

NATIVE CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES OF TORONTO

NATIVE FAMILY WELL -BEING AND CHILD PROTECTION:  
STRENGTHENING THE CIRCLE

A Submission for the Designation of NCFST  
as a Mandated Child Welfare Agency

February, 1994

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	Page 2
LEGISLATION AND FUNDING SOURCES	Page 3
ORGANIZATION	Page 4
NEEDS IDENTIFICATION	Page 12
PROPOSED PROGRAMS	Page 14
PHYSICAL PLANT	Page 70
FINANCIAL AND BUDGET DETAILS	Page 72
APPENDICES	

## INTRODUCTION

Native Child and Family Services of Toronto (NCFST) now seeks designation as a mandated agency to provide child protection services to the Native population of Metropolitan Toronto. This submission provides documentation of the agency's capacity to assume such a mandate.

Following the Ministry's criteria for approval, this submission aims to demonstrate ...

1. That the corporation is financially capable of establishing, maintaining and operating the proposed child welfare service
2. That the affairs of the corporation are carried on under competent management and in good faith
3. That the premises are suitable for providing the services for which approval is sought

As well, the submission will show that ...

4. The agency's service model, existing program practices and procedures, and organizational supports are consistent with Ministry expectations for a viable service agency with a child protection function

This document presents summary descriptions of NCFST philosophy, services, and organization. For more detailed information, original agency documents (eg. Letters Patent, Policy Manual, etc.) are provided in Appendices. Otherwise, the submission directly follows the format proposed in a document entitled Guidelines for Program Proposals for Organizations Seeking Ministry Funding, forwarded by Doug Saunders, former COMSOC Program Supervisor.

## LEGISLATION AND FUNDING SOURCES

Native Child and Family Services has operated, and will continue to operate under the Provincial Child and Family Services Act, as administered under the Ministry of Community and Social Services (COMSOC). NCFST has successfully pursued a policy of seeking diversified funding from all levels of government and private sources. For 1993, the agency's funding sources were:

### **A. PROVINCIAL MINISTRIES**

#### Ministry of Community and Social Services

- . Family Support
- . Family Violence
- . Sexual Assault

#### Ministry of Citizenship: Native Community Branch

- . Community Programs

### **B. FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS**

#### Health and Welfare Canada

- . Family Violence
- . Brighter Futures
- . Drug Preventions

#### Employment and Immigration Canada

- . Pathways
- . SEED

### **C. METRO TORONTO COMMUNITY SERVICES**

- . Social Services Grants Program
- . Summer Programs

### **D. CITY OF TORONTO**

- . Recreation Grants
- . Department of Public Health: AIDS Prevention; Drug Prevention

### **E. NON-GOVERNMENT FUNDING SOURCES**

#### Foundations

- . Children's Aid Society of Metropolitan Toronto Foundation
- . Levi-Strauss Foundation
- . Trillium Foundation
- . Toronto Star Fresh Air Fund

**F. UNITED WAY** (Member agency)

NCFST has received funds through a number of private donations, and will continue to diversify funding sources in the coming years. The Agency will seek funds from Child Welfare funding.

## ORGANIZATION

1. **Name of Organization**

Native Child and Family Services of Toronto

2. **Contacts**

Vern Douglas (NCFST President)  
Employment Equity Office,  
Toronto Board of Education,  
155 College St.  
Toronto, Ontario, M5T 1P6  
Tel.: 397-3341

Sylvia Maracle (NCFST Vice-President)  
Ontario Federation Of Indian Friendship Centres,  
234 Eglinton Ave. East,  
Toronto, Ontario.  
Tel.: 484-1411

Kenn Richard, Executive Director  
Native Child and Family Services of Toronto,  
464 Yonge St., Suite 201, M4Y 1W9  
Tel.: 969-8510

### 3. Historical Development

Native Child and Family Services first came into being as a result of the Native communities' concerns over the problems facing families and children among Toronto's estimated 40,000 (Statistics Canada) Native people. As early as the 1970's a group of people began to organize, and approach the local CAS' and the Ministry with their concerns about the placement of children in non-Native homes. These early efforts served to mobilize the Native community and raise child welfare issues, but they were without significant impact.

Shortly after the 1985 changes in CFSA, the Native child welfare movement in Toronto began to focus on developing a Native child welfare agency according to the principles of the revised Act. The early efforts of the initial group began to pay off; several from the initial group formed the nucleus of the first NCFST Board. Following extensive planning and preparation, the agency opened its doors in 1988.

Although representatives from the Native communities were involved in the initial planning, and although working service objectives were established, a decision was made to mount a broad consultation process with Native communities. The purpose of this consultation was to clarify the needs, establish a service model, and generally consult broadly beyond the original planning group and Board. This process began in early 1989.

The result of the community consultation process was a detailed service and organizational model which has guided the implementation of the agency and its programs throughout its early years. That document, entitled "Native Family Well-Being in Urban Settings: A Culture-Based Child and Family Services Model", is included as Appendix A.

Since the consultation process, NCFST has expanded into several program areas, beyond the original family support services. The agency now offers sexual abuse treatment, customary care, residential and day camps, youth services, and children's programs. As well, the Agency liaises with First Nations in their efforts to repatriate children. Two recently funded initiatives, the Ninoshe Program and the Children's Circle are further steps in the Agency's holistic and culture-based programming. (Details on the Agency's various programs are provided in Section D).

NCFST has also taken great strides towards its community development goal of building a responsive and caring Native



community. A Customary Care Program for short- and long-term care is now in place. Natural helpers are extensively involved with the Agency through volunteer contributions to the Xmas party, summer camp, and cultural events in the Youth Program. Clients have been reunited with their home communities. NCFST now has a strong presence in Toronto, with extensive links throughout the Native and mainstream service network.

The Agency's desire to offer child protection services represents a long-standing commitment to the Native communities of Toronto, since those early steps in the 1970's. This was confirmed in the community consultation process, and has received agency-wide attention during the last year. The transition to child protection requires a number of organizational structure changes, to which we now turn.

## **Organizational Structure: An Overview**

This section summarizes NCFST's proposed organizational structure. This includes existing and new service departments and positions within the agency. As well, the lines of authority and accountability are described. (See organizational chart)

### **The Management Team**

NCFST's proposed organizational structure is as follows: A Board of Directors is the ultimate corporate authority for the agency, with responsibilities for policy-making, financial control, fund-raising, and other functions deemed necessary and appropriate for the Agency. (Details are provided in Section B,4)

Reporting to the Board, the Executive Director is responsible for the development and delivery of services. As well, the E.D. is responsible for day-to-day administration of the Corporation's affairs and physical operations. (For details of responsibilities, see Job Descriptions, Appendix B)

An Office Manager now reports to the Executive Director. This person is the secretary to the Board of Directors and the Executive Director, and provides administrative support and book-keeping services to the agency. A new larger administrative unit is proposed. Reporting to the Office Manager, additional staff will perform the new and increasingly complex tasks related to case management information, financial, and personnel administration.

The proposed new organization will consist of six core service departments: Family Services (Family support and child protection), Residential Services, Youth Services, Treatment Services, Cultural Services, and Children's Services. (These are detailed in Section D.)

Seven Service Coordinators will report directly to a new Director of Services, who in turn will report to the Executive Director. The seven Program Coordinators will be: a Treatment Program Coordinator, two Family Services Co-ordinators, the Residential Services Co-ordinator, the Youth Services Coordinator, a Community Services Coordinator, and a Children's Services Coordinator.

**Office and Service Staff**

Reporting to their respective Service Co-ordinators will be the following NCFST staff. This is significantly larger than the current complement.

Treatment Workers (Treatment Services):	2 FTE
Family Service Workers (Family Services):	10 FTE
Child Abuse Specialist (Family Services):	1 FTE
Child Care Workers (Residential Services):	2 FTE
Ninoshe:	2 FTE
Youth Workers (Youth Services):	3 FTE
Adoption Worker (Residential Services):	1 FTE
Emergency Services (Family Services):	1 FTE
Safe House staff (Residential Services):	4 FTE
Summer Camp staff (Children's Services):	2 FTE
Office Manager	1 FTE
Administrative staff (Secretary/ Receptionists/ Data Entry):	3 FTE
Payroll/Book-keeping Clerk):	1 FTE

#### 4. The Board of Directors

##### Board Composition

President: Vern Douglas

Vice-President: Sylvia Maracle

Secretary: David McCuaig

Treasurer: Gerri Ense-

McGre-  
gor

Members: Gus Ashawasega  
Mary Ann Kelly

Todd Ducharme  
Doug Sinclair

The addresses and telephone numbers of all Board members are listed in Appendix "C". At present, all but one Board member are Native.

Concerning qualifications, the NCFST By-Law specifies that at least 6 members shall be Native persons, and shall be members of the Corporation for 30 days prior to election.

The present jobs and background experiences of the current Board members provide the agency with a strong governing capacity for social services and organizational functioning. Expertise in:

- . needs of urban Natives: planning, development and services
- . the justice system
- . sexual abuse
- . management
- . personnel and training
- . computers
- . Native child welfare: one of the original founders of NCFST
- . general social welfare
- . equity specialist
- . multiculturalism
- . provision of customary care

- . traditional teachings
- . policy development
- . community development

### **Board Committees**

As required by regulation 550/85, NCFST's By-law provides for an Executive Committee. Further, the By-Law gives directions for selection of members, the minimum number, decision-making, recording and reporting (See Appendix D, pg.9-10).

The Corporate By-Law also encourages the development of Standing Committees for the purpose of advising the Board and assisting in the administration of corporate affairs. To this point, the following committees have been struck:

- . A Program Committee
- . Personnel Committee

Other special task-related committees have been, and will be, struck (Fund-raising)

### **Orientation of Board Members**

The Board President orients all new Board members to the agency service and organizational structure, as well as Board committee structure and responsibilities. New members review all relevant agency materials, including the service model, annual meeting reports, and funding proposals.

The Board of Directors attends regular retreats where members review the cultural and service development of the agency, new policy development, strategies of development and progress towards goals, and other issues.

NCFST is currently working on a Board Manual which will articulate the specifics of governance, ethics, roles and responsibilities.

### **Board Commitment to Child Protection**

NCFST's Board of Director has unanimously endorsed seeking a mandate for child protection. This commitment was originally formalized when the service model was developed, and is stated as an Agency objectives.

In June, 1992, the Executive Director and the Board undertook a preliminary review of the necessary agency developments and budget for a mandate. At that time the Board directed the Executive

Director to pursue the process.

## **5. Letters Patent and By-Laws**

The Letters Patent for the organization were completed and dated August 14, 1986. They are included in Appendix E.

### **By-laws**

The Agency's By-Laws are included in Appendix D. The By-Laws clearly identify: the corporate structure, eligibility for membership in the organization (pg.2), qualifications for Board membership (pg.4), procedures for election and operation of Board (pgs. 4-9), term of office for Board members, officers and committees (pgs.8-9), eligibility for re-election (pg.4), and conflict relationships (pg.6).

## **6. Membership**

The NCFST By-Law specifies membership qualifications as follows. Members must be eighteen years of age or over. They must notify the Secretary of the Corporation concerning their desire for membership. They are admitted to regular membership by the Board, and shall pay annual dues. There is only one class of membership in the Corporation, that of "Regular Member".

For additional details on membership, see Appendix D.

## **7. Annual Meeting**

The Corporation hold its annual meeting each year according to the requirements of the Agency By-law. The last meeting was held in September, 1993.

## **8. Personnel Practices**

Native Child and Family Services' expected personnel practices have been formalized in a "Personnel Policy". This was approved and adopted by The Board of Directors on May 11, 1992.

In the development of personnel policies, the agency consulted with the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres, and other Native and non-Native agencies.

For a detailed description of personnel policies, see Appendix "F".



## NEEDS IDENTIFICATION

Native Child and Family Services has carefully documented its assumptions concerning the problems addressed by their services. This section presents a summary statement of the problems facing the families and children in Toronto's Native population. These were documented through the community consultation process (Appendix A), and in several proposals since then.

### 1. Description of Need Identified

#### Target Population

The target population for Native Child and Family Services of Toronto are the Native people in Metropolitan Toronto. Native persons are any persons who present themselves as such.

#### Identified Needs: Urban Problems and Native Family Life

NCFST's services are based on the assumption that the quality of life for many Native families in Toronto is sufficiently stressed, and in some cases inadequate, to warrant organized support within the Native community. A needs assessment identified the following indicators:

- . child abuse and neglect
- . family violence
- . depression
- . suicides/suicide attempts
- . sexual abuse
- . alcohol/drug abuse
- . adolescent problems

Based on community consultation, research, and clinical experience, the agency has also identified the following contributing factors to the above problems:

- . inadequate parenting knowledge and skills
- . cultural change affected by migration: reserve/city differences; shock;
- . cultural loss and identity crisis

- . economic factors: poverty, unemployment, and low paying jobs
- . insufficient or inadequate housing
- . broken, transient, or single parent families
- . access issues
- . marginalization, exclusion and racism
- . limited support within the family
- . alienation and social isolation within the city
- . adults lacking appropriate parenting, because of forced participation in residential schools, foster placements
- . weaknesses/disorganization in home and local communities

### 3. Survey of Need

From December, 1988 to January, 1990 a service model development project was completed by a consulting firm. The methods and results of that project are summarized in the document entitled "Native Family Well-Being in Urban Settings: A Culture-Based Child and Family Services Model" (Appendix A). See Section 1.

### Demographic Data on Toronto's Native Population

The current aboriginal population of Metropolitan Toronto is an estimated 40,040 people. Of these, 11,810 are children up to the age of 15. A detailed description of Metropolitan Toronto's Native population is provided in Appendix "G". This information is based on the Canadian Census, 1992, Statistics Canada.

### 4. Similar Programs

Three other agencies in Toronto provide child welfare services.

- . Children's Aid Society of Metropolitan Toronto
- . Catholic Children's Society of Metropolitan Toronto
- . Jewish Family and Child Services of Metropolitan Toronto

Several other agencies provide services to Native people.

- . Anishnabe Health: culture-based health services

- . Anduhyaun Incorporated: emergency shelter; family violence
- . Council Fire: emergency, relief and family support
- . Native Women's Resource Centre: community work; group programs; literacy; job training.
- . Aboriginal Legal Services of Toronto

## PROPOSED PROGRAMS

A total of six program areas within Native Child and Family Services are proposed within the new agency structure:

1. Family Services
2. Residential Services
3. Treatment Services
4. Youth Services
5. Community Services
6. Children's Services

In the following sections, details will be provided on the needs, objectives, and service activities of these programs, beginning with a statement of needs for the service system as a whole.

### 1. Needs to Be Met By NCFST Programs

Taken together, the agency's six services address the following broad needs of Native children, families, and communities:

- . children's need for protection against physical, sexual, and emotional abuse; and against child neglect
- . sexual, physical, and alcohol abuse victims need for the restoration of physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual well-being
- . children's need for quality parenting
- . the need to access resources in the urban setting
- . the needs of Native children, youth, and adults to have the life skills and knowledge for participation in the urban setting
- . the needs of Native children, youth, and adults to learn their cultural values, practices and beliefs, as a foundation for a positive self-esteem

- . the need to develop an urban Native culture and community
- . Community need to develop the resources and skills to enhance the quality of life for families, and to restore balance in everyday living

## 2. Numbers and Geographic Areas to be Served

The geographical area for direct services is Metropolitan Toronto in its entirety. As indicated, there are now 40,040 Native people in this area, including 11,000 children.

**Within this population base, Native Child and Family Services assumes that approximately 4,000 Native children are at risk of maltreatment. For example, it is known that:**

- . 8 of 10 Native people were sexually abused (Ontario Native Women's Association report)
- . Native suicides are 7 times the national average

One of the most dramatic recent statements is that a Native child

has a  
great  
er  
chanc  
e of  
going  
to  
jail  
than  
to  
unive  
rsity

.

Not long ago, The Ministry of Community and Services commissioned a study of family support services, part of which identified the following factors placing children at risk of abuse or neglect:

- . unemployment/poverty
- . geographical mobility
- . multiple family housing
- . poor parenting skills
- . limited formal education
- . early marriage
- . isolation from informal ties
- . history of abuse as children
- . attitudes condoning physical force

The service experience and documented studies strongly suggest that many Native people living in Toronto have many of these characteristics. As well, those in need are extremely isolated from the main-stream service system. **An estimated 4,000 Native children at risk in Toronto may quite conservative.**

Based on the on-going rate of increase, an enhancement of outreach work through community work, and incorporating the existing child welfare agency case loads, **NCFST is assuming a 1994 case-load of 150 cases at any one point in time**, with an annual caseload of some 300-400 families and 600-800 children.

All are considered significantly "high risk", warranting child welfare services. As to projections for service demand, migration trends, fertility rates, and existing social indicators all point to a heavy and increasing caseload over the long term.

### 3. Capacity to Serve Native People

NCFST has now been in operation since 1988, and has demonstrated its capacity to serve the Native people of Toronto. The indicators of this capacity include:

- . a 62% self-referral rate from April, 1992 - March, 1993
- . extensive referrals from mainstream and Native agencies
- . positive client satisfaction studies in on-going program evaluations, as well as strong evidence for client change (Evaluation of Mooka'am Program, in progress)
- . several experimental initiatives combining culture-based healing and contemporary social work
- . National and Provincial recognition of the excellence of NCFST's service model (Eg. Health and Welfare Canada; Laidlaw Foundation)

Apart from these indicators, a number of agency characteristics can be cited in further support of the agency's capacity and public recognition in its services to Native communities:

- . Native Board and staff

- . involvement of Native healers and cultural teachers in programs
- . strong connections to other local Native agencies, as well as a Native child welfare network across the province
- . on-going participation and leadership in community education, professional training, conferences, etc.

Above all, NCFST has made a concerted effort to incorporate its unique culture base in a model for services and organizational growth. It has experienced steady success in implementing the model in all programs. We now turn to a description of the agency mission and programs.



#### 4. Mission Statement and Program Philosophy

Responding to the problems and conditions identified in the needs assessment, NCFST staff and Board collaborated in the development of the following mission statement, spelling out an organizational and service vision for the agency:

"Native Child and Family Services of Toronto strives to provide for a life of quality, well-being, caring, and healing for our children and families in the Toronto Native community. It does this by creating a service model that is culturally-based, respects the supreme values of Native people and the extended family, and the right to self determination."

The philosophical foundations of the agency are spelled out in its values and service principles.

#### **Values and General Principles**

From the beginning, Native Child and Family Services has developed and provided services in ways that would respond to the needs of families and children according to a clear philosophical base of values and service principles. These ideals were established as part of the model development process, and are summarized as follows:

#### **The cultural base of organization and service**

This statement emphasizes that agency operations and services should be based in, or be compatible with, the culture of Native people. This refers to core assumptions about how life is organized and how problems occur. As well, this refers to ideas about desirable quality of life in communities and families, and the most appropriate helping processes. (See Appendix K)

#### **The supreme values of Native people**

According to the model, services should reflect the supreme values of Native people. These include values such as ...

. kindness                      . honesty                      . strength

- . sharing
- . bravery
- . wisdom
- . humility
- . trust
- . friendship

### **Beliefs**

The agency's development and operations reflect a number of specific beliefs:

- . the child is sacred
- . parents are granted the responsibility for raising the child from the Creator
- . the extended family and the community at large are important sources of support, care, and help
- . knowledge is viewed as a group rather than individual resource
- . it is important to live in harmony with nature; persons and the environment are extensions of one another, and both are needed to make a whole
- . traditional Native attitudes stress the past and present over the future
- . family unity within the natural family is important
- . Native people have a right to self-determination
- . the ultimate mandate comes from the Creator

### **Holistic service vision**

The agency strives to understand and help clients within a holistic perspective. Each service addresses the needs of clients as mental, physical, psychological and spiritual beings. Thus, clients' problems are described in terms of their thoughts and feelings, their state of bodily health, their interactions with others, or their attitudes and relationship with the spiritual world.

The agency avoids a narrow focus on one realm (eg. thinking and feeling) only, and avoids the use of abstract clinical labels. Instead, practitioners and clients enter a problem-solving

partnership to describe problems and look towards "healthy" states, in ways that respect the fullness of a person's life. The Native description of troubled people as "out of balance or harmony" illustrates this perspective. Service plans will follow suit, by providing help and support for the client as a whole person.

The holistic perspective also acknowledges Native culture as an important source of behaviour, identity and beliefs. Cultural differences between reserve and urban living will be assessed as a possible influence on family problems in the urban context. NCFST's methods are compatible with Native family and parenting patterns, including arrangements for support and helping.

Finally, NCFST service philosophy assumes a continuity between traditional and contemporary Native culture. This may or may not manifest in actual behaviour and communication (eg. language use), but is present in the taken-for-granted assumptions about why things are done as they are, and why they are important. NCFST offers traditional healing or practices as a way of helping clients recover or strengthen these assumptions, and incorporate them into a stronger sense of themselves and their behaviour.

Depending on how client problems or disharmonies manifest themselves, and are described by the client, services will draw on the most suitable mix of traditional and contemporary resources and techniques.

### **A Life Cycle Perspective**

Another component of NCFST service philosophy is the importance of targeting services to the various stages of the family life cycle. The surrounding dynamics and solutions to the problems of a young adolescent parent, for example, are different than those of the unemployed middle-aged parents of several children.

Agency services are alert to the developmental tasks and needs of clients at various life cycle stages of development. Services will target the significant life cycle stages and their respective challenges, from pre-natal periods to family-elder relationships.

### **A life of quality: the continuum of prevention to protective services**

The holistic base of services also means that Native Child and Family Services consistently strives to help Native families and communities in Toronto live a life of quality, as well as solve

immediate problems. This principle summarizes the commitment to preventative services which build strengths and resourcefulness, in order to avoid or minimize problems.

NCFST services will fall at different points on a continuum of prevention, protection, and therapy or healing.

### **Family well-being**

An important component of this life of quality is family and individual well-being across the life cycle. The service model assumes five criteria for well-being, each of which shows different patterns at different life cycle stages.

- . the family's capacity to access and use available resources in the urban environment
- . its ability to take responsibility for problem-solving and healing, and gradually achieve independence from formal services
- . strong and meaningful relationships within the city for fulfilling a life of quality
- . an appropriate balance between the various family activities (eg. child-rearing, employment, affection, tasks, etc.) so that some things are not done at the expense of the others
- . the capacity to teach and maintain values and sentiments, including those (eg. kindness and respect) which are particularly important to Native people.

### **The child in the family: family focus**

Although the child is an important target for NCFST services, the holistic perspective requires that services and programs will be planned from a family focus. One implication of this is that the child's behaviour, and indeed the behaviour of other family members, will always be viewed as interconnected family processes.

As well, service planning for the child will anticipate both the beneficial consequences for the child and the consequences for the family as a whole. Efforts will be made to seek greater balance over disharmony.

\* \* \*

This section has summarized the core ideals governing the services and operations of Native Child and Family Services. The following sections describe the specifics of service delivery, beginning with NCFST service principles.



### Service Principles

If the above is a set of broad ideals for service, then the following specific guidelines have so far provided an important framework for service options and decisions within the agency.

- **The agency gives priority to prevention over protection services:** Children at risk will be removed from their homes only as a last resort.
- **The principle of customary care:** where possible, the family's extended family members or local Native community will be involved in the care of the child if parents are in need of support or healing, or if children must be taken to a place of safety.
- **The principle of parental consent:** if possible, the immediate parents should participate in service planning, placement choices and other key service decisions.
- **The principle of planning for family well-being:** services and temporary placements are guided by an over-all plan to restore family unity and well-being.
- **The principle of self-help:** service programs, plans and practices will be designed and conducted to help individuals, families and communities achieve independence, resourcefulness, and problem-solving capacities.
- **The principle of self-advocacy:** advocacy services within the agency will help clients develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to realize their own interests when dealing with urban institutions.
- **The principle of natural parent participation:** where children require temporary placement, the natural parents will be involved with the co-parents in a "temporary parenting system".
- **The principle of natural family permanency:** if possible, child

placement planning should aim to return the child to the natural parents.

- . **The principle of continuity of care**



## 5. Agency Goals and Service Objectives

Since its inception, the development of Native Child and Family Services has been guided by four broad organizational development and service goals. Each of these specifies several objectives.

### Organizational development

**Goal 1: To create and maintain a culture-based agency of service, healing and well-being for Native individuals and families, that contribute to the development of whole and healthy Native communities.**

### Objectives

- . To create and maintain an organizational framework that reflects the Native model of development and service
- . To implement the appropriate mechanisms for entrenching in the agency (a) culture-based methods and operations which promote (b) self-determination and (c) interdependence, of individuals, families, and communities
- . To develop a secure and on-going authority base, financial and resource base, for guaranteeing quality operation, programs and services that meaningfully respond to the Native community, and are in keeping with the vision and goals of the agency.

### Service Development

**Goal 2: To develop an integrated network of effective programs and positive relationships for a caring and supportive environment.**

### Objectives

- . To foster the reunification between urban Native families, their extended families, and home communities
- . To develop a Native appropriate program and network of intervention for temporary and long-term care.

- . To develop Native community involvement programs relevant to children, youth, relationships, family life, child-rearing and living in the community.
- . To develop the natural helping network within the Native community.

**Goal 3: To develop awareness of the culture, along with the knowledge, skills, attitudes for contemporary Native health and well-being, and self-determination.**

**Objectives**

- . To develop culturally appropriate approaches and activities to facilitate Native teaching, cultural awareness and cultural revitalization.
- . To develop skills for the application of Native knowledge, values and culture for Native-appropriate services and family living.
- . To develop the knowledge and skills for strengthening wholesome parenting and family management.
- . To develop appropriate individual and organizational skills for enhancing community leadership, self-sufficiency, and access to resources.

**Goal 4: To provide Native-appropriate support services and resources, for child and family care, healing and well-being.**

**Objectives**

- . To protect Native children whose physical and emotional well-being are at risk.
- . To help restore personal and emotional well-being to the victims of child neglect, sexual abuse and family violence.

- . To help restore child and family well-being through counselling, referrals, and family-focused or individual treatment.
- . To support families whose intra-familial, developmental or external life stresses weaken the quality of parenting
- . To advocate on behalf of Native families who are experiencing difficulties in meeting their needs in relation to urban institutions.

## 6. Services and Activities

To achieve its service objectives, the agency offers a variety of prevention, crisis intervention, and therapeutic or healing programs. This submission marks the agency's intent to offer child protection services. Each program strives to integrate traditional Native and contemporary social work practices. We begin with a brief discussion of culture-based healing and prevention.

### Culture-Based Healing and Prevention

Following its service and organization model, Native Child and Family Services' service development consistently strives for consistency with Native culture. This is accomplished primarily through the initial design of each program, including the definition of suitable relationships between staff and clients, between colleagues, and between staff, volunteers and traditional resource people.

The selection of appropriate staff is also important for the implementation of a culture base. NCFST seeks Native staff, but if Native people are unavailable, non-Natives with clear cultural competencies are hired. Native or non-Native, all staff must (a) demonstrate a sensitivity to their own values, beliefs and limitations (b) understand the beliefs, attitudes, social and cultural backgrounds of Native people, and (c) have or be prepared to develop the knowledge and skills (including cultural skills) for working with Native families and children. NCFST's in-service training reinforces the cultural competencies which staff bring to the job.

With this background, we now turn to a description of the specific ways that NCFST services and service organization reflects Native

culture. In general, Native culture at NCFST is reflected in service theory, practices, helping roles and relationships, material resources, and staff training.

### **Service Philosophy: The Medicine Wheel and the Four Directions**

Work with clients in all NCFST programs is guided by service principles broadly reflective of the four directional processes of the Medicine Wheel. Planning and delivering services follows a process of (i) Visioning a positive state of well-being, based on holistic principles; (ii) taking Time to build the appropriate relationships for bringing about change; (iii) Knowing oneself, the family, the community and the culture, in order to build integrity, family strength, and individual well-being; and (iv) Doing the appropriate things that flow from the previous three processes.

This framework has given direction to the over-all planning process in the agency (eg. clear model development is an example of visioning), the case management process (eg. continuity of care sustains on-going relationships), and staff practices (eg. the time given to building diffuse relationships with clients).

### **The Family as the Focal Unit**

All helping interventions are based in some concept of thinking about where the problem is, what are the causal or sustaining forces, where and how specifically does a helper intervene? These notions have a cultural base, reflecting how members make sense of their world, what they value, and what they believe are appropriate actions towards others.

Native Child and Family Services takes the family unit as the main focus in understanding matters of children's maltreatment and well-being. By identifying the family unit as an important focal point for its work, the agency also recognizes the impact of external influences, from the family's immediate network (eg. relatives, friends, neighbours), or indirectly through more distant sets of influences like community behaviours, resources, opportunities, or indeed public policies.

The choice of "family in environment" as the focal unit is consistent with Native cultural-based holistic beliefs. This avoids narrow, piece-meal or abstract understandings in favour of explaining life (and therefore problems in living) in every increasing circles of interdependent forces. For example, rather than reducing complex problems in living to simplistic explanations, a holistic understanding would incorporate (i)

physical health (ii) the spiritual (iii) the emotional, and (iv) the psychological aspects of living.

### **The Life Cycle**

NCFST's healing and prevention programs respect the Aboriginal notion of the Wheel of Life or life cycle. The ages and stages of life from birth to death are recognized as infants, toddlers, children, youth, young adults, parents, grandparents, and elders.

Along with the various beliefs concerning each stage, the needs and contributions of those in each stage are acknowledged. The life cycle model specifies the responsibilities of family and community members as they contribute to the various journeys of life. Young adults, for example, are reminded by their elders that they are starting the harvest of their youth, and are beginning to travel their own paths.

For service planning and delivery, the information about the life cycle sensitizes staff to the needs of clients at various stages, the appropriate participants in the healing or learning processes, and the roles and capacities which require strengthening.

### **Prevention and NCFST Programs**

Service practices at NCFST include cultural learning as an important part of a change strategy. To place this in context, we begin with a discussion of prevention.

Prevention services aim to prevent problems or limit their impact. Depending on their goals and their target groups, prevention services may be of different types.

In child welfare, some prevention initiatives are directed to whole communities or even larger populations. These aim to create the information, resources, relationships, and community structures so that family life is strong, and parent-child relationships support the safe, healthy development of children. Such preventative interventions may, for example, try to assure that parents do not have unrealistic expectations for their children, or that there is no violence or other disruptions to the parent-child relationship.

NCFST's community education initiatives (eg. sexual abuse awareness from Mooka'am staff and clients), community work to build strong, coordinated Native agencies, and drop-in facilities through Youth Services, and youth education for healthy sexuality, all are examples of NCFST's primary prevention initiatives. Also included

are efforts to increase the cultural sensitivity of non-Native services occur through networking or specific "Native Awareness" initiatives.

Other prevention initiatives focus on specific target populations (eg. single parents, previously abused women, teens, or communities with high residentially mobility or conflict) where there is a risk of child maltreatment, or evidence of early problems.

These preventions aim to create strengths (eg. NCFST's parent education), build resourcefulness (eg. building natural helping networks, voluntarism), limit the seriousness of early problems (eg. NCFST's family support services), help alleviate the stress of urban living (family support), and advocate for families needing access to other services. As well, such interventions will alert the clients to their parenting obligations and rights according to the Child and Family Services Act.

In these initiatives, sometimes called "secondary prevention", therapy or healing may be used as a tool for preventing later child maltreatment. NCFST's Mooka'am Program, for example, uses traditional and contemporary healing methods with sexual abuse victims, to stop an intergenerational pattern of child abuse.

The final set of preventions involve direct interventions into troubled lives for the purpose of avoiding more serious problems (eg. injury or death), and setting the stage for changing troubled family situations. Removing children from abusive homes through foster or customary care arrangements, while parents receive help, are examples of "tertiary prevention."

NCFST's "Community Care" programs, particularly the Customary Care Program and the Safe House, are tertiary prevention initiatives. Customary care provides alternative Native family arrangements to children from troubled family situations or those who are clearly at risk. The NCFST Safe House is a temporary placement for children needing alternative arrangements, or for whom no customary care options are available.

### **Cultural Learning and Prevention**

All NCFST programs have some prevention goals and components. Within each program, cultural learning is an important prevention process. **Through cultural learning, NCFST aims to create a sense of pride and self-esteem, build a social and helping community of**

**Native people sharing a common sense of belonging, and teach specific knowledge and practices for living and healing.**

For Native Child and Family Services, "cultural learning" refers to the process of learning to "live in a good way" according to the beliefs, values, and norms of Native culture. Cultural learning involves the four processes of (i) knowing and understanding various parts of culture (ii) valuing and respecting culture as important (iii) wanting to live in a good way, and adapt the culture to urban living and (iv) incorporating culture into a "sense of who one is" as a Native person.

At NCFST, cultural learning takes place through:

- (i) Participation in a unique Native agency whose staff, facilities, materials, organizational culture, and service practices constantly reinforce positive distinctiveness, and a sense of community.
- (ii) Role modelling by Native staff, cultural teachers, and volunteers as they help clients. A planned Native Big Brother/Big Sister program will strongly emphasize role modelling principles.
- (iii) Participation in cultural circles in the Youth Services

and  
Child  
ren's  
Circl  
e  
progr  
ams;  
these  
are  
teach  
ing  
or  
cultu  
ral  
educa  
tion  
pract  
ices  
in  
which

stories,  
 legends,  
 and  
 traditional  
 practices  
 convey  
 fundamental  
 values,  
 knowledge,  
 and  
 ways  
 of  
 living.

- (iv) The use of traditional ceremonial/spiritual practices, such as sweet-grass ceremonies, traditional handshake or hugging, and prayer.
- (v) Exposure to Native material cultural items and images, through artwork, posters, and other artifacts appearing throughout the offices; as well as their pure cognitive interest, these symbolically stimulate a feeling of uniqueness, pride, and sense of "who we are as Native people".
- (vi) Forms of relationships such as the talking and healing circles, with their special rules (eg. talking in sequence, non-interruption, non-confrontation). These convey at a deeper level of learning, such values and principles as respect for individual experiences. Culturally unique forms of relationships also contribute to a strong collective sense of community.



(vii) Healing practices and medicines in which clients (such as sexual abuse victims in the Mooka'am Program), experience and learn the benefits of healing circles, sweet-grass, cedar baths, sweat lodges, fasting, and prayer.

(viii) Natural exploration and reinforcement of learnings in one's private life, solitude or participation with other Native people, outside of the agency. This is encouraged by agency staff and fellow participants.

### **Cultural Principles and Staff Roles**

Native Child and Family Services also incorporates traditional cultural principles into staff service roles. The structure of how staff provide services in specific relationships with the client reflects important beliefs and norms from Native culture. This will be illustrated as follows.

First, unlike contemporary social work practice, NCFST staff supplement scientific and professional knowledge and practice, with resources which are respected within Native culture. Thus, sweet-grass, women's cedar, and other traditional medicines are used as needed and as wanted. Reflecting the strong spiritual component of Native culture, prayer may be used in a group or individual therapeutic setting. The knowledge base of practice is clearly broader than western science and professionalism, and helps to avoid simplistic understandings of client problems.

Secondly, service staff's engagement with clients is much broader, reflecting the holistic philosophy. Thus, staff will not hesitate to act like "friends" or even soul-mates with clients, building legitimacy and trust on a much broader basis than professional expertise. The boundaries between the helper and the client are much less distinct, as reflected, for example, in staff willingness to share their own issues in healing circles. This "openness" of staff-client relations imply that client issues are never too small or never too big for attention.

This same diffuse involvement with clients manifests itself in a number of other ways. The expression of a broad range of emotions with the client, crying for example, is far more acceptable than the "emotional neutrality" of the pure, non-Native helping role.

Thirdly, the staff's ability to influence the client towards healing or a better quality of life is very much affected by common membership in the Native community. Being helped by a fellow community member who one sees at community events carries more clout than credentials, membership in associations, or other signs of professional "expertise". Staff may accompany clients to powwows, for example. The principle of "community care and participation" creates strong sentiments. This is a powerful leverage in NCFST's helping process.

Fourthly, because of the strong cultural base of knowledge and skills in agency practice, the staff's sources of learning includes cultural learning opportunities within the Native community. This may happen within or independently of the agency, and may involve staff and clients in co-learning situations with elders or cultural teachers. Since cultural learning is seen as an important source of healing, the notion of a "community of healers" is an important contrast to the professional dichotomy of helper and client.

The Native holistic principle also applies to staff development. Staff are viewed as much more than a bundle of skills and knowledge. Native Child and Family Services recognizes that the emotional dimension of helping and staff emotional needs are equally as important as professional and cultural excellence. Because Native staff may also come from dysfunctional family or community backgrounds, their experiences with clients may evoke negative memories, feelings, or even behavioral responses.

Having opportunities within the agency to deal with these issues is an important dimension of staff development and stress management. At NCFST these needs are surfaced in monthly staff talking circles, guided by a cultural teacher. These opportunities for staff support and personal development will be especially important when the agency incorporates a child protection mandate.

Finally, the over-all model of helping roles is more compatible with the traditional family structure, than that of the professional social service technologist. The word "ninoshe" for example means "aunty" in Ojibway. The Ninoshe Program, although staff-based, is very much a visiting aunty program with services centred around informal care, common-sense wisdom, community involvement, role modelling, and teaching. Family service staff also function like members of the extended family.

\* \* \*

Specific services will now be described within the context of the six main service departments. In some cases (eg. child protection), services have not yet been offered. These will be identified, and described as an added component of the over-all agency model.

## Family Services

### (i) Family Support

Since the inception of NCFST, family support services have been provided to the majority of clients, using case work practices. Clients are typically young, single parent families, with limited financial resources. Many have backgrounds of physical or sexual abuse. As well, they are isolated within the city, and are mistrustful and unskilled in dealing with mainstream institutions.

Consistent with agency goals and principles, Family Service Workers strive to support parents and children, and try to keep them together. Staff monitor the situations for possible risk to children, and if necessary, arrange for short-term placement through the agency's Customary Care Program. Serious abuse cases are referred to appropriate child protection agencies.

Much of Family Service Worker time is spent in informal counselling during home visits. In these, staff respond to a wide range of family and children's problems, such as stress, loneliness, children's behavioral problems, difficulties with partners, or the need for housing, food or financial assistance. As well, Family Service Workers provide budget counselling or listen to special issues relating to residential school, extended family break-up, or cultural shock in the city.

Family Service Workers are the main case managers in the agency. In this capacity, they gather and report client information, participate in intake and assessment, develop service plans, make referrals, follow client progress according to service goals and objectives, participate in case reviews, and make recommendations concerning termination. (For other relevant information on the case management system, see diagram, the sections on "assessment", "supervision", "intake and termination", and "record-keeping")

Family Service Workers also provide advocacy and referral services for their families. This service draws on their knowledge of other Native or non-Native agencies, as well as the informal Native network or social activities. In this capacity, staff acquaint clients with other services and recreational opportunities, helping

to build trust in those who are alienated from main-stream agencies and urban institutions in general.

Their work also brings them into the family court process, where they act as Band Representatives for First Nations across Canada. As well, they support families in their dealings with the court, by preparing them, supporting them throughout the process, and explaining court procedures and outcomes. Frequently, they are involved in the front-line work associated with Supervisory Orders.

Finally, each Family Service Worker contributes to the intake function, in an agency-wide rotating intake process. Participation in intake requires six days a month.

An important part of NCFST's family services is to assure that vulnerable people in Native communities receive support at critical junctures in their lives. We now turn to the Ninoshe Program, and how it supports single parents.

**(ii) The Ninoshe Program**

The Ninoshe Program is a family support program which will respond to the needs of young, single parents. These young women, as a result of loneliness, stress, and inadequate parenting skills, are struggling with their child-rearing responsibilities. Again, this program offers services in a context of Native cultural values and supportive relationships.

Services will be provided by a visiting ninoshe, or "aunty" in Ojibway. A mature kind woman, reminiscent of the traditional member of the extended family, visits the home and provides gentle counsel, role modelling, and companionship to the parent and the child.

An important component of the Ninoshe Program is the alleviation of the clients' stress through the positive presence of the ninoshe, her direct assistance in daily tasks, and modelling coping skills.

The Ninoshe Program also recognizes that most sole support Native parents lack the parenting skills to raise their children, within a safe, secure environment. The program will structure learning opportunities by having mothers observe their children's interactions with an experienced, loving Native woman.

Finally, through the presence and activities of the ninoshe, the program aims to provide an environment which nourishes the child's identity and esteem in the Native way.



**(iii) Parent/Child Program**

This new program targets high risk mothers and their children with a focus on the prevention of child neglect and abuse, and the enhancement of the quality of family life. Most NCFST clients are highly stressed, sole support parents with a hoist of intra-psychic, interpersonal and environmental problems.

The program's objectives are:

1. To alleviate stress and improve the coping abilities of participants
2. To strengthen parenting skills among participants such that the quality of their children's lives are improved
3. To provide a more nurturing, balanced, and Native traditional environment for children
4. To promote self help and mutual aid among participants

Two program methods are being developed. The staff person will contact other Metro parent education and parent support programs, for the purpose of enhancing the delivery of these programs for Native people and proposing joint operation of the programs.

Secondly, an in-house parent\child program is under development, utilizing a strong culture base with Native traditions. Talking circles, spirituality, teachings on child and family life, and group problem-solving will be central to the program. Both parents and children will be involved, sometimes together, sometimes apart. Elders and traditional teachers will be involved in the program.

This program will operate in conjunction with the home-based Ninoshe Program. As well, the program will be offered both in-house and in the community. The Gabriel Dumont housing project has been targeted as a priority location.





**(iv) Child Protection****General Philosophy**

NCFST seeks to protect Native children against the various forms of maltreatment: parental neglect, abuse, exploitation or exposure to unwholesome or demoralizing conditions. The agency has adopted a holistic conception of child protection services, one that considers all services as contributing to protection.

The conception of child protection at NCFST emphasizes a non-punitive approach to strengthening family environments and parental practices which promote children's well-being. Services will also be available to respond to the most extreme instances of child neglect or abuse. Thus, the agency will provide support services to strengthen the home, supplementary activities to care for the child in the home, and in extreme cases, will make temporary substitution arrangements.

Even in extreme maltreatment, NCFST seeks to avoid the practice and resulting stigma associated with "removing the child from the home". Rather, NCFST seeks temporary modifications of the arrangements for parenting. These modifications will be guided by the principle and practices of "co-parenting", or parenting partnerships, in which the child's natural parents continue to be involved with the child's life while they, themselves, receive support, teachings or treatment.

The short-term changes for child protection will be compatible with the Native principle of "community care" or responsibility for children. Child maltreatment, it may be argued, is partially due to the breakdown of community in the lives of some parents, due to historical and current realities.

In traditional communities, child protection was fulfilled directly, informally, and personally by immediate family and other community members. In mainstream child welfare, this has been replaced by the formalized procedures related to agency intervention. NCFST seeks to restore the sense of community concern and care in the child protection process.

**Organizational Implications**

When NCFST is designated to offer child protection services, a child protection function will be added to complete the Family Services Department. The new function will be introduced through two organizational structural changes: (i) a modification of the

Family Services Worker position, and (ii) the addition of the new position of Child Abuse Specialist.

What is proposed is the addition of 2 roles to the Family Service Worker's position, those of "child protection" and "community work". These two roles will be carried out in addition to the existing family support roles.

Adding child protection work to the Family Service Worker position, allows child protection intervention to be done by those in a pre-existing trusting relationship with the client. As well, it allows a continuation of care with serious cases, thus avoiding the involvement with multiple service providers.

Adding "community work" to the Family Services position has several anticipated benefits. First, by working on local initiatives (eg. planning, local board participation, volunteer mobilization, etc.), workers will establish a "positive presence" in Native communities. This should result in establishing agency trust and credibility which is necessary for successful enactment of child protection duties.

Second, a community work component will add balance to work which is heavily crisis-oriented and personally draining.

Third, this will establish a strong link between community prevention work, and the crisis intervention of family support and protection. Ideally, community work helps to build healthy environments in which child maltreatment does not happen. Family support/protection workers, by virtue of their intimate knowledge of their clients' lives, should have direct input into local initiatives contributing to the betterment of those lives.

Fulfilling the Agency's family support duties, as well as child protection and community work, will require raising the current family Services staff complement from 4 to 10.

The other significant change involves the addition of a Child Abuse Specialist, to complement the generalist work of the Family Service Workers. This position will be filled by an M.S.W., whose expertise will be readily available to the agency and the Native communities at large. The Child Abuse Specialist will be available for the development of investigation and assessment tools, staff training and support, and will participate directly or indirectly in virtually all child protection tasks. This work will be done in a way that does not compromise the case management function with its emphasis on "relationship" and "service continuity".

The Child Abuse Specialist will participate in virtually all child protection tasks, to which we now turn.



**Child Protection Tasks**

The team of Family Service Workers and the Child Abuse Specialist will undertake the following tasks associated with child protection work.

1. Investigation
2. Intake and assessment
3. Service planning
4. Court work
5. Child placement
6. Follow-up; facilitation of co-parenting
7. Case reviews
8. Liaison: police, medical profession, treatment staff, First Nations, etc.
9. Community education re: NCFST protection services

For details, see Job Descriptions in Appendix "B". See Diagram 1 for case management scheme.

**Child Protection Policies**

Since the beginning, NCFST agency policies and procedures have been in place to govern family service staff participation in child protection (See Appendix F, pgs. 10-13). These policies and procedures will be up-dated to reflect the agency's new mandated status.

Section 3.8 of the Agency's Manual, entitled "Defining a Child in Need of Protection", outlines (i) agency reporting requirements (ii) criteria for recognizing risk situations, and (iii) the principle of client advocacy.

Should they encounter a child protection situation, policy now requires family service staff to disclose this, along with identifying information and facts. To assist the staff, the manual summarizes relevant sections of the Child and Family Services Act which provide risk indicators.

The manual also provides clear guidelines for (i) consulting with the Supervisor on occasions of suspected abuse or neglect (ii) the expectation of informing clients who are about to be referred and finally (iii) the requirement of offering advocacy to them.

### **Assessment Implications**

A strong assessment function is a prerequisite to successful protection work. Client assessment will be based on a holistic conception of the client, including considerations of strengths and weaknesses in individuals, parenting relationships, and the links between the family, kinship relations, and the community.

Appropriate assessments will include statements of the problem (including the level of risk), family strengths and weaknesses, recommendations, and referrals within or outside the agency. The recommendation of protective intervention will be made as a tool or means to strengthen families, such that children can remain with their parents.

The importance of assessment in protection work requires the multiple perspectives of a well-trained assessment team.

### **Risk Indicators**

At the base of all protection work is some conception of children in situations of maltreatment, or at risk of being maltreated because of a particular set of home, parenting or community circumstances. One of the challenges of child protection work is to assess when children are at risk, based on information gathered by the protection worker through interviews, observations, and document analysis. As well, risk assessment will be aided by the on-going relationship with the family, such that the balance of family strengths and weaknesses are known.

NCFST assumes that, as an agency about to do mandated protection work, the assessment system must be sound. Further, the workers must be well trained and able to recognize signs of maltreatment and potentially maltreating environments.

NCFST recognizes that ideas about appropriate and inappropriate parenting change over time, and may differ in different cultural groups. As well the agency recognizes the potential role of the urban reality (eg. adjustment, social isolation, unemployment, culture shock, etc.) in creating stress and undermining the best intentions of some parents. It follows then, that risk indicators must reflect the family and parenting norms of Native culture as well as the socio-economic situations of Native families in an urban centre. Finally, risk indicators should also incorporate the myriad of family strengths.

NCFST research will identify an appropriate risk assessment tool

for Native families, one that is compatible with (a) a holistic model of family strengths and weaknesses, and (b) NCFST service principles. To avoid the ethnocentric bias in current legislation, policies and procedures, NCFST's assessment tool will identify real risk within a Native perspective of family functioning.

### **On-call policy**

NCFST has now implemented a staff on-call policy. One service staff member and one supervisor are available on a 24-hour basis, during the week and on week-ends. The current "beeper" system will be replaced with a cellular telephone so that the on-call staff can respond to emergency telephone calls to the agency. Extra remuneration is provided.

### **Liaison with emergency personnel**

Another important part of NCFST's capacity for responsiveness to emergencies will be its strong working relationships with community resources who are specialized in crisis work. Working protocols or informal arrangements will be established with:

- . the police
- . Anishnabe Health
- . the hospitals, particularly Wellesley Hospital
- . family shelters (eg. Anduyhan) and housing programs

Emergency team relationships with the police will be coordinated through the Aboriginal Peace-keeping Unit.

### **Apprehension Warrants**

Provincial legislation allows mandated agencies to seek a warrant to apprehend when parents resist this intervention. In the rare case when this is necessary, the Family Services Worker will approach a Justice of the Peace for a warrant. In the company of a policeman, she will then proceed to apprehend the child.

### **Promoting Public Awareness**

Family Services Workers will have the main responsibility for promoting community awareness concerning NCFST new mandate as a child protection agency. This will be supplemented by a public education campaign (eg. brochures, newsletter, etc.) targeting all



Native agencies, groups, and communities. A new volunteer initiative may be the third component of the agency's public awareness plan.

### **Legal Services**

Because of its prominent role in the court work associated with child protection matters, legal services will be part of the Family Services Department. For the first two years, this will be a purchased service. This will be evaluated, giving consideration to the option of a full-time in-house lawyer.

Legal services will be purchased on a retainer arrangement. A lawyer will provide legal services according to the Child and Family Services Act. In addition to managing the entire legal process associated with child protection, and offering policy advice, the legal specialist will collaborate in the development of an in-service training program to assure that services comply with legislation.

### **The Community Child Welfare Council**

An important Native cultural value is captured by the concept of "community care" of children. Because the Native community takes responsibility for children's well-being, it follows that communities should have important decision-making responsibilities when troubled family situations may undermine children's well-being and growth. This includes reviewing complaints, and recommending steps to strengthen families. This also includes short- and long-term alternative parenting arrangements to alleviate high risk situations while parents seek help.

The Native Community Child Welfare Council is the mechanism for assuring community care. Although it will lean towards other less intrusive solutions, one of its tools is the use of the court system in extreme cases of maltreatment and parental resistance or inability to seek help.

Finally, the Community Council may in itself be a direct source of change in parental behaviour. By participating in the child protection process, the Council sends a message to parents that the quality of their parenting is important to the Native community. As

well, parents may be influenced by the visible display of Native community power and concern.

### **The Court**

In cases of extreme child maltreatment, and parental unwillingness or inability to respond to other services, the leverage of Provincial Court may be necessary. NCFST seeks to minimize the confusing and revictimizing experience of court for clients. As well, studies in other Native agencies reveal that court work is the most negative and stressful experience for staff. To begin to address these issues, the following suggestions have been made:

- . Court should be held in a Native environment
  
- . The use of the same judge who is culturally aware and sensitive to Native experiences with the justice system
  
- . The encouragement of legal counsels who are respectful of client experiences
  
- . Thorough family support for clients before, during and after court proceedings

To alleviate the negative experiences of court, NCFST staff will be well-trained in CFSA legislation, record-keeping, the court process, and family support.



## Community Care Services: Customary Care, Safe House and Long-Term Care

An important principle of NCFST is that Native people should take care of their own people, and that the Native community of Toronto share in the responsibility for child welfare.

As indicated in our discussion of goals and objectives, the agency provides Native-appropriate services and resources for the care of children in need. This is accomplished primarily through its Community Care Services which consist of: (i) Customary Care Program (officially licensed to provide residential services for children) and the (ii) Safe House. A future long-term care initiative will involve the development of adoption and repatriation services.

Based on the Native values of collective community responsibility for children, the importance of children, and the principle of self-determination, these programs protect the child without sacrificing the integrity of the family unit. This is accomplished by maintaining ties between the child and the parent, and strengthening the parenting skills and situation for eventual return of the child. All of these are undertaken through a cooperative, consensual process within the Native community.

### **(i) Customary Care Program**

The agency's Customary Care Program is one of the most important vehicles for responding to Native children's need for safety and security. At present, the program incorporates five core activities: the recruitment of Native homes from within the Toronto Native communities, home studies to assure suitability, orientation of customary care parents, parent training, placement, and follow-up. The process of assessing potential Native homes conforms to Ministry guidelines.

Concerning training, program staff have collaborated with Mothercraft to develop a culturally-appropriate training program for Native care-givers. This includes the development of a resource manual, outlining the principles and practices for successful care-giving.

In some cases, children are repatriated to their First Nation communities. The agency, working under the authority of a Band Council Resolution (BCR), facilitates the return of the child to the community, ideally to an extended family member.

The policies and procedures for the Agency's Customary Care Program are included as Appendix "G".

**(ii) A Safe House**

The agency's proposed safe house responds to the need for an emergency home for Native children. The house will supplement the Customary Care Program, providing short-term safety, security and assessment, when customary care homes are unavailable. For some troubled or difficult children, the safe house may be the most appropriate placement.

The atmosphere and living arrangements will be culturally appropriate and supportive of the residents as Native children. The home will be modelled after Native extended family care, with staff assuming the traditional "aunty" roles of care, training, supervision and help with specific tasks such as school work.

The proposed safe house is a much-needed alternative to the mainstream system in which care-givers have little awareness of Native problems, social situations, and culture.

The target population of the home will be (i) children in need of protection for whom customary care homes are unavailable or inappropriate (ii) children needing temporary care to avoid apprehension (iii) self-referrals, (iv) children from families in crisis situations, or (v) special needs children who may be hard to serve. The length of stay is short-term, with a firm commitment to return children to natural families as soon as possible, or to find an appropriate long term alternative arrangement.

Six staff members are required to meet the special parenting, clinical and cultural needs of Native children: 1 house parent, 1 elder, 2 childcare workers, 1 social worker, 1 domestic, and 2 half-time relief workers. The elder will participate in the daily living routines, bringing the culturally-based life experiences, traditional knowledge, spiritual guidance, and teaching to the children and the staff. More than anything, the elder will infuse the house with a sense of place, and will be a primary source of nurturance, care and love.

A professional social worker will be responsible for the plan of care, and liaison with the agency. As well, the worker will provide staff orientation, training, leadership and support to all house

staff. The staff will work according to principles of team work, consistent with the holistic principles of the agency.

**(iii) Long-Term Care: Repatriation and Adoption Services**

The long-term care services of adoption and repatriation are not yet in place in the agency, although NCFST has assisted First Nations and Inter-Tribal Agencies with repatriation cases. Repatriation is the process of helping families and communities restore ties with children who, through earlier mainstream child welfare decisions, were placed outside of their home communities. NCFST, through the Customary Care Program, also participates with the mandated agencies in all adoptions involving Native children. According to a formal protocol (see Appendix I), NCFST participates in home studies, attends Adoption Resource Exchange meetings, assists in planning long-term care, and facilitates communication with Bands.

As a mandated society, NCFST seeks to incorporate full adoption services within the context of its Community Care Services. To this, a full-time Adoption Program Development Specialist will be hired to develop these services. The development phase, approximately one year in duration, will build on the Native culture-based principles and practices of "customary adoption".  
Treatment Services

NCFST has quickly developed the capacity to respond to the emotional, physical, spiritual, and psychological needs associated with child abuse.

The agency's abuse treatment services will provide a range of counselling, healing, and therapeutic services to child abuse victims, their families, and the perpetrators of abuse. As well, although not an alcohol treatment program, these services will treat the family dynamics and consequences of alcohol abuse.

These will be offered through a full range of individual, couple, family, and group modalities. NCFST treatment will combine contemporary social work with traditional Native healing practices.

Two existing programs will now be described.

**(i) Sexual Abuse Treatment: The Mooka'am Program**

The Mooka'am Program is an example of the agency's efforts to incorporate specific Native helping practices into a healing program for abuse victims. Recognizing that sexual abuse may be an intergenerational pattern, Mooka'am offers a combination of traditional and contemporary healing to adult victims and their families. Services are also provided to children suspected of being abused.

The victims of child sexual abuse come to the program with a variety of dysfunctional thinking and behavioral patterns. The program addresses these by helping victims to...

- . develop healthy and enduring relationships with peers and members of the opposite sex, based on non-victimization.
- . develop healthy coping behaviours for dealing with life's demands, rather than using self-destructive behaviours, such as drug and alcohol abuse
- . improve their physical health
- . increase their self-help potential, including the ability to participate in a healing community
- . appropriately parent

A range of treatment objectives guide the program, with particular attention to: the enhancement of self-esteem, removal of self-blame for victimization, removal of negative stigmas related to the abuse, acceptance of the body, understanding and valuing Native identity and culture.

These treatment goals and objectives are pursued through a combination of Native and contemporary social work practices, including healing circles, sweat lodges, traditional medicines: sweet grass, cedar; individual counselling, relaxation and visualization techniques, cultural awareness, non-directive creative methods such as keeping diaries, writing, art work, poetry-writing; family therapy, and participation in summer camp.

Mooka'am program development has incorporated a documentation and e

valuation process. These are discussed in the section on "Evaluation".

**(ii) The Children's Circle**

An estimated 80% of NCFST's case-load, involving 520 children, are judged to have addiction problems. NCFST's experience is that the "multi-problem" Native family, those with dysfunctions over generations, has alcohol addiction as the dominant characteristic.

The Children's Circle Program responds to the needs of children from addicted families. These include needs related to bonding issues, emotional issues, social issues (isolated from other children), educational issues, physical and health issues, and fetal alcohol syndrome. Children at NCFST typically express low self-esteem, self-blame for family troubles, depression, fear and anger. They have difficulty expressing feelings, are either dependent or overly responsible, don't trust and feel helpless. Family neglect causes poor nutrition, school or legal difficulties, inability to meet developmental tasks, and understimulation.

The Children's Circle Program goals are (i) to improve the psych-social state of Native children of alcohol and/or drug addicted parents, and thereby help break the addiction cycle among participant parents (ii) to further knowledge, skill, and effectiveness in the provision of prevention and treatment services to off-reserve children of addicted parents. Goal ii speaks to the developmental work of the program.

Specific objectives are as follows:

Treatment

1. To improve participant self-esteem
2. To reduce isolation and promote self-help and mutual aid
3. To infuse a culturally-based value system and a way of living with a strong emphasis on sobriety
4. To develop coping skills
5. To motivate and assist addicted parents to seek treatment
6. To identify children affected by FAS and FAE and to ensure they are appropriately assessed and treated



Program development and education

7. To describe the value base, knowledge, and methods of practice of the "Children's Circle Program" in a comprehensive, culture-based model of service delivery
8. To improve treatment and prevention practice for Native children on a broad scale within the urban Native context

This program will be delivered by a full-time specialist who will provide the following service activities:

- . social and recreational activities
- . individual assessment of children from severely addicted families
- . healing groups for children
- . cultural education (eg. traditional Native values, traditional ceremonies, family relationships)
- . alcohol-prevention education groups for children
- . parent counselling concerning impact of addiction on children, treatment options and referrals, and follow-up.

Service activities, like the Mooka'am Program will incorporate contemporary and traditional educational and healing methods.

A program evaluation specialist will facilitate responsibility for the development of the program model, program evaluation, and the dissemination of results.

**(iii) Family Violence Treatment**

Several cases in the Agency are in need of holistic family treatment for family violence. Research and clinical experience has shown that patterns of family violence, such as child physical abuse, sexual abuse, or spouse abuse are symptomatic of total family dysfunction.

To alleviate these abuses, treatment must target family relationships and thinking patterns, whether these involve insensitivity to the needs of individual members, distorted

communications, confused family boundaries, or isolation from the community. This requires assessment and treatment of the family as a whole, frequently with all family members present.

Family system treatment will be provided by a full-time family therapist.

### Youth Services

NCFST's Youth Services target a highly vulnerable Native youth population. In Toronto, as in Canada at large, Native youth are at high risk for incarceration, premature pregnancy, school drop-out, alcohol and drug use, prostitution, and other forms of self-destructive behaviour. As well, they are prone to casual, unprotected sex, and therefore are at risk for contracting the HIV virus.

Native street youth in Toronto typically grew up in dysfunctional family backgrounds, and are involved in a transient and in some ways uninformed peer culture. For these reasons, NCFST's youth services focus on enhancing self-esteem, disseminating AIDS prevention information and condoms, raising awareness about the effects of alcohol and drug-abuse, and creating a sense of peer community. Programs are based on values and skills for respect, self-care, and mutual aid, and are firmly grounded in traditional Native culture.

Program objectives are pursued through a combination of outreach activities, individual counselling, group work, and community development. In outreach work, program staff attend activities where Native youth may be reached (eg. "The Breakfast Club"), make them aware of NCFST's youth services, and encourage their participation. Staff also liaise with other youth programs in Toronto.

Counselling concentrates on enhancing self-esteem, teaching self-help attitudes and skills, and building attitudes for mutual aid. Group work also builds self esteem, while strengthening the cohesiveness of the Native youth community. Within the group format, youth are also exposed to specific teachings on traditional gender roles, sexuality, self-care and mutual responsibility.

The social planning focus of community development gives particular attention to strengthening the links with other youth serving agencies and networks. Public education initiatives address the AIDS information needs of Native youth, through a targeted

distribution of relevant literature and condoms.

Finally, an Opportunity Worker will assist youth establish long-term goals in terms of literacy and education, career planning, and job preparation.

Youth services are provided in ways which are appropriate to Native clients, and are culture-based in format and content. Reflecting the core values of mutual respect and community care, services are offered by Native staff who respect tradition, and whose personal experiences help build communication and trust between youth and adults.

Group work includes traditional cultural circles, and incorporates sweet grass ceremonies, traditional medicines, and sweat lodges into the healing and group-building process. At present, three different circles are provided: a culture circle, a drumming group, and an alcohol/drug abuse prevention program. The latter, "Neesohkamatowin" ("Caring for Each Other") aims to provide information on the dangers of alcohol or drug abuse, and thereby change this potentially destructive behaviour.

Ultimately, all of these program components aim to help Native youth make healthy life-style choices, avoid self-destructive behaviours, and generally make more adaptive responses to the stress and demands of their lives.

### Children's Services

NCFST'S Children's Services provide a series of prevention services to Native children at risk. These services target children from dysfunctional families who need supplementary parenting and socialization opportunities.

Children's Services aim to create a resilience in children whose growth has been limited by seriously troubled situations. The agency's adult clients struggle to meet basic needs, resolve their own emotional problems or developmental tasks, and grapple with their identity needs as Native people. These struggles, combined

with limited knowledge and skills for child-rearing, result in inadequate parenting at best. Children lack the self-esteem, the advice from adults, the fun of childhood, and the opportunities for life-skill development.

These programs assume that children's over-all socialization opportunities come from the total life-space of family, peers, school, and the community at large. Further, the program assumes that where one part of that life-space is deficient, others can be enriched.

To this end, the Programs will provide mutual support and friendship, role modelling, cultural enrichment, and task learning. Children will interact, have recreational fun, and experience success with like-minded children from similar backgrounds. Through games and teachings, they will be exposed to mature male and female Native staff who are empathic and enthusiastic about children and their needs, and who model appropriate behaviour and life skills.

In short, the Children's Program will provide many of the experiences that are missing at home. Ideally, despite their unfortunate home circumstances, the children will emerge relatively intact, less likely to carry on a cycle of neglect, abuse and misery.

We now turn to one specific program within Children's Services, the Summer Camp.

### **Summer Camp**

The annual summer camp, along with the Christmas party, are the agency's main primary prevention initiatives. The camp is held during the summer months in a beautiful lake-side setting, at a time when children are at their highest risk for alcohol abuse and violence, and are most likely to be drawn into acts of vandalism.

NCFST's camp experience is markedly different from mainstream agency camps. The latter are limited in their offerings to Native children, because of low staff-client ratio, inadequate resources, and a narrow focus on recreation. In contrast, NCFST's camp offers learning, healing and self-esteem building opportunities within a cultural environment of Native traditions.

The camp is offered during four time segments of eight days each. A maximum of twenty participants per session are drawn from the NCFST case-load, and from other agencies. Mostly children are involved, although some adult sexual abuse victims from the Mooka'am Program

are also invited.

The summer camp program aims:

1. To create resilience in children in order to overcome the limitations on life chances due to dysfunctional family backgrounds.
2. To contribute to the prevention of alcohol and drug use, and to promote safe sex and other responsible life-style choices.
3. To increase the physical health and well-being of participants
4. To teach a respect for oneself, for others, and for the Earth.

These objectives are pursued through a unique combination of camp activities, rules and expectations, staffing and staff/participant relationships.

Many Native children, as a result of their dysfunctional family backgrounds and the negative stigma, suffer from low self-esteem and emotional trauma. To enhance their self-confidence as Native people, the camp offers the experience of authentic Native culture, exposure to Native role models, and opportunities to participate in traditional Native ceremonies. A sense of competence and safety skills are developed through the learning and participation in environmental survival tasks.

Traditional teaching circles aim to instill the knowledge and capacities for more appropriate life-style choices, particularly as regards alcohol, drug use, and unsafe sex. These and other activities are organized and delivered by staff and volunteer resource people with the backgrounds and experience to acquaint children with the realities of urban life. The interesting cultural content and style of the teachings capture the children's interest, while creating feelings of respect for self and for others.

Physical health and well-being is enhanced through an emersion in an outdoor setting in which the children participate in vigorous work and recreation. In addition to the healthy, nutritious food, there are strict rules against using alcohol and drugs. The talking circles include discussions of nutrition and healthy living. Healthy living comes directly from participating in a healthy environment, and indirectly from learning useful principles to take home.

### **Future Programs: The Little Beavers' Program**

As a year round children's program, the Little Beavers Program will provide a useful complement to the Agency's Summer Camp. As an early intervention prevention program, it will offering a full range of recreational and social opportunities. Again, within the context of Native traditions, it will provide the self-esteem and peer socializing opportunities as an early foundation for children's growth and well-being. The Little Beavers Program has a long history within Native communities and can be easily adapted within a child welfare setting.

### Community Resources Development

From the beginning, NCFST has worked towards the entrenchment of Native culture in agency organizational development, program development and service delivery. However, unlike the situation in First Nation Communities, urban Native agencies lack easy accessibility to appropriate culture-based resources. A Community Services Worker is needed to help identify needed resources, access these resources, and facilitate their most appropriate use in the agency.

The proposed new Community Services Worker will be responsible for mobilizing, training and providing support for Native volunteers for the agency. As well, this person will identify and help the agency access cultural resources for the agency's staff training, service delivery, community education, and volunteers. An important part of the responsibilities will be the development and support of a Native Big Brothers/Big Sisters program.

The Community Services Worker will facilitate the access to cultural teachers, elders, and other traditional people for internal case and program consultation, as well as external community education to other service providers and Native communities.

The Community Services Worker will facilitate staff training, assuring that staff receives the cultural training and sensitivity to render their work more culture-based. Culture-based parent training will also be facilitated in the Customary Care Homes.

Tangible assistance would be provided to service staff in specific cases, where cultural teaching and perhaps spiritual guidance would be needed to enhance the over-all service plan. Again, the

Community Services Worker would provide the link between the agency and the most suitable resources.

As well, this Worker will assist in the development and implementation of new programs. For example, in the new Children's Circle, he or she would give talks on the dangers of alcohol and drug abuse, and how this life style would be at odds with Native values. This would also require accessing culturally-appropriate material and media resources through contacts with local Native agencies, working with external cultural centres, or developing new in-house materials.

The Community Services Worker would facilitate community education initiatives, for example, culture-based talks or workshops in family education or parenting. Working with agency staff and Native community resource people, this person would help staff and volunteers adapt cultural ideas and resources to the needs of those living in the city.

Community education activities would take place in open forums, or in small sessions for high risk groups, such as single parents. Similar educational opportunities will be available to non-Native service providers interested in developing more culturally appropriate services.

The Worker would work directly with staff involved in traditional healing activities, helping them to access sweat lodges, traditional medicines, and healers. Similar activities will be provided on staff and Board retreats.

Finally, the Community Services Worker will be available as an internal organizational consultant, facilitating a cultural component in Board meetings, employee assistance, and policy development. This has proven to be a useful role in other Native service organizations, such as Ojibway Tribal Family Services, and Dilico Child and Family Services.

An important function of this position will involve developing appropriate roles for elders in the agency, identifying local elders and facilitating their involvement.





## 7. Complementary Services

To supplement the delivery of its core programs, NCFST will purchase several specialized part-time services. These are as follows:

### **Program consultation, case consultation, referrals**

- . Psychological assessment
- . Psychiatric services
- . Medical services
- . Cultural consultation
- . Program evaluation

As well, while receiving NCFST services, it is anticipated that clients will be involved with other local Native programs. So far, these are as follows:

### **Native Programs used by agency clients**

- . Pedhabun Lodge (alcohol treatment)
- . Anishnabeg Health
- . Native Women's Resource Centre
- . Anduhyuan
- . Council Fire
- . Native Community Crisis Team
- . Native Men's Residence
- . Aboriginal Legal Service

### **Liaison with mainstream and Native service providers**

Native Child and Family Services has carefully cultivated working

relationships with Toronto's Native and non-Native service agencies, and has forged strong networks with provincial organizations. NCFST was a founding member of the Toronto Aboriginal Social Service Association, and the Ontario Native Child and Family Services Association. The Executive Director also sits on the Community Council Child Welfare Project (Aboriginal Legal Services), and is generally involved in numerous other community service activities. Other NCFST staff members also sit on local Boards of Directors.

To clarify its working relationship with the Children's Aid Societies, the agency developed a formal protocol. Through this arrangement, mainstream agencies have agreed to be alert for Native clients, make them aware of NCFST and, with client agreement, make referrals.

The links with the Native agencies, and the apparent credibility with the Native communities, seems to have paid off. Sixty percent of new cases are self-referrals; the second largest source of referrals are Native agencies.

**8. Staffing**

Executive Director: 1 FTE

Director of Services: 1 FTE

Office Manager: 1 FTE

Payroll Clerk/Bookkeeper: 1 FTE

Secretary/Receptionist/Data Entry: 3 FTE

Family Services Coordinators: 2 FTE

Residential Services Coordinator: 1FTE

Treatment/Healing Coordinator: 1 FTE

Youth Services Coordinator: 1 FTE

Community Services Coordinator: 1 FTE

Children's Services Coordinator: 1 FTE

Treatment Workers (Treatment Services): 2 FTE

Family Service Workers (Family Services): 10 FTE

Child Abuse Specialist (Family Services): 1 FTE

Child Care Workers (Residential Services): 2 FTE

Youth Workers (Youth Services): 3 FTE

Adoption Worker (Residential Services): 1 FTE

Safe House staff (Residential Services): 4 FTE

Summer Camp staff (Children's Services): 2 FTE



## **10. Management**

### **Staff Development**

Pertinent information on staffing and staff development is contained in the Agency's Personnel Policy. (Appendix F) The manual was approved and adopted by the Board of Directors on May 11, 1992.

### **Recruitment policy**

The Agency's Personnel Policy contains a section outlining a policy for staff recruitment. Hiring gives priority to Native people with the appropriate academic qualifications, professional background and life experiences. An important feature of the hiring policy is securing staff who can act as strong role models in the Native communities.

### **Staff and management qualifications**

The Agency's Executive Director has qualifications which clearly meet the requirements of COMSOC regulation 550/85, section 29. He has a Masters of Social Work degree, and has worked as a social work practitioner in child welfare for 12 years. Three of these years were spent at the Children's Aid Society of Metropolitan Toronto; another 4 years involved child welfare and community work in Winnipeg.

### **Current Staff Qualifications**

Native Child and Family Services now has 4 Family Service Workers on staff. Of these, 2 have BSW degrees, 1 has a B.A. in Native Studies and Social Work, and 1 has some university. One Family Service Worker has some high school, with extensive child welfare experience at NCFST and Catholic Children's Aid Society of Metropolitan Toronto. The Co-ordinator of Family Services holds an MSW.

The Residential Services Co-ordinator holds a BA (Family Studies). The program's Child Services Worker has a B.A. The Mooka'am Program Co-ordinator is an MSW, and the Treatment Worker holds a BSW.

A few staff members are not university educated. What they bring to the agency are work experiences in Native human services. They bring vast knowledge of urban Native communities, family problems, and experience in other Native programs. They have been hired less for their academic qualifications and more for their experience, and their ability to relate to Native clients and community

resource people.

### **Personnel policies**

The Personnel Policy (Appendix F) contains several other policies. This includes: information on the process of developing policy; policies concerning staff appointments, salaries and job classification, termination, office hours, attendance, leave and time off, job description policy, and matters pertaining to conflict of interest.

### **Staff orientation**

According to policy, all new staff receive an orientation to the agency by the immediate supervisor. This includes information about the agency and introductions to all staff.

### **Training and Consultation**

The Agency's Personnel Policy acknowledges the importance of staff training. Training opportunities are discussed during supervision when specific professional goals are set.

Staff have attended many training events since the Agency opened its doors. These include: cultural awareness training, child protection and related training (eg. identification of high risk cases), play therapy workshops, traditional healing classes, child protection training, and others.

NCFST has utilized the training services of the Institute for the Prevention of Child Abuse. Agency staff have taken steps to prepare themselves for protection services by taking IPCA's "Core Child Protection Training for Child Protection Workers" (investigation, assessment, providing services to children and families). Each year the agency has sent 2-3 workers, and will continue to do so.

Apart from IPCA, the Agency has used a variety of resource people for training and consultation. The choice of these resources reflects the commitment to the development of skills, knowledge, and programming, which are compatible with Native culture.

For the unique resource development needs of the agency, the agency has used clinical psychology consultants, a clinical sociologist experienced in Native program development and evaluation, Native cultural teachers and elders, and Native practitioners with experience in traditional healing.

Future training will concentrate on developing advanced staff skills in child protection. A preliminary staff training needs

assessment highlighted the following areas:

- . The Child and Family Services Act
- . Court work and documentation
- . Apprehension
- . Investigation
- . Working with the police and other emergency personnel
- . Building client trust
- . Indicators of abuse and neglect
- . Stress management
- . Crisis intervention



## **Supervision**

Front-line staff supervision at NCFST is carried out on a regular basis by the Family Services Co-ordinator, the Youth Services Coordinator, the Treatment Services Coordinator, and the Residential Services Coordinator.

In Family Services supervision, for example, supervision focuses on (i) personal work (eg. relations with staff, work satisfaction, etc.) (ii) case progress, and (iii) professional development.

In case supervision, special attention is given to the difficult cases or what the agency refers to as "hot cases". The full case load of all staff is reviewed every month.

Supervision also affords the opportunity for fine-tuning and implementing the service plans for each client. Further service decisions are made after the team assessment, following more detailed assessment.

The supervision of professional development is integrated with staff evaluation. The aim is to monitor the staff member's progress in professional development goals as identified in annual staff evaluations. All case information becomes part of an agency information system.

At present, the supervision of the four Program Coordinators is the responsibility of the Executive Director. The proposed new Director of Services will assume management supervision in the future.

Supplementing the supervision by Program Coordinators, the Agency also has introduced a peer supervision process. On a weekly basis, a team meeting is held with all staff, in which presentations are given concerning work progress. All staff contribute to problem-solving with special difficult cases.

## **Staff Meetings**

NCFST holds weekly staff or "team meetings". During these meetings, cases are discussed and assigned. Ideas are shared for the development of case plans. Case issues are raised concerning on-going clients.

The weekly staff meeting is an important management tool. The opportunity is afforded for reviewing the agency's progress towards goal-attainment and program development. Important policy matters and funding issues are raised, as are the on-going relationships

with other community organizations and groups.

Team meetings contribute to the on-going education of staff through internal case consultations and guest speakers.

### **Staff Evaluation**

The Agency's policies relevant to staff evaluation (Personnel Policy, Pg. 6) indicate first that staff will receive two evaluations during a six month probationary period, after three and six months.

After probation, staff evaluations occur annually, covering professional and cultural skills, knowledge and attitudes. Currently, the front-line staff are evaluated by the Coordinator of Family Services.

### **The Planning Process**

Depending on the focus, the planning process at NCFST takes place in a number of different ways. However, there are a few common features of all planning at the agency. First, the Executive Director takes a central role, by initiating the process, facilitating the contributions of others, and ultimately assuming responsibility for a final documentation. Secondly, the E.D. consults broadly within the agency, including staff and the Board of Directors.

In principle, the E.D. and the Board would prefer a proactive, long range planning approach which would allow the gradual implementation of the service model. However, the current economic reality is that program development responds to the specific funding initiatives available from government. Although the agency has been successful in securing short-term funding, in some cases, such funding has not addressed the highest priority needs.

Turning now to some of the more unique features of planning, the initial needs assessment and service model development was conducted by a working committee of the Board, in consultation with a consulting team. The process involved a multi-staged consultation with Native communities, service providers, NCFST Board and staff, and government representatives. Data was fed back to community groups for verification and elaboration, and was used in a Board/staff visioning workshop.

Organizational development and planning has also occurred in Board retreats and Board/staff retreats. For example, in one retreat, the Executive Director and the Board reviewed progress on service

implementation, fine-tuned aspects of the model, and refined the functions of the Board. Another retreat was more issue-oriented, in which Board and staff reviewed challenges and concerns in service delivery and operations.

As indicated, the Executive Director has a central role in program planning and development. Typically, in response to available funding the E.D. develops a program idea which is consistent with the needs and philosophy of the service model. The idea will be discussed with staff and Board members, and a first draft will be written. Following staff review, and Board acceptance, a proposal will be submitted for funding.

Program planning and development has also taken place in conjunction with a formative evaluation of the program. In the Mooka'am Program, an evaluation consultant, the agency Program Supervisor, Mooka'am Co-ordinator, the Executive Director, and program staff collaborated on the development of a program model and evaluation design. The consultant took the lead in drafting and circulating the various drafts of model and evaluation plan. Towards the conclusion, the team meet to review a first draft of the report, and derive implications for programming.

### **Service Planning**

Since opening its doors, Native Child and Family Services has submitted one service plans to the Ministry of Community and Social Services, written according to the COMCOC format. In previous years, service plans were completed according to NCFST format.

Although the Executive Director took the major responsibility, the various Program Co-ordinators make direct contributions to the process. Ultimately, the plans were approved by the Board.

Each service plan contained a review of the past years activities, including evaluations, and a projection for the coming year. A rationale was included for each program proposal and budget request. Based on comments from Ministry officials, Agency management assumes that the quality of service planning adhered to Ministry standards.

## **Financial Management**

### **Policy sources**

Except for financial management responsibilities in job descriptions, there is no documentation of NCFST's financial policies and procedures. However, a fiscally conservative set of expectations are in place throughout a well-defined financial management system.

### **Participants and process**

In NCFST, those responsible for financial management are the Board of Directors, the Executive Director and the Business Manager.

The Executive Director, according to job description, assures that the Board of Directors receive regular financial reports, including comparative statements on a year-to-year, and monthly basis. This includes annual cash flow projections and analyses. The E.D. is also expected to prepare operating budget forecasts and supporting documentation pertaining to the Corporation's annual funding and specific project submissions. Finally, the E.D. is expected to arrange for specialized financial advice to the Corporation, as needed.

In day-to-day financial decision-making, the agency's financial management can be described as a centralized operation. The Executive Director has the ultimate authority for spending decisions. Within the parameters of their respective budgets, Program Co-ordinators must submit spending requests for final approval. The Business Manager administers the financial system, but does not make financial decisions. Finally, two signatures are required on all cheques, which are stamped "for deposit only".

### **The accounting system**

The Agency has used the Bedford Integrated Accounting Program to record all revenue and expenditures. The system allows for a general ledger, the recording of accounts payable and accounts receivable, payroll, and the allocation of revenues and costs to various programs. The Agency is now making the transition to the NUVEWS System which, according to a consultant, offers more flexibility, provides customized reports, and allows networking.

### **Financial controls**

There are three sets of financial controls within the agency pertaining to: (i) reporting arrangements (ii) signing authority and (iii) consultation.

The financial state of the agency is closely monitored. Financial reporting from the Executive Director is done regularly during the monthly Board meetings. The financial report includes (i) a summary of revenues and expenditures for each program (ii) revenues and expenditures for operations, and (iii) revenues and expenditures for each agency program.

An agenda item within every Board of Directors' meeting, entitled "Treasurer's Report" encourages the Board to review the report, raise questions, and deal with any financial issues.

A co-signing arrangement is another means for assuring financial control within the agency. All cheques are co-signed by the Executive Director and the Board President.

Finally, in addition to the year-end audit, a Consulting Accountant provides regular review and advice to the Business Manager both on a monthly basis, and again towards the year end. The Consulting Accountant is hired from a separate firm than the Auditors. Under consideration is the phasing out of the Consultant arrangement in favour of purchasing the services of a part-time book-keeper.

### **Financial Performance**

Even though NCFST finds itself relating to many funders, and functions in a somewhat unpredictable financial environment, the Agency has been fiscally responsible. Consistent with the internal policy, it has not entered a deficit scenario in the last five years.

### **Salaries**

The agency follows salary scales for all staff except those on contract. For example, the range for service staff is \$35-\$45,000. These scales are reviewed regularly, within three-year periods. The full salary scale, revised on July 12, 1993, is included as Appendix J.

## **Insurance**

Native Child and Family Services has taken two insurance policies with Reed Stenhouse Ltd. One, a Commercial Package Policy, covers such items as office contents, computer systems, professional malpractice, etc. The other coverage is a "Directors and Officers Policy", offering protection against suits for negligent acts, errors, omissions, and the like.

In both policies NCFST is covered up to \$5,000,000.

## **11. Volunteers and Student Field Placements**

The Agency has made extensive use of volunteers in program planning, evaluation, and service delivery. Last year, for example, volunteers were utilized in the following activities:

- . Board of Directors: planning, monitoring, fund-raising meetings with potential funders, etc.
- . development of evaluation components to new program
- . contributions to proposal writing
- . planning and participation in conference presentations (eg. Mooka'am Program presentation to Institute for Child Abuse Prevention Annual Conference)
- . summer camp activities
- . preparation and contribution to Christmas party
- . teaching drumming, singing and other cultural activities to young people in Youth Services

An analysis of last year's volunteer activities identified 20 direct service volunteers. Adding the Board members brings the total to 30 people.

Further analysis shows that, including students in the Ambassador Program, volunteers contributed a total of 4,845 hours to the agency's activities.

NCFST values the contributions of its volunteers. Voluntarism has been difficult to operationalize and monitor, due to the lack of a

Volunteer Coordinator. Future plans include the development of Native Big Brothers and Big Sisters Programs.

### **Teaching centre**

Native Child and Family Services has provided numerous opportunities for university and college students to learn in a Native-controlled, culture-based setting. Both Native and non-Native students have participated.

Thus far, the Agency has accommodated students from five universities and colleges, including the University of Toronto School of Social Work, and Ryerson. In some instances, students have returned to the agency after graduation to take full-time jobs. Last year, for example, two students were hired and are now making strong contributions to the Agency.

### **12. Eligibility and Priorization**

Because of its holistic, family-focussed service philosophy, NCFST does not declare any potential clients ineligible for services. This is a strong cultural dictate. Also, no other Native agencies exist in the city for the purpose of servicing child welfare cases. Funding agreements and agency programs (eg. Summer Camp, Youth Services) would prohibit dealing with only high risk child welfare clients. In general, though, NCFST gives higher priority to children who are protection concerns.

### **13. Intake and Termination**

At Native Child and Family Services, intake is rotated throughout the Family Service team members, each person assuming intake duties for six days of every month. All staff are expected to have knowledge of community resources, and the issues that the agency faces. This encourages immediate feed-back to the family in crisis.

Depending on the initial relationship with the client, the intake workers may or may not keep the cases at intake. If not, they are reassigned during a staff team meeting. The agency recognizes the limitations to this intake model (eg. immediate connection between intake worker and client may be lost), and is monitoring the process closely. In this rotation model, if a family needs immediate service, either the intake person provides it, or any other member of the team.

The agency envisions some modifications to the intake system upon

assuming a child protection mandate. Changes would allow better response to the high risk cases on a consistent, planned basis.

Family Service Workers are now used as "case managers" in which every case in the agency is opened under Family Services. After the internal referral, the F.S.W. keeps that case open as a case management case, and provides services that are not the responsibility of other programs (eg. housing, financial, etc). For a summary of information taken during intake, see #17, "Intake Information".

### **Assessment**

Initial minor assessment and case planning is done at team meetings. At that time, extensive discussion takes place among Family Service Workers and treatment staff concerning each family. Plans are then made, including the identification of serious family issues which must be monitored.

The other facet of the team model is that people are asked to bring cases to the team for on-going re-assessment and service consultation. Staff are encouraged to share three questions about the case beforehand, and give brief synopses of family situations.

This complements the Agency's official supervision, team or peer supervision. The process works well for everybody's learning, and it assures a collective base for high quality service for difficult cases. As well, it builds a high level of trust within the staff.

The arrangements for termination reflect the Agency's "client-driven" approach to services. Clients take an important role in identifying their needs, prioritizing target issues, and ultimately contributing to a decision that services are no longer needed. As well, termination may take place when the helping relationship breaks down, and the client is clearly not benefitting from services. With "Society status", termination will only take place if protection concerns are alleviated.

### **14. Client Contributions**

Given the poverty circumstances of most NCFST clients, there are no expectations to contribute financially.



**15. Transportation**

The clients' financial circumstances and the nature of some programs (eg. customary care, summer camp, etc.) means that the Agency, in the future, should have its own vehicles. It is proposed that two vehicles will be purchased, one each for Customary Care and Family Services.

## **17. Record-Keeping**

All organizations need policies, arrangements, and practices for gathering, storing and utilizing information. At present, NCFST is making the transition from manual methods for recording and retrieving service data. The manual method was quite cumbersome, but fortunately the agency received funding for computerization from the Trillium Foundation.

Computerization will proceed in two phases. Phase 1, currently underway, involves the development of office automation and computer networking. Phase 2 involves the full implementation of a case management information system, as described in the following sections.

### **Computerization**

At present, NCFST has in place a 386 IBM compatible computer and a Hewlett Packard IIp printer, for use primarily for book-keeping and word-processing. Following a computer system needs assessment in 1989, and recent management consultation, funding was secured from the Trillium Foundation to upgrade agency hardware and software. This was done primarily for the purpose of meeting Ministry requirements for appropriate service planning data.

The proposed hardware is a local area novell network, built around a powerful, 486-high speed computer. A total of five work stations will include the current computer and three other less powerful ones. One of the work stations will be in a general work area accessible to program staff. The selection of a computer network system was guided primarily by cost-effectiveness, security of data and files, functionality, and its capacity for enhancing group productivity.

The new network will include two printers, a fax/modem card, and a colour scanner. A tape back-up system and uninterruptable power supply will assure data security.

The new computer system will perform the standard office functions (word processing, desktop publishing, financial accounting and spreadsheet analysis, administrative data bases, remote communication) and facilitate other management projects, such as program evaluation.

The proposed up-dated system is also essential for capturing the detailed client information for the agency's case management system, and generally to manage the information needs of all other

services. The proposed data are organized according to the agency's case management functions, as follows:

### **Intake Information**

This information constitutes all pertinent data which allows description and analysis of clients:

- . client demographic information: name, address, band, living arrangements, etc.
- . problem statement
- . key relationships of the client
- . data on primary and secondary care-givers of children
- . previous Agency participation of client and care-givers

### **Tracking**

This information allows tracking of the on-going interactions and activities of the Agency with individuals, families and groups, including such information as:

- . date and time
- . location of interaction
- . names of case-workers
- . presenting problems: expressed by client and identified by staff
- . referral source
- . out referral actions/agencies
- . case objectives, plans of actions, milestones, follow-up dates
- . progress with respect to objectives
- . general case notes
- . administrative transactions, such as transfers

- . individual participation in group activities

Two other features of this system are particularly important for the needs of service agencies. First, a "triggering" system will be put in place, alerting the case-worker to follow-up and monitor client progress. Secondly, to facilitate speed and accuracy of data entry, analysis and reporting, a pre-structured format of choices will be used. In addition, a more detailed recording system will allow the agency to monitor and change its service categories.

The proposed new system will allow approximately one workstation for every three staff, a considerable improvement over the current situation. Computers would be used primarily by the full-time administrative staff, part-time student placements, and volunteers. It is anticipated that with time, more service staff will also become users.

Additional details on the development of this system, its rationale, anticipated benefits for the agency, and implementation details are included in Appendix M.

**18. Follow-up**

Consistent with the client-driven service philosophy, the doors will always be open for client-initiated future contacts with the Agency. NCFST maintains an on-going relationship with clients. For example, former child clients are invited to summer camp, and families are invited to Xmas parties.

**19. Program Evaluation**

NCFST has a strong interest in the effectiveness of its work. As well, it strives to evaluate both on-going and new initiatives, particular those which are innovative, culture-based, and oriented to child protection.

Thus far, the agency has devoted considerable time and resources to program evaluation. At the outset, steps were taken to assure that programs were evaluatable by documenting an over-all service model, and by clarifying individual program models. All of these incorporate goals and objectives that are measurable.

Several program evaluations have been completed or are presently underway. These include:

- . an evaluation of the art therapy program
- . a developmental evaluation of the Mook'am Program
- . a client impact evaluation of the Mook'am Program (in progress)
- . an evaluation of summer camp

The new initiatives (Ninoshe and Children's Circle) both have evaluation components.

## E. PHYSICAL PLANT

### 1. Type of Building

Native Child and Family Services recently moved to a new location, and now has the appropriate premises for delivering the full range of child welfare services. As well, the internal structure and space allows for the quality of staff relations and organizational atmosphere deemed necessary for an agency serving Native clients.

The agency is centrally located in downtown Toronto, with clear accessibility from public transportation. The office complex has sufficient office space for existing staff, volunteers, and students, and has ample opportunity for accommodating the staff in new programs.

There is sufficient meeting room space, kitchen and coffee room facilities to provide the opportunities for staff-staff, and staff-client interaction. For the specialized treatment services of programs like Mooka'am, there are several private areas for interviews and therapy.

The present office infrastructure accommodates the play and treatment needs of children, as well as the spacial needs of the Youth Services Program. Mooka'am and future treatment programs have suitable space for play therapy. As well, the general office area has another large room for family activities. The Youth Program has substantial space for meetings and cultural circles for large numbers of Native youth.

Finally, there is suitable space for the agency's administrative functions and resources. Filing areas are ample and easily accessible to the Business Manager. There is sufficient space to accommodate the new computers. The Executive Director's office space is quite well-suited for small supervisory and staff meetings, as well as meetings with visitors.

At present, the premises are well-suited to the organizational needs of the agency. We now turn to a description of the agency's organizational make-up.

### 2. Location

Downtown Toronto

3. Municipal and Provincial Requirements

#### 4. Construction, Acquisition, Renovation, Rental

The main capital implications of NCFST's future development is the rental or purchase of the Safe House. This budget item is already included in the funding for that project.

Otherwise, the current arrangements for the central office is good for 4.5 years.

In the distant future, NCFST will consider the viability of a more local delivery model, with satellite offices in several Native communities across Metro.





F. FINANCIAL AND BUDGET DETAILS

[To Be Inserted]

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix ANCFST Service Model

Appendix B Job Descriptions

Appendix C Board of Directors

Appendix D NCFST By-Laws

Appendix E NCFST Letters Patent

Appendix F NCFST Policies and Procedures

Appendix G Native Population of Toronto: Demographic Characteristics

Appendix H NCFST Customary Care Program: Policies and Procedures

Appendix I Protocol with Children's Aid Societies

Appendix J NCFST Staff Salary Scale

Appendix K Insurance Policies