



2019/2020 ANNUAL REPORT

**COMMUNITY
COLLABORATION
LEADS TO GROWTH
AND SUCCESS**

atcfn.ca



SERVING OUR COMMUNITIES

Mission

Athabasca Tribal Council serves our Nations by providing relevant and innovative programs and services that enrich the well-being, health, and prosperity of our people. We are committed to ensuring the protection of our Inherent rights, our Treaty Rights, and our Traditional Territories. While respecting the autonomy of each Nation, our strength is our unity.

Vision

Athabasca Tribal Council, in collaboration with our Nations, honours our Treaty and supports a thriving, healthy, and self-reliant future for Cree and D ene people.

Values

Collaboration, Respect, Integrity, Service, Unity, Innovation, Excellence





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**WELCOME,
TAWOW,
SINI'E
DANIYA
N'ID'A**



Message from the Board

To our respected elders, community members, and partners:

2020 was a challenging year. It was one that could have brought devastation to our people, but together, and with the support of Athabasca Tribal Council, our communities were able to come together, collaborate and support each other.

We are still weathering the COVID-19 pandemic. We have survived a historic spring flood, and have seen the call to end racism take centre stage in Canada.

Through it all, we supported the five First Nations that make up Athabasca Tribal Council by securing the infrastructure, funding, and resources needed to keep our communities safe, and by advocating for justice and focusing attention on the needs of the Indigenous people of our region.

2020 allowed us to see the significant impact that ATC can have in supporting our communities. As with any organization, when you see success, you also see the potential growth that can be achieved. Working with our CEO Karla Buffalo, we are confident that ATC's role in the community will continue to expand and increase the prosperity of our First Nations, our communities, and our region.

We would like to say a special thank you to the staff and volunteers of ATC who serve our members every day with passion and dedication. We could not be more grateful for all you do.

Hiy hiy, Marsı cho.

Chief Allan Adam
President of Board of Directors,
Chief - Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation

Board of Directors

(in photo from left to right)

Chief Mel Grandjamb - Fort McKay First Nation
Chief Allan Adam - Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation
Chief Vern Janvier - Chipewyan Prairie First Nation
Chief Peter Powder - Mikisew Cree First Nation
Chief Ron Kreutzer - Fort McMurray 468 First Nation

Photo Credit: Joey Podlubny

**WELCOME,
TAWOW,
SINI'E
DANIYA
N'ID'A**





Message from the CEO

Tân'si, Edlánat'e members, friends, and elders,

Responding to our environment, situations and conditions is a part of everyday life. 2019/2020 delivered a unique set of challenges, and Athabasca Tribal Council has responded in ways we never imagined. But through it all, and in collaboration with communities, governments, organizations, and other partners, we have continued to offer the help and support that our member nations need and deserve.

The global COVID-19 pandemic made individual isolation and physical distancing within communities a necessary strategy for survival. To curb the impact this has had on our social structures and mental health, ATC adapted to a new remote work environment and developed innovative ways to deliver health, education, culture & language programs, employment and training support and services to children and families.

I want to recognize the ATC staff for their commitment to the community during this time. Our team pulled together to focus on delivering health services along with the tools, resources, and supports necessary to keep our communities safe, healthy, and connected.

As we closed our office and opened isolation facilities to support our community members through the pandemic, we also faced a spring flood and the evacuation of downtown Fort McMurray and Waterways. Many of our own staff members were forced to leave their homes while others stepped up to volunteer at the evacuation centers.

The summer of 2020 saw the fight against systemic racism take centre stage. We saw a surge in awareness and protests supporting Black, Indigenous and People of Colour (BIPOC). This backdrop has bolstered ATC's voice, and we remain dedicated to fighting for respect for our environment, natural resources, and treaty rights across all levels of government and will continue to do so in our advocacy work in coming years.

Through all of this, our Board of Directors has remained steadfast. Their strong leadership creates the unity needed to empower our team to adapt and thrive through the challenges ahead. Under their direction we will continue to fulfill our mission of helping the communities that we serve with the programs and supports they need.

Hiy hiy, Marsı cho
Karla Buffalo
CEO Athabasca Tribal Council

**HEALTH
PANDEMIC
PLANNING
SUPPORT
RESOURCES**



2 COMMUNITY ISOLATION CARE CENTRES TO PROVIDE A SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE WELLNESS LOCATION

68

COMMUNITY MEMBERS SUPPORTED AT ISOLATION CARE CENTRES
as of November 2020

1.3

MILLION DOLLARS DELIVERED THROUGH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY SUPPORT FUND TO QUICKLY GIVE HELP WHERE NEEDED

Planning in a Pandemic

As news of the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) reached Canada in early 2020, it quickly became clear that First Nations needed access to timely and accurate information about the virus. ATC created a new Pandemic Planning Team made up of leadership from the five First Nations we serve, local Métis community leadership, ATC Staff, government and health agency representatives across all levels including the Red Cross.

In response to rising COVID-19 case numbers, ATC implemented a remote work plan to limit physical contact with community members while continuing to deliver essential services. Staff across all departments came together to ensure Medical Transportation, Child and Family Services and continued support to Post Secondary and High School Boarding Home students as pandemic safety measures were put in place.

As the situation continues to evolve, ATC's action plan remains nimble and focused on delivering vaccinations to all of our members in a timely and safe manner when our members need our team the most.

Supporting First Nation's Pandemic Plans

Collaboration during times of crisis is key to problem solving.

Guided by the vision of the ATC Chiefs, the first Pandemic Planning Team meeting convened on March 14, 2020. They created a Health Emergency Response Plan for each of our member communities and identified critical issues to be resolved. These plans identified equipment and facilities required to respond to any possible situation and provided guidance on how to handle an outbreak, safety protocols for staff and community members, testing, caring for infected persons, and processes for medical evacuations.

The success of this collaboration is measured in the ability of our First Nations to share information, ideas and identify solutions or lessons learned from each other. ATC continues to develop solutions and respond to cross-community issues, and as the vaccination roll out continues we will continue to support the needs of our First Nations communities so they can remain safe and healthy.

Isolation Care Centres

The need for isolation care centers was identified by the ATC Board in early meetings of the Pandemic Planning Team. Community members who tested positive for COVID-19 needed to self-isolate. Households often sharing multiple common spaces, making it difficult to self-isolate in a safe and healthy way. This significantly increased the risk of transmission of COVID-19 to the rest of the household and the entire community.

To address this need, the ATC Urban Isolation Care Centre opened on April 22, 2020 in Fort McMurray. The 26-unit facility quickly needed to be expanded to respond to requests for support from the leadership of the Fort Chipewyan



EDLANET'E TANSI
**WELCOME TO
OUR CARE
CENTER**
OUR HEALTH IS OUR PRIORITY

YOU WILL BE GREETED BY YOUR NURSE. PLEASE KNOW WE
ASSIST YOU DURING YOUR STAY. THANK YOU FOR DOING YOUR
PART DURING THESE CHALLENGING TIMES. WE ARE HERE FOR YOU.

ATHABASCA TRIBAL COUNCIL

community. On May 15, 2020, a second facility was opened to support this remote community. As of November 2020, 64 community members have used the urban care centre to isolate, and four community members have used the facility in Fort Chipewyan.

Both care centers are equipped with medical staff, security, meal support, and ensure respect for Indigenous culture and practices.

Care doesn't only focus on limiting the spread of the virus. A community member's health and well-being, both mental and physical, is assessed daily by staff, which allows ATC to be more responsive to community member needs, and cases are escalated as necessary. Isolation is hard on a person's mental health. Each room is provided with a wellness activity package and cultural or ceremonial support can be requested at any time.

The well-being of our members is at the heart of ATC's work. We will continue to provide these care centres for community members, adapting to new challenges, and remaining nimble to ensure the best day-to-day care and safety.

Resources and Funding

Getting financial support quickly into the communities was a priority for ATC leadership. Through Indigenous Services Canada, ATC received \$1.3-million in funding from the "Urban and Off-Reserve Covid-19 Emergency Fund" to provide services to community members who do not ordinarily reside on-reserve. Distribution of the funds to eligible community members took place, with 3914 members receiving funding through the program as of November 30, 2020.

The ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic requires resources and additional funding to ensure the health and safety of ATC communities. ATC will continue to seek funding for Isolation Care Centres into 2021 in order to continue to provide isolation resources to First Nation communities through the winter months.

More than just pandemic support

Beyond the much-needed pandemic support, the Health Department also continued to take care of other medical and wellness needs. This included assisting with appointment bookings, travel, accommodations, and meals to ensure community members have access to the health care they need. We also prioritized the need for connection between elders and community members living in long-term care.

At the beginning of 2019 ATC hosted an Opioid Response Planning Workshop that included several guest speakers with lived experience, and a doctor who spoke about Opioid treatments and responses and led to the creation of an Opioid working group. The group brought together members from each community to develop a funding proposal for a treatment facility along with a response strategy designed to prepare people for treatment, and ensure they have a place to go afterwards.

We also hosted Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Awareness Days. Janet Fox led Traditional Parenting workshops. Sleep Training workshops were hosted. And ATC supported the community by providing food and snacks at the AA Roundup in Janvier.

When programming needed to become virtual to ensure the safety of our community members, the FASD Training for Caregivers course was adapted to be delivered online. But through the pandemic there have been more challenges helping Elders in long term care facilities connect with community members and family. To help, ATC's Hospital Indigenous Liaison brought coffee and fresh-baked cookies to members throughout the year and gifts were given to each Elder in care.

As ATC looks forward to 2021 the Health Department will continue to play a substantial role in supporting the Community Members of all five First Nations.

**EDUCATION,
CULTURE
AND
LANGUAGE**
*COMMUNITY
CONNECTION
VIRTUAL*



40
FULL-TIME
POST-SECONDARY
STUDENTS

11 **BOARDING**
HOME PROGRAM
STUDENTS

101
ACTIVE AND ENGAGED
BOOK CLUB
PARTICIPANTS

540
MOTHER'S AND
FATHER'S DAY
DELIVERIES
THAT CELEBRATED LOVE,
CARE AND CONNECTIONS

Adapting How Communities Connect

Teaching traditional ways of life, language, and spirituality in communities has always involved having an in-person connection. Being present at workshops, sessions, and schools encourages participants to connect with their Elders, presenters, teachers, and the community. The COVID-19 pandemic pushed the Education, Culture and Language department to think of new ways to keep our communities connected, and continue providing quality, lifelong, education.

Before the pandemic suspended in-person events, we were able to gather and hear well-being and life skills teachings, participate in traditional parenting workshops and create traditional clothing.

In March of 2020 it became apparent that the pandemic was going to change all in-person connections. Once the transition to a remote workplace was complete, the ECL department adapted its projects and programs so they could continue to serve our members in a virtual environment. This meant providing new support to our community members so they could effectively access programs and workshops.

First, video conferencing services were provided to presenters, students, Elders and community members to facilitate virtual workshops. Materials for the workshops are delivered through a contactless drop-off to ensure everyone's health and safety, along with maximum participation.

Second, we helped support students by providing tutors, and delivering homework packages to those experiencing internet issues. We also helped post-secondary students who needed to travel home as a result of school and campus closures.

Third, we kept members connected through the ATC Summer Book Club by moving to a virtual set-up. Collaborating with the Wood Buffalo Regional Library participants across all ATC First Nation communities signed up to join the discussion and connect with each other.



EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING SUCCESS PARTNERS CONNECTION

RESUME

Career Objective

I am seeking a competitive and challenging environment where I can use my ability to communicate with clients and take advantage of my knowledge of English.

Accomplished secretary seeking to leverage skills in personnel management and recruitment in an entry-level human resources position.

Professional Experience

- Preparing business plans
- Planning investment activities and budget
- Analyzing data sets collected through all departments
- Preparing financial forecasts
- Preparing reports for the board of management
- good at establishing rapport with people from diverse backgrounds
- highly organized and detail oriented
- organized with over three years of industry experience
- five years of product management experience

Success Stories

The Employment and Training department offers services to all First Nations, Inuit and Métis people living in the Wood Buffalo Region.

Staying in contact with Employment and Training clients is essential to ensuring their success after they complete their chosen programs. The shift caused by the pandemic allowed the department to turn these follow-up communications into detailed success stories to inspire more community members to continue developing in their own training and careers. Some of their stories are below, with more available on the ATC website.

900
RECIPIENTS
OF OUR WEEKLY
EMPLOYMENT AND
TRAINING NEWSLETTER



Donal

Mikisew Cree First Nation

The first step for Donal in reaching his career goals was enrolling in the Professional Firefighting Program at the Emergency Services Academy. "The heat and smoke make these drills feel very real, and it's excellent preparation for the real world."

In 2021, Donal will be seeking full-time employment as a professional firefighter.



Shaye

Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation

After completing the Community Based Environmental Monitoring (CBEM) program through Keyano College, Shaye is now employed by the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation – Dene Land Resource Management (ACFN – DLRM) as a field tech. "I haven't had a job that I loved so much before! It's amazing being a land user, and I couldn't see myself doing anything else."



Anthony

Fort McKay First Nation

Anthony applied to Trade Winds' Iron Worker Pre-Employment Training Program after finding out about it on the ATC website. "I found out that I met Trade Winds' criteria, and so I took the entrance exam, and that's how it all started," he shared.

Today he is successfully employed in the trades, and a proud member of the Local 720 Union.



Tasheena

Mikisew Cree First Nation

Tasheena participated in three courses: brow lamination, brow henna, and lash lifting and tinting at Beauty 2 Brows – the first Indigenous beauty academy in Canada.

"By attending the beauty courses, I learned new skills and techniques to create my own small business." Tasheena says.



Penelope

Tsleil-Waututh First Nation

Laid off from work, Penelope saw an ad for the Urban Indigenous Employment Preparation Program and immediately signed up for the Upskilling Program, knowing that the opportunity could open doors for her.

"They did a wonderful job keeping us motivated every day, and helping us succeed," she enthused.

**CHILD &
FAMILY
SERVICES**

***PREVENTION
SUPPORT
CONNECTION***



40

**PARTICIPANTS IN
TRADITIONAL PARENTING
WORKSHOPS**

60+

**PARTICIPANTS IN
TRADITIONAL DRUMS
& SONGS SERIES**

8

**SUCCESSFUL
KINSHIP AND FOSTER
CARE APPLICANTS**

900

**ATC FAMILY CHRISTMAS
PACKAGES DELIVERED
TO COMMUNITY
MEMBERS**

Keeping Connections Strong

The CFS department works together with families and communities to develop nurturing, safe environments for children, youth, and individuals where family strengths are recognized. Our community structured approach is the basis of our Kinship & Foster Care Program. The program recruits potential caregivers that can open their hearts and homes to children in need, while maintaining and protecting their community connection, Indigenous identity, culture, heritage, spirituality, language and traditions. In 2020 the program gained eight caregivers.

The pandemic and the need to adapt to a virtual environment highlighted new needs for children and families. Maintaining connections between children in care and biological families is one of our top priorities. Virtual platforms like FaceTime and Zoom were introduced to facilitate meetings, keep connections alive, and better support the mental health of children and families. To support online learning, Chromebooks were provided to children in school. Working with families, CFS staff helped to create COVID-19 response plans to help manage if a member of the household were to contract the virus. And communication between caregivers and CFS staff was increased to ensure children, families and caregivers had access to timely, accurate information about COVID-19.

To ensure children were able to keep their cultural connections strong, ATC designed a virtual Traditional Drumming Series that included both Cree and D ne drum protocols, along with shape, sound and design information. Over 60 children actively participated in this series and has become an important program in the CFS toolbox that creates cultural connections and strengthens community.

At the end of 2019, ATC hosted the Children's Christmas Party with 75 children in attendance in addition to their biological families and caregivers. The special event built family connections, community and culture. In 2020, CFS adapted and delivered Christmas activity packages to 900 households, and encouraged people to gather on Facebook to complete challenges as a family and have the chance to connect as a community.



**OPERATIONS
& FINANCES**

***CHALLENGE
ADAPTATION
SUPPORT***



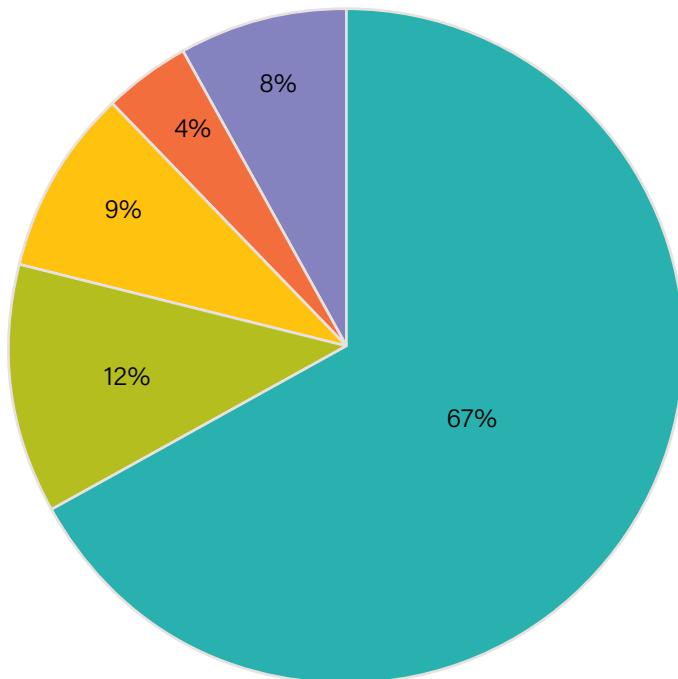
The Operations and Administration team supports ATC across all of the programs and services we provide to our member nations. The pandemic presented unique challenges to the resources and supports needed for ATC to continue to provide programming and support to communities. The challenges gave ATC an opportunity to grow and expand our services to meet the new needs.

Working tirelessly to establish virtual processes and support staff in creating at-home workspaces, a new normal was created so staff were able to continue serving communities. As a result, ATC has increased its reach and ability to connect with both on-and off-reserve members, which has strengthened the services we provide.

ATC Revenues and Expenses

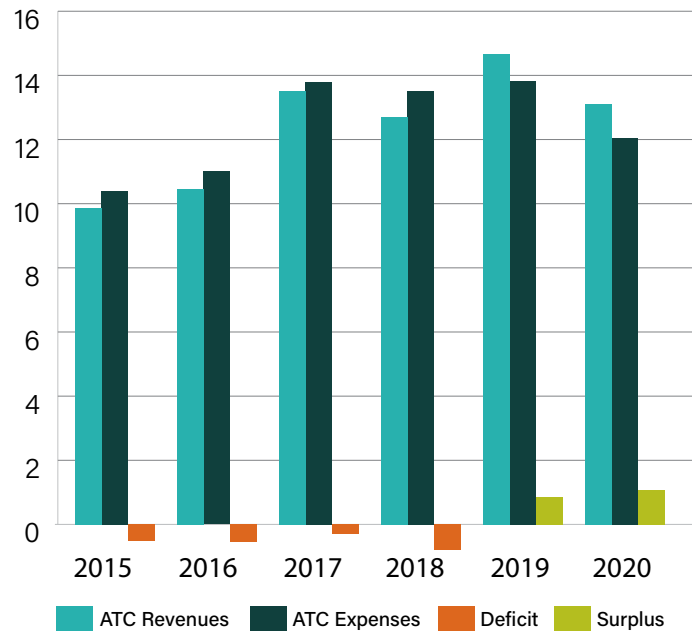
In the 2020 financial year, ATC received a significant portion of revenue through funding agreements with Indigenous Services Canada, Health Canada, and Services Canada. Due to the recovery of previous years' actual spending from the Federal Government, ATC was in surplus by \$1.082 million compared to \$851,000 during the previous fiscal year.

ATC 2020 Funding



- 67% Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)
- 12% First Nation Inuit Health Branch
- 9% ASETS
- 4% Government of Alberta
- 8% Others

Audited Year Over Year Revenues versus Expenses Comparison



ATC OFFICE LOCATION

9206 McCormick Drive
Fort McMurray, Alberta
Canada T9H 1C7

Phone: (780) 791-6538

Email: info@atcfn.ca

After Hours Essential Service Contact Information:

Edmonton Medical Transportation
1-800-514-7106

Child & Family Services On Call
587-645-3437

Child & Family Services Crisis Unit
1-800-638-0715



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