

Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba

ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024



REFOCUS TO PREVENTION

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Message from the **Chair of the Board of Directors**

I am delighted to present our annual report for the fiscal year 2023–2024, highlighting the remarkable achievements of the Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba. In a time of global uncertainty, our agency has demonstrated unwavering resilience, continuously evolving and adapting to meet the needs of the children, families, and communities we serve. The Board of Directors and senior management remain steadfast in their commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of our children, families, and staff while maintaining the essential programs and services that are critical to our communities. Throughout this period, we have remained focused on delivering vital services across the region and responding with care and compassion to the evolving needs of our citizens.

As we approach the end of our Strategic Planning period, we are proud to share that through evaluation and future-focused planning, we have identified new pathways for development. This includes expanding the Awasis Agency Transition Program, collaborating closely with the KTC Grand Council to ratify and implement the KTC Law, and enhancing the capacity and well-being of our service providers. These efforts position us to strengthen our support systems and further our impact within the communities.

While we continue to navigate the challenges presented by the provincial government's mandate to transition all agencies into the Single Envelope Funding (SEF) model, our agency has responded with creativity and determination. Through collaboration with key partners, we have secured alternative funding routes and strategically utilized CHRT funding to continue advancing our mission.

Despite these obstacles, Awasis remains at the forefront of strategic planning and development in partnership with the Keewatin Tribal Council (KTC). Our Executive Director, Rusty Beardy, has been instrumental in advocating for the needs of our communities in response to the federal C-92 legislation. We are honoured to be part of this critical initiative and are deeply committed to supporting the KTC's leadership in advancing the well-being of Indigenous children and families.

Looking ahead, we are filled with optimism and confidence. Thanks to the unwavering dedication of our staff and the invaluable support of our community partners, we are confident that the Awasis Agency will continue to serve as a beacon of hope, providing transformative services to those in need. Together, we will build a stronger, more resilient Child and Family Services system that honours and uplifts the children, families, and communities we are privileged to serve.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba staff, I extend my deepest gratitude to all those who contribute to our mission.

Sincerely,
Chief Betsy Kennedy
Board of Directors Chairperson
Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba



Together, we will build a stronger, more resilient Child and Family Services system that honours and uplifts the children, families, and communities we are privileged to serve.



Message from the Executive Director

I am pleased to present the Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba's 2023-2024 annual report. This report highlights the tremendous efforts of our staff and the challenges and successes of our collective work to provide services for the communities we serve. In 2023-2024, our services grew as we focused on prevention initiatives.

With support from our funding partners, we expanded our services for youth aging out of care by further developing and expanding the Post Majority Support Services (PMSS) program. The PMSS program has enabled us to provide more services and care than was previously possible.

We continue to focus on recruiting staff from our member Keewatin Tribal Council (KTC) nations to support the work needed in the communities we serve, including cultural and land-based programming. Accessing people within the community is crucial to our work. However, we face challenges finding the right people, as we often compete with other local and regional programs for the same resources.

The Awasis Agency has remained steadfast in our commitment to supporting the Keewatin Tribal Council in developing a law with its member nations. We are nearing the end of this process, and we are preparing to present and discuss the draft law with the citizens of the KTC nations. This is a significant and exciting initiative that will have far-reaching implications for everyone. We are fully committed to supporting this process. Despite the uncertainties surrounding our activities, particularly regarding the collective approach to this process, I have advocated for this initiative since we began more than three years ago. I will continue to call on all leadership to form a collective response and voice as we work toward finalizing the KTC nations law.

Despite the many uncertainties, our agency's staff have continued to provide services to the best of their abilities, often in challenging environments. Their unwavering resolve is a testament to their dedication, as we strive to meet the needs of the children, families, and communities we serve. I want to thank the Board Chiefs for their continued support and the staff of the agency for their hard work and successes.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend a thank you to our Board of Directors for their dedication to our agency:

- Chief Richard Hart (Bunibonibee Cree Nation)
- Chief Betsy Kennedy (War Lake First Nation)
- Chief Jordna Hill (Shamattawa)
- Chief Hubert Watt (Mantou Sakahigan)
- Chief Michael Yellowback, (Manto Sipi)

Ekosi,
Rusty Beardy, BSW, RSW
Executive Director
Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba

“ Steadfast in our commitment to supporting the Keewatin Tribal Council in developing a law with its member nations. ”





Vision Statement

“Healthy communities, healthy First Nations children and families”

Mission Statement

“To revive, enhance and support culturally based resources for families and communities”

Services

Protection: Intake / Investigation • Assessment / Planning • Case management • Placement Protocols • Permanency planning • Evaluation

Promotion: Public meetings and presentations • Empower families • Engagement with leadership • Engagement with community resources and collaterals

Prevention: In-home supports, respite, parent aides, counseling awareness and education workshops, community development, Cree and Dene traditional activities • Land-based initiatives • Placement protocols with extended families

Partnership: Engage / Involve collaterals • Co-host events and activities • Coordinate • Report

A photograph of a person climbing a dark rock face on the left side of the frame. The background is a bright, orange-hued canyon wall with visible rock textures and shadows. The overall scene is dramatic and high-contrast.

Challenges


- Recruitment and retention of employees
- Recruiting service providers in the community
- Inadequate mental health, addiction treatment services, and trauma programs in the northern region
- Managing a high volume of intakes is challenging, especially with transient populations
- Staff are exposed to drug use effects during home visits
- Community resources working in silos

Successes

- Creation of a Transition/PMSS program to meet youth needs
- Establishment of Grandparent Mentors in our local offices who provide mentoring, nurturing, and guidance to our children, families, and staff that enhance our well-being
- Completed four FE Cabins for families to participate in programming
- Creation of Placement Desk workers to facilitate placement of children and recruitment of caregivers
- Increase in the diversion of children from entering into care through private arrangements



Goals

- 
- A 3D target with concentric rings in shades of teal and light blue. An arrow with a white shaft and a teal fletching is embedded in the center bullseye.
- New Law implementation
 - All communities have in-community services and facilities
 - Increase service provider's capacity development and well-being
 - Develop an Emergency Placement in Thompson (McGill)
 - Reduce the number of Children in Care by 11% by March 31, 2025
 - Reduce the number of children entering into care by 10%
 - Develop apartments for PMSS recipients (Princeton)
 - Construct more FE cabins for families to participate in programming

The Refocus to Prevention Strategy Included:



COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW

A comprehensive review of all agency positions to ensure that all persons working for Awasis Agency were determined to provide, preventative service delivery that was trauma informed and based in Indigenous Perspective.

UPDATED ASSESSMENTS

Updated assessments, including the Awasis Safety Assessment and Intake Investigation, that would assist workers in ensuring that a strength-based approach was highlighted in all family and children's interactions.

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Education, training, and the creation of policy and procedure concentrated on adverse childhood experiences of domestic violence, substance abuse and mental health.

POLICY PUBLICATION

The publication of agency policy and procedure focused on Family Enhancement funding and supports for families to ensure a prevention focus and prevent apprehension in all cases.

PARTICIPATORY TRAINING

Interactive/participatory training, for all frontline agency Supervisors, and Coordinators focused on agency wide preventative service delivery.

The *Refocus to Prevention Strategy*, introduced in November 2022, aimed to ensure that all functions within Awasis Agency were centered on prevention-focused services for children, families, and communities. This strategy required every employee, from administration to frontline workers, to focus on reducing the number of children in agency care and preventing new cases, thereby promoting family preservation.

The strategy identified social barriers as significant obstacles to successful reunification, often leading to extended stays for children in agency care. In response, the *Reunification Policy* was implemented in 2023 to expedite the process of reuniting children with their families. Under this policy, children could be considered reunified and out of agency care as soon as they were placed in non-care home settings.

The agency provided financial support through Family Enhancement funds until other sources of income, like social assistance and child tax benefits, were secured.

Additionally, the agency expanded its efforts to include family preservation by preventing child apprehensions through Private Arrangements. This involved financially and physically supporting alternative family caregivers, with parental consent, to care for children outside the care system, thereby avoiding apprehension.

RELATIONSHIPS

Recognition of service needs and encourage relationships with parents and families requiring assistance.

PREVENTION

The goals are to support families in their early involvement to prevent children from coming into care.

SUPPORTS

To provide in home supports and services to families to address prevailing life challenges.

PARENTING

To promote and develop positive parenting and nurturing skills in their homes.

PROGRAMMING

To deliver ongoing case management, parent specific programming and culturally specific services.

INCLUSION

These relationships shall include, extended family, community, culture, language, ceremony and the land.

Refocus to Prevention Strategy Success



Publication of agency policy and procedure:

- Reunification
- Rescinding Permanent orders
- Use of Private Arrangements.

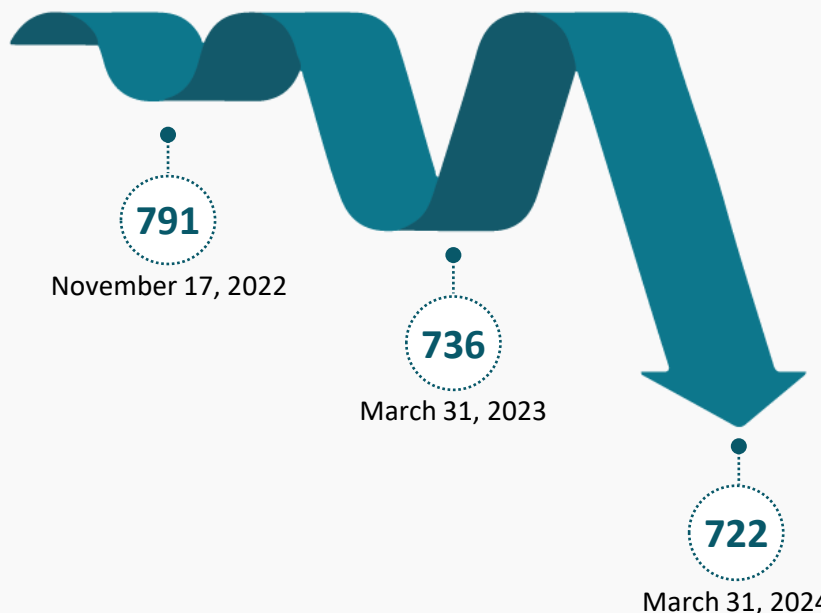


Reintroduction of Local Childcare Committees in the communities.



Reintroduction of the Awasis Agency Family Circle Intervention.

Decreasing the Number of Children in Care



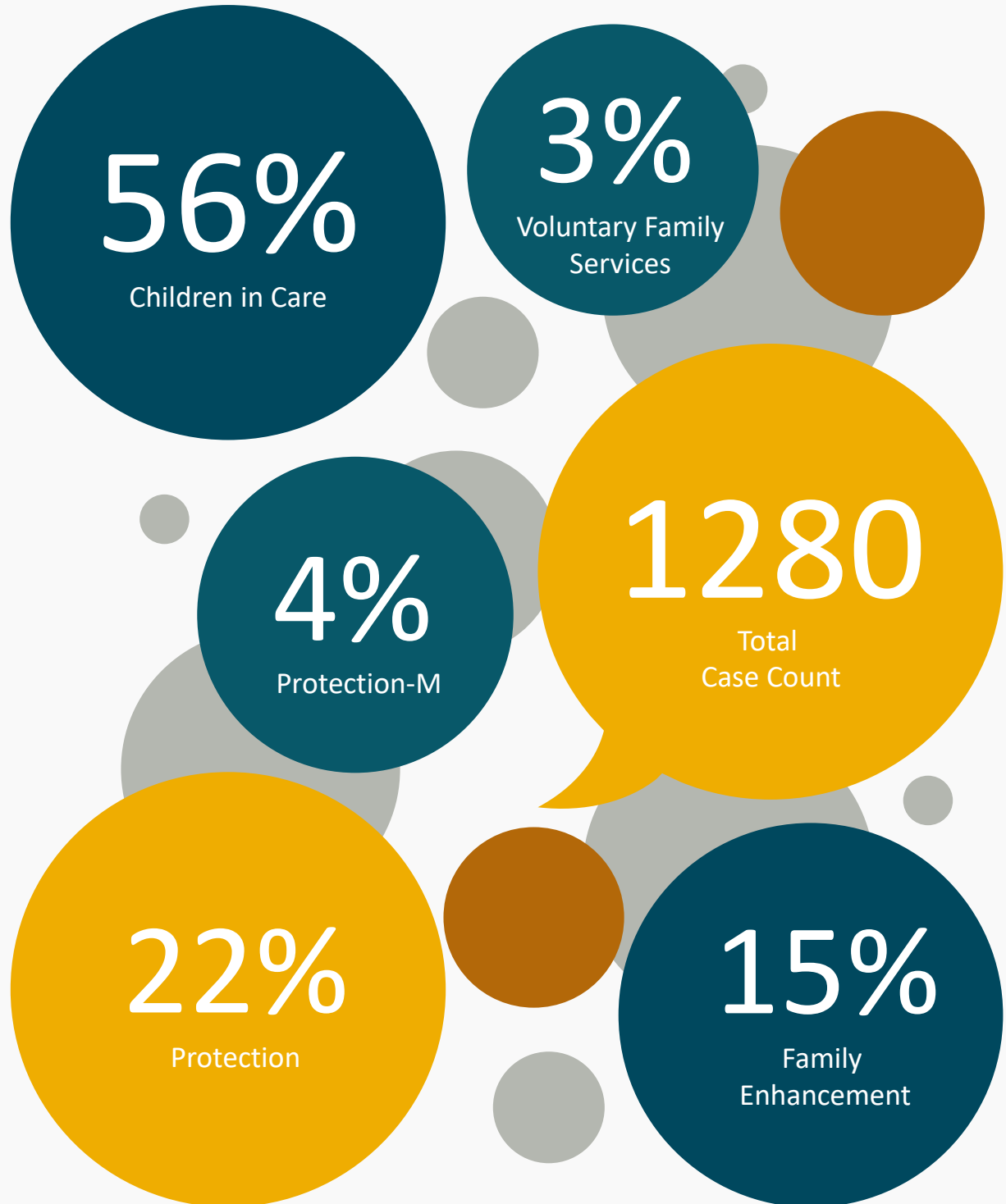
The implementation of comprehensive prevention services has been instrumental in decreasing the number of children entering care. By focusing on early intervention and support for families, these services address the root causes that often lead to child apprehension. Programs such as family counseling, in-home support, financial assistance, and access to community resources empower families to overcome challenges before they escalate into crises. This proactive approach not only strengthens family units but also reduces the need for children to be placed in care, promoting long-term stability and well-being for children within their own homes and communities.

Agency Case Counts as of March 31, 2024

At the end of the fiscal year, 1280 cases were open to Awasis; over half were Children in Care (CIC) cases. The Winnipeg Service Delivery Office manages the majority (40%) of CIC cases.

We also had 59 Dual FE/PRT cases open at the end of the fiscal year.

Over the course of the fiscal year, Awasis opened and closed 710 and 748 cases, respectively. This number does not include the number of Foster Care Management cases opened and closed over the last fiscal year.



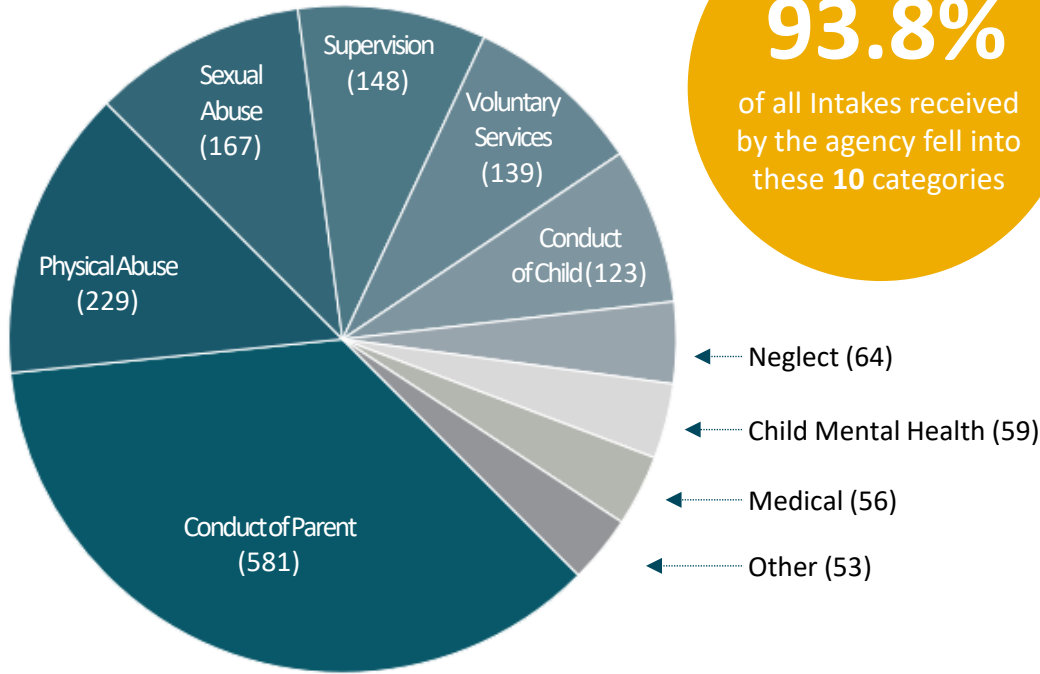
1082

Number of Intakes
Received in 2023-2024

1726

Number of
Identified Issues

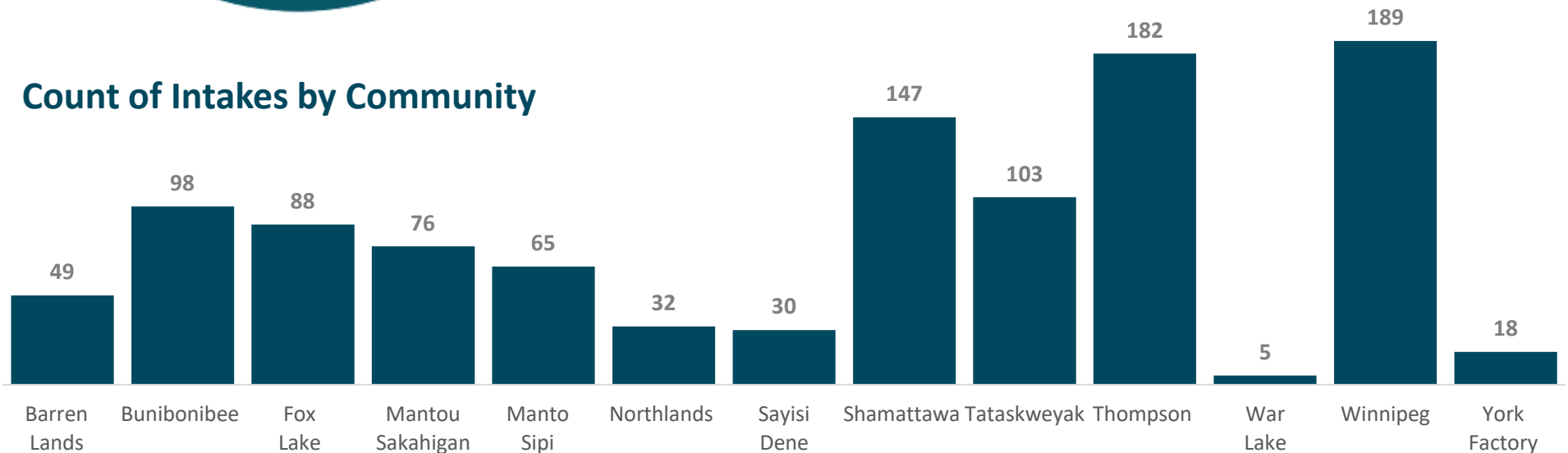
- The number of intakes increased by 5% from the previous fiscal year
- Most of the intakes (581) pertained to issues relating to the **Conduct of the Parent**

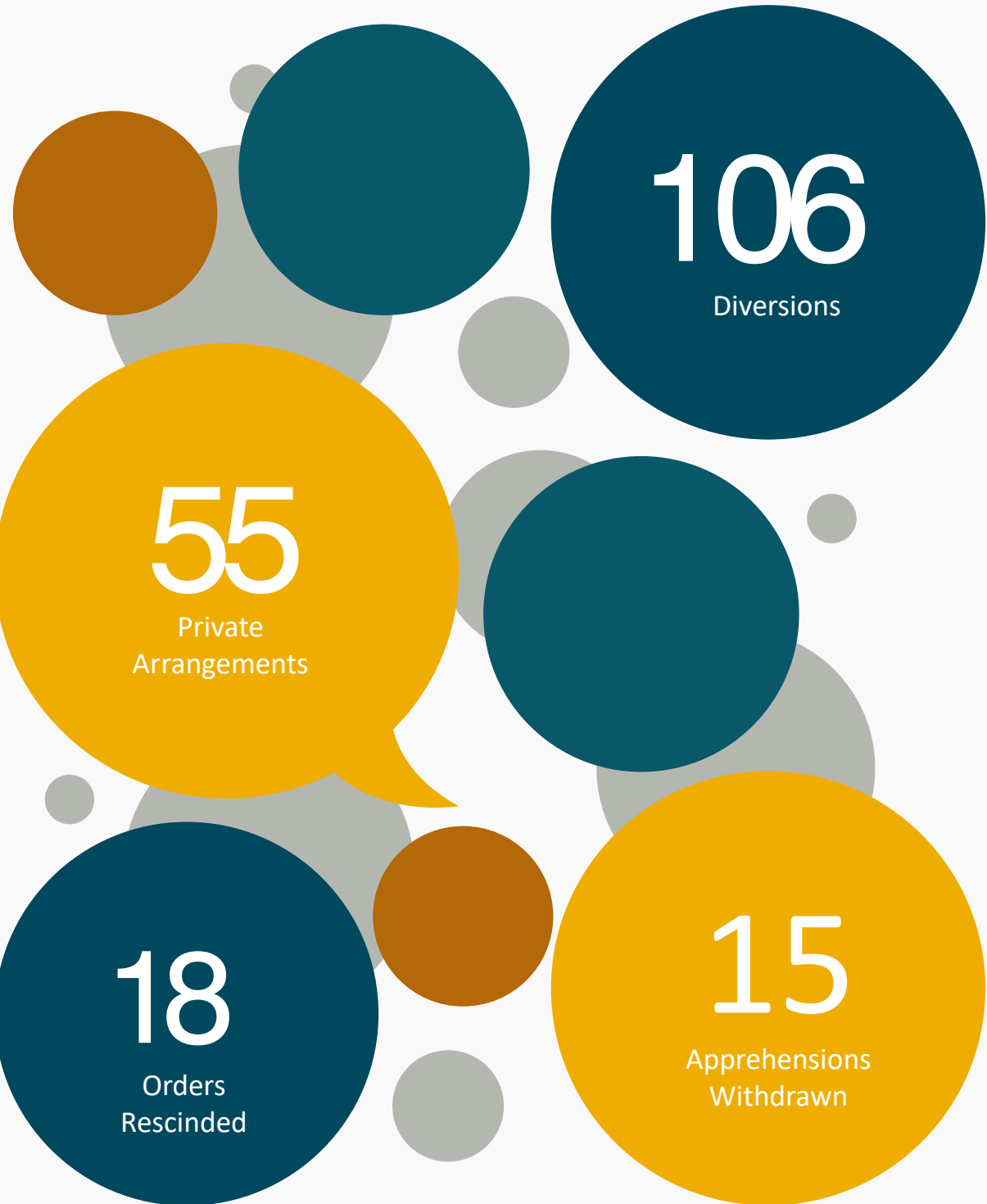


6.2% of all intakes received by the agency fell into the following categories:

- Mental Health of Parent (21)
- Child afraid to Return Home (13)
- Emotional Abuse (12)
- Missing Child (10)
- Parent-Child Conflict (9)
- Non-child welfare matter (9)
- Expectant Parent Service (7)
- Notice of Maternity (6)
- Death (5)
- After Hours request-other agency (4)
- Child Exploitation (4)
- After Hours request from non-agency source (3)
- Absent Child (2)
- After Hours request-own agency (2)

Count of Intakes by Community





Private Arrangements and Reunification

The combined efforts for families, staff networks, and collateral support saw more children being diverted from apprehension and placed with extended family and relatives as a form of family preservation and risk mitigation.

Trauma-informed family preservation focuses on supporting and stabilizing families by recognizing and addressing the effects of trauma on both children and parents. This approach prioritizes creating a safe, empathetic, and supportive environment that acknowledges the impact of past and present trauma on family dynamics. By integrating an understanding of trauma into every aspect of service delivery, professionals work to build trust, strengthen family bonds, and empower families to develop healthier relationships.

Trauma-informed care emphasizes collaboration, resilience-building, and culturally sensitive practices, helping families to heal and thrive while preventing further disruptions that could lead to out-of-home placements. Ultimately, this approach aims to preserve the family unit by providing the tools and support necessary for long-term stability and well-being.

Human Resources

HR STRATEGIES IMPLEMENTED TO RECRUIT PERSONS, SPECIFICALLY IN THE COMMUNITY

The HR Team continues to work closely with Unit Supervisors to recruit in the communities, providing interim opportunities for potential employees to gain experience and knowledge of the position. We continue to build capacity in/with our community. The traditional job posting is distributed, and a community-specific ad encourages community members to apply. Job postings are distributed in regional newspapers, social media, and local bulletin boards to reach as many community people as possible. Since Awasis created a Facebook page for employment opportunities, the update has impacted the number of applicants for each competition.

The purpose of the Human Resource department of Awasis Agency is to act with integrity in providing ethical, culturally appropriate service, while ensuring compliance within applicable legislation and policy. We believe that holding ourselves to a high standard and being accountable for our decisions and processes lead to quality service for the children, families and communities that the Agency serves.

SUCCESSSES

- All employees have participated in employee orientation, and there is no backlog.
- Offered lateral kindness training for all employees.
- Revamped onboarding procedure to be more effective and efficient.

CHALLENGES

- The staff turnover rate is high.
- Using paper and manual systems slows the work.
- New funding opportunities from other agencies seeking to fill vacancies from the same pool of job seekers.

FUTURE GOALS

- Engage with the Supervisors regularly to offer mentoring and coaching on HR policies.
- Explore options on how to increase the turnaround time for filling vacancies.
- Participate in job fairs and community events to build awareness that Awasis Agency is the choice of employment/employer.

Diana Delaronde-Colombe
Human Resources Coordinator

233

Number of Active Employees

47

Voluntary
Separation

27

New Positions
Created

24

Vacancies

Service Delivery

Fox Lake, Mantou Sakahigan, Manto Sipi, Shamattawa, War Lake, York Factory

Challenges, successes, and strategies of the Awasis Agency, which provides services in communities, particularly in northern regions.

SUCCESSSES

- The agency has acquired funding for cabins for land-based programming that includes traditional knowledge and cultural practices.
- The focus on prevention has improved, with the aim of decreasing the likelihood of children coming into care.
- There is success in reunifying children with their families or placing them with extended family or culturally appropriate guardians.
- More youth in care are graduating from high school, with aspirations for further education or employment.

CHALLENGES

- Staffing shortages lead to frontline Child and Family Services (CFS) workers handling dual responsibilities in Family Enhancement and protection work.
- Low attendance in prevention programs, which are vital for issues like domestic violence, parenting, and trauma.
- High intake volumes and the transient nature of some clients make it difficult to manage cases effectively.
- The agency faces logistical issues like insufficient office and storage space, and the risk of exposure to drug-related harm when entering homes.
- Limited mental health, youth suicide, and addiction treatment services are available.

STRATEGIES

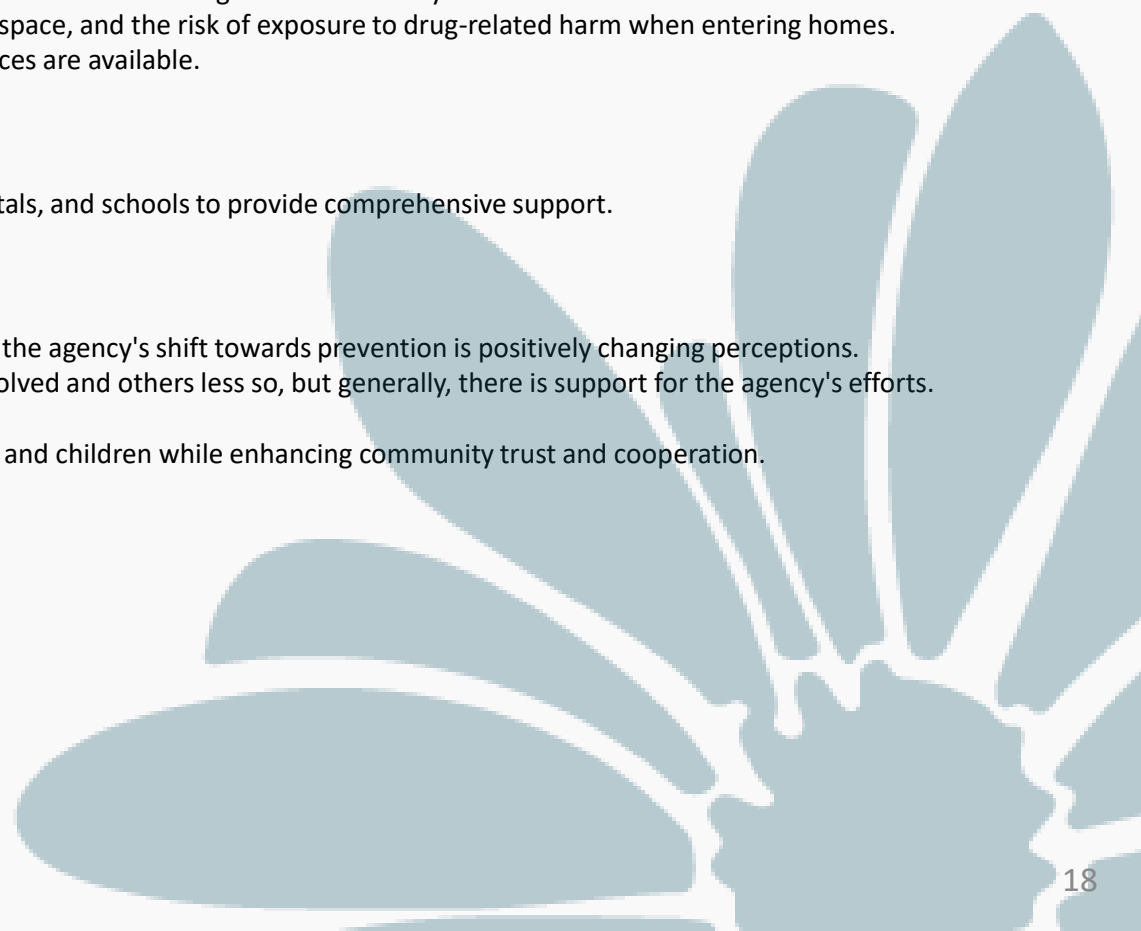
- Developing safety plans with families.
- Building positive relationships with local resources like RCMP, hospitals, and schools to provide comprehensive support.
- Emphasizing prevention to create positive family relationships.

COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Although child protection services are sometimes met with resistance, the agency's shift towards prevention is positively changing perceptions. Engagement with community leadership varies, with some actively involved and others less so, but generally, there is support for the agency's efforts.

These efforts collectively aim to address the complex needs of families and children while enhancing community trust and cooperation.

Robert Lafontaine, MA, BSW
Director of Services



Service Delivery

Barren Lands, Bunibonibee, Northlands, Sayisi Dene, Tataskaweyak, Thompson

Like the uniqueness and beauty of the northern lights, each of our communities is unique in its languages, customs, beliefs, and practices. Our year has been a year of blessings and teachings by our children, youth, families, elders, leadership, and communities. I want to acknowledge and appreciate each of our staff for their commitment to serving their children, families, and communities.

SUCSESSES

To highlight a few of our many successes, we continue to practice with a prevention lens right at first contact, on call, and at intake. Furthermore, it is an honor to be a part of the reunification journey of children returning to their parents and/or extended family, which is reflected in our stats. We also acknowledge the gift of life and celebrate births.

- We are excited about creating our Transition Program that meets the needs of our youth.
- We also have grandparent mentors in our local offices who provide mentoring, nurturing, and guidance to our children, families, and staff, enhancing our well-being.
- We have celebrated the grand opening of our Family Enhancement cabins in a few of our communities.

CHALLENGES

- Increase in involvement with caregivers due to addictions interfering with meeting the needs of their children.
- There is an increase in mental health issues among youth and supports and services are not available in communities and/or the north. As a result, we must seek placements in the south. We are constantly recruiting community members to join our on-call team.

Our Units work from a holistic framework to meet the needs of children and families. Our teams work with resources and are beginning to practice the family circle framework. We are always reminded that "it takes a village to raise a child."

Our Units acknowledge and appreciate the support and guidance from our resources, elders, and leadership. These relationships give us strength in the work we do.

Ekosi, Masi, and in closing, we thank the Creator for each day.

Regan Sweeny, BSW
Director of Services



Winnipeg Services

The Winnipeg Service Delivery Office (WSDO) strives to provide an effective service to the children and families of Awasis Agency, both on and off reserve, under the *Child & Family Services Act of Manitoba*. The unit provides protection services, including conducting intakes and investigations, assessments, apprehensions, planning, placements, case management services, and services to families.

CHALLENGES

- Insufficient addiction and mental health services in Winnipeg and Long waitlists for mental health and addiction services.
- High workload for case managers due to increased service demand.
- Risk of burnout among staff, potentially reducing service quality.

WINNIPEG PREVENTION PROGRAM

- Focuses on child safety and strengthening family relationships.
- Promotes healthy lifestyles and ensures access to city resources.
- Supports families in achieving goals through relationship-building.
- Collaborates with the Cultural Program team for traditional healing.
 - Activities include sweat lodges, cultural workshops, and ceremonies.
 - Monthly programs focus on holistic healing (mind, body, spirit, physical).
 - Topics covered include anger management, domestic violence, substance abuse, and parenting.

CHALLENGES WITH RELOCATION

- Families often need to move from northern communities to Winnipeg for services.
- Relocation is challenging due to the lack of local services in northern regions.

SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAM (SSP)

- Provide additional support to children and families.
- Manages Family Support Service Agreements and inter-office requests.
- Hires service providers for tasks like transportation, supervised visits, and in-home support.
- Offers on-call services and respite support for families.

COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

- Works with various partners, including Jordan's Principle, Manitoba Housing, Women's Shelter, and local medical practitioners.
- Helps families access housing, medical care, education, and financial assistance

Tammy Rivera, BSW
Director of Winnipeg Services

Quality Assurance

Quality Assurance [QA] is pivotal in trauma-informed practice, ensuring that services provided are consistently effective, respectful, and culturally sensitive. In the context of addressing the impacts of colonization, QA involves developing and implementing standards that prioritize the recognition and mitigation of trauma in all organizational practices. This includes regular assessment and evaluation of programs to ensure they are aligned with trauma-informed principles, such as safety, trustworthiness, peer support, collaboration, empowerment, and cultural competence. Additionally, QA ensures that staff receive ongoing training and support in trauma-informed care, helping them understand the historical and ongoing effects of colonization. By embedding these practices into the fabric of the organization, QA helps to create an environment that promotes healing and resilience, ultimately contributing to more effective and compassionate care for individuals and communities impacted by trauma.

RISK MITIGATION IN CHILD PROTECTION

- **Assessment and Identification:** Early identification of risks to child safety.
- **Prevention:** Implementing measures to prevent harm, like counseling and support services.
- **Safety Planning:** Creating detailed plans to ensure child safety.
- **Monitoring and Supervision:** Ongoing checks to ensure safety plans are effective.
- **Collaboration:** Working with multidisciplinary teams for comprehensive child support.
- **Documentation and Reporting:** Keeping detailed records of actions and outcomes.
- **Training and Education:** Ongoing training is needed to recognize risks and implement trauma-informed care.

FAMILY PRESERVATION

- **Crisis Intervention:** Immediate help for families in emergencies.
- **In-Home Support Services:** Tailored services to address family needs at home.
- **Strength-Based Approach:** Building on family strengths and fostering resilience.
- **Comprehensive Assessment and Planning:** Developing individualized service plans.
- **Case Management:** Coordinating services and monitoring family progress.
- **Skill Building:** Teaching parenting and conflict resolution skills.
- **Community Resources:** Connecting families with local support networks.
- **Cultural Competence:** Providing culturally sensitive services.
- **Follow-up and Aftercare:** Ensuring continued support for families.

Dana Ash-Avison, BGS, BSW, RSW
Director of Quality Assurance

Foster Care

The foster care system plays a crucial role in providing care and support for children who cannot be cared for by their biological families. Our agency recognizes the growing need to infuse foster care practices with cultural sensitivity and respect for Indigenous traditions. We strive to maintain and nurture Indigenous cultural practices, languages, and traditions to ensure that children grow up with a strong sense of belonging and pride in their heritage.

CULTURAL SENSITIVITY AND SUPPORT

- Maintains Indigenous cultural practices, languages, and traditions.
- Ensures children develop a strong sense of belonging and pride in their heritage.

SPECIALIZED FOSTER HOMES

- Operates 17 specialized foster homes in the South.
- Opening 3 specialized foster homes in the North.
- Developing an Emergency Placement Resource home in Thompson for short-term care due to immediate risk or inability of parents to care for children.

EVENTS AND COMMUNITY BUILDING

- Hosts annual Christmas parties for all children and youth in care.
- Events are aimed at fostering connection, joy, and a sense of belonging.

LONG TERM GOALS

- Prioritizes kinship care, placing children with relatives or community members.
- Focuses on maintaining cultural ties and strengthening family bonds.
- Advocates for customary care, placing Indigenous children with culturally appropriate caregivers.
- Involves Elders and traditional caregivers for guidance, supporting children in developing a strong cultural foundation.

OVERALL OBJECTIVE

To create a nurturing environment that supports both the immediate and cultural needs of children in foster care, ensuring their well-being and connection to their heritage.

Leigh-Ann Sanness, MSW, BSW
Director of Foster Care

299

Number of Awasis
Placements

181

Foster Homes

118

Places of Safety

619

CICs and AYAs in
Awasis Placements

Family Enhancement

FAMILY ENHANCEMENT CASE MANAGEMENT

- Provides preventive support to reduce children entering the protection system.
- Staff carry a maximum of 15-20 cases due to family complexities.
- Works with families and collaterals to prevent child entry into the system and promote reunification.
- Uses emergency interventions and private arrangements for at-risk children, similar to customary care models.
- More prevention and family reunification workers are required.
- Offers in-home support: parent-aid, homemaker, and respite services.

FAMILY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMMING

- Focuses on awareness, education, advocacy, and counseling.
- Engages families and communities in culturally appropriate programs.
- Programs include parent conferences, traditional parenting, addiction workshops, grief support, and life skills.
- Faces challenges in recruiting service providers due to stigma, criminal records, and payment delays.

FAMILY ENHANCEMENT CULTURAL SERVICES

- Supports culturally appropriate programs and resources in northern communities.
- Offers land-based programs and traditional ceremonies for healing and wellness.
- Involves teachings on traditional practices like harvesting and cultural ceremonies.
- Engages Elders for guidance and support.

FAMILY ENHANCEMENT WELLNESS CAMPS

- Provides camps for families, accessible by boat or snowmobile, focusing on land-based activities.
- Aims to revitalize traditional skills and offer a space for healing.
- Programming aligns with the four seasons, promoting peace and harmony.

PARENTING PROGRAM

- A seven-week program based on the seven sacred teachings.
- Covers topics like addiction-free living, peaceful relationships, and trauma healing.
- Facilitated by community resources, Elders, and the Family Enhancement team.

Sally Beardy, BSW
Director of Family Enhancement

CONNECTION TO COMMUNITY



Community Programming



Family Camp



Community Programming

Family Enhancement

Winnipeg Prevention program provides services to children and families. Our focus is to address safety-related matters for children and parents while strengthening family relationships, encouraging, and teaching healthy lifestyles, and ensuring the families are accessing the resources and services within the City of Winnipeg.

Families engage with the program to work on their goals while building relationships that are healthy, and effective and encourage positive outcomes. With the support of our Cultural Program team, we work collaboratively to identify and respond to the needs and interests of the families and community.

Cultural services strive for ways of Traditional healing for families to reconnect to the land, Culture, Language, Music, and Ceremonies. Throughout the year, the prevention team has developed monthly programs to help families with the four parts of healing for human beings, which is the mind, the body, the spirit, and the physical part. Cultural services hold biweekly sweat lodges and ongoing workshops at the request of the families.

The Elders Knowledge Keepers, and facilitators play a huge role in our programming as they are the teachers of the culture, the land, and the healing for the families. Our team provides ongoing workshops to families related to anger management, attachment and healthy relationship building between parents and children, domestic violence and substance abuse, and traditional parenting programs, cedar baths, and sweat lodges.

Winnipeg Family Enhancement collaborated with an extensive range of services and support within the community.

Our families still struggle with relocating from the northern communities to the city, which can be very challenging. Some of our families require medical and treatment services, that are unavailable in the north and have to relocate to the city to receive the services they need. Prevention services will assist our families with referrals to our partners, Jordan's Principle, KTC, AFM, MB Housing, Life's Journey, Onashewawin, Women's Shelter, Medical Practitioners, Schools, and Employment and Income Assistance.

Tammy Rivera, BSW
Director of Winnipeg Services

34,625

Number of Participants in
Programming agency-wide.

17,980

Number of Children in
Programming agency-wide.

15,343

Number of Families in
Programming agency-wide.

ENGAGEMENT



What participants say about our program



“The workers are very polite and friendly, also willing to help, which makes things a lil’ easier for a single parent like me.”

“I love the activities they provide family outings, and I especially like how they have traditional teachings.”

“I think what you are guys do is great, very good supports.”

“Learning cultural things that I didn’t learn growing up...safe spot when needing someone.”



Prevention Services

FAMILY PRESERVATION: Prevention Services collaborates with the Child Protection units to address family preservation and risk mitigation.

FOCUS ON SAFETY AND FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS: Prevention Services addresses safety-related matters for children and parents while strengthening family relationships.

CULTURAL PROGRAM COLLABORATION: Prevention Services works with the cultural program team to identify and respond to the needs of families and the community. Cultural services emphasize Traditional healing and reconnecting families to the land, culture, language, music, and ceremonies.

CULTURAL SERVICES: Include biweekly sweat lodges and workshops at the request of families.

MONTHLY AND BIWEEKLY PROGRAMS: The Prevention Team has developed monthly programs to help families with holistic healing, focusing on the mind, body, spirit, and physical aspects.

WORKSHOPS AND TRADITIONAL SERVICES: Prevention Services offers ongoing workshops on various topics such as anger management, healthy relationship building, domestic violence, substance abuse, traditional parenting, cedar baths, and sweat lodges. Elders and knowledge keepers play a significant role in these programs.

COLLABORATION WITH COMMUNITY SERVICES: Prevention Services collaborates with a wide range of services and support systems within the community.

PREVENTION SERVICES: Assists families, particularly those relocating from northern communities to Thompson and Winnipeg, with referrals to partners like Jordan’s Principle, MB Housing, Women’s Shelter, and others. Prevention Services encourages and teaches healthy lifestyles and ensures families access resources and services in the eleven Communities, Thompson and Winnipeg.



Child Abuse Program

The Awasis Agency Child Abuse Program Report for 2023-2024 outlines the agency's efforts in addressing child abuse across several communities. They handled 417 cases, mainly involving physical and sexual abuse. Key challenges include a lack of support for victims, an increase in abuse cases, and difficulties working with local RCMP. Despite these issues, the program has made progress by forming a multi-disciplinary Child Abuse Committee and expanding their team to better manage cases.

All referrals of Child Maltreatment, Domestic Violence, and Sexual Exploitation are reviewed by the program, where decisions are made on how we will proceed with the investigation, and by agency policy, ensure that all legislation, standards, and regulations regarding child abuse investigations are met.

Awasis Agency's Child Abuse Coordinator is the Chair of the Northern Joint Child Abuse Committee [NCAC], which sits in Thompson, Manitoba, and is shared with NCN Child and Family Services. Three new committee members were recruited this year.

NCAC is the only joint committee in the province, with Awasis Agency averaging 74 cases before the committee. These cases are not specific to a fiscal year as cases remain open for the duration of criminal proceedings, which in the north can take a significant amount of time.

StreetReach

This initiative is part of Tracia's Trust and serves a secondary prevention function aimed at child protection (i.e., preventing children from being sexually exploited). The StreetReach Program has been in operation in Thompson for four years now. There are currently twenty-six youth attached to the program. Twenty-two females and four males.

Transitional Planning Post Majority Services

The Transition Program was started in 2021. Following numerous file reviews of Children in Care who had previously aged out, which demonstrated that far too many young people turning 18 while in care had no concrete plan in place for them to be discharged successfully, it was also observed that AYA applications were often late, which disrupted or cancelled services for the young person.

At the direction of the Executive Director, Awasis Agency implemented a prevention-based intervention program for youth aged 15 to 21 who are children in care or with an agreement for young adults.

The Transition Program is designed to work with youth (age 15+) conducting a comprehensive assessment of their developmental, spiritual, educational, and physical needs. This thorough assessment enables our caseworkers and transition workers to provide tailored life skills training, mentorship, and guidance as the youth approach the age of 18.

Our program places a strong emphasis on addressing the unique needs of each youth, including their educational, employment, health, well-being, and spiritual needs. This personalized approach ensures that each individual receives the support they require to thrive. Further, any opportunity to rescind a permanent order to return youth to caregivers and or an opportunity for guardianship is identified while the youth is involved with the Transition Program; Program workers will assist with these plans.

The Transition program has partnered with other agencies to ensure that assessments can be completed for CLDs application, that family visits can occur as part of a reunification plan, and that therapy and mentorship are available for each youth as needed.

Featured PMSS Program Participant Dakota Beardy



“I really love this program; it helped me in every way. I have struggled along the way but thankful for all of what the program has offered me 100%. I’m really thankful for my new home, furniture and the staff at the agency.”



35,025

Total Number of AYA
Days in 2023-2024

188

Total Number of
AYA Agreements

94

Number of AYAs
as of March 31, 2024

7

Number of
SSAY Agreements

52

Number of
PMSS Agreements

43

Number of PMSS
as of March 31, 2024

Finance

The Finance department of Awasis had several goals during the fiscal period. Financial stewardship being the primary goal to ensure the responsible management of the Agency financial resources. This process included budgets, cash management, financial planning, risk management and capital structure optimization. In additions we looked at cost controls and efficiency to run our organization better and cheaper.

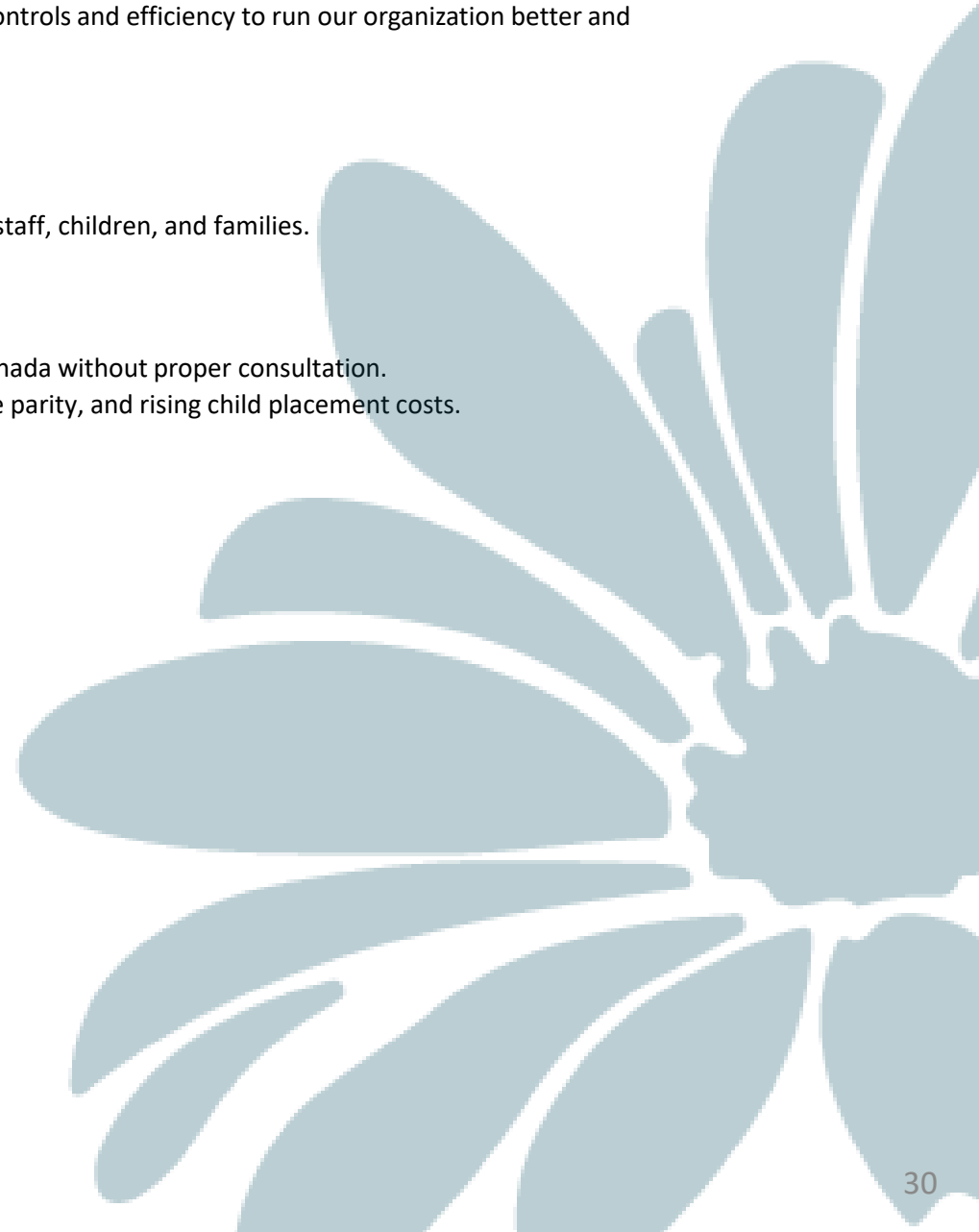
SUCSESSES

- Implemented cost-reduction strategies and improved efficiency.
- Reengineered payroll processes to reduce redundancy and speed up tasks.
- Facilitated the purchase of a building for future development to better serve staff, children, and families.

CHALLENGES

- Instability caused by changing funding directions from Indigenous Services Canada without proper consultation.
- Inadequate provincial funding from Manitoba, affecting operating costs, wage parity, and rising child placement costs.

Lou Beauregard, CPA, CGA
Director of Finance and Information Technology



INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Members
Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba

Opinion

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba, which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2024, and the statements of revenue and expenditures, changes in fund balances, and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba as at March 31, 2024, and its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba's financial reporting process.

AUDIT • TAX • ADVISORY

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Auditor's Responsibility for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

AWASIS AGENCY OF NORTHERN MANITOBA

STATEMENT 1

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

MARCH 31

	2024	2023
ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Cash	\$ 9,177,081	\$ 1,129,728
Accounts receivable (Note 4)	10,288,111	9,992,014
Prepaid expenses	<u>470,111</u>	<u>324,892</u>
	19,935,303	11,446,634
TANGIBLE CAPITAL ASSETS (Note 9)	<u>3,335,969</u>	<u>1,782,066</u>
	<u>\$ 23,271,272</u>	<u>\$ 13,228,700</u>
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities (Note 5)	\$ 3,980,219	\$ 3,331,645
Deferred contribution (Note 6)	<u>5,900,000</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>9,880,219</u>	<u>3,331,645</u>
CONTINGENCY (Note 7)		
NET ASSETS		
UNRESTRICTED	10,439,765	8,345,133
INVESTED IN TANGIBLE CAPITAL ASSETS (Note 9)	<u>2,951,288</u>	<u>1,551,922</u>
NET ASSETS	<u>13,391,053</u>	<u>9,897,055</u>
	<u>\$ 23,271,272</u>	<u>\$ 13,228,700</u>

On behalf of the Board




bakertilly

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31

	2 0 2 4	2 0 2 3
REVENUE		
Indigenous Services Canada <i>(Note 12)</i>		
Operations	\$ 29,410,463	\$ 27,345,515
Maintenance	20,364,536	13,955,204
Province of Manitoba		
Child Welfare Directorate (Maintenance)	11,373,335	11,065,691
First Nations of Northern Manitoba CFS Authority		
Operations	5,630,453	5,423,324
Canada Revenue Agency		
Children Special Allowance	4,476,975	4,479,918
Interest	326,821	173,464
Other income	<u>1,827,751</u>	<u>341,281</u>
	<u>73,410,334</u>	<u>62,784,397</u>
EXPENDITURES		
Advertising	77,900	63,424
Bank charges and interest	74,671	52,416
Community initiatives	3,790,191	3,326,755
Emergency assistance	541,539	296,918
Equipment	220,730	522,167
Foster home - maintenance	22,572,876	22,612,987
Foster home - other costs	6,124,262	3,261,896
Foster homes - travel	3,355,040	3,041,285
Freight	91,777	69,675
Insurance	350,987	318,397
Office and general	2,781,205	671,667
Program expenses	3,321,943	3,781,153
Professional fees	1,045,576	728,229
Repairs and maintenance	850,356	735,572
Rent	544,466	573,864
Salaries and benefits	18,086,918	18,188,829
Supplies	418,173	267,788
Telephone	518,926	415,432
Travel	2,507,851	2,716,899
Utilities	120,633	131,784
Vehicle operations and maintenance	352,370	348,511
Workshops and conferences	<u>978,724</u>	<u>531,728</u>
	<u>68,727,114</u>	<u>62,657,376</u>
EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENDITURES	<u>\$ 4,683,220</u>	<u>\$ 127,021</u>

