

**·ᐃᑦᕈᐅᐃᐱᐳᐴᓯ ᐃᐱᐱᐳᐴᓯ ᕐᐃᐱᐱᐳᐴᓯ** (ᐃᐱᐱᐳᐴᓯ)

**Grand Council of the Crees** (Eeyou Istchee)

**Grand Conseil des Cris** (Eeyou Istchee)

**ᐱᕈᑦ ᓂᓄᓪᓴᓂ**  
**Cree Nation Government**  
**Gouvernement de la Nation Crie**

# CREE SOLIDARITY ALLIANCE

## ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS POVERTY AND EXCLUSION IN EYYOU ISTCHEE

# 2019-2023



***Empowering all people that live in  
Eeyou Istchee***



***So they may fully participate in  
their culture, their nation and Cree  
society***

**2019-2023**

## A decorative graphic element located at the bottom left of the page. It features a stylized blue flower with five petals and a yellow center, surrounded by brown leaves and a winding vine.

# 2019 KWEY-9Δ"

## DEAR SIRS AND MADAMS,

It is my pleasure, as Director, to present this 5-year Action Plan for Cree Solidarity Alliance. The Social and Cultural Department of Cree Nation Government is continuing to add programming and services for the people we serve, and we are proud to incorporate this new programming element to address poverty and exclusion in Eeyou Istchee.

The Cree Nation Government has undergone some significant changes over the past four years. With the new Governance structure now ratified, many of the departments of Cree Nation Government are undergoing internal reviews to better plan the services and programming administered through respective funding agreements and internal budgets.

The Social and Cultural Department has been very busy with significant changes in our structure. From mainly a Language and Cultural orientation to a department that now includes mandates for Social programming, such as Youth, Cree Women, Elders, Sports

***Poverty and exclusion remain relevant conversations in Eeyou Istchee, often being experienced by elders, those living on the land, women and our young population. Our vision is to make a positive difference in the lives of our people that is inclusive of all members of Cree society***

as well as the creation of the Cree Language Commission.

For the Social and Cultural Department, we felt that we needed to work together as an administration and ensure we have a plan for today, as well as a plan for the future. We have set as a goal for 2019-2020 to create a results-orientated, objective based department that represents standards of excellence and success.

We are pleased to present this 5-year Action Plan for Cree Solidarity Alliance 2019- 2024. Our Plan will be our road map to administration and service delivery of the agreement and it will serve help to guide our administrative team to improve our interaction and communication with Solidarity Alliance partners. Ultimately we want to increase our ability to attain action plan goals and in doing so help our partners and members in the Cree Nation achieve theirs. We have a unique opportunity through the Cree Solidarity Agreement to work with a wide range of partners and stakeholder to leverage outcomes. Our vision through this program is to make a positive difference in the lives of people in our region that struggle with insufficient income levels and are not able to participate fully in the society of Eeyou Istchee.

**Meegwetch,**

**Rodney Mark, Director of the Social and Cultural Department**



# A NEW PLAN FOR POVERTY AND EXCLUSION FOR 2019-2024

## THIS ACTION PLAN OUTLINES THE CONTEXT, RATIONAL AND GOALS FOR ADDRESSING POVERTY AND EXCLUSION IN EYYOU ISTCHEE

This plan is being provided to the Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale (MTESS) as part of a continued effort to address poverty and exclusion in Eeyou Istchee. The Cree Solidarity Alliance holds the following guiding principles:

1. The guidelines are based on a personal care approach that recognizes Cree people as a valuable resource and values the participation of Cree communities and their members.
2. The guidelines are based on respect for the Eeyou / Eenou culture, recognizing that the Eeyou / Eenou elders are the most precious sources of wisdom, knowledge, and experience. The promotion of the right to self-determination also reflects the respect that marks the work of the Alliance. The Eeyou / Eenou nation has the inherent right to define its own future.
3. The approach chosen by the Cree Alliance for Solidarity is based on a review of the existing situation, as well as consultation with people, organizations, and entities.

Our aim over the next 5 years is to develop and implement a plan that tackles poverty and exclusion in our communities. Tackling poverty and exclusion requires an approach that continues to bring together our regional partners and stakeholders while making tangible impacts in the community. Furthermore, while the creation of core programs & services is at the heart of this plan, it is grounded on the assumption that data is key to informed decision making moving forward. Our goal to that effect is to work with all our partners in the Solidarity Alliance to understand the impacts of poverty & exclusion, key areas of need in our communities while also creating a realistic portrait of vulnerable groups. In doing so, we hope to build up our people so they can participate fully in their communities, their Nation and their traditional way of life.

### Get in Touch with us:

**Rodney Mark**  
Director of the Social and Cultural Department

32 Amisk Street, Mississauga,  
ON, L4W 1C0

Email: [rmark@cngov.ca](mailto:rmark@cngov.ca)

Phone: 418-923-3002

## 01

# INTRODUCTION

# ABOUT THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEPARTMENT

## OUR MISSION

To provide the people of Eeyou Istchee life enhancement using traditional knowledge and the strength of our traditional lifestyle. To use our proud heritage and traditional beliefs in working with the people of our region to preserve and promote our Language, Culture and Traditional way of life.

## OUR VISION

To use Cree traditional beliefs and values to improve the quality of life and promote a transfer of knowledge for the people of Eeyou Istchee. We aim to provide meaningful support for Social and Cultural programs, through thoughtful, collaborative consultations and partnerships.



## 1 SOCIAL SECTOR

## 2 CULTURAL SECTOR

## 3 TECHNICAL ADVISORY SECTOR

# OUR STRUCTURE

The Social and Cultural Department of Cree Nation Government is responsible for the funding and administration of social and cultural programs and consultations on behalf of Cree Nation Government.

The Social and Cultural Department plays a key role in working with Cree communities and stakeholders throughout Eeyou Istchee by providing important platforms to enhance Social and Cultural outcomes for the region.

The Department has three sectors of activity:

### **Social Sector - responsible for agreements, program funding and administration for;**

- Youth aged 13 to 35 under the guidance of the Cree Nation Youth Council
- Elders aged 60+ under the supervisions of Elders Analysis and Recommendation Committee
- Poverty and Exclusion Agreement

### **Cultural Sector - responsible for agreements, oversight, and administration for:**

1. Cree Language and
2. Toponymy
3. Archaeology Unit
4. Cultural Activities

The Cultural Sector operates within the Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute (ACCI). Aside from their main mandates, the units of the Language and Cultural sector also work with ACCI to integrate their work and activates with those of ACCI.

### **Technical and Advisory Sector -**

This sector represents a link between the Cree Nation Government and the various entities included within the sector. The Director of the Social Cultural Department is responsible for assisting in an advisory capacity on behalf of Cree Nation Government. The following are the entities of this sector:

- Cree Outfitting and Tourism Association
- The Income Security Program
- Cree Native Arts and Crafts Association CNACA
- Eeyou Istchee Sports and Recreation Association
- Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute (ACCI)

# ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Social and Cultural Department works with the stakeholders and partners to provide the input of Cree Nation Government as well as in securing financing both internally at Cree Nation Government as well as externally with other funding agencies including Federal and Provincial Governments. The Social and Cultural Department also plays a significant role in helping to provide opportunities and platforms for discussions on improving Social and Cultural outcomes.



## Cree Nation Youth Council's Role

Based in all 9 Cree communities, the Cree Nation Youth Council represents the youth of their respective communities. This includes the development of services, programs, and partnerships to ensure youth representation and positive youth development.

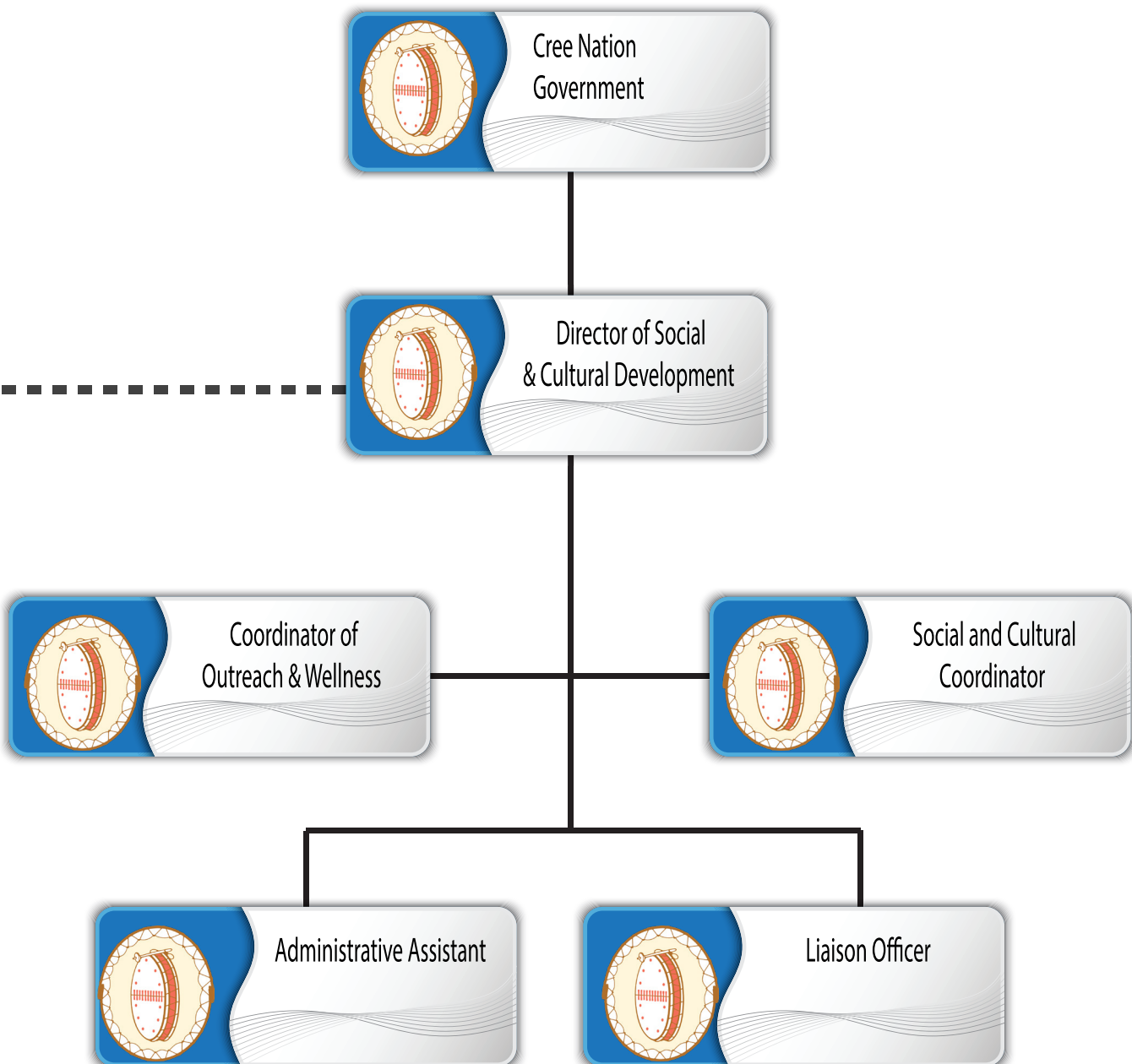
Upon implementation of the Cree Solidarity Funds, they will be engaged to inform, consult and participate in core youth action items.



## 8 APPROVED POSITIONS

## 5 CNG POSITIONS

### 3 YOUTH SECTOR POSITIONS



## 02

# CREE SOLIDARITY ALLIANCE



## HISTORY OF THE ALLIANCE, DEVELOPMENT OF THE FIRST CREE SOLIDARITY ALLIANCE FUNDS

**THE PROCESS OF CREATING THE CREE ALLIANCE FOR SOLIDARITY WAS FIRST DISCUSSED BY GRAND CHIEF MATTHEW COON COME AND THE MINISTER OF EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL SOLIDARITY IN THE FALL OF 2009.**

The Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale (MTESS) has earmarked \$ 1.7 million to enable the Cree Regional Authority to implement a community strategy to fight poverty in Cree communities; this amount was used between April 1, 2010, and March 31, 2015.

In November 2012, the Grand Council of the Cree appointed Deputy Grand Chief Ashley Iserhoff as Development Supervisor of the Cree Alliance for Solidarity.

The Vice Grand Chief invited the President of the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay and the President of the Cree School Board to join him in planning and managing the Cree Alliance for Solidarity.

Information exchanges, a one-day meeting between the representatives of the three Cree entities and consultations with other Eeyou Istchee stakeholders, including the Cree Nation Youth Council, the Cree Elders Regional Council and the Cree Women's Association of Eeyou Istchee led to the development of this Action Plan for Cree Solidarity of Eeyou Istchee, 2013-2015.

## THE GOALS OF THE ACTION PLAN WERE

### 1

#### Cooperation and coordination among organization and entities

1. meaning that all projects sponsored must:  
Form new, or strengthen existing, partnerships
2. Complement, rather than overlap or duplicate, existing projects

### 2

#### Economic Development

projects should honor mandates of other entities concerned with economic development, job training, employment measures, and education; these areas are recognized as the foundation used to counter poverty.

### 3

#### Community Based Initiatives

Respecting education, family support services, food security, poverty and health, and overall empowerment and independence for all Crees. Priority to be given to the needs of Elders, Youth , and women.

**In July of 2013, the 3-year Agreement of the Management of the Funds Quebecois d'initiatives sociales within the framework of Solidarity Alliances was signed, and by September, the Cree Solidarity Alliance committee began reviewing projects submitted by eligible organizations.**

**At the close of the agreement, 16 projects, representing all Cree communities of Eeyou Istchee, had been approved that coincided with the goals and objectives of the Cree Solidarity Alliance.**

In the following table, the projects are broken down to emphasize the priority needs highlighted previously - Women, Youth, and Elders. It is these populations that are considered the most at risk with concern to inequality, loss of opportunities, discrimination, making them vulnerable for poverty and exclusion:

## Women



### List of Projects

1. Community Social Pediatrics
2. Waskaganish Apistiawaash College
3. Fly Families in Community
4. Aasuumiih
5. Eeyou Healing Retreat
6. Healthy Homes, Brighter Futures
7. Chiiwaaschaouu Nishiyuu

## Youth



### List of Projects

1. Washaw Sibi Community Healing Initiative
2. Healthy Homes, Brighter Futures
3. Fly Families in Communities
4. Turtle Concepts
5. DJ & Dance Program
6. Waswanipi Lunch Program
7. Elephant Thoughts

## Elders



### List of Projects

1. Waskaganish Apistiawaash College
2. Waswanipi Elder's Initiative



# DEMOGRAPHICS AND CONTEXT

## CONSIDERING FOUR CORE DETERMINANTS OF POVERTY, EXCLUSION AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING

There are four areas in which the Cree Solidarity Alliance strives to address to uphold their vision for all Crees to have equal means and opportunities for employment, independence, and well-being in Eeyou Istchee;

These pillars are **Education, Nutrition & Health, Poverty & Exclusion, and Data.**

These pillars are extremely intertwined - you cannot consult on one area without touching on another. This overlap demonstrates the deep root of these issues for the Crees in Eeyou Istchee, and the importance and urgency of addressing them.

### EDUCATION



There is a well-established link between the benefits of education and overall quality of life. Higher education gives way to better opportunities for steady employment and career choices, which subsequently leads to higher income levels. From this, we can reasonably assume that those with higher education are more likely to have sustainable housing and food security, and therefore better quality of well-being and health.

In a recent consultation with the Cree Nation Youth Council, education was deemed the number one issue facing youth. The following statistics highlight this current issue:

#### DECLINING GRADUATION RATES



**2011-2012: 10.9 %**

**2012-2013: 9.9 %**



## A RISE IN ABSENTEEISM RATES IN EEYOU ISTCHEE

**20.8 %**

2012-2013

**22.3 %**

2013-2014

**24.6 %**

2014-2015

## ENROLMENT TO GRADUATE COMPARISON IN UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS

<b>2010-2011:</b>	<b>130 ENROLLED</b>	<b>13 GRADUATED</b>
<b>2011-2012:</b>	<b>130 ENROLLED</b>	<b>17 GRADUATED</b>
<b>2012-2013:</b>	<b>134 ENROLLED</b>	<b>21 GRADUATED</b>
<b>2013-2014:</b>	<b>112 ENROLLED</b>	<b>13 GRADUATED</b>
<b>2014-2015:</b>	<b>115 ENROLLED</b>	<b>11 GRADUATED</b>
<b>2015-2016:</b>	<b>120 ENROLLED</b>	<b>9 GRADUATED</b>

### Note: Dropout Rate and Teenage Pregnancy



Another point to consider is that teenage mothers often give up their education as a result of being the primary caregiver for an infant. Missing out on education has long-term effects on a woman's opportunities later in life, such as career outcomes, living conditions, and overall well-being.





Eeyou Istchee is currently experiencing a housing shortage of over 5000 units across 10 communities that will be required in the next 15 years. This has resulted in an overcrowding rate nearly 5 times greater than the rest of Quebec.

## LOW-INCOME AND LACK OF AVAILABLE HOUSING

# 8.2%

Low Income Families  
in Quebec

### INCOME IN CREE COMMUNITIES

The average employment income of the Crees is statistically lower than the average in Quebec, while the cost of living in northern, isolated communities remains much higher.

# 22.6%

Low income Families  
In Eeyou Istchee

A period of prolonged unemployment can lead to an increase in the probability of experiencing poverty and a higher risk of social exclusion. Prolonged unemployment is viewed as “unacceptable” by society, and makes reintegration back into the job market more difficult.

As well, evidence in research points to a correlation between low-income levels and higher levels of health ailments, such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and cancer.

### OVERCROWDING AND HOUSING SHORTAGES IN A GROWING POPULATION

Overcrowded housing remains an alarming issue in Eeyou Istchee, as well as the deterioration of homes due to high levels of humidity - 30.5% of Eeyou Istchee homes require major repairs, which is four times more than the province of Quebec.

Poor living conditions may contribute to the spread of disease and infection, such as pneumonia; a lack of food and sanitation also have detrimental impacts on families - both of these issues are exacerbated by overcrowding.

The population of Eeyou Istchee continues to grow at an alarming rate, where just over 300 babies are born each year. To make matters more concerning, many of these babies are born into already crowded, multi-family households, with teenage mothers (20%), and/or with mothers obtaining low levels of education (50%). The percentage of low-income Cree families who are a single parent household is an alarming 42.1%.

### ISOLATION AND THE NEED FOR GREATER DATA

Cree communities have a higher prevalence of long-term illness, disability and a growing base of elderly people. However, we lack a requisite understanding of how these groups access employment (when possible), social participation and the degree of isolation they experience in their day-to-date lives. This lack of core data on a determinant of wellbeing needs to be addressed in a comprehensive way in our communities.

This also includes vulnerable demographics such as youth, single mothers and low-income families that lack the means to participate in Cree life in a way that is conducive to overall wellbeing.



# HEALTH AND NUTRITION

## KEY FACTORS IN SOCIAL WELLNESS IN EYYOU ISTCHEE



Health is a key element in spiraling social exclusion. Sickness, whether physical or mental, may be either a cause or a consequence of social exclusion because persons with health problems may face marginalization in some spheres of social life (work, family, friends).

Marginalized groups and vulnerable individuals are often worst affected, deprived of the information, money or access to health services that would help them prevent and treat disease. The Crees are overweight by 84% (64.4% obese), with the rate of diabetes being three times higher than the general population of Quebec.

The cultural and social barriers faced by marginalized groups, including indigenous communities, can mean they use health services less, leading to serious consequences for their physical well-being.



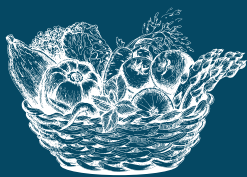
CBHSSJB (2017)  
Access to a Nutritious  
Food Basket in Eeyou  
Istchee (2016 Update).  
Project report.

THE COST  
OF FOOD  
PER DAY PER  
PERSON **\$11**

COST PER  
WEEK FOR A  
FAMILY OF 4 **\$321**

**64.4%**  
OBESITY RATE

**84%**  
OVERWEIGHT



## NUTRITION AND ACCESS TO HEALTHY FOOD

Food insecurity was identified as a factor that can characterize the social exclusion of an individual or a family. The proposed indicator, that is, fear of lacking food because of financial reasons, would appear to be an obvious characteristic of the reality of social exclusion associated with poverty. 21% of Cree Mothers worried about having enough money to buy their children food to eat.

## DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE

Poor living conditions and vulnerability may lead to a person making harsh choices, such as turning to alcohol or drugs for relief. Drugs and alcohol spending can be disastrous, removing funds from essential things such as education, healthy food, healthcare, etc.

Levels of high alcohol consumption are much higher in Eeyou Istchee than the province of Quebec as a whole.

People in deprived, marginalized, and vulnerable communities have weaker support networks, i.e. fewer external resources or persons to motivate them to address alcohol problems. This lack of resources becomes a vicious cycle, as those who find themselves in the throws of alcoholism are often ostracized or alienated even more from social support (friends, family, colleagues, etc.). These vulnerabilities are often passed on through the generations and, in this way, we can clearly see how alcohol abuse and the harmful effects can contribute to lasting poverty.

# DATA AND INFORMATION

## A NEED FOR PARTNERSHIP TO BETTER UNDERSTAND POVERTY, EXCLUSION AND KEY AREAS OF NEED



There continue to be significant gaps in the data available for the people of Eeyou Istchee. In order to progress with the vision of this department and this fund, we will need to take action to improve our knowledge of how the above-mentioned areas correlate with one another. With this understanding of predictive factors, Eeyou Istchee will have a greater chance of developing programs and services that address poverty and exclusion. Extensive insight is needed using statistical research and data collection in the following areas:



**LEVELS OF  
INDEBTEDNESS  
IN EYYOU  
ISTCHEE**



**UNEMPLOYMENT  
AND RATES  
OF SOCIAL  
ASSISTANCE**



**ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT  
AND LEVELS OF  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP**



**MENTAL AND  
PHYSICAL  
HEALTH,  
ILLNESS RATES**



**FOOD AND  
MATERIAL  
INSECURITY  
RATES**



**NEGLECT, ABUSE AND  
RATES OF FAMILY  
VIOLENCE IN EYYOU  
ISTCHEE**



# OBJECTIVES

## WORKING TOGETHER TO COMBAT POVERTY AND EXCLUSION BY REDUCING ITS EFFECTS ON OUR PEOPLE

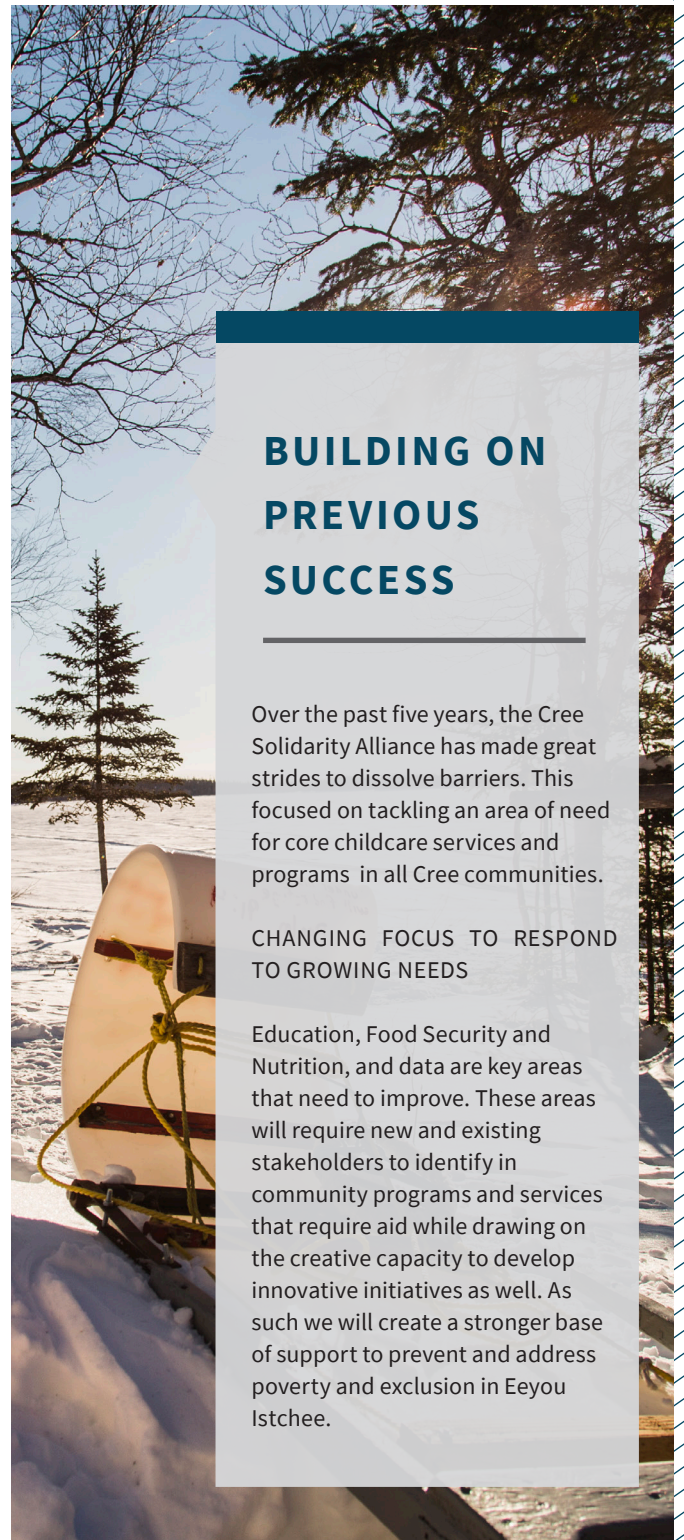
The intention of the Cree Solidarity Alliance is first and foremost to protect the dignity of our people, to empower them in the face of obstacles concerning poverty and exclusion. The effects of poverty and exclusion impact the social, cultural and economic development of the entire Nation, strengthening barriers and fractures where there must be bridges and unity.

People who want to change their lives must recognize that they have a personal responsibility in this regard, but there also must be an acknowledgement that many of these low-income individuals are victims of negative preconceptions, making it even more difficult for those who need help to get it. Resources and access to information should be prominent in our communities to help those in need, as well as education to the general public on these issues.

Perseverance should be strongly encouraged in our schools, with the goal of steady employment, and future career choices in clear sight for our youth. Employment opportunities, on-the-job training and job creation are issues that need to be examined in more depth - especially for those with disabilities and/or those have been discriminated against.

Preventative measures to counter poverty and exclusion need implementation at the local and regional levels. Issues such as food security and lack of housing decrease the quality of life for our people - the impacts on mental health are alarming, leading to substance and alcohol abuse, more barriers to employment, discrimination, and so forth.

The Cree Solidarity Alliance creates the opportunity for entities to work together not only to combat poverty and exclusion by reducing its effects already impacting our people but also, through research and education, to take the appropriate measures to prevent its causes, breaking the cycle for future generations.



### BUILDING ON PREVIOUS SUCCESS

Over the past five years, the Cree Solidarity Alliance has made great strides to dissolve barriers. This focused on tackling an area of need for core childcare services and programs in all Cree communities.

#### CHANGING FOCUS TO RESPOND TO GROWING NEEDS

Education, Food Security and Nutrition, and data are key areas that need to improve. These areas will require new and existing stakeholders to identify in community programs and services that require aid while drawing on the creative capacity to develop innovative initiatives as well. As such we will create a stronger base of support to prevent and address poverty and exclusion in Eeyou Istchee.

## 03

# PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK 2019-2023

## AN ALLIANCE THAT BRINGS TOGETHER OUR STRENGTHS TO BETTER ADDRESS AREAS OF NEEDS

**Poverty and Exclusion are multifaceted influences that span broad areas of health, education, employment, and wellness. Addressing poverty and exclusion will require a framework that brings together entities, institutions, government services, and our citizens. This framework will need to mobilize expertise and resources to create effective action. As such, the Cree Solidarity Alliance is built with this reality in mind by aiming to:**

## 1

Establish representation through the Cree Solidarity Alliance Funding Committee that brings members of the Cree Board of Health and Social Services, Cree School Board, Cree Communities, as well as Cree Nation Government. Most importantly, an individual currently impacted by poverty & exclusion is provided membership as a representative of the demographic.

## 2

The Social and Cultural Department offers administrative expertise to manage, monitor and report on the funding. The Department is unique in its position to engage youth and elders as stakeholders, as their mandate provides funding and representation on two councils in Eeyou Istchee: the Cree Nation Youth Council and the Elders Analysis and Recommendation Committee. Youth and Elders are two identified vulnerable groups in Eeyou Istchee, and both groups have done substantial work to consult with their members and identify the issues their respective members face.

## 3

A network of resources exists in Eeyou Istchee, from the Cree Women to the Cree Trappers Associations. These entities represent special interest groups are active with their membership and can play a vital part in the Cree Solidarity Alliance. Local and Regional businesses are also involved in special community-based support mechanisms, such as food security programs and drivers of fundraising for social causes. The Cree Solidarity Alliance will network, as well as consult with, these special interest groups to create a more integrated approach. In turn, we will more effectively impact our communities in a way that is inclusive of as many members of Cree society as possible.





# AREAS OF NEED

## PARTNERSHIP THAT EMPOWERS PEOPLE THROUGH EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

### 1

Provide employment that is inclusive of all members of our society. Make a commitment to dissolve barriers by creating opportunities with our stakeholders.

### 2

Empowerment, through citizenship, civic initiatives, and work experience for people of all ages.

### 3

There is a need to address persons living with disabilities and their role in the workplace, community initiatives, and discussions of health and wellness.

### 4

Create support networks and programs that tackle isolation of vulnerable groups in our communities. These include but are not limited to people with long-term disabilities and illness, and elders.

## MOBILIZING LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

### COMMUNITIES

mobilizing our members to discuss, understand, and support people that are living in poverty or experiencing exclusion.

### LOCAL ENTITIES:

building on programs and initiatives within local bands to support members living in poverty and exclusion. In addition, each local Social and Cultural department will play an important role in implementing a regional program developed through the Solidarity Alliance.

## REGIONAL STAKEHOLDERS



Connecting stakeholders to create work experience programs, training opportunities and community skills and employment needs assessments. In addition, working with the Cree Health Board to gain a clearer picture of disability and integration will be a priority.

## APATISIWIN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT



Connects people living in Eeyou Istchee with employment and training opportunities. The Alliance will network and exchange information with Apatisiwin Skills Development to effectively facilitate labour market integration and workforce development.

## MOBILIZING REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

## AREAS OF NEED

## WORKING WITH PARTNERS TO FOSTER HEALTHY LIVING, FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

## NUTRITION AS A CORE CHALLENGE

Eeyou Istchee in a 2017 report by the Cree Health Board showed the highest cost to meet the requirements of the National Food Basket in all of Quebec.

This cost of over \$330 per week for a family of four would absorb nearly 70% of the living wage of a low-income family. This disparity needs a partnered approach to be solved.



Community gardens build a base of agricultural knowledge and skills while providing alternative means of food distribution for our people.



Food security is a barrier to social wellness and health in our communities, especially in coastal communities of Eeyou Istchee.



Nutritional education and resources that reaches members of communities in poverty, with health issues, or experiencing exclusion from access to healthy food.



Making sure that young people from kindergarten to Secondary 5 have access to nutrition and healthy snacks in school.



In 2017, Cree Nation Government along with the Cree Board of Health and Social Services James Bay created a call to action to address food security and nutrition in the north. Addressing these areas of need is a core way the Social and Cultural Department can support that call.

## MOBILIZING PARTNERSHIPS TO ADDRESS HEALTH AND NUTRITION IN EYYOU ISTCHEE

---

### Cree Communities

#### Approach

---

Working with Community Development, Social and Cultural Departments to implement a Garden Program. This program will involve coordination, work creation for construction and maintenance, and integration of members from communities.

### Health and Education Partners

#### Approach

---

Work with resources in health and nutrition to create information campaigns in schools and the community about healthy eating habits. These campaigns will also aim to develop active living initiatives. The local schools will also play a vital role in partnering snack, lunch, and nutrition programs to youth attending school.

### Local Businesses

#### Approach

---

Work with local food retailers and businesses to build on existing programs that provide food to vulnerable members of Cree society. This work can be done through seasonal, and holiday initiatives drawing on support from community members.

### Cree Women of Eeyou Istchee

#### Approach

---

Work with CWEIA to establish social enterprise initiatives that support single mothers, low-income families, and elders in our communities. These could include soup kitchens, thrift stores, donation repositories, etc.

### Department of Commerce and Industry

#### Approach

---

Through Plan Nord funding the Department of Commerce and Industry will engage with communities to build local greenhouses.

# AREAS OF NEED

## THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN POVERTY PREVENTION AND EMPOWERMENT OF OUR PEOPLE

### EDUCATION IN EYYOU ISTCHEE

The average educational achievement in Eeyou Istchee is Secondary 3. This lack of academic readiness for training and employment creates long term barriers to labour market participation and contributes significantly to unemployment and poverty in Eeyou Istchee. Working with the Cree School Board, and communities to address root causes is a must.



**Stay-In-School programs that support existing initiatives while creating new resources to tackle absenteeism and drop-out rates.**



**Supporting students to achieve academic success through partnerships that support study spaces, tutoring resources, and building a culture of lifelong learning.**



**Provide Adult Education and Upgrading that supports under-skilled, under-employed, and unemployed people to gain academic prerequisites.**



**Promoting role models, career paths, and exposure to community opportunities at early ages that foster learning as a means to achieve personal goals.**

## MOBILIZING PARTNERSHIPS

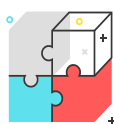
- 1. Communities:** Parents and community members play an essential role in establishing education as a core part of any strategy to prevent poverty and exclusion. They will be the drivers of stay-in-school and absenteeism initiatives while being supported by the key stakeholders within the Alliance.
- 2. Cree School Board:** The school board will be the core provider of educational services for all ages. Partnering with CSB and Adult Education will provide mechanisms that support for youth and adults looking to build their capacity. This will also include in school programs that promote arts, culture and academic support for students.
- 3. Local Administration:** Support the CSB and the Alliance in their goal to recognize academic achievement, while supporting parents to address absenteeism, lateness and educational resources.
- 4. Cree Nation Youth Councils:** Providing local study spaces, access to computers and networking with CSB to connect youth with tutors. Our Youth Councils can provide an area with internet access for those that do not have access at home that facilitates education.

# AREAS OF NEED

## BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS THAT SHARE INFORMATION/DATA THAT AID DECISION MAKING

### Income Levels and Distribution

**Perform Income Studies, which will lead to a better understanding of income distribution between different demographic cohorts of Cree society such as single-parent families, low-income and high-income households, and educational levels of achievement, etc.**



**Build data and research partnerships that brings together existing information as well as new data resources for all stakeholders to contribute to and utilize effective decision making.**



**Conduct Income studies, which will provide a better understanding of income distribution between different demographic cohorts of Cree society.**



**Creating an inventory of health and social wellness indicators in partnership with the Cree Board of Health and Social Services James Bay.**



**Targeted consultation with vulnerable members of society is necessary to better understand poverty and exclusion (persons with disabilities, single mothers, members on income security, etc.**

## MOBILIZING PARTNERSHIPS

- 1. Cree Nation Government: Work with all departments of Cree Nation Government to identify existing data sources, assets, and frameworks that can help to understand housing, employment, and income in Eeyou Istchee. Key partners include Apatisiwin Skills Development, Commerce and Industry, and Capital Works and Services.**
- 2. Working with partners including Justice and Correctional Services, and Cree Board of Health and Social Services to better understand social wellness and indicators of poverty and exclusion in Eeyou Istchee.**
- 3. Working with Traditional Stakeholders including the Cree Trappers Association, Niskamoon, and Social and Cultural Departments to understand Income Security, and quality of life of traditional members of Cree society.**
- 4. Working with employers, Cree communities, ASD and the Cree Health Board. This partnership will aim at collecting data on disability, long-term illness and their effect on poverty, isolation, and quality of life of our members.**



## 04

# ADMINISTRATION OF FUNDING

## OVERVIEW OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS



Over the next five years, the Cree Solidarity Alliance Fund will move its administrative processes to a transparent and reliable approach to service delivery and program funding. The Five Year Cree Solidarity Action Plan will include administrative action items that will bring us closer to our goal of reducing poverty in Eeyou Istchee so that all Crees have the resources, the means, the choices and the powers necessary to maintain their economic independence and participate fully in the development of their nation. A primary focus will be the implementation of a file database management system created specifically for Cree Solidarity Alliance Fund that will store and transform data, fostering a path from insight to action. Ultimately the purpose of maintaining a strong administrative process is about securing effective planning, organization, management, and control. This process is important because it helps to simplify and achieve the objectives of this Fund.

### GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE:

In its initial meeting, the Cree Alliance for Solidarity Committee coined a vision for its work: "To alleviate poverty in Eeyou Istchee, in order to allow all Crees to have the resources, means, choices, and powers necessary to maintain their economic independence, and to be able to participate fully in the development of their Nation." Our committees moving forward retain a number of important goals and priorities:

## COOPERATION AMONGST ENTITIES



**Strive to create a 'systems thinking' approach for the work that is to be carried out.**



**Create synergy between existing programs and new initiatives that will be established through this work.**



**Contribute to the improvement of services, by ensuring transparency in communications**





# PRIORITY AREAS OF SOLIDARITY FUNDING COMMITTEES

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

To actively support economic development, job training, employment measures, and education, to show that they form the basis of the combat against poverty and exclusion, and should be recognized as such.

To encourage the private sector to keep participating in the implementation of job training and economic development initiatives, and in the motivation of students to further their education.

To foster cooperation between services and programs, and ensure a continuous flow of information between entities.

To encourage the private sector to keep participating in the implementation of job training and economic development initiatives, and in the motivation of students to further their education.

To encourage social entrepreneurship projects at the local and regional levels, by helping to link them with existing funding and business development programs.

To support innovative projects aimed at improving school success and retention. This support also includes reintegration of adult learners looking to improve their skills.

## COMMUNITY BASED INITIATIVES

Food and material insecurity (including educational aspects, collective kitchens, cooking classes)

Family support services (including parenting skills workshops, home economics)

Educational initiatives that create community involvement (Stay-in-School), Meal Programs, and Retention programs)

Advocacy and civics programs that encourage volunteering and social initiatives

Empower and Support Families living in Eeyou Istchee

Supporting local initiatives that promote the dissemination of culture and values



Ensuring clear representation from both the education and business sectors will be a priority for committee structure



Ensuring clear representation from both the education and business sectors will be a priority for committee structure





44% of income security recipient receives \$12,000 \$17,000 per year as a form of assistance for traditional pursuits and traditional living. Working with members of this program as well as local cultural departments will be important to program success.

## COMMITTEE STRUCTURES

### Follow-up Committee for Cree Solidarity Alliance Funds

#### BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE COMMITTEE

The committee will be responsible for interpretation and guidance on the Funding Agreement between MTESS and the Cree Nation Government. This committee will also ensure that:

- All reporting is submitted and reviewed by the committee on a six-month basis and that funding expenditures are in alignment with the agreement;
- Review and Appoint members that are recommended to the Analysis and Recommendation Committee;

### Analysis and Recommendation Committee:

#### BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE COMMITTEE

The committee will be responsible for the review and recommendation of program submissions for funding from all eligible applicants. This committee will ensure that all submissions:

- Meet the funding guidelines and policies of the Cree Solidarity Alliance;
- Priorities and objectives are respected within submissions;
- Follow-up on recommended and approved projects under the Cree Solidarity Alliance Funds;

#### PROPOSED COMMITTEE MEMBERS

1. Director of the Department of Social and Cultural Development of Cree Nation Government;
2. Funding Administrator of the Finance and Treasury Department of Cree Nation Government;
3. MTESS Representatives (to-be-determined by MTESS)

This committee would ensure that transparency and accountability measures are in place through representative membership and regular dissemination of information

#### PROPOSED COMMITTEE MEMBERS

1. Representative from the Business Community;
2. Representative member of the Cree population impacted by poverty and/or exclusion;
3. Representative from the Cree School Board;
4. Representative from the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay;
5. Youth Representative;
6. Elder's Representative;
7. Representative from the Department of Commerce and Industry;



## POLICIES & PROCEDURES: PROGRAM ACCOUNTABILITY AND STRUCTURE

The Cree Solidarity Alliance are currently working to implement structured policies and procedures to guide the funding process. These policies will align with the Social & Cultural Strategic Plan and general policies of the Cree Nation Government. Policies and procedures aim to establish boundaries, guidelines, and ensure best practices designed to influence and determine all major decisions and actions. These procedures will help to maintain consistency in the administrative process of the Fund, thus every applicant will have a clear understanding of operations, boundaries, and expectations.

### THIS WILL WORK IN ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING FINANCIAL POLICIES OF CREE NATION GOVERNMENT INCLUDING:

An existing funding agreement requiring reporting, financial standards & guidelines that are consistent across all funding providers in Cree Nation Government; (Annex)

All policy and procedure will adhere to the Financial By-Law of Cree Nation Government Finance and Treasury Department. (Annex);

A protocol for conflict of interest that ensures that decision makers in Cree Nation Government are making fair and impartial decisions for funding use;

## FUNDING PROCESS: DELIVERING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES TO EYYOU ISTCHEE

A funding process was developed in order to facilitate a fair yet efficient course of action. The intention is to have a thorough and financially responsible process with mechanisms in place to provide support to applicants in order to help guide them through the steps and fund requirements. The Alliance Committee has put in place a set of administrative rules that will govern the funding process, from initial proposal to completion, of all projects submitted:

1. **Submission of funding application:** applicant ensures compliance with funding guidelines
2. **Project review:** by Liaison Officer and Coordinator of Outreach and Wellness
3. **Project presentation to the Alliance Analysis and Recommendation Committee:** the committee recommends projects for approve by the appropriate Cree Nation Government authority (Coordinator, Director, Treasurer, Management Committee) depending on project amount.
4. **Selected projects are recommended:** to Cree Nation Government by the Committee
5. **Reporting:** all projects are monitored, and funding recipients are expected to provide standardized reporting on the progress of their activities (financial/activity).
6. **Evaluation of results:** A comprehensive picture must be created at the end of each project, to establish the situation before and after the project.

**THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEPARTMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO AUDIT AND EVALUATE ALL PROJECTS DURING THEIR IMPLEMENTATION AND AFTER THEIR COMPLETION.**

# ELIGIBILITY

## WHO CAN APPLY FOR CREE SOLIDARITY ALLIANCE FUNDING?

### OVERVIEW

Eligible projects under the Cree Solidarity Alliance Fund are cultural- and evidence-based (or inspired by best practices) initiatives aimed to address and prevent poverty, social exclusion, and obstacles to employment resulting in poor living conditions. Successful projects will encourage and empower Crees throughout Eeyou Istchee by giving them fair opportunities for education, employment, and independence.

### WHO CAN APPLY FOR FUNDING?



**Recognized not-for-profit corporations (local and regional);**



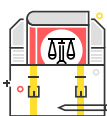
**Coalitions of not-for-profit corporations (local and regional, one of whose organizations is responsible for coordinating projects)**



**Cree Nation Band Administrations and Departments;**



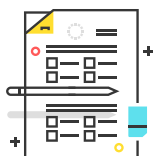
**Local and Regional Aboriginal Organizations;**



**Private sector organizations, if such organizations will not make a profit on the program;**



**Research organizations studying issues identified or complimenting issues in this action plan;**



### WHO CAN APPLY FOR FUNDING?

Priority for funding will be determined based on an applicants capacity to provide funding that leverages existing funding requests. Consideration will also be given based upon forming partnerships with Cree educational institutions, Health Entities, and Community Band Administrations. This will facilitate exchange of information and bring together existing services in a way that improves overall program effectiveness.

All applications must be aligned to the four pillars of the Cree Solidarity Action Plan and the actions contained within the Action Plan. The pillars and actions have a wide scope and were developed to target poverty and exclusion in Eeyou Istchee. While the Action plan is comprehensive, The Cree Solidarity Alliance is open to innovative ideas and project.





# ACCOUNTABILITY AND MONITORING

## WORKING WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND APPLICANTS TO ENSURE FUNDING IS MEETING OBJECTIVES AND STANDARDS

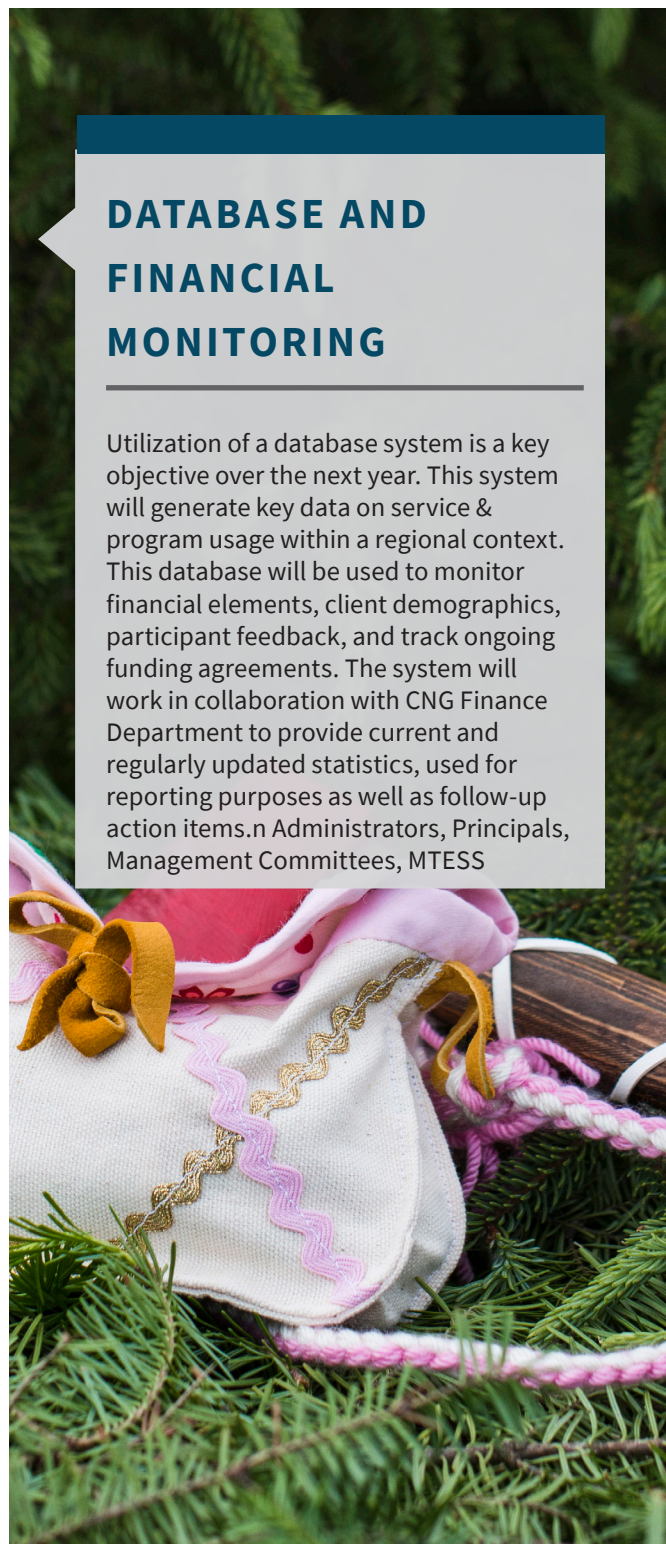
Coordination and delivery of this action plan will help stakeholders become engaged and endorse the need for change and the steps being taken to bring it about. The Social & Cultural Department promotes the Cree Solidarity Alliance funds to recognized not-for-profit corporations (local and regional), coalitions of not-for-profit corporations (local and regional, one of those organizations must be responsible for coordinating projects and administering funds), and Cree Nations. Promotion campaigns will include:

1. The Social and Cultural Department currently has a defined process for notification of Calls for Proposals, an email memorandum from the Director to key stakeholders;
2. Posters and brochures available in Cree and English;
3. Information booths and presentations conducted at local general assemblies;
4. Promotional videos featuring various successful projects; and,
5. Advertisements in The Nation magazine.
6. Other online delivery mechanisms will include updated information on the Cree Nation Government website (Social and Cultural section), as well as the Facebook page.
7. In community promotion through community tours and presentations to local band administrations;

Engagement with stakeholders will be key in communicating the purpose of the funds; these could include Community Education Administrators, Principals, Management Committees, MTESS

### DATABASE AND FINANCIAL MONITORING

Utilization of a database system is a key objective over the next year. This system will generate key data on service & program usage within a regional context. This database will be used to monitor financial elements, client demographics, participant feedback, and track ongoing funding agreements. The system will work in collaboration with CNG Finance Department to provide current and regularly updated statistics, used for reporting purposes as well as follow-up action items. Administrators, Principals, Management Committees, MTESS



## 05

# ACTION PLAN FOR THE CREE SOLIDARITY ALLIANCE

## AN ACTION PLAN FOR POVERTY AND EXCLUSION FROM 2019-2023

The purpose of the Social and Cultural Department Action Plan is to integrate into its programs, services and administration, the goals and objectives of the Cree Solidarity Alliance for the funding period of 2019-2024, as well as incorporate the principles of the MTESS Government Action Plan “Reconciling Freedom and Social Justice: A Challenge for the Future”.

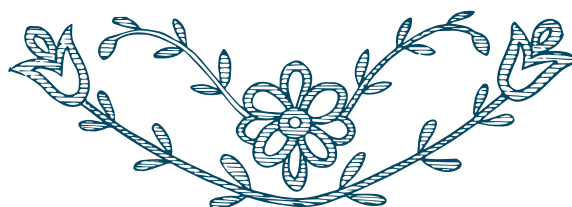
It is our goal to promote programming through our alliance that delivers on actions items in this plan. Communities and other partners will deliver programming from the actions that most identifies with their needs. By leveraging the resources of the Social and Cultural Department with Local Cree Administrations, Alliance partners and the members of the communities we hope to extend the positive results.

The Social and Cultural Department of Cree Nation Government recognizes the challenges that poverty and exclusion present to the territory and is committed to working with the Alliance to implement a new range of programs that will aim to address inequality, allow for the exercising of the rights and responsibilities of our people, and aim to address the vulnerable demographics within our population.

The actions within this plan will center around four main pillars:

1. Poverty & Exclusion
2. Education
3. Food Security and Nutrition
4. Data & Administration

The ultimate goal of our program is to improve the lives of those who live in poverty, as well as to understand the conditions that exist around the vulnerable portions of our population. Education has been identified as a key factor in preventing poverty in later life. Education and lack of prerequisites to vocational training exist as a significant contributor to poverty in our region, improvements to education will serve as the foundation on which all other preventative strategies will be built upon. Finally, we need to understand the current state of inequality in the territory better, as well as have a more accurate picture of our vulnerable populations.



# ACTION AREA 1: POVERTY AND EXCLUSION

## FOSTERING SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND GROWTH THAT SUPPORTS OUR PEOPLE



### INTRODUCTION

Poverty and Exclusion play a key determining role in overall health and are predictive of the quality of life that a person is likely to experience. Because of the vulnerability that poverty and exclusion can create, there is the concern that it creates a cyclical and self-sustaining state of suffering within certain portions of the population of Eeyou Istchee. The Social and Cultural Department of Cree Nation Government is committed to aligning our programming to prevent, improve, and build community-oriented approaches to address poverty and exclusion.

### ACTION ITEM 1

Employment and volunteer opportunities through community gardens will be prioritized. This will be managed through participating band administrations:

1. Work experience and volunteer positions
2. Development of agrarian/gardening skills
3. Education and soft skills (cooperation, civics, dedication etc.)

#### TARGETED MEMBERS OF THE POPULATION

- Underemployed
- Youth and Elders
- People with disabilities

#### OUTCOMES

- Make gardening a part of our community lifestyle
- Socially inclusive programming
- Increased capacity and self-sufficiency in our communities

### ACTION ITEM 2:

Develop a Workplace Assistance Programs for those affected by:

1. Mental and Physical Disabilities
2. Low income
3. Unemployed/ Under-Employed

Work in partnership with Cree Health Board to gain a clearer picture of disability and integration as well as Apatisiwin Skills Development.

#### TARGETED MEMBERS OF THE POPULATION

- Segments of the population living with a mental or physical disability.
- Low income individuals/families
- Low Skilled

#### OUTCOMES

- Implement a “Workplace Assistance Program” that will allow greater community participation and employment rates for those living with a disability.
- Create financial stability/independence
- Empower individuals

**ACTION ITEM 3**

Develop and implement budgeting and household finance workshops throughout Eeyou Istchee working in collaboration with local housing departments as well as Capital works and Services of Cree Nation Government

**TARGETED MEMBERS OF THE POPULATION**

- General Population
- Prospective Homeowners

**OUTCOMES**

- Improve the financial literacy of Eeyou Istchee by giving people the prerequisite skills to manage their household finances.

**ACTION ITEM 4:**

Evaluate the extent of overcrowding and housing shortages in Eeyou Istchee as an indicator of social wellness and health. This evaluation will be done in partnership with local housing administrations as well as the Department of Capital Works and Services.

**TARGETED MEMBERS OF THE POPULATION**

- General Population
- Cree Nations of Eeyou Istchee

**OUTCOMES**

- Improve living conditions for at-risk families
- Combat and prevent health hazardous living conditions

**ACTION ITEM 5:**

Support Youth: Work Experience Program for youth to assist in:

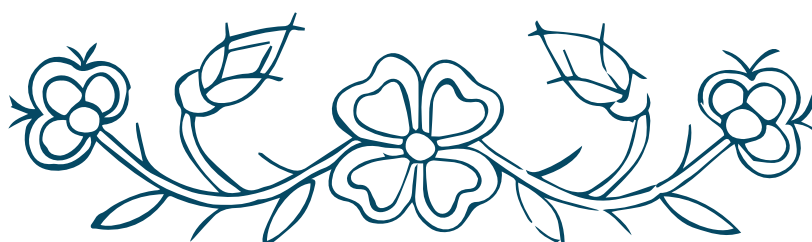
1. Evaluate and assess the needs of local youth councils when implementing youth employment initiatives (summer student, youth work experience etc.)
2. Identifying at-risk youth to ensure they are given priority for program inclusion
3. Work in partnership with ASD to provide labour market strategies workshops to youth to develop and pursue career goals in their communities.

**TARGETED MEMBERS OF THE POPULATION**

- Segments of the population living with a mental or physical disability.
- Low income individuals/families
- Low Skilled

**OUTCOMES**

- Implement a “Workplace Assistance Program” that will allow greater community participation and employment rates for those living with a disability.
- Create financial stability/independence
- Empower individuals





**ACTION ITEM 6**

Work with Social and Cultural Departments within local Band Offices to create poverty support initiatives:

1. Seasonal food drives to support elders, persons living in poverty and low-income households
2. Clothing and Second-Hand Bins to repurpose and reuse items in our communities
3. Anti-Poverty and Exclusion Campaigns through meetings, events, and dissemination of materials, etc.
4. Work collaboratively with businesses to ensure participation in initiatives.

**TARGETED MEMBERS OF THE POPULATION**

- Persons experiencing material and food insecurity in Eeyou Istchee;
- Low Income individuals and families;
- Elders;
- Single Mothers;

**OUTCOMES**

- A framework to support people living in or at risk of poverty or exclusion
- A greater community understanding of poverty and an awareness of means to help
- Inclusive civic participation in our communities

**ACTION ITEM 7:**

Work with Local Bands and the Department of Social Cultural Development to subsidize the adaptation of homes for Elders and persons with disabilities:

**TARGETED MEMBERS OF THE POPULATION**

- Low-Income Elders
- Persons with Disabilities

**OUTCOMES**

- Improve living conditions for at-risk families
- Combat and prevent health hazardous living conditions

**ACTION ITEM 8:**

Partner with the Communities and the Department of Commerce and Industry to develop sustainable Social Economy Projects to assist and serve social initiatives within our communities:

**TARGETED MEMBERS OF THE POPULATION**

- Low Income
- Persons with Disabilities
- Persons excluded from normal participation in society

**OUTCOMES**

- Create more social economy enterprises in Eeyou Istchee
- Foster entrepreneurship as an option
- Open more food banks and thrift store sites

**ACTION ITEM 9:**

Establish in partnership local Native Women's Associations to promote civic and social economy initiatives within Cree communities including:

1. Soup Kitchen / Food Drives;
2. Thrift Stores
3. Sewing Donation Projects
4. Cooking for a cause

**TARGETED MEMBERS OF THE POPULATION**

- Single mothers
- Low income families
- Elders

**OUTCOMES**

- Create opportunities to generate volunteer hours, or court-ordered community hours
- To give low-income families a place to purchase reasonably priced necessities

# ACTION AREA 2: EDUCATION

## EMPOWERING OUR PEOPLE THROUGH SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE



### INTRODUCTION

Low educational attainment, as a result of absenteeism and high dropout rates continue to be a widespread issues within the Cree Nation. Looking to the CSB Annual Report from 2016-17, we see that absenteeism averages 22.9% across schools in Eeyou Istchee. The high school graduation rate for those on the general education pathway is 9% within five years of beginning post-secondary. The rate increases to 25% with an additional year of studies for those that are retained within the Secondary School system. Because of the critical role education plays in the lifelong success of a person, as well as the preventative nature it has towards poverty, we are committed to aligning our programming to address absenteeism, promote stay-in-school programs, and improving the educational attainment of the Cree Nation.

### ACTION ITEM 1

Work together with ASD and CSB to encourage Adult Sector upgrading and skills development.

#### TARGETED MEMBERS OF THE POPULATION

- Persons that are:  
Unemployed/Underemployed
- Youth missing academic prerequisites
- General Population looking to improve their work and training readiness

#### OUTCOMES

- Promote upgrading and skills development to generate more employment opportunities
- Create better success for stable income and security for families

### ACTION ITEM 2:

Work with Youth Councils to provide tutoring and E-resources after school

#### TARGETED MEMBERS OF THE POPULATION

- Children/Youth in school from kindergarten to secondary 5

#### OUTCOMES

- To provide resources to low-income families, where not all children have access to computers or internet at home
- To garner greater success for academic achievement and graduation rates

### ACTION ITEM 3:

Work with communities (parents) and Youth Enrichment Services (Department of Justice) to develop a Truancy Officer Program to address the absenteeism at school

#### TARGETED MEMBERS OF THE POPULATION

- Youth

#### OUTCOMES

- The position of Truancy Officer would be committed to follow up on all absent students and to document reasons for absenteeism to better tailor programs or services
- Make direct home visits for students with chronic absenteeism
- Collaborate with guardian(s) and Youth Enrichment Services to develop a plan of action catered to the individual's needs (i.e., tutoring, behavior management, counseling, etc.)

**ACTION ITEM 4**

Engage students in a Role Model Program in partnership with the Cree School Board and the Cree Nation Youth Councils

**TARGETED MEMBERS OF THE POPULATION**

- Children/Youth

**OUTCOMES**

- Inspire, motivate and empower school youth to realize academic achievement and set ambitious dreams for the future
- Foster relationships of trust between mentors and mentees through common interests and scheduled outings

**ACTION ITEM 5:**

Implement programs specifically designed to promote students to stay in school, through a partnership with the Cree School Board:

1. sports
2. arts (e.g. music)
3. clubs
4. education/tutoring
5. STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, medicine)

**TARGETED MEMBERS OF THE POPULATION**

- Low-Income Elders
- Persons with Disabilities

**OUTCOMES**

- Improve living conditions for at-risk families
- Combat and prevent health hazardous living conditions

**ACTION ITEM 6:**

Implement a Breakfast Club program working with Partners Cree School Board and the Cree Board of Compensation and other sponsors to provide healthy breakfast food for students

**TARGETED MEMBERS OF THE POPULATION**

- Children/Youth

**OUTCOMES**

- Prevent hunger, behavioral issues, social exclusion, and increase overall well-being and ability to learn
- Encourage partnerships with Alliance partners, Cree communities and Schools

**ACTION ITEM 7:**

Partnership with ASD to provide in-school electives that:

1. Provide work readiness and life skills
2. Promote career awareness and exploration
3. Promote Cree traditional skills and knowledge

**TARGETED MEMBERS OF THE POPULATION**

- Youth

**OUTCOMES**

- Driving course
- Construction Certificates
- MPAQ
- First Aid
- Entrepreneurship (Paul Martin Initiative)
- CTA Program
- Budgeting and Economics
- Cooking and Home Ec.



**ACTION ITEM 8:**

Work with Local Businesses, CNYC, and Cree School Board to provide back-to-school kits to reduce the cost for youth to have access to school supplies

**TARGETED MEMBERS OF THE POPULATION**

- Youth from Kindergarten to High School

**OUTCOMES**

- Reduce exclusion to resources that are part of participating in their education
- Create incentives to in community purchases

**ACTION ITEM 9:**

Work with local recreation centres, youth centres, and schools to provide greater access to study/research spaces for youth:

1. Promote tutoring and quiet spaces for youth
2. Provide greater access to computers and library resources

**TARGETED MEMBERS OF THE POPULATION**

- Youth of all ages

**OUTCOMES**

- Reduce the impact of overcrowding on academic performance by ensuring access to available study spaces.
- Increase tools and resources available to youth required for learning

## ACTION AREA 3: HEALTH & NUTRITION

### INCREASING FOOD SECURITY THAT PROMOTES HEALTH AND WELLNESS IN EYYOU ISTCHEE

**INTRODUCTION**

There is a bidirectional relationship between nutrition/health and social exclusion/poverty. Findings show that those who live in poverty have a much higher risk of diabetes throughout their lifespan and that becoming diabetic has an adverse effect on one's ability to work and the increased likelihood of social exclusion. Because of the epidemic rates of diabetes within the Cree Nation, we highlight it as a main pillar within our action plan and will prioritize programs that increase the security of nutritious food and healthy lifestyles. There are also higher rates of substance abuse within the territory, which have similar relationships with poverty and exclusion, we will also look to promote programs that help to cope with substance abuse and integrate members back into the community.



**ACTION ITEM 1**

Develop, structure and implement a community garden program in all Cree communities in partnership with Local Band Administrations to:

1. create a community space for gardening
2. promote healthy living and nutrition
3. create employment and volunteer work for maintenance and management of the community garden
4. Work with local businesses to form a community food distribution initiative that promotes economic spin-offs.

**TARGETED MEMBERS OF THE POPULATION**

- Youth
- At risk individuals
- Underemployed and unemployed

**OUTCOMES**

- Provide education and skills that foster agricultural knowledge
- Create employment opportunities through seasonal and part-time work
- Work with the Cree Health Board and Social Services to provide nutrition training
- Increase access to fresh food in our communities

**ACTION ITEM 2:**

Work with local trappers and outfitters to support harvesting program:

1. Small scale fishing programs
2. Harvesting of traditional berries and plants
3. Small game and donation of wild meat

**TARGETED MEMBERS OF THE POPULATION**

- Elders
- Low income families
- Low income individuals

**OUTCOMES**

- Provide food security and access to traditional food
- Partnering with the Cree Trappers Association and Income Security member to harvest traditional game, fowl, fish, berries, and medicine.
- Provide training to community members on preparing, and distributing harvested foods. This training will provide income to traditional experts and hunters in our communities.
- Teach cooking programs that utilize our traditional skills and provide community events with access to traditional Cree cooking.

**ACTION ITEM 3:**

Develop and implement school meal programs:

1. Working with the Cree Health Board to develop a nutritionally balanced program
2. Partnering with schools to provide in-school lunches for children 8-15
3. Work with Cree Nation Youth Council, Cree School Board and Communities

**TARGETED MEMBERS OF THE POPULATION**

- Children and youth

**OUTCOMES**

- Create greater access to nutritious foods for students throughout Eeyou Istchee.
- Increases students ability to learn through proper nutrition
- Promote healthy and active lifestyles
- Encourage community participation and awareness

**ACTION ITEM 4:**

Implement supplemental nutrition programs (e.g. food stamp program) for single mothers

1. Community and Business supported cooking classes to cook and provide meals.
2. Partner with Local Native Women's Associations to cook for a cause

**TARGETED MEMBERS OF THE POPULATION**

- Single mothers
- At Risk Individuals

**OUTCOMES**

- Offer nutrition assistance to eligible single-parent households
- Teach cooking low-cost meals
- Provide increased food security for those in need
- Encourage community participation and engagement

**ACTION ITEM 5:**

Partner with Commerce and Industry and Society Plan Nord to have greenhouses located in the Cree Communities

**TARGETED MEMBERS OF THE POPULATION**

- Underemployed
- Unemployed
- Elders
- Youth

**OUTCOMES**

- Grow certain crops year-round to create sustainable nutrition to communities
- Foster cross-generational volunteerism
- Creation of employment, and opportunity for court-ordered community hours
- Bring a sense of purpose and fulfillment

**ACTION ITEM 6:**

In partnership with Cree Health Board, create information campaigns in schools and the community about healthy eating habits using:

1. Promotional/Educational Materials
2. Food and Fitness Challenges

**TARGETED MEMBERS OF THE POPULATION**

- General public

**OUTCOMES**

- Support existing active living initiatives
- Encourage healthy lifestyles to combat/prevent disease

**ACTION ITEM 7:**

Working with local food retailers and businesses to build on existing programs that provide food to vulnerable members of Cree society.

1. This can be done through seasonal, and holiday initiatives drawing on support from community members.
2. Food banks, food drives and donations

**TARGETED MEMBERS OF THE POPULATION**

- Low-income families
- At risk individuals
- Single mothers

**OUTCOMES**

- Provide nutritional food to those in need
- Encourage community support and engagement



# ACTION AREA 4: DATA AND INFORMATION

## SUPPORTING NEW AND EXISTING RESEARCH THAT HELP UNDERSTAND OUR REGION



### INTRODUCTION

There continue to be significant gaps in the data available for the people of Eeyou Istchee. Of particular importance to this Action Plan, will be the need to improve our understanding of indebtedness, unemployment and social assistance rates, economic development and entrepreneurship, mental and physical health, food & material security, and current rates of neglect, abuse, and family violence. The goal will be to build a better statistical profile and understand the extent to which these factors are predictive of poverty and exclusion. Improved understanding of the factors above will aid the Social and Cultural Department by allowing us to understand our population better and improve the data-based decision making that goes into the creation of programs.

### ACTION ITEM 1

Create monitoring mechanisms within the Social and Cultural Database to monitor program data including:

1. Client intake and participation in communities;
2. Funding leveraging and areas of funding
3. Feedback from communities and participants

#### TARGETED MEMBERS OF THE POPULATION

- Social and Cultural Department of Cree Nation Government
- Department of Commerce and Industry

#### OUTCOMES

- To gain the ability to monitor and adjust to changes in outcomes
- To better understand poverty and exclusion trends over time

### ACTION ITEM 2:

Conduct an income study in partnership with Department of Commerce and Industry as well as Apatisiwin Skills Development.

#### TARGETED MEMBERS OF THE POPULATION

- Large Regional Employers
- Local Business and Entities
- Mining and Resource Companies
- Cree Trappers Assn.
- Income Security Program for Cree Hunters and Trappers

#### OUTCOMES

- 1. To gain a clearer picture of the following:
    1. Average Income
    2. Income Gap
    3. Single Parent Income
    4. Traditional vs Non Traditional
    5. Costs of living by Community

**ACTION ITEM 3:**

Data Index for Well being

- |  |            |
|--|------------|
| 1. Traditional Living and Cultural Participation | 2. Health  |
| 3. Employment                                    | 4. Housing |
| 5. Education                                     | 6. Justice |
| 7. Food security and nutrition                   |            |

**TARGETED MEMBERS OF THE POPULATION**

- Cree School Board
- Cree Board of Health and Social Services
- Cree Justice and Correctional Services
- Cree Trappers Association
- Apatisiwin Skills Development
- Income Security Program
- Community Social Departments
- Elders Councils

**OUTCOMES**

- Collect data to determine well-being of people in Eeyou Istchee
- Record data to identify trends and programming needs

**ACTION ITEM 4:**

Overcrowding and Housing Needs in Eeyou Istchee to evaluate:

- Average number of people per household
- Impact on overall well being
- Risks factors on quality of life and health

**TARGETED MEMBERS OF THE POPULATION**

- Families living in undesirable living conditions

**OUTCOMES**

- Partner with Capital Works & Services and communities to collect data regarding overcrowding and housing needs
- Determine what are the next steps, such as future programming and services for affected individuals

**ACTION ITEM 5:**

Consult with identified vulnerable groups to analyze existing programs, services, and needs.

**TARGETED MEMBERS OF THE POPULATION**

- Single Parent Homes
- The Elderly
- Youth
- Individuals and families living with members who have long-term disabilities
- Communities

**OUTCOMES**

- Gain a clearer picture of the needs of these groups and understand how they are utilizing existing services, as well as what gaps in services exist.

**ACTION ITEM 6:**

Look to the forms and administrative process of the department and determine if it is aligned with the data that we would like to collect.

**TARGETED MEMBERS OF THE POPULATION**

- Administration

**OUTCOMES**

- Adapt existing tools and develop new forms to address any gaps that may exist in data collection mechanisms.

# 2019-2023 CONCLUSION

The Social and Cultural Department of the Cree Nation Government recognizes the large contribution that is required from all partners and stakeholders in the Cree Solidarity Alliance. It is for this reason that we will have a new Coordinator of Outreach and Wellness to specifically work with Partners and Stakeholders to achieve the best possible outcomes for our affected members.

We are well aware of our network of Government Departments, Regional Entities and Communities and the diversity of resources available through this network. Over the past several decades the evolution of Cree Governance in Eeyou Istchee has made significant strides. Crees now preside over most aspects of the administration of Cree society including Education, Health and Social Services, and Child and Family Services. Many others such as Justice and Correctional Services, Eeyou Eenuu Police Force, Commerce and Industry, and Social and Cultural are more recent additions.

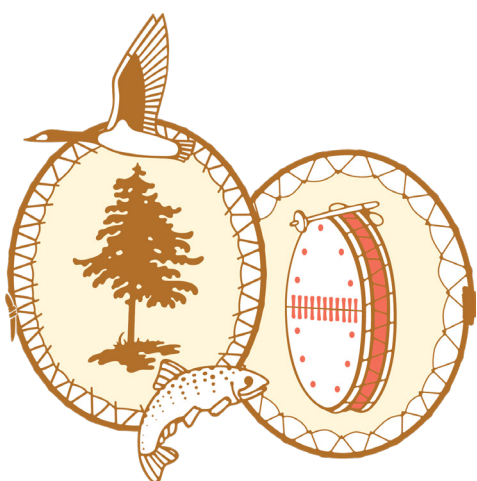
The Cree Solidarity Alliance program will create a significant opportunity to work together. Working together to make the maximum use of the combined resources and to engage with the entire population is key. We need to promote the concept that we all have a part to play and that government alone cannot bring all the required programs and services. We need to be proactive in engaging and communicating the issues of Poverty and Exclusion across Eeyou Istchee.

In an effort to fully utilize the funding and resources we have, we must emphasize building on our strengths that exist while leveraging partnerships to create new and innovative programming. This requires that our entities, institutions, and communities be willing to share information, not only on resources but on data that we are all aiming to gather. In this way, we can make informed decisions that bring clarity and capacity the Cree Solidarity Alliance that will have a tangible impact in our communities.

The Cree of Eeyou Istchee has always placed great value on sharing and respect for others. Cree Solidarity Alliance is an extension of Cree values. If we stay true to this concept as our guiding principle, we will make a positive improvement on the social well-being in our region. The previous five years were about addressing disparities in programs and services related to childcare to positively impact our people. By creating a newfound focus on nutrition, education and core poverty and exclusion, we further enable our people to self-sufficiency in an ever more inclusive Cree society.







# CREE SOLIDARITY ALLIANCE

## 2019-2023 ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS POVERTY AND EXCLUSION IN EEYOU ISTCHEE

We would like to recognize the role of the Plan d'action gouvernemental pour l'inclusion économique et la participation sociale (PAGIEPS), from which the funding for the Fonds québécois d'initiatives sociales (FQIS) is derived. A sincere thank you to Ministère du Travail, de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité sociale for their support and partnership with Cree Nation Government.