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Chiefs of Ontario Champion \$47.8 Billion Agreement for First Nations Child Welfare Reform

(Toronto, Ont. – September 16, 2024) Following the announcement of the historic \$47.8 billion Final Agreement on the Long-Term Reform of the First Nations Child and Family Services (FNCFS) Program on July 11, 2024, the Chiefs of Ontario (COO) have hosted a series of engagement sessions to discuss the benefits and implications of the Agreement. The Final Agreement was reached between the Assembly of First Nations, Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Chiefs of Ontario, and the Government of Canada.

Since 1978, COO and the Chiefs-in-Assembly have passed 191 resolutions focused on addressing law, policy, programs, services, funding, and self-determination in social services. These resolutions include specific mandates to reform band representative funding and the 1965 Indian Welfare Agreement (IWA). In light of these efforts, COO applied for, and was granted, intervenor status in the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal's (CHRT) 2016 Merits Decision. This intervention allowed for COO to advocate for critical reforms in band representative services, the 1965 IWA, and children's mental health. This unique history and the effects of the 1965 IWA profoundly impact First Nations in Ontario, motivating COO's ongoing pursuit for justice and reform.

"This agreement embodies a strong commitment to First Nations-led service delivery, particularly in the context of the 1965 IWA and its extensive influence. By prioritizing culturally relevant, community-based solutions, over government-imposed models, we are ensuring that our communities' values and needs are at the forefront of how services are delivered," said Ontario Regional Chief Abram Benedict. "This transformative approach empowers our people to shape their futures in a way that truly honours our traditions and priorities."

The Final Agreement is the result of years of dedicated efforts by First Nations Leadership and technicians, designed to provide stable, predictable funding, over the next decade. This enhanced funding will address the increased cost of delivering services in remote communities through the implementation of an evidence-based approach to remoteness, the Remoteness Quotient Adjustment Factor (RQAF), which is First Nations-informed and championed by Nishnawbe Aski Nation. This approach ensures remote First Nations receive adjusted funding based on actual costs, with an Ontario-regional average RQ Adjustment of 41.5%, reflecting the true expenses involved in service delivery.

COO will host a [Special Chiefs Assembly](#) on October 10, 2024, in a hybrid format, both virtually and in-person in Toronto, Ontario, on the ancestral territory of many nations, including the Anishnabeg, Chippewa, Haudenosaunee, and Wendat peoples. Chiefs

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and Proxies in Ontario will vote on the resolution to consider the approval of the Final Agreement.

On October 16-18, 2024, the Assembly of First Nations will host a [Special Chiefs Assembly](#) on Treaty No. 7 Territory, in Calgary, Alberta, where Chiefs and Proxies from regions across Canada will have an opportunity to deliberate on and vote on the proposed reforms.

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The Chiefs of Ontario supports all First Nations in Ontario as they assert their sovereignty, jurisdiction, and their chosen expression of nationhood. Follow Chiefs of Ontario on Facebook, X, Instagram, or LinkedIn @ChiefsOfOntario

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