

COMMUNITY PRIORITIES



Access to our own Information (Data Sovereignty)

Indigenous people need to tell our own stories and not have others interpret what we mean. The OAC is working with partners to ensure that the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition is able to collect and analysis data collected about Ottawa Indigenous community members.

Access to Land for Ceremony and Wellbeing

We heard almost immediately that we needed to have land in the city of Ottawa for restoring our balance and maintaining our mental wellness; for ceremony, especially when we lost loved ones; and for programming and connection so that we can come together as community. We have been working with the City to find that land and have also connected with Beechwood Cemetery to create a permanent place to remember Ottawa Indigenous community members who were returned to their home community after they passed.

Building New ways of doing our Work with our Partners

The one thing that we learned through COVID-19 is that the old ways of doing things did not work. Many partners were open to staying focused on responding to the real needs of Indigenous community members – even if it meant moving away from the way things had been done in the past.

Finding better ways to Respond to the needs of our Children and Families

The OAC is working on a new research project with CHEO and Kids Come First to identify specific ways that we can improve access to services and programs for children especially in the area of mental health, developmental services and pediatric dental care.



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Improving Services to Indigenous Community Members

By improving our own services as the Ottawa Indigenous community service providers. The OAC member organizations have been involved in the research and have responded to updates and issues that have arisen in real time. The survey results will continue to support OAC member organizations to revise and develop new programs and services. And to advocate to funders for the value and necessity for Ottawa based service organizations to be fully supported.



Indigenous Housing and Homelessness Strategy

This issue only became more acute, particularly for community members who could not “Stay at Home.”



Respecting our own Processes for telling our Stories

The Research Ethics process we went through harmed our relationships with each other and with our partners. It started from a colonial structure of accountability that did not take into account our community structures of Elders and our own accountability tables. We are working to establish an Indigenous based research ethics approach.



Strengthening Indigenous Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy

We developed a strategy that reflects our cultural values, our reliance on community, culture and family; and the need for our partners to provide culturally safe services. We are currently working, through Minwaashin Lodge, on a Family Healing Lodge, for women who have addictions and who will bring their children and family when doing their healing work. We have been working closely with the Royal Ottawa Hospital to establish better pathways for service.



Strengthening our Response to the Mental Health and Addictions Crisis

Like the research, the Elders continue to raise this as a priority for our community. We are losing community members and the research told us what people need to restore and maintain balance.