

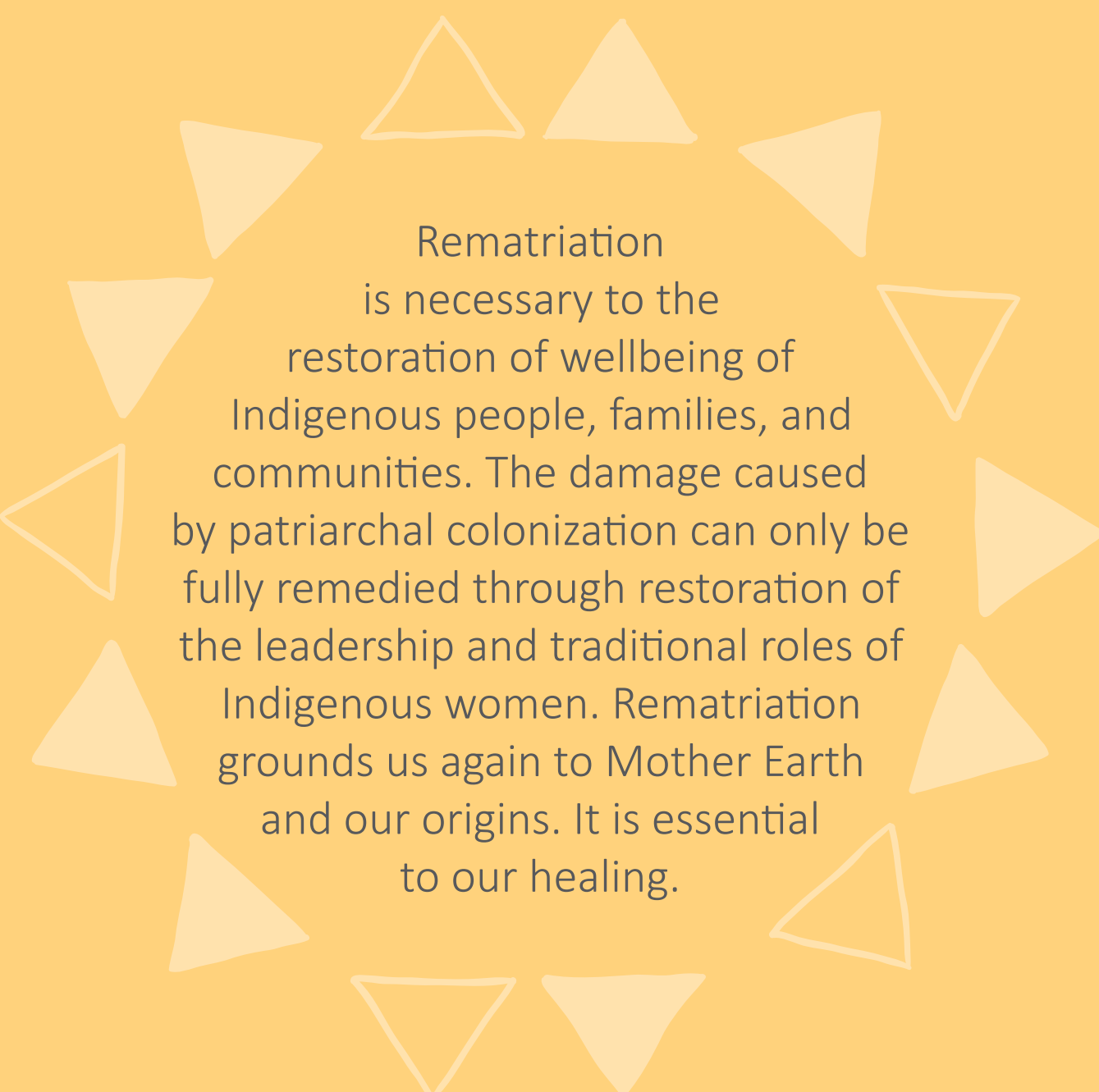


ANNUAL REPORT

2016 - 2017



*"Reclaiming
Our Roles as
Mothers and
Leaders"*



Rematriation
is necessary to the
restoration of wellbeing of
Indigenous people, families, and
communities. The damage caused
by patriarchal colonization can only be
fully remedied through restoration of
the leadership and traditional roles of
Indigenous women. Rematriation
grounds us again to Mother Earth
and our origins. It is essential
to our healing.

#REMARIATE

Table of Contents

- 2** President Annual Report
- 4** Executive Director Annual Report

Our Story

- 6** Our Creation Story
- 8** Our Agreements
- 9** Our R.A.T.T.L.E.S. Framework
- 12** Our Vision
- 13** Our Mandate, Guiding Principle,
& Aims and Objectives
- 15** Our Leadership
- 16** Our Roles and Responsibilities
- 18** Strategic Picture Update

Our Work

- 22** MMIW
- 26** Human Trafficking
- 28** Policy & Research
- 34** Communications
- 36** Community Development
- 42** Client Services

Our Growth

- 52** Organizational Development
- 55** Risk Management
- 58** Finance



On behalf of the Board of Directors, it has been an honour over the past year to work towards empowering Indigenous women and communities to speak on their own behalf, especially at this time of changing relationships with governments at all levels. We want to acknowledge each leader, each woman who is doing great things, whether it

be at the grassroots community level or the highest office of public service. We know that when we work together and support each other we can achieve better outcomes for our future generations.

During our work at the Indigenous Women's Leadership Forum, Indigenous women leaders from across the province spoke about our capacity and the need to participate in a wide range of leadership roles to support our communities. Whether we go into a First Nation community or an urban Indigenous organization, we see our women as workers, as managers and as the helpers. However, we acknowledge that despite the strength of Indigenous women's leadership, the majority of formal leadership roles continue to be dominated by men. While this does not take away from the amazing work done by women who serve on council, or even those who have been elected Chief, we make this point to highlight the disparity. Upon stepping back further and looking at the situation, we realize that it is not that Indigenous women are not leaders, but rather Indigenous women's leadership looks different. We lead on the ground, in the community, and in our families with the people.

ONWA has taken on the responsibility to give voice to the concerns of women and to work to create spaces at the table, based on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). Article 18 explicitly states,

Indigenous peoples have the right to participate in decision-making in matters which would affect their rights, through representatives chosen by themselves in accordance with their own procedures, as well as to maintain and develop their own indigenous decision-making institutions.

Why is it important for us to have our own opportunities to come together and have our own discussions? What matters to us as Indigenous women?

- The health and wellbeing of our families.
- The health and wellbeing of our communities and our nations.
- The restoration of our traditional roles in our communities and governance structures.

To heal our families and communities, we must reclaim our leadership roles. This has been our goal for the last year and our rallying cry for decades. As Indigenous women, we are the givers of life and the first teachers of our future generations. It is our traditional role to ensure the continuation of an Indigenous worldview.

The right to speak for ourselves as Indigenous women, and not have others speak for us, is of particular importance in light of Article 8, section 1 of the UNDRIP:

Indigenous peoples and individuals have the right not to be subjected to forced assimilation or destruction of their culture.

We have heard at different meetings how people are tired of hearing about the violence against Indigenous women. *"We need fresh ideas coming from the women."* Our first response to that thinking is that we too are tired - tired of experiencing violence and tired of being on the receiving end of hate, prejudice, discrimination and the legacy of intergenerational trauma.

When we look at Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs - which by the way is based on a Blackfoot teaching - we see that after basic needs like housing, health care and food, the next level for growth and self-

actualization is SAFETY. It is hard to talk about other issues when we cannot guarantee the safety of ourselves, our family members and our children. We know that this continues to be a key issue for us, so yes we will continue to talk about safety. The forced replacement of traditional gender equality with colonial governance structures, when the Indian Act declared only Indian men could sit as chief or serve on council, has led to the appallingly high rates of violence against Indigenous women and girls. The refusal of our government to accept amendments to Bill S-3 to remove gender discrimination from the Indian Act perpetuates discrimination against our women and girls.

The protection of Indigenous women so that we can fulfill our informal and formal leadership roles and responsibilities as mothers, clan mothers, and leaders is acknowledged in UNDRIP as stated in Article 7, Section 2:

Indigenous peoples have the collective right to live in freedom, peace and security as distinct peoples and shall not be subjected to any act of genocide or any other act of violence, including forcibly removing children of the group to another group.

We also have to go back to our basic needs. We have a long way to go to address the socio-economic disparity between Indigenous women and everyone else in the Canadian economy. Factors like poverty, housing, racism, violence, education, health and child welfare will need to be at the core of a coordinated strategic response to the issues facing Indigenous women.

In the past, Indigenous women have held significant leadership roles in the community and family. To restore our place in decision-making processes, Indigenous women have a lot to reclaim and make visible. We have to reclaim our traditional gender balance in our communities and families, restore the leadership roles of Indigenous women in governance structures, and restore our roles as mothers, knowledge keepers, lifegivers, medicine women and human beings.

The revitalization of Indigenous women's leadership cannot be limited to having the same opportunities as Indigenous men to compete for a seat in decision-making bodies. We must think outside of the imposed Indian Act structures that have only served to weaken our nations and threaten our sovereignty. We need to ensure that Indigenous women have their own governance structures and opportunities for leadership.

As Indigenous women, our traditional Women's circles and counsels have functioned well since time immemorial. We now have to revitalize these traditional governance structures.

As Indigenous women we will need to continue to lead from our responsibilities as mothers and caregivers for our families, communities, culture, language and the Earth. To that end we have been working and dialoguing at the following key provincial tables, such as:

- AHWS Collaborative Forum with the Collective
- Executive Committee to End Violence Against Indigenous Women
- Special Priority Policy Working Group
- Indigenous Housing Strategy
- Urban Indigenous Health Table
- Urban Indigenous Table on Income Security Reform
- Indigenous Child and Youth Strategy
- Urban Indigenous Policy Engagement Table
- Minister's Advisory Council on First Nation, Metis & Inuit

We have come a long way, but we still have a tremendous amount of work to do and the more we can do it in supportive ways, learning from each other - the more we strengthen each of us as leaders.

In unity,

Dawn Lavell-Harvard

Dawn Lavell-Harvard
President

Executive Director Annual Report



This has been a substantial year for our agency, as we continue to evolve and increase our capacity to accomplish our Vision in supporting women to take up their leadership roles in the family and community. We are reclaiming our voices grounded in culturally teachings of respect which is to speak the

truth about Indigenous women's issues without blame or judgment. Telling the truth without violence is an important goal of ONWA as we move away from colonized behaviours and toward reconciliation. We need to be leaders and speak from a wholistic understanding of the issues affecting Indigenous women.

Our strategy moving forward is to only work within our circle of influence based on strong principles such as creating safety for Indigenous Women and Empowering Leadership for both individual women and communities to speak on their own behalf. To do this work we will be courageous, and balance our bundle that is based on love and not shame.

The work we need to accomplish is no easy task. We have begun to work on the spectrum of sexual violence currently focusing on anti-human trafficking, further we are building community capacity to look at the prevention of missing/ murdered Indigenous women, through this work we are building an ONWA bundle that is based on honouring all Indigenous cultures across the province. As, an Indigenous women's agency we employ over 64% Indigenous Women and we are never far from the issues that we are working on, which is why we must stay grounded as leaders and break the cycle of violence. Once we take on

the role of a leader we are no longer community members, our role has evolved.

We have been staying more focused than ever on our circle of influence, and this upcoming year will be no different as we focus our attention on our key priorities within our Strategic Picture, specifically around Leadership development both within the family and community, building an ONWA bundle, strengthening our service delivery model and capacity building for our team and communities.

An outcome of our Strategic Picture has resulted ONWA increasing services in communities across the province, like the Circle of Care program focused on addressing violence against Indigenous Women, Anti Human Trafficking Liaisons to build community capacity to addressing human trafficking and our Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women's program that works with both families and communities. As a result of our numerous new programs the agency received a funding increase of 50%, which has allowed us to distributed 10% of our funding in the amount of \$600,000 back to communities compared to \$130,000 from the previous fiscal year. This was no easy feat as we currently have 39 contribution agreements with over 150 administrative reports.

This year we will be prioritizing the issues of supporting women on the spectrum of sexual violence, safety of women and empowerment of women and communities to speak on their own behalf as well as the ongoing professional development for our team. To measure our impact we are currently working on an Indigenous women's gender based analysis framework that has safety as the core principle.

This tool will be instrumental in furthering our strategic picture and key goals around empowering Indigenous women's leadership as a decolonizing practice. A gender based analysis

will ask key questions of the work we accomplish and hold the people accountable as we critically analyze their documents, some questions to assist us in our work are;

- Does this document or initiative support Indigenous women's safety?
- Is there space for Indigenous women's self-empowerment? This is reflective of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People and in particular Article 18; that states that Indigenous women have the right to be represented by institutions of their own choosing.

Furthermore we are working on a R.A.T.T.L.E.S Research framework as a way of taking up our responsibilities as leaders, grounding our work in culture, aligning our work with our Strategic Picture, and use stories to illustrate our impact. We adopted this model after attending the Banff Leadership training and have worked on implementing this framework across all departments. This framework will guide us in the work we need to accomplish, it will keep us grounded in our values and will further build our capacity to support the communities and Indigenous Women.

This year we have experienced substantial growth as an agency. We must use a risk management approach in regards to capacity to ensure we operate from a strong foundation. We must stay focused and not detour from our set goals as we are challenged on our positions. A wholistic understanding of the issues is necessary to ensure ONWA's staff are supported in the work we do and we do not exhaust them. We recognize any issue we choose to work on must be with a focused resolve and that to honour Indigenous women's stories we must support and empower women on their healing journey. We recognize that empowerment comes from the individual and community speaking on their own behalf.

We are pleased with the work that has been accomplished and we hope you enjoy this report that highlights the work we have accomplished, areas for improvement, provides accurate and transparent financial information, and our partnerships.

We continue to be honoured to work with Indigenous women and communities.

In the Spirit of Reconciliation,

Cora-Lee McGuire-Cyrette

Cora-Lee McGuire - Cyrette
Executive Director

Our Story



Our Creation Story

The Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA) has been providing support to communities in Ontario for decades. Although the organization was founded in 1971, this was not the beginning of our work, but the recognition of work that Indigenous women living in urban areas were already doing. The result has led to an Indigenous women's agency that is a voice for their issues that they continue to face, in their lives and in the lives of their families. The voice and story of Indigenous women is complex with multiple layers and facets, but this is also reflective of the work of ONWA. Imagine, if you will, an Indigenous woman trying to keep her chin up yet experiencing poverty, sexism and violence at every turn. That too, is our story, the story of ONWA, an Indigenous women's agency with membership organizations without core funding (poverty), working towards ending violence against Indigenous women for decades without steady support from funding bodies. Having continuously argued the importance of this work, our frustration is palpable when funding is

dispensed to other organizations who feel that they are now the experts on issues pertaining to Indigenous women. The disappointment is disheartening to say the least.

Women's work has often been marginalized, but Indigenous women's work has been completely left off the page. Women's work has been ghettoized, yet Indigenous women's lives have been put at risk in the lack of response to their needs. The wellness of a community is reflected in how well the women in the community are doing, and unfortunately in many communities they aren't doing very well at all. Empowering community building by the communities themselves is a priority for ONWA as it is critical to ending violence against Indigenous women. ONWA empowers community and supports the Indigenous women's voice through direct client service delivery, community development, and policy and research.

ONWA works hard to support community events throughout the province - The Full Moon Memory Walk, The Water Walk, and Sisters in Spirit are important activities that are in addition to our

other work and sometimes goes unrecognized. We support community by helping community take the lead on activities that they feel strongly about.

The Client Services Department is responsible for delivering services in communities throughout the province with satellite offices in Kenora, Dryden, Sioux Lookout, Thunder Bay, Geraldton, Timmins, Hamilton, Ottawa and Napanee. Programs delivered through these sites vary between the Aboriginal Healthy Babies Healthy Children, Aboriginal Victim Family Liaison, Circles of Care, and Health Outreach. The selection of sites is based on needs of the communities and the capacity to deliver services in the area. Some sites have one program with one staff member, while others have multiple programs and staff. This is oftentimes an item that is determined and negotiated with funding agencies and is usually proposal-based.

Our Community Development Model for service delivery is dependant on the needs of the community and their capacity to deliver programming for Indigenous women. The service delivery model can provide community building through knowledge sharing in the form of presentations and information fairs on a variety of issues as it relates to the community's needs. Programs such as Building Aboriginal Women's Leadership, Aboriginal Responsible Gambling Awareness, and Diabetes Awareness are crucial to supporting Indigenous women to recognize their role as leaders in their community.

The model further supports building community by flowing funding to Indigenous women's agencies who have the experience and expertise in delivering services to community. ONWA pilots initial programs through our Thunder Bay site, then rolls out programming into our regions through our remaining sites, and then flowing funding to ONWA Chapters that have met the criteria for delivering programming in their community. Depending on the service being delivered, ONWA will work with community partnering agencies for a specialized service

delivery approach. An example of this is the Indigenous Anti-Human Trafficking Liaison program which is specialized programming for a unique population needing services based on their needs.

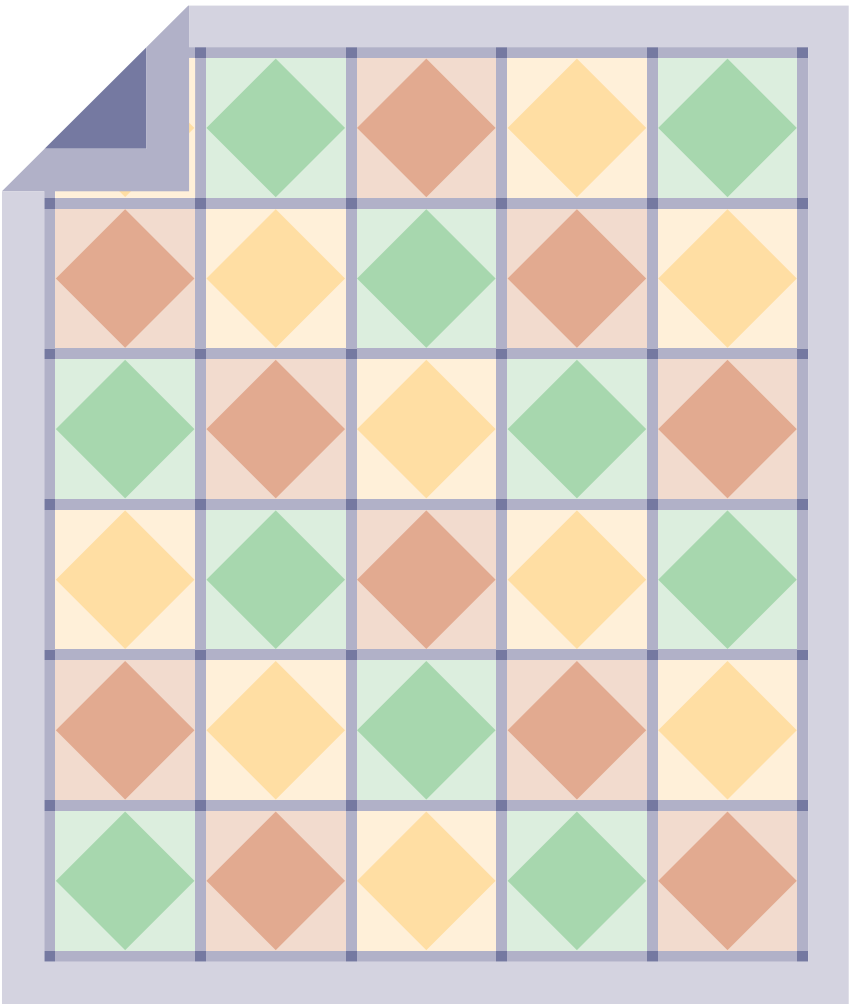
The ONWA Policy and Research team support the work of ONWA by providing the necessary policy support needed to ensure programming is effective and meaningful to the communities we serve. They also provide technical support to ONWA leadership at various policy tables.

Our model for programming that helps build community is varied in its approach. Services that support Indigenous women's lives and the issues that affect them is complex at best. ONWA currently manages up to 39 projects and programs in a fiscal year and our capacity to do so is challenging at times. Reporting for each funding agreement is individualized as per that particular agreement. The quilt on the following page is a representation of the extent of this work.

Our Agreements

This 39 panel quilt illustrates the 29 separate funding agreements ONWA holds with 14 unique funders, as well as 10 additional projects and initiatives that ONWA does not receive any funding for. Each of the 29 agreements includes specific reporting requirements due on a quarterly, six-monthly, or annual basis, consisting of either financial reporting or a combination of financial and program reports. Managing all of these agreements is administratively intensive and the funding we receive does not always fully meet the needs of community. However, as Indigenous women we are very resourceful. We have learned how to stitch together the pieces to create a blanket to wrap around the women and communities we serve.

Agreement Quilt



- Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada
- Indian Youth Friendship Society
- Lakehead Adult Education Centre
- Métis Nation of Ontario
- Ministry of Children and Youth Services
- Ministry of Community and Social Services
- Ministry of Education
- Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
- Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
- Ministry of the Attorney General
- Ministry of the Status of Women
- Native Women’s Association of Canada
- Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services Corporation
- Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres

Our R.A.T.T.L.E.S. Framework

The R.A.T.T.L.E. Model was presented to the Ontario Native Women’s Association during our 2017 Indigenous Leadership and Management training in BANFF, Alberta. This Ojibway teaching originates from the Timiskaming First Nation territory and offers an Indigenous Framework to build empowerment, accountability, and safety in Indigenous women’s leadership and as an organizational responsibility.

Historically, our protocols and ways of being, knowing, and teaching recognized our Indigenous women’s leadership roles to ensure our families and communities needs were being met. ONWA acknowledges the voices of Indigenous women and continues to focus on social and cultural wellbeing as a core responsibility. The model has now been changed to be inclusive of our Indigenous storytelling philosophy, worldviews, and methodology.

The R.A.T.T.L.E.S. teaching concept tells the ONWA story of Indigenous women’s leadership, empowerment, and resiliency. Through this traditional discourse of knowledge, we are able to identify and define how the organization captures program indicators, capacity, measurable outcomes, and the essence of our journey by listening to the ‘noise’ our RATTLE makes when shaken.

Responsibility

The rattle’s hide holds our traditional teachings, protocols, and values. ONWA’s strategic model recognizes that Indigenous culture is at the center of our organization’s structure. The concept of the R.A.T.T.L.E.S. teaching complements our traditional practices, search for knowledge, accountability and reporting functions, and how we incorporate service delivery as a best practice.

Alignment

The rattle is held together by sinew and the alignment of the material is important. ONWA has aligned our service delivery, community development, and policy and research structures with our strategic planning and circle of care model. Our cultural practice and participation, program deliverables, advocacy, work-plans, and leadership skills respond to the issues affecting Indigenous women, families, and our communities.

Techniques & Tactics

The noise when the rattle is shaken is made by the pebbles placed within the hide. The sacred bundles we carry and cultural exchange of knowledge is a necessary part of our Indigenous identity and self location. ONWA offers advocacy, services, and supports (techniques) to Indigenous women to take their role in leadership within their family and community.

Resources (tactics) offered reduce barriers for Indigenous women to attain services, interventions, and provide a continuum of care that builds strength and ability to facilitate healthy outcomes. This community approach builds partnerships with community service providers, natural helpers, and Elders and Knowledge Keepers. Staff capacity training and the organizational supervision practices ensure that strength-based, trauma informed, culturally safe practices are offered that are effective, relevant, and to deliver service deliverables to reinforce a sense of purpose and meaning in life that reflect positive women’s leadership roles.

Language

The rattle has markings that indicate processes and protocols. ONWA is committed to building a strong communication plan and reporting structure that allows for growth in role modelling, evaluation, and communication. Language is a tool that guides our story and how we communicate our strategic plan alignment throughout the organization and within our community.

Evaluation

The stick is the strength and foundation of the rattle. Restoring traditional healing practices is a pathway to re-establishing the interconnectedness with our families and communities.

Cultural-based models of practice offer an opportunity to continue to empower the revitalization of our culture. Evaluation of staff performance, scheduled supervision, database creation, program evaluation, and monitoring of workshop presentations guides ONWA's strategic directions and fosters trauma and culturally-informed practices.

Through this evaluation we are able to capture measurable outcomes, program indicators, success stories, and highlight the positive increase of goal achievement for Indigenous women's and their families.

Storytelling

ONWA's story begins with 'our bundle' and by telling our story of resilience, empowerment, and strength of women's leadership and our roles. Through this structure, we build the ability to articulate for the inclusion of the Indigenous worldview, re-colonizing frameworks, and the delivery of practice-based and evidence-based practices and services that support Indigenous women's leadership. All ONWA programs tell a story of change, capacity building, and the implementation of a wholistic, culturally-safe, community-based model of practice that deconstructs contemporary realities that Indigenous people face daily at a structural and systems level.

What does Indigenous women's leadership look like:

AS DEFINED BY WOMEN AT OUR **INDIGENOUS WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP FORUM**

A STRONG WOMAN

With a Vision that:

- connects to the land, our families and children, mother earth
- includes a path for our children and grandchildren
- supports communities to grow and become more connected to each other
- keeps culture, ceremonies, and language alive

She is:

- passionate
- resilient
- compassionate
- a good listener
- respectful
- kind and calm
- courageous and brave
 - not afraid to speak up
- determined and never gives up
- follows through
- She names what is not acceptable in her family and the community

A LEADER IS A HELPER

Sees the big picture but brings it down to a community level

She knows herself...

- her identity as an Indigenous woman
- she has an inherent strength that she recognizes and nurtures in herself
- she takes care of herself
- she honours her journey and is kind to herself
- she can balance her mental, physical, emotional and spiritual self



Our Vision

At the Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA) we will support women to take up their leadership roles in the family and in the community.

ONWA will support women's leadership. To do that we have to ensure that our voices are heard. We have to start by listening to each other first.

- To reclaim our voices we must have knowledge. Much of the knowledge we need to be strong leaders is rooted in the cultural teachings.
- To hear our own voices we must silence our pain and trauma and find a place for it in our lives that does not hurt us.
- Our self-esteem needs to be reclaimed.

So when we speak we will have a grounded, balanced, strong, and kind voice.

To achieve our leadership roles we have to break the cycle of abuse that is part of our families and communities. To do that we will, through all of our actions and words, not carry forward the abuse.

We will speak the truth because we will know what the truth is. We will be forgiving and move forward after our truth has been shared. We will not use the colonization behaviours we have learned to hurt others. We will believe in our truth and respect it.

We will expect board members and our Executive Director to reflect this vision of behaviour. When they do not behave in this way we will gently ask them to realign their behaviour.

We will be focused in our work and not exhaust the staff or board. We recognize that any issue we chose to work on, with focused resolve, will support women to move forward in all issues, because all issues are interconnected.

In being leaders in our families our focus must be on the children:

- We take up our role for the children and address the child welfare system. We will build a child welfare system that is transformed and recognizes that the shattered, hurt parent needs love, care and attention, just as her children do. We will create new ways of healing families that are based on the cultural teachings. We help each woman change her life for the better.
- We take up our role for the youth and deal with the youth suicide. We will be good teachers and guides for our youth and make space for them in our work.

We will trust in ourselves and in each other that we can realize this vision. We will love and care for each other.

Our Mandate

The Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA) is a not for profit organization that empowers and supports Indigenous women and their families in the province of Ontario.

Affiliated with the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), ONWA encourages the participation of Indigenous women in the development of Federal, Provincial, Municipal/Local government policies that impact their lives and ensure issues affecting Indigenous women and their families are heard at key government tables.

ONWA is committed to providing services that strengthen communities and guarantees the preservation of Indigenous culture, identity, art, language and heritage. Ending violence against Indigenous women and their families and ensuring equal access to justice, education, health, environmental stewardship and economic development, sits at the cornerstone of the organization. ONWA insists on social and cultural well – being for all Indigenous women and their families, so that all women, regardless of tribal heritage may live their best lives.

Our Guiding Principle

ONWA's guiding principle is that all Indigenous ancestry will be treated with dignity, respect and equality; benefits and services will be extended to all, no matter where one lives and regardless of Tribal heritage.

Our Aims and Objectives

- To build relationships with all levels of government and other organizations to collaborate on all socio-economic issues affecting the well-being of all Indigenous women and their families. (physical)
- To increase Indigenous women's skills and capacity in planning, developing and managing an array of programs and services that directly impact their lives and those of their families. (mental)

- To continue to work towards unity amongst Indigenous women and their families to affect positive change in society in recognizing the importance of diversity and inclusion for all people.
 - Through a communication strategy with our membership we will encourage a unified voice to fully participate politically to ensure Indigenous women and their families are appropriately represented
- To promote and advance equality and social justice issues as they affect the realities of Indigenous women’s lives. (emotional)
 - Designing of resource materials and capacity development opportunities
- To preserve and promote the sacred roles of Indigenous women and their families as valued and respected members in the community. (spiritual)
- Services are provided in a culturally respectful manner.
- Provide opportunities for Indigenous women to learn and teach traditional ways to future generations that are unique to Indigenous culture.

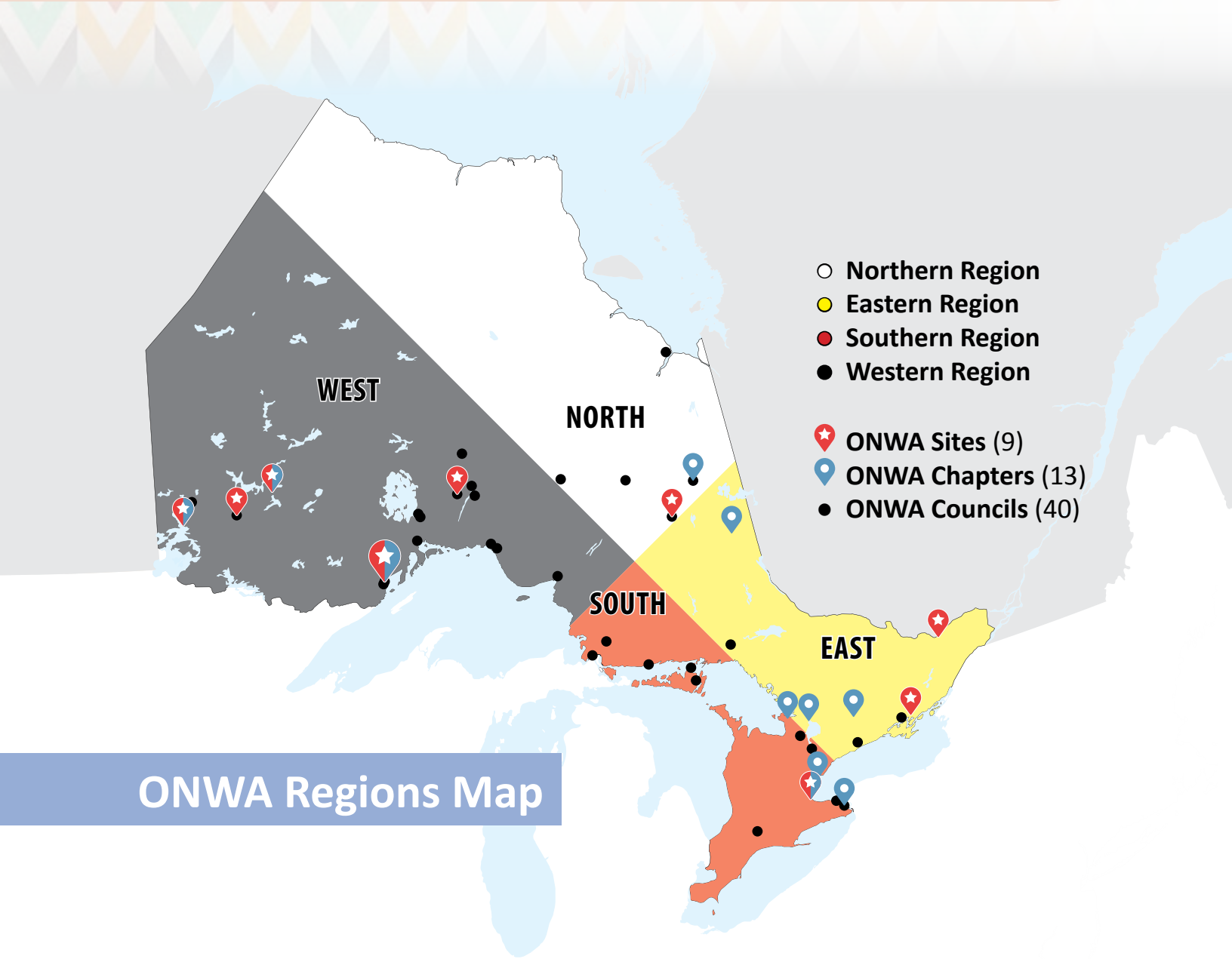
Our Leadership

In order to more accurately reflect the Four Directions, ONWA restructured the division of geographical regions for Chapters and Councils. This change occurred at the 2016 AGA, and the spread of Directors became uneven upon allocation to new regional areas. 2017 is an election year and will bring restoration of balance across the four regions.

Board of Directors - CURRENT REGIONS (2016-2017)			
Eastern Region	Southern Region	Western Region	Northern Region
Dr. Dawn Harvard President	Vice President	Kelly Anderson Treasurer	Roberta Wesley Secretary
Melinda Commanda Director	Dr. Gloria Alvernaz-Mulcahy Director	Agnes Bachmann Director	Betsy Connor Director
Director	Wendy Sturgeon Director	Cecilia Airns Director	Director
		Georgette Murray Director	
		Sharon Sapay Director	
Youth Director	Jessica Winger Youth Director	Kayla Meekis Youth Director	Youth Director
	Mariah Abotossaway Youth Director	Mary Anderson Youth Director	
Grandmother	Elize Hartley Grandmother	Catherine Everson Grandmother	Dorothy Wynne Grandmother
	Suzanne Knapp Grandmother		

Honourary Members

- Jeanette Corbiere-Lavell (Manitowaning)
- Dorothy Wynne (Moosonee)



Our Roles and Responsibilities

The Ontario Native Women’s Association takes seriously our responsibility to the community and the part we play in empowering Indigenous women and advocating for their voices to be heard. Every member of the team plays an important role in the work we do. In the true nature of Indigenous women’s leadership, we do not see one person as more important than the other, but rather, every person plays an important part of the whole, as we come together in unity and work towards one vision.

Culture and our identity as Indigenous women leaders are the foundation of the work we do, forming the root from which the flower of our organization derives nutrients and water to grow. Water is central to many of the teachings we receive from our elders and grandmothers, and we open our meetings in a good way with a smudge and honouring of the water. As Indigenous women, we recognize our responsibility to the water, and the life that it gives us.

ONWA membership

The ONWA membership is made up of 13 incorporated Chapters and 40 grassroots Councils. These membership organizations Provide input into ONWA’s strategic picture and provide knowledge and expertise that supports the Vision of the agency.

Board of Directors

The Board of Directors provides leadership based on the Vision of ONWA. They operate from a policy structure, which means they approve ONWA’s key agency positions, establish policies, affirm legal responsibilities, approve operating budgets and work plans of the agency, and hold responsibility to the membership and community.

Executive Director

The Executive Director is responsible for the implementation of the Vision and Strategic Picture across the entire agency and ensuring the alignment of all work meets the needs of the Ontario Native Women’s Association. The Executive Director holds overall authority for the

entire agency on issues of financial management and risk management, seeking direction from the Board of directors. The Executive Director maintains working relationships with the Board of Directors, ministries and key partners to further the agency’s vision. She is responsible for the strategic direction of ONWA and leads the team of Directors of each Department.

Directors

Directors of each Department are responsible for ensuring that the activities of the department align with the Strategic Picture and vision of ONWA. Directors are responsible for reporting, financial management and oversight of all operations within their respective departments. They provide support and direction to the managers.

Managers

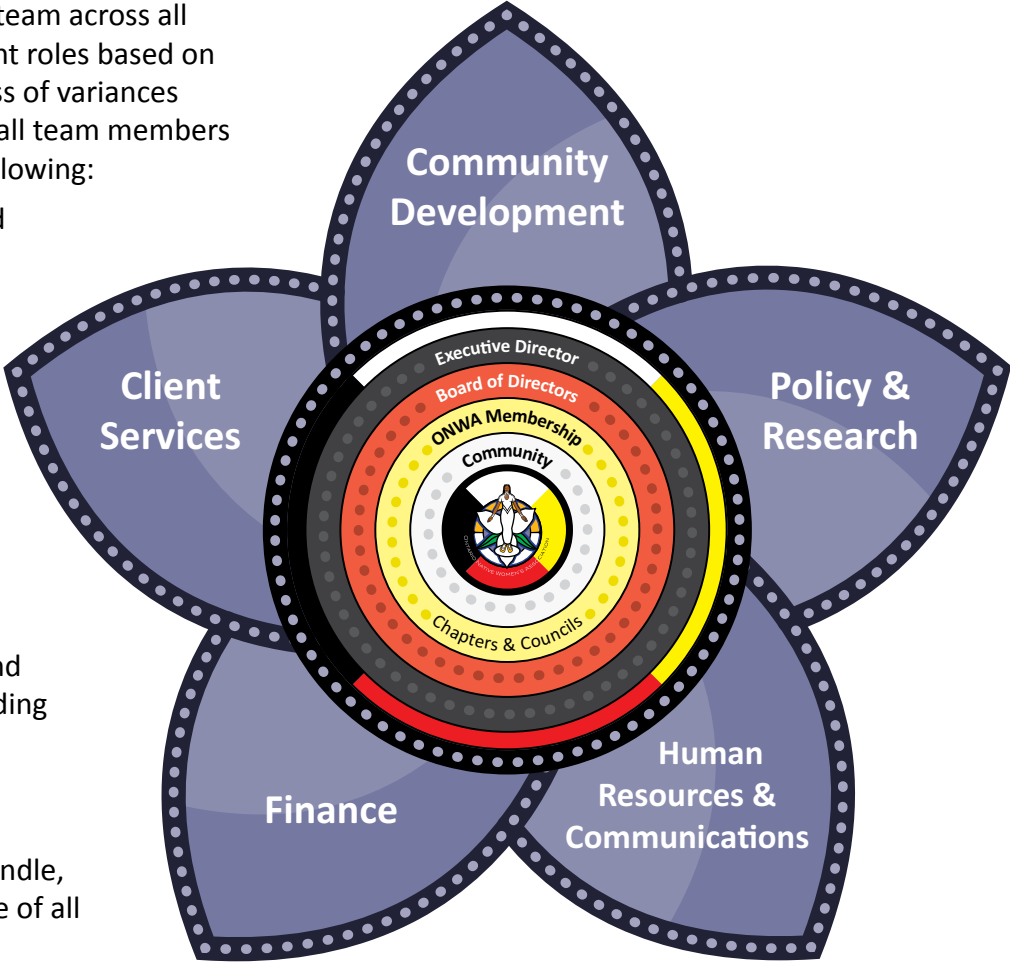
Managers are involved in all aspects of the daily operations of ONWA, ensuring quality assurance, enforcing ONWA policies and procedures, and directing team members on a regular basis regarding their assigned work responsibilities.

“Water is what sustains us. Water is what brings us into this world, and water is what keeps us in this physical world. And so it’s our life.”
- Jan Longboat

Team

ONWA has a vast and varied team across all departments, all with different roles based on their area of work. Regardless of variances between different positions, all team members have responsibility for the following:

- Implement the Vision and Strategic Picture, as reflected in their yearly work plan.
- Represent ONWA’s key messages and positions in their work and communications to external organizations and the community.
- Respect the leadership and direction of ONWA, including following policies and procedures.
- Work from the cultural foundation of ONWA’s bundle, based on respect and love of all cultures and teachings.
- Exercise roles as helpers within a women’s agency, supporting the direction of the leadership.
- Every team member in ONWA is expected to be a leader, that is respectful to the women, families and communities we work with.



ONWA Structure

Strategic Picture Update

ONWA introduced the Strategic Picture 2016-2021 at the ONWA Annual General Assembly in September 2016, clearly defining our focus and direction for the next five years as we move toward a unified vision. Despite not being funded for our Strategic Picture, ONWA has already made great headway on each of the Strategic Directions in the first year. The full Strategic Picture can be viewed on ONWA’s website and below is an update on the work that has been done.

Strategic Direction 1: ONWA is built on a strong Cultural Foundation

A. Represent the diversity of the different Indigenous cultures in Ontario:

- a. An Elders protocol has been drafted and program guidelines developed that identify the process for selecting Elders and Traditional Teachers for each program. The finalized Elders protocol will form part of ONWA’s Cultural Bundle.
- b. ONWA is ready to launch a learning app with a course to help learners discover the history, worldview, experience, political organizing and advocacy of Indigenous women in the province of Ontario. The course will be offered for free to Indigenous women, and there will be a nominal fee to mainstream agencies to support the expansion of the program. This app is called RETII, which stands for Reconciliation and Education of Teaching Indigenous Ideologies.

B. Conduct ourselves based on culture

- a. ONWA is refocusing the Grandmother’s Council to work at the governance level and provide direction for the Board and membership at the AGA.

- b. We developed a Code of Conduct that reflects ONWA’s cultural foundation and has been signed and implemented by all staff and members of ONWA.
- c. All ONWA programs now incorporate culture and teachings into the work plans and the very foundation of the program. We are currently looking at measuring the success of the work we do through storytelling and narratives.

Strategic Direction 2: ONWA recognizes that it is time of Indigenous Women’s Leadership

A: Rights-based framework

- d. ONWA has incorporated the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) as part of our framework of rights and responsibilities. Ongoing capacity development and training is occurring to support staff to understand and articulate the implications of UNDRIP within ONWA.
- e. ONWA hosted the 1st Indigenous Women’s Leadership Forum, bringing together leaders from across the province to define what Indigenous women’s leadership looks like and our responsibilities as leaders. This highly

successful event that created a safe space where women could support each other as leaders. ONWA is advocating for ongoing funding to support this event and further expand to other women leaders and our daughters.

B. Responsibility to develop the Youth

- f. ONWA hosted UAS Youth Conference with a focus on employment, in partnership with the Thunder Bay Urban Aboriginal Advisory Committee (UAAC). Over 200 youth participated, as well as numerous community partners and employers. Youth Ambassadors played key roles in the planning and facilitation of the event, ensuring it was youth-drive and youth-led. These youth built on their leadership skills and were a crucial element to the success of the conference.
- g. To raise funds for youth to attend Healing Our Spirits Worldwide in Australia in 2018, the Client Services Department has set up a canteen at the ONWA office and other fundraisers are being planned.

C. Responsibility to the Survivors of Residential School

- h. Our responsibility to the survivors of the Residential school; ONWA submitted the Indigenous *Ska-Be* (helper) proposal to provide support services to improve the health and wellbeing of urban Indigenous seniors and individuals with disabilities, with a particular focus on women, so that they can achieve a good quality of life reflective of their needs and culture. If funded, the *Ska-Be* program will offer education and hands-on support services. This program will use a culturally-based, wholistic wellness approach within a wrap- around circle of care to deal with mental health needs, chronic disease and disability.

D. Recognize our responsibility to Thunder Bay

- i. ONWA has increased support in the Thunder Bay community over the last year, including responding to crisis and issues affecting the safety of Indigenous women. ONWA is currently working to set up an Anti-Human Trafficking Situation table with key partners in the community to address trafficking of Indigenous women in Thunder Bay.
- j. All available ONWA staff participated in the search for Josiah Begg, and have provided support and focus to families dealing with crisis, outside of our usual programming.
- k. At the 2016 AGA, ONWA adopted a new membership structure that allows only one Council per community but an unlimited number of incorporated Chapters. ONWA is currently working with our Thunder Bay councils to assist them to consolidate.

E. Recognize our responsibility to the Indigenous women across the province

- i. ONWA has made a systems change by supporting community development as a top priority and we have created criteria and expectations around where we place programming. Sites and Chapters must demonstrate their capacity prior to being selected for the implementation of a program.
- j. ONWA has taken the position that we don’t speak on behalf of Indigenous women, but rather we take up our responsibilities to empower women to speak for themselves. We are stepping into our responsibility to model our vision and create a safe space for Indigenous women’s voices to be heard.

Strategic Direction 3: ONWA will apply a culturally-based wholistic understanding of the issue

- k. Partnership with other organizations has increased significantly and we have also been working on strengthening connections with our membership. New partnerships include NAN Women’s Council, Thunder Bay Police, OPP, The Learning Assistance Network, Superior Strategies, Water Walk, Carlton University and Trent University. Potential partnerships that support our vision continue to be explored.
- l. We are training our team on how to effectively represent ONWA at committees and policy tables and advocate for ONWA’s position. We are currently writing numerous position papers to assist our team to understand our positions on important issues.

A. Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women

- m. ONWA has applied for standing in all phases of the Inquiry and we have created an internal Working Group to share information across all departments. We have hosted partnership meetings with the FILU’s, and we were successful in securing funding from both the province and federal government around our Community Development model and hosting regional ceremonies;
- n. Within our work around Anti Human Trafficking, ONWA has successfully secured the Indigenous Anti-Human Trafficking Liasons to build community capacity to support survivors. This has included the creation of trauma-informed culturally-relevant training, and hosting community planning sessions;
- o. ONWA applied for funding in partnership with some of our members on

establishing safe houses, as well as a crisis response model that includes land-based healing.

Strategic Direction 4: ONWA is a Strong and Stable Organization

A. Credible Membership Structure

- p. At the 2016 AGA we established the new membership structure, accurately reflecting the four directions and establishing two membership categories: grassroots Councils and incorporated Chapters. Having a credible membership structure and restructuring the agency has had a profound positive impact on ONWA being able to accomplish what we have in a very short period of time.

C. Risk Mitigation Plan

- a. The focused work of the past year has led to ONWA becoming low-risk agency. We are proactively evaluating how to improve our systems and build our positive reputation as an agency.

E. Strong Staff capacity

- b. We have invested in training and capacity building for our team on multiple levels, including our leadership. We will continue to build ongoing training into our work plan as we invest in the most important assets of our agency – our people doing the work towards our vision.

F. Effective Membership Engagement

- c. We have created and expanded the new Community Development Department to support our membership and other communities requesting our services. We will be working with communities to create visions of community safety and supporting the communities.

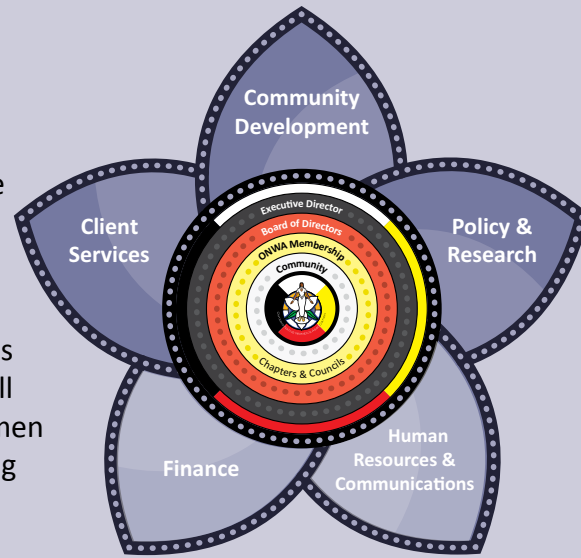


- Theodore Roosevelt

Our Work

The beaded flower represents the structure of ONWA. Each of the Departments, as represented by the five petals, have their own unique function and responsibilities, and all work together and exist for the benefit of the centre of the flower - the Community.

Certain issues, particularly those involving the safety of Indigenous women and their families, require specific attention and involve all departments of ONWA. Issues of violence against Indigenous women have always been at the forefront of our work, and as such Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Anti-Human Trafficking require an integrated, all-of-organization approach.



Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women #MMIW

Open Letter to the Inquiry Commissioners

The Inquiry, as it is currently formed, is leaving us with significant doubts on the ability to achieve their mandate. Our concerns include:

- Restarting the hearings in Thunder Bay
- The lack of commitment and willingness to reach out to families
- The lack of culture and ceremony
- The absence of strong Indigenous women's leadership
- The lack of communication
- The lack of procedural and legal fairness in the process
- The lack of a trauma informed approach
- The legal focus of the Inquiry instead of looking at prevention

The full letter is available to read at: www.onwa.ca/open-letter-to-the-inquiry-commissioners

MMIW Policy:

ONWA has been monitoring the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women throughout the past year. ONWA expressed concern about how the commissioners would establish a meaningful and safe engagement process with women and families throughout Canada at the early stages of the Inquiry. ONWA has also voiced concern about the problematic lack of transparency regarding the commissioners' consultations with Indigenous communities (intentions and outcomes), the Inquiry budget details, and specific details regarding the Inquiry timeline and deliverables. We requested more information about how a culturally relevant trauma-informed lens will be safely and effectively developed and implemented during consultations with families.

On July 11, 2017 ONWA released an Open Letter to the Inquiry Commissioners to express publicly our withdrawal of support for the continuation of the Inquiry in its current format and approach.

MMIW Pow-Wow

Support for families of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls must be grounded in culture, including ceremonies to honour them. ONWA held a Pow-Wow to honour MMIW in September 2016 with nearly 200 people in attendance. The pow-wow allowed ONWA to hold space for families and community of MMIW to access traditional healers and sacred ceremony. The pow-wow included traditional teachings, healing, and a chance for people to share their experiences and stories.





ONWA held a birthday party to hold space for the niece of Gladys Radek who is one of the many MMIW. At the gathering there was a screening of the documentary “Highway of Tears” with nearly 50 people in attendance.

MMIW Services:

ONWA is taking a leadership role in providing crucial information about the Inquiry to communities, families and agencies. A dedicated website for MMIW is being launched as a support network for survivors, family members, and loved ones, as well as an important touch point for referrals to community services.

In providing continued support to families, ONWA travelled with 13- 15 family members of MMIW to attend the announcement of the National Inquiry where Elders were present to support and care for the family members. ONWA’s MMIW Pow Wow was an important time of ceremony, as was our participation in the Sisters in Spirit Vigils and the Full Moon Memory Walk to commemorate the death of Sharon Johnson’s sister. On the U.N International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls ONWA hosted a Poetry Night in Thunder Bay as well as other commemorative events across the province.

ONWA has established a MMIW Family Support Program Services database and has begun to

compile a list of services in each community that can provide various supports to families, including whether the service agencies are equipped to provide trauma-informed care and traditional ceremony. ONWA will ensure that the service providers in this database are able to work with Indigenous family members in a way that recognizes: the impact of the trauma of losing their loved one, the effects of dealing with an often racist justice system in the aftermath of their loss, and the multiple, intergenerational traumas that impact Indigenous communities and families.

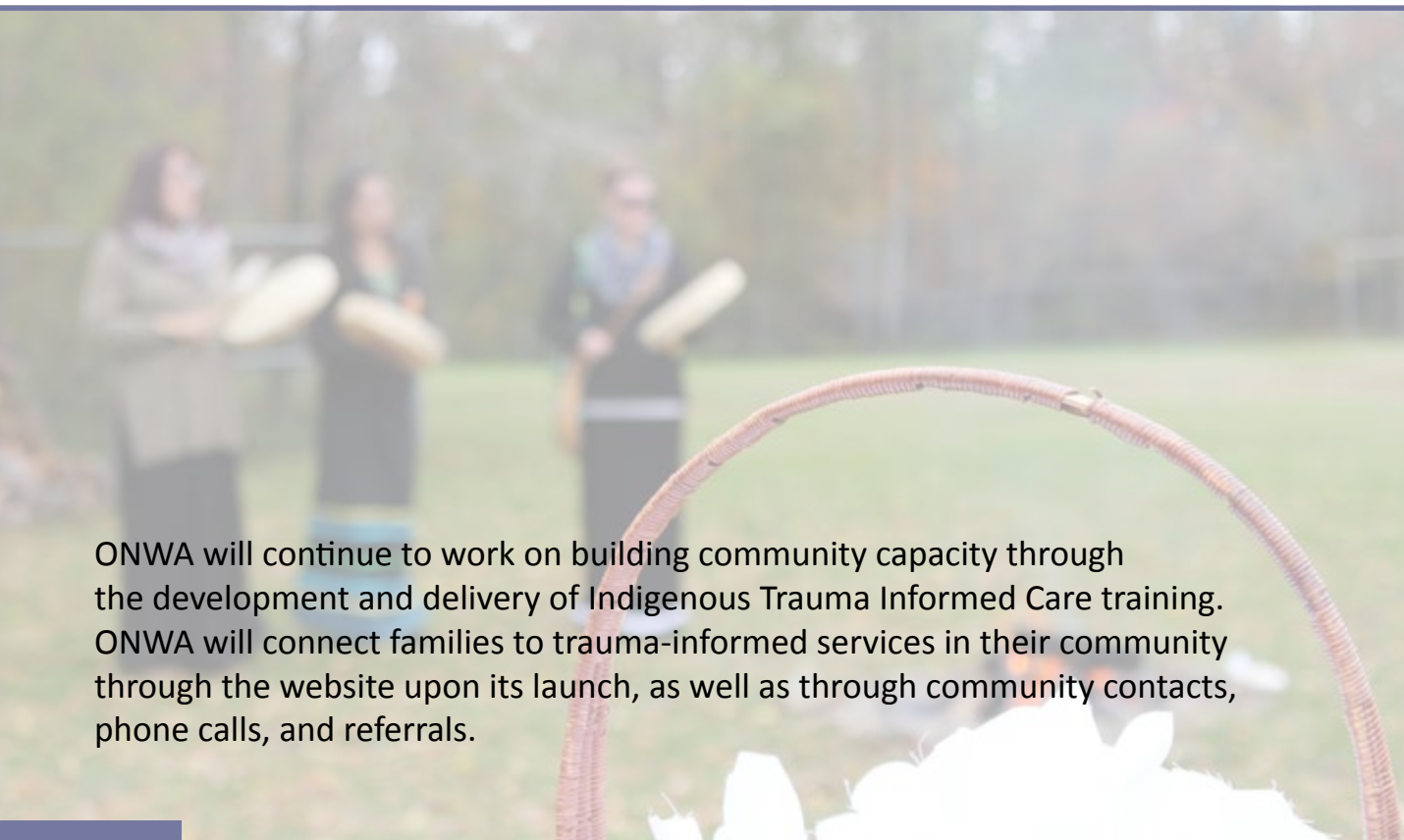
ONWA will continue to work on a delivery system that will provide community capacity-building through the development and delivery of Indigenous Trauma Informed Care training to address these skill needs. ONWA will connect families to trauma informed services in their community through the website that is currently in the final stages.



Sisters in Spirit Vigils

The MMIW program plans the Sisters in Spirit Vigils that take place on October 4th provincially. These vigils honour the lives of over 1000 missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, as well as acknowledging that the violence they experience is a national tragedy.

Provincially, ONWA hosted vigils in Sioux Lookout, Thunder Bay, Timmins, Kenora, Napanee, Geraldton, Dryden, Ottawa and Hamilton where families are given the opportunity to honour the lives of their missing or murdered loved ones. At the Thunder Bay site, lanterns were lit and set free to honour our sisters. This past year, over 500 people participated in the vigils across Ontario.



ONWA will continue to work on building community capacity through the development and delivery of Indigenous Trauma Informed Care training. ONWA will connect families to trauma-informed services in their community through the website upon its launch, as well as through community contacts, phone calls, and referrals.



Human Trafficking

Ontario is a major centre for human trafficking in Canada, accounting for approximately 65 percent of police-reported cases nationally. In June 2016, the province launched Ontario’s Strategy to End Human Trafficking with an investment of up to \$72 million. The strategy is aimed at increasing awareness and coordination, enhancing justice-sector initiatives and improving access to services for human trafficking survivors.

ONWA has continued to analyze policies, legislation and emerging trends in this area to inform policy development and provide strategic direction to address and combat Human Trafficking.

ONWA was the only agency in the province that hosted a human trafficking Survivor Engagement. After this engagement held in April 2016, ONWA continued to advocate for the needs of survivors across the province and submitted a number of grant proposals for funding to provide supports, capacity building, and develop responses to Human Trafficking across Ontario.

In March 2017, ONWA was selected as the successful recipient to deliver the Indigenous Anti- Human Trafficking Liaisons Program (IAHTL) to support Indigenous communities in providing survivor focused and localized responses to human trafficking. The overall objectives of the Initiative are:

1. Building Agency, Community and Survivor Capacity
2. Support proposal development for the Indigenous-Led Initiatives Fund
3. Support Indigenous-specific prevention and awareness

Six (6) liaison positions across the province, hosted by partner organizations have been implemented to meet the project objectives in regions that have been prioritized as regions with heightened vulnerability for Indigenous sexual exploitation. The regions and partner organizations are: MNO (Ottawa area);

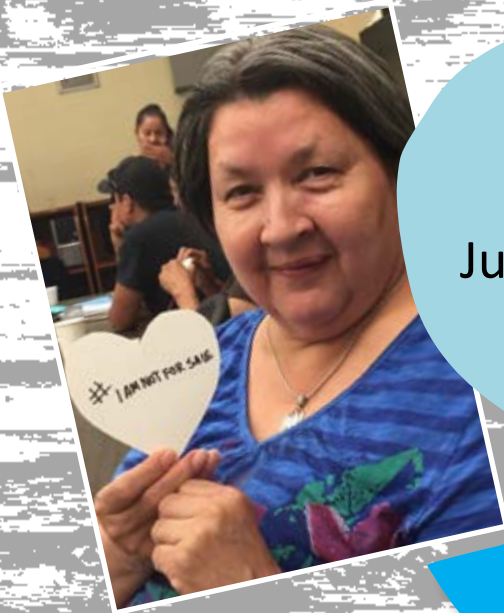
Situation Tables and Working Groups

The complexities of issues such as MMIW and Human Trafficking require an integrated response, as the work of ONWA in these areas intersects across several departments. To enhance collaboration, communication, and proactive measures, ONWA has established a Situation Table with all staff involved on these files. Other Situation Tables and Working Groups will be established in the coming months to support other work being done across departments (e.g. child welfare).

NAN (Northern Ontario); NWRCT (Toronto & Horseshoe urban focus) ; FFTAH (Treaty 3); COO (Golden Horseshoe reserve community focus); ONWA (Thunder Bay region). A project lead has also been established to support the liaison activities.

While each liaison project shares the same objectives and will collaborate on broader themes and issues, the IAHTL supports community-driven activities that best reflect local needs and priorities. All sites are expected to approach the work through a culture-based trauma-informed lens that includes gender-based analysis and prioritizes Indigenous people with lived experiences of human trafficking and sexual exploitation. There is an additional emphasis on youth engagement. Some of the local activities planned for the project include:

- Engaging community and survivors to increase capacity for addressing Human Trafficking in Indigenous communities.



July 30: United Nations World Day Against Trafficking in Persons

#iamnotforsale

- Establishing processes for community-led development of Indigenous service delivery models that address human trafficking
- Human Trafficking prevention and awareness
- Host and organize community engagement sessions on and off reserve that are inclusive and supportive of trafficking survivors
- Assess local agencies’ knowledge and capacity to address issues relating to human trafficking in the region
- Formulate provincial recommendations that are specific to needs of Indigenous communities and survivors
- Identify specific funding set-asides, including an overall strategy and action plan for evaluation, continued community engagement and sustainability

The ONWA Liaison position will provide support for engagement and leadership of Indigenous trafficking survivors in the Thunder Bay area to

develop a locally specific response model to address sexual exploitation and trafficking in Thunder Bay. Given the increasingly hostile climate of racism in the Thunder Bay area and the increased frequency of violence against Indigenous people, this project will also include a review of institutional responses to Indigenous women who may be at risk of becoming trafficked. The ONWA Liaison will develop institution focused preventative responses as well as wholistic culture-based service models and education in the region.

Operating through ONWA, the Project Lead provides expertise and support for the regional Anti-Human Trafficking Liaisons (AHTLs) working in the 5 targeted regions. This will ensure that a coordinated approach is taken amongst the partner organizations and Liaisons. The Project Lead will also oversee the evaluation of the overall Initiative and regional projects through measuring successes, challenges and outcomes. ONWA has selected a Project Lead with “lived experience” of human trafficking.

Policy & Research

ONWA’s Policy and Research Department is an integral part of helping ONWA to move towards our vision, working to influence policy and legislation that impacts Indigenous women and their families. The Policy and Research Department gathers, assesses and disseminates information that promotes cultural understanding and assessment to ensure a wholistic approach to service provision. ONWA works to create ethical practices in research and capacity through enhancing Indigenous women’s information governance. Further, Policy and Research continues to articulate and advance an innovative culturally-rooted, gender-based analysis (CR-GBA) to research.

The Policy and Research Department remains dedicated to addressing current government policies and legislation through promoting a strengths-based, Indigenous women-centered policy stance on a number of diverse issues in six key areas, including:

- Ending Violence Against Indigenous Women
- Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women
- Human Trafficking
- Education and Cultural Competency
- Housing and Poverty Reduction for Indigenous Women and Their Families
- Indigenous Children and Youth
- Indigenous Women’s Health and Wellbeing
- Urban Indigenous Policy

Ending Violence against Indigenous Women

The Executive Committee (EC) to End Violence Against Indigenous Women is a coordination body that provides oversight and guidance to the provincial implementation of initiatives under *Walking Together: Ontario’s Long-Term Strategy to End Violence Against Indigenous Women*. ONWA participates in the Executive Committee with the OFIFC, MNO, COO, IFN, NAN and Six Nations of the Grand River Territory. Under the Executive Committee, there are six key areas: supporting children, youth and families; community safety and healing; policing and justice; leadership, collaboration, alignment and accountability; prevention and awareness; and improved data and research. ONWA will Co-Chair the Provincial Committee on Human Trafficking with the Ontario Anti-Human Trafficking Coordination Office and will participate in the following Provincial Committees once their work begins in 2017: Prevention and Awareness; Policing and Justice; Community Safety and Healing; Improved Data and Research; Children, Youth and Families.

National Indigenous Women’s Summit (NIWS)

In 2016-2017, ONWA was involved in the National Steering Committee for the National Indigenous Women’s Summit (NIWS) that took place in Toronto in March 2017. ONWA sent two youth Delegates and five Observers to the Summit. The National Summit which began occurring in 2006 as a way for Canada’s Premiers, provincial and territorial governments and National Aboriginal Organizations to come together to work collaboratively on issues affecting Indigenous women across Canadaian. NIWS was an opportunity for First Nations, Metis and Inuit women to gather with Indigenous organizations from across Canada to work together to find solutions to issues that affect their lives with the support of provinces, territories and the federal government. ONWA delegates were able to bring forward key issues on specific topics for the Summit including:

- Governance - Indigenous Women have a Right to Our Own Organizations,
- Sustainability - Sustainable Core Funding is needed for Indigenous Women’s Organizations, and
- Culture - Culturally-rooted, gender-based and sustainable programming is needed for Indigenous women.

Breaking Free, Breaking Through Video

The Ontario Native Women’s Association (ONWA) and the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres (OFIFC) launched a public awareness video in September 2016 titled *Breaking Free, Breaking Through*. The video, produced by Apple Wagon Films in Thunder Bay addresses violence against Indigenous women and the supports needed for women and their families. The video is part of a research project completed by ONWA and OFIFC documenting the resiliency of Indigenous women in breaking free from violence.

As an organization with a mandate to address violence against Indigenous women, ONWA is deeply concerned with the disproportionately high rates of violence against Indigenous women and girls. This public awareness project brought increased attention and collaborative efforts to address the safety needs of Indigenous women in Ontario and for our communities to begin to have an open dialogue on this issue.



Indigenous Women's Leadership Forum

On February 25-26, 2017 ONWA hosted their first ever Indigenous Women's Leadership Forum in Toronto, ON. The Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario was in attendance along with other dignitaries such Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum and the President of ONWA, Dawn Lavell-Harvard. 51 women attended from across Ontario to attend the two day gathering; along with ONWA staff to be the conference support. During the first day, there were acknowledgements, presentations and blanketing ceremonies occurred for honouring Indigenous Women Leadership that was in attendance. There were discussions surrounding topics such as; leadership and strategies to support one another as Indigenous Women's Leaders. The participants were very pleased with the forum; ONWA is pursuing this to become an annual gathering.



Education and Cultural Competency

ONWA was invited to participate in a TRC Curriculum Steering Committee in early 2016. This Committee is led by the Ministry of Education and its purpose is to inform the development of Curriculum to be implemented province wide for grades K-12, as part of the implementation of TRC Calls to Action #62 and #63, which directly relate to curriculum. Under the Steering Committee, there is also a Joint Implementation Working Group, which ONWA is also a part of. The Joint Implementation Working Group plays a more hands on role in the review and development of new Ontario Curriculum and resources. In both of these committees, ONWA has helped to ensure that the voices and experiences of Indigenous women are included as part of the new Curriculum in Ontario.

Housing and Poverty Reduction for Indigenous Women and their Families

ONWA's Housing Policy Analyst supports the ongoing requirement of improving access to safe affordable housing while advocating for a Housing First approach that removes barriers of Indigenous women and their children experiencing homelessness into being rapidly re-housed. ONWA's focus is on providing housing policy, research, analysis and recommendations that are informed by an Indigenous gender-based lens to support Indigenous women and their children in attaining culturally appropriate housing.

The Housing Policy Analyst supports ONWA's Executive Director in her role as board member of Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services (OAHS). In working collaboratively as partners, ONWA and OAHS have greatly advanced housing related issues affecting Indigenous peoples across the province. ONWA's Housing Policy Analyst continues to promote and work in partnership with OAHS and to utilize the Ontario Urban and

Rural First Nation, Métis and Inuit Housing Policy Framework to advocate for increased funding and resources.

ONWA has been actively providing input on discussions related to the development of Ontario's Indigenous Housing Strategy and both ONWA's Executive Director and Housing Policy Analyst hold seats at the Indigenous Housing Strategy Engagement Table. ONWA has also been involved in providing recommendations to the Special Priority Policy (SPP) Working Group that falls under Ontario's Modernizing Social Housing Program. ONWA's position continues to advocate that particular priority needs to be given to Indigenous women and their families, in particular, Indigenous women who are fleeing violence and sex trafficking and require swift access to safe and affordable housing are at the center of ONWA's discussions.

Indigenous Children and Youth

ONWA's Policy Analyst works collaboratively with the Ontario Children and Youth Strategy in partnership with the Ministry of Child and Youth Services, OFIFC, MNO and TI on the following:

TRIO – Transformed Relationships through Improved Outcomes

This past year has seen the co-development of the TRIO Framework as well as TRIO's High Level Outcomes. We are now at a point where we have also developed our own ONWA Evaluation and Outcomes Model to guide our research, policy and data collection practices. Our Model is designed and aligned with our Strategic Picture to achieve the goals set by the communities we serve.

Children, Youth Family Services Act (CYFSA)

ONWA worked very hard to co-develop Bill 89, an improved and expanded legislation to strengthen child welfare and improve outcome for Indigenous children, youth and families. As a result of these legislative changes, ONWA has

identified issues as key priorities for regulatory co-development to be in place immediately for April, 2018 implementation.

Youth Life Promotion

In partnership with MYCS’s Mental Health Programs Unit, Children and Youth at Risk Branch and ONWA are working on a cultural and gender-based Indigenous youth life promotion and suicide prevention program. This program and activities will be designed by Indigenous youth, for Indigenous youth. These services will include mental health and wellness supports, and a balance of crisis and post-crisis land-based programming to strengthen Indigenous youth’s identities and support active roles within their families and communities.

Effective Programming Initiative (EPI)

ONWA is committed to taking a youth centered approach to supporting a systems change in effective programming in youth justice services that will take initiative and consider youth holistically, in connection to their communities, families and service providers. This initiative recognizes that there are youth who are disproportionately impacted by criminalization (FNMI, urban Indigenous youth, black youth, LGBTQ2S youths. EPI is fully committed to aligning with the OICYS and the 5 pillars.

Licensed Residential Services for children and youth

ONWA is currently participating in a discussion on the *Licensed Residential Services for Children and Youth* to determine the next steps for child and youth residential services reform including supporting children and youth to understand and exercise their rights and have a say about their homes; implementing quality of care standards informed by young people to improve the daily experiences of children and youth; and working with Indigenous partners, young people and other stakeholders to immediately explore options to replace the term “residential”, as well as drafting of regulatory changes.

Middle Years

ONWA has been working collaboratively with our partners and MCYS to form insights on middle years ages 6-12yrs regarding development and wellbeing. We have been reflecting on the experiences of Indigenous children, families and urban communities through a cultural and gender-based lens to formulate supports in both developmental and strategic frameworks.

Indigenous Women’s Health and Wellbeing

ONWA’s Health Policy Analyst accomplished a great deal at the Urban Indigenous Health Table (UIHT) and the Indigenous Healing and Wellness Strategy (formerly Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy) Provincial Collaborative Forum. ONWA’s work in Trauma Informed Practices, Models and Culture Based Trauma Informed Approaches has helped shape policies that directly affect Indigenous women, including Mental Health and Addictions, Social Determinants of Health Frameworks, Dementia and Palliative Care Models and Diabetes and other chronic diseases.

“The Circle has healing power. In the Circle, we are all equal. When in the Circle, no one is in front of you and no one is behind you. No one is above you. No one is below you. The Sacred Circle is designed to create unity.”

- Dave Chief, Oglala Lakota

Rebuilding the Circle

The Rebuilding the Circle research project continued into 2016-2017 with a focus on examining the impacts of violence on children and youth. The research is investigating the intersection between violence, child welfare and related systems from the perspectives of Indigenous women who witnessed violence in childhood or experienced violence in adulthood. Last year, 32 in-depth interviews were conducted with both service providers and survivors of violence in Hamilton, Niagara, Thunder Bay and Sioux Lookout. During this year, surveys and narratives from women who were interviewed were put together into a report that proposes recommendations for supporting a path towards healing and wellness. Research validation sessions were held in Niagara and Sioux Lookout where the findings of the report were presented back to the participants for feedback and validation. The research report was well received by participants, and the additional comments and suggestions provided were incorporated into the final report.

I’m so humbled to be able to work alongside with the women that have faced adversity and continue to make great gains and strides in this community. It is their drive and bravery that we as service providers need to honour, validate, and celebrate, as they are a testament to the true strength and resiliency of our community. Being a part of ONWA has allowed for both personal and professional growth. As an Indigenous Anti-Human Trafficking Liaison, bridging relationships and creating spaces for people to tell their truth helps us all to come together as a community and heal. I am filled with determination to continue working with the pioneers of this movement to end violence against Indigenous women.

Collin Graham, Indigenous Anti-Human Trafficking Liaison



Communications

Oral history tells us that storytelling has been part of our culture across generations. It grounds our sense of belonging as we tell the stories of our people through our own cultural lens coming from a position of resilience and strength.

ONWA has modelled our Media and Communications team to be part of our overall strategy as the “Voice for Indigenous Women’s Issues in Ontario”. By writing our own history, we can begin to challenge the societal norms and reclaim our traditional roles as community leaders.

One example illustrating this approach was the successful launch of the *Breaking Free, Breaking Through* video which used a strengths-based approach to discuss sexual violence. Instead of only focusing on violence, we showcased the strength and resilience of Indigenous women, highlighting their roles and unique identities. By shaping our message, we can shape perception.

ONWA is committed to an open and transparent communication process and strives to strengthen our efforts through media relations, publications and advertising, as well as the use of social

media. The Communications Coordinator and Communications Clerk coordinate the outward messaging of the organization, ensuring it is in line with our strategic directions.

The Communications Department also continues to provide information to families of all activities and goes on with regards to the MMIW Inquiry through press releases, social media platforms, telephone calls or email. ONWA will continue to scan news media for anything related to missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, and attend all relevant workshops, forums and gatherings to ensure that we can provide accurate and up-to-date information to families.



Poetry Night: UN International Day to Eliminate Violence Against Women

ONWA hosted a poetry night in November to give a voice to women, girls, survivors of violence, and allies. The evening included readings from both emerging and established poets, live musical performances, prizes, and a collective art project entitled “Orange the World”, the theme for the UN International Day for EVAW, where participants on the night dipped their hands in orange paint and placed them on a canvas to signify standing together to eliminate violence against women and girls.




Social Media


Social Media is where many people go for news; its reach is far and wide, from urban locations to remote northern First Nations communities. As such, it has been important and influential over the past year. ONWA is strategically utilizing these platforms to increase our outreach and raise awareness around our strategic priorities, programs and events.


Social Media Engagement Statistics

**ONWA Website** (www.onwa.ca)
(April 1, 2016 - March 31, 2017)
1,028,057 Page Views
139,235 Visitors

**ONWA Facebook** (@ONWA7)
(as of March 31, 2017)
3,036 Page Followers
3,163 Likes
+ 821 from last year (2,342)

2,342	3,163
April 1, 2016	March 31, 2017

**ONWA Twitter** (@_ONWA_)
(April 1, 2016 - March 31, 2017)
182,488 Tweet Impressions
+ 158,740 from last year (23,748)
6,325 Profile Visits
+ 4,045 from last year (2,280)
194 Mentions
+ 77 from last year (117)
640 New Followers
+ 411 from last year (229)

**ONWA Instagram** (/onwa_official)

Community Development

The Community Development Department delivers education and awareness programs to empower communities on issues that affect Indigenous women and their families.

Community Development programs are delivered in two ways - the first being by providing knowledge and information exchange through a Program Coordinator that utilizes a service delivery model that encompasses a combination of workshops, education campaigns, and regional activities. The second is through a flow-through funding model that delivers direct client services through our sites, Chapters and partnering organizations based on community need and organizational expertise.

ONWA has developed our service structure to reflect the reality of Indigenous women’s lives, and works with community to ensure that their needs are being met through capacity building. Community Development program staff are committed to supporting communities where they are at, empowering Indigenous women to be leaders and helpers in their communities.

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”

- Nelson Mandela

Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS)

This past year the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) program has been able to support over 30 Indigenous women across the province secure employment and pursue their educational dreams. Through our partnership with the Thunder Bay Lakehead Adult Education Centre (LAEC), for the Single Parent Initiative (SPI), we were able to assist Indigenous mothers work towards and complete their Ontario Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). With access to services such as resume and cover letter writing, access to computers, photocopying, printing and faxing of resumes, ONWA ensured that Indigenous women had the resources to actively participate in the ever-changing labour market.

Program successes include: Identifying community linkages that ensured Indigenous women had access to invaluable programs and services; developing partnerships that enhanced educational and employment opportunities for Indigenous women; delivering presentations to communities, high schools, college and universities across the province that showcased the ONWA ASETS program.

Aboriginal Diabetes Education Project (ADEP)

The Aboriginal Diabetes Education project (ADEP) encourages wellness among Indigenous women and their families through healthy, interactive, physical activities to create diabetes awareness and prevention in an engaging and culturally safe environment. The project also offers diabetes related presentations and education workshops on the importance of foot care to ensure information provided is culturally sensitive and age appropriate. The Mocc Walk is a provincial activity that encourages walking as a preventative measure to diabetes or as an exercise to help manage the disease.

Partnerships are an integral part of this project. The partnerships established enhances women’s access to necessary services in our community. Continued and new partnerships include Thunder Bay Indian Friendship Centre, 55+ Centre, Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre, Indigenous Diabetes Health Circle, Lakehead Adult Education Centre and Single Parent Initiative. The ADEP was invited to the National Indigenous Diabetes Prevention Conference and presented “The Mocc Walk” to the attendees.

ADEP Program Stats	
1,876 Workshops & Presentations Participants	1,031 Mocc Walk 2016 Walkers

Aboriginal Responsible Gambling Awareness Program (ARGAP)

The Aboriginal Responsible Gambling Awareness program educates Indigenous people about current gambling trends and proactive gambling

The Aboriginal Responsible Gambling Awareness program partnered with the Community Wellness Program to facilitate a “Know your 4 Sacred Medicines” workshop to youth. Following the presentation, one youth disclosed that she had past trauma issues with men and had a hard time trusting men, but that day she had a turning point. She felt SAFE with the presenter who was a man, and said she appreciated that there are good men out there and would use the teachings to trust again. As the presenter, this made me feel good inside and reminded me that I am doing the right work with youth and for Indigenous women. It’s cool to be a gentle man.

Aaron Tyance, Aboriginal Responsible Gambling Awareness Coordinator

awareness strategies from a culturally safe perspective.

This program provides community awareness, education, prevention, and individual referrals for our Indigenous women, community members and their families. The program offers provincial information booths and workshops on healthy gambling limits. The program has a partnership with Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School. Our Aboriginal Responsible Gambling Awareness Coordinator in partnership with the ONWA Youth in Transition program educate the students of the high school on responsible gambling by facilitating youth wellness activities such as paintball, gym night and learning from the elders. The program also provided traditional craft workshops including medicine pouch making, quilting and a face-mask exercise to support the importance of cultural identity among youth. The program is in the process of developing a youth drumming group and a fathers parenting support group to further enhance life skills that encourage responsibility to self and family.

ARGAP Program Stats	
170 Workshops	11,249 Participants

My favorite work-related story is the chance to see the women and their families on their healing journey. Watching our amazing grandmothers and elders working directly with Indigenous women and families and seeing their eyes light up when they are feeling supported and able to share their experiences. I have participated in healing circles/workshops with women who have been struggling, and witnessed the comfort they feel with ONWA as they open up to share their story. It is an amazing feeling when women and their families overcome their hurt and pain and be able to stand up and feel empowered. I am grateful to be a part of this.

Jessica Goodman, Circles of Care

Building Aboriginal Women’s Leadership Program (BAWL)

The BAWL program assists in building capacity and supporting Indigenous women as leaders in their communities. ONWA believes that this can be accomplished by Indigenous women changing the presence and practices of our women, by encouraging networking and by women taking a more active role in understanding how governments and leadership organizations function.

The BAWL program focuses on the issues, challenges, and inequities that Indigenous women face as we strive to fulfill the responsibilities of our jobs, meet the needs of our family members, and answer the demands of the community. The program also addresses the issue of under representation of women in positions of influence, on tribal and band councils, management boards and boards of directors of Indigenous organizations. Education and training presentations on Leadership Skills Development training, Public Education, Navigating Community and Information networks to help promote awareness of Indigenous women in leadership roles. Planning sessions for Indigenous women to shape the training program to address specific needs of their communities is vital for

community development. The BAWL program promotes Indigenous women’s leadership in both community and business development. Training is available on a number of other topic areas to build capacity in membership – Councils and Chapters.

The BAWL Program successes included training initiatives to 402 Indigenous women across the province.

Workshops focused on four main areas;

- A) The enhancement of the health and wellbeing of Indigenous women
- B) Building capacity for current and potential Chapters and Councils
- C) Community workshops to strengthen healing in community and promote the sacred roles of Indigenous women
- D) Educate mainstream organizations regarding impacts of colonization and historical trauma and work towards unity amongst Indigenous women and their families

BAWL Program Stats	
44	Women received BAWL training and accepted leadership roles in their community
5	ONWA Chapters requested and received professional development training for their employees
44	Communities received BAWL training Provincially

Mental Health Program

This program provides mental health non-residential treatment services to Indigenous women and their families when the individual is suffering from emotional, psychological or behavioural illness. Specialized services also include community development, capacity building and networking, as well as coordination

of education information sessions regarding mental health. The program is delivered in both Thunder Bay and Sioux Lookout, with direct counselling and case management being the primary focus in Sioux Lookout. Our Thunder Bay site focuses on community development, capacity building and networking, as well as coordination of education and awareness building.

Programs and services include: mental health prevention education; health promotion, peer helping; intake, screening, and assessment; early intervention; case management; and traditional therapeutic approaches. Referrals for crisis intervention and trauma informed support service support are made with grief and loss counselling being methodically applied in severe situations.

Mental Health Program Stats	
15	Personal development activities
175	Participants
1	Provincial campaign to help create awareness regarding mental health and the importance of life promotion during mental health awareness week
12	Capacity development training activities were conducted provincially
Training included partnerships with KO-E Health Net (telemedicine) to reach northern communities, and topics on lateral violence, trauma informed care, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder in adolescents and adults, mental health first aid, and non-violent crisis prevention training. There was also Inter-agency training that included orientation to culture/history and cultural practices in order to improve services for Indigenous peoples.	
595	Students at the Annual Fall Harvest learned about the 4 sacred medicines
644	Individuals in Sioux Lookout attended the Out in the Cold Homeless Program, Less Stress Fridays, Lunch & Learn, Kokum’s in Training, Craft Circles (beading, feather casings, regalia making, etc.), Healing Circles, Traditional Healing Ceremonies, and Sharing Circles

Mental Health Week, 2016

ONWA joined Canadian Mental Health Association (CAMH) in getting loud for their Annual Mental Health Awareness week from May 1st to May 7th. We re-initiated our annual provincial movement to help raise awareness regarding mental health issues by wearing a designated colour for each day of the week.





UAS Youth Conference

ONWA hosted the UAS Youth Conference at the Victoria Inn in Thunder Bay. The conference focused on employment and training and gave youth the opportunity to develop their resumes and cover letters, and to receive on-site certificates in WHIMIS, CPR, Smart Serve and other qualifications. Over 200 youth from Thunder Bay and surrounding communities participated, as well as numerous community partners and employers. Youth were inspired by speakers such as youth entrepreneur, Kendal Netmaker of Neechie Gear, and model Jade Willoughby, and a performance by Indigenous hip-hop artist, Cody Coyote.

The conference was led by youth, with Youth Ambassadors providing guiding the activities of the conference, providing input on the agenda, designing the poster, acknowledging the speakers, and acting in leadership roles at the conference. They were an integral part in ensuring the conference was youth-driven and met the needs of the young people in attendance. The conference was a huge success and received great feedback from participants.



Connecting with the Family Support workers and hearing about the great advocacy work they have been doing means I am able to share in that joy for the community they serve. My work allows me to continue the positive connections they are making with Indigenous women and other service providers and empowering them to continue on their journey with the work they do. We work together to support strength and change.

Jocelyn Rancourt, Circles of Care

Circles of Care Program

The Circles of Care Program focuses on Indigenous women and their children who are involved with the child welfare system. This program also supports families who are experiencing or who have experienced violence in their lives. The program is designed to support families in crisis and empower women to examine their current situation and create safe and supportive means of living for themselves and their families.

Activities include: working closely with clients to provide a circle of care that responds to the cultural, mental, physical, emotional and spiritual needs of the woman through collaboration with Indigenous and non-Indigenous services in the community. This is done by providing direct services in the areas of crisis management, traditional supports, systems navigation and advocacy support to the client. By creating partnerships with other service providers across sectors this program is able to create culturally safe systems for Indigenous women to support their family well-being.

The Circles of Care Program has 9 designated program sites working together across the province to ensure program successes

through advocacy, case management, support and holistic teachings. This program is delivered in three ONWA satellite locations, Kenora, Timmins and Ottawa and these sites are managed by the Client Services Department. The Community Development Department manages the flow through agreements for the remaining 6 sites in Fort Erie, Sioux Lookout, Midland, Hamilton, Thunder Bay and Toronto.

Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS)

ONWA was the agency that received funding from the federal Urban Aboriginal Strategy in order to support the functioning and direction of the Thunder Bay Urban Aboriginal Advisory Council (UAAC). In addition to a Partnerships Coordinator and Community Capacity Coordinator to support the function of the UAAC, staff were brought on between January and March 2017 for the planning and delivery of a Youth Conference and Youth Outreach activities. The federal funding has now changed and is called the Urban Programming for Indigenous People (UPIP) and ONWA has supported the UAAC in their applications to help address issues affecting Indigenous people living in Thunder Bay.

Urban Indigenous Policy Engagement Table

ONWA is a member of the Urban Indigenous Policy Engagement Table (UIPET) with the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR), the OFIFC, and the MNO. The main function of the UIPET has been the development of the Urban Indigenous Action Plan (UIAP), a budget commitment from the Ontario government to help guide ministries and service delivery agents in how to appropriately engage with urban Indigenous communities and organizations. In the winter 2016/17, ONWA, MNO, and OFIFC facilitated community engagements across the province on the UIAP Discussion Paper. ONWA led engagements on the discussion paper in Sioux Lookout, Niagara, and Thunder Bay, and also facilitated a series of Community Planning sessions to support them to identify priorities and create a plan relevant to the needs of their local urban Indigenous community. The feedback from the community engagements informed the development of the UIAP which is intended to provide a starting point of conversations with communities on how they would like to be engaged by the government.

CELEBRATING OUR WORK

Programs	Workshops	Participants	Provincial Campaign	Regional Activity
ASETS		30 clients		
ADEP	12 Diabetes Awareness Workshops	1,799	1,031 Annual Mocc Walk participants	4 Footcare workshops with a total of 77 participants 800 diabetes socks handed out
ARGAP	170	11,249		
BAWL	15	44		5 Chapters received Professional Development Training
Circles of Care	20	270		1 Family Support Worker Orientation Training
Mental Health	12	175	1,239 Mental Health Week Social Media Including Fall Harvest and Sioux Lookout activities	3 Mental Health First Aid Training 5 Non-Violent Crisis Intervention training
UAS	8 Outreach activities	284	Youth Conference	200 participants

Client Services

Working with a foundation of culture

ONWA program workers are guided by the vision of ONWA, with culture at the foundation of all programming. Workers share cultural knowledge, healing tools, and offer support to foster growth and achieve optimal client outcomes. We are aware of the interconnection between connection to culture and the desire to step into traditional responsibilities. ONWA programs seek to enhance and build upon Indigenous women’s leadership, encouraging them to share their gifts and mutually support one another, and empowering them to embrace and take up their traditional responsibilities.

Hearing our Voices: An Indigenous Women’s Reproductive Health Curriculum

ONWA AHBHC is currently wrapping up the *“Hearing our Voices: an Indigenous Women’s Reproductive Health Curriculum”* in conjunction with Northern Ontario School of Medicine, Principal investigator Dr. Naana Jumah and Dr. Lisa Richardson. The purpose of this project is to develop a curriculum based on the social determinants of Indigenous Women’s reproductive health for doctors in training in Family Medicine and Obstetrics and Gynaecology. This will enable doctors to provide culturally safe care that addresses the reproductive health care of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis women.

Aboriginal Healthy Babies, Healthy Children (AHBHC)

The Aboriginal Healthy Babies, Healthy Children Program (AHBHC) is a culture-based prevention/ intervention program for families with children six years of age or younger, including expecting mothers. The AHBHC program prepares mothers for parenting, offers pre and post-natal care, and early childhood development. The AHBHC Program acknowledges the strength of the sacred bond between mother and child and works to create the best possible opportunities for the healthy development of children through home visiting, service coordination, and referrals.

The AHBHC program is delivered in a number of ONWA’s satellite offices which are located in Dryden, Sioux Lookout, Thunder Bay, Gerladton/ Greenstone, Napanee, Ottawa and Hamilton. The Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) and the Metis Nation of Ontario (MNO) fund this Program through the Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy (AHWS).

The Maamawi Parenting Program (designed and delivered by ONWA Family Home Visitor- FHV) finds its foundation in Indigenous cultural teachings and practices, the Seven Grandfather Teachings inform all elements of this traditional



An AHBHC participant recounted how she learned how to make natural, organic baby wipes through attending ONWA programming, she was budget-conscious and stated that ONWA provides family with their basic needs, as well as a safe learning environment.

Culture and kindness: Restoring balance through the leadership of mothers

As culture is the foundation for all AHBHC programming, the AHBHC FHV’s actively integrated culture into their workshops, programming and home visits:

- Introducing each workshop with smudging
- Inviting Elders to our workshops, offering prayer and culture-based teachings
- Moss-bag making was an activity that a number of FHV’s offered to the community members,
- Mino-bimaadiziwin workshops were offered to foster healing and encourage healthy lifestyles
- Drum-making with the community
- Birch-bark biting
- Art-based programming, building upon strengths, celebrating our gifts
- Berry picking, medicine picking, sharing circles, fishing, traditional parenting etc. FHV’s reach out to the community and offer workshops that are tailored to the expressed needs of the community.



parenting program. Traditional parenting practices foster knowledge exchange among the program participants. Knowledge exchange includes traditional parenting, dental care, stress management, breast and bottle feeding, baby massage, baby proofing, injury prevention and positive discipline.

AHBHC Family Home Visitor's are cognizant of the interconnection between a culture-based foundation and the taking up of traditional responsibilities, the traditional parenting programming that is offered seeks to build up and empower Indigenous mothers, encouraging them to share their gifts and mutually support each other. AHBHC FHV also offer workshops that encourage healthy attachment between mother and child, baby massage is one such program that provides mom with a natural way to calm and comfort her baby.

The AHBHC FHV nurture relationships of trust with the Indigenous families that they support, home visits are an important part of the relationship development process. The FHV's work with the families from the first meeting, to craft a Plan of care, an important part of this process involves hearing what the mother

One Family Home Visitor shared a positive story about a young mother who attended prenatal education sessions at ONWA. As a result of the programming she was able to access at ONWA, staff reports that she was able to successfully return to her educational studies while also exclusively breastfeeding her infant daughter, taking time during lunch breaks to pump breastmilk and nourish her child.

(and her family) needs in the way of services/ programming, and working with her to develop a plan that is intuitively driven by her needs, aspirations and strengths.

AHBHC Workers

1,500 Home visits	500+ Families	301+ Community Initiatives Participated in	5,500 Community Members Engaged
-----------------------------	-------------------------	--	---

Circles of Care Worker

[Content] The Circles of Care Program is designed to meet the unique needs of Indigenous women who are involved with both the child welfare system and violence against women sector. It provides services for Indigenous women, their children, families, and communities by creating circles of care that meet their cultural, mental,

physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. The program meets these needs through the implementation of Family Support Workers to work as system navigators, designated and trained to support Indigenous women in a culturally rooted, holistic way, so that women are better able to navigate through the complex systems encountered when experiencing violence and involvement in child welfare matters. There is a focus on crisis management and stabilization, awareness and education, planning and goal setting, liaison with service providers and conflict resolution support as they work with Indigenous women and their families. The program has made viable connections in each of their communities (Kenora, Timmins, and Ottawa).

AHBHC Workers

40 Home visits	31 Families	5 Workshops	79 Participants
--------------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	---------------------------



Community Garden

All ONWA clients at the Thunder Bay site are encouraged to participate in our Community Garden. Clients are involved in the entire process, from planting to harvest, are invited to take home what they have grown. Fresh items grown in the garden are also used throughout programming and for the annual "From Seed to Table" workshop.





Traditional Healing

ONWA Thunder Bay site continues to host Traditional Healing sessions with Elder Al Hunter. Participants are provided with teachings on traditional protocols and have the opportunity to meet with Al one-on-one to receive their traditional names, colours, clans, doctoring, and support on their healing journey. We will be expanding and incorporating this healing into services delivered from the Kenora site.

Community Health Outreach (CHOW)

The Community Health Outreach program is funded by the Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy (AHWS), the Ontario Native Women's Association Community Health Outreach Program is delivered in three communities, namely: Greenstone/Geraldton, Sioux Lookout and Thunder Bay.

ONWA's Health Outreach Worker (HOW) program recognizes that Indigenous women are a critical part of community transformation, when she is in a 'good space,' safe and healthy, the community will also be safe and healthy. The needs of Indigenous women are framed and informed by lived experience, traditional knowledge and Indigenous identity, their health needs are connected to quality of life and access to community-based supports.

ONWA offers a trauma-informed space for all Indigenous women and their families, the HOW programs hosts traditional craft circles,

refers clients to Indigenous cultural and community-based resources, and provides client-support and home-visits. The HOW worker grounds all programming in Indigenous culture, and creates space for positive community-growth and change, supporting the emergent leadership of Indigenous women within the community.

The HOW worker expands the reach of ONWA within the community, promoting health and wellness, transmitting her knowledge and stories through workshops/seminars and sharing circles. The HOW engages with her community, inviting them to participate in culture-based ceremony including: drum making, painting, medicine picking and lands-based activities.

The Health Outreach Worker actively liaises with community-based services, partner agencies and mainstream/traditional health service providers, ensuring that there is a comprehensive network of trauma-informed supports available for community members to access, should they need to. In addition to building relationships up trust with community-based services and partner agencies, the CHOW also works to advance the interests and needs of her community through her participation in various community-based committees.

The CHOW works from a strengths-based perspective, empowering and energizing the community, to take the lead in promoting communal health, reducing disparities and incorporating a wholistic perspective that encompasses the entire spectrum of health needs.

One woman who regularly attended ONWA, stated that through her participation in ONWA programming, she finally felt empowered enough to ask for things that she needed. This woman felt confident expressing her needs, and was also certain that when in need, she could turn to ONWA and be supported.



Medicine Picking

During late summer and into early fall, Elder Al Hunter facilitates medicine picking with staff and clients in the Thunder Bay area. Participants receive teachings on the where medicines can be found, how to pick them, and their many uses.



Nihdawin Family Support Worker

274+ Family Visits	350 Workshops & Events	4,000 Community Members Engaged
---------------------------------	-------------------------------------	--

Ending Violence Against Indigenous Women (EVIW)

Ending Violence Against Indigenous Women (EVIW) program provides services to Indigenous women who have experienced sexual assault or other forms of abuse and violence. The Indigenous Sexual Assault Worker supports, advocates for and assists clients who have experienced violence. Front line services are delivered in Sioux Lookout, with the expansion to Dryden and surrounding areas of these communities. Services provided are confidential and based on the clients plan of care to assist them on their healing journey.

The EVIW program hosted a variety of events throughout the year, which provided clients with the opportunity to learn their culture, regain their identity, and start their healing journey. These include traditional teachings, drumming, healing and sharing circles, traditional crafting and activities on Mother Earth.

A new addition to the EVIW program is the Ending Violence against Indigenous Women

Training Coordinator (EVIW-TC). This position works out of the Thunder Bay satellite office, and travels to the required communities. The EVAW-TC has developed trainings and will implement the culturally rooted, wholistic training program

Aboriginal Sexual Assault Worker			
292	45	150	5,211
Home visits	Families	Workshops	Participants
Aboriginal Victim and Family Liaison			
147	27	57	986
Home visits	Families	Workshops	Participants

for the Family Support Workers, as well as other front line workers who work with Indigenous women who have experienced various forms of violence. The coordinator has developed and collected resource materials, including good practices in Violence Against Women (VAW), as well as communication materials to support the Family Support Workers with their responsibilities in advocating for Indigenous Women and their families.

RETII App
Reconciliation and Education of Teaching Indigenous Ideologies

ONWA is ready to launch a learning app with a course to help learners discover the history, worldview, experience, political organizing and advocacy of Indigenous women in the province of Ontario. The course will be offered for free to Indigenous women, and there will be a nominal fee to mainstream agencies to support the expansion of the program.

To register for the Course, visit: <http://reconciliation.onwa.ca>

“This history contains the seeds of our shared past, continued present and our future relationships as Indigenous women. It is necessary, now, for all people in Ontario to learn this history and to learn the impacts on Indigenous women in Ontario.”

- Dr. Patricia McGuire, RETII course creator and Professor at Carleton University



Christmas Food Drive

Nihdawin took the lead on this Fundraiser and made a inter office challenge between offices to see who could bring in the most non-perishable food items. Executive Director, Cora-lee McGuire-Cyrette, collected shampoo/conditioner/lotion from the hotels during her travels over the year and made individual personal hygiene bags that were presented to Shelter House. ONWA staff also have been assisting at Shelter House on a monthly basis with meal preparations for the homeless or those in need in Thunder Bay.

Nihdawin “My House – A Place Where I Live”

Nihdawin “My House – A Place Where I Live” Program assists Indigenous people that are experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of experiencing homelessness within the city of Thunder Bay. Nihdawin takes a Housing First Approach which looks at assisting homeless clients with the tools and financial means they require to create, sustain, and maintain a self-sufficient life. Nihdawin clients receive a multitude of culturally-grounded and relevant services that support them in achieving their personal goals.

This year, the Nihdawin team grew with the addition of another Family Support Worker and a Housing First Coordinator. They continued to develop and nurture community partnerships

that enable referrals and timely support to ensure clients’ needs are met, including a relationships with residents of a local alcohol treatment centre. The workers go monthly to offer traditional programming and healing for the residents, and work with them to get supports in place to help them find housing upon completing the treatment program. Clients also had the opportunity to participate in a medicine pick where they learned how to harvest local medicines and use them for their healing journey.

Nihdawin Family Support Worker			
334	337	85	2,340
Home visits	Families	Workshops	Participants
Housing First Coordinator			
-	-	8	454
Home visits	Families	Workshops	Participants



Hometown Heroes Award

The Thunder Bay Police Service nominated ONWA for the Hometown Heroes award, an initiative by the Thunder Bay Border Cats and Boston Pizza to recognize individuals, groups, and organizations going above and beyond to help their community.



A student at Dennis Franklin Cromarty High School was struggling during her last year of school. Her grandparents reported she was ready to give up and return home to her reserve. She connected with a Youth In Transition Worker who provided services and emotional support to her in this difficult time. During the graduation ceremony, her grandparents thanked the ONWA worker for her support to help the student achieve her high school diploma. This young woman volunteered at ONWA to complete her 40 hours of volunteering, and she assists with our regular monthly programming as a Youth In Transition mentor. She also received 1st place in an art show and had her pieces displayed in the Thunder Bay Art Gallery.

Youth In Transition (YITW)

The Youth in Transition Worker (YITW) program supports Indigenous youth in Sioux Lookout and Thunder Bay in their transition out of the child welfare system into adulthood. YITWs help youth to develop and pursue their goals, and support them to identify, access, and navigate adult service systems relevant to their specific needs. They also support youth to connect to existing supports and resources within their communities including, housing supports, education resources, employment services and training, life skills training (e.g. financial management, household management), health and mental health services, and legal services.

There were great educational outcomes for several of the YITW clients last year. Five clients successfully completed their high school year 2016-17, with one graduate and four students returning in September 2017. One client successfully completed their first year of College, and three additional clients who previously graduated have begun the process of enrolling in post-secondary education - two in college and one at university.



Quilt of Hope

The YITW and Responsible Gambling programs worked with students from Dennis Franklin Cromarty school on a "Quilt of Hope", a three month project early 2017 that brought students together to tell their stories through individual squares for the quilt. The unveiling featured student hand drummers who were mentored by the YITW and CWW and supported to make their own hand drums.

Our Growth

This has been an exciting and busy year for ONWA on our journey of change, one that is aligned with our strategic direction and mirrors our vision. We have been focusing on shifting our overall culture, enhancing training opportunities, and supporting the growth of our organization and employees. For us to empower Indigenous Women, we understand the importance of empowering our team and leading the way.



Organizational Development

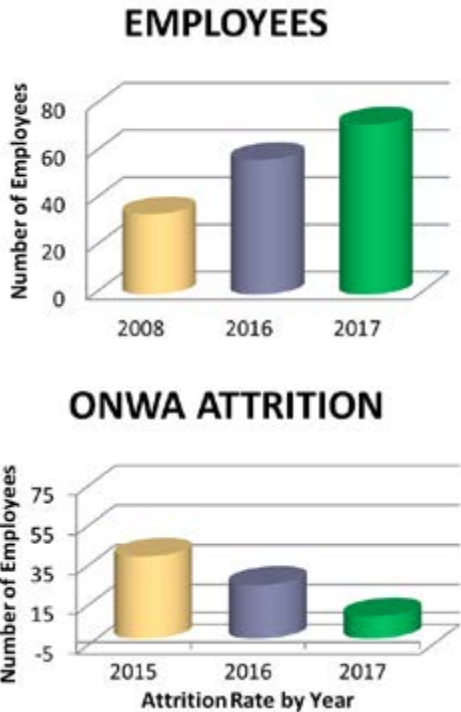
Human Resources

Growth and Recruitment

Growth and recruitment significantly increased over the past fiscal year. Key leadership positions were filled, including at the Director and Management levels, and the addition of the Circles of Care Program resulted in recruitment across the province.

Fiscal Year	Total Recruitment Competitions	Average # Days To Fill
2015 - 2016	13	29
2016 - 2017	35	22

A key focus in recruitment is ensuring we select the right candidate for each position as well as giving them the tools to be successful while retaining them long term. We continue to see growth and in our overall team and feel we have an engaged and motivated workforce, evidenced by our declining attrition:



Coming Together

The HR Department created a comprehensive onboarding program, *Coming Together*, to help ensure all new employees of ONWA are welcomed, informed and motivated to contribute to ONWA's success. *Coming Together* guides Employees and Managers from the first day of employment through to the end of their first year. It provides tools in creating long lasting relationships, transparency, heightened two-way communication and expectations related to organizational outcomes. The program incorporates coaching and mentoring as an effective and meaningful way to familiarize new hires with ONWA's culture, vision, mandate, guiding principles and strategic direction.

Coming Together is going through final approval processes and will be available to all employees of ONWA by the winter of 2017.

Pay for Performance and Pay Equity

One of our most notable accomplishments this year was the launch and implementation of our Pay for Performance model, ensuring all employees are evaluated on an annual basis. It is a tool used between Employees, Managers and Directors to heighten communications, build relationships and work towards measurable outcomes.

A Pay Equity Committee has also been formed to evaluate all new positions and ensure pay equity across the organization. Directors, Managers, Employees and HR take into consideration all perspectives and use the proven Hay method to reach consensus.

Indigenous Employees Graph, 2017

STATUS TOTAL	48	69.6%
Status Women	44	63.8%
Status Men	4	5.8%
NON-STATUS	21	30.4%
TOTAL	69	100%

“WITH ORGANIZATION COMES EMPOWERMENT.”

- Lynda Peterson

Training & Development

Training and development of our team was a top priority at ONWA this year. We established two Training Coordinator positions to help ensure employees have tools and tactics to exercise their roles and responsibilities in a confident, knowledgeable, culturally relevant, and safe way. Orientation and training was provided to staff from nine sites and Chapters upon the establishment of Circles of Care program, and all staff of ONWA were brought together for a week of training in Trauma Informed Care. In addition, *Own the Podium* training was offered with Stan Wesley to help employees to develop confidence with public speaking.

Building our leadership and management capacity was something we identified and invested in this past year. 12 leaders participated in *Indigenous Leadership Management Training* held at the Banff Centre of Arts. It was an intense, emotional and life changing opportunity where our team was pushed outside their comfort zones, boundaries were tested and they had much time for thought, reflection, and sharing. Trust, support, family and the importance of storytelling were consistent themes throughout our week. The facilitators stated that in 20+ years they have delivered this training they have never worked with such a cohesive and engaged team!



Leading edge

In keeping with ONWA’s mandate in empowering and nurturing self-growth and independence in women, we are able to provide our Thunder Bay employees with the opportunity to attend Leading edge gym bi-weekly. They participate in team building activities such as fitness and boxing and learn valuable self-defense techniques. Through this we hope to enable our staff to feel strong, active and knowledgeable regarding their safety and the safety of those around them.



Risk Management

ONWA has implemented a risk management approach to it’s operations, part of this plan is a regular risk management reporting to the board of directors and being proactive to look at risks outside of the minimum standards, moving forward each department will be required to review risks and mitigation strategies that apply to their team. ONWA has been recently assessed as a low-risk organization, we have been tested by outside agencies on our policies, procedure and evaluated each time ONWA has passed and received compliance reports. Below is a sample of the identified risks and the controls that have been put in place to manage risks. The Risk Assessment Tool was used to establish the level of risk of the agency as “LOW”. The items below are rated on a scale of 1-4., from lowest risk (1) to highest risk level (4). ONWA’s scores are 1 and 2 on all items, and measures are being put in place to ensure all items can be rated at the lowest risk in the future.

CATEGORY	ISSUE/RISK	MANAGEMENT	RATING
Governance/ Organizational Risk	Is there a clear differentiation and understanding of roles and responsibilities between the Board and Executive Director?	The agency has implemented all new human resources policies and procedures that removed the Board from operational decisions. The Board has also further adopted and approved an Executive Directors Manual, Board Governance procedures that clearly differentiate these roles and the implementation of a policy governance.	1
	Does the Board regularly assess and document the performance of the Executive Director?	The Board has not completed and documented the results of a performance assessment of the Executive Director. The board has implemented and approved an Executive Director performance template that will be implemented this quarter.	4

Service Delivery/ Operational Risk	Does the organization effectively manage serious health and safety concerns for clients?	The agency has developed new Service Delivery policies and procedures focused on quality assurance and rights of workers and clients. Further policies and procedures will continue to be developed and expanded upon as this is an ongoing process. The agency has a Health and Safety Committee that has been designated to include clients within their mandate and not just employees. Employees have been trained to inform all clients participating within events to inform all participants of the fire evacuation procedures at the beginning of the event. Also being implemented at all home visits is are fire alarm checks and servicing.	2
	Does the organization communicate service delivery results effectively to funding bodies?	All expectations contained within each contribution agreement are met, adhered to and monitored. The agency works collaboratively with each funding body to program implementation. All service delivery results are further backed up and saved on an agency shared drive for easy access. Further work is being completed this fiscal in the development of a service delivery database to effectively monitor all services across the province.	1
Stakeholder Satisfaction/ Public Perception Risk	Does the organization have an internal client complaints process that responds to complaints in a timely manner?	A complaint policy and procedure exists, will be posted on the organization website as well as regular confidential client questionnaires that are focused on client satisfaction and recommendations has been implemented. These reports are currently being compiled.	2
Financial Risk	Is there a written plan to deal with cash-flow requirements and/or accumulated debt?	The organization has no accumulated debt. While the Finance department provides cash flow projections as required, there is no contingency plan in place at this time, a contingency plan will be developed this year.	2

Financial Risk	Does the organization have and utilize financial policies and procedures covering procurement, meals/hospitality and travel?	The agency has rewritten all financial policies/procedures to be aligned with the BPS Procurement Directive, all staff have access to all the financial policies/procedures and have been trained for implementation. Also recently implemented is a Finance Drive, to store all financial records, templates, controls and information management.	1
Legal/ Compliance Risk	Does the organization have a process in place to ensure compliance with applicable legislation, regulations, and policy and operational requirements?	The agency has an HR Manager that monitors the agencies compliance, follow up on a regular basis for compliance issues, and we have a tracking system for legal compliance.	2
Information and Technology Risk	Does the organization have an electronic and/or paper-based back up system?	The agency regularly backs up the IT system, as the Finance Department staff drop off the back-up system at our IT company to be stored off site. The agency has further developed an O drive for all management documents, corporate documents and an S drive for all templates and documents for all staff to access across the province.	1
People/ Human Resources (HR) Risk	Is there a succession plan for key management positions?	Succession planning policies have been developed for the Executive Director position, other key Management positions are currently looking at succession planning across the agency.	2

Finance

The Finance department ensures compliance with both the Canada Revenue Agency and Canadian accounting standards for not-for profit organizations and is responsible for payroll, accounts payable, accounts receivable, receipt revenue, audit and financial reporting. The department is also in charge of filing taxes and recording fixed assets and deferred capital contributions.

The 2016 – 2017 fiscal year was an excellent growth for Ontario Native Women’s Association. The revenue from operations increased by 50.3% over 2015 – 2016 and generated a net surplus \$419,012. Growth in programs funded by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, accounted for 24.4% and growth in Fees for administrative services, accounted for 5.3%. All other funding revenue accounted for 20.6 %.

In 2016- 2017, 94.5 % of salaries and program expenditures were on program services delivery and 5.5% on administration services.

In 2016 – 2017 the operating surplus of \$419,012 represents 4.7 % of total revenues for the fiscal year with \$22,564 transferred from the Unrestricted Fund to the Restricted Fund to cover certain program deficiencies. The administration services cost of \$465,308 includes a loan impairment expense of \$81,214 and the previous year cost of \$448,823 includes the Healing Lodge sale of \$98,333.

Total assets as of March 31, 2017 were \$4,726,049, up from \$2,155,443 the previous year. Cash is \$2,141,575, up from \$545,243, an increase of \$1,596,332. Working capital is at \$875,802 up from \$452,068 at the same time last year.

Growth in Funding, 2010-2017



Expenditure by Service, 2017



Auditor’s Report is available upon request.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

BALANCE SHEET

March 31, 2017 | With comparative figures for 2016.

- NOTES TO BALANCE SHEET**
As of March 31, 2017
1. Ontario Native Women’s Association (“ONWA”) is a tax exempt not-for-profit organization incorporated on November 17, 1971 under the Province of Ontario Corporations Act.
 2. Working capital (current assets less current liabilities improved by \$423,734 (\$875,802 from \$452,068).
 3. Purchased capital assets are recorded at cost. The assets purchased this period of \$864,977 were building improvements to 380 Ray Blvd.
 4. Deferred Revenue results from funding agreements representing more than one fiscal year and contains the unexpended portion of the funding.
 5. ONWA reports using fund accounting maintaining the Unrestricted Fund, Restricted Fund, Capital Assets Fund and Capital Reserve Fund. The Unrestricted Fund is related to the general operations and administration. The Restricted Fund is related to programs that are funded with restricted contributions. The Capital Assets Fund reports the financial changes related to capital assets.

	2017	2016
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash	\$2,141,575	\$546,243
Short-term Investments	\$191,471	\$189,835
Accounts Receivable	\$687,161	\$550,453
Prepaid Expenses	\$12,629	\$20,030
Loan & HST Receivable	\$188,251	\$195,817
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	\$3,221,087	\$1,502,378
Capital Assets	\$1,504,962	\$653,065
TOTAL ASSETS	\$4,726,049	\$2,155,443

	2017	2016
LIABILITIES & FUND BALANCES		
Accounts Payable and accruals	\$1,932,970	\$676,843
Deferred Revenue	\$412,315	\$373,467
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	\$2,345,285	\$1,050,310
Deferred Capital Contributions	\$1,140,804	\$284,185
FUND BALANCES		
Invested in Capital Assets	\$364,159	\$368,880
Capital Reserve	\$148,500	\$148,500
Unrestricted Fund	\$727,301	\$303,568
TOTAL LIABILITIES & FUND BALANCES	\$4,726,049	\$2,155,443

STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENSES

March 31, 2017 | With comparative figures for 2016.

20172016

REVENUE		
Restricted Fund Revenue	\$7,945,431	\$5,291,859
Unrestricted Fund Revenue	\$911,605	\$599,670
Capital Asset Fund Revenue	\$8,358	\$8,358
TOTAL REVENUE	\$8,865,394	\$5,899,887

20172016

EXPENSES		
Restricted Fund Expenditures	\$7,967,995	\$5,323,514
Unrestricted Fund Expenditures	\$465,308	\$448,823
Capital Asset Fund Expenditures	\$13,079	\$8,778
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$8,446,382	\$5,781,115
Excess of Revenue over Expenditures	\$419,012	\$118,772

NOTES TO BALANCE SHEET

As of March 31, 2017

1. ONWA follows the deferral method of accounting for contributions. Restricted contributions are revenue in the year the related expenses are incurred. Unrestricted contributions are revenue as received if the amount is reasonably assured.
2. Materials and services are recognized as expenses when the materials and services are used in the normal course of ONWA operations and would otherwise have been purchased.

“Woman is the centre of the wheel of life. She is the heartbeat of the people. She is not just in the home, but she is the community, she is the Nation.

One of our Grandmothers.

The woman is the foundation on which Nations are built. She is the heart of her Nation. If that heart is weak the people are weak. If her heart is strong and her mind is clear then the Nation is strong and knows its purpose. The woman is the centre of everything.”

“The Woman’s Part”
Art Solomon

A Voice for Indigenous Women's Issues



Contact Information:

Head Office:

150 City Road · P.O. Box 15-684 City Road · Fort William First Nation, ON P7J1J7 ·
Toll Free: 1-800-667-0816 · Phone: (807) 577-1492 · Fax: (807) 623-1104

Main Satellite Office:

380 Ray Blvd · Thunder Bay, ON P7B4E6 · Phone: (807) 623-3442

E-mail: onwa@onwa.ca



www.onwa.ca



@ONWA7



@_ONWA_



/onwa_official