

Aboriginal Family Court Worker Program

PROGRAM GOAL

The Aboriginal Family Court Worker program was established in order to ensure Aboriginal youth in conflict with the law, separating couples, and Aboriginal families involved in the Child Welfare system receive fair treatment under the law.

Aboriginal Family Court Workers assist Aboriginal people in the judicial process as well as provide preventative community legal education.

Funded by the Ministry of
the Attorney General

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- To ensure access to all Aboriginal people in Ontario, regardless of their status, receive the best available legal and justice related services prior to, during, and following a court appearance and to also maintain the effectiveness of those services.
- To reduce the sense of alienation experienced by Aboriginal persons who are in conflict with the law and to bridge the cultural and linguistic gap between Aboriginal people and the justice system.

Contact:

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Family & Youth Courtworker

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**N'Swakamok Indigenous
Friendship Centre**

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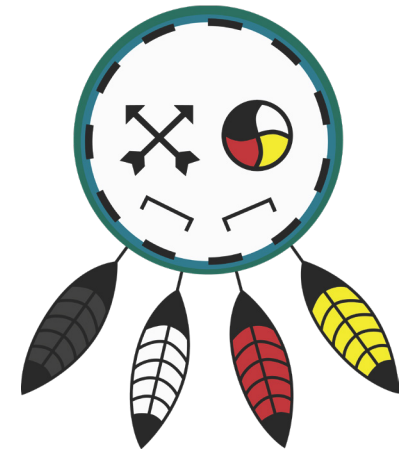
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Hours

Monday - Thursday
8:30 to 4:30
Friday
8:30 to 2:30

Aboriginal Family & Youth Courtworker



**N'Swakamok Indigenous
Friendship Centre**

ABORIGINAL FAMILY COURT WORKERS: PROVIDE SUPPORT TO FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED IN FAMILY COURT MATTERS AND YOUTH INVOLVED WITH THE YOUTH CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACT.

The Aboriginal Family Court Worker will:

- Assist Aboriginal parents, guardians, relations and/or young persons who become involved with the Family and/or the Child Protection court matters or processes.
- Assist Aboriginal youth, parents, guardians, and/or relations who become involved with the Youth Criminal Justice Act.
- Explain the procedures of the Family Court.
- Assist Aboriginal individuals by acting as a liaison between the individual, family, service providers and the court; by ensuring both parties are being treated equally.
- Provide information about Legal Aid if the client cannot afford a lawyer.
- Obtain the services of an interpreter if needed.
- Explain to clients the decisions that the court makes at various stages of the family's case.
- Explain the family's rights and responsibilities under the law.
- Work with the community agencies to help the family to meet their immediate and long term needs and goals in relation to a court process.
- Provide equal services and treatment to separating parties when both parties voluntarily agree.
- Work with parents or families in the case of a child apprehension by CAS, to ensure that all proper steps are taken to protect the child and if possible reunite the family.
- To promote Friendship Centre programs available for clients and ensure that clients' needs are being addressed.
- To ensure open rights and custody cases get equal information and moral support.
- To provide a wide variety of support services to clients and provide information of community services.
- To help Young Offenders to understand their rights and responsibilities and to refer them to the appropriate support services.

The Aboriginal Family Court Worker and The Community:

- Conduct public education/prevention workshops for the Aboriginal Community relevant to the area of Aboriginal families, children and youth justice related issues.
- Participate in the community development of prevention programs and with emphasis on youth to reduce the incidence of crime; and assist in the development and delivery of Aboriginal Community Justice Programs.
- Provide education to the judiciary to help them better understand the culture, needs, and aspirations of Aboriginal people.

The Aboriginal Family Court Worker will not:

- Provide legal advice.
- Act as a language interpreter for the court.
- Will not act as a Probation Officer to paroled or probationed youth.
- Select a lawyer for their clients, but will provide a list of available lawyers.