Current State Assessment Report

September 10, 2024

Sihtoskâtowin Project

For the

onihcikiskwapowin Saddle Lake Cree Nation

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Note: Staff and Membership survey data will be available in separate summary reports.

Project Context

We were engaged by the Saddle Lake Cree First Nations in the winter of 2024 to conduct a comprehensive organizational review. Chief & Council and the Band Administrator commissioned the review as part of their efforts to ensure that the organization is appropriately structured and resourced to meet the needs and expectations of all SLCN members.

This report is the product of the first phase of the review which included an extensive interview program, staff and membership survey, and initial review of Nation documentation This report summarizes our findings and identifies opportunities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization.

Acknowledgements

Our work has been undertaken with great respect for nehiyaw customs and Indigenous law. We are respectful of the fact that you are the descendants of the first peoples to occupy these lands and have the right to govern yourselves as an independent and self-sufficient nation.

We wish to acknowledge Chief & Council and the Tribal Administrator for trusting us to undertake this project. Their support and willingness to address difficult questions was helpful.
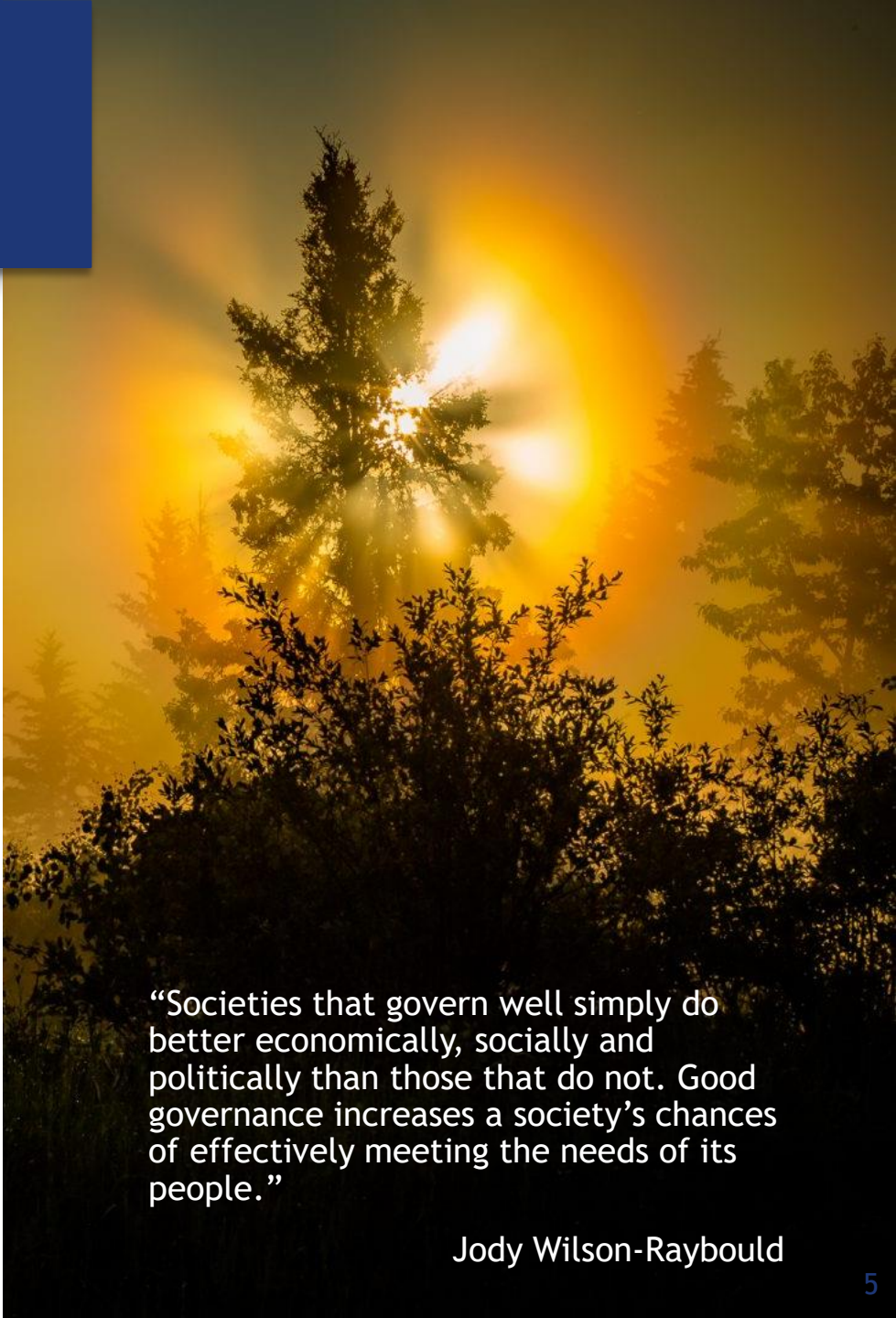
We also acknowledge and thank managers and staff within all departments for providing important insights. Their input – provided through interviews and surveys (225 staff) – helped us reach our findings and informed our recommendations.

We also wish to acknowledge and thank the 214 SLCN members (from both on and off reserve) who provided important information to us through written and on-line surveys. The survey results clearly illustrate the importance of the Nations' programs and services in the minds of its members and their care for their community.

Nation Building is Hard Work

Nation building is never easy, especially where people have been forced to rebuild and re-establish their traditional governance and community support systems.

Developing and enhancing governance and service delivery systems requires time, patience, commitment and teamwork.

"Societies that govern well simply do better economically, socially and politically than those that do not. Good governance increases a society's chances of effectively meeting the needs of its people."

Jody Wilson-Raybould

Sihtoskâtowin Tribal Administration Review Objective

Objectives of a Well-Functioning Organization:

- Delivers quality services to members
- Operations are efficient
- Strengthens cultural beliefs
- Ensures financial stability

Key pillars of Indigenous Operations:

The key responsibilities for SLCN to deliver are known:

	Stability	Wellness
1. Language & Land	Stability	Wellness
2. Training & Development	Stability	Wellness
3. Finance & Income Gen.	Stability	
4. Infrastructure/Housing	Stability	
5. Social		Wellness
6. Education		Wellness
7. Health		Wellness

The question is how to do it most effectively?

Different Perspectives

Improving Nation Operations

Chief and Council

- Member priority needs are met
- Nation making strides towards long-term vision

Management

- Clear direction and mandate
- Programs and services are delivering value

Different Viewpoints

Members

- Priorities are being met
- Understand Band's role

### Funders/Partners

- See value for dollar
- Confidence in programs and services
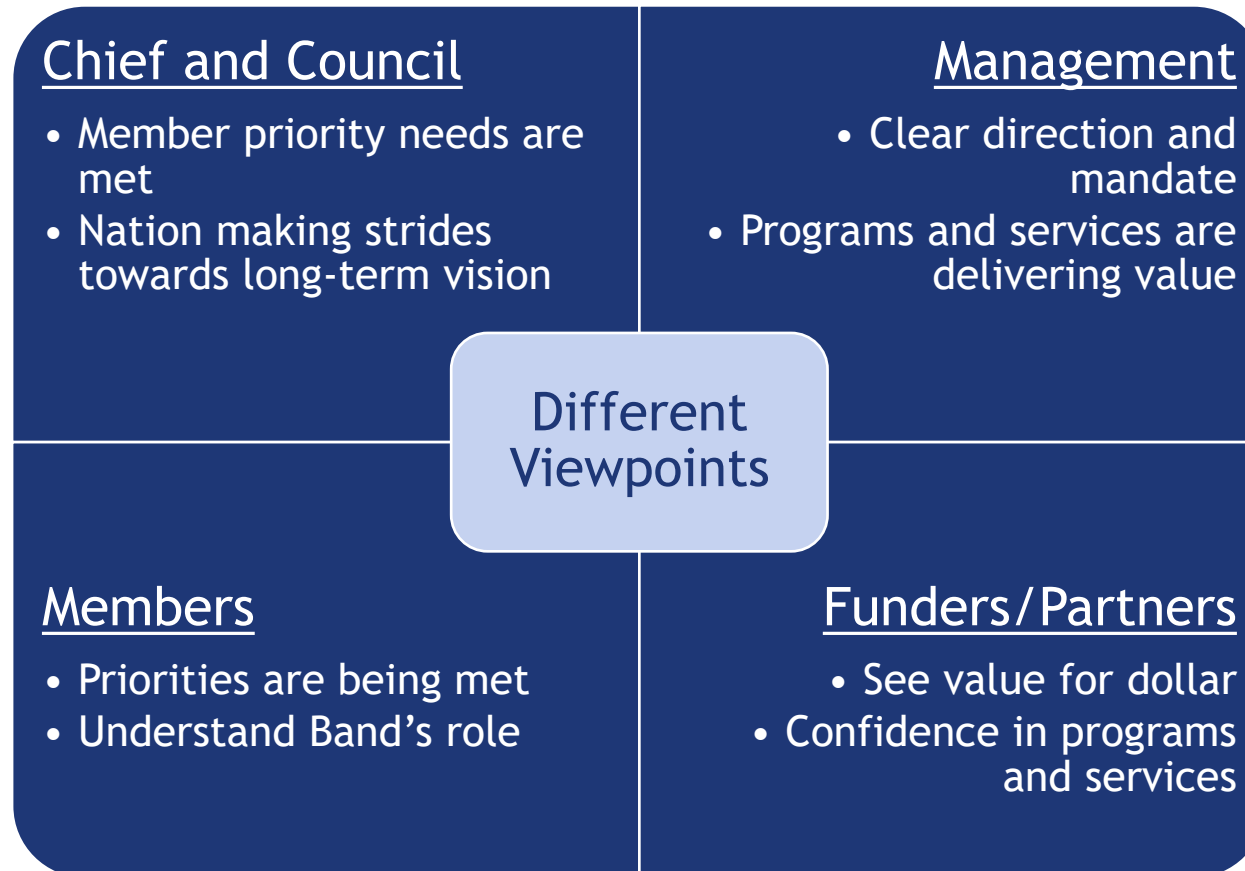
General Observations

Information for the review was gathered through different sources:

- Leadership Interviews
- Manager Interviews
- Staff Survey
- Membership Survey
- Document Review

General Observations

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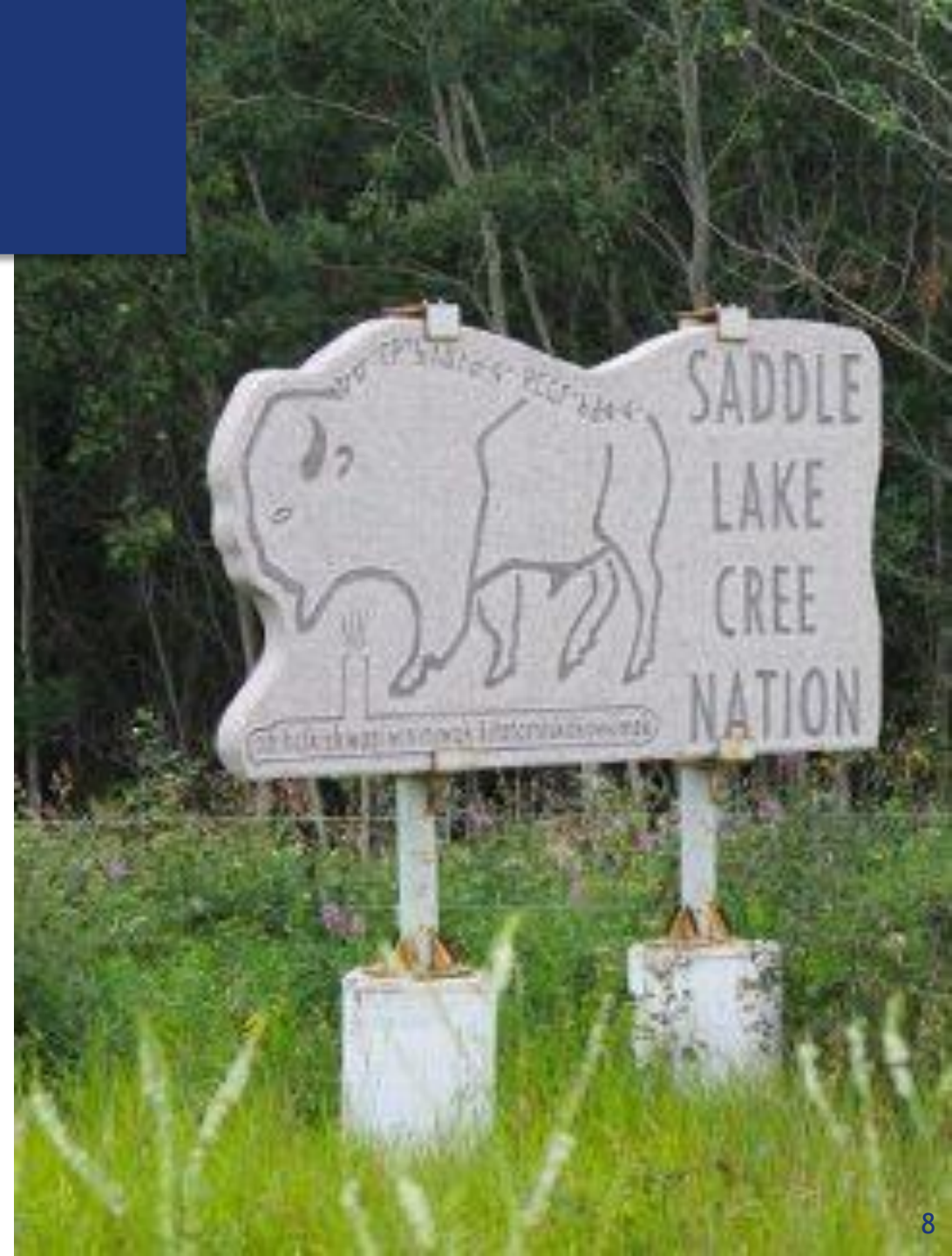
- Good contributions, variety opinions on what's working well, what could work better, supportive of project, interested in project results

- While Chief & Council are committed to doing what is best for SLCN and its members, they have different perspectives on governance.

- With Leadership not on the same page in many areas, governance and achieving strategic priorities is being challenged.

General Observations

- Leadership Interviews
- Manager Interviews
- Staff Survey
- Membership Survey
- Document Review

- Management within the organization overall appears to be competent and committed to providing quality programs and services.

- Management seemed very proud and protective of their Nation

- It seems evident that the majority want the best for the future generations

- There seems to be mistrust of change and gathering information (normal)

General Observations

- Leadership Interviews
- Manager Interviews
- Staff Survey
- Membership Survey
- Document Review

→

- Most staff report good understanding of their roles and responsibilities and believe that they are appropriately qualified for their jobs.

- There is a desire for training and a clear path of career progression

- Pride in working for the Nation is high

General Observations

Leadership Interviews

Manager Interviews

Staff Survey

Membership Survey

Document Review

- Members believe that SLCN programs and services are important.

- Member satisfaction varies across different programs and services. It is high in some areas and low in others – but generally at least somewhat satisfied.

- Most members on and off reserve are dissatisfied with communication from the Band.

General Observations

- Leadership Interviews
- Manager Interviews
- Staff Survey
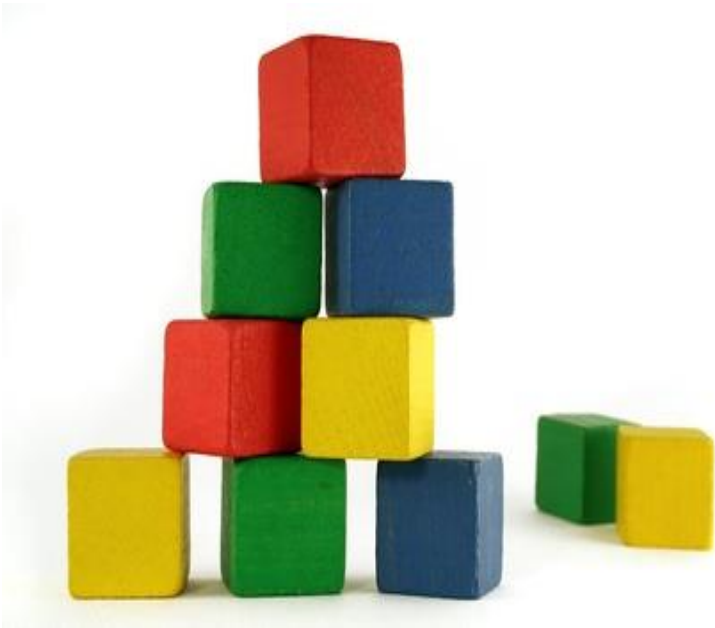- Membership Survey
- Document Review

- Policies are not a consistent reference; procedures are not clear in policy

- Procedural forms are not shared; some departments have systems while others do not (e.g.) leave forms and tracking systems

- Staff performance is not measured regularly

A Framework for Organizational Strength

10 Foundational Factors for An Effective Organization:

1. Cultural beliefs and practices evident in daily operations
2. Clearly defined vision and mission
3. Clear organizational goals and objectives that are tracked
4. Effective engagement with members / clients
5. Hiring, training and keeping the right people
6. A safe and supportive working culture
7. Sufficient resources for program and service delivery
8. Use of systems to provide consistent direction and oversight
9. Commitment to continually improving the organization
10. An organizational structure that supports effective operation

Cultural beliefs and practices evident in daily operations

Language

- Saddle lake seems to be rich is language; many members are conversing in nehiyawewin

- This is a very important trait to have in our territories. A lot of other nations do not have the capacity in that regard. It would be beneficial to focus on passing on the language for future generations

Ceremony

- This is where our people truly learn the values, systems and language

Treaty

- Keep this as the leading factor

- Nurturing our minds, body and spirit as a collective will ensure our people are more in tune as individuals contributing back to our own people

Foundational Factor 1 – Integration of Values and Beliefs Through Nehiyaw Pimatisowin

Member Survey Results – Language and Treaty

Knowledge of Language and Treaty		No understanding	Limited understanding	Good understanding	Very good understanding
Understand Treaty's True Intent/Spirit	Off	14%	44%	25%	17%
	On	13%	45%	30%	13%
Speak Cree	Off	33%	52%	10%	5%
	On	19%	55%	17%	9%
Understand Cree	Off	14%	67%	17%	2%
	On	8%	58%	18%	16%

Knowledge of Language and Treaty
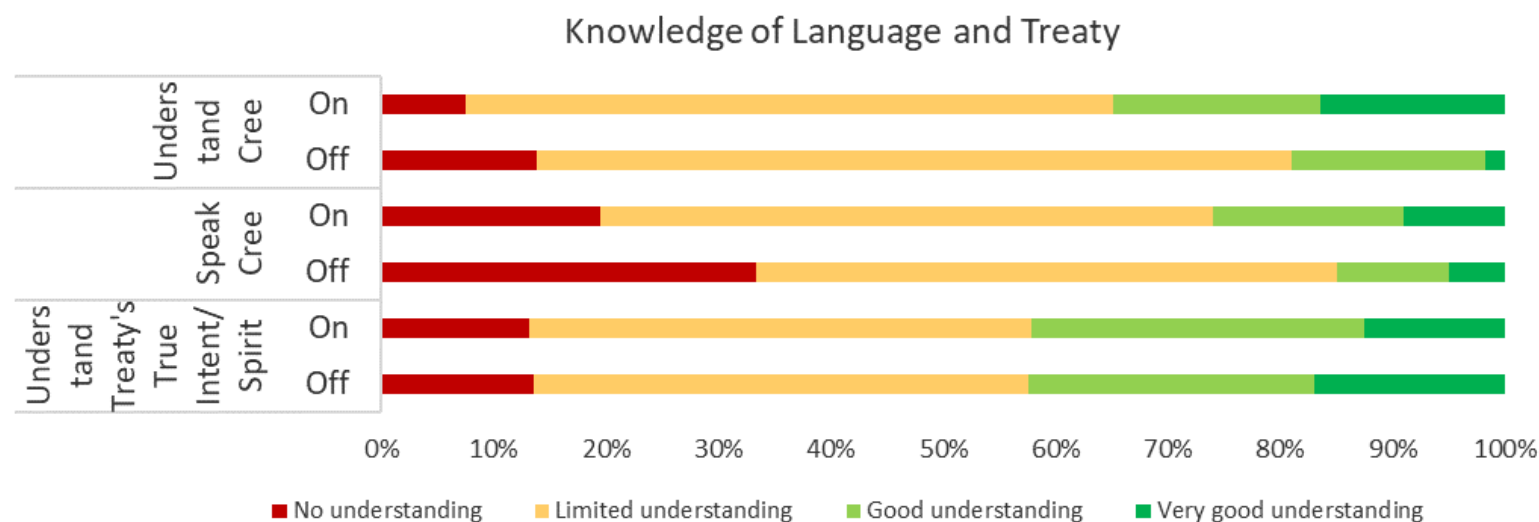
Foundational Factor 2 – Clear Vision / Mission

Clearly Defined Vision and Mission

- When asked, Management did not know the Nation's vision or mission

- Some departments try to follow their own departmental visions and missions
    - Mandates attached to funding can create competition with the Nation's vision

- When the Nation doesn't have this guiding principle at the forefront, departments are going to assume the responsibility and invent their own

- This results in a lack of alignment between departments and the Nation collectively

Foundational Factor 3 – Clear Objectives/Goals

Clear organizational goals and objectives that are tracked

- Leadership started, but could not complete the process of developing a strategic plan

- A lack of a strategic plan appears obvious
  - a general lack of prioritization amongst existing goals and objectives is observed

- C&C are reactive, not proactive to issues and not all appear to be on the same page

- Need to separate broad Nation goals from those that are more operationally-oriented to improve focus and accountability (applied from the top-down)

- Lack of orientation material to get new Councillors up to speed quickly

- The Nation is strong on Treaty perspective in general, but weak on operationalizing the vision
  - creates tension with funders / Program Directors

Staff Survey Input

- Staff appear to have a clear understanding of *program* visions/missions

- Two-thirds of staff indicate having a workplan; another quarter are unsure
- Half of staff indicate an opportunity to provide input; one-third are unsure if they do
- Two thirds of staff either do not, or are unsure of having progress monitored or receiving feedback

Programming Vision / Mission

Clear vision/mission for your program	81%	15%	5%

■ Yes   ■ Somewhat or Unsure   ■ No

Workplans

Program has a workplan	65%	28%	7%
Opportunity to provide input into workplan	52%	32%	16%
Workplan monitored and feedback provided	35%	43%	22%

■ Yes   ■ Somewhat/Unsure   ■ No

Management Interviews

- Some in management seem to be uneasy with the thought of change or sharing of information
  - This can be countered with transparent and open communication
- Many noted they were not briefed on the Review or our role as independent consultants

Effective engagement with members

- No overall communication and engagement plan in place – both internally to staff or externally to Membership

- Communication between Chief & Council and Membership and staff can at times be inconsistent

- New Nation website has been launched
  - still requires some work, but represents an important step forward in improving communication / information sharing with Members

Member Survey

Most Common Sources of Information on Nation Activities / News

Categories (top to bottom):
- Word of Mouth
- Social Media (Facebook, YouTube)
- General Band Meetings
- Communicating with Nation Staff (programs)
- Topic or Program-Specific Meetings (open houses, information sessions)
- Other (specify below)
- Communicating with Chief or Councillors

Axis: 0% 5% 10% 15% 20% 25% 30% 35% 40% 45% 50%

■ Lives On Reserve ■ Lives Off Reserve
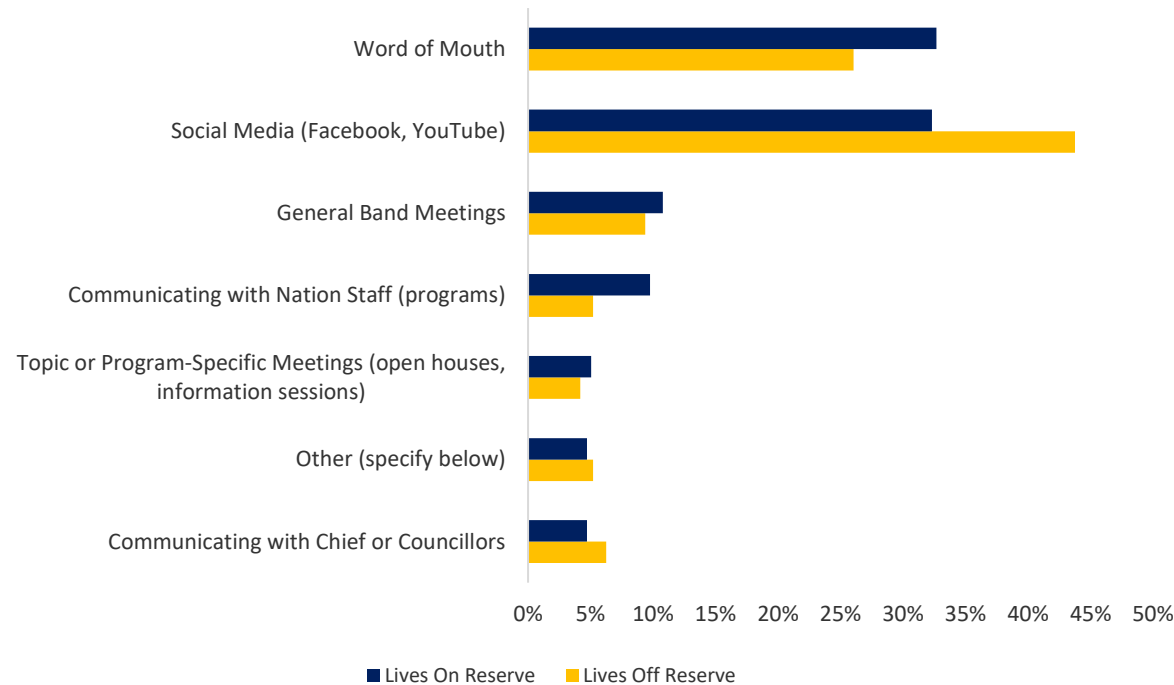
How Well Informed You Are on Things You Need to Know from the Nation

Categories (top to bottom):
- Not Informed
- Somewhat Informed
- Well Informed

Axis: 0% 20% 40% 60%

■ Lives On Reserve ■ Lives Off Reserve
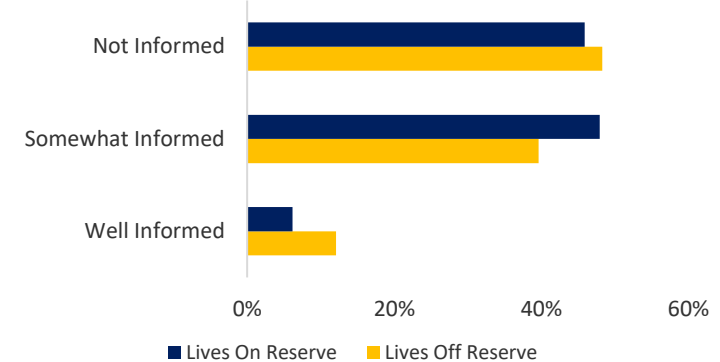
- Word of mouth and social media are the most common ways Members learn about Nation news – neither of which are dependable sources

- The majority of Members indicate being not informed about things they need to know

Member Survey

Members Desire Regarding Frequency and Detail of Communications from the Nation

Sources of Information Members Would Like To Receive More Information From
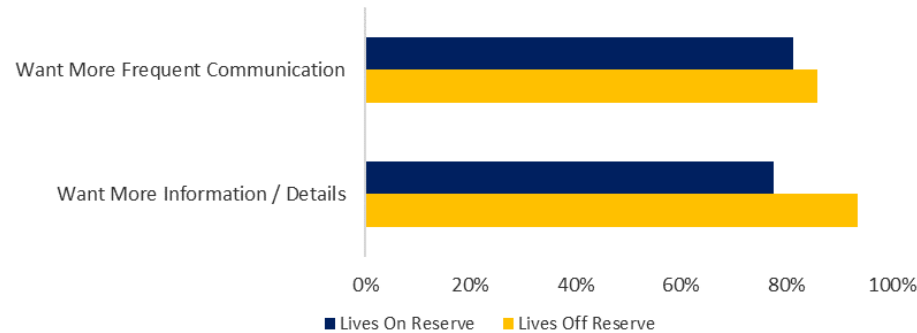
- 80%+ of Members want more frequent communication with more detail
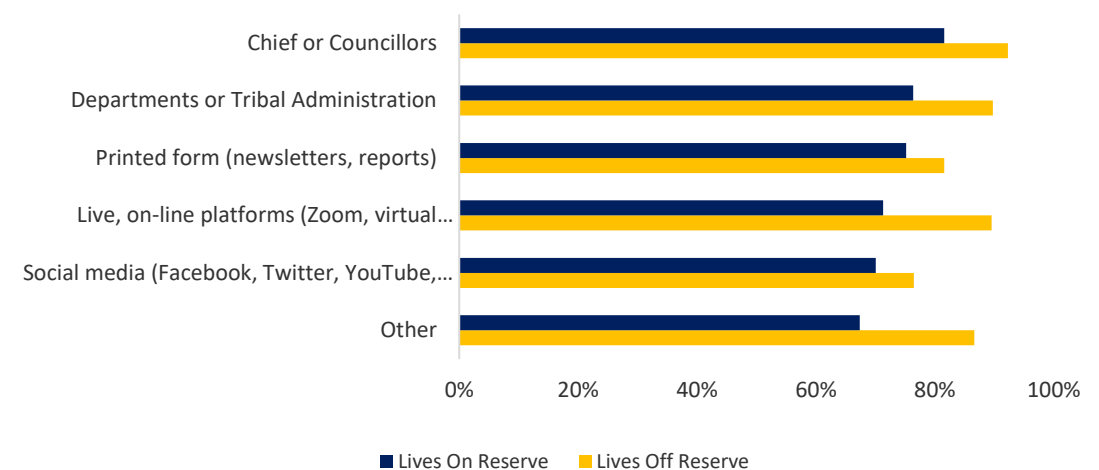
- The desire this information from C&C firstly, followed by the TA and Departments
- Around 75% would like printed information (newsletter, reports)

Foundational Factor 5 – Effective Staffing

Hiring, Training and Keeping the Right People

- Managers are qualified for their positions and committed to improving program and service delivery

- Uniform salary grids and job classification across the organization are required

- Uniform grid(s) would assist in proper job placement and progress through each individual position

- Succession planning would be easier to affect with an implemented structure of the Nation's positions

- Recruitment to compliment training and development would be beneficial

Foundational Factor 5 – Effective Staffing

Staff Demographics (from Survey):

Distribution of Survey Respondents by Department

Department	%
Education (including Schools and Daycare)	36%
Health	18%
Public Works / Housing	16%
Emergency Services	9%
Wahkohtowin / CFS	8%
One of: Employment/Training; TLU; Membership; FNDF; Lands; Social Services; Finance; EcDev; Administration	12%
Other (Not listed above)	1%
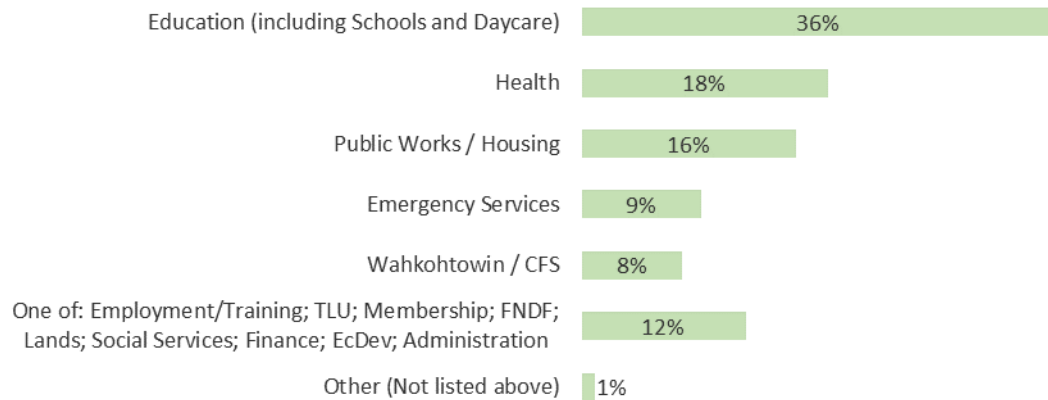
- Response rate by department ranged between ~30-50%
- Overall response rate of all staff estimated at ~43%

Job category

Job category within Nation: 86% Non-Management | 14% Management

■ Non-Management ■ Management

Employment Status

Employment Status: 90% Employee | 10% Contractor

■ Employee ■ Contractor

Workforce Composition by Sex

Workforce Composition by Sex: 24% | 74% | 2%

■ Male ■ Female ■ Other
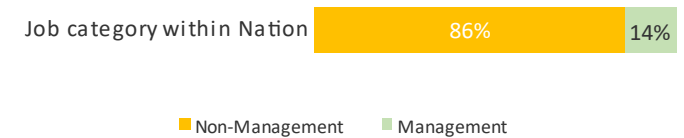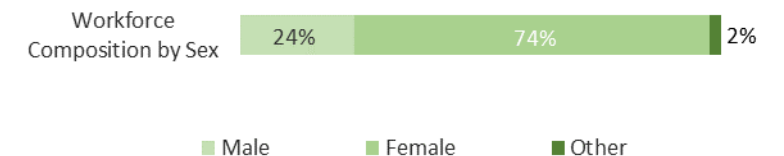
Note on Staff Survey Respondents:
- Employees from Education (including the two schools and Daycare) had the highest participation in the survey (36%), followed by Health (18%) and Public Works / Housing (16%)
- A number of departments had relatively high response rates based on number of employees participating over total staff count in those departments

Foundational Factor 5 – Effective Staffing

Staff Demographics (from Survey):

- Over one-third of employees have worked for the Nation for 10 years or more
- Another 21% have worked 4-9 years
- One-quarter have been there for 1-3 years
- 16% of employees are new hires

Average Time Working for the Nation

Less than 1 Year	16%
1-3 Years	26%
4-9 Years	21%
10+ years	37%
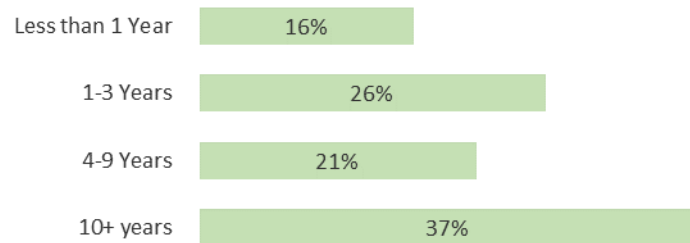
- Over one-third of staff report having a good/very good understanding of Cree; another 58% have limited understanding
- 22% of staff report a good/very good ability to speak Cree, and another 62% report limited ability
- Half of employees report a good/very good understanding of the Treaty's spirit and intent

Knowledge of Cree Language and Treaty

	No understanding	Limited understanding	Good Understanding	Very good understanding
Understand Cree	8%	60%	18%	13%
Speak Cree	19%	60%	14%	7%
Understanding of Treaty's spirit and intent	8%	46%	29%	16%
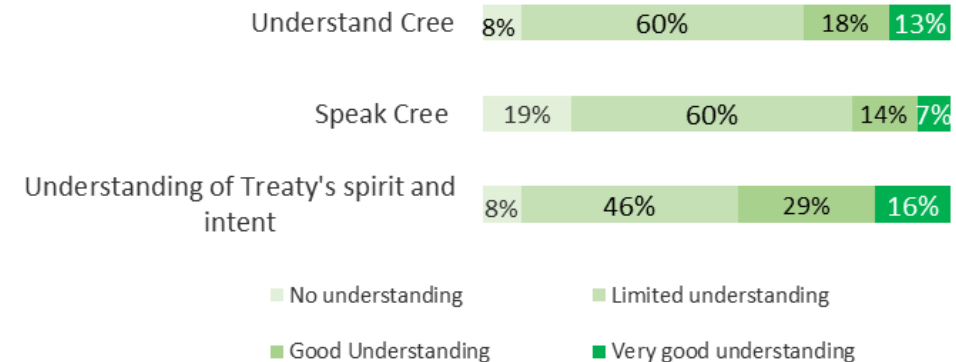
Foundational Factor 5 – Effective Staffing

Transparency in Hiring and Promotions

- Only one-third of employees feel that hiring is done in a transparent manner; nearly half of employees are unsure

- Staff do not believe that job competitions and promotions are applied fairly – 42% feel they are not, and over half of staff feel somewhat that way, or are unsure

- Half of staff believe nepotism/favouritism is a problem within the Nation – this point was emphasized by staff

Transparency in Human Resourcing

	Yes	Somewhat or Unsure	No
Hiring of new staff done in open / transparent manner	32%	48%	20%
Job competitions and promotions applied fairly	8%	51%	42%
Nepotism / favouritism is a problem within the Nation	51%	40%	9%
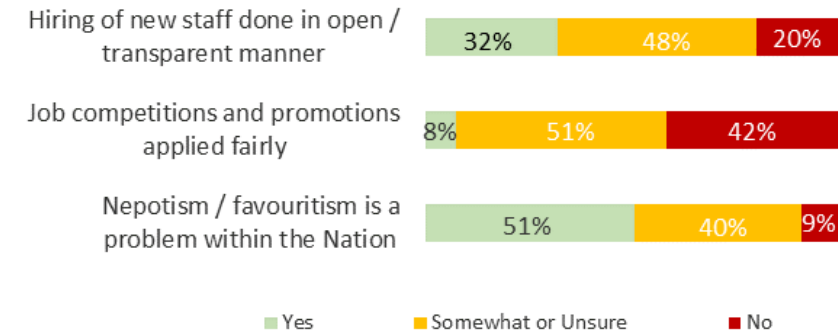
Preparation for Jobs and Career Progression

- Three quarters of employees indicate having sufficient training or skills to do their job

- Less than half have been offered job-related training; one-quarter have somewhat been offered training (or are unsure), and one-third have not been offered training

- Of those offered training, two-thirds report it was helpful, with another one-third saying somewhat helpful (or unsure)

- Nearly all employees indicate wanting more training

- Slightly less than half of employees see a path for developing their careers at the Nation. One-third feel somewhat or are unsure

Training and Career Development

	Yes	Somewhat or Unsure	No
Have the training / skills to adequately perform job	76%	22%	2%
Been offered job-related training while working for the Nation	42%	27%	32%
If offered training, it was helpful	63%	33%	3%
If given the chance, would like to do more training	96%	4%	0%
See a path for developing career or professional growth in the Nation	47%	38%	15%

■ Yes ■ Somewhat or Unsure ■ No
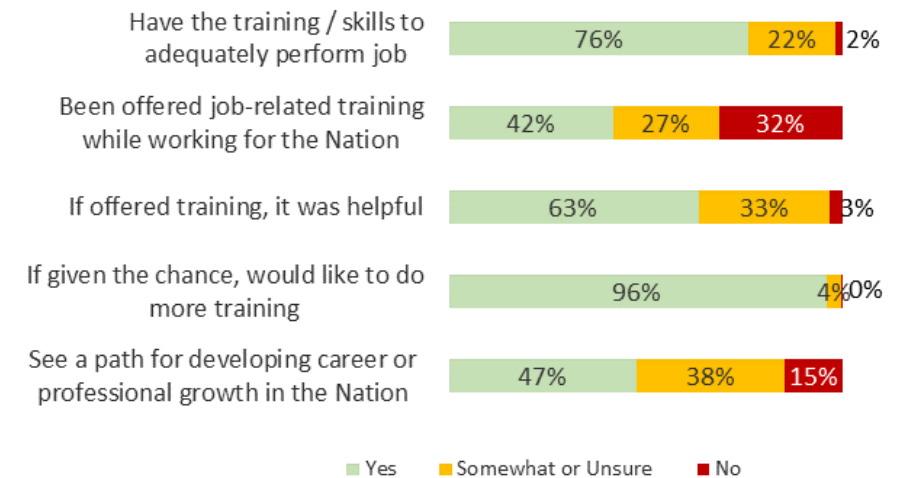
Feeling Supported in their Jobs

Feeling Supported in Doing Job

	Yes	Somewhat or Unsure	No
Supported by colleagues	68%	26%	6%
Supported by other departments	42%	46%	12%
Supported by manager / supervisor	68%	22%	10%
Supported by Tribal Administrator / Senior Management	46%	32%	22%
Supported by Chief and Council	36%	42%	22%
Receive/share information with other departments	40%	39%	21%

- Yes
- Somewhat or Unsure
- No
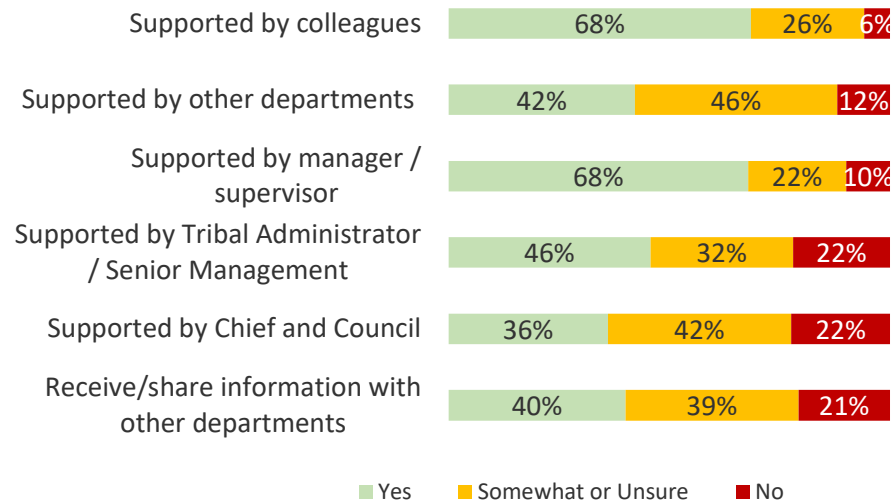
- Two-thirds of employees feel supported by their colleagues, while one-quarter feel somewhat supported or are unsure

- Less than half feel only somewhat supported by other departments

- Two thirds of employees indicate feeling supported by management or supervisors

- Less than half of employees feel supported by senior management and/or the Tribal Administrator. One third are unsure, and 22% do not feel supported

- This trend continues with Chief and Council with less staff reporting feeling supported by C&C

- Only 40% of employees indicate they receive and share information well with other departments

Foundational Factor 6 – Safe and Supportive Work Culture

Work-Life Balance

- Almost 60% of employees report having a good work life balance, while another third report somewhat (or unsure)

- The most often listed reasons for not having a good work-life balance are workload (38%), feelings of pressure from management / Leadership (19%) or from clients/Members (18%)

Work-Life Balance

| Have a healthy work-life balance | 59% | 33% | 8% |

Legend: ■ Yes ■ Somewhat or Unsure ■ No
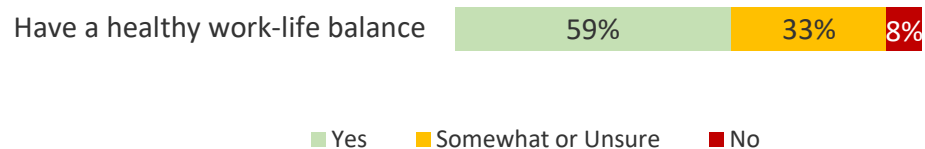
Reason for Unhealthy Work-Life Balance
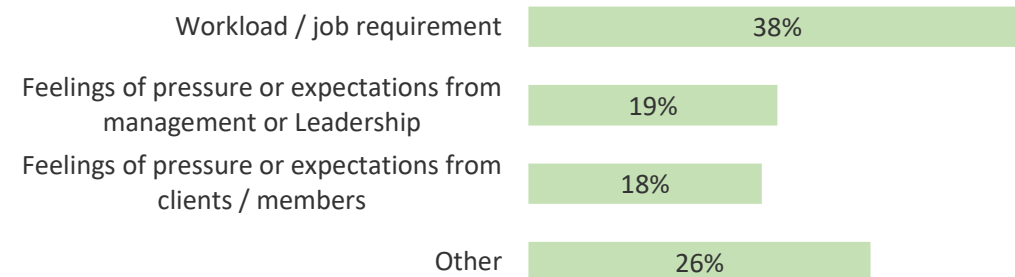
Workload / job requirement	38%
Feelings of pressure or expectations from management or Leadership	19%
Feelings of pressure or expectations from clients / members	18%
Other	26%

Respectful Workplace

- Only one-quarter of employees indicate the Nation has a respectful work environment

Work Environment

Nation has a respectful work environment	27%	53%	20%

■ Yes ■ Somewhat or Unsure ■ No

- 12% of employees indicate having witnessed sexual harassment at the workplace
- Over half of workers report having witnessed bullying at work
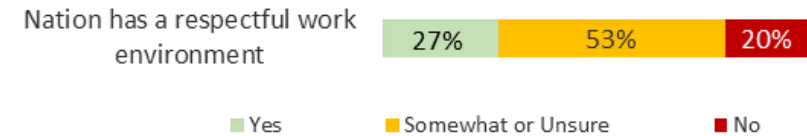
- One in ten workers report having experienced sexual harassment while working for the Nation; an additional 4% report being unsure
- 43% report having been bullied at work; another 10% are unsure

Witnessed While Working at Nation

Sexual harassment	12%	6%	82%
Bullying	57%	7%	37%
Discrimination	46%	5%	48%

■ Yes ■ Unsure ■ No

Personally Experienced While Working at Nation

Sexual harassment	10%	4%	86%
Bullying	43%	10%	47%
Discrimination	33%	11%	56%

■ Yes ■ Unsure ■ No
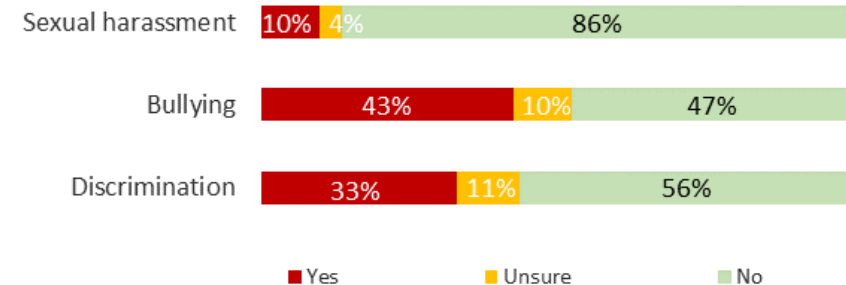
Foundational Factor 6 – Safe and Supportive Work Culture

Action by Management / Leadership on these Issues

Issue	Yes	Somewhat or Unsure	No
Process exists to report discrimination, bullying, or sexual harassment	37%	47%	16%
Management / Leadership takes seriously and acts on complaints	14%	54%	32%

Legend: ■ Yes   ■ Somewhat or Unsure   ■ No

Recipient of Abuse on the Job from Band Members

	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
Been recipient of abusive behaviour of clients/band memebers wihile working	10%	50%	40%

Legend: ■ Frequently   ■ Occasionally   ■ Never

- Nearly half of workers are unsure of processes to report sexual harassment, bullying, or discrimination and another 16% think they not exist

- Only 14% of staff feel that management / Leadership has taken past instances seriously and acted accordingly. Half of employees felt somewhat (24%) or unsure (30%)

- One-third of employees do not think complaints are taken seriously / acted on

- 60% of employees report experiencing abusive behaviour from Nation members while doing their jobs

- 10% experience it frequently, while another 50% experience it occasionally

Pride in Working for the Nation

Worker Pride

Proud working for the Nation — 98% | 2%

Yes | No
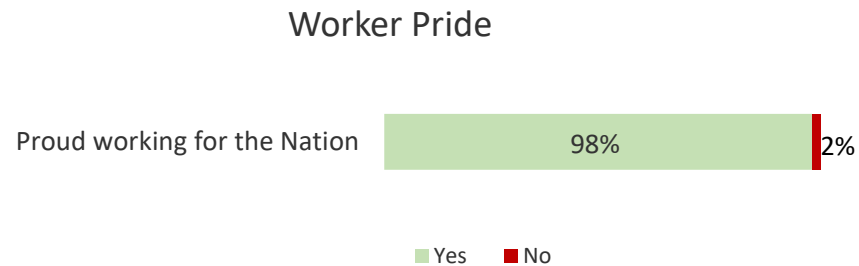
- Despite all the commentary above, there remains a high level of pride in the staff to be working for the Nation (98%)

Foundational Factor 7 – Sufficient Resources

Input from Management

- While in general Councilor participation as portfolio leads is good, in some cases participation is low

  - Appears Councilors do not feel need to be active if no issues are evident

  - But Directors express need for more information sharing / coordination strategically (both directions)

  - More clarity is required for Councilors on their portfolio roles

- Some departments note funding levels have not changed in decades / based on dated population counts

- Various departments identify the possibility of a 'one stop window' for Members seeking supports, with guidance on where to go within Operations (but does not proceed beyond the idea stage)

- Some duplications in services / coverage areas across departments identified

- Some areas appear to be under-resourced (e.g. Membership)

Foundational Factor 7 – Sufficient Resources

High Level Finance Review

- Nation finances appear healthy, cash reserves, no immediate issues identified
  - Controls in place – C&C reviewing and signing all cheques
  - However, with this system, Leadership are drawn into the weeds, distracts from taking broader perspective

- Reporting occurring, and available for departments when asked
  - C&C Lacking big picture reporting on financial state to manage by
  - Lack of communication and sharing information

Foundational Factor 7 – Sufficient Resources

High Level Finance Review

- Budget meetings – Leadership keeping an eye on finance periodically
  - High level look on a department basis

- Areas for Improvement:
  - Duplication – some departments keeping parallel records
  - Organization charts not aligning with financial statements
    - E.g. 14 departments versus 9 in financial statements and accounting systems
  - SLCN lacking value-add reporting – no big picture until audited financial statements
  - No clear, plain picture of the financial status on a consolidated basis for monthly review
  - Statements not clearly indicating discretionary versus non-discretionary revenues / expenditures
  - Lack of communication and sharing information
  - Some cases of management override

Foundational Factor 7 – Sufficient Resources

Considerations for Improvement – Finance Area

- Address information needs from a management perspective

- Address cheque signing
  - Delegate some controls to managers
  - C&C should review systems and controls /not necessarily doing all the signing
  - Use portfolios to take responsibility for overseeing departmental spending

- Ways to improved reporting (Excel templates, etc.)

- Support for succession planning – more empowerment of staff – they will need time to come up to speed

Foundational Factor 7 – Sufficient Resources

Member Survey – Importance and Satisfaction with various Programs and Services

- One proxy for how well-resourced various programs and services are

- (but not the only explanation for satisfaction levels expressed by Members)

Foundational Factor 7 – Sufficient Resources

Importance of Programs and Services - Pt 1

Legend: ■ On Reserve ■ Off Reserve

Y-axis (Degree of Importance): Very Important, Somewhat Important, Not At All Important

Categories:
- **Public Works**: Building Supplies, Housing - Maintenance, Public Areas Maint., Public/ Band Buildings, Housing - New, Wastewater/Sewer, Garbage Collection, Water Delivery, Fire Department, Road Const, Gravel, Plow
- **Health**: NNADAP(Subst. Abuse), Home Care/Assisted Living, Head Start, Building Healthy Communities, Ind. Res. School Program (MMW), Mental Health/Counselling, Jordan's Principle/Outreach, Brighter Futures/Suicide Prev., Medical Transportation, Public Health, Medical Clinic
- **CFS**: Post Majority supports, Band Designate, Wicitoh Kamihk (Resource Center), Reunification, Child Protection, FCSS
- **Social Dvpt**: Sewing Centre, Social Assistance (Inc. Support), Reinvestment
- **Empl. & Training**: Annual Career Fair, Youth Mentorship Program, Summer Student Program, Employment Services, Training Programs, Employment Requirements

Importance of Programs and Services - Pt 2

Legend: On Reserve (dark blue), Off Reserve (yellow)

Y-axis (Degree of Importance): Very Important, Somewhat Important, Not At All Important

Categories and programs:

Education: Cultural Education, Oskiya Outreach, Daycare, Student Transportation, Gr. K-12 Supports, Onchaminahos(K-6) School, Post-Secondary Program, Kihew Asiniy (7-12) School

Lands, Resources, Ec Dev: First Nations Development Fund, Cemetery/Woodlot Programs, Traditional Land Use, Buisness Development, Economic Development, Lands (Within SL)

Businesses Serving Members: Walter's Store, Northside Store, Eugene's Gas Bar, Saddle Lake Trading Post (St. Brides), Laundromat, Centex / Bison Auto, Saddle Lake Pharmacy

Emerg. Mgmt: Security Team, Emergency Mgmt (Crisis, Safety), Temporary Work Programs, Food Sustainability, Emergency Homeless Shelter, Community Supports, Search and Rescue

General Admin / Membership: General Sponsorship, Admin. Support Staff for Leadership, Administration Reception, General Administration, Youth Programming, Special Events, Membership Department, Special Services, Finance Department

Foundational Factor 7 – Sufficient Resources

Satisfaction of Programs and Services - Pt 1

Legend: On Reserve, Off Reserve

Categories: Public Works, Health, CFS, Social Dvpt, Empl. & Training

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Foundational Factor 7 – Sufficient Resources

Satisfaction of Programs and Services - Pt 2

Legend: On Reserve, Off Reserve

Y-axis (Degree of Satisfaction): Very Satisfied, Somewhat Satisfied, Not Satisfied

Categories:

Education: Cultural Education, Oskiya Outreach, Daycare, Student Transportation, Gr. K-12 Supports, Onchaminahos(K-6) School, Post-Secondary Program, Kihew Asiniy (7-12) School

Lands, Resources, Ec Dev: First Nations Development Fund, Cemetery/Woodlot Programs, Traditional Land Use, Buisness Development, Economic Development, Lands (Within SL)

Businesses Serving Members: Walter's Store, Northside Store, Eugene's Gas Bar, Saddle Lake Trading Post (St. Brides), Laundromat, Centex / Bison Auto, Saddle Lake Pharmacy

Emerg. Mgmt: Security Team, Emergency Mgmt (Crisis, Safety), Temporary Work Programs, Food Sustainability, Emergency Homeless Shelter, Community Supports, Search and Rescue

General Admin / Membership: General Sponsorship, Admin. Support Staff for Leadership, Administration Reception, General Administration, Youth Programming, Special Events, Membership Department, Special Services, Finance Department

Foundational Factor 7 – Sufficient Resources

Foundational Factor 7 – Sufficient Resources

Child and Family Services

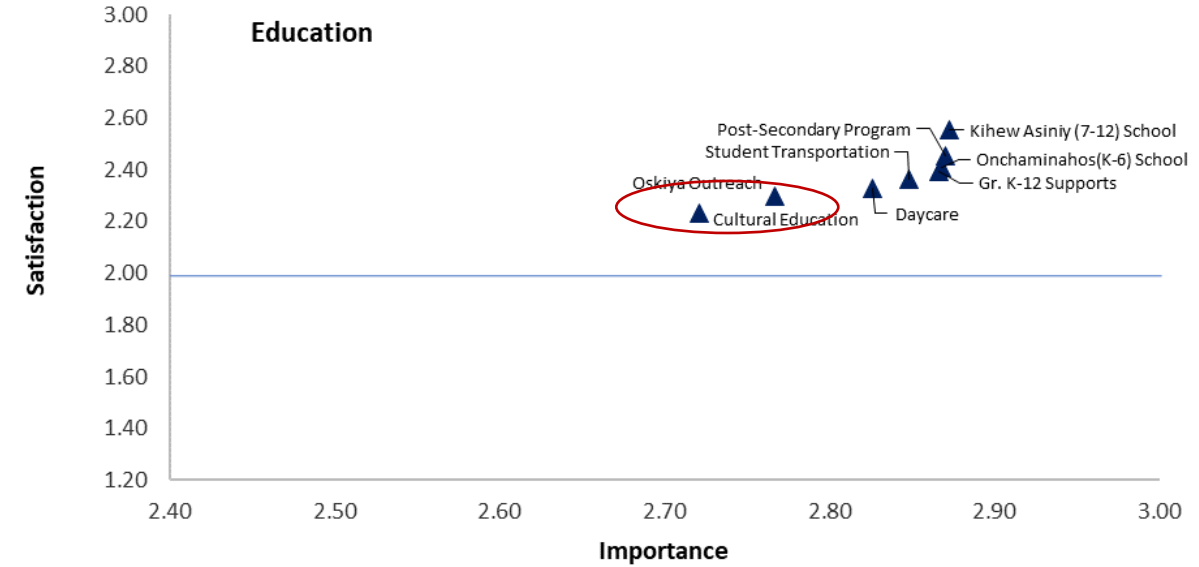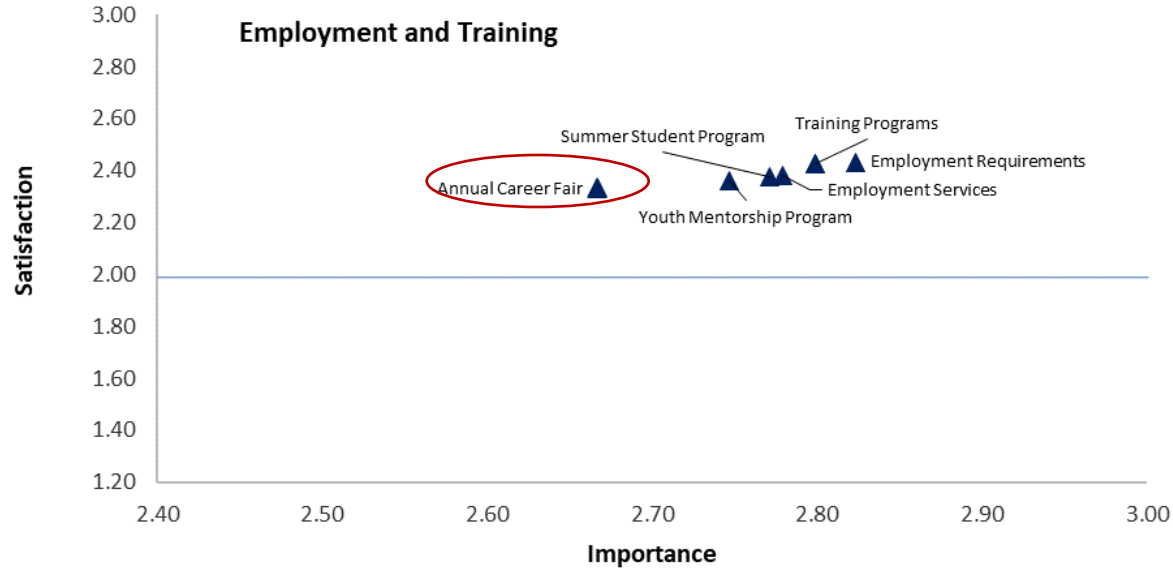- Wicitoh Kamihk (Resource Center)
- Band Designate
- Post Majority supports
- FCSS
- Child Protection
- Reunification

Social Development

- Reinvestment
- Sewing Centre
- Social Assistance (Inc. Support)

Foundational Factor 7 – Sufficient Resources

Employment and Training

- Summer Student Program
- Training Programs
- Employment Requirements
- Annual Career Fair
- Employment Services
- Youth Mentorship Program

Education

- Post-Secondary Program
- Kihew Asiniy (7-12) School
- Student Transportation
- Onchaminahos(K-6) School
- Oskiya Outreach
- Gr. K-12 Supports
- Cultural Education
- Daycare

Foundational Factor 7 – Sufficient Resources

Lands, Resources, Economic Development

Satisfaction vs Importance chart with markers labeled:
- Cemetery/Woodlot Programs
- First Nations Development Fund
- Lands (Within SL)
- Economic Development
- Buisness Development
- Traditional Land Use

Businesses Serving Members

Satisfaction vs Importance chart with markers labeled:
- Saddle Lake Pharmacy
- Centex / Bison Auto
- Saddle Lake Trading Post (St. Brides)
- Laundromat
- Eugene's Gas Bar
- Northside Store
- Walter's Store

Foundational Factor 7 – Sufficient Resources

Emergency Management
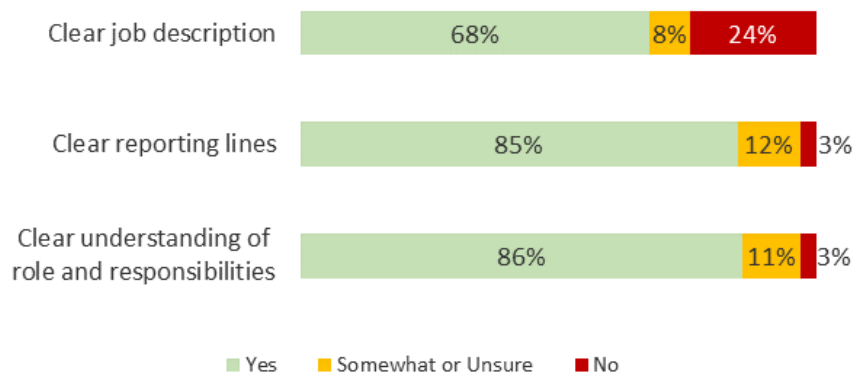
General Administration & Membership

- Overall, Members on reserve find all programs to be at least 'somewhat important' and have for the most part a reasonable satisfaction with them

- Those red circled could benefit from a look / support from senior Management (more engagement to understand issues, funding levels? communication of rules? etc.)

Foundational Factor 8 – Consistent Direction and Oversight

Systems in place to ensure consistent direction and oversight to staff?

Expectations and Reporting Structure

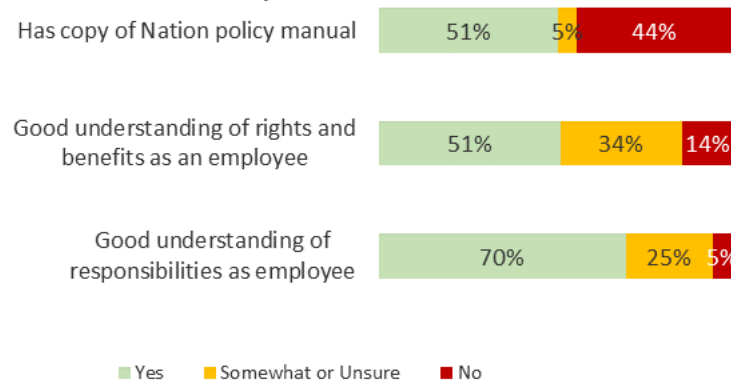|	Yes	Somewhat or Unsure	No
Clear job description	68%	8%	24%
Clear reporting lines	85%	12%	3%
Clear understanding of role and responsibilities	86%	11%	3%

■ Yes ■ Somewhat or Unsure ■ No

- Staff appear to have a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities and reporting lines

- Less clarity on job descriptions; 24% of staff do not have one, another 8% are unclear – nearly a third of all staff lack clarity
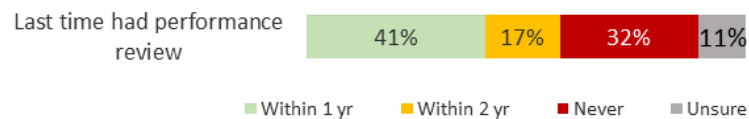
Systems for Consistent Direction and Oversight of Staff

Awareness of Rights and Responsibilities

Has copy of Nation policy manual	51%	5% 44%
Good understanding of rights and benefits as an employee	51%	34% 14%
Good understanding of responsibilities as employee	70%	25% 5%

■ Yes ■ Somewhat or Unsure ■ No

Performance Review

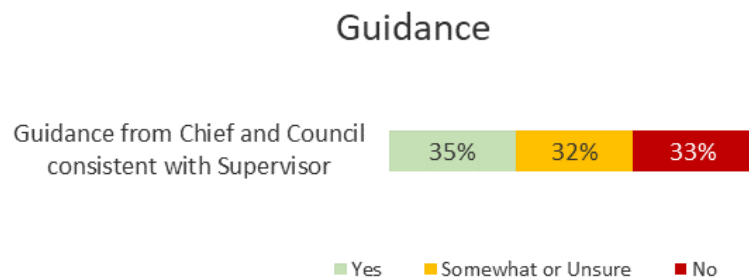|		
Last time had performance review	41%	17% 32% 11%

■ Within 1 yr ■ Within 2 yr ■ Never ■ Unsure

- Nearly half of employees report not having a copy of the Nation's policy manual; 5% are unsure

- Only half of employees indicate understanding their rights and benefits. 70% of employees indicate having a good understanding of their responsibilities as an employee

- Nation policy manual was reportedly last updated in 2018 – departments have tried working collaboratively on it, but lack time to complete

- Less than half of employees report having a job review in the last year, and 58% have had within two years

- One-third report never having a performance review

- 11% of employees indicate being unsure what a performance review is

49

Foundational Factor 8 – Consistent Direction and Oversight

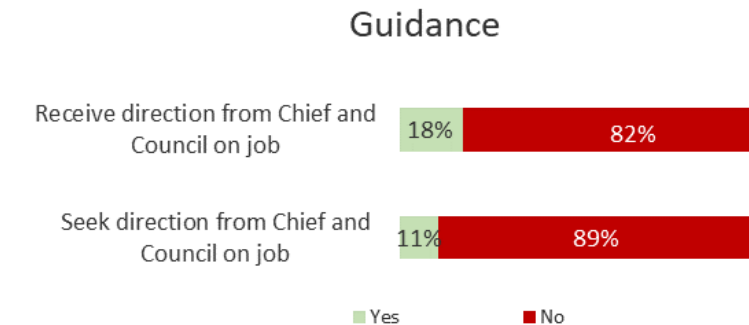## Systems for Consistent Direction and Oversight of Staff

Guidance

Receive direction from Chief and Council on job: Yes 18%, No 82%

Seek direction from Chief and Council on job: Yes 11%, No 89%

■ Yes ■ No

Guidance

Guidance from Chief and Council consistent with Supervisor: Yes 35%, Somewhat or Unsure 32%, No 33%

■ Yes ■ Somewhat or Unsure ■ No

- Only 18% of employees indicate that they receive guidance from Chief and Council

- Only 11% seek guidance from Chief and Council

- ** interpret these responses with caution – as the # of respondents to the next question indicate many more receive direction from C&C than indicated here

- For those who do receive direction from Chief and Council, only one third report that feedback being consistent with their supervisor

- Management interviews indicate 'meddling' from C&C can occur occasionally (e.g. direction without formal directives)
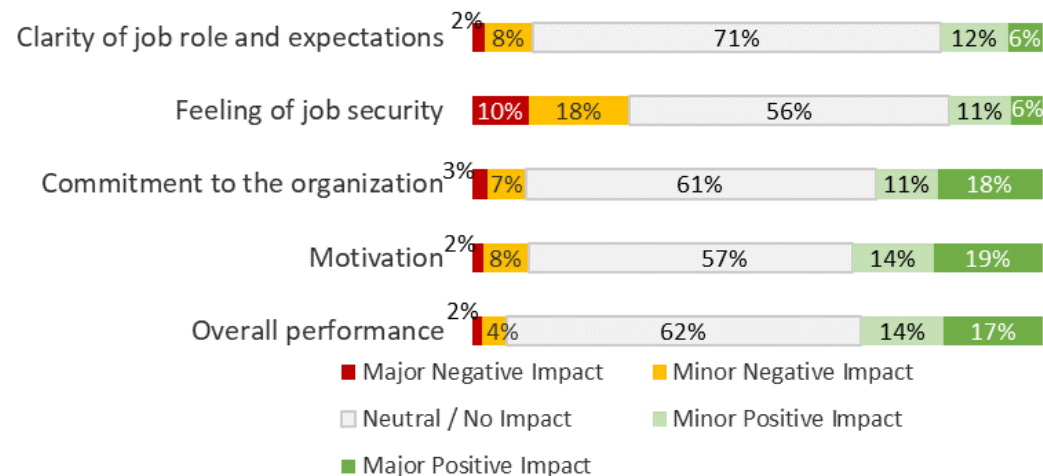
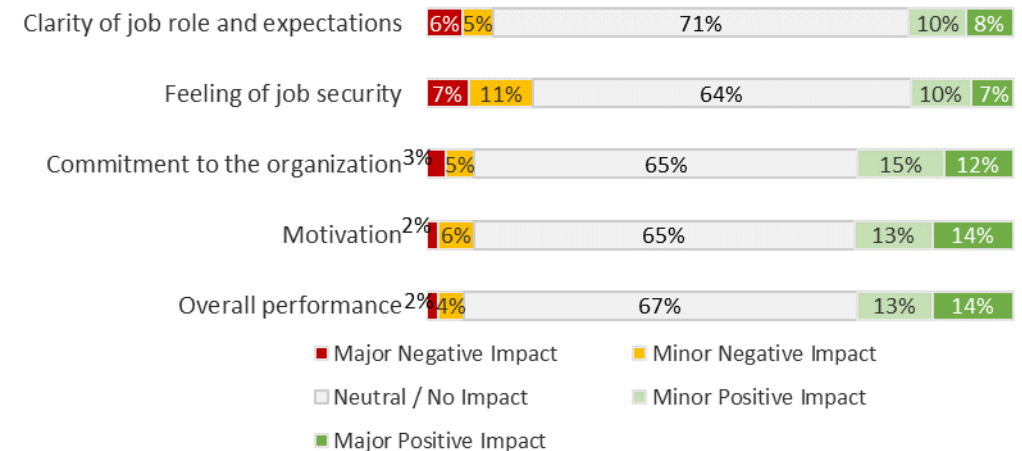# Foundational Factor 8 – Consistent Direction and Oversight

- Change in C&C can increase motivation, but also feelings of job insecurity

- Similar, but less accentuated feelings occur with a change in the Tribal Administrator

Impacts of the 3-Year Election Cycle

	Major Negative Impact	Minor Negative Impact	Neutral / No Impact	Minor Positive Impact	Major Positive Impact
Clarity of job role and expectations	2%	8%	71%	12%	6%
Feeling of job security	10%	18%	56%	11%	6%
Commitment to the organization	3%	7%	61%	11%	18%
Motivation	2%	8%	57%	14%	19%
Overall performance	2%	4%	62%	14%	17%

- Major Negative Impact
- Minor Negative Impact
- Neutral / No Impact
- Minor Positive Impact
- Major Positive Impact

Impacts of Change in Tribal Administrator

	Major Negative Impact	Minor Negative Impact	Neutral / No Impact	Minor Positive Impact	Major Positive Impact
Clarity of job role and expectations	6%	5%	71%	10%	8%
Feeling of job security	7%	11%	64%	10%	7%
Commitment to the organization	3%	5%	65%	15%	12%
Motivation	2%	6%	65%	13%	14%
Overall performance	2%	4%	67%	13%	14%

- Major Negative Impact
- Minor Negative Impact
- Neutral / No Impact
- Minor Positive Impact
- Major Positive Impact

General Administration

- **Engagement To-Date**
  - Mixed support for project in key Administration roles
  - Administration area lacking capacity to support project
    - Timely responses to communication
    - Clarity of communication
    - Lack of understanding of steps and proactive engagement to get up to speed
  - Indicative/suggestive of broader lack of capacity
    - E.g. gaps in basic administrative pieces:
      - Email list for staff – singular domain
      - Organizational chart of overall operations and departments
      - Up-to-date contact lists
    - Directors feedback about department
  - Through project, tried to explore opportunities to build capacity
    - Lack of clarity in roles identified
    - Looking for ways to bolster area - job description request, interviews
    - Recent hires / fires

Human Resource Functions and Management

- The lack of an organizational-wide Human Resource Department affects operational performance
  - Managers struggle with basic HR functions, and inconsistency leads to confusion across departments
  - HR/legal issues taking up Tribal Administrator and C&C time
  - Finding resources to fund HR can be challenging (e.g. not available in many program funding structures)
  - However, the costs incurred through mismanagement (dismissal lawsuits, injury avoidance, legal advice etc.) would likely cover the costs of effective HR resources

Administrative Function:

- Administration
  - Files & forms management
  - Paperwork
  - Process drive
- Transactional Activities
  - Routine activities done on a regular basis
- HR Policies
  - Properly interpreting policies for management and employees
  - Ensuring compliance
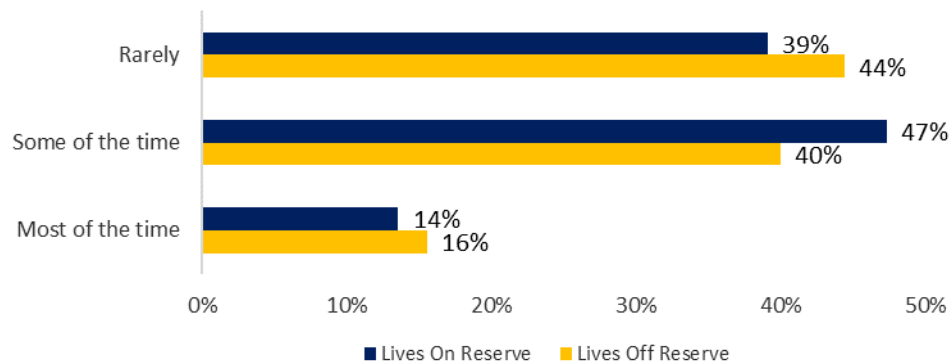 - Revision

Strategic HR Management:

- Effective utilization of human capital (KSA's- knowledge, skills & abilities)
- HR Best Practices
- Behaviors of Employees
- Effectiveness of decisions given business strategies
- Supporting organizational strategy
- Create organizational alignment
- Recruiting the old-fashioned way

Overall satisfaction – Member Survey

Overall, How Often is the Nation's Operations Meeting Your Expectations

	Lives On Reserve	Lives Off Reserve
Rarely	39%	44%
Some of the time	47%	40%
Most of the time	14%	16%

Overall, How Satisfied Are You With The Services Provided On/Off Reserve

Living On Reserve

- Not Satisfied, 15%
- Very Satisfied, 37%
- Somewhat Satisfied, 48%

Living Off Reserve

- Very Satisfied, 21%
- Not Satisfied, 49%
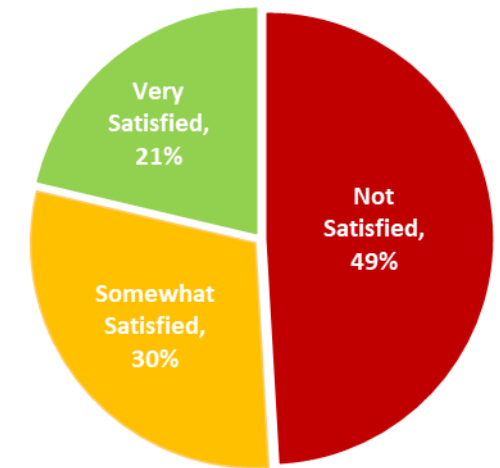- Somewhat Satisfied, 30%

- There is room for improvement with Nation operations
  - Only ~15% of Members feel the Nation's operations meet their expectations most of the time
- Around 40% of Members feel it *rarely* meets expectations
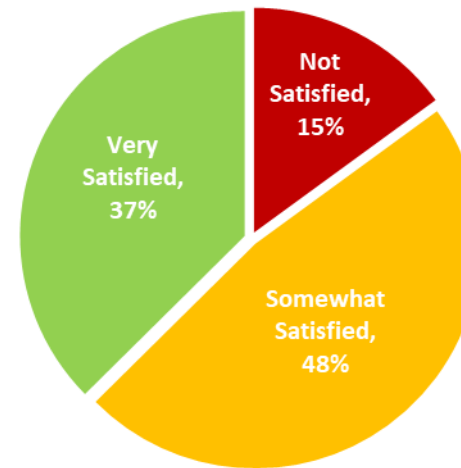
- That said, general satisfaction levels are higher with the services offered by the Nation
- Members living on reserve are more satisfied overall with the Nation operations, with one third very satisfied, and nearly half somewhat satisfied
- Levels are lower with Members living off reserve – nearly half are unsatisfied
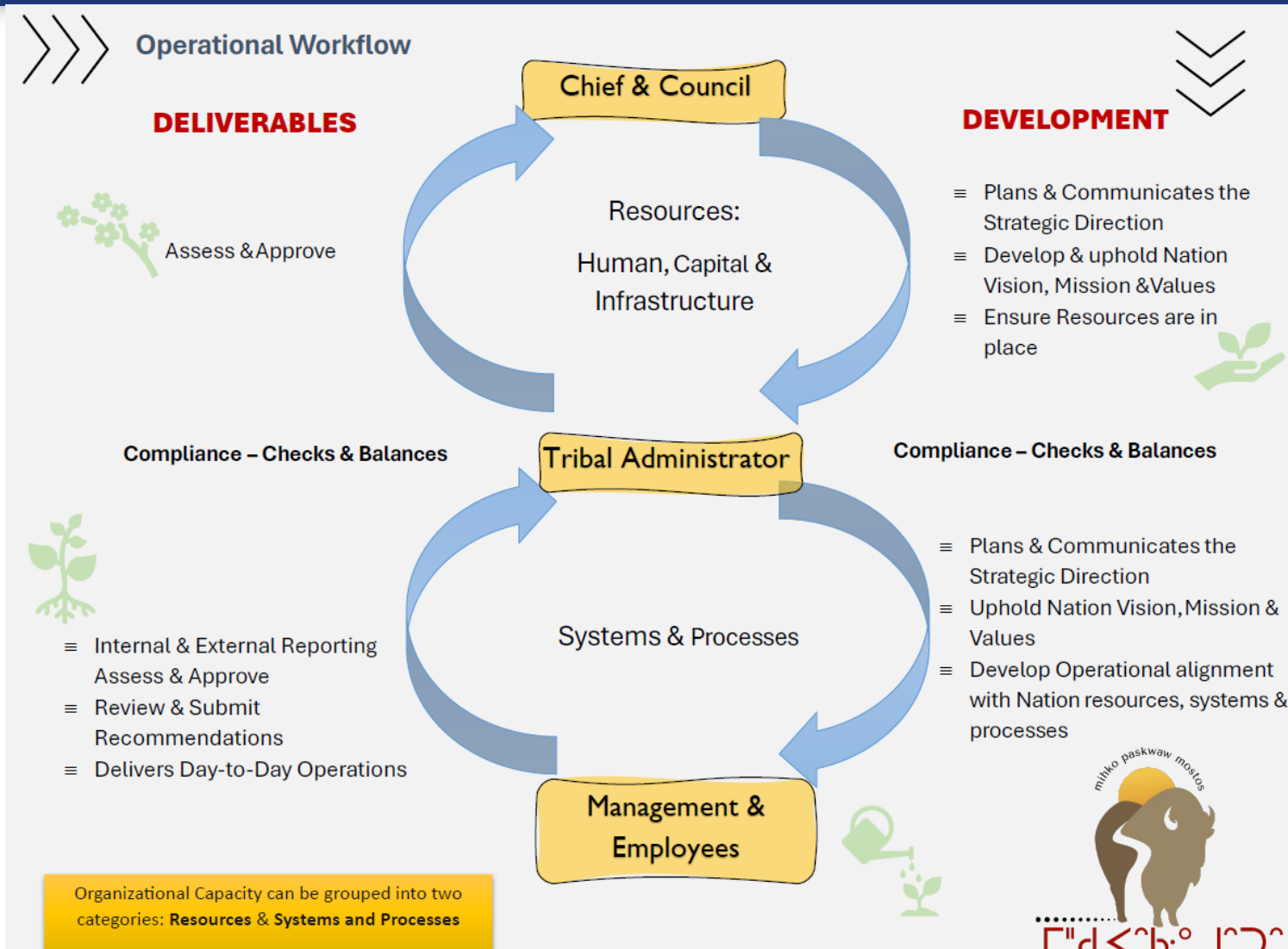
Foundational Factor 9 – Continuous Improvement

Where Members Recommend More Resourcing Should Be Placed

Priorites for Nation Investment

(Bar chart showing Lives On Reserve and Lives Off Reserve percentages for categories: Housing, Jobs and training, Infrastructure (roads, water, sewer), Health Services (mental health, clinical, addictions), Traditional Knowledge, Cultural and Language Programming, Youth Programming, Nation Safety and Security, Education (K-12 / Post Secondary), Recreational Opportunities, Nation Events (bbq's, special events, family programming), Social and Community Services (social assistance, FCSS), Other (specify below). X-axis: 0% to 25%.)

■ Lives On Reserve   ■ Lives Off Reserve

- Housing, jobs/training are priorities for all Members

- For those off-reserve – more health services and language and cultural programming

Division of Leadership Responsibilities

Operational Workflow

DELIVERABLES

Assess & Approve

Chief & Council

Resources:

Human, Capital & Infrastructure

DEVELOPMENT

- Plans & Communicates the Strategic Direction
- Develop & uphold Nation Vision, Mission & Values
- Ensure Resources are in place

Compliance – Checks & Balances

Tribal Administrator

Compliance – Checks & Balances

Systems & Processes

- Internal & External Reporting Assess & Approve
- Review & Submit Recommendations
- Delivers Day-to-Day Operations

- Plans & Communicates the Strategic Direction
- Uphold Nation Vision, Mission & Values
- Develop Operational alignment with Nation resources, systems & processes

Management & Employees

Organizational Capacity can be grouped into two categories: **Resources** & **Systems and Processes**
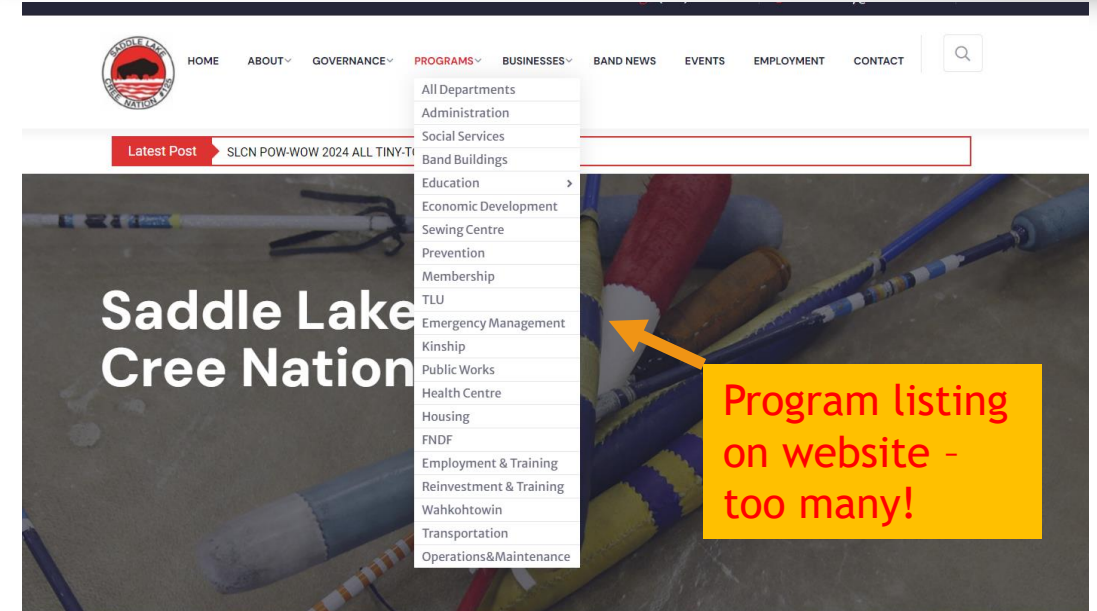
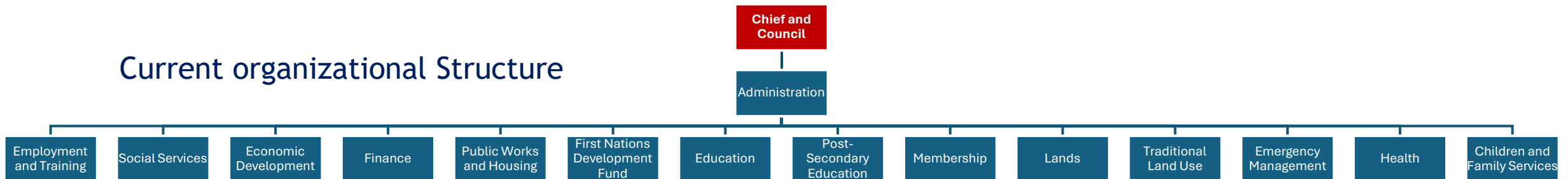# Foundational Factor 10 - Effective Organizational Structure

The organizational structure is very flat

- results in an unmanageable number of direct reports (to the TA as well as C&C)

- loses out on synergy opportunities of clustering under similar service areas (e.g. all social-type projects together, land-based departments, etc.)

- organization would benefit from organizing under pillars (see p6) that align with Nation values/priorities, not funding streams

- Division leads could provide faster and consistent oversight/guidance to departments, and streamlined engagements with the TA and C&C

Program listing on website – too many!

Current organizational Structure

Chief and Council

Administration

| Employment and Training | Social Services | Economic Development | Finance | Public Works and Housing | First Nations Development Fund | Education | Post-Secondary Education | Membership | Lands | Traditional Land Use | Emergency Management | Health | Children and Family Services |

Division of Leadership Responsibilities

Responsibilities for Ensuring the Foundation is in place:

Building Block	Chief & Council Responsibilities	Administration Responsibilities
Clearly Defined Vision and Mission	Review and approve vision and mission and communicate it to members.	Ensure process is in place to support C&C in orienting, defining, monitoring and communicating vision & mission.
Develop and Monitor Goals and Objectives	Approve a set of long-term goals and objectives for the Nation. Once approved, hold Administration accountable for progress.	Develop and recommend strategic and other long-term plans for C&C approval. Monitor and report progress on plans to C&C, the organization and members.
Effective Membership Engagement	Approve and adhere to a membership engagement and communication plan	Support implementation of C&C's engagement and communication plan.
Hire, Train and Keep the Right Staff	Hire and monitor the performance of the TA. Adhere to and support Administration's human resource policies and practices.	Hire and manage staff, engage and manage contractors. Ensure appropriate HR systems in place.

Division of Leadership Responsibilities

Building Block	Chief & Council Responsibilities	Administration Responsibilities
Ensure a Safe and Supportive Work Culture	Support Administration, lead by example.	Implement safety and training programs. Implement organizational culture initiatives. Engage with staff.
Allocate Appropriate Resourcing	Review and approve budgets.	Develop & recommend budgets for review and approval by C&C. Ensure resourcing aligns with priorities.
Consistent Direction and Oversight	Support Administration. Maintain focus on both specific objectives and 'big picture' priority areas.	Develop guidelines, procedures and systems to manage the organization, including performance measurement and report to C&C and Members.
Commitment to Continuous Improvement	Support Administration.	Implement performance management systems. Reward strong and address weak performance. Provide guidance to staff.
Integration of Beliefs and Practices	Promote language and traditional culture.	Utilize language and traditional culture to help the workforce especially regarding behaviour. Create space for learning and healing to assist people in finding themselves and mentoring others.

Organizational Resiliency

Organizational capacity (foundational strength) is an important factor of resiliency, or ability to weather change.

15 Years In The Life of a First Nation

CHIEF AND COUNCIL	CHIEF AND COUNCIL	CHIEF AND COUNCIL	CHIEF AND COUNCIL	CHIEF AND COUNCIL

ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM	ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM	ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

COMMUNITY

Change is a certainty.
How well an organization manages it is resiliency.

A Major Benefit of a Strong Organization

Having a strong organization in place is key to ensuring both the **continuity** and **improvement** of programs and services over time.

- Changes in leadership (Chief, Councillors, Administrators) affect the organization

- From an organizational perspective, change in leadership is rarely neutral – sometimes positive, but often negative

When these elements are in place:

- Solid governance framework
- Strategic plans and planning processes
- Strong organizational structure and resources
- Good management and administrative systems

There is increased likelihood that leadership change will have at least a neutral, if not positive, impact (resiliency)

Delivery of programs and services (value) to members is not noticeably interrupted

Organizations (including governments) which see less disruption tend to make further progress towards their long-term vision.

Communication

- Effective and efficient program and service delivery relies heavily on good communication between membership, leadership and administration
- Communication is strongest when specific attention is given to BOTH speaking and listening
- Written communication is important – use of texts can create confusion and risks like a lack of legal record
- Clear and meaningful feedback (e.g. from C&C to funding requests) is important

Communication – Speaking and Listening

Speaking

- Membership needs ways to communicate needs and feedback **to** Chief and Council and Administration

- Chief and Council needs ways to communicate plans and progress to Membership and Administration

- Administration needs ways to communicate information, results and needs of programs and services to Chief and Council and Membership

Listening

- Membership needs ways to hear from Chief and Council and Administration on programs, services and other community priorities

- Chief and Council needs ways to hear needs and feedback from Membership and Administration

- Administration needs ways to hear strategic guidance from Chief and Council and needs and feedback from Membership

Next Steps

- Read and discuss these findings

- Decide what and how to share information with staff/members
  - E.g. summary reports of survey results posted

- Identify priority areas for remainder of project

- Good in concept

- Participation has been mixed
  - Tried different approaches (meetings as needed, regularly scheduled)
  - Turnout sporadic

- Overall only somewhat effective
  - E.g. would be appropriate vehicle to discuss any concerns re: Finance / staff compensation data request
  - Lack of attendance

- Indicative of overall project status
  - is the Nation owning/driving the project or not?
  - Consultant's role is to provide technical and administrative support, provide impartial third-party view, allow for open sharing
  - It is not meant to sell project need or participation to key leadership roles
  - Staff and members need to see that lead come from the top for any chance of buy-in

Remainder of Project – Options for Consideration

- Governance – Administration workshop
- Practical HR tools/practices, drawing on staff survey input
- Practical Finance reporting templates/practices
- Communications practices and tools
- Organizational structure
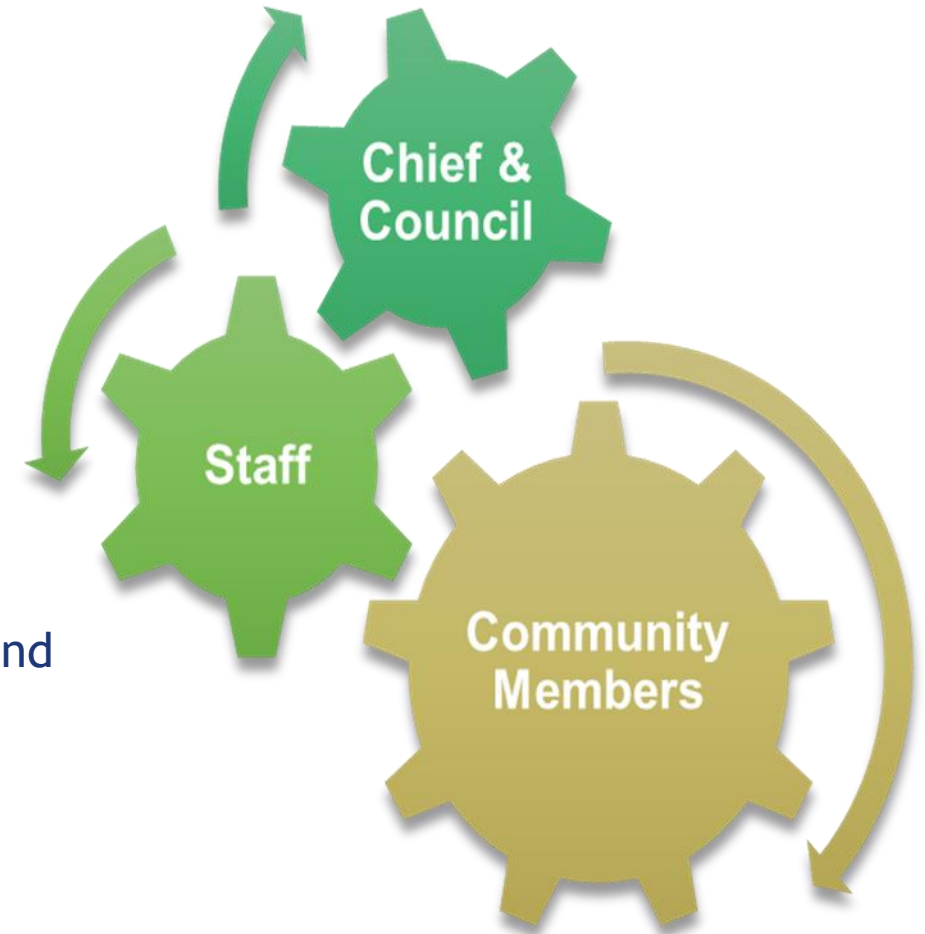- Focus on priority programs and services as per membership input

The Imperative for Teamwork

You are the stewards of your land and caregivers for your people. Steps taken by leadership influences the outcome of future generations.

It is imperative that SLCN ensures effective and efficient ways of working together.

Nation building works best when Chief & Council, Administration and community members are working together.

The ability of the organization to deliver value to Members is dependent upon this.

Chief & Council

Staff

Community Members

kinana'skomitina'wa'w