



CARRIER SEKANI
FAMILY SERVICES

2023-2024

Carrier Sekani Family Services Jordan's Principle Report



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Jordan's Principle, Service Coordination – Internal Report

Prior to April 1st, 2023, CSFS received confirmation of our contract renewal for two FTE Service Coordinator (SC) positions, and we were approached to house another FTE for a Regional Service Coordinator (RSC) position. The RSC position was implemented to fill any service gaps throughout the region which spans from Witsset to the Northeast communities, the Findlay Hub (McLeod Lake, Kwadacha, and Tsey Keh Dene), Fort St. James (Nak'azdli Whut'en, Tl'azt'en Nation, Binche Whut'en), and Quesnel (Nazko and Lhoosk'uz Dene) regions. Witsset does fall under the geographical region supported by the SC contract held by Northwest Child Development Society located in Smithers; however, their SC position is currently vacant. The Northeast does have a SC located in Fort St. John; however, the regional position contract included backfill support responsibilities for that SC position.

CSFS was also selected as one of the host agencies to participate in the Approved Request Contingency (ARC) pilot program which included one FTE for an ARC fund administrator position. This one FTE is responsible for maintaining the ARC spreadsheet that is intended to keep track of expenditures in real time. This role is also responsible to support administrative duties for the oversight of the Jordan's Principle department.

The ARC pilot program was initiated to flow funds directly from agencies to the vendors and to clients upon application approvals rather than continue with the reimbursement process through Indigenous Services Canada (ISC). Within the ARC contract, utilization of these funds was contingent on application submissions through one of the three service coordinator positions housed within CSFS.

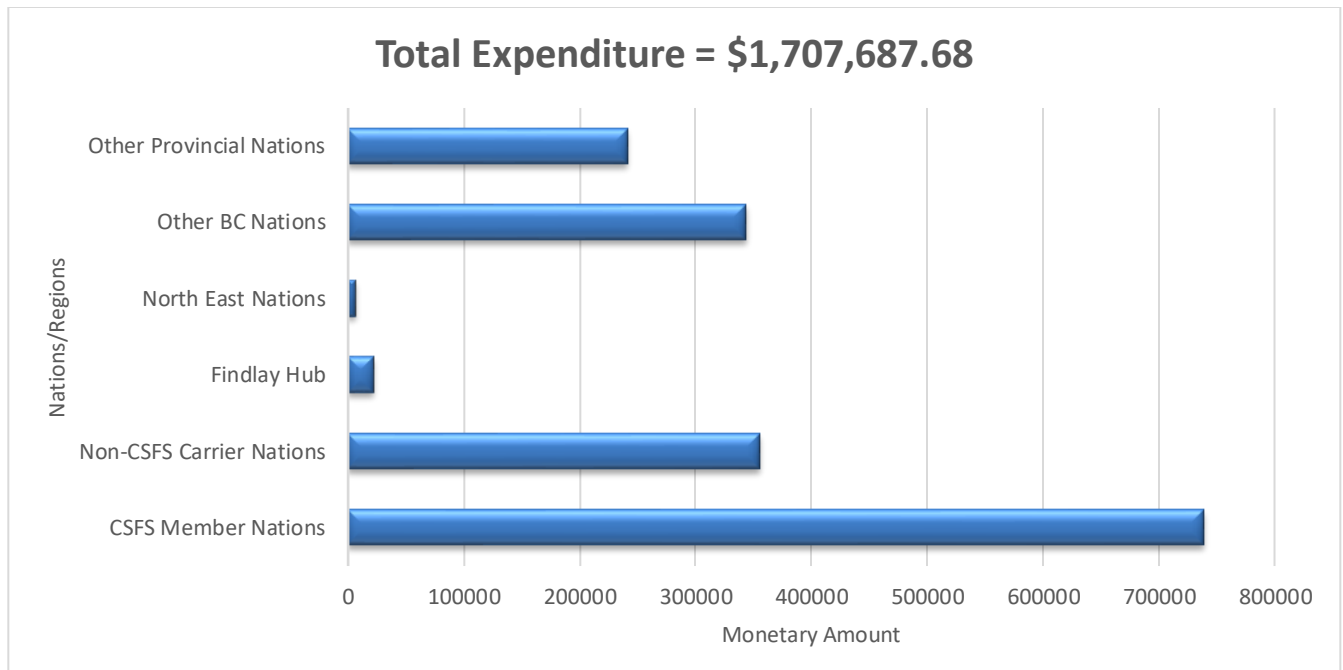
The ARC funding pilot program was also intended to reduce payment wait times for reimbursement as ISC was approximately 8 to 12 months behind in reimbursing vendors, clients, and organizations for programs, services, and items that ISC approved for payment. ISC reimbursement to CSFS for expenditures in the initial stages of the Jordan's Principle department implementation was extremely slow and required invoicing ISC which was burdensome and lacked proper administration for tracking payments.

Financial Update

In the 2023-2024 fiscal year, CSFS administered \$1,707,687.68 in ISC approvals through the ARC fund pathway.

Of the \$1,707,687.68, CSFS Member Nations accounted for \$738,694.55 of the ARC expenditure in approved requests for Jordan's Principle supports from April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024.

Please see below for a breakdown of where the funds have been administered by Nation and ISC service descriptor.

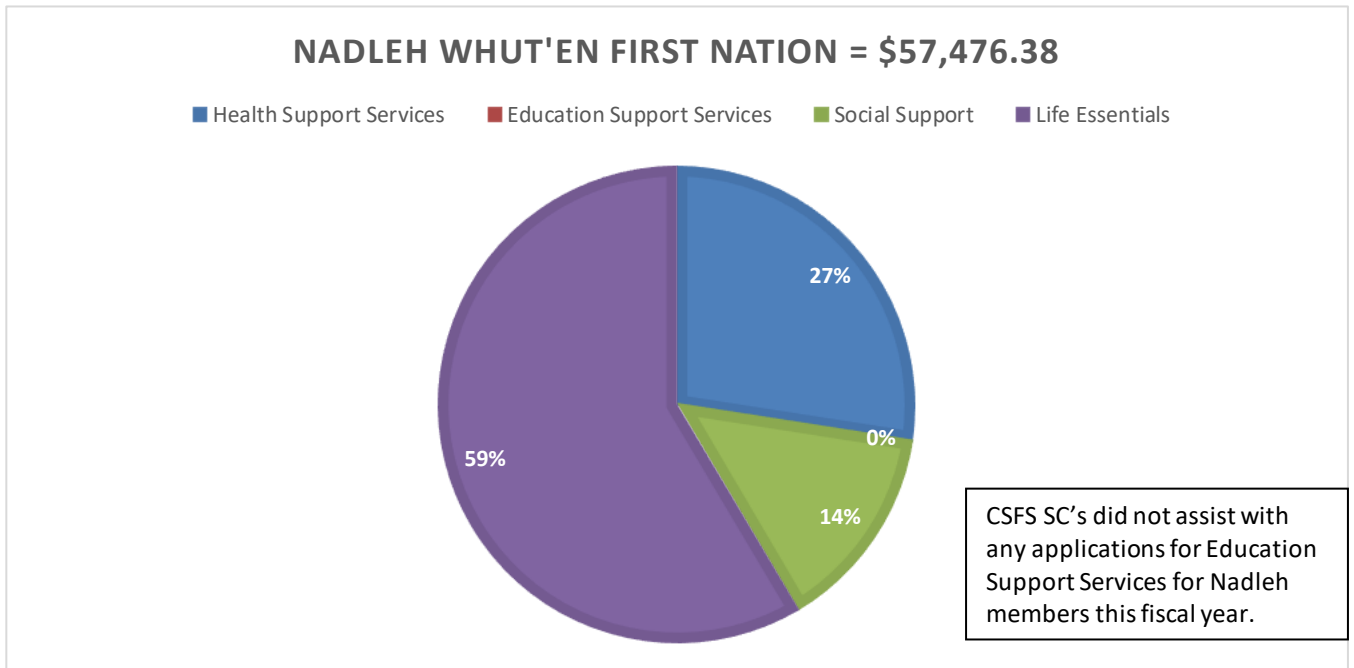


CSFS employs one FTE Service Coordinator in Prince George who works with the urban Indigenous population. This accounts for a large portion of the *'Other BC Nations'* and *'Other Provincial Nations'* accessing services through CSFS Jordan's Principle staff.

The charts below highlight the ISC service descriptors for accessing Jordan's Principle services and/or products which include:

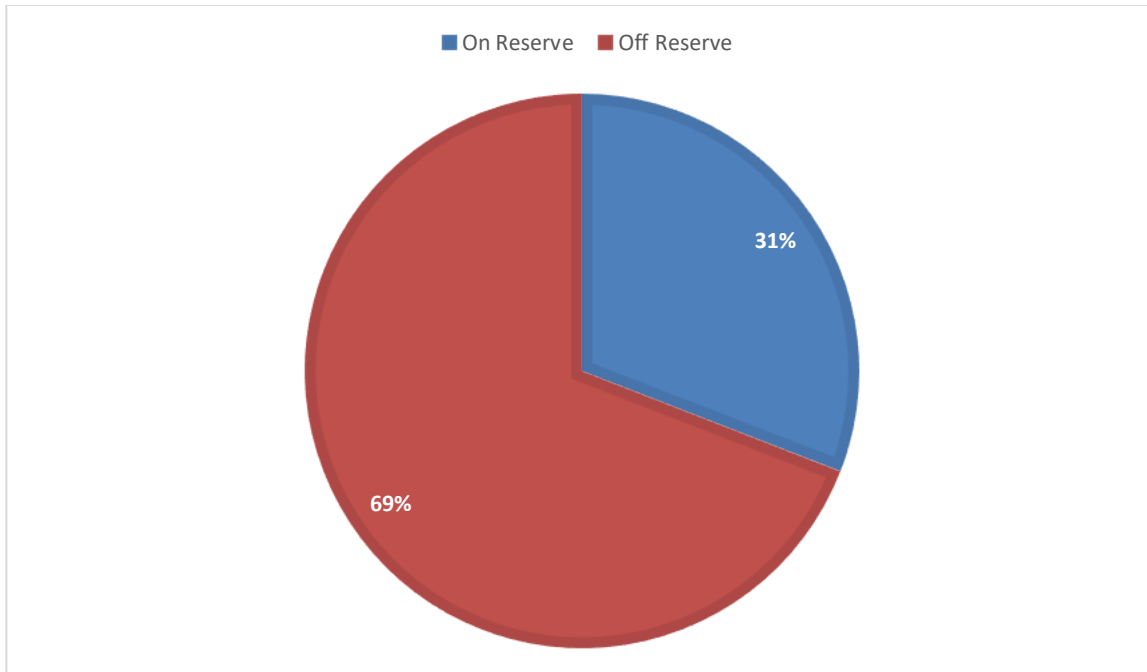
- Health Support Services, for example:
 - Medical transportation not covered by First Nations Health Benefits (FNHB)
 - Health services such as dental procedures or products such as medical equipment or prescriptions not covered by MSP or FNHB
 - Specialty health services not covered by MSP or FNHB such as speech therapy
- Education Support Services, for example:
 - Educational tools and equipment not provided by the school or the Nations
 - Transportation to and from school where school bussing is not available
 - Tuition fees not covered by the Nations
 - School supplies (mainly off reserve)
- Social Supports, for example:
 - Transportation to attend community events for off reserve members
 - Physical activity fees – hockey, martial arts etc.

- Graduation attire and photos
- Life Essentials, for example:
 - Groceries for 3 to 6 months up to \$500 per child
 - Rent for 3 to 6 months with eviction notice
 - Emergency accommodations upon eviction for 3 to 6 months
 - Children/ youth clothing
 - Utility payments for up to 3 months with disconnection notice
 - Infant items:
 - Car seats
 - Baby formula, diapers, and wipes for up to 3 months
 - Cribs
 - Children/ youth beds and other bedroom furniture – must be specific to the needs of the child or benefit of the child



On & Off Reserve Access:

Based on our master data sheet, CSFS SC's have submitted approximately 1000 applications in this fiscal year. The population of on and off reserve populations accessing Jordan's Principle differentiates as follows:



CSFS SC based out of Prince George and the RSC have primarily been providing service to Urban Indigenous population. They have received a large number of referrals and requests for service in this past year. This reflects the large number of off-reserve requests being submitted by CSFS SCs. We also aid those from our member nations residing in other urban centres such as the lower mainland and the Okanagan regions.

Group Requests:

We do not collect data from the schools on reserve or the Nation’s social development departments. The on-reserve schools and social development departments have been successful in submitting group requests directly to ISC for group events such as Gathering Our Voices, school programs such as lunch programs, and children’s basic clothing needs such as winterwear.

Quantitative information:

This section is taken from the reporting document required by ISC.

Total number of non CSFS nations served: 21 from our North Central region including one from the Northwest (Witset)

Carrier Nations Served: 18

Sekani Nations Served: 2 (Takla and Yekooche are included in Carrier Nations)

Additional communities served include Northeast band members, members from other BC bands, band members from other Provinces (numbers are being tallied)

Qualitative information:

Description of activities undertaken to reach out and identify potential service coordination clients to improve the situation for families:

In prior years, there was a wide variety of outreach initiatives undertaken to raise awareness of Jordan’s Principle and the services that are available that can benefit the First Nation families within our area. However,

due to increases in the need for application assistance and processing, it has become increasingly difficult to take time away from the office for outreach services that include presentations to outside agencies and Nations. We do, nevertheless, prioritize attendance at community health fairs and large-scale events such as Indigenous People's Day. The Jordan's Principle Regional Service Coordinator has committed to attending 2-day sessions in the communities that were not provided coordination services in the past year to have 1 presentation day coupled with a corresponding application assistance day. This has been working well and we will continue to provide services in the best possible method in line with how the communities see fit.

The CSFS departments and teams that the SCs work with include: the Integrated Care Teams within the 11 member Nations; physicians and primary care teams; the Prince George and Vanderhoof Youth Services team; the Family Preservation Teams; and the Dzee Ba'yugh (Heart House) Safe House staff located on Lake Babine Nation Woyenne community in Burns Lake.

The Regional Service Coordinator has been working to establish relationships with Nezul Bey to ensure that the nations who receive child and family support services with that agency are included in our service provision of Jordan's Principle coordination.

CSFS continues to update and distribute posters and pamphlets with contact information for Jordan's Principle Service Coordination within our region. Due to the turnover in service coordinators within the agency, our pamphlets and posters no longer have contact names but have mobile numbers as they remain consistent. We also have a Jordan's Principle email address that can be accessed by all three SC's.

Examples of how the relationships built across health and social systems and levels of government facilitated better access for clients and how the knowledge gained from this function will help improve access for future clients:

The CSFS SCs have the support of an organization that employs staffing within both health and social service delivery throughout the region such as Family Preservation Workers, Maternal Child Health Workers, Youth Care Workers, Wellness Workers, Patient Travel Clerks, Mental Health Clinicians and Primary Care providers, and a team dedicated to assisting families who are experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness due to eviction. The SCs work closely with staff in all of these roles to create more wrap-around services for youth and families with Jordan's Principle funding when there is a recognized need for a child or children that can't be funded elsewhere. This has been especially helpful for families in ensuring that there is access to immediate supports. The team has been able to enhance the education and skills-based programming offered by some of the programs with services and products funded through Jordan's Principle to create a more holistic approach to providing supports for clients. Our RSC is working to establish this model of support with the Nations that do

not access services through CSFS by working with the Nations' social services directors, health directors and with the agencies that provide child and family supports such as Nezul Bey. CSFS SC has also attended the information sharing forum hosted by the Prince George Friendship Centre in March 2024.

Relationships have been developed with various service providers, including dental clinics, optometry clinics, psychology clinics, tutoring providers, plumbing and construction contractors, and furniture stores. These relationships have helped to create awareness of Jordan's Principle and have encouraged health professionals to refer possible cases to the SCs. Establishing working relationships with service providers, has supported our team in reaching more families in need of Jordan's Principle funding.

The SCs have been providing much needed support to families with intake paperwork, communication with clinics, and assistance with travel needs for direct billing purposes.

Description of opportunities used to build cultural competency within the broader health and social systems or provide culturally appropriate and safe care for clients:

The SCs attended the Nowh Guna' Carrier Culture Training provided by CSFS as soon as training is offered. This training provides attendees with information on Carrier cultures, as well as information to develop the attitudes, knowledge and skills needed to provide culturally competent services. The training provided information about the language and dialects used by the Carrier peoples, and about the Carrier clan and governance system to increase cultural competency. The service coordinators also participated in the three-day BC Aboriginal Child Care Conference where knowledge was shared from Elders, Indigenous service providers and researchers, as well as traditional knowledge holders and artists. The team also attends and participated in the Jordan's Principle Service Coordination Hub meetings and conferences where we have had the opportunity to learn about practices for culturally safe and trauma informed care. We continue to work with our training team to ensure that the CSFS Jordan's Principle team has access to training that will enhance their ability to work effectively and collaboratively with Indigenous peoples in using a trauma-informed scope.

In March 2024, the service coordinators and Jordan's Principle managerial staff attended a three-day conference in Montreal, QC which was hosted by the Assembly of First Nations – see SC Gathering Summary.

Qualitative information on achievement of objectives and activities, including as appropriate, successes, barriers, challenges, future needs, etc. including any success stories of families served:

There have been a number of success stories within our area. Many families have stated that the funding that they have received through Jordan's Principle has aided in alleviating stress for them, and that this has brought a lot of safety, security and happiness to their entire family. With the assistance of Jordan's Principle, families,

children and youth have received assistance that has provided them with a better quality of life.

Although we have helped numerous families in accessing Jordan's Principle and one of the main points of success is the ARC funding contract where we are able to pay vendors and for products/supplies through a contribution fund rather than reimbursement. However, delays relating to ARC replenishment continue to add financial burdens on agencies who administer ARC funding.

Along with the successes, there have been barriers. There continue to be significant delays in processing non-urgent requests at the Jordan's Principle BC region; during the last update in March 2024, the backlog was at approximately 4,600 applications awaiting adjudication at the BC focal point.

CSFS has seen an uptake in urgent requests that involve food security needs and homelessness or affordable housing needs. This takes most of the SC's and RSC's time and they often do not have the capacity to address any other family needs.

ISC has now implemented a contractual policy stating that all SC's will have to complete ten group applications per year along with their 35 individual applications per year. While I think that the individual requirement should be greater than 35 per year, I think that an agency such as CSFS should have one FTE dedicated to completing group requests. The added burden of completing these requests should not be put onto existing SC's as they are already working to capacity.

The administrative workload is also burdensome and time-consuming, we could all benefit from ISC allocating funding for one FTE for a clerk position.

ISC has initiated a Life Essentials Group Contingency fund and has had agencies take this on as a means to reduce the backlog at BC Region focal point; however, we have not agreed to take this contract on as it does not come with additional staffing FTEs nor does it come with safeguards for liability.

Families that the team have supported by submitting non-urgent or non-time sensitive requests have often had to wait between eight to twelve months for a decision. Although we have had very few applications go to headquarters for a decision, there is still no way to directly get in contact with HQ through email or phone, and when the SCs have requested that someone from HQ contact them to be able to discuss a case, there is no response from HQ. This lack of access and transparency makes it difficult for the SCs to advocate for families and to navigate the approvals process with ISC.

There have also been challenges related to the system not being set up to function in rural and remote areas. While applications for funding can be submitted, there are not always services for families to access in our region. For example, many areas in our region do not have tutoring services, psychology clinics, and childcare or respite services. There is a need for ISC to support the development of these services in our region. It has been challenging to communicate the rural and remote nature of the region we work in to ISC Jordan's Principle Focal

Points. For example, a Focal Point was recently in disbelief that there were no free, consistent sports programs for kids to access in specific areas. It has also been challenging at times to communicate with families and get signatures due to our region encompassing several remote areas that do not have regular internet or cell service. Focal Points are often shocked to hear that the entire province is not serviced by public transit or taxi. It would be beneficial for the Focal Points to visit the rural and remote areas of the province or to have offices set up in the northern region. SCs and Focal Point staff need to work together in order for this program to become efficient and meet the needs of the clients it serves in a timely and respectful manner. ISC attendance at the BC Jordan's Principle Hub meetings have been focused on relationship building; however, ISC continues to develop plans for service coordination direction without agency input.