



# First Nations Child and Family Services (FNCFS) Monthly Update

May 2018

IFSD is pleased to provide this first monthly update to its stakeholders on the progress of the First Nations Child and Family Services (FNCFS) project.

## Principal updates

- 64% of all First Nations Child and Family Services agencies have participated in data gathering efforts, principally during one of the five workshops hosted by IFSD in May 2018. Agencies in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and the Atlantic are leading in participation rates.
- IFSD is continuing its outreach efforts to engage a maximum number of agencies in this project. The goal is 100% participation to help to ensure the diversity of agencies and their experiences are included in the project.
- Future visions discussed during the workshops for First Nations Child and Family Services agencies centred around three themes: 1) self-determination (both cultural and financial); 2) uniqueness of nations, communities and agencies; and 3) network of practice to share wisdom and experience among peers.

## Are you an agency that hasn't yet participated in the survey?

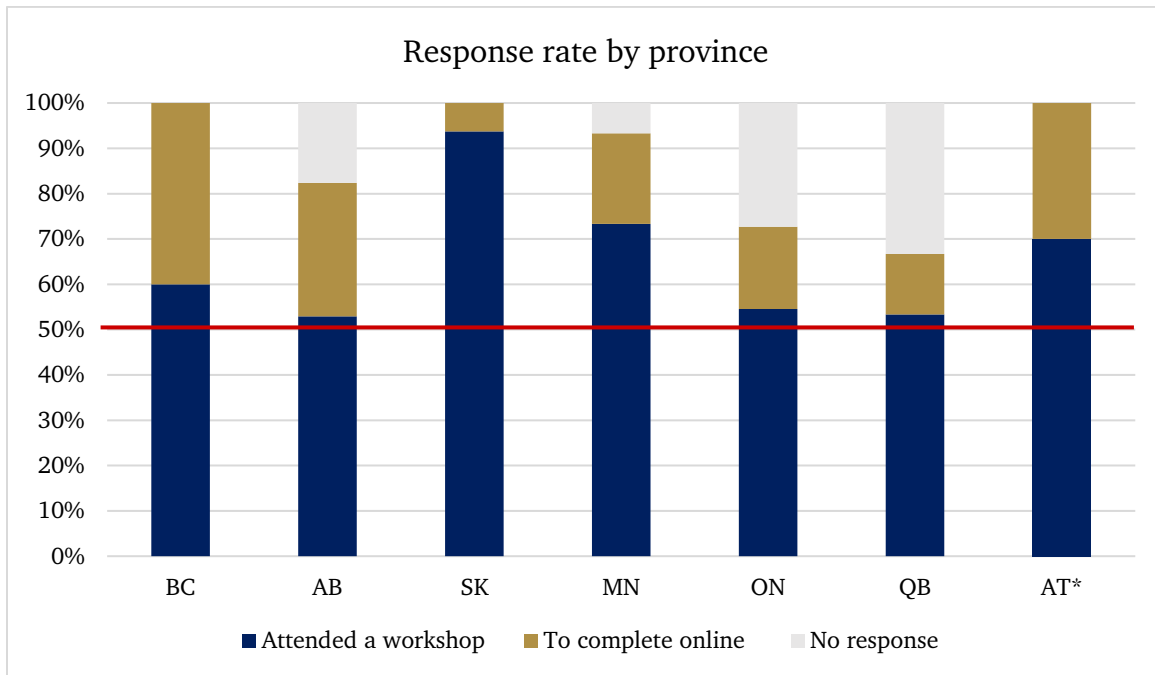
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### Participation and data collection

IFSD has been busily engaging First Nations Child and Family Services agencies from across Canada to inform a baseline of what it costs them to do their work. Agencies have shared their experiences and data to inform the costing and to provide meaning to the numbers.

In May 2018, IFSD hosted four two-day workshops at the University of Ottawa (Ottawa, Ontario). IFSD was pleased to welcome two representatives from each participating agency to Ottawa, which often included agency leadership and a financial expert who contributed to the data-gathering process. Additional workshops were held in May in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan and will be held in early-June in Ottawa.

At this time, 64% of agencies from across Canada have participated in an IFSD workshop. IFSD has hosted 129 guests at the workshops, representing a total of 67 agencies. Several agencies that were unable to attend one of the workshops have committed to completing the survey online.



\*AT (Atlantic) = Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland

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IFSD encourages agencies who have yet to participate in the survey to respond to outreach efforts and schedule a virtual meeting by phone, Skype, or WebEx to discuss the project and the survey tool. As experts and practitioners, your support, feedback, and knowledge are invaluable and an integral component of the success of this project. We need your help to ensure agencies are properly represented.

*IFSD is grateful to agencies and their leadership who have shared their organization's experience and data to inform the critical cost estimation component of this project.*

IFSD wishes to recognize the National Advisory Committee (NAC), the Assembly of First Nations, and Cindy Blackstock and the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society for their support in outreach and review of the survey tool.



Cindy Blackstock, Executive Director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, speaking at a workshop with First Nations Child and Family Services agencies at IFSD, May 18, 2018.

## Workshop highlights

The workshops were designed as working sessions where agency representatives could complete the survey with the support of their team at IFSD. Most importantly, the workshops were forums for agencies to share their wisdom, practices and experiences. Exchanges during the workshops were invaluable in building meaning around the data shared and for weaving connections between a network of peers.

During the workshop sharing sessions, participants shared their views, experiences and visions for the future of FNCFS with IFSD and their colleagues. Group discussions coalesced around the concept of ‘the good life’, with an emphasis on holistic visions of child and family wellness tightly woven with culture, land, and community. Each group of workshop participants defined their visions for the future differently.

There are three common ideas that emerged during the vision sessions (approach and definition were nuanced with each workshop group):

- 1) **Self-determination:** Participants shared the need for First Nations laws and culture to govern First Nations child and family services. *Crucially, self-determination implied decision-making authority of agencies to allocate and spend their funding as they determined to be most appropriate to meet the needs of their communities.*
- 2) **Uniqueness of nations, communities, and agencies:** Participants expressed the importance of having the particularities of their nations, communities, and agencies recognized. New funding architectures should meet agencies where they are now and support them as they meet their future goals. There is no single approach that can best support agencies (no cookie cutter approach).
- 3) **Network of practice:** Participants shared the value of sharing challenges, wise practices, and experiences with their colleagues. There was an expressed interest in creating a space for regular information sharing and dialogue with peers. Some suggested a national centre for wise practices in First Nations child and family services and others an online platform for network building.

## Next Steps

In the coming weeks, IFSD will be analyzing the data provided through the surveys. Some of you who have already completed the survey may receive an email from IFSD in the following weeks to fill any gaps in your survey answers. We encourage you to answer all the follow-up questions as best you can to help the rigour and success of the project.

An initial round of data analysis will be undertaken in June 2018 to identify general trends and emerging typologies of agencies. These initial findings will be shared back with agencies for their review. The first phase of analysis will define a framework for the cost analysis by identifying potential cost-drivers in agency activities.

IFSD will continue to engage with agencies throughout the project and keep agencies up to date on progress with monthly updates. IFSD is pleased to respond to requests for further information or to provide individual briefings on the project and its progress.

**Contact Information**

For questions about the project or to participate, please contact:

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