Thunder Bay Urban Aboriginal Strategy

Service Agreement entered into with Shkoday Abinojiwak Obimiwedoon who is the flow-through agency supporting the work of the Urban Aboriginal Advisory Committee (UAAC)

$75000 was allocated to develop Action Circles through the UAAC to hire support staff and to provide necessary operational funds for the Action Circles.
The community is our core

The community decides the priority areas for the Urban Aboriginal Strategy through information gathered from regular forums.
Accomplishments Achieved

In 2011, the UAAC projected creating one action circle. However, the broader community saw the value of what could be accomplished and supported the development of four action circles. The circles that were created are: Justice, Access to Social Services, Employment and Training, and Housing. Action Circles identify priority needs and set action plans to meet those needs.
“The UAS Employment and Training Circle works together to help strengthen employment and training opportunities for Urban Aboriginal people by addressing barriers and gaps and educating the community about our growing Aboriginal workforce.”

– Sharon Smith Baxter, Chair, UAS Employment and Training Circle
• It will be the responsibility of each Circle to ensure that the committee is reflective of the diversity of the community it represents.

• Each Circle is expected to serve the best interest of all Aboriginal people residing in Thunder Bay. Accountability to all Aboriginal people supersedes any conflicting loyalty such as that to one particular organization or segment of the community.
Circle Development

The collaborative approach model is about sharing our strengths, expertise and knowledge by creating a forum for partners at all levels to work collectively to address the priority needs of the urban Aboriginal Community.

- Promote partnerships
- Build Aboriginal community capacity
- Establish and maintain dialogue
- Address gaps / barriers in service
Employment and Training Action Circle

Clan name: Turtle (Mis kwaa de se)

Vision: An equitable work environment that is inclusive of Urban Aboriginal people in the City of Thunder Bay.

Mission: Support and share information that will enhance employment and training opportunities for Urban Aboriginal people.
“TBUAS brings the community together to address community issues and find common ground to solutions”. I am proud to be part of this process”........Melanie Tobishkogijig, Chair, Access to Social Services
“I am inspired to attain my goal to starting my own business. Thanks to the UAS for connecting me to the right people”….Janet Napash
• Circle Coordinator hired
• All circle have completed Terms of Reference and work plans
• All circles have chairs
• Circle chairs are now being invited to UAAC meetings
• UAAC members have been attending circle meetings when available
• Working with Thunder Bay Youth Strategy Chair in creating a partnership for youth involvement in the circles
• created increased partnerships in the community
• created a venue to share initiatives and community projects
• hosted the employment and training conference with over 100 participants and sponsorship from 11 outside agencies
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<tr>
<th>Key partners</th>
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<td>Lakehead University</td>
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<td>City of Thunder Bay</td>
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<td>Confederation College</td>
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<td>North of Superior Workforce Planning Board</td>
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<td>Lakehead Public Schools</td>
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<td>Thunder Bay Indian Friendship Centre</td>
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Justice Action Circle

Clan name: Marten (Waa Bi zhe shi)

Vision: To ensure Aboriginal people have access to justice and to reduce the percentage of Aboriginal people in conflict with the law by developing a better understanding and trust within the system, aligning practices to reflect Aboriginal culture.

Mission: To bring Thunder Bay’s justice sector together to create a culturally responsive justice system for Aboriginal people.
• Worked on the development and the submission of the Ah-wa-neyn Nin project

• Brought in Jonathan Ruden from Aboriginal Legal Support Services in Toronto to do an educational seminar on Gladue Courts with the circle members

• Meeting with local justice leaders about the prospects of having a Gladue Court in Thunder Bay and planning next steps

• Planning an elders meeting to talk about restorative justice December 13th
Key Partners

Legal Aid Ontario
Nan Legal Services
Kinna-aweya Legal Clinic
Ontario Native Women’s Centre
Creighton Youth Services
John Howard Thunder Bay
Thunder Bay Indian Friendship Centre
Housing Action Circle

Clan name: Beaver (Amik)

Vision: “To achieve a socially healthy and vibrant Aboriginal community – emotionally, physically, mentally, and spiritually.”

Mission: “Community coming together in the spirit of trust and respect to improve conditions by sharing knowledge and influencing change in self, community and policy.”
• Completed the housing forum May 2011
• Met and discussed findings established priority area
• Increased partnerships with new members at the table
• Identified youth as a priority area and have partnered with the TB Youth Strategy to have the Youth Housing Pillar join our Housing Circle
• Terms of reference review underway and new chair in place
Key partners

Bisno
City of Thunder Bay
Salvation Army
Shelter House
Métis Nation of Ontario
Thunder Bay Youth Strategy
Access to Social Services Action Circle

Clan name: Crane (Ojijaak)

Vision: A healthy Aboriginal community that thrives spiritually, socially, emotionally, mentally and physically.

Mission: A circle of partners sharing responsibility to develop strategies, ideas and projects to create and sustain accessible services and a continuum of support to better serve the urban Aboriginal community.
• Research Aboriginal directories

• Partner with Tbaytel to assist in having an Aboriginal directory included in the telephone book

• Working towards the development of an Aboriginal Welcoming Centre that will include resources and navigation services

• Completed Terms of reference and work plan
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<th>Key Partners</th>
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<tr>
<td>St Joseph’s Care Group (GAPPS)</td>
<td>ONWA</td>
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<td>Thunder Bay Regional Hospital</td>
<td>John Howard Thunder Bay</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Thunder Bay</td>
<td>Regional Multicultural Youth Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Métis Nation of Ontario</td>
<td>Ontario Aboriginal HIV/Aids Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>DSSAB</td>
<td>Kinna-Aweya Legal Clinic</td>
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Moving Forward

• Seek community support for the renewal of the UAS

• Involved in the National Circle and the gathering of support letters for the renewal

• Current funders include City, MAA, and OFI
Looking Ahead

Over this past year, the Urban Aboriginal Planner has been approached by other organizations wanting to see the establishment of additional Action Circles – circles that will focus on Youth, Health and Wellness and Economic Development.

To maintain and develop this level of community coordination requires human and infrastructure resources.