

## News release

For immediate release

### **Driftpile Cree Nation signs agreement with Canada supporting First Nations jurisdiction over child and family services**

February 27, 2025 — Edmonton, Alberta — Indigenous Services Canada

Today, Chief Dwayne Laboucan, the elected Council of Driftpile Cree Nation, and the Honourable Patty Hajdu, Federal Minister of Indigenous Services, signed a service delivery agreement affirming Driftpile Cree Nation's inherent right to self-governance over its children, youth, and families. This agreement supports the implementation of Driftpile Cree Nation's *Mihtatakaw Sîpiy Awasak Wiyasiwêwin* (Driftpile River Children's Law), using the framework provided by *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*.

This agreement honours Driftpile Cree Nation's jurisdiction over the delivery of programs and services required for the safety and well-being of their children and families. Canada looks forward to joining Driftpile Cree Nation in a cultural ceremony to celebrate this historic achievement in the coming months.

Driftpile Cree Nation, through its Children's Lodge, the Chief Kinosêw Awasak Mîkiwâhp (CKAM), will deliver wholistic, wrap around prevention, protection and, support services for young adults to all of its approximately 3,237 members living in Driftpile Cree Nation and across Alberta. Signing the agreement is a collaborative effort rooted in the shared understanding that their Nation's children will thrive within their families, community and culture.

Over the coming 4 years, Canada will provide \$16.4M, in base funding per year adjusted annually based on inflation and population growth. In addition, Canada is contributing funding for facilities to support the new child and family services program. In the absence of funding from Alberta, Canada will also provide funding for a twenty-four month period to support children who do not reside in Driftpile Cree Nation.

Supported by this agreement, Driftpile Cree Nation will commence its work on March 17, 2025, to implement its Law along with a new, customary program and service delivery model that was developed collaboratively with members and will be carried out by CKAM. While Driftpile children and families are strong, when they do need help, the Nation will be there. CKAM will work with the community and wrap-around families like a warm blanket. As has always been done, Kohkoms, Mosoms, Elders, Knowledge Keepers and the community at large will help play a key role in the delivery of all CKAM programs and services. Together, through CKAM, the Nation we will offer food, clothing, shelter, compassion, love, and hope, so that its children and families can be healthy, strong and safe.



Canada

By supporting Indigenous Peoples to lead the transformation of child and family services within their own territories, we collectively help to ensure that both present and future generations of Indigenous children and their families flourish and prosper together.

## Quotes

*“Family is at the heart of Driftpile Cree Nation. We embrace and endorse our journey to implementing Mihtatakaw Sipiy Awasak Wiyasiwewin and asserting our inherent Rights respecting our children, youth, and families in a profound way. We will provide our own services - designed and developed by us, and for us - that put families first and ensure that our children are always connected to their families, language, culture, and community. This historic effort is about honouring our families, near and far, as guided by our Ancestors since time immemorial.”*

Chief Dwayne Laboucan  
Driftpile Cree Nation

*“Today's signing affirms what Driftpile Cree Nation has always known - that their children thrive best when cared for through systems designed by their own community, rooted in ancestral wisdom and collective identity. This agreement goes beyond governance frameworks to honour the Nation's inherent right to nurture and protect its children. The leadership shown by Driftpile Cree Nation demonstrates how Indigenous-led approaches create stronger supports for children, youth and families. Their work ensures that community values and cultural connections remain at the heart of child and family services, creating a model of self-determination that benefits everyone in the community.”*

The Honourable Patty Hajdu  
Minister of Indigenous Services

## Quick facts

- For most Indigenous children, child and family services are provided under the legislation of the province or territory where the children and families reside.
- On January 1, 2020, *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families* (the Act) came into force. The Act affirms the inherent right to self-government of Indigenous Peoples, which includes jurisdiction over child and family services, provides a pathway for Indigenous communities to exercise jurisdiction over child and family services and sets out principles applicable, on a national level, to the provision of child and family services to Indigenous children.
- As of November 2020, federal commitments have included \$542 million in funding to advance First Nations, Inuit and Métis engagement to implement the Act and to support Indigenous communities and groups in building the capacity to establish their own child and family services systems. As well as \$73.6 million in



Budget 2021, and \$87.3 million in Budget 2022, to support Indigenous jurisdiction over child and family services.

- Through Budget 2023-2024, the Government of Canada committed \$1.8 billion over 11 years, starting in 2023-24, to support communities in exercising jurisdiction under the Act.
- This service delivery agreement is the 3rd agreement in Alberta and the 12th agreement across Canada using the framework provided by the Act.

### Associated links

- [\*An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families\*](#)
- [Reducing the number of Indigenous children in care](#)
- [Notices and requests related to An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families](#)

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