SAUGEEN FIRST NATION ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025

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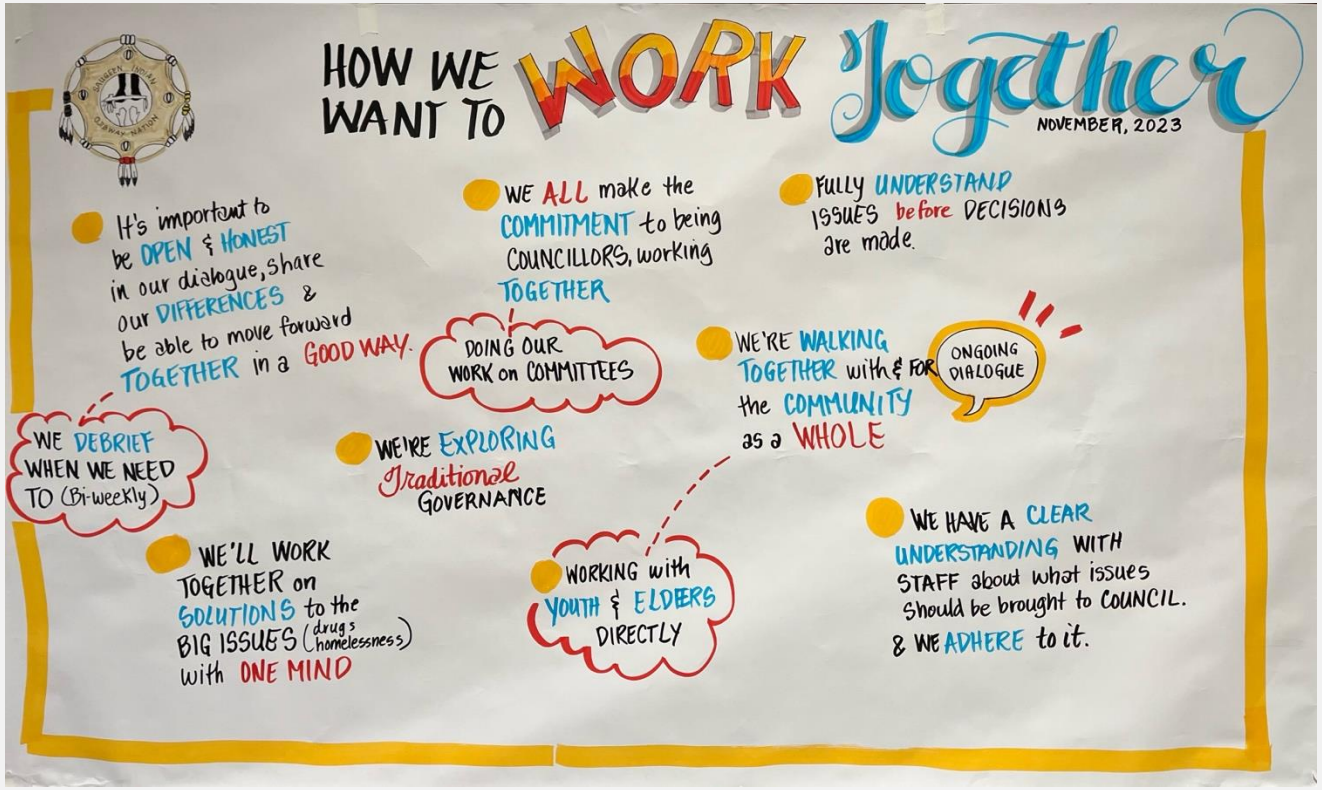
MESSAGE FROM CHIEF & COUNCIL

We commit to creating an open and honest dialogue, moving through our differences and working together as a team to create a strong leadership for our community. We want to walk together with membership to explore traditional governance and begin creating solutions and opportunities to the issues we face today.



FIRST NATION PROFILE

History

The Saugeen Anishnaabek have been here for time immemorial occupying 2 million acres of land in Southwestern Ontario, spanning from the tip of the Saukiing (Bruce) Peninsula South to Goderich and East to the Nottawasaga River, including the lakebed surrounding the Territory. Saugeen Ojibway Nation's Traditional Territory is of the Anishinabek Nation: The People of the Three Fires known as Ojibway, Odawa, and Pottawatomie Nations. The Chippewas of Saugeen are one of two Nations that form the Saugeen Ojibway Nation.

In 1836, SON reluctantly agreed to Treaty 45 ½ to surrender part of the territory with the promise of having the Peninsula forever protected from encroachment. But the Crown did not protect the Peninsula and in 1854 told SON that they had no choice but to give up the Peninsula because the white settlers could not be stopped, the result was Treaty 72.

The legal name of the community is Chippewas of Saugeen, however in the early 1970's we began referring to the community as Saugeen First Nation #29. Saugeen First Nation consists of four reserves; Saugeen 29, Chief's Point 28, Saugeen Hunting Grounds 60A, and Saugeen & Cape Croker Fishing Islands 1.

Although we never stopped fighting for our inherited rights and assertion of our territory, more recently, in the early 1990's, Saugeen became proactive in righting historical wrongs and began a series of court filings. Thus began the Eastern Boundary Land Claim, Treaty 72 Land Claim and our assertion over the waters around the Peninsula.

Successfully, on October 2, 1995, The Duluth Declaration was signed, affirming Saugeen First Nation's jurisdiction over the waters around the Saugeen/Bruce Peninsula, though a 1993 Canadian Federal Court decision declaring that the Ojibway's' right to fish commercially takes precedence over any other activity.

On July 29, 2021, Treaty 72 Land Claim decision was released. The trial judge agreed with SON that the Crown's failure to do what it could have to protect the Peninsula was a breach of the treaty and a breach of the Crown's honour. However, the trial judge did not agree that the Crown had a fiduciary duty to protect the Peninsula and dismissed that part of the claim. SON is now proceeding to the remedies phase of this case.

On April 3, 2023, the Eastern Boundary Land Claim decision was released and moved the eastern boundary of Saugeen First Nation farther east, to avoid the curvature of Lake Huron and keep the reserve boundary straight and entirely on land, giving Saugeen another 1.4 miles of shoreline, to about 9 1/2 miles total. However, this decision is being appealed by the Town of South Bruce Peninsula.

To this day, we continue to assert our jurisdiction within our Traditional Territory to ensure that our members inherited rights and interest are protected, allowing opportunities, enhanced services, and access to resources to assist in helping our membership mino bimaadsawin.

FIRST NATION PROFILE

Location

Along the shores of Lake Huron, the Saugeen River and at the base of the Saukiing (Bruce) Peninsula, Ontario

Band Membership

2022 Registered Members

(as of December 2024)

FIRST NATION PROFILE

Chief & Council

Chief Conrad Ritchie

Councillor Randall Kahgee

Councillor Sonya Roote

Councillor Lester Anoquot

Councillor Lorne Mandawoub.

Councillor Fay Roote

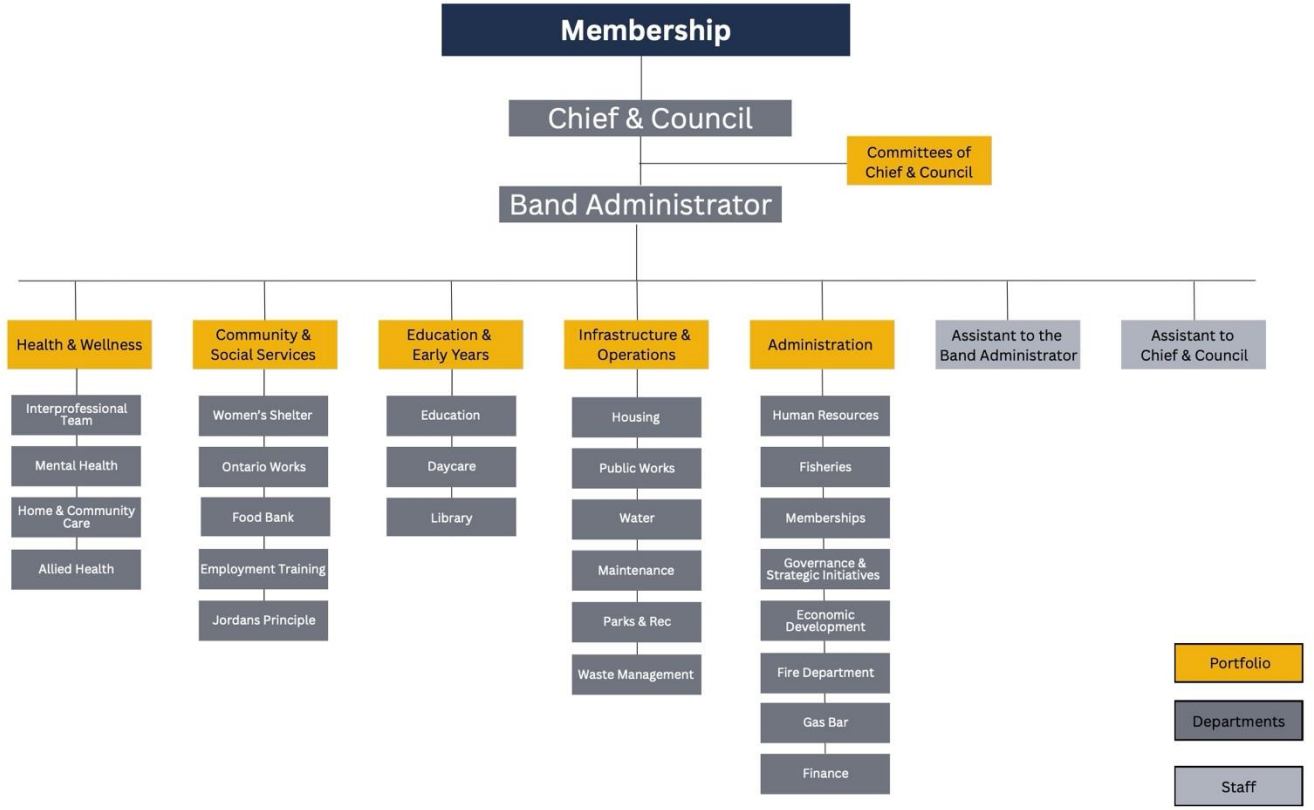
Councillor Cheree Urscheler

Councillor Letitia Thompson

Councillor Theresa Root

Councillor Audra Root

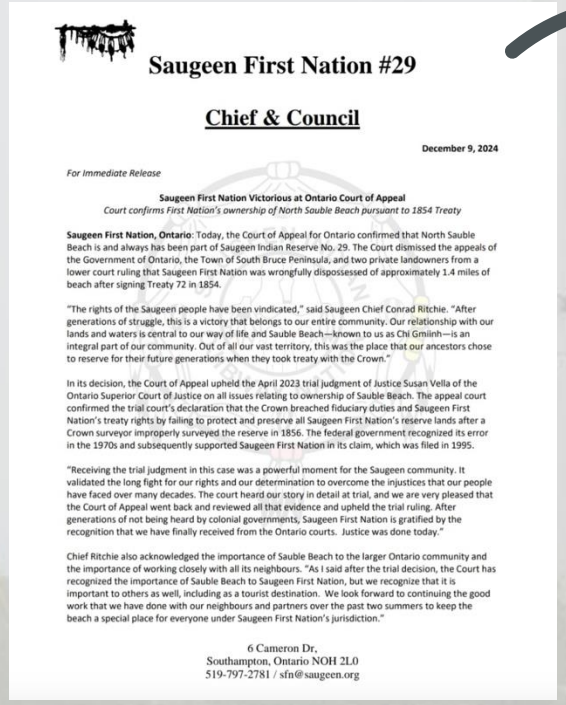
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



LAST YEARS ACHIEVEMENTS

- Ontario Court of Appeals confirms Saugeen's ownership of North Sauble
- Opening of Hospice Like Space "Niinigiiwe"
- Completion of 5-Year Strategic Plan
- Began Construction of Ceremonial Building
- Partnered with Bruce Telecom for Enhanced Internet Services
- Ratification of *Zaag'idiwin* - Child and Family Wellbeing Law
- Signing of the Friendship Accord with Saugeen Shores Council

NORTH SAUBLE BEACH VICTORY



Saugeen First Nation #29

Chief & Council

December 9, 2024

For Immediate Release

Saugeen First Nation Victorious at Ontario Court of Appeal

Court confirms First Nation's ownership of North Sauble Beach pursuant to 1854 Treaty

Saugeen First Nation, Ontario: Today, the Court of Appeal for Ontario confirmed that North Sauble Beach is and always has been part of Saugeen Indian Reserve No. 29. The Court dismissed the appeals of the Government of Ontario, the Town of South Bruce Peninsula, and two private landowners from a lower court ruling that Saugeen First Nation was wrongfully dispossessed of approximately 1.4 miles of beach after signing Treaty 72 in 1854.

"The rights of the Saugeen people have been vindicated," said Saugeen Chief Conrad Ritchie. "After generations of struggle, this is a victory that belongs to our entire community. Our relationship with our lands and waters is central to our way of life and Sauble Beach—known to us as Chi Gmiinh—is an integral part of our community. Out of all our vast territory, this was the place that our ancestors chose to reserve for their future generations when they took treaty with the Crown."

In its decision, the Court of Appeal upheld the April 2023 trial judgment of Justice Susan Vella of the Ontario Superior Court of Justice on all issues relating to ownership of Sauble Beach. The appeal court confirmed the trial court's declaration that the Crown breached fiduciary duties and Saugeen First Nation's treaty rights by failing to protect and preserve all Saugeen First Nation's reserve lands after a Crown surveyor improperly surveyed the reserve in 1856. The federal government recognized its error in the 1970s and subsequently supported Saugeen First Nation in its claim, which was filed in 1995.

"Receiving the trial judgment in this case was a powerful moment for the Saugeen community. It validated the long fight for our rights and our determination to overcome the injustices that our people have faced over many decades. The court heard our story in detail at trial, and we are very pleased that the court of appeal went back and reviewed all that evidence and upheld the trial ruling. After generations of not being heard by colonial governments, Saugeen First Nation is gratified by the recognition that we have finally received from the Ontario courts. Justice was done today."

Chief Ritchie also acknowledged the importance of Sauble Beach to the larger Ontario community and the importance of working closely with all its neighbours. "As I said after the trial decision, the Court has recognized the importance of Sauble Beach to Saugeen First Nation, but we recognize that it is important to others as well, including as a tourist destination. We look forward to continuing the good work that we have done with our neighbours and partners over the past two summers to keep the beach a special place for everyone under Saugeen First Nation's jurisdiction."

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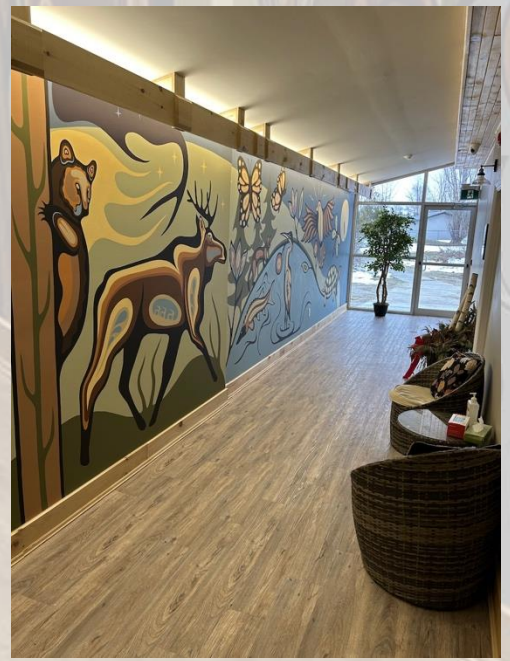
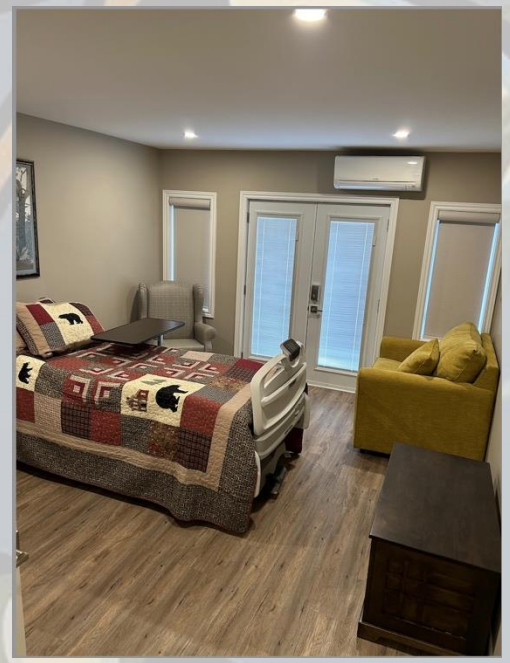
“NIINIGIIWE” HOSPICE







CEREMONIAL BUILDING

FRIENDSHIP ACCORD

Strengthening the relationship between
Saugeen First Nation #29 and the Town of Saugeen Shores

The Chief and Council of Saugeen First Nation #29 and the Mayor and Council of the Town of Saugeen Shores recognize that we live together on the shared traditional territories of the Saugeen Ojibway Nation.

VISION

We share a common vision of developing a collaborative working partnership for the benefit of our communities, based on the principles of the 7 grandfather teachings,
Love – Zaagidwin,
Respect – Mnaadendmowin,
Bravery – Aakdehwin,
Truth– Debwewin,
Honesty– Gwekwaadziwin,
Humility – dbaadendizwin, and
Wisdom – Nbwaakaawin.
As neighbouring communities, we commit to share our wisdom to build a better future for our children and generations to follow.

GUIDING PRINCIPALS

Saugeen First Nation and the Town of Saugeen Shores recognize that building stronger government-to-government relationships will help create a level of certainty for their respective Communities and ensure an important dialogue that seeks to improve the quality of life for all residents.

1. Strengthen the cooperative and supportive bond between governing bodies to promote the well-being of all community members
2. Acknowledge our past and histories and work towards reconciliation.
3. Respect each other's customs, traditions and beliefs, shared values, and culture in spirit and practice.

PROCESS

Establish an annual joint council meeting in review of our friendship and partnership and in consultation on issues of joint interest of both communities. The joint council meeting will occur once annually.
Parties will approach the work set out in this friendship agreement in a way that ensures that each Party acquires and maintains a full understanding of the others' public initiatives, governing structures, traditions, jurisdiction and responsibilities.
Love, Respect, Bravery, Truth, Honesty, Humility, and Wisdom.

On January 31, 2025, in Saugeen First Nation, we celebrated a historic moment with the Town of Saugeen Shores as we signed the Friendship Accord. This agreement marks a deep commitment to working together in partnership to foster economic development opportunities and build stronger relationships. This partnership is about more than just progress—it's about unity, respect, and a shared vision for a brighter future for all. Together, we grow, we build, and we thrive.

5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

What is a Strategic Plan?

A strategic plan identifies the destination of where we want our Nation to be and provides Chief & Council and the administration with directions as to how to get there. It is our plan that reflects the needs and priorities of our members and the vision for our Nation. It provides a guide to help us work together, stay true to our values and be more accountable and transparent to our membership. The strategic plan guides our decision-making (ex. resource allocation for the annual budget), helps evaluate progress towards our goals, and monitor the performance of our Nation's administration.

Goals for the Strategic Planning Process

Our goal through this 5-year Strategic Plan is to begin empowering our administration to carry out the necessary activities and goals required to assist our community in achieving our vision for the future, thus providing improved programming and services to our membership and becoming more accountable as leaders.

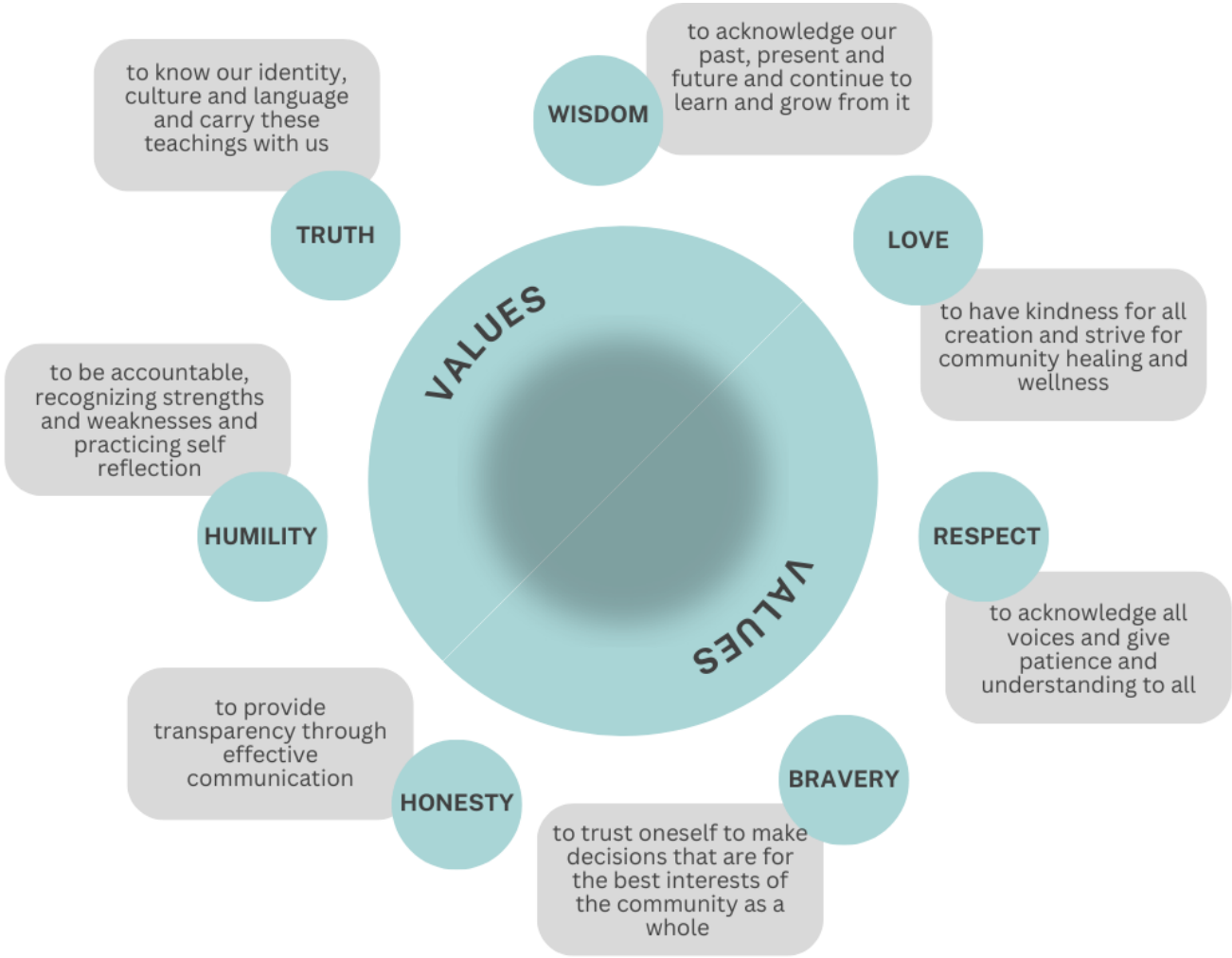
OUR VISION


Reclaimed Anishinaabe NATIONHOOD & Strong GOVERNANCE
STRONG ECONOMY & SELF SUFFICIENCY & FINANCIAL CAPACITY
our Vision
INFRASTRUCTURE that supports COMMUNITY
LANGUAGE CULTURE TEACHINGS CEREMONIES are strong
a SAFE Community
a HEALTHY Community
SAUGEEN INDIAN
OJIBWAY NATION

OUR MISSION

Working together and engaging the membership of Saugeen to provide strong governance and the enhancement of culture, language, community, relationships, and programming. By moving forward together in a positive and harmonious way, we can create opportunities for growth and development of a safer, healthier and more sustainable community.

OUR VALUES


VALUES
VALUES
WISDOM
to acknowledge our past, present and future and continue to learn and grow from it
TRUTH
to know our identity, culture and language and carry these teachings with us
LOVE
to have kindness for all creation and strive for community healing and wellness
HUMILITY
to be accountable, recognizing strengths and weaknesses and practicing self reflection
RESPECT
to acknowledge all voices and give patience and understanding to all
HONESTY
to provide transparency through effective communication
BRAVERY
to trust oneself to make decisions that are for the best interests of the community as a whole

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES & ACTIVITIES

Membership goals & priorities

Council & Administration input

Our Values

Current State Analysis

Past Challenges & Successes

Ec Dev

Health & Wellness

Education

Youth

Land & Safety

Housing

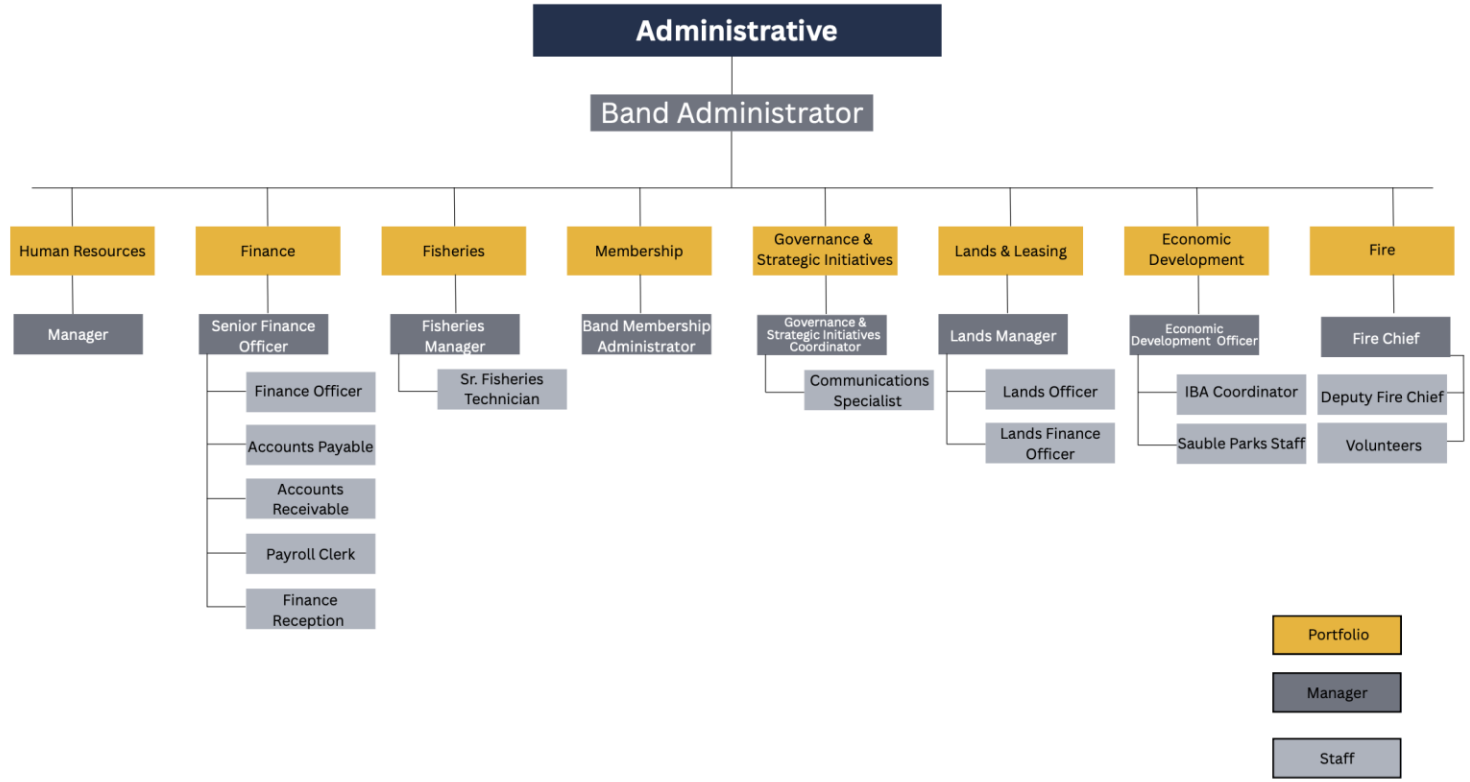
Language & Culture

Leadership

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2025-2030

- Economic Development
- Health & Wellness
- Education, Training & Employment
- Jurisdiction, Land & Community Safety
- Housing & Infrastructure
- Elders, Language & Culture
- Leadership
- Youth

ADMINISTRATION



FISHERIES

The Fisheries Department was created in 1993 with the mandate to serve the people of Saugeen First Nation and deals with issues such as fisheries management, jurisdiction, enforcement, training, planning, and research. However, currently there are minimal fish to catch in our local waters, Saugeen First Nation has no fisherman left and the fisheries departments main task is participating in research. Although research is great, if we don't act soon there will be no Lake Whitefish left. Lake Whitefish is culturally significant, and we should do everything we can to ensure they don't disappear. Currently we are working on a proposed project to create a dual-purpose aquaculture facility with one system for the purpose of enhancement of Lake Whitefish stocks in Lake Huron and the other system to produce Steelhead (Rainbow Trout).

In 2023-2024 the project progressed, and we accomplished the following:

- A comprehensive business plan with financial projections
- Detailed engineered drawings of the aquaculture facility
- The chosen lot was cleared of trees
- Conducted a geotechnical and hydrological study
- Some capacity building and training

Next steps for the 2025-2026 fiscal year we intend to seek funding from the NICFI program to completely prepare the lot for construction and complete the lot survey, we are also seeking funding from FedDev to continue the construction process, however additional funding will be required to finish the build.

Other projects we have been involved in are the Together with Giigoonyag, a broad scale telemetry array (in partnership with Parks Canada, MNRF, & SON), BSM & telemetry array, drift testing & set up (Bruce Power), larval whitefish incubation using rivers n streams pilot project (Sault Tribe Band of Odawa Indians), and MNRF egg harvesting for captive Bloodstock, Saugeen strain of whitefish.

MEMBERSHIP

The Membership Department and Indian Registry Administrator is responsible for discovering events affecting the Indian Registry System, such as births, deaths, marriages, transfers, divorces, age of majority, etc. The administrator is also responsible for obtaining/locating certified documents verifying these events, e.g. birth certificates, death certificate, marriage certificate, etc. as well as issuing Certificates of Indian Status (status cards) to members of Saugeen First Nation #29, as well as other First Nations. Here's a brief overview of registered members as well as populations over the last several years.

Overview of Registered Members					
Year	Births	S-3	Transfer In's	Transfer Out	Deaths
2019	7	7	0	0	8
2020	15	9	0	0	34
2021	22	25	7	1	23
2022	15	22	5	0	22
2023	13	31	2	1	25
2024	21	23	1	1	7
2025	9	4	2	1	12
Total new members: 240 - Total lost members: 135					
Had S-3 Legislation not come into place, we would not have gained 135 new members.					

Total # of Registered Members	
Year	Total
2019	1910
2020	1908
2021	1934
2022	1957
2023	1976
2024	2012
2025	2022

GOVERNANCE & STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

The Governance and Strategic Initiatives Coordinator works collaboratively with the Chief and Council and the Band Administrator to coordinate, lead, and manage Council's strategic planning, community engagement, governance initiatives, and organizational communications strategies. Other activities include the oversight of special projects, encouraging work between cross functional teams within the organization, confirming and securing funding, acting as a liaison between internal and external partners, and fostering collaboration and communication across the organization.

- Funded position, created to enhance governance initiatives within Saugeen First Nation
- Coordinator began October 2024
- Compiled & finalized SFN 5-Year Strategic Plan
- Secured funding and for a 20-Year Capital Planning Study
- Hosted and engaged community through 6 Information Booth Sessions and 3 Community Meetings

LANDS & LEASING

The Lands Management and Leasing Department's duties include processing all Recreational and Agricultural Lease documents, registers all land documents, processes Land Transfers, and issue Certificate of Possession documents as well as updates and maintains Saugeen First Nation Geographic Information System (SFNGIS) and assists band members and employees within the various departments. Other duties include, but are not limited to, collecting cottage rental payments and service fees, maintaining records, preparing, reviewing, processing, and recording land transactions and leasing documents, verifying and distributing registered land transaction documents, preparing leases and permits, letters of direction and various other legal documents, processing new leases, lease applications, renewals, rent revision agreements, relinquishments, documents relating to leasing as well as individual landholdings, maintaining a working knowledge of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC, land registry, Indian Land Registry System (ILRS). We also deal with Environmental issues, staff have been working with various ministry departments regarding species at risk, invasive species, species of special concern.

- More recently, Lands has been assisting Administration with a variety of issues regarding to lands which include the new land claim area of Sauble Beach, land claim parcels in Tobermory, Saugeen Shores and Mountain Lake area (Grey County).
- Lands has completed 17 newly surveyed lots in the Saugeen Village area. 10 of these were identified for future housing needs and the remainder were for Administration and Commercial properties.
- In 2025/2026 we will conduct Land Appraisals, prior to the designation vote in August, these Appraisals are for all lots to be leased in the upcoming 2026 lease, and this appraisal sets rates on those lots for 5-year term.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Economic Development Department has been investing in expanding the capacity and supports to community members through our SFNIBA program. In 2024–2025, SFNIBA continued to support local entrepreneurs through workshops, mentorships, and community markets. Highlights include the December Maker's Market with 21 Indigenous vendors, the weekly Night Market series (June–August) with consistent participation from 6 band member vendors and up to 14 vendors at peak, and live entertainment each week. Programs like Starter Company Plus, the Further Faster initiative with Georgian College, and the Xcelerate HER event at the museum provided additional support and development opportunities for SFN entrepreneurs.

In addition to these initiatives, Ec Dev secured dollars from the Government of Canada's Skills and Partnership Fund to advance the restoration of the Amphitheatre project in partnership with the Backyard Boys. These dollars support 6 Saugeen members in a three-year Brick and Stone masonry program designed to complete a number of community projects over the next three years, beginning with the Amphitheatre.

Another highlight out of Ec Dev is the signing of the Friendship Accord with Saugeen Shores. This initiative began through a CEDI program and developed into this partnership that's aimed at strengthening the relationship between Saugeen First Nation and Saugeen Shores. The parties agree to collaborate and advance four key interests in economic and social development, these interests include:

1. Tourism
2. Increasing Connection
3. Building Complete Communities
4. Business Development

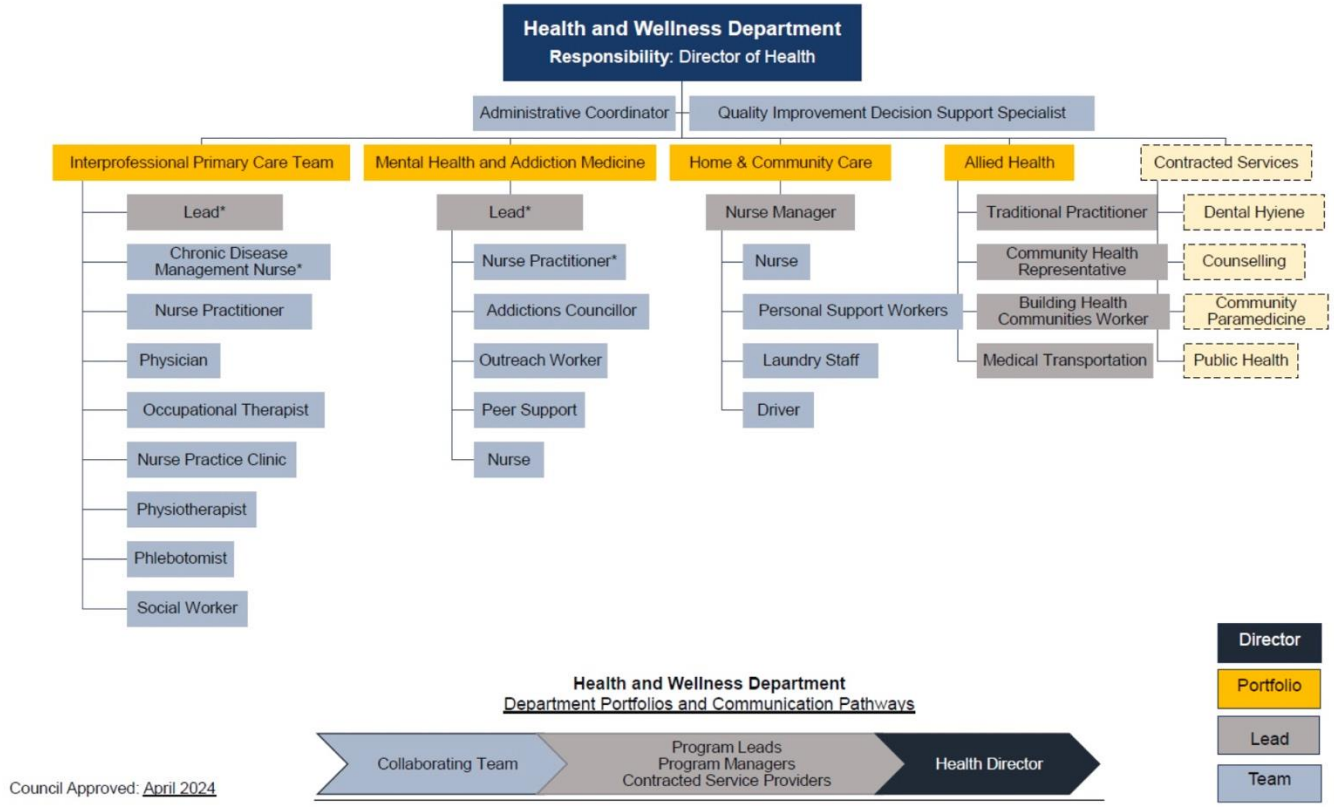
FIRE & EMERGENCY SERVICES

The Saugeen Fire & Emergency Services department effectively and efficiently responds to and mitigates emergencies involving the rescue of persons, incidents of fire, unplanned releases of dangerous goods, and pre-hospital emergency medical incidents. The department strives to provide community-based, customer-focused service to create a safe and comfortable environment for the residents of Saugeen. We protect the development of our community through extensive inspection, prevention, and enforcement programs. As well, education programs are aimed at eliminating fire and safety hazards in the home and workplace. Members of Saugeen Fire & Emergency Services pride themselves on providing a very progressive service to residents in Saugeen and the surrounding areas.

Saugeen Fire & Emergency Services is solely committed to protecting life, property and business from the impacts of fire, emergencies and natural disasters. Saugeen Fire & Emergency Services will assist with medical emergencies to the residents of Saugeen whenever it is called upon to do so. Fire Prevention is an important part of our Mission which is accomplished through fire prevention initiatives, education and emergency preparedness programs. The members of Saugeen Fire & Emergency Services will provide a safe, professional & rapid response to all emergency situations in our mandate. The firefighters will always show compassion for the patients of emergencies and will minimize any adverse effects on the environment resulting from responding to emergencies whenever possible.

- Call volume in 2024 – 209 calls
- Secured $100,000 in funding for Wildland Fire Equipment and Training
- Active smoke alarm campaign, providing members with working smoke alarms through the year
- Increased social media awareness and public relations within community

HEALTH & WELLNESS



INTERPROFESSIONAL PRIMARY CARE TEAM

As an integrated service delivery provider, the Interprofessional Primary Care Team coordinates and empowers a holistic and person-centered multidisciplinary team approach to provide high quality, and evidence-based practices to meet the needs of the community. We believe our most important objective is to deliver exceptional holistic and integrative care, which is trauma-informed and culturally safe. Services provided include:

- Interprofessional health care providers had an average of 700 appointments total per month
- 58 children under 6 yrs old received Well Baby Checks and Immunizations
- 745 patients accessed care, an increase of 330 patients in 2024/2025, 44% increase

Staffing Structure:

- Physician
- Nurse Practitioner
- Chronic Disease Management
- Nurse
- Diabetic Foot Care Nurse
- Occupational Therapist
- Mental Health Counsellor

Services provided include:

- Primary Care
- Same Day Access
- Nursing Clinic
- Chronic Disease Management
- Diabetic Foot Care
- Sexual Health Clinics Immunizations
- Phlebotomy (Labs)
- Occupational Therapy
- Mental Health Counselling

MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTIONS

The Saugeen First Nation (SFN) Wellness Centre delivers integrated, culturally safe health and social services with a focus on harm reduction, recovery support, youth wellness, and crisis intervention. Rooted in Indigenous health equity and community wellness, the Centre provides essential and ancillary services to address urgent mental health, addictions, housing stabilization, and youth needs for SFN members of all ages. Core services are anchored by a Nurse Practitioner (NP), Registered Nurse (RN), and outreach case management team, ensuring continuity of care, coordination, and medical oversight. Core services provided consist of:

- **Mental Health and Overdose Crisis Response**
- **Sober Living Transitional Housing Support**
- **Medication Administration (On-Site & In-Home)**
- **Ancillary & Wraparound Services**
- **Youth Program**

Staffing Structure:

1 Nurse Practitioner
2 Nurses
2 Outreach Case Management Workers
1 NADAP Worker (M–F)- on leave
1 Mobile Crisis Worker- to be hired
1 Youth Mental Health Worker (M–F)- to be hired

In 2024/2025 our team supported:

- *174 individuals with a total of 10,295 visits through Crisis Intervention- Mental Health*
- *107 individuals served with 100% retention, for a total of 15,336 visits for Addictions Treatment- Substance Use*

HOME & COMMUNITY CARE

The Home and Community Care program assists those in need of our services within Saugeen, mainly working with Elders, but our services extend to any community member in need of assistance. Our goal is to provide support to our clients and their families involved in their care which will allow the clients to remain independent and, in their home, as long as possible.

We offer many client-centered services, encouraging family involvement to deliver the most optimal care. These services include assisted living/homemaking, laundry service, meal prep, personal care/bathing, toileting/peri-care, dressing, oral care, skin care, assistance with transferring and rehabilitation exercises.

Home and Community Care also loans out equipment to community members as needed; supplying items such as wheelchairs, walkers, commodes, crutches, raised toilet seats, bath chairs, bedrails, hospital beds and more.

Nursing services are available for teaching health services for clients, families and caregivers, monitoring for therapeutic intervention, nursing treatments and procedures. Nurses can assist with Case Management/Patient Navigation services including hospital discharge planning, initial assessments, consultations with physicians and family members, case conferences, and establishing linkages/liaison with health care professionals.

Home and Community Care has created a Hospice Like Space called "Niinigiwe" for community members requiring end-of-life care with PSW staff to provide care and assistance to clients and family members, with 24 hour on call access to Registered Nursing staff. This space is a one-unit space attached to the Elders facility. “Niinigiwe” is a comfortable, inviting, home-like space for family and friends to care for and support their loved one on their final journey. We have had one client use this space on their final journey and this was a very positive experience for the client and their family.

Programming for our Elders include Elders' fitness twice a week, a weekly shopping excursion, crafts, trips to Keady Market, Hanover Casino, lunch and learns on pertinent topics for Elders such as Estate Planning, Wills and Power of Attorney, etc. Transportation to these events is also included. The biggest event we hold annually is the Elders Christmas Gala. This is a formal dinner and entertainment event that serves over 200 Band members.

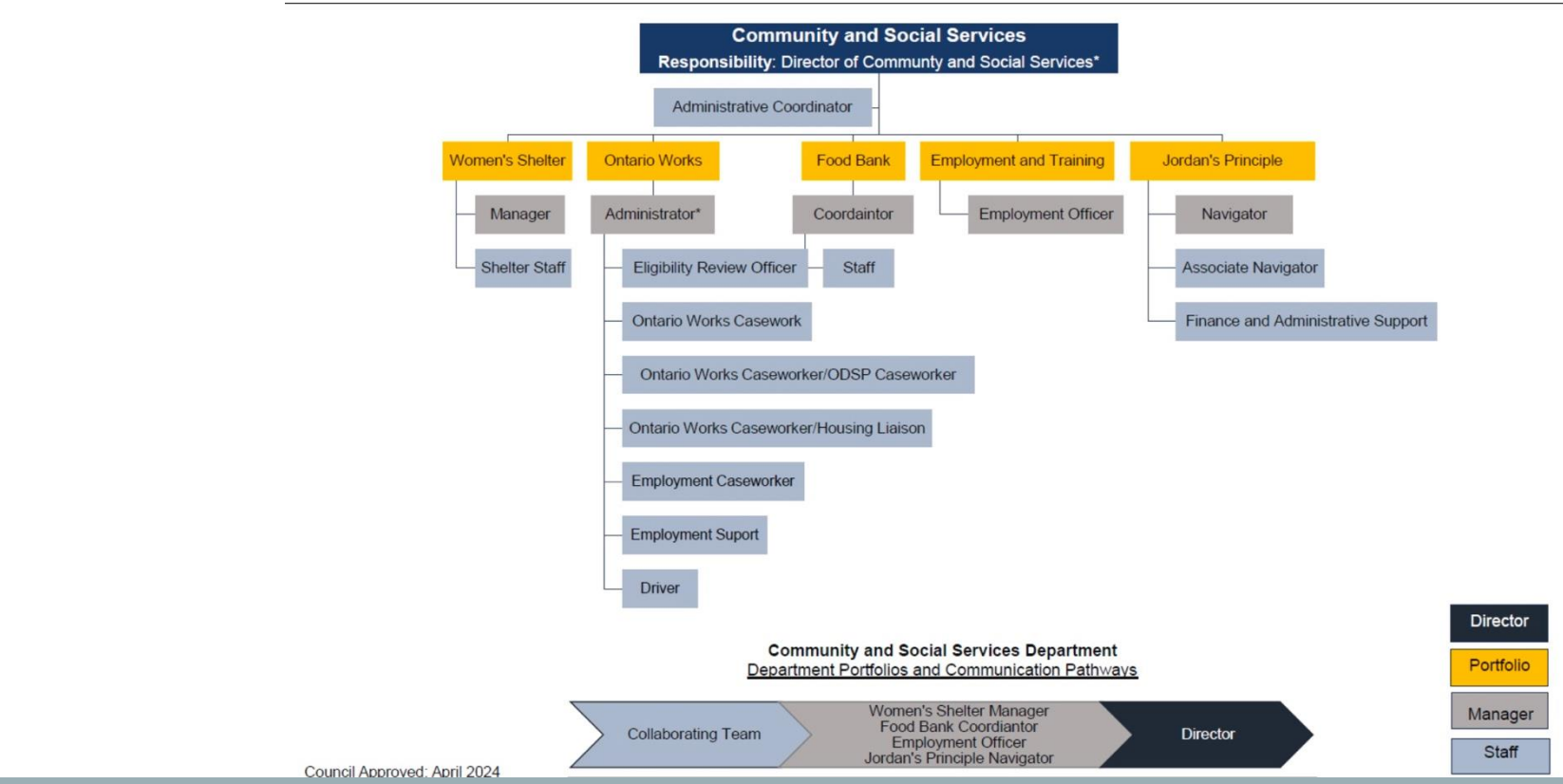
Currently we have 101 active care plans that our PSW’s and nursing staff provide support for.

ALLIED HEALTH

Allied health professionals and programs play an important role in supporting the health of the community. They work alongside doctors, nurses, and other healthcare workers to offer care that helps prevent illness and provides ongoing support. Instead of just treating problems when they happen, allied health focuses on keeping people healthy in the long run through education, early help, and regular follow-up. Programs within the Health Centre that offer this are:

- Community Health Representative
- Building Healthy Communities
- Healthy Babies, Healthy Children Programs
- Diabetes Health programs
- Ageing Well Programs
- Harm Reduction Programs
- Mental Health and Addictions Programs
- Good Food Box

COMMUNITY & SOCIAL SERVICES



WOMEN'S SHELTER

Since opening in 1997, Kabaeshiwim Respite Women's Shelter has provided a 24/7 safe haven for women and children fleeing violence or at risk of abuse. Open every day of the year, the shelter is always staffed to ensure safety, support, and healing. Beyond offering emergency shelter, we walk alongside women and families in their journey toward stability, empowerment, and community connection. Through strong partnerships and a holistic approach, we remain dedicated to ending violence and fostering healing within Saugeen First Nation and surrounding communities.

Services Offered

- Temporary residential shelter for Indigenous & non-Indigenous women and children
- Walk-in supports & outreach (safety planning, advocacy, connection to services)
- 1:1 counselling (in-person & virtual)
- Transportation assistance (Bruce & Grey Counties)
- Support with OW, ODSP, housing, legal aid, medical, CAS & employment applications

2024–2025 Highlights

- *Over 80 women and children provided safe shelter*
- *405 crisis calls answered*
- *241 safety plans created with clients*
- *Strengthened partnerships with local agencies to support clients*

Capital Improvements

- Complete shelter renovations including:
  - *New paint throughout entire building*
  - *New doors and flooring*
  - *New security fence installation*
  - *Updated furniture throughout*

Looking Forward

- ➢ Continued alignment with Saugeen First Nation's 5-Year Strategic Plan
- ➢ Focus on expanding outreach and culturally rooted healing supports
- ➢ New addition to the shelter with 4 more rooms and a large community space
- ➢ More community outreach and community facing events

ONTARIO WORKS

The Ontario Work's vision is to achieve improved employment outcomes for Ontario Works participants by increasing individual employability with the goal of sustainable employment and increased financial independence.

Ontario Works discretionary benefits are one-time exceptional expenses, such as for adult dental or vision care, dentures, prosthetic devices, and emergency health needs, that an Ontario Works Administrator can approve based on the client's individual circumstances, these dollars are solely for OW clients.

Transitional Support Fund is a housing-related support fund that helps low-income individuals and families, especially those on-reserve, to secure, retain, or maintain accommodation by covering costs like rent and utility deposits, shelter or utility arrears, and costs for establishing a new residence.

The Ontario Works program:

- Recognizes individual responsibility and promotes self-reliance through employment
- Provides financial assistance to those most in need while they meet obligations to become and stay employed
- Effectively serves people needing assistance
- Is accountable to the taxpayers of Ontario
- Provides land-based training and workshops
- Provides employment related workshops, computer access, resume writing, interview skills, & budgeting
- Referrals for other programs and services
- Transportation for clients related to OW needs, 24 hours notice is required for this service
- Partners with United Way, LEAP Program, all SFN programs, as well as ODSP

FOOD BANK

The Food Bank provides a much-needed emergency food service to Saugeen First Nation community members as well as fresh, local produce from our Community Garden. We provide perishable foods (milk, eggs, bread, fruit and veggies) on the 2nd and 4th week of each month, as well as non-perishable items, accessible once per month. Other services provided are food packages deliveries, toy drive, Christmas dinners (in collaboration with Queens Bar & Grill) & backpack giveaway (in collaboration with Education & United Way).

- Food bank access
  - Client Access: 829
  - Household total: 1596
  - Children in households: 414
- Toy Drive
  - 73 families
  - 156 children
- Christmas Dinners - 840 dinners
- Backpack Giveaway – 200 backpacks
- Annual Charity Golf Tournament: raised over $50,000.00 to go towards food purchases.

EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING

The Employment & Training Department has a Community Resource Centre with computers and printers for community use. Community members can also access the Job Bank and create resumes and cover letters for employment purposes. There is also a drafting room and a theory room with a digital projector and screen for a classroom setting. There is a kitchen area on premises for light lunches and a small meeting place for small groups. There is a full woodshop, which is responsible for constructing SFN Band Member requests of dog houses, bat houses, garbage bins, picnic tables, etc. There are large bulletin boards in the hallways of Employment & Training which have job postings from SFN, Bruce Power and other employment opportunities outside of the community. Services offered are seasonal employment, temporary employment, youth work employment, summer student employment, Amphitheatre grounds crew, science and technology program, and woodshop programs. Lastly, many training opportunities are offered through Employment & Training for community members and employees, ranging from First Aid/CPR, WHMIS, fall arrest, confined spaces training, H.A.A.M.B. funding information, etc.

The Employment and Training Centre has received funding to undergo renovations to the building which will include an addition onto the current footprint, design work is currently being completed on this renovation project!

JORDANS PRINCIPLE

The Jordan's Principle team has supported families with navigating the Jordan's Principle application process, collecting necessary documents, submitting applications and providing services after approvals to ensure funds are used appropriately as stated in the approval.

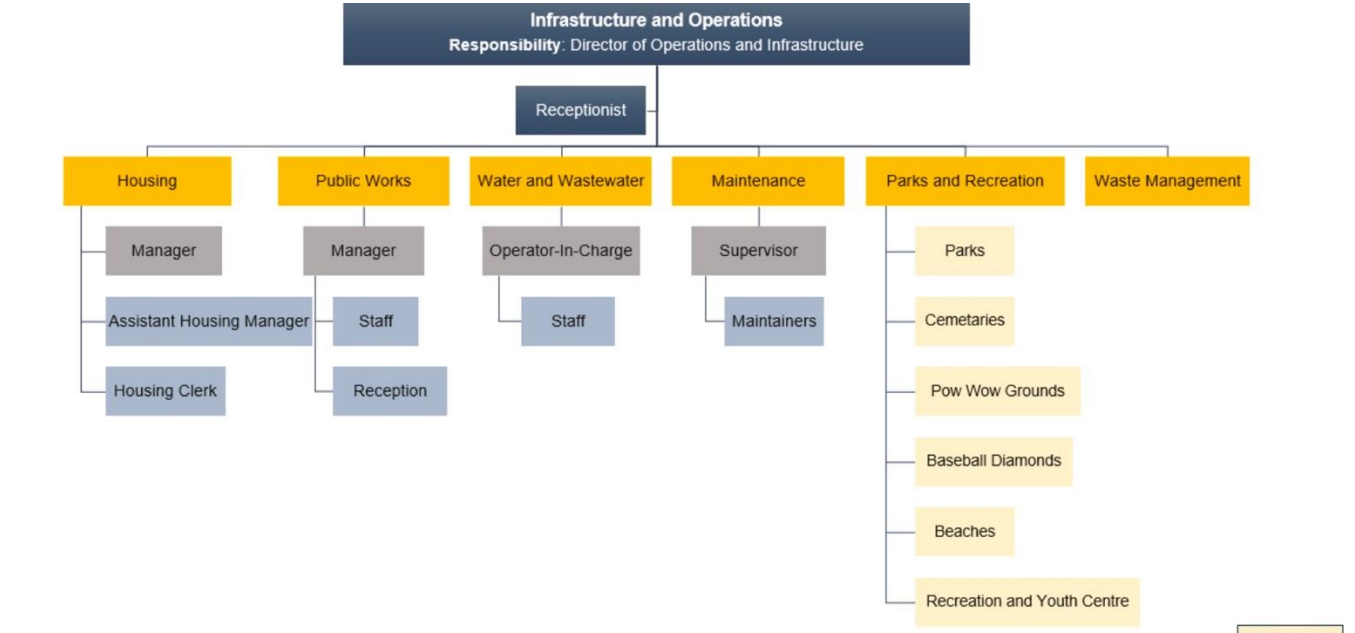
In FY 2025 we had 95 new clients and held approximately 350 total files, many are still active.

- 62% of children are on reserve, 38% are off reserve.
- 288 new applications were submitted with a total of 692 individual items or services requested.
- Out of the 692 requested items, 233 were approved, 29 were denied and the remaining are undecided at National Review or still backlogged awaiting intake at Regional level.
- The dollar value of services or individual items requested amounted in 3.8 million dollars - 1.89 million was approved, 74 thousand denied and 1.83 million is awaiting a decision.

Some of the high value services provided were individual education support workers for children with high needs, respite, therapies not covered such as speech and language pathology, recreational, occupational and behavioural. Other services provided were health and social related needs such as clothing and grocery support, rent, furniture and other needs based on the individual requests.

As of February 2025, ISC released a Jordan's Principle bulletin that made it difficult for families to receive an approval which in turn has discouraged families from submitting new applications.

INFRASTRUCTURE & OPERATIONS



Infrastructure and Operations Department
Department Portfolios and Communication Pathways

Council Approved: _____

HOUSING

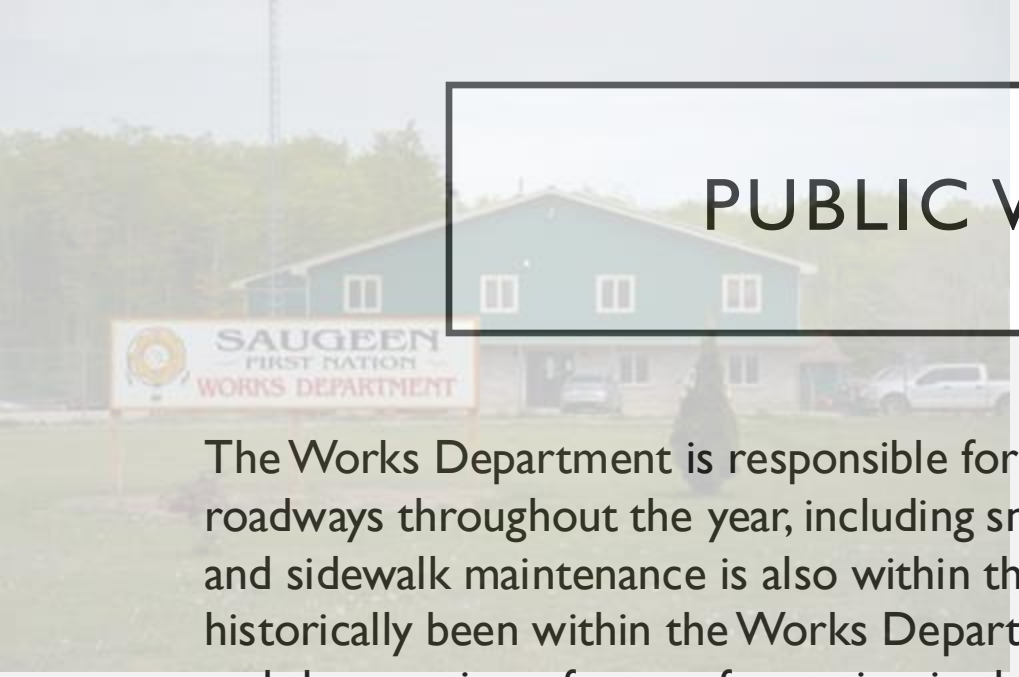
The Housing Department is responsible for the management and development of housing initiatives within the community. Key responsibilities include: ***Managing band-owned rental units*** and overseeing day-to-day operations, repairs and maintenance, rent and arrears. ***Collaborating with Habitat for Humanity***, to develop new housing opportunities and support critical repairs and maintenance of existing community housing. ***Preparing and submitting funding proposals*** for future housing projects and housing related infrastructure. ***Working with external consultants and lenders*** to design and implement housing finance programs. ***Coordinating with exterior contractors*** to maintain and repair both band-owned and privately owned housing units. ***Managing budgets and financials*** for construction projects and band-owned buildings. ***Reviewing housing policies, rental agreements, and mortgage contracts***, and recommending updates as needed. ***Partnering with researchers and consultants*** to assess and prioritize housing needs and development within Saugeen First Nation. ***Developing a Community Housing Strategy*** to create a cohesive and planned approach to community housing development. ***Helping Community Members*** navigate funding and financing options to repair, renovate or to add onto their homes.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- **Five new rent-to-own homes** are currently under construction in partnership with Habitat for Humanity, expanding affordable and accessible housing options for community members.
- **Nine apartment units** at the Weegwaus Complex are undergoing deep renovations to improve living conditions and increase rental availability.
- **The Children's Housing Fund** has been secured **to support 11 privately owned homes** with additions or basement renovations, specifically targeting overcrowded conditions affecting children.
- **Lot servicing** is underway for a future development of **14 townhouses** northwest of the village multiplex. This includes installation of utilities, curbs, security lighting, and paving of the multiplex laneway, parking areas, and Madwayosh Lane.

CURRENT INITIATIVES

- **Recruitment of a maintenance technician** to address urgent repairs in both band-owned and privately owned community housing.
- **Policy and procedure review** within the Housing Department to ensure alignment with current needs and best practices.
- **Community consultation** led by Together Design Lab to gather input and insights on housing priorities and challenges.
- **Exploration of new housing strategies,** including diverse housing types and innovative approaches to increase future housing supply in Saugeen First Nation.



PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

The Works Department is responsible for the construction, improvement, repair, and maintenance of all SFN roadways throughout the year, including snow removal and ditch maintenance. Road signage, street lighting and sidewalk maintenance is also within the scope of the Works Department. Solid waste and recycling has historically been within the Works Department mandate, however with the decommissioning of the landfill and the creation of a transfer station in the works, this may change in the future. Other items that are to be focused on in the coming years is:

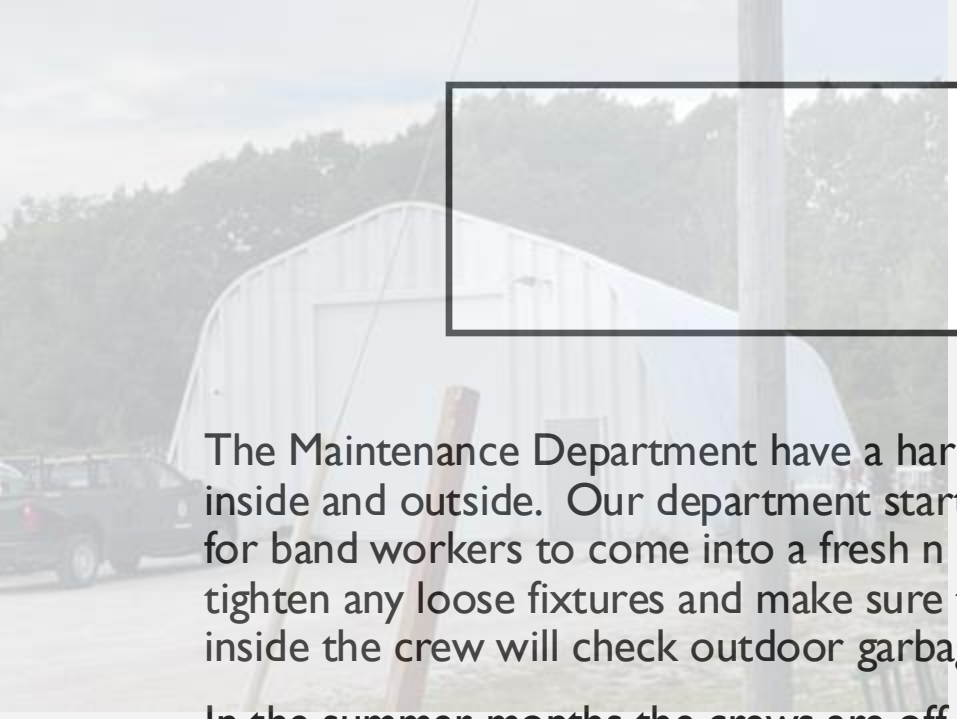
- Capacity Building & Training in Heavy Machinery for the crew
- Asset acquisition
- Development of new roads for housing subdivisions
- Repair of existing roads

WATER WORKS

The Saugeen Water Works Department monitors the quality of drinking water for Saugeen First Nation. Under the Safe Drinking Water Act we are Licensed and Certified to operate and maintain community distribution and facility. We follow the reg, 170/03 under the Safe Drinking Water Act with its sampling requirements. We are a small crew but we do what we can to help our community.

- We also monitor the distribution system, and its many appurtenances.
- Although we are not plumbers, we will give free advice. Waterworks also installs new water services or replacements.
- When called upon, beach sampling may be required, and although this is recreational this department has the means & equipment needed to check for e-coli levels.

There is many components to operate here at the Water Works Dept, we are proud to say that we were able to get outside funding to replace our SCADA system. It is a key component in our day to day operations. In short, the communications between the Water Tower and the PRV and SCADA are efficient.



MAINTENANCE

The Maintenance Department have a hard working and eager team that look after most of the band buildings inside and outside. Our department starts at 7:00 am Monday to Friday cleaning, removing garbage and recyclables for band workers to come into a fresh n tidy workplace. The crew check to make sure lights are all functioning, tighten any loose fixtures and make sure the facility is topped up with supplies. After the buildings are cleaned inside the crew will check outdoor garbage cans and any littler on the ground to be discarded.

In the summer months the crews are off daily cutting grass, weed whacking, pruning trees, trimming shrubs, hauling things to the dump or assisting various department with other tasks that they need assistance with.

In the winter months the crews are busy clearing walkways and some parking lots of snow and spreading salt for the safety of all.

All months of the year we deal with plumbing, heating, electrical, HVAC systems issues. We have seen a significant increase in worn out heating, cooling equipment or leaky roofs. It may be a simple fix or a complete unit replacement.

We have aging buildings that keep us running to make sure all is functional and something different to work on each day.

RECREATION

The James Mason Recreation & Cultural Centre is the heart of our community — not only functioning as a gymnasium but also serving as the largest and most frequently used event space in the area. It regularly hosts a wide range of activities, including community meetings, cultural celebrations, workshops, and sports tournaments. Its central role makes it essential to the social, cultural, and physical well-being of our community members.

However, due to the age of the facility and the increasing demands placed on it, several areas now require significant upgrades. Renovations are necessary to ensure the space remains safe, accessible, and equipped to meet current and future needs. Although we did replace the roof this year, we still require many other upgrades.

Key Renovation Needs Include:

- **Structural Repairs**: Addressing wear and tear in walls, and flooring to ensure safety and longevity.
- **Accessibility Improvements**: Upgrading entrances, restrooms, and pathways to meet accessibility standards and ensure inclusivity for all users.
- **HVAC and Ventilation Upgrades**: Improving air quality, climate control, and energy efficiency.
- **Lighting and Electrical Systems**: Replacing outdated systems with energy-efficient, modern solutions that better support multipurpose use.
- **Kitchen and Facility Amenities**: Updating the kitchen and storage spaces to support community events and gatherings more effectively.
- **Technology Integration**: Installing updated audiovisual and connectivity infrastructure to support meetings, presentations, and hybrid events.
- **Interior and Exterior Refresh**: Modernizing finishes, fixtures, and signage to improve aesthetics, comfort, and functionality.

Investing in these renovations will not only preserve the structural integrity of the Recreation Centre but will also enhance its ability to serve as a vibrant, inclusive, and multifunctional space for years to come.

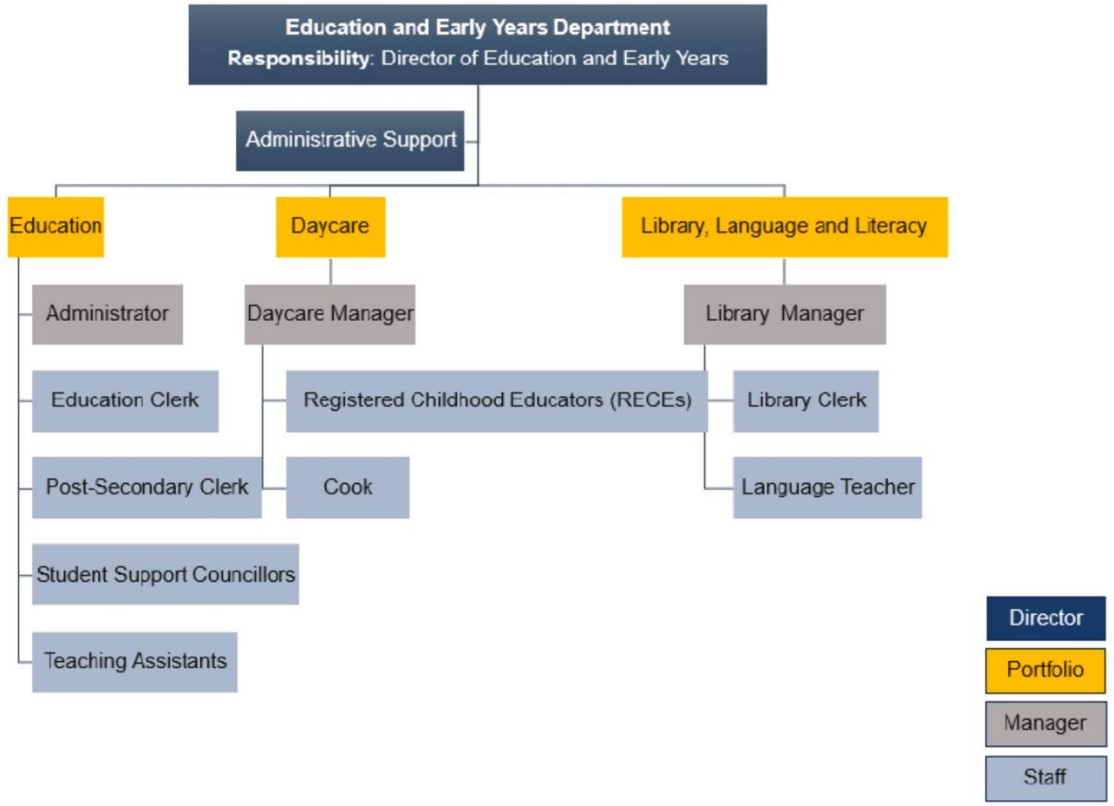
WASTE MANAGEMENT

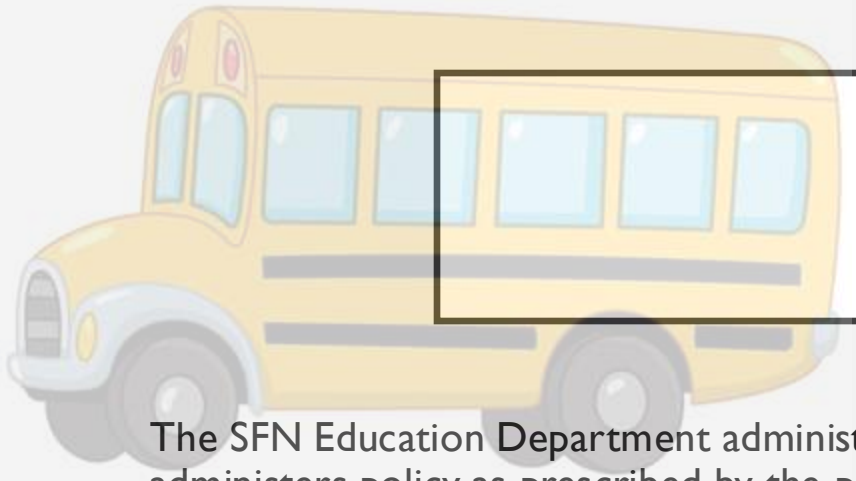
In 2020 Saugeen completed a landfill study to determine the future of solid waste management within the community. Based on previous input and feedback from members, strong concerns were raised regarding the environmental impact of the landfill on land and water. It was determined that the preferred alternative would be to close the landfill and construct a transfer station. This lead us to contract Waste Management to begin collecting the solid waste and recyclables so that we could begin diverting the waste out of the community. To advance our efforts to develop a transfer station, we applied and received funding to hire a Solid Waste Coordinator to lead our efforts in the decommissioning of our landfill and the construction of a new transfer station.

The Solid Waste Coordinator will act as project lead on behalf of the First Nations to efficiently manage solid waste projects. The individual will be responsible for creating an operational plan for the current landfill site, determining all alternatives and creating recommendations to the First Nations with a focus on securing funding from ISC to decommission our current landfill and construct a transfer station. They will be involved in managing staff and budgets related to waste projects within the community, and O&M activities surrounding solid waste, and waste diversion programs.

Another component of this role is the development of educational and outreach materials such as educational pamphlets, posters and social media campaigns outlining waste issues. Such initiatives will include solid waste planning, recycling education, and other waste diversion tactics on reserve.

EDUCATION & EARLY YEARS





EDUCATION

The SFN Education Department administers the federal elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education program and administers policy as prescribed by the policy. The SFN Education Department provides, advocates for, and supports students and parents/guardians attending the various levels of education. Each summer, the department prepares the busing routes, works with daycares and schools for transition via school visits and riding the bus, giving new students an idea of what to expect for their coming years. Transitions are also provided to elementary students heading to secondary education. Each year the Education Department delivers the awards program for students, as Band Council sponsored event.

Elementary and Secondary Education

- 112 Elementary Students supported *
- 74 Secondary Students supported *
- Safety work boots purchased for 12 co-op students
- Arrange transportation for 10 students attending NII Energy Co-op
- Provide in-school math tutoring with Stephanie de Gryp
- 16 Grade 8 graduates
- 15 Grade 12 graduates

Post-Secondary Education

- 2 College students approved for funding support **
- 24 C27 University students approved for funding support **
- 3 Graduate students approved for funding support **
- 1 Doctoral graduate
- 7 University graduates
- 5 College Diploma graduates
- 5 College Certificate completed

* tuition, bussing, school fees, lunch assistance, teaching assistants, assessments
** tuition, mandatory fees, living allowance, travel assistance, books

DAYCARE

Saugeen Early Learning Services – Binoojiinh Gamig – "Child's Place" has been in operation since November 2010. We are licensed for 16 children – 30 Mths. – 60 Mths. of age under the Ministry of Education – Child Care and Early Years Act.

We provide a culture and language-based program along with quality care and educational experiences. Another important aspect is to provide many opportunities for parent engagement. We encourage parents & families to be a big part of their child's learning. Language revitalization is a very important aspect of Binoojiinh Gamig. One of our main goals is to have your child prepared and ready for school with all the necessary skills required in order to be successful. Our main objective is to one day become a full language immersion center.

At present, we are in the midst of combining into one center. September 2025, renovations will start at G'Shawdagawin Center. Once renovations are complete, all staff, and all children will move and we will close Binoojiinh Gamig forever.

G'shawdagawin will be licensed under the Ministry of Education – Child Care and Early Years Act for 16 preschoolers and 10 toddlers. We will be working closely with the Director – Melissa Ritchie. We hope to house a full time Anishinaabemowin teacher on site. More qualified staff for child-staff ratios, more professional development days will be offered. More opportunities for parent engagement activities., native language nights. etc.

Our long-term goal for the future is to be housed directly into the new community school. Our vision moving forward is to become a full language immersion program. As part of our program, our main objectives is to deliver a high-quality educational program, which includes direct parent involvement in their child's education, but also to provide school readiness skills for our children, so they are prepared, ready and successful for their next rites of passage. Another important aspect for our program is to offer cultural teachings, historical teachings, learn about ceremonies, and customs, but also to offer a land-based learning program. We would strive to work with our elders, families, and community partners to help build that solid foundation for our children, so our children, know who they are as "Anishinaabe".

LIBRARY, LANGUAGE & LITERACY

The Saugeen First Nation Public Library is an essential service to the community and open to the public. We offer current and culturally relevant collections and services. We welcome all community members and support their needs for access to information, personal empowerment, and self-affirmation. In partnerships with other SFN community programs, our public libraries contribute to our social and economic well-being by nurturing our spirits, preserving our traditions, culture, and language, as well as encouraging lifelong learning and literacy.
The Public Library offers both weekly and monthly programming and some of the other library services/utilities offered include: telephone, computer, internet, photocopying, laminating, book and dvd lending, coffee station, and a community information board.

REGULARLY PARTNERS WITH:
- A.C.Y.P.S.
- Building Healthy Communities
- Family Well Being Program
- Local community Elders and Artisans (for workshops)

This past year the library was able to build an extension onto the current building allowing for more office space and workshop space.

ZAAG'IDIWIN NGODOODEGIZWIN DIBENDAAGIZWIN NAAKNIGEWIN

- On August 30, 2024, in parallel with the Chief & Council election, Saugeen held a ratification vote for the Zaag'idiwin (Unconditional Love) Child and Family Well-being law. Membership voted in favour of the law, with 328 out of 381 eligible voters in support.
- Through the passing of this law, Saugeen created a Child & Family Services Non-Profit Organization called *Zaag'idiwin Naaknigewin*, to begin building service models that will best serve our children, youth and families. When fully implemented, this agency will oversee and support our children, youth and families into the future.
- A number of child and family wellbeing programs that were previously under the Saugeen First Nation organization will be transferring over to this agency, these programs are ACYPS, Band Reps, and Customary Care.
- Zaag'idiwin Ngodoodegizwin Dibendaagizwin Naaknigewin will be in full effect this coming November 2025
- For more information Zaag'idiwin Ngodoodegizwin Dibendaagizwin Naaknigewin, please contact Audra Root, Executive Director.

DRIFTWOOD COMMUNICATIONS

- Saugeen has an exciting new strategic partnership that will significantly enhance Driftwood Communications and expand high-speed fibre optic broadband infrastructure across Saugeen First Nation. This initiative is aimed at securing our communication services for the future and reinforcing our position as a competitive utility.
- Saugeen First Nation has successfully secured funding from the Government of Ontario that will allow us to advance Driftwood Communications. This funding will facilitate the installation of fibre optic broadband connectivity throughout our entire territory, including the Village, French Bay, Chief's Point, and Scotch Settlement. By investing in this infrastructure now, we are also preparing for anticipated growth and economic development opportunities in the future.
- To ensure ongoing maintenance and necessary upgrades of our band-owned utility, Council has approved a managed services partnership agreement. This partnership will entrust the management of Driftwood Communications to Bruce Telecom, a local third-party with the necessary expertise and resources in this competitive market.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Finance Department Overview:

The Finance Department is responsible for safeguarding the financial resources of Saugeen First Nation. The department supports SFN and its programs and services by providing day-to-day record keeping, preparing financial statements, processing payroll, assisting program managers with budgeting, forecasting and financial reporting to funders, etc.

Because the work we do is so important to the financial health of the First Nation, we have many checks and balances in place to verify the accuracy of our work and to protect the assets of SFN. These internal controls include: segregation of duties to reduce the opportunity for an employee to commit a fraudulent act; the use of passwords and user authentication to limit access; hand-counting cash and inventorying assets; issuing pre-number receipts for all payments received and keeping a log of the receipts issued; reconciling bank accounts on a monthly basis; requiring two authorized signatures on all cheques; limiting management authorization approval; and using physical controls such as locked doors and cabinets and keeping cash in the safe.

Current Focus:

In addition to the regular day-to-day work, the Finance Department will be focusing on completion of the annual audits, working with program managers to begin the process for the 2026-27 budgets, and reviewing and updating the Finance Policy, Personnel Policy, Information Management Policy, and Governance as it Relates Financial Administration Policy.

We are also continuing our work with First Nations Financial Management Board to become Financial Management System Certified. Certification will show that Saugeen First Nation is meeting the required levels of quality or excellence by doing what we say we will do in our Financial Administration Law. This certification can make it easier for SFN to borrow money on the same terms as other governments in Canada.

CONSOLIDATED BUDGET

	2023-24	2024-25
REVENUE BY SOURCE AND SIGNIFICANT CATEGORY		
Government transfers - Provincial	3,526,166	5,565,367
- Federal	11,594,810	12,163,956
Investment income	820,000	1,790,000
Rental income	319,800	337,800
Land Lease Revenue	5,112,210	5,112,210
Business operations - Gas Bar	6,358,500	6,287,000
- Dufferin Wind Farm	814,283	848,132
OFNLP/Rama	847,500	1,125,000
Service Fees	1,561,691	1,561,691
Medical Isotopes	500,000	500,000
NWMO Community Wellness Initiative	300,000	300,000
Other	1,453,066	1,844,006
	33,208,026	37,435,162
EXPENSES BY PROGRAM AND SIGNIFICANT CATEGORY		
Administration*	3,987,598	5,180,093
Chief and Council	991,824	1,125,060
Community and Social Services	5,086,639	5,921,909
Education, Employment and Training	4,903,404	5,754,209
Economic Development	6,775,124	7,115,498
Health	2,680,321	4,605,378
Housing and Maintenance	3,026,679	1,742,324
Lands and Natural Resources	493,871	496,072
Public Works, Parks, Recreation & Infrastructure	3,404,651	3,491,175
Interest Distribution	1,034,250	1,561,625
	32,384,361	36,993,343
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	**823,665**	**441,819**

* - includes insurance and legal fees

Own Source Revenue for 2024-25

The budgets for 2024-25 included the following Band Funds/Own Source Revenue:

- Cottage Lease Revenue - $5,112,210
- Service Fees - $1,561,691
- OFNLP/Rama - $1,125,000
- Honi/Bruce to Milton - $990,000
- Dufferin Wind Farm - $848,132 (including $781,956 deferred from previous years)
- Medical Isotopes - $500,000
- NWMO – Community Well-Being - $300,000

Own Source Revenue Allocation

- Administration*- $2,084,874
- Chief and Council - $815,985
- Community and Social Services - $930,514
- Education, Employment and Training - $352,513
- Economic Development - $216,166
- Health - $160,000
- Housing and Maintenance - $710,606
- Public Works, Parks, Recreation & Infrastructure - $2,365,711
- Interest Distribution - $1,561,625

TOTAL ALLOCATED: $9,197,994

* - includes insurance and legal fees

OFNLP/Rama

Historically Rama has generated approximately $1 million per year. Spending is broken down into five categories: community development, health, education, economic development, and cultural development.

- For 2024-25, funding was expected to be $1,125,000.
- Programs receiving Rama funds included:
- Pow Wow
- Post Secondary Education
- Library
- Weeg renovations
- Emergency Health Fund
- Recreation Support Fund
- Food Bank

Honi/Bruce to Milton Corridor

Funding varies each year, due to demand/consumption and hydro rates.
10% of the revenue is set aside for future call backs and invested in short-term GICs, and the remaining funds were invested in longer-term GICs.
As of March 31, 2025, a total of $10,016,701.78 had been received by SFN as a result of the investment in the Bruce to Milton Corridor.
Between 2016-17 and 2024-25, $2,671,325 of those funds had been used for interest distribution payments.
For 2024-25, the budgeted revenue was $990,000 including interest earned on the GICs, with $403,000 allocated to offset a portion of the interest distribution payments.

PROVINCIAL & FEDERAL FUNDING

In addition to Own Source Revenue, SFN also receives funding from the provincial and federal governments for a variety of programs

Most of the funds received from the federal government are part of the "New Fiscal Relationship Grant", which has the most flexibility (i.e., can be reallocated and used in a manner consistent with SFN's strategic plan, and unspent funds may be carried forward and retained after expiry of the agreement)

PROVINCIAL & FEDERAL FUNDING

The following programs received provincial funding:

- Day Cares
- Home & Community Care
- Women's Shelter
- ACYPS
- Family Well-Being
- Fisheries
- Literacy Program
- Addictions Outreach
- Healthy Babies/Healthy Children
- Mental Health
- Traditional Healing
- HIV/AID Awareness
- Elders' Fitness

The following programs received federal funding:

- Education
- FN Child & Family Services
- Housing
- Land Management
- Home & Community Care
- Brighter Futures
- NNADAP
- Day Cares
- Building Health Communities
- Community Health Reps
- Health Reception
- Diabetes
- Maternal Child Health
- FASD
- Pre-Natal Nutrition Program
- HIV/AIDS Awareness

Gas Bar

For 2024-25, we expected the Gas Bar would operate with a deficit. The budgeted revenue was $6,287,000 but expenses were budgeted to be $6,484,210 resulting in an anticipated deficit of $197,210.

Legal Fee's – Land Claims

In 2024-25, legal fees were expected to total $2,200,000, including fees specific to land claims:

- Treaty 72 Land Claim - $750,000
- Aboriginal Title - $750,000
- Eastern Boundary - $250,000

These costs have been on-going for many years and are expected to continue until the land claims are settled. The expenses vary yearly depending upon the status of the legal proceedings.

Loans

In 2024-25, SFN had 3 outstanding loans: 2 with Tecumseh and 1 with CIBC.

The Tecumseh mortgages are for the Red Road Café and were paid in full during the 2024-25 fiscal year.

The CIBC loan was entered into to help offset cash flow issues resulting from land claim legal fees, and construction of the governance building and the ball diamonds. The balance at March 31, 2025 was $5,615,304.

OTTAWA TRUST & GIC'S

Ottawa Trust

As of March 31, 2024, the following funds were held in trust by the federal government:

- $311,692.53 – Band Capital
- $10,350,993.78 – Band Revenue

Interest earned during the 2023-24 fiscal year totaled $336,398.41

The last time funds were withdrawn from the trust was in 2015-16 ($999,000)

GIC's

As of March 31, 2025, the following amounts were invested in GICs:

- Honi - $7,317,702.62
- NWMO - $674,855.77
- OPG - $2,795,849.36
- Bursary Fund - $135,053.06
- Police Building - $15,981.95
- Revenue - $158,095.16

Q & A