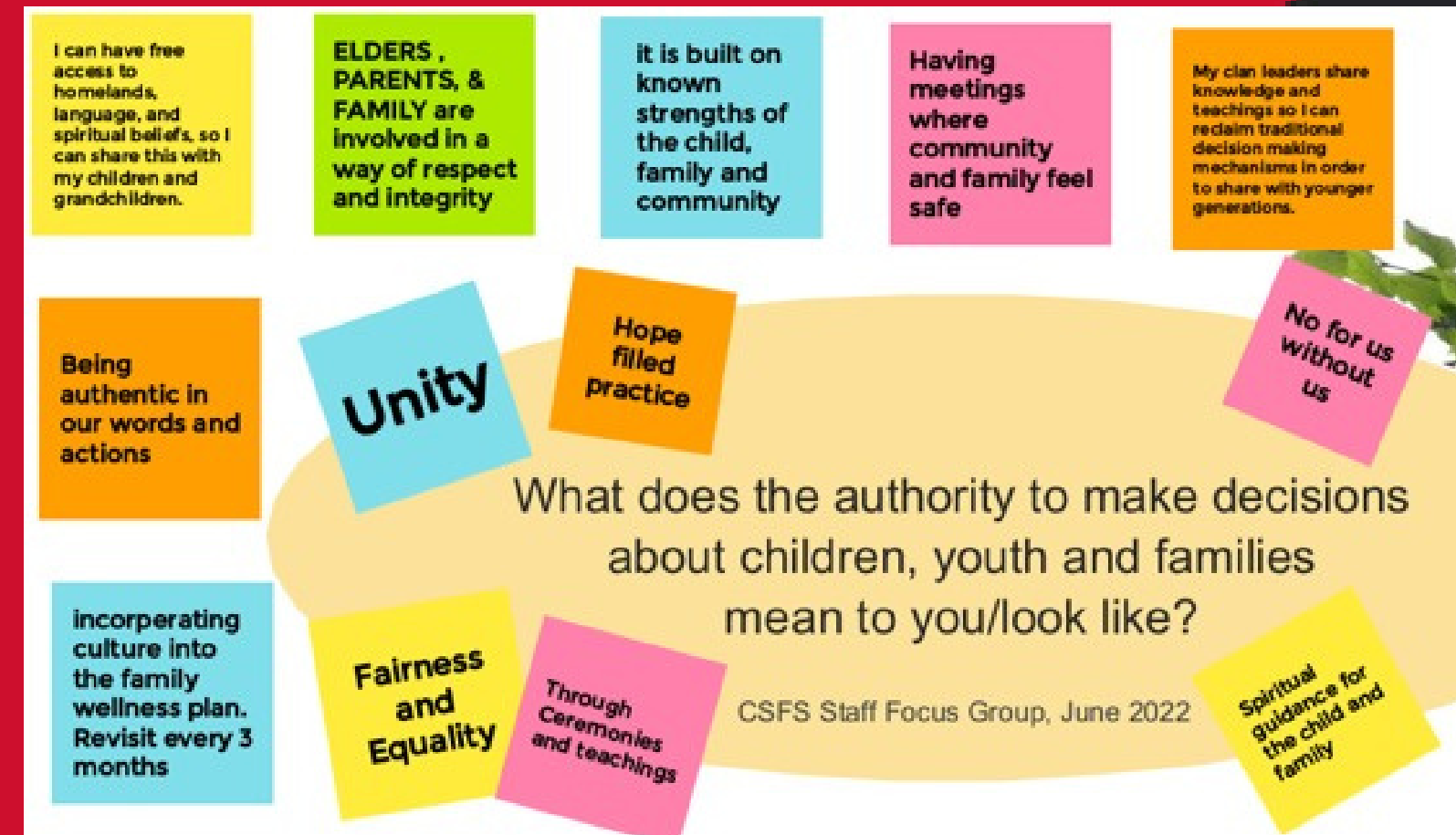
Keep Culture at the Centre

“With the guidance of our elders, Carrier Sekani Family Services is committed to the healing and empowerment of First Nations Families by taking direct responsibility for: health, social, and legal services for First Nations people residing in Carrier territory.”

Engage With All Stakeholders in All/Process

Utilize engagement opportunities to:

- Socialize the process
- Ground truth test every step
- Be a 'living record of decision making'
- Work towards common understanding to ensure all stakeholders have the same level of knowledge
- Include ceremony at every step



Translate Your Intentions Into a Comprehensive Business Plan

- Review your current services and structure
- Consider what you *want* to do but don't *currently* do
- Employ business perspectives such as gaps analysis
- Ensure the 'business' is understood by everyone

Develop Your Framework

- Fit it to your vision
- Supports inherent authority



Define the Actual Cost of Doing the Work



FAMILIES



CHILDREN



COMMUNITY

Employ Change Management

CURRENT STATE

Evaluate what you CAN do now

Work with the 'experts' to design the next steps by analyzing current service delivery

**TRANSITIONAL
AUTHORITY**
This is the big
work

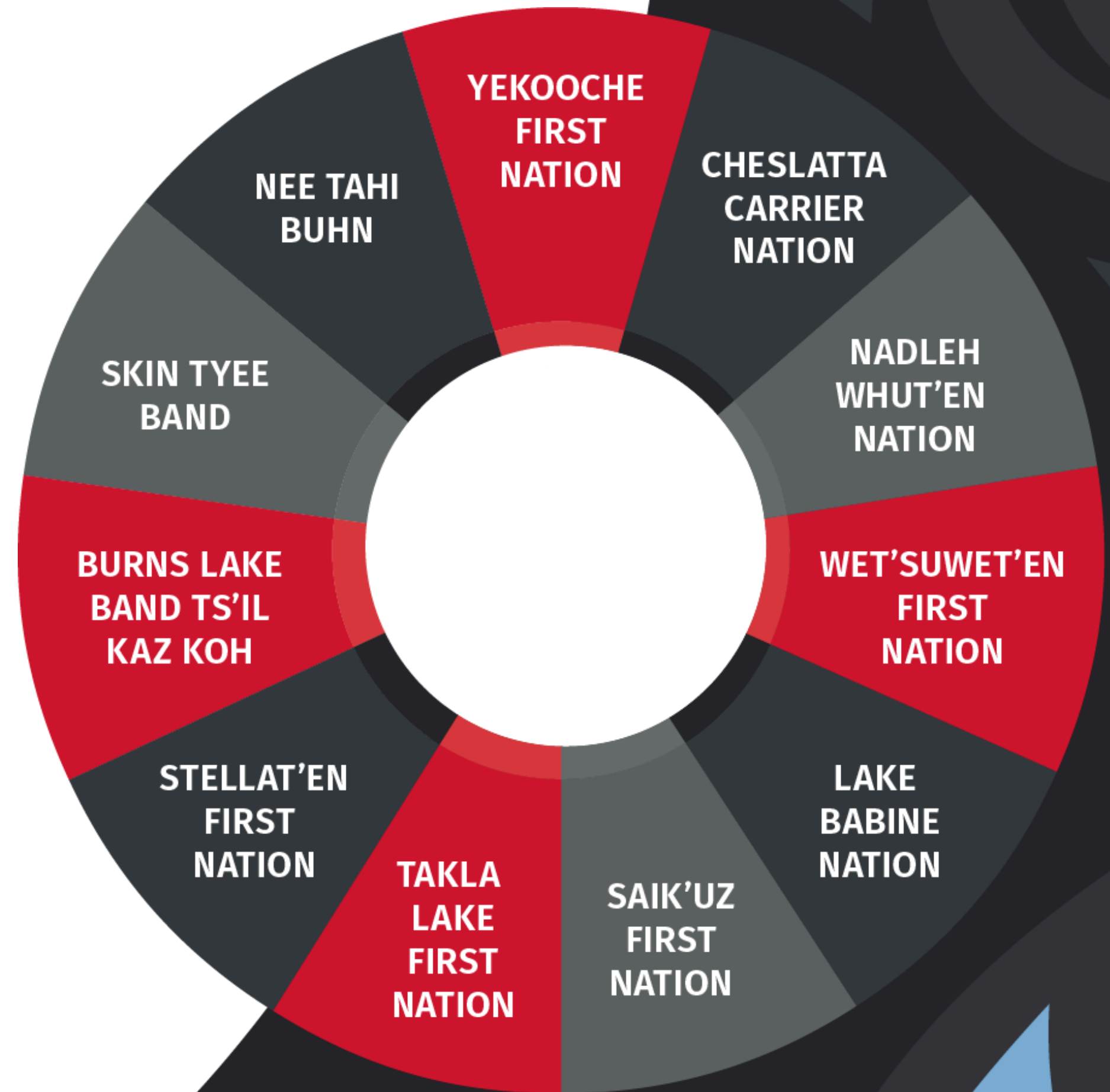
JURISDICTION (FUTURE STATE)

Your law is your authority
Service delivery meets your
community's expectations

Define Service Delivery *Impacts*

Ensure Evaluation and Feedback

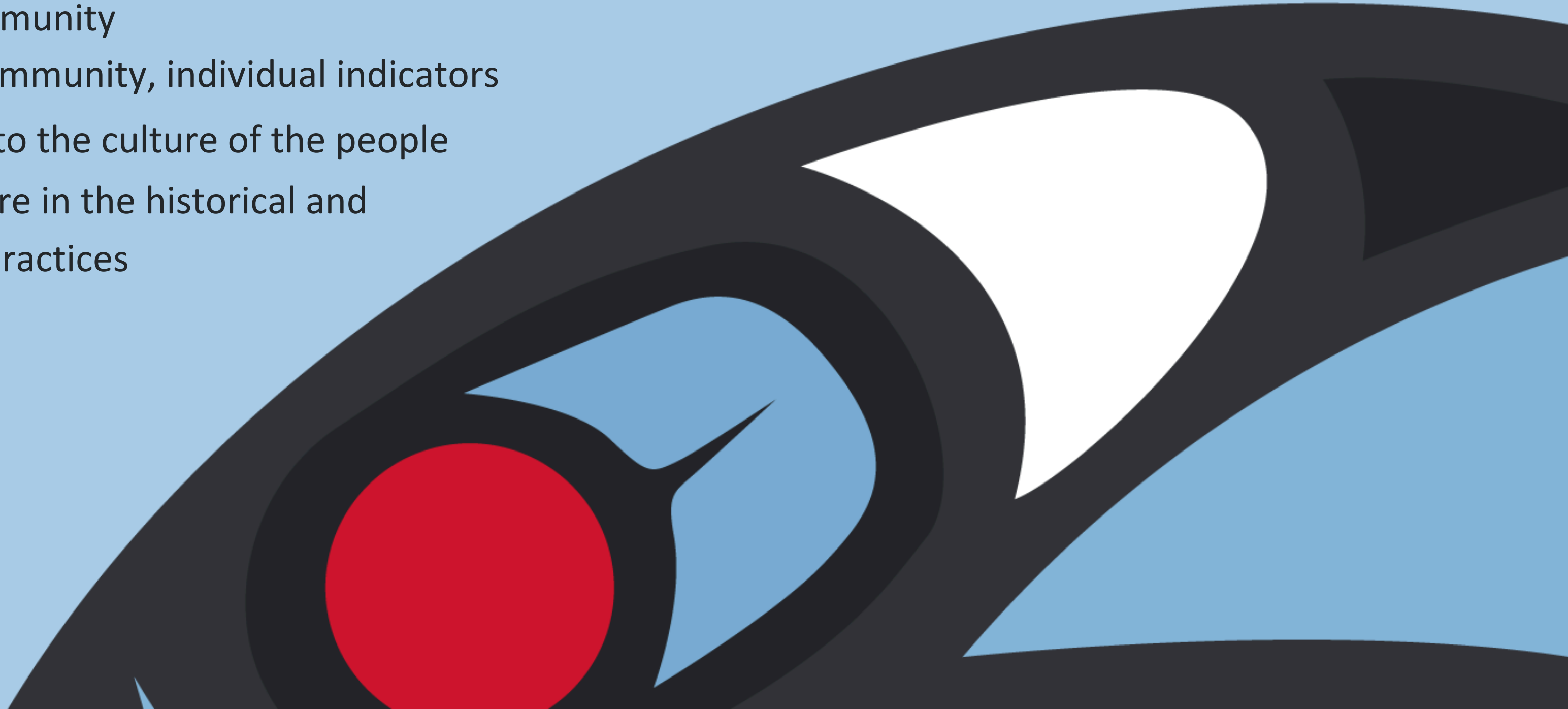
- What services and programs are new, currently existing, and no longer relevant?
- What are the impacts on services as you transition?
- How do you make sure its hitting the mark?



Develop Indicators as “Locally Meaning”

Keep the Dialogue Alive

- Illustrate service impacts through the eyes of each child, family, and community
- Define Nation, community, individual indicators
 - Keep it specific to the culture of the people
 - Represent culture in the historical and contemporary practices





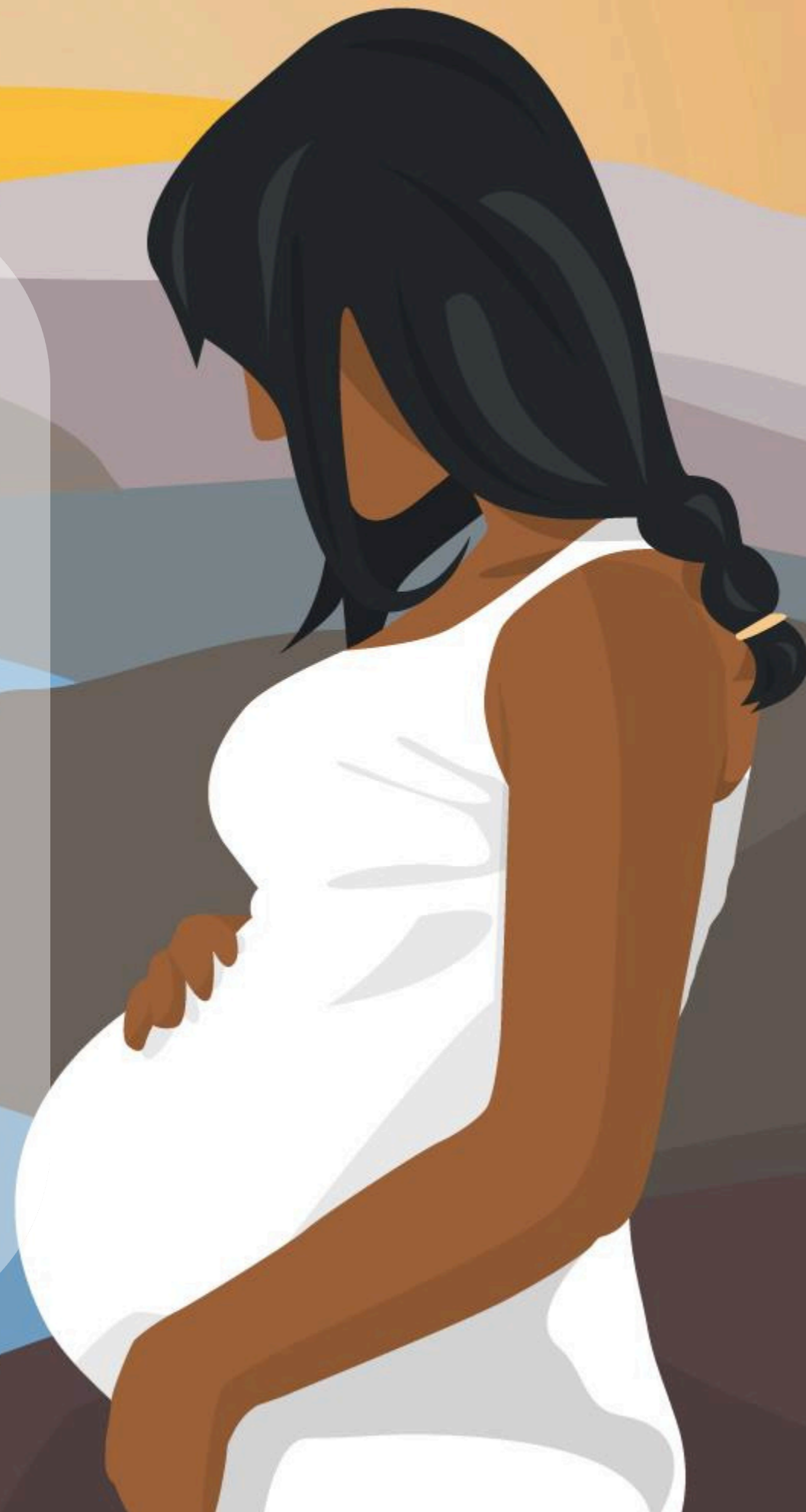
Define Indicators of your Work

An indicator is a measure of how well the individual and community are doing in relation to your purpose for service expansion and asserting jurisdiction.

Maintain a Principled Process

Tie Your Work to Your Purpose

- Your process follows the principle your Nation defines –for CSFS it is “every child has the right to live up to their fullest potential”
- Rely on one core purpose statement as a compass
- Processes for capacity development are not about a negotiation, it is about what every child needs to achieve substantive equality and the mechanisms to achieve this are defined by your Nations and Agencies –don’t be afraid to smudge the lines if necessary.





Good Practices, Good Policies, Good Laws

- Co-created with member Nations
- Community-led development
- Legal and practice expertise

“uy’ goozlee” –Carrier teaching of “go slow”

Thank you | MussiCho

FOR MORE INFORMATION | [CSFS.ORG](https://www.csfs.org)



CARRIER SEKANI
FAMILY SERVICES



**Christa Smith,
Executive Director**

Christa Smith is the Executive Director at Denisiqi Services Society where she has been for the last 6 years. She has over 20 years of business experience, leadership and volunteerism with various government, private and nonprofit organizations. She sits on the board of directors for the Our Children Our Way Society, is the President of Indigenous Perspectives Society and a technical advisor on the Tsilhqot'in Nation Jurisdictional team. Christa loves to learn and has an extensive educational history that includes a Masters of Business Administration, a Masters in Counselling Psychology, and a Bachelors of Social Work to name a few. She is also a two-time author and a practicing clinician in a small private practice.



Denisiqi Services
Society



**Our Children Our Way
Society**



Denisiqi Services Society

**"Developing and Expanding
ICFS Agencies" 2025**

DELEGATED SERVICES

- C3 Voluntary Services
- C4 Guardianship
- C6 Child Protection

- Support services
- Serving both on and off reserve

DENISIQI is based on the philosophy of families helping each other within the community.

It is important for our children to have a safe, caring and loving environment



The Plan

On the Nations journey towards full jurisdiction, Denisiqi moved to Child Protection Delegation (C6) to act as a bridge while the nation builds capacity and readiness to take on these services.

When the organization was first established in 2004 this was always the plan.



THE DIFFERENT INITIATIVES UNDER CHILD AND FAMILY

Here's a summary of the different agreements supporting children and families.



6

These are separate projects, but they are all good steps forward!

The road

2004 Denisiqi doors open

2012 Voluntary Services Agreement (C3)

*** July 2005 – April 2012**

(7 yrs to complete)

2019 Guardianship (C4) Agreement

*** Feb 2014- Apr 2017**

(3 yrs to complete)

2021 Urban Expansion Agreement

*** Oct 2020 - Mar 2021**

(5 months to complete)

2024 Child Protection Delegation (C6)

*** May 2024- Dec 2024**

(7 months to complete)



The Approach

- Community support and engagement
- Staff readiness and change management
- Readiness check list tracker
- Human Resource and Policy Manual
- Service Delivery Model
- Delegation Training and ongoing training plan
- Protocols with partners and communities
- Roll out and slow transition



Insights and Learning

- Robust engagement plans
- Embrace unique needs of communities
- Be patient, flexible and prepare for change
- Internal Change Management with staff



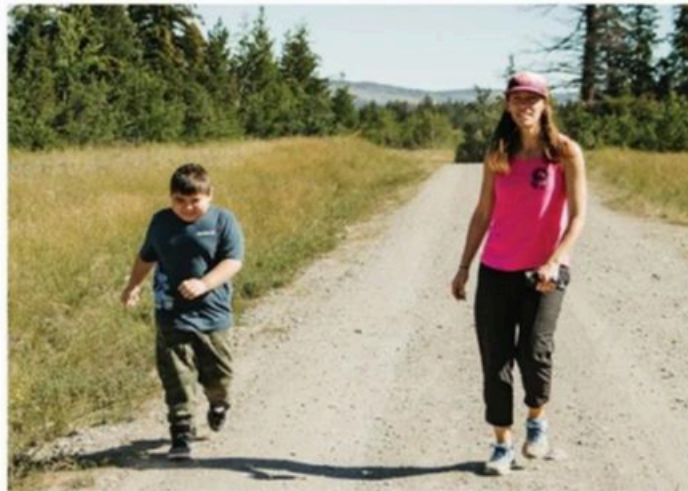


The best way to raise T̄silhqot'in children is on the land.



Children learn the best by doing in the context of relationships, whether it is ?Etsu or a school teacher.

Each family has their own unique way of teaching and understanding the transfer of knowledge.



Family is important. My dad taught us to depend on each other.



Sechanalyagh

Questions?



Melanie Hudson has served as the Executive Director of Island Métis Family & Community Services Society for 6 years. Prior to this role, she worked in various legislative and policy roles within the BC Provincial Government including several years at the Provincial Office of the Ministry of Children and Family Development. Melanie has also worked as a practicing lawyer for several Indigenous Nations and has worked in finance including for Indigenous non-profit agencies.

Melanie is of Cree–Métis and mixed European ancestry with her family coming from the St. Boniface area in Manitoba. She has a Bachelor of Commerce and a Juris Doctor. She is the Chair of the Indigenous Services Division with CCSEA. She has served on many Boards including Métis Nation Greater Victoria, Island Métis Family & Community Services Society, and currently serves as the Vice Chair on the Board of the YMCA/YWCA Vancouver Island.

Melanie Hudson



Kim is an Indigenous Child Welfare professional, Social Worker, and parent of two. She is the Manager of Guardianship and Permanency Planning at Island Métis Family and Community Services Society, with over a decade of experience in Indigenous Child and Family Services. Kim has worked in frontline Child Protection, managed Delegated Teams, and contributed to Indigenous Child Welfare Policy. She also instructs Indigenous Child Welfare Training, co-chairs the IICRD Board, and is a Research Assistant at Royal Roads University. A third-generation European settler on lək'wəŋən Traditional Territory, Kim is committed to bridging traditional practices with governmental frameworks and universal rights principles.

Kim Adamek



Island Métis Family & Community Services Society



Our Children Our Way Society

welcome tawaw



Island Métis
family & community
services society ∞

345 Wale Road | Victoria BC | V9B 6X2
250.391.9924 | www.metis.ca

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Island Métis Family and Community Services Society History and Current State

Island Métis Family and Community Services Society (IMFCSS) was incorporated under the BC Society Act on October 19, 1996, to provide culturally grounded advocacy, support, and programming for Métis children, youth, and families on Southern Vancouver Island. In 2019, we embarked on our delegation readiness journey and in April 2024 we achieved C3 and C4 delegation, officially becoming an Indigenous Child and Family Services Agency (ICFSA).

Today, our dedicated team of over forty staff members delivers a wide range of programs and services, including Youth and Family Support, Children and Youth with Special Needs, Life Skills, Counseling, Cultural Support, Child Care and Delegated Guardianship and Permanency Planning.

We strive to collaborate with MCFD to reduce the number of Métis children in care, with the goal of attaining full delegation of child and family services under the CFCSA. Committed to developing a culturally appropriate system of care, we provide cultural and social services that empower Métis families to honor, celebrate, and practice their traditions and history.

Delegation Implementation Across Two Scopes

- **Through Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) Process**
- **Within the unique cultural context and demographics of the agency**



Key Lessons



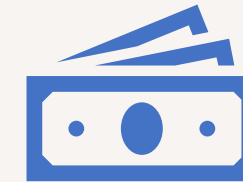
Prioritize Early Engagement:
Collaborate with stakeholders early on.



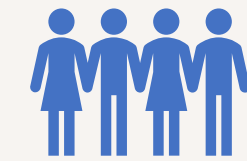
Evaluate alignment of organizational capacity with fulfilling readiness process:
Assess the agency's ability to meet MCFD's readiness process expectations while maintaining community priorities. Identify what supports are needed.



Utilize Consultants: Contracted consultants are an efficient way to bridge staffing gaps to supporting delegation readiness.



Funding Formulas: Ensure fulsome understanding of government funding formulas and assess ongoing financial sustainability.



Implementing Delegation within Agency Context is Incremental and Ongoing:
Continued micro and macro community engagement is key to bridging MCFD Policy and Legislation with the cultural context of the Island Métis community.

Early and Ongoing Stakeholder Engagement Opportunities

Seek out high level engagement opportunities

- Board of Directors
- MCFD
- Partner service delivery agencies (i.e. RCMP and School Districts)
- Established ICFSA's
- Community and Nation Leaders

Establish and implement practical and ground level engagement

- Internal front-line staff and management
- External front line staff and management
- Community members (including children, youth, families, and knowledge holders)

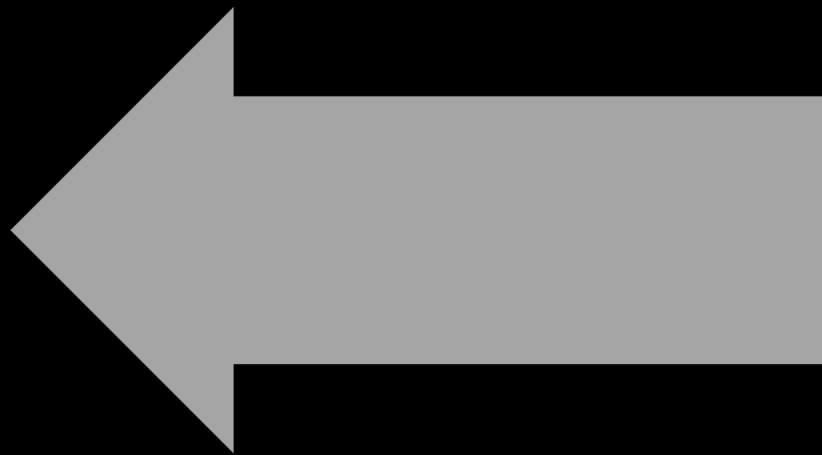
Process

- Collaborative relationship building through information sharing
- Know your audience and adapt process accordingly
- Informed by community Elders and Knowledge Keepers



Outcomes

- Inform and be informed by stakeholders
- Shared understanding
- Sustainable relationship building



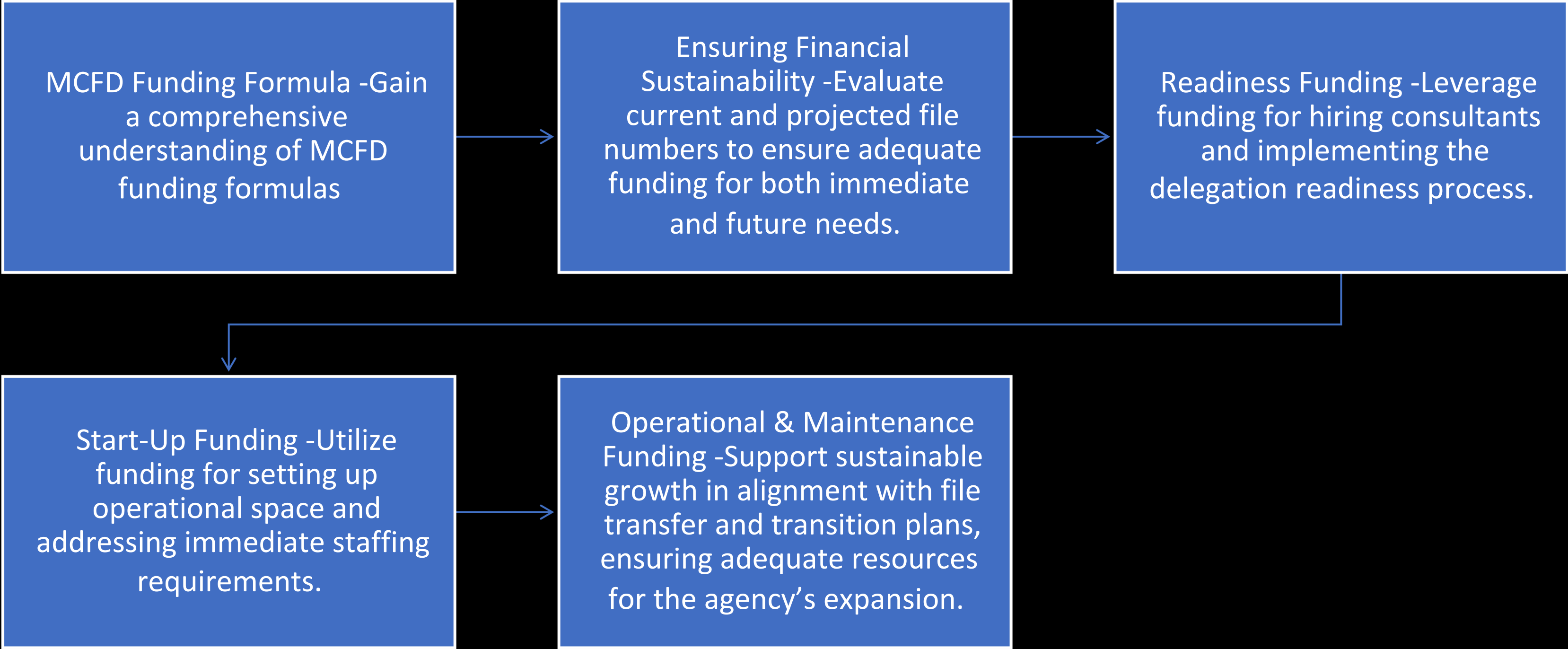
Maximize Readiness through Consultation

Contract expert consultants to support high-level strategic tasks

- Provision of research and data analysis
- Aligning internal policies with delegation requirements
- Developing and Implementing Communications Plans

Capitalize on opportunities to consult with established ICFSA's

- What can be learnt from our sister agencies?
- What information and insights can our agency offer to others?
- How do strengthen ongoing opportunities for information sharing?



Next Steps: Advancing Delegation Through Community & Culture

- **Culturally Rooted System of Care**-Implement a delegated service model that reflects Métis culture, traditions, and community values.
- **Internal Delegated Practice Standards**-Develop standards grounded in Métis ways of knowing, ensuring culturally appropriate service delivery.
- **C4 Service Delivery**-Consistent track record of sound service delivery at the C4 level, bridging MCFD policy and legislation with Métis cultural practices, ensuring services align with community needs.
- **Pathway to Full (C6) Delegation**-Expand authority to provide comprehensive child and family services.



Maarsii! (Thank you!)



Island Métis
family & community
services society 

Executive Director: Melanie Hudson

Email: melanie@metis.ca Phone: (250) 391-9924

Questions and Answers



**Indigenous Child and Family Services Directors Our Children
Our Way Society**



Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada

Indigenous Child and Family Services



**"Please visit this link to learn more about the First Nations and urban
based Indigenous communities delegation process: "**

**Carrier Sekani
Family Services**

**Denisiqi Services
Society**

**Island Métis Family &
Community Services
Society**

**Nezul Be Hunuyeh Child
and Family Services
Society**



**Our Children Our Way
Society**

Our Children Our Way Society

2025 Webinar Schedule

Join the **Our Children Our Way Society** for our 2025 monthly webinar series, dedicated to empowering Nations and Organizations that serve and support Children, Youth, Families, and Communities. Each webinar will provide valuable insights, strategies, and resources tailored to enhance the effectiveness of your programs and initiatives. Expert speakers will cover a range of topics including child development, community engagement, and innovative solutions for family support.

Resources will be available for download following each session, ensuring you have the tools needed to implement what you learn.

- **March 19: A Road Map – Journey to Jurisdiction – Critical Decision Points on the Journey**
- **April 16: Creating a Framework for Practice Rooted in Indigenous Ways of Knowing & Being**
- **Friday, May 09: Jordan’s Principal 20th Anniversary on May 10 – Special Screening of “Jordan River Anderson, the Messenger”**
- **May 21: Transformative Change – What holds systems in place & what transforms systems?**
- **June 18: Parallel Process – Leadership within your Organization**
- **July 16: Psychological Safety – Creating and Supporting a Learning Organization**
- **August 20: Appreciative Inquiry in Child and Family Services**
- **September 17: Strength Based & Solution Focused Supervision – Reflective/Reflexive Practice**
- **October 15: Balancing Clinical Supervision/Consultation & Administrative Supervision**

Time: 10:30am Vancouver, BC

Zoom Meeting ID: 617 6151 5618

Passcode: 184305

Registration Link:

<https://ca01web.zoom.us/meeting/register/u5Ugceitrz4sG9wFp1xH2M3yaYvbtRRi9IQ>

Contact: Secretariat@OurChildrenOurWay.ca

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