Southern First Nations Network of Care

Annual Report 2025-2026

Our Member Agencies

Animikii Ozoson Child & Family Services Inc.

Child and Family All Nations Coordinated Response Network (ancr)

Dakota Ojibway Child & Family Services

Intertribal Child and Family Services (ICFS)

Sandy Bay Ojibway First Nation Child & Family Services

Southeast Child & Family Services

Sagkeeng Child & Family Services Inc.

West Region Child and Family Services (WRCFS)

Dakota Tiwahe Services Inc.

Kinonje Abinoonjiiag Niigan Inc.

Waywayseecappo First Nation Child & Family Services Inc.
Gakina Animino Ayaamin Omaa Ne'Aakwong

Makoose C Gamik Inc.

Anishinaabe Pimadiziwin

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Governance

MISSION STATEMENT: In partnership with its Child and Family Services (CFS) agencies, Southern First Nations Network of Care makes a difference in the quality of life of all children and youth by ensuring their protection through the provision of safe homes with responsible caregivers, promoting the wellness of families and strengthening of First Nations people and communities. Services and resources will align with community needs; and activities will be more focused on prevention than crisis management. It will serve as a model of successful self-governance that will inspire similar levels of professionalism, compassion, and effectiveness among all CFS agencies.

VISION STATEMENT: First Nations children, families, and communities will be healthy, strong, empowered and enjoy an enhanced quality of life.

MANDATE: Southern First Nations Network of Care receives it mandate from the First Nations in Southern Manitoba and from the provincial Child and Family Services Authorities Act (CFSAA).

Southern First Nations Network of Care, along with the other three CFS Authorities, is responsible for the establishment and management of a province-wide service delivery system. This includes ensuring that services are delivered to Southern First Nations citizens throughout the province, as well as people who chose Southern First Nations Network of Care.

Message from Grand Chief Jerry Daniels

Southern First Nations Network of Care continues to demonstrate strong leadership and dedication in advancing the wellbeing of our children, families, and Nations. Your ongoing efforts to deliver services grounded in First Nations values and guided by the principles of self-determination are vital to the collective progress of our communities.

The Southern Chiefs' Organization (SCO) recognizes the importance of the Network's work in strengthening family and community systems, ensuring that children remain connected to their culture, language, and identity. Together, we share a commitment to creating environments where every child is valued, protected, and supported to reach their full potential.

I commend the leadership and staff of the Network for your continued dedication to transforming child and family services through an approach grounded in our values of respect, kinship, and self-determination. The path forward must always be guided by our inherent rights and our sacred responsibility to care for one another.

Together, we are building systems that honour our teachings and restore balance to our communities. I look forward to a future where every child is safe, loved, and proud of who they are as Anishinaabe or Dakota people.

Miigwetch,

Grand Chief Jerry Daniels
Southern Chiefs' Organization

Message from the Board Chair Margaret Swan

As Chair of the Board of Directors of Southern First Nations Network of Care, I am honoured to reflect on the progress we continue to make together in supporting First Nations children, youth, and families.

Our work is grounded in the belief that every child deserves to grow up connected to their family, community, culture, language, and traditions. Guided by the wisdom of our Elders, the strength of our communities, and the resilience of our families, we remain committed to advancing services that are culturally responsive, community-driven, and reflective of First Nations values.

The achievements of our organization are made possible through collaboration and a shared commitment to the well-being of those we serve. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to our staff, leadership, community partners, Elders, caregivers, and families whose dedication and compassion make a meaningful difference every day. Your efforts help create pathways for children and families to thrive while strengthening the foundations of our communities for generations to come.

As we look ahead, we remain focused on fostering strong partnerships, supporting family and community wellness, and ensuring that First Nations voices continue to guide our decisions and priorities. Together, we will continue to build on our successes, embrace new opportunities, and uphold our responsibility to future generations.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you for your trust, support, and commitment to this important work. It is a privilege to serve alongside you as we work toward stronger, healthier, and more connected communities.

Miigwetch.

Sincerely,
Margaret Swan
Chair, Board of Directors
Southern First Nations Network of Care

Message from the CEO Shirlene Asham

Booshoo, Tansi, Aneen, Ha Ho, and Welcome,

As I reflect on the past year, I am filled with gratitude for the dedication, resilience, and compassion demonstrated by our staff, leadership, Elders, caregivers, foster families, and the thirteen mandated Agencies that form Southern First Nations Network of Care. Together, we continue to walk a shared path focused on the safety, well-being, and future of First Nations children, youth, and families throughout Manitoba.

This year brought both challenges and opportunities. Across our communities, families continued to navigate the impacts of intergenerational trauma, housing pressures, mental health concerns, workforce shortages, and the ongoing need for culturally grounded supports. These realities remind us daily that child and family services extend far beyond crisis response. It requires relationship-building, prevention, healing, advocacy, and a commitment to supporting families before challenges become emergencies.

Despite these obstacles, our network continued to move forward with determination. Every day, frontline workers, supervisors, caregivers, and support staff demonstrate remarkable strength as they work to keep children safe and connected to family, culture, language, and community. Their efforts embody the vision of Southern First Nations Network of Care: healthy, strong, and empowered First Nations children, families, and communities enjoying an enhanced quality of life.

Our thirteen mandated member Agencies are at the heart of this work. Together, we serve diverse Nations and communities across Manitoba while remaining united by a common purpose: ensuring that children and families receive the supports they need to thrive. Whether through prevention programming, family reunification efforts, permanency planning, cultural connections, or community engagement, our Agencies continue to demonstrate what is possible when we work collectively and place children at the centre of every decision.

As an organization, we have continued our efforts to align our work with the principles of Indigenous self-determination and the vision established through federal legislation respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families. This work is transformative. It represents an opportunity for First Nations to strengthen jurisdiction, reclaim traditional approaches to caring for children, and ensure services are designed and delivered in ways that honour our cultures, values, and inherent rights.

I am particularly proud of the dedication shown throughout our network in addressing complex and evolving needs while maintaining a focus on prevention, wellness, and family strengthening. We know that meaningful change takes time, patience, and collaboration. Through partnership with our Agencies, communities, leadership, and stakeholders, we continue to build a child and family service system that reflects the strengths of our people and the hopes we hold for future generations.

Moving forward, we remain committed to innovation, accountability, and community-driven solutions. We will continue investing in relationships, supporting our workforce, strengthening prevention services, and advancing a system in which First Nations children grow up connected to their families, cultures, and communities. The path ahead will undoubtedly bring new challenges, but it also brings tremendous opportunity for growth, healing, and renewal.

On behalf of Southern First Nations Network of Care, I extend my sincere appreciation to everyone who contributes to this important work. Your commitment, compassion, and belief in our children inspire us every day. Together, we are strengthening families, empowering communities, and creating a brighter future for the generations to come.

Miigwetch. Ekosi. Thank you.

Shirlene Asham
Chief Executive Officer
Southern First Nations Network of Care

Policy & Research Unit

Core Functions

The Policy & Research Unit provides policy analysis, research, legislative review, and strategic advice to support Southern First Nations Network of Care (SFNNC), its Board, leadership, and mandated agencies.

The unit monitors emerging provincial and federal developments, including legislation under An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families, and assesses their implications for First Nations child and family services.

The unit leads the development, review, and interpretation of policies, governance structures, and legislative reviews while coordinating input from First Nations agencies and government departments.

Key Activities

During the reporting period, the unit:

- Conducted policy research, legislative analysis, environmental scans, and reviews of emerging provincial and federal requirements affecting First Nations child and family services.
- Developed, reviewed, and updated SFNNC internal policies and operational frameworks to strengthen governance, compliance, risk management, and business continuity, including:
  - ◊ Quality Assurance Unit
  - ◊ Services Support Unit
  - ◊ Policy Unit
  - ◊ Alternative Care Unit

- Supported the development and review of key organizational policies, including:
  - ◊ Artificial Intelligence Policy
  - ◊ Working Alone Policy
  - ◊ Business Continuity Plan
  - ◊ FIPPA Policy
  - ◊ Communications Policy
  - ◊ Human Resources Policy & Procedure Manual
  - ◊ Board Governance documents
  - ◊ Internal departmental and operational policies
- Reviewed policies and governance documents from mandated agencies and provided policy interpretation, recommendations, and strategic direction.
- Reviewed new and amended legislation and translated complex requirements into practical guidance for management, departments, and mandated agencies.
- Prepared briefing materials, research summaries, consultation documents, and strategic advice for management and the Board.
- Participated in national and provincial technical discussions, including the National Children's Chiefs Commission and Manitoba technical expert meetings, to support First Nations children, families, and community priorities.

Policy and Governance Work

During the reporting period, the unit contributed to organizational and agency level policy development, review, and implementation. This work strengthened internal controls, clarified roles and responsibilities, supported compliance, and improved consistency in the application of legislative and policy requirements.

The unit also supported the review and development of Board governance documents, Bylaws, procedures and provided guidance on related governance requirements.

Accreditation

The Canadian Accreditation Council (CAC) is a non-profit organization that accredits organizations across Canada, including programs serving children, youth, families, and adults. The 2023 Governance and Management Standards include eight sections. During the

reporting period, the Policy & Research Unit supported the development of policies aligned with the 2023 Governance and Management Standards.

SFNNC has also explored the potential establishment of a separate non-profit organization focused specifically on accreditation. Research was conducted to inform management about the opportunities, requirements, and potential challenges associated with establishing a new non-profit organization with an accreditation mandate.

Our Commitment

The Policy & Research Unit remains committed to evidence-based analysis, strong governance, legislative compliance, and practical policy development. Its work supports SFNNC and its mandated agencies in responding to legislative changes, strengthening organizational practices, and advancing priorities that support Indigenous children, families, and communities.

Policy & Research Unit

- **Marvin Emmanuel Adesanya**, Acting Policy Supervisor
- **Stephen T. Odupe**, Senior Policy Analyst
- **Mateja Jankov**, Senior Policy Analyst

Service Support Unit

Aniin,

The 2025–2026 fiscal year has been a year of growth, collaboration, and meaningful progress for the Service Support Unit. Despite the challenges and evolving needs within child and family services, our dedicated team has continued to provide strong support to our Nations, member agencies, children, youth, and families.

The Service Support Unit consists of a manager, three Intake Specialists, a Transfer Specialist, and an Administrative Assistant. The team's role is to support our member agencies in various capacities and assist Southern First Nations Network of Care membership with child welfare matters that require advocacy. This support is especially important during a time when we continue to adapt and evolve in response to ongoing changes in Indigenous child welfare, including the integration of An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families, which recognizes the inherent rights of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples to govern child and family services, aims to reduce the overrepresentation of Indigenous children in care, and ensures that services reflect Indigenous cultures, laws, and community priorities, while upholding the best interests of children.

The Service Support Unit continues to strive for excellence and works tirelessly to provide best-practice support services through collaborative efforts with agencies, families, and community members of Southern First Nations Network of Care. The unit works closely with provincial and federal entities, as well as other collateral partners, to ensure the continuity of comprehensive support for our children, youth, and families.

The Service Support Unit would like to acknowledge each staff member who demonstrates a willingness to work collaboratively in guiding, supporting, and advocating for families and member agencies.

The key functions of the Service Support Team include:

- Agency-to-agency transfers
- Change of Authority requests
- Intake services
- Supporting newly mandated agencies with transfer processes

Intake

Culturally appropriate intake services are provided by Brittany Jonsson, Brianne Jones, Sarah Flattery, and Shelley Wilson in accordance with The Child and Family Services Act, The Child and Family Services Authorities Act, An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families and all applicable regulations and standards governing child welfare.

This role involves a significant amount of time, effort, and careful attention. Staff remain mindful of response times throughout each stage of a concern or complaint, from initial receipt to resolution. Intake coverage operates on a rotational schedule throughout the year.

The Intake team is responsible for assessing all incoming inquiries, complaints, ministerial queries, and requests for intervention. Responsibilities also include resolving concerns, connecting families with resources, support, and services that help strengthen and preserve families, and assisting with communication strategies between families and agencies. Intake duties further involve gathering information, conducting extensive CFSIS reviews, and collaborating with community collateral partners as required.

The Intake team continues to utilize a tracking system that identifies and monitors the types of intakes received by Southern First Nations Network of Care.

Intake Category	Count
Case Planning	1,511
per diem/Level V/AYA/SYA/ECF/Transitional Planning	1,509
Follow up to Intake	1,038
Information	877
Complaint	436
IPPA	367
Community Concern	358
Transfers	298
Alternative Care	283
Minister Inquiry	277
Request for Information	110
Other	86
Critical Incident Report	65
Website Inquiry	39
ADP	29
Child Protection Centre	29
Notice of Significant Measure	19
Child Abuse	17
Adoption	4
Human Resource	4
Quality Assurance	2
Grand Total	**7,358**

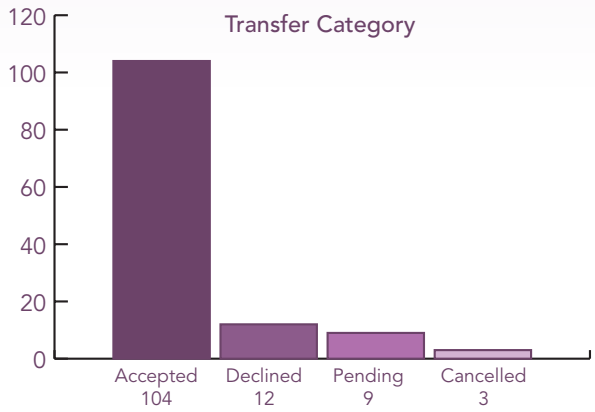
Transfers

Over the past year, we have continued to support our agencies with transfers and other matters requiring coordination between agencies, Authorities, and provinces. This work continues to grow and often involves situations that do not fit neatly within one process or protocol.

A large part of our work has been helping agencies navigate complex transfer matters, including change of authority requests, inter-authority transfers, and interprovincial files. This often involves addressing questions related to jurisdiction, culturally appropriate service delivery, family and community connections, and the respective responsibilities of sending and receiving agencies.

Another focus this year has been strengthening transfer processes through the development and enhancement of tools, resources, and training opportunities for member agencies. We have also continued to identify areas where greater consistency and clarity are needed to support timely and well-informed transfer decisions.

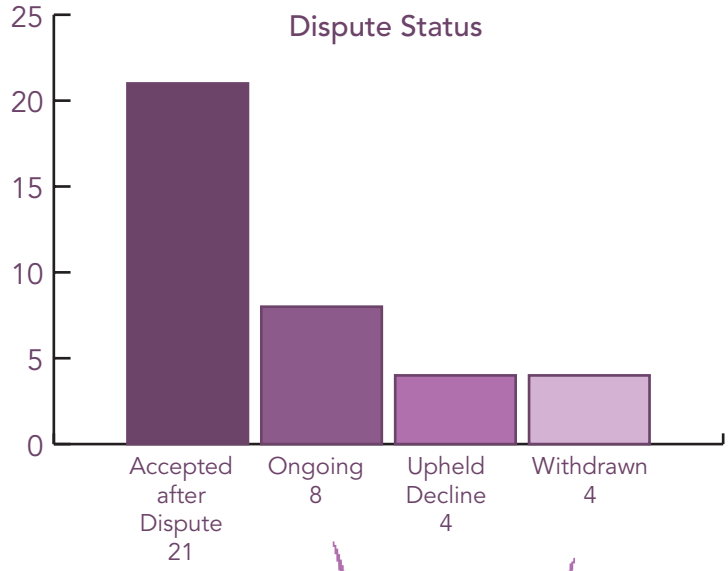
Transfer Category	Count
Accepted	104
Declined	12
Pending	9
Cancelled	3
Grand Total	**128**



Disputes

Throughout the year, the Service Support Unit continued to assist member agencies in navigating transfer disputes and other complex matters requiring coordination between agencies and Authorities. Our role includes facilitating discussions, providing guidance on policy and process, and helping parties work toward resolutions that support the best interest of children and families. While disputes can present challenges and delay decision-making, our team remain focused on facilitating respectful and timely resolutions. Of the 37 disputes managed during the reporting period, 21 were successfully resolved and resulted in accepted transfers, demonstrating the value of collaboration, communication, and a shared commitment to achieving positive outcomes for children, youth, and families.

Dispute Status	Count
Accepted after Dispute	21
Ongoing	8
Upheld Decline	4
Withdrawn	4
Grand Total	**37**



Looking Ahead

As we look ahead, the Service Support Unit remains committed to supporting our Nations and member agencies through the ongoing changes and complexities within Child and Family Services. We will continue to provide responsive, culturally grounded support, strengthen collaborative relationships, and assist agencies, children, youth, families, and communities in navigating emerging challenges.

The focus will remain on strengthening services, supporting positive outcomes for children, youth, and families, and working collaboratively with our Nations, member agencies, and partners to ensure that services continue to reflect the needs, priorities, and well-being of the communities we serve.

Service Support Unit

- **Sandra Starr**, Service Support Manager
- **Candace Campbell**, Transfer Specialist
- **Brianne Jones**, Intake Specialist
- **Shelley Wilson**, Intake Specialist
- **Sarah Flattery**, Intake Coordinator
- **Cher Gottfredsen**, Administrative Assistant
- **Brittany Jonsson**, Intake Specialist

Alternative Care and Resource Development Unit

The Alternative Care and Resource Development Unit supports member agencies in planning, developing, and implementing culturally grounded resources and services that promote the health, well-being, and safety of children, youth, families, and communities. During 2025–2026, the unit focused on strengthening culturally appropriate care, safe and stable placements, kinship and community-based care, and access to resources for children and youth with diverse and complex needs.

Key areas of work included oversight of third-party placements, implementation of Community-Centered Care Agreements, caregiver training and resources, foster home appeals and variance reviews, placement coordination, resource development, and advocacy for increased funding and treatment capacity.

Key Achievements

During 2025–2026, the Alternative Care and Resource Development Unit:

- Strengthened monitoring of third-party placements to support consistency in per diem rates, standards of care, and service delivery.
- Developed and delivered Care Agreement training and resources to support consistent implementation across member agencies.
- Developed policies, standards, procedures, and templates supporting Care Agreements and alternative care services.
- Established an Appeal Committee to provide a fair, consistent, and impartial process for foster parent and caregiver appeals.
- Reviewed foster home variance requests while balancing child safety, caregiver capacity, placement availability, and regulatory requirements.
- Advocated for additional funding, treatment capacity, foster homes, and community-based resources for children and youth with complex needs.
- Strengthened partnerships with member agencies, community organizations, placement providers, and provincial partners.

Alternative Care Activity

Activity	Total
Child Removals	43
Foster Home Variances	33
Foster Home License Appeals	6
Grand Total	**82**

Of the 33 foster home variance requests reviewed:

- 16 were approved for mixed facilities;
- 16 were approved for homes caring for more than seven dependents; and
- 1 was approved for foster home caring for more than three children under five.

No variances were approved for homes seeking to care for more than two children under two.

These reviews continued to balance the need for placement capacity with child safety, caregiver capacity, regulatory requirements, and the availability of appropriate resources.

Care Agreements

Following the release of the Province of Manitoba's Community-Centered Care Agreements, the unit provided ongoing support to member agencies to promote consistent, culturally safe, and community-centered implementation. The team developed and delivered Care Agreement training and a comprehensive Care Agreement Guide containing standards, policies, procedures, templates, and regulatory requirements.

The unit worked closely with the Department of Families to share updates, collect and analyze data, identify implementation strengths and challenges, and support continuous improvement. Kinship and community-based placements remained a key priority.

Kinship and Community-Based Care

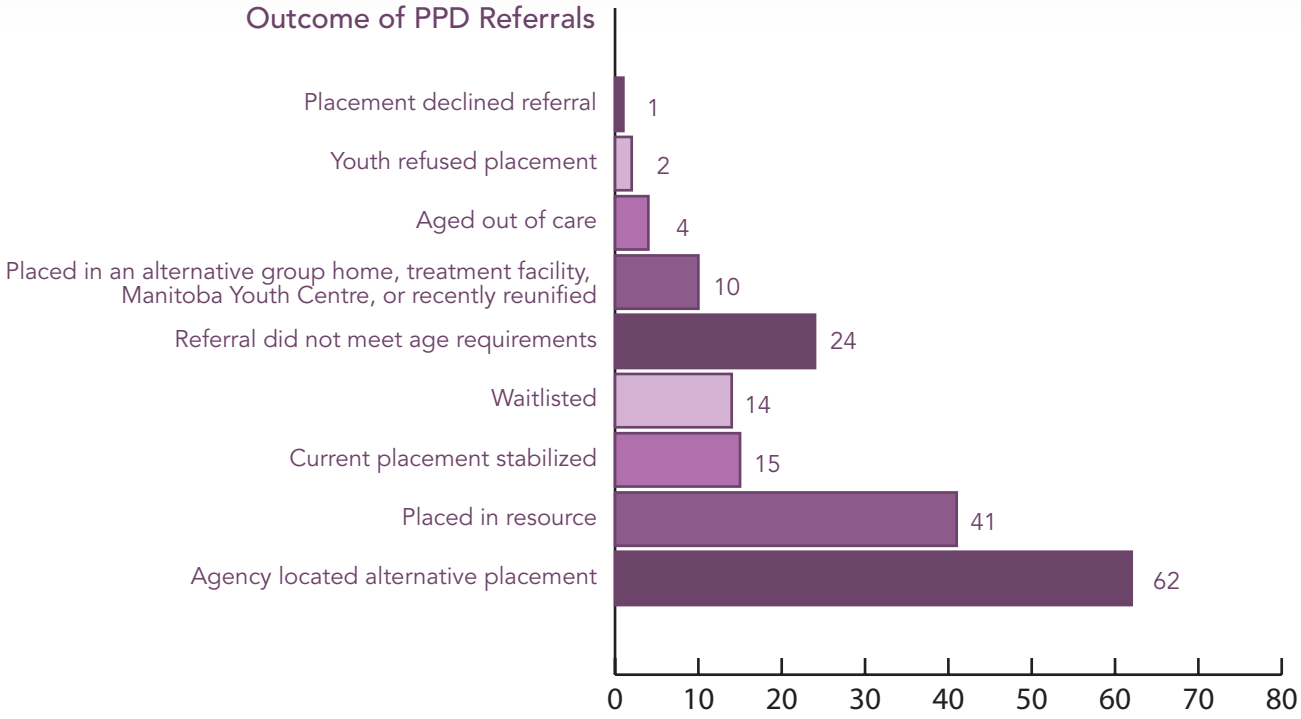
The unit continued to promote kinship and community-based placements to maintain family, cultural, and community connections for children and youth. A Kinship Care Package was developed for current and prospective caregivers, and Kinship Caregiver Training is being developed to strengthen caregiver knowledge and capacity.

Placement Coordination and Provincial Placement Desk

The Collaborative Authority Resource Team (CART), with one representative from each Authority, continues to work with agencies to identify and secure longer-term placements. Activities include monitoring Emergency Placement Resource (EPR) usage, meeting with EPR staff, attending placement planning conferences, reviewing vacancies, and coordinating with the Provincial Placement Desk (PPD).

Referral Type	Count
Group Care	122
Referral Closed prior to being referred to placement	40
Treatment Foster Home	6
Foster Home and Group Care	5
Grand Total	**173**

Outcome of PPD Referrals	Count
Agency located alternative placement	62
Placed in resource	41
Current placement stabilized	15
Waitlisted	14
Referral did not meet age requirements	24
Placed in an alternative group home, treatment facility, Manitoba Youth Centre, or recently reunified	10
Aged out of care	4
Youth refused placement	2
Placement declined referral	1
Grand Total	**173**



In 2025–2026, Southern Network member agencies submitted 173 PPD referrals. Of these, 62 resulted in an alternative placement being found by the agency, 41 resulted in placement in the referred resource, 15 were cancelled after the current placement stabilized, and 14 remained on the waitlist. The remaining referrals were closed or resolved due to eligibility, age, reunification, treatment, youth preference, or other placement outcomes.

Emergency Placement Resources and Ongoing Challenges

The unit continues to work with EPR providers to monitor admissions, discharges, placement duration, and discharge planning. The ongoing shortage of EPR and foster home resources remains a significant challenge for member agencies, with many resources operating at or above capacity and PPD providers maintaining extensive waitlists.

Limited treatment options for youth experiencing complex mental health and substance use also continue to create pressure on agencies, which may need to develop individualized placements. Expanding family-based, community-based, treatment, and agency-approved foster care resources remains a priority to improve placement stability and reduce reliance on emergency and specialized resources.

Agency Alternative Care Committee (AACC)

The Agency Alternative Care Committee (AACC), comprising 13 coordinators representing Southern agencies, met quarterly to discuss legislative updates, placement resources, training needs, Care Agreement implementation, and resources and guidance for agencies.

Specialized Alternative Care Supports

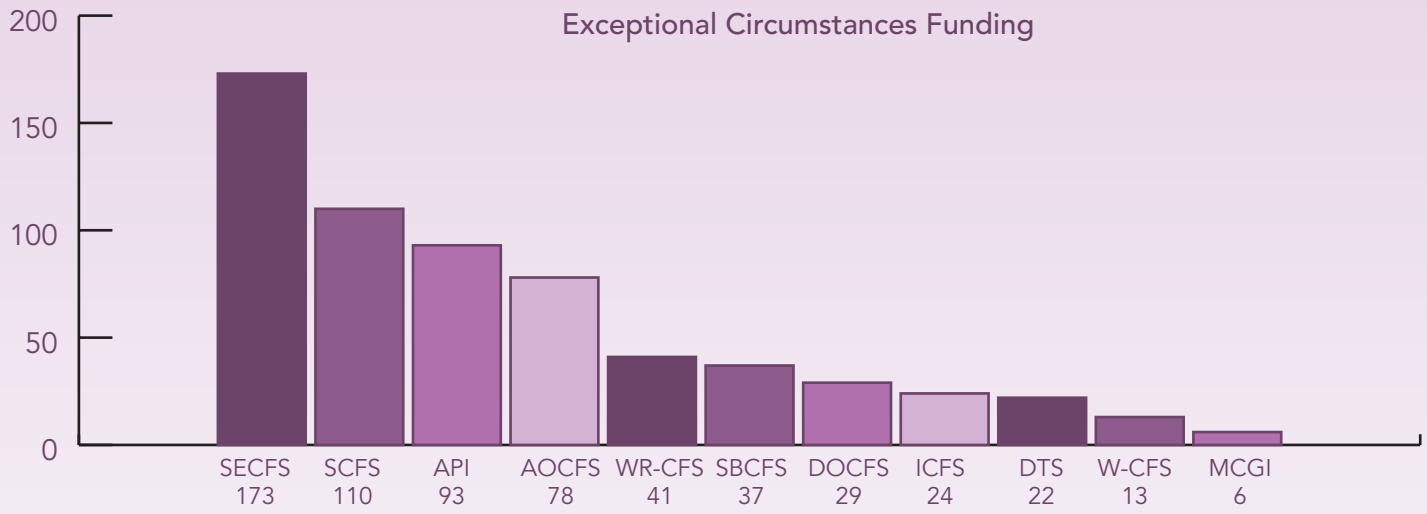
The Alternative Care Specialist provides support and coordination for children and youth in alternative care, working with caregivers, agencies, and community partners on placement concerns, foster parent appeals, policies, services, and resources. The role also supports tracking and monitoring SFNNC's four Care Agreements.

The Special Rates Specialist reviews Special Rates and Agreements with Young Adults (AYA) submissions, ensures required documentation is complete, reviews and approves rates exceeding $150.00 daily per diem, and liaises with Southern agencies and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC). The Specialist also monitors third-party placement per diem rates and serves on the Keith Cooper Scholarship Team.

Exceptional Circumstances Funding

The Unit processed and supported 626 Exceptional Circumstances Funding (ECF) submissions across member agencies.

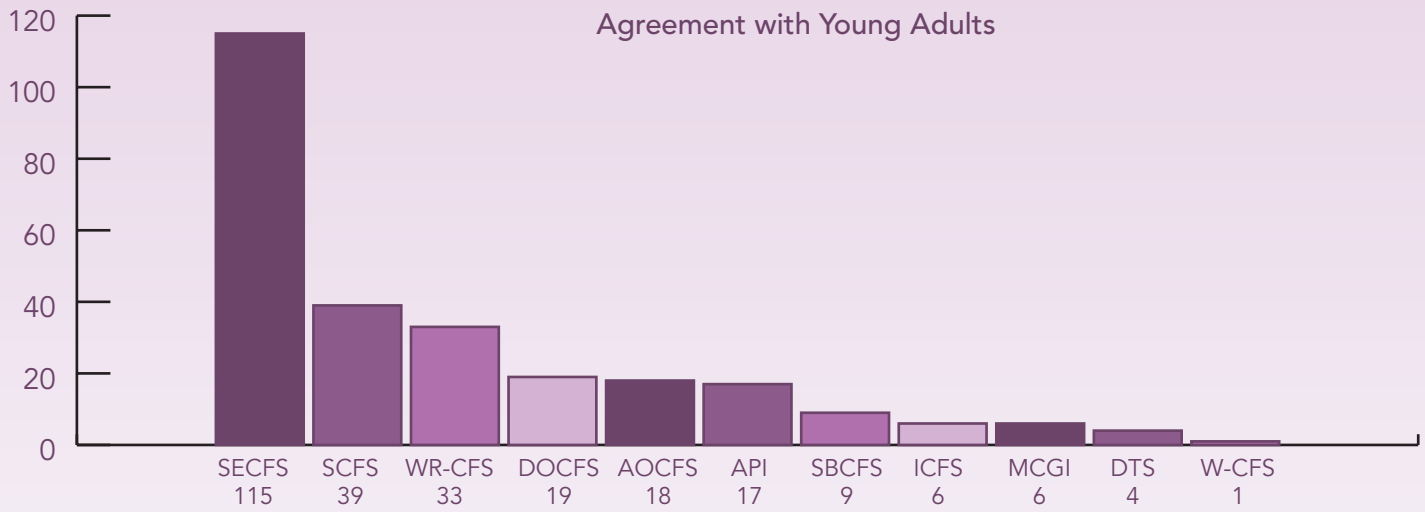
ECF	Count
Southeast Child and Family Services	173
Sagkeeng Child and Family Services	110
Anishinaabe Pimadiziwin Inc.	93
Animikii Ozoson Child and Family Services	78
West Region Child and Family Services	41
Sandy Bay Child and Family Services	37
Dakota Ojibway Child and Family Services	29
Intertribal Child and Family Services	24
Dakota Tiwahe Services	22
Waywayseecappo First Nation Child & Family Services	13
Makoose C Gamik Inc.	6
Grand Total	**626**



Agreement with Young Adults:

The Unit also supported 267 Agreements with Young Adults (AYA) across Southern Network member agencies.

Agreements with Young Adults	Count
Southeast Child and Family Services	115
Sagkeeng Child and Family Services	39
West Region Child and Family Services	33
Dakota Ojibway Child and Family Services	19
Animikii Ozoson Child and Family Services	18
Anishinaabe Pimadiziwin Inc.	17
Sandy Bay Child and Family Services	9
Intertribal Child and Family Services	6
Makoose C Gamik Inc.	6
Dakota Tiwahe Services	4
Waywayseecappo First Nation Child & Family Services	1
Grand Total	**267**



Partnerships and Resource Development

The unit strengthened partnerships with End Homelessness Winnipeg, the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth (MACY), community organizations, and placement providers. These partnerships supported data collection and discussions on youth aging out of care, homelessness, service gaps, and opportunities to improve outcomes during the transition to adulthood.

The unit also continued meeting with placement and treatment providers, conducting site visits and tours, reviewing service proposals, and advocating for additional resources and treatment capacity.

Acknowledgements

We sincerely thank our member agencies, community partners, placement providers, and provincial partners for their continued collaboration and commitment to improving placement opportunities and outcomes for children and youth with diverse and complex needs.

Alternative Care and Resource Development Unit

- **Lucinda Massan**, Acting Alternative Care and Resource Development Manager
- **Meagan Parisian**, Alternative Care and Resource Development Manager
- **Jessica Thordarson**, Alternative Care Placement Coordinator
- **Amanda Schubert**, Alternative Care Specialist
- **Sarah Flattery,** Intake Coordinator
- **Tiffany Newton**, Administrative Assistant

Quality Assurance Unit

The Quality Assurance (QA) Unit works in collaboration with Southern Network staff, 13 member agencies, communities and their leadership which include Chief and Councils, to ensure quality services are being provided to the children and families of our Southern First Nations.

The QA Unit also works collaboratively with the provincial and federal compliance bodies.

Major Functions of QA Unit for 2025/2026

- Transfers Working Groups are established to include representatives from the QA Team and Service Support Team, to facilitate communication between the four Authorities, Province, and member agencies as required:
- Oversight of Critical Incident and Serious Injury Reporting for our member Agencies.
    - ◊ Consultation with member agencies to determine if an Internal Agency Review (IAR) is required.
    - ◊ The purpose of an IAR is to review services provided to a child or youth as well as circumstances and events leading up to injury or death. The findings of the review are then analyzed by the agency to determine areas in need of improvement and whether further training is required for staff.
- Child and Family Services Information System (CFSIS) Data Compliance
- Data Analysis (including Child Maintenance (CM) Billings)
- Year-end Reporting
- Child Abuse Committees
- Supporting SFNNC member agencies in CFSA documentation practices
- Provide consultation for historical and current services provided to children and families

Critical Incident Reviews & Reporting

Member agencies are required to report critical incidents if the child or youth was receiving services from the agency or if that child or its parent/guardian received services from an agency within one year before a critical incident occurred. The agency should complete a Critical Incident Report. If more than one agency was involved, both agencies may be required to report.

Critical injury reports can be sent to cir@southernnetwork.org

All serious injuries occurring July 1, 2023, or later must be reported to the Manitoba Advocate for Children and Youth (MACY).

What is a critical incident?

A critical incident is an incident that has resulted in the death or serious injury of a child or youth.

What is a serious Injury?

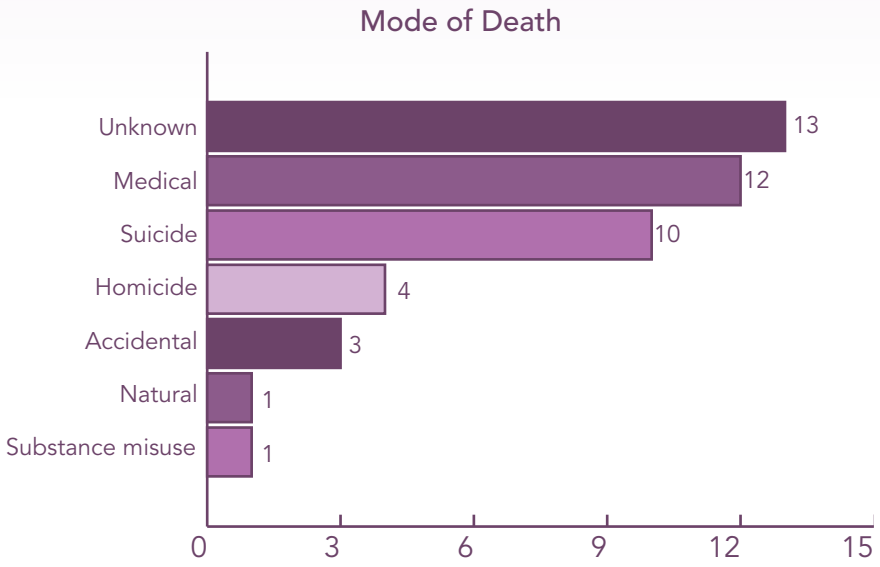
A serious injury is a physical or psychological injury that will have life-long, permanent effects.

The following statistics represent the Critical Incident and Serious Injury reports received by Southern Network during the period April 1, 2025, to March 31, 2026.

Critical Incident Statistics:

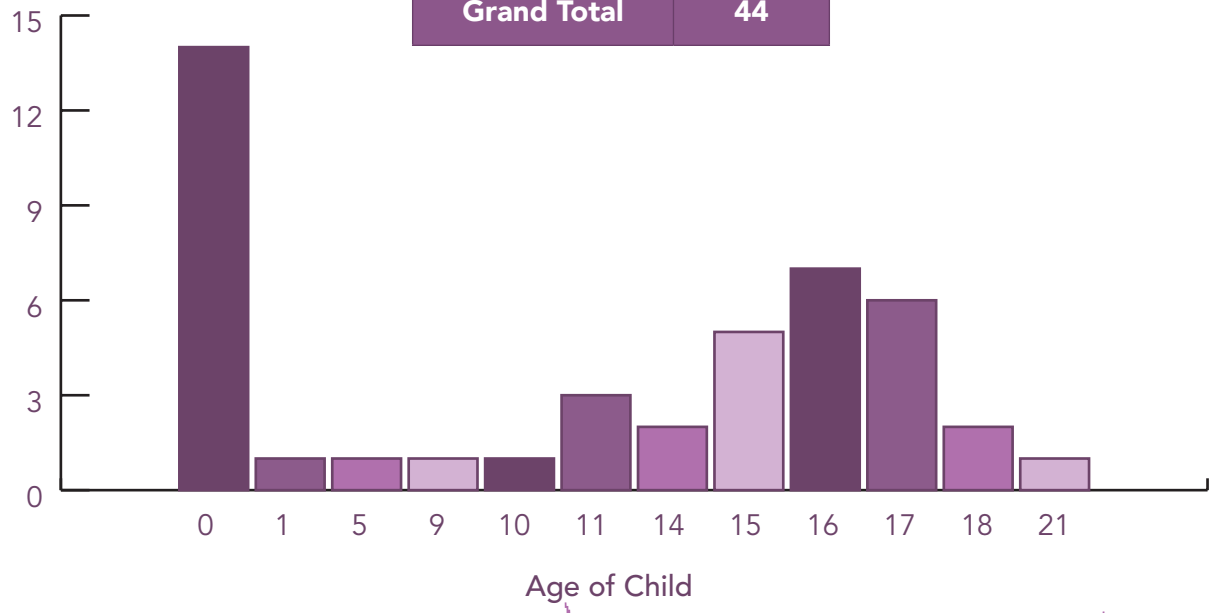
Mode of Death:

Mode of Death	Count
Unknown	13
Medical	12
Suicide	10
Homicide	4
Accidental	3
Natural	1
Substance misuse	1
Grand Total	**44**



Age of Child:

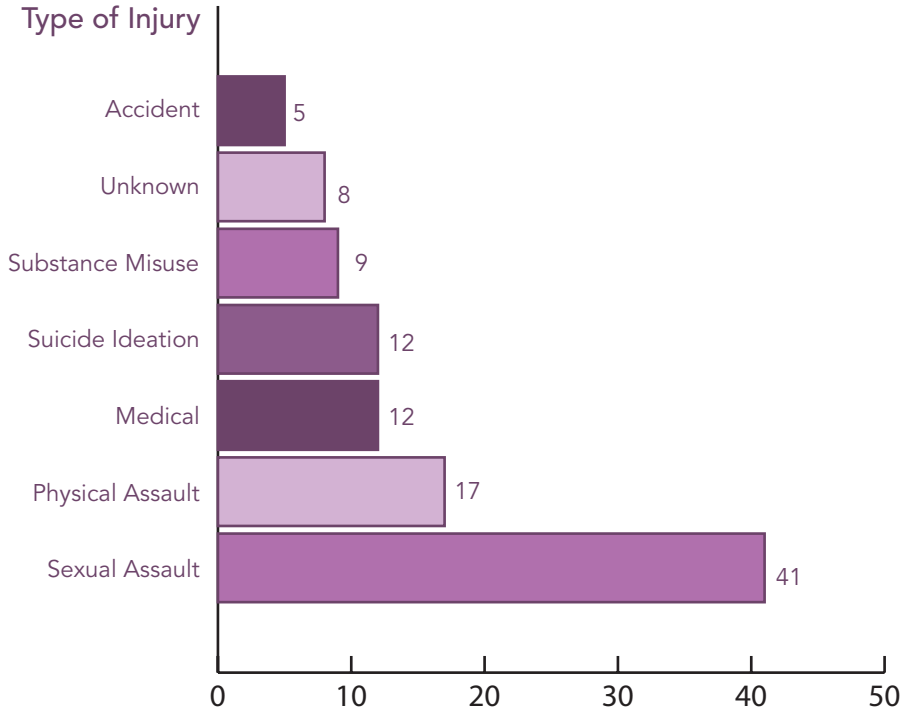
Age	Count
0	14
1	1
5	1
9	1
10	1
11	3
14	2
15	5
16	7
17	6
18	2
21	1
Grand Total	**44**



Serious Injury Statistics:

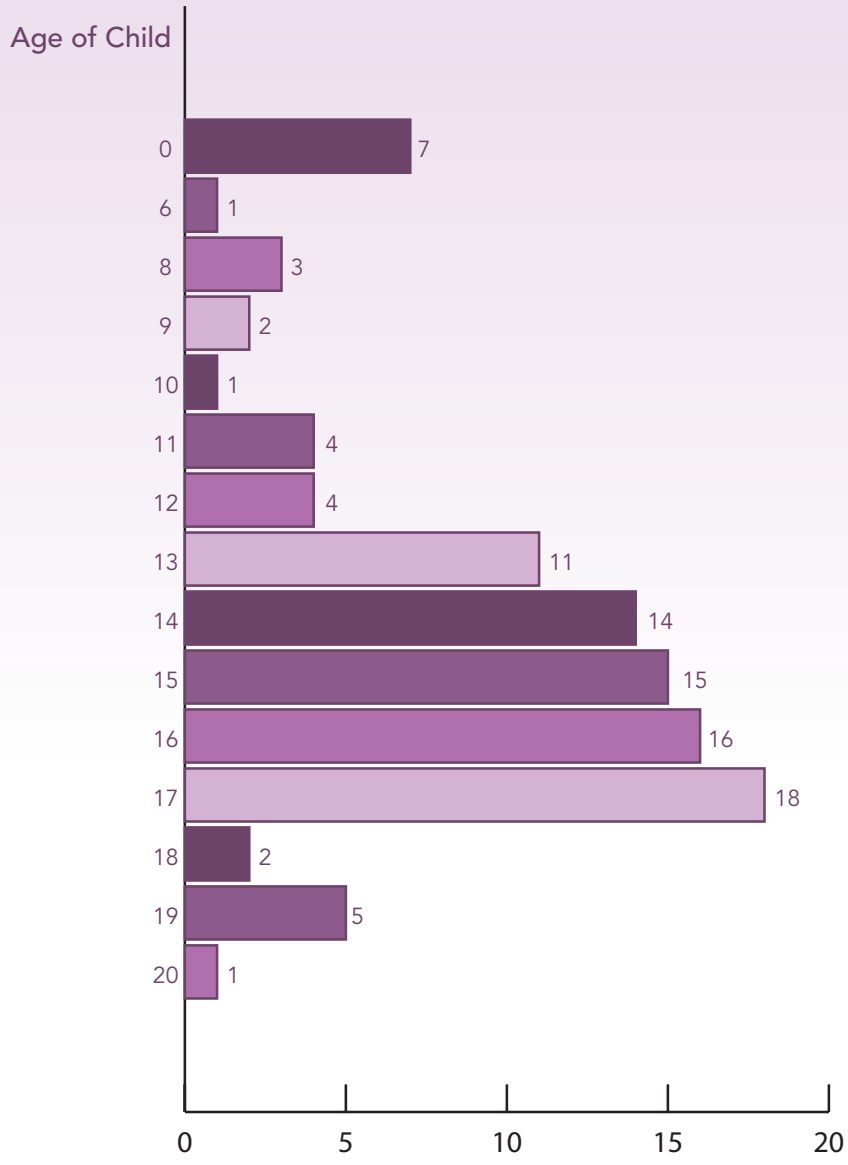
Injuries by Type:

Type of Injury	Count
Sexual Assault	41
Physical Assault	17
Medical	12
Suicide Ideation	12
Substance Misuse	9
Unknown	8
Accident	5
Grand Total	**104**



Age of Child:

Age	Count
0	7
6	1
8	3
9	2
10	1
11	4
12	4
13	11
14	14
15	15
16	16
17	18
18	2
19	5
20	1
Grand Total	**104**



Data Reporting & Compliance

Southern Network agencies are expected to maintain recordkeeping systems and processes that ensure compliance with all relevant legislation and regulations. Southern Network's role in supporting and monitoring this work includes:

- Ensuring data entered into the Child and Family Services Information System (CFSIS) meets established data quality and minimum standards.
- Conducting compliance checks for Child Services, Foster Care Management (FCM), and Intake records to identify areas requiring follow-up or correction.
- Monitoring year-end and provincial reporting to confirm case numbers, legal status, placements, demographic information, and other required data are accurate and up to date.
- Analyzing Child Maintenance (CM) billing reports and CFSIS records to identify discrepancies and support accurate billing and case information.
- Providing data analysis, statistical information, reports, and data visualizations to support SFNNC management, internal units, agencies, and the Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- Providing data-related guidance and clarification to agencies and sharing data updates through QA Coordinators' meetings.
- Participating in provincial discussions and working groups related to CFSIS data, CFSA requirements, and other data-related initiatives.
- Developing and maintaining data tracking tools and templates in collaboration with internal departments and agencies.

Year-end reporting statistics as of March 31, 2026:

Children and Youth by Case Type:

Case Type	Count
Children in Care	5,034
Agreement with Young Adult	337
Kinship Care/Customary Care Agreement	67
Grand Total	**5,438**

Family Files:

Case Type	Count
Protection	2,268
Protection - Maltreatment	631
Voluntary Family Services	250
Family Enhancement	158
Grand Total	**3,307**

Child Abuse Committees

The Child and Family Services Act (CFSA) requires agencies to establish at least one Child Abuse Committee (CAC). The CAC composition is made up of a multi-disciplinary team of individuals including a medical practitioner, a police officer, a representative of a school division, a staff member of the agency, and a Child Abuse Coordinator.

The Child Abuse Committee has four primary functions:

- Review every case of suspected abuse referred to the committee
- Review as required, the involvement of the police, medical and hospital professionals, and others involved in the investigation and management of the case
- Provide consultation in the investigation and management of the case
- Make recommendations, where it is considered appropriate or necessary to protect the child or any other child. This includes recommending that an alleged offender be named on the Child Abuse Registry (CAR).

The provincial CAR established under section 19.1 of the Child and Family Services Act contains information on persons who have abused a child as defined in the CFSA. The director is responsible for the operation of the provincial Child Abuse Registry.

Southern Network currently has 13 Child Abuse Committees in operation, monitors CAC members and submits to the province.

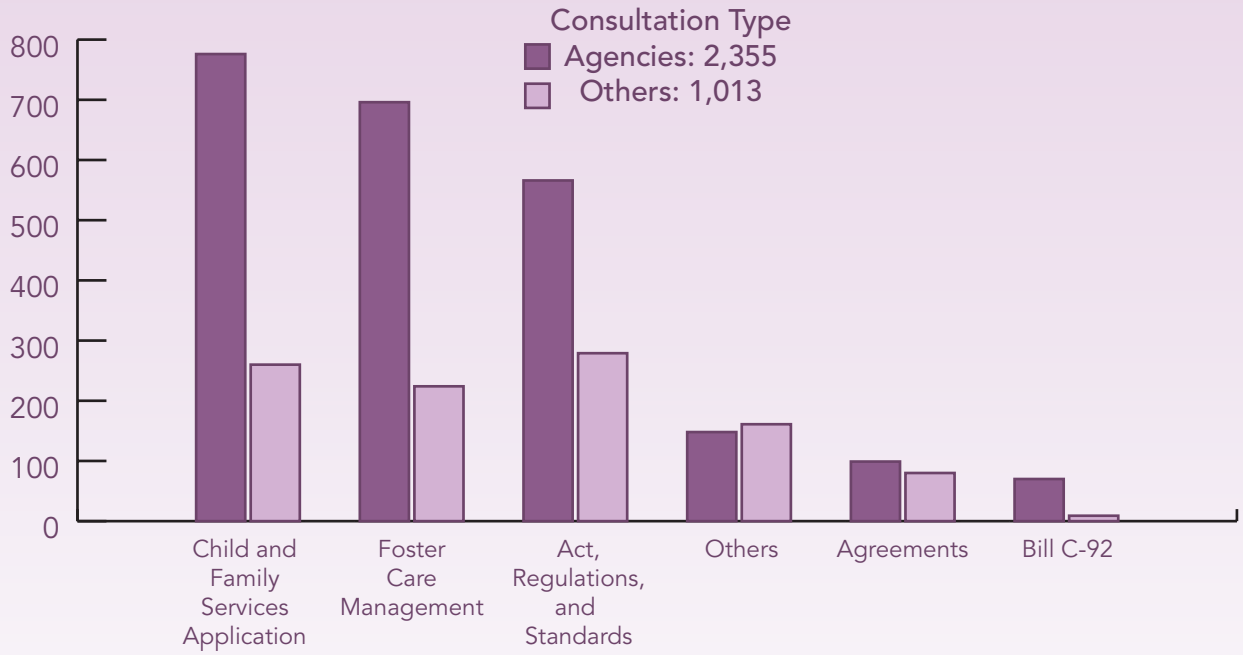
CFSIS Specialist

The Child and Family Services Information System (CFSIS) Specialist is responsible for the administration, compliance, and data management aspects of CFS.

- Provides frontline support to SFNNC agencies using CFSIS, including troubleshooting issues and responding to inquiries.
- Supports new and existing staff on the effective use of CFSIS, ensuring compliance with provincial standards and protocols.
- Ensures the accuracy, confidentiality, and integrity of data within the system.
- Generate and analyze reports for internal use and provincial reporting requirements.
- Track correspondence and follow up with colleagues regarding documentation, legal status, case recordings, and reviews.
- Liaise with provincial partners and IT specialists to implement updates and resolve technical problems.
- Working closely with other units, such as finance and program development, to ensure cohesive service delivery.

Consultations:

Consultation Type	Agencies	Others
Child and Family Services Application	776	260
Foster Care Management	696	224
Act, Regulations, and Standards	566	279
Others	148	161
Agreements	99	80
Bill C-92	70	9
Grand Total	**2,355**	**1,013**



Quality Assurance Unit

- **Kim Hotomani**, Q.A. Manager
- **Shannon Allard**, Vision Keeper / Acting Manager
- **Jade Chymy**, Vision Keeper
- **Vinetta Monias**, Vision Keeper
- **Brittany Jonsson**, Vision Keeper
- **Joseph Licopa**, CFSA Specialist
- **Yogapriya Veerasamy**, Data Specialist
- **Amanda Hamelin,** Administrative Assistant

Education and Training Unit

Boozhoo, Aniin.

This report highlights the coordination of key training, education and collaboration initiatives delivered across partner agencies by the Education and Training unit for the reporting period 2025-2026. Collaborative partnerships include Yellowquill University College, Child Protection Branch, The Forensic Practice, SEED Winnipeg Inc., and Joint Training Team.

The thirteen agencies mandated by Southern Network are provided funding to develop and implement their education and training plans independently based on the needs of the agency. The work at the authority level is intended to complement and support those training needs identified by the agencies.

Agency Training

Coordinated training opportunities were made available to the agencies. These initiatives created relevant learning for youth and enhanced agency staff knowledge, investigative practices, and evidence-informed decision-making. Key learning topics included:

- Money Stories for Youth
- Sudden Wealth
- Youth Cultural Workshops
- Sexually Exploited Youth Presentations
- Winnipeg Police Services Gang Prevention
- Global Interviewing
- Introduction to Child Abuse Investigation
- Foundations of Effective Interviewing
- StepWise 360: Interviewing Children and Youth

Collectively, these training and development initiatives have strengthened workforce capacity across partner agencies. Agency staff acquired valuable knowledge, practical tools, interviewing techniques, and investigative skills. As a result, workers are better positioned to engage families, conduct thorough assessments, support safety and well-being, and deliver high-quality services that contribute to improved outcomes for children and families.

Joint Training Team

The Joint Training Team (JTT) is a permanent subcommittee of the provincial Child and Family Services Standing Committee. The JTT originated in 2007 under the name Joint Training Unit (JTU) and changed its name in 2009, the committee has continued to work together to explore and address the training needs of the child and family services workforce in Manitoba. JTT is comprised of a training representative from each of the four Child and Family Services Authorities and the Child and Family Services Branch. It is the role of the Education and Training Manager to represent Southern Network as the training representative at JTT to bring forward and advocate the training needs at the agency level.

Monthly meetings are held with a focus on identifying training needs, sharing resources, and coordinating collaborative learning initiatives. These meetings strengthen partnerships and the improved alignment of training efforts across participating authorities.

Inter-Authority Safe and Together Committee

The Inter-Authority Safe and Together Committee was developed, bringing together the four authorities and Child Protection Branch representatives. Safe and Together is a child-centered, strengths-based model that provides the skills, knowledge and tools to work with families affected by domestic violence. Initial discussion focused on the implementation plans specific to each authority, recommending training in the Safe and Together Model be available for all authorities and agencies.

A significant achievement during the reporting period was the successful completion of the Safe and Together Model's Train-the-Trainer program, resulting in two Southern Network staff becoming certified facilitators who can now deliver Safe and Together training directly within agencies. This initiative has increased organizational capacity and will equip agency staff with practical tools to better assess family safety, engage non-offending caregivers, and support children and families affected by domestic violence.

Child and Family Services Worker Program Cohorts

With the support of provincial funding, Southern Network and Yellowquill University College entered into a partnership to train 50 agency staff. The plan was for two cohorts of 25 students attending one week each month on separate weeks. All 13 agencies were invited to attend an information session in July 2025 as part of recruitment efforts to fill 50 available spots for the September 2025 start dates.

The first two years, staff would be enrolled in the Child and Family Services Worker Diploma Program and upon successful completion, there is an opportunity to proceed to the two-year Bachelor of Relational Studies. After completion of the two-year diploma program along with the two-year continuation of the Bachelor of Relational Studies, the students will be awarded a four-year bachelor's degree from Yellowquill University College.

With the support of their agencies, 50 staff from ten agencies were successfully enrolled and began their studies in September 2025. As of March 2026, all 50 students remained enrolled, demonstrating a 100% retention rate and strong participant engagement.

Internal Professional Development

Internal professional development sessions for Southern Network staff were delivered focusing on communication skills, conflict resolution strategies, and team building. Training supported stronger workplace relationships, improved collaboration, and increased organizational effectiveness. By developing these core professional skills, staff are better equipped to work collaboratively with families, colleagues, and community partners, contributing to more positive outcomes for the agencies they serve and support.

Looking Ahead

Looking ahead in the upcoming year, the Education and Training Unit will focus on supporting the two Child and Family Services Worker Program cohorts through successful completion of year one, expanding specialized training opportunities, continuing the Safe and Together implementation strategy, and strengthening collaborative learning initiatives across partner agencies.

Education & Training Unit
Lorraine Desmarais, Manager
Tiffany Newton, Administative Assistant

Administrative Unit

The Network is grateful for the dedication and support of its administrative staff, who contribute to the smooth and effective day-to-day operations of the organization.

Over the past year, the Administrative Unit has focused on adapting to new technology, implementing document management through SharePoint, and strengthening cross-training among administrative staff. Administrative staff provide support across various units, including Service Support, Alternative Care, Quality Assurance, Education and Training, and Finance, helping to meet operational needs and address backlogs.

The Office Manager oversees office administration and operations for the Network. Other responsibilities include:

- Supporting provincial agency employment management records in CFSIS.
- Collaborating with IT to support office technology, systems, and operational needs.
- Maintaining office facilities and coordinating office-related requirements.
- Providing administrative support to SFNNC units and management as required.
- Reception and Communications

During the 2025–2026 reporting period, Southern Network received and processed the following communications through its reception desk:

Communication	Total
Phone calls	2,779
Letters and correspondence	1,696
Faxes	77

Note: Communications received directly by staff through cell phones and email are not captured in these figures.

Administrative Unit

- **Karen Desjarlais**, Office Manager
- **Allison Daniels**, Executive Assistant to the CEO
- **Shirley Perreault**, Receptionist/Administrative Assistant

Human Resources Unit

Human Resources (HR) continued to strengthen organizational practices and support workforce development throughout the year.

HR Policies, Compliance & Records

A comprehensive review and update of the Human Resources Policies and Procedures Manual was initiated, incorporating feedback from both employees and management to ensure policies remain relevant, responsive, and aligned with organizational needs. An audit of employee files was completed to ensure compliance and record management requirements, with this work continuing as part of an ongoing quality improvement process.

HR Systems & Records Management

HR enhanced its human resource operations through updates to the Human Resources Information System (HRIS), improving the tracking and management of employee information and supporting more accurate and efficient recordkeeping.

Employee Development & Learning

HR maintained a focus on employee development by researching management training opportunities to support future growth and succession planning.

Recognizing the importance of supporting employees both professionally and personally, a series of educational presentations were organized on topics such as public and private pension plans, employee benefits, wills and estates, health care directives, and power of attorney. These sessions provided employees with valuable information to assist in financial and personal life planning.

Employee Recognition

HR continued its employee recognition efforts by celebrating years of service milestones, acknowledging the dedication, commitment, and valuable contributions of employees.

Workforce & Recruitment

With a workforce of 28 employees representing diverse backgrounds, expertise, and identities, Southern Network remains committed to fostering an inclusive and representative workplace. Building and strengthening an Indigenous workforce continues to be a key organizational objective, with 17 employees (61%) self-identifying as First Nations. This reflects the organization's ongoing commitment to supporting and strengthening Indigenous representation across the workforce. During the reporting period, we successfully recruited and on-boarded six new employees, enhancing organizational capacity and strengthening teams across multiple Units.

Positions Recruited

- Human Resources Specialist
- CFSIS Specialist
- Intake Specialist (2)
- Financial Analyst
- Alternative Care Specialist

Health & Safety

The Health and Safety Committee meets regularly to support a safe and healthy work environment for all employees and visitors. The committee has developed and implemented workplace safety policies and procedures, coordinated regular fire drills that have resulted in improved evacuation times with each exercise, and provided ongoing health and safety training and updates at staff meetings. To further strengthen capacity and stay informed of best practices, committee members also attended the annual Safe Work Manitoba Committee Leadership Conference. These efforts demonstrate the organization's continued commitment to fostering a culture of safety, preparedness, and employee well-being.

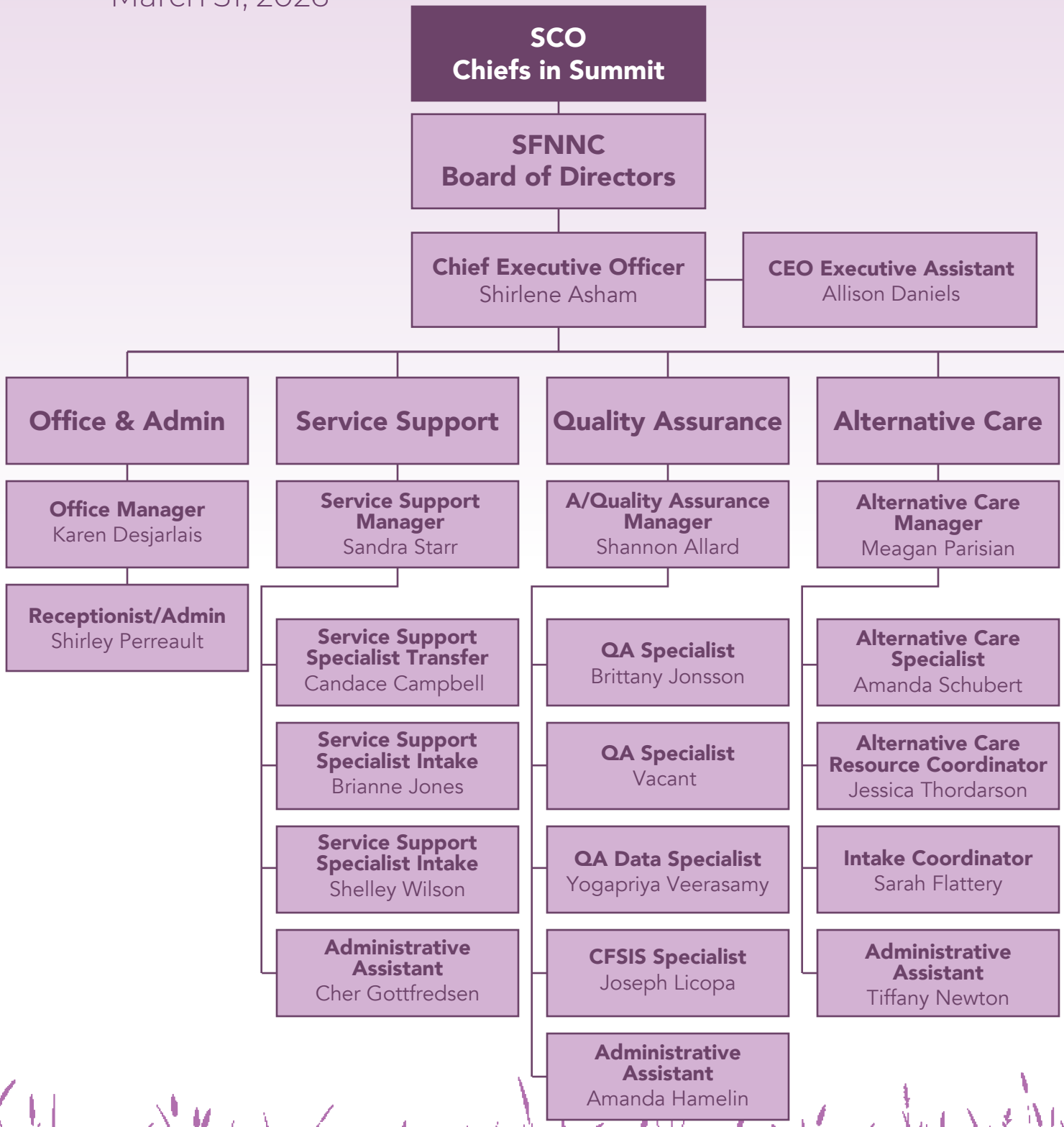
HR Support to SFNNC & Agencies

Human Resources continues to provide support to both SFNNC and its Agencies by offering guidance on employee relations, coaching, performance management, and interpretation of employment standards and workplace policies. Through these services, Human Resources helps foster positive workplace relationships, ensure legislative compliance, and support a collaborative, respectful, and engaged work environment.

Human Resources Unit
Ginette Bisson - Human Resources Specialist

Organizational Chart

March 31, 2026



KEY:

- **Current Employees**
- **Shared with SCO**
- **Indirect Reporting**
- **Direct Reporting**

Policy

A/Policy Supervisor
Marvin Adesanya

- **Senior Policy Analyst**
  Mateja Jankov
- **Senior Policy Analyst**
  Stephen Odupe

Finance

Chief Financial Officer
Zhenyu Wu

- **Financial Consultant**
  Kyle Newton
- **Financial Analyst**
  Sandra Vien
- **Accounting Clerk**
  Kitt Boken

Education and Training

Education & Training Manager
Lorraine Desmarais

- **Administrative Assistant**
  Tiffany Newton

Human Resources

HR Specialist
Ginette Bisson

Finance Unit

The Finance Unit plays a vital role in supporting Southern First Nations Network of Care by ensuring sound financial stewardship, accountability, and transparency. During the 2025–2026 fiscal year, the Finance Unit continued to provide strategic financial leadership while supporting the Network's evolving responsibilities under provincial child and family services initiatives.

Working closely with Executive Management, the Board of Directors, member agencies, government funders, and external auditors, the Finance Unit remained committed to maintaining financial sustainability, strengthening accountability, and supporting quality service delivery for First Nations children, youth, and families.

The Unit

During the 2025–2026 fiscal year, the Finance Unit consisted of:

- **Zhenyu Wu**, CPA, CGA, Chief Financial Officer
- **Kyle Newton**, Financial Consultant Special Projects
- **Kitt Boken**, Accounting Clerk
- **Sandra Vien**, Financial Analyst

Goals and Objectives

During 2025–2026, the Finance Unit focused on:

- Providing strategic financial leadership and advice to Executive Management and the Board of Directors.
- Ensuring compliance with provincial and federal funding agreements and reporting requirements.
- Supporting member agencies through funding administration, financial analysis, and reporting.
- Strengthening financial planning, internal controls, accountability, and transparency.
- Supporting the implementation of First Nations child welfare reforms and funding initiatives.

Key Activities and Accomplishments

During the fiscal year, the Finance Unit:

- Coordinated the annual independent audit and supported the completion of the organization's audited financial statements.
- Managed the administration and reporting of multiple provincial and federal funding programs.
- Supported member agencies through quarterly funding allocations, financial reporting, claims, and reconciliations.
- Ensured compliance with funding agreements and reporting deadlines.
- Improved financial tracking of restricted funding, deferred revenue, and project expenditure.
- Collaborated with Manitoba Families and Indigenous Services Canada on new funding initiatives and reporting requirements.
- Provided financial analysis and reporting to support organizational planning and informed decision-making.

Looking Forward

The Finance Unit remains committed to continuous improvement, responsible financial management, and strong accountability. As funding models and child welfare legislation continue to evolve, we will continue working collaboratively with our member agencies, funders, Executive Leadership, and Board of Directors to ensure financial resources are managed effectively in support of SFNNC's mission and strategic priorities.

We appreciate the continued collaboration and support of our member agencies, leadership team, Board of Directors, government partners, and staff throughout another successful fiscal year.

Photo by Bryce Olsen

NOTES

Southern First Nations Network of Care

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