



**Mi'kmaq Social Governance Initiative
Community Update
October 2021**

Message from Chief Leroy Denny

Ta'n Etli-tpi'tmk Board Chair and Lead Chief of Social Governance

I am pleased to provide an update to our leadership and community members on the work we are doing to support a section 35 self government agreement over a new Mi'kmaq social assistance program. Unfortunately the covid-19 pandemic and election cycles have pushed our implementation forward to 2023. There has been significant progress and the work continues to support our transition to self-government.

Highlights

Common Social Policy Development

Social Development Administrators (SDA's) and the project team are close to finalizing a new common Mi'kmaq Social Policy to replace the outdated 1994 Atlantic Region Mi'kmaq-Maliseet Social policy. This new policy is designed to support Mi'kmaq families living in all thirteen communities to reduce poverty, to improve living conditions and to open opportunities for training and employment. The draft policy will be presented to the Chiefs and the band councils for review and approval in the coming months.

Mi'kmaq Case Management System

With Membertou Geomatics Solutions expertise and the guidance by the Social Development Administrators, the new common social policy has been integrated into a customized Mi'kmaq Social Governance application (software). This software includes a new case management model for social clients. This means clients will have an opportunity to work with SDA's to create an plan to support them for training and employment opportunities and to eliminate long term social assistance dependency.

Pilot Projects

The new Mi'kmaq social policy and case management system will be tested in four communities starting in 2022-2023 depending on the allocation of additional resources from Indigenous Services Canada. The four pilot projects will provide feedback on the efficiency and effectiveness of the new policy and case management model. The testing results will help the project team make necessary changes before the policy is implemented in all communities.

Ta'n Etli-tpi'tmk Association

In September 2020, the Chiefs formed a new L'nu public institution to support the path to self-government over Mi'kmaq social (income assistance). The Ta'n Eтли-tpi'tmk social governance model is similar to the Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey Education governance structure with Chiefs as Board of Directors. Jurisdiction, control and management of income assistance will continue to be at the community level.

Saqmaw Leroy Denny serves as the Board Chair and Lead Chief on the Social Governance initiative.

Social Development Administrators (SDA's)

Mi'kmaq SDA's continue to be actively engaged in the governance project. They are the architects of the new Mi'kmaq social policy and without their participation the social governance project would not have advanced. The project team recognizes the tremendous work our SDA's in the communities for their clients. Due to covid-19, SDA meetings have been virtual with some in-person meetings.

A number of SDA's also serve on committee's including a steering committee (3), a software system technical committee (6), the Social Terms of Reference Side Table (6) and the negotiation team (3). The vertical inclusion of SDA's allows for direct input by SDA's throughout the entire transition process.

Social Governance Negotiations

Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia- Canada are using an existing formal process to negotiate agreements through the Made in Nova Scotia Process and Framework Agreement. Negotiations are guided directly by the Ta'n Eтли-tpi'tmk Association Chiefs.

The Chiefs have appointed two co-lead negotiators and given mandates to Jim Michael, Pink Larkin Law and Brian Arbuthnot, seconded from Wagmatcook. Jim and Brian will be supported by SDA's Dale Sylliboy (Eskasoni), Colleen Denny (Pictou Landing) and Tillie Googoo (We'koqma'q) and Jean Knockwood, Senior Policy Advisor, Ta'n Eтли-tpi'tmk.

Meetings with Chiefs and Council's

The project team is planning to attend meetings with all Chiefs and Council's once funding is approved by Indigenous Services Canada and covid-19 public health measures allow for community based visits. Engaging Chiefs and Council's, band managers, CFO's and elders is important to the success of a future self-government arrangement with Nova Scotia and Canada.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact Jean Knockwood at:

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