



# *Rainy River First Nations*

## **Rainy River First Nations Annual Operational & Financial Report**

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Reporting Period: April 1, 2025 - March 31, 2026

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This report provides an overview of governance, financial management, and operations for Rainy River First Nations for the 2025-2026 fiscal year. The organization continues to deliver essential services while strengthening accountability, governance, and financial oversight.

Programs remain stable, though pressures related to funding, staffing, and infrastructure continue. The Nation is actively managing these pressures through planning and improved processes.

## **1. Organizational & Financial Management Framework**

Rainy River First Nations operates under Chief and Council, with Administration led by the Manager of Administration. Financial oversight is provided by the CFO, Garry Chua.

Budgets are approved annually by Chief and Council. Finance provides quarterly reports. Adagio is used across all departments for financial tracking.

Internal controls include defined signing authority (MOA and CFO), separation of duties, and standardized procedures.

## **2. Governance & Administration**

### **Policy & Communications**

The Policy and Communications Department supports the development, review, and communication of the Nation's policies, procedures, laws, and governance materials. Its role includes advising leadership and staff on policy interpretation, analyzing existing governance documents for alignment and legal soundness, supporting amendment processes, and drafting new policies where required.

In addition to governance support, the department is responsible for creating and distributing communication materials to membership through both paper and digital platforms. This includes notices, memos, posters, stories, interviews, and informational materials that help keep members informed of administrative and political matters.

Prepared by Wayne Strachan, MOA and Tim Grover, EA to MOA

During the reporting period, the department played a key role in the amendment processes for the Election Code and Membership Code, including facilitation of information sessions and communication with membership. This work supported transparency, community engagement, and alignment of governance documents with Nation priorities.

## **Membership**

The Membership Department is responsible for administering the Membership Code and maintaining the Nation's membership records. Core responsibilities include receiving and reviewing applications, preparing materials for the Membership Committee, maintaining the membership list, managing records, and responding to member inquiries related to membership, status, solar payments, and related administrative matters.

The department also coordinates Membership Committee meetings, supports voter list preparation when required, and ensures that documentation and records are maintained accurately and confidentially.

Key accomplishments during the reporting period included reducing the backlog of membership applications and strengthening internal administrative capacity through the approval and hiring of a Membership Registrar Trainee.

## **Human Resources**

The Human Resources Department supports workforce development, recruitment, staff relations, policy development, and internal organizational capacity. The department's workplan is grounded in the 7 Grandfather Teachings and focuses on strengthening equity, transparency, communication, and member-focused hiring practices.

Key priorities include posting employment opportunities internally to community members first, developing a community-first employment policy, completing a compensation and wage review, improving onboarding and offboarding processes, and increasing staff engagement through communication and training initiatives.

Recruitment data included in the HR report indicates that from November 5, 2025 to February 25, 2026, 38 applications were received, of which 13 were from registered community members. Community members had a higher confirmed hiring rate than non-members during that reporting period, supporting the department's goal of increasing employment opportunities for membership.

### 3. Departmental Operations

#### **Health Services (CHN, Medical Transportation & Home and Community Care)**

Health Services delivers essential healthcare programs through Community Health Nursing, Medical Transportation, and Home and Community Care. Services include immunization clinics, communicable disease prevention, public health education, medical transportation coordination, homemaking supports, and personal support services.

Medical Transportation supports both local and long-distance travel for medical appointments and includes prior approvals, travel coordination, reimbursement tracking, and reporting in accordance with NIHB requirements. Home and Community Care includes homemaking support, home visits, liaison with service providers, and use of enhancement funding where appropriate.

These services support access to essential health care and are delivered in accordance with applicable funding agreements and reporting requirements.

## **Education Department**

The Education Department supports members from elementary through post-secondary education. Its role includes post-secondary application intake and funding administration, attendance monitoring, academic support, student transportation oversight, and delivery of cultural and community programming.

The department works with families, school boards, and funders to improve educational outcomes and maintain compliance with ISC and other funding requirements. Key accomplishments included completion of annual post-secondary intake and allocation processes, implementation of improved attendance and academic tracking, and strengthening of financial forecasting and budget monitoring processes.

The department reported 148 members served, 14 staff employed, and 9 events held during the reporting period.

## **Jordan's Principle**

The Jordan's Principle program provides holistic and culturally grounded services to children and families, helping ensure access to health, social, and educational supports without delay. Services include case management, support with applications, youth transportation, community engagement programming, and cultural initiatives such as regalia support and cultural teaching.

Program outcomes during the reporting period included support for individualized child services, transportation access, increased youth participation, and delivery of cultural programming. Statistical reporting in the file shows 100 members served, 4 programs delivered, 20 events held, and funding utilized of \$197,613.17.

The program continues to reduce barriers to service access and promote child and family well-being through timely and responsive support.

## **Ontario Works**

The Ontario Works program provides financial assistance and employment-related supports to an average of 37 clients monthly. Services include welfare and bill payments, employment-related benefits, skills supports, and client access tools such as computers and laptops for resumes, cover letters, and job search activities.

Employment-related expenses support clients re-entering the workforce, including assistance for safety equipment, transportation, grooming, meals, cell phone costs, and fine payments related to regaining drivers' licences. Workshops delivered included resume writing, cover letters, financial literacy, and wills and estates.

The program also works with ODSP and other community-based supports, and continues to focus on improving client services, policy development, and local administration capacity.

## **Training & Employment**

The Training and Employment Department is responsible for designing, coordinating, and managing training and employment opportunities for community members. Program efforts during the reporting period included heavy equipment operator-related training support, operator-in-training initiatives, and a line cook training program.

The department identified several operational challenges, including low participation in some programming, lack of dedicated training space and equipment, and transportation barriers affecting access to training and employment opportunities.

Despite these limitations, the department continues to pursue opportunities that strengthen workforce readiness and employment potential for members.

## **Public Works Department**

The Public Works Department is responsible for housing, water and wastewater systems, operations and maintenance, asset and fleet management, emergency and fire-related coordination, and community infrastructure support. It also provides after-hours on-call response for housing and public works emergencies.

Department responsibilities include housing maintenance and development, water treatment plant oversight, wastewater system operation, grounds maintenance, equipment and fleet management, and support for capital and renovation projects. The report also identifies active housing pressures, renovation needs, and operational demands tied to maintaining safe and reliable infrastructure.

The department remains central to community safety, service reliability, and long-term infrastructure planning.

## **Lands and Natural Resources Department**

The Lands and Natural Resources Department is responsible for the management and administration of Rainy River First Nations' lands, supporting stewardship, governance, and land-use decision-making.

Core responsibilities include the administration of reserve lands, negotiation of leases and service agreements, oversight of taxes and land-related obligations, and implementation of the RRFN Land Code. The department also supports Additions to Reserve (ATR) processes and engages with external stakeholders to support land and resource management decisions.

During the reporting period, the department focused on building internal capacity through training, including permits and consultation training, First Nation Land Registry training, and leadership and communication development.

Operational funding is received annually through Indigenous Services Canada under the Framework Agreement, supporting administrative functions related to land management.

A key challenge identified is limited community engagement and participation in land-related initiatives.

Priorities for the next fiscal year include the development of a community garden to support food sovereignty, establishment of a Lands Committee and Terms of Reference, and drafting of an Environmental Protection Law.

The department is currently staffed by a Lands Manager, with plans to recruit a Lands Assistant to support expanded capacity and program delivery.

## **Seniors (Elders) Program**

The Seniors Program supports the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being of Elders in the community. Programming includes wellness initiatives, food supports, community events, social activities, and culturally grounded engagement opportunities.

Examples of activities include home-cooked meals and delivery, healthy food boxes, sewing sessions, yoga, birthday recognition, community event planning, and wellness programming. The report also notes the importance of collaboration with other programs due to limited direct staffing.

Challenges identified include unstable or unclear funding, transportation access, program attendance, and facility-related issues, but the program continues to provide important support to Elders and strengthen community wellness.

## **Addictions Department**

The Addictions Department supports individuals, families, and the community as a whole in responding to addiction-related challenges through prevention, intervention, outreach, aftercare, and recovery-focused services. The proposal outlines a structure that includes leadership, case management, cultural support, wellness workers, recovery home support, and outreach workers.

Program delivery is intended to blend Anishinaabe healing practices with western therapeutic approaches, with emphasis on trauma-informed care, cultural reconnection, life skills, recovery planning, and support for clients transitioning to and from treatment.

The department represents an important strategic service area and reflects the Nation's broader commitment to addressing addictions as a community priority.

## **Kay-Nah-Chi-Wah-Nung (KNCWN)**

Kay-Nah-Chi-Wah-Nung functions as both a cultural and economic development asset for the Nation. Its goals include serving as a gathering place for the community and Treaty 3 area, building events and revenue, supporting cultural preservation, strengthening educational programming, and participating in Indigenous tourism

development.

The report highlights significant recent growth in revenue and event activity, along with efforts to expand food services, gift shop offerings, exhibits, and program partnerships. It also outlines ongoing projects involving research, repatriation discussions, collaboration with universities and museums, and development of additional programming space and community-based activities.

KNCWN contributes to both cultural continuity and long-term organizational sustainability through tourism, education, and community engagement.

## 4. Financial Management

Financial practices include annual budget approval, quarterly reporting, program-level monitoring, and use of Adagio.

Administration and Finance ensure alignment with funding agreements and financial accountability.

### ***\*Audited Financial Statements Availability***

*The most recent audited financial statements for Rainy River First Nations, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2024, are available for review by membership upon request.*

*Audited financial statements are prepared annually and will continue to be made available in accordance with the Nation's commitment to transparency and accountability.*

## 5. Financial Performance Overview

The Nation operates with funding from multiple sources. Programs are generally delivered within budget, with variances driven by demand and timing.

There remains a reliance on program-based funding, and efforts continue to improve long-term sustainability.

## 6. Risks, Mitigation & Capacity

Key risks include funding stability, staffing, infrastructure, and program demand.

Mitigation strategies include HR initiatives, financial planning, infrastructure

Prepared by Wayne Strachan, MOA and Tim Grover, EA to MOA

maintenance, and improved program tracking.

## **7. Strategic Direction & Growth**

Strategic priorities include expansion of addictions services, economic development, partnerships, and workforce development.

These initiatives support long-term sustainability and community well-being.

