



Beendigen
Anishinabe Women's
Crisis Home & Family
Healing Agency

Annual Report
2022-23





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Board of Directors

President: April Head

Vice President: Rosan Wesley

Treasurer: Kahla Campbell

Secretary: Lisa Bishop

Directors: Akeesha Footman (until May 2023), Jamilee Wanakamik

Youth Representative: Madison Wigwas



Mission

Our mission is to provide safety, shelter, and supports to Indigenous people and their families who are experiencing or at risk of experiencing violence, and to facilitate the cycle of healing through the delivery of culturally safe programs.

Vision

To empower Indigenous women and their families to live (Meno Bimawdziwin) a good life through traditional teachings and ceremonies. Beendigen supports families and communities to live free from violence.

Values

We honour the Medicine Wheel Teachings, the Thirteen Grandmother Moons, and we practice the Seven Grandfather Teachings to foster hope, meaning, belonging, and purpose to Indigenous peoples and community.



President & Executive Director's Message

It has been a busy year for Beendigen. As always, our main priorities are to empower Indigenous women and to be a space that is supportive and safe for those who may be facing crisis and violence. Our Crisis Home is consistently full, showing just how much need there is in the community for safe places for women and their families to turn to when they are facing abuse and domestic violence. The Beendigen Healing Our Own Counselling Unit team has also been very busy, running weekly programs including grief and trauma groups, anger management, anti-human trafficking workshops, children's programs, drumming groups, and much more.

At our Crisis Home, some exciting renovations have been taking place over the course of the past several months, with more planned for the summer and fall. The Talk4Healing Helpline office was relocated to a new, more spacious area of the building, and the staff has all new equipment to ensure they can best support those who reach out. Miigwetch to MCCSS for the additional funding. New flooring was also put into the shelter. Additionally, Beendigen received 1,055,000.00 to add new rooms and a much-needed elevator from Ontario Aboriginal Housing Association. Renovations also took place at our Healing Our Own Counselling Unit offices in Victoriaville Centre, which have helped to refresh and improve the space.

Beendigen now has two new vans that will help us support the transportation needs of our clients. We also received funds for security cameras and cultural supports. These new additions are thanks to the Safe Delivery Enhancements for First Nations, Metis, Inuit, and Urban Indigenous Communities and Organizations Agreement with Ontario Health. Chi-Miigwetch to Ontario Health for their support.

Beendigen staff have enjoyed greater cultural connection this year, as the team has participated in drum making and beading. We have been busy beading vamps for our moccasins as a cultural component of our last few staff meetings. We have some excellent beginner beaders at Beendigen!

We are looking forward to continued growth within Beendigen, and we are always seeking new and better ways to support Indigenous families through our programs and services. We would like to thank our stakeholders for their continued support and funding - it is through their help that we are able to continue to empower Indigenous women on their healing journeys.

The vital services that we provide at Beendigen would not be possible without our committed, passionate team of employees. We would like to thank them for all they do to help those who are struggling and who need a helping hand. Lastly, a big thank you to our Board of Directors who offer their time and wisdom to help Beendigen be successful in our goals.

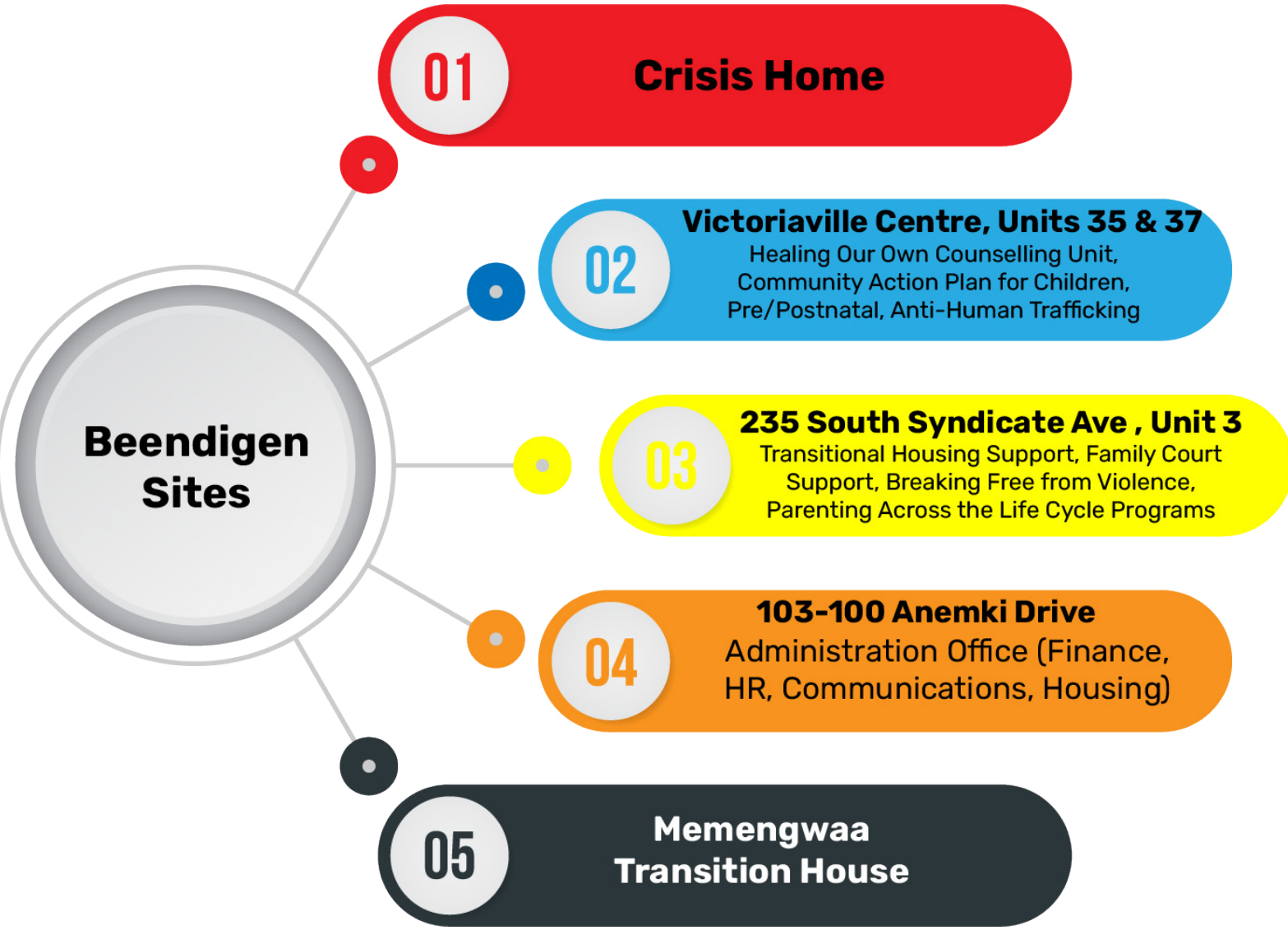
Chi-Miigwetch,

April Head
Board President

Colleen Maloney
Executive Director

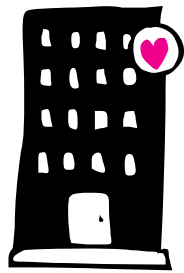
More Than Just A Shelter

Beendigen currently operates out of five main locations. Many people recognize Beendigen through our women's shelter, but our services range far beyond that. From our Healing Our Own Counselling Unit, housed in Victoraville Centre, to our administration office on Fort William First Nation, each site offers different vital services to the community and functions as a key component of the agency as a whole.



Our Services

Crisis Home



Beendigen’s Anishinabe Crisis Home provides free emergency shelter and basic needs for women and children who require safe accommodations and are seeking refuge from abuse or crisis. At our shelter, we meet people where they are at. The Crisis Home can provide accommodations for up to 24 women and children.

The Crisis Home is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Staff provide crisis and supportive counselling in addition to safety planning to help you and your children live a life free from violence.

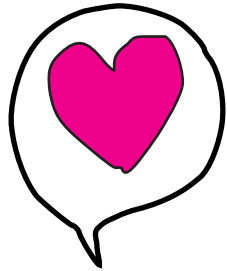
Transitional Housing Support Program (THSP)



Our Transitional Housing & Support Workers help women to secure and maintain housing, develop an individual safety and transitional plan, and provide them with helpful community resources.

Program workers also help survivors on the path to regaining their independence through safety planning and connection to wrap-around supports.

National Native Drug & Alcohol Addiction Program (NNADAP)



NNADAP offers support for those living with addiction and the families of those living with addiction. Our NNADAP worker collaborates with those who use substances to safety plan and reduce harm. Topics explored include stigma and feelings around stigma, overdose and relapse prevention, safety and resiliency, and more. Harm reduction is at the core of how we support those who use substances.

Healing Our Own Counselling Unit



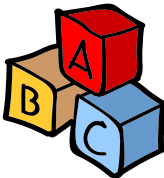
Beendigen provides a wide-range of holistic healing services to women and their children. Some Healing Our Own Counselling Unit programs include: Individual and Group Counselling, Sacred Circle, Anger Management, Sewing Group, Drumming, Grief Counselling, Sexual Abuse/ Sexual Assault Healing, Breaking Free from Violence, Anti-Human Trafficking, and more.

Family Court Support Program



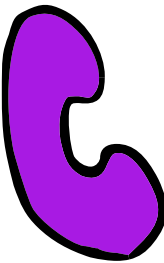
The Family Court Support Program can help make the family court process less overwhelming and easier to understand. Our workers help clients prepare for family court proceedings, refer clients to other specialized services, help with safety planning, and accompany clients to court proceedings, where appropriate.

Community Action Plan for Children (CAPC), Pre/Postnatal (CPNP), Parenting Across the Life Cycle (PAL)



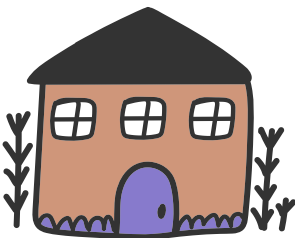
Beendigen offers a variety of programs designed to support mothers or soon-to-be mothers. Our CAPC program plans weekly activities to help children learn and grow, like crafts, storytime, cooking, and recreation. The Pre/Postnatal Program provides support both before and after mothers give birth, focusing on topics like breastfeeding, labour and birth, nutrition, and more. Our newest program for mothers is the PAL program, which supports families as children grow and helps caregivers develop parenting skills.

Talk4Healing Helpline



We offer 24/7 help and support for women all across the country. Started in 2012, Talk4Healing helpline has provided over 20,000 Indigenous women and their families with real-world solutions, without judgment, in a safe and accepting environment. Talk4Healing is able to provide support via talk, text, and chat. Our helpline services are fully grounded in Indigenous culture, wisdom, and tradition.

Wakaigin Housing & Memengwaa Transition House



Wakaigin has 27 housing units throughout the city of Thunder Bay. Memengwaa Transition House was opened in 2020 and operates as a bridge for residents between emergency shelter and permanent Housing. Supportive services are provided to families in our transitional units by our outreach workers, and tenants are also able to access programming and services offered by Beendigen.

Eligibility for Beendigen’s units is limited to women and children, with priority given to women leaving Beendigen’s Anishinabe Women’s Crisis Home.

The Year At A Glance...



8736

of women and dependants served in our shelter

648

of referrals to other appropriate services



2324

of Beendigen workshop/ group participants



931

of hours spent by Beendigen staff providing counselling services



9033

of Talk4Healing helpline phone & live chat interactions



Introducing the Parenting Across the Life Cycle Program

Beendigen's new Parenting Across the Life Cycle Program (PAL) was developed by the Ontario Native Women's Association as a branch of an existing, overarching program, Breaking Free From Violence.

The program's main focus is providing parents with the skills needed to encourage a healthy bond between parent and child throughout the life cycle from infant, to child, to youth, and beyond. The connection between Indigenous parents and their children has been fractured by traumas caused by colonization, residential schools, the 60s scoop, and normalized violence. The PAL program seeks to support mothers and caregivers in a process of healthy reunification with their children.

“ Indigenous children from infant to youth and beyond continue to voice their need to come home. ”
- ONWA

The PAL program is a place of support and education for Indigenous parents as they experience the many joys and challenges of raising children. This past year, the PAL program held a wide-variety of engaging and culturally-grounded activities designed to empower Indigenous mothers and caregivers. This has included activities such as making healthy meals, candle making, indigenizing self-care days, reading groups, painting, planting, rattle-making, and circle of security, a program based on research about how secure parent-child relationships can be supported and strengthened.

PAL will continue to prioritize strengthening Indigenous family bonds through a trauma-informed lens, and we look forward to working alongside more wonderful families next year!





Cultural Foundations

Drum Making

Tikinaagan Making



Staff Beading

Throughout several staff development days, the Beendigen team learned how to bead. Many of us are first-time beaders, and we valued the process of learning how significant this art form has been and continues to be within Indigenous spaces. Beadwork, as a practice, offers an opportunity to experience community, connection with ancestors and cultural identity, and healing. Through the intricate patterns and motifs expressed through beading, the art form also serves as a vital way to record, honour, and remember cultural and historical knowledge. Beading is a "display of cultural resiliency" and as an art form enables the "freedom to be proud of one's Indigeneity."¹



Gray, M. J. (2017). Beads: Symbols of Indigenous cultural resiliency and value. University of Toronto, Dept. of Anthropology.

This is to all staff
& workers:

There's so many things I want to say. First of all, thank you all for getting me to move to my home, especially as I was given time to heal before I came here. I was a lost soul - didn't know what to do or where to go. I don't have any family here. So you all became my extended family. Every one of you treated me with love, kindness, never any pressure to move out right away. I have so many precious memories - especially seeing and talking to the Elder. I loved listening to her, she is such a loving, kind soul. She also told me a few personal things about why I was the way I was, feeling the way I did, and also what to do to heal. I'm also back into my native culture. I want to honour my Indian name - STAR WOMAN. Elder gave me the name over 40 years ago. I've learned a lot here and I'm strong, healthy, and happy because of all of you. Maybe I did complain about my aches and pain in the butt.

I love you all and you gave me my life back,
but better.

This letter was given to Beendigen staff from a client who was a resident in our shelter who made her way into her forever home through her commitment to her healing journey.





16th Annual MMIWGMB2S+ Valentine's Day Memorial Walk

February 14, 2023



National Day of Awareness for MMIWGB2S+ & Healing Our Own Counselling Unit Open House

On May 5th, National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, Boys, and Two-Spirit Individuals (Red Dress Day), Beendigen's Healing Our Own Counselling Unit held an open house at our Victoriaville location. We were honoured to spend this important day with the community as people stopped in to learn more about what we do, the services we offer, and how we can support Indigenous families on their healing journeys.

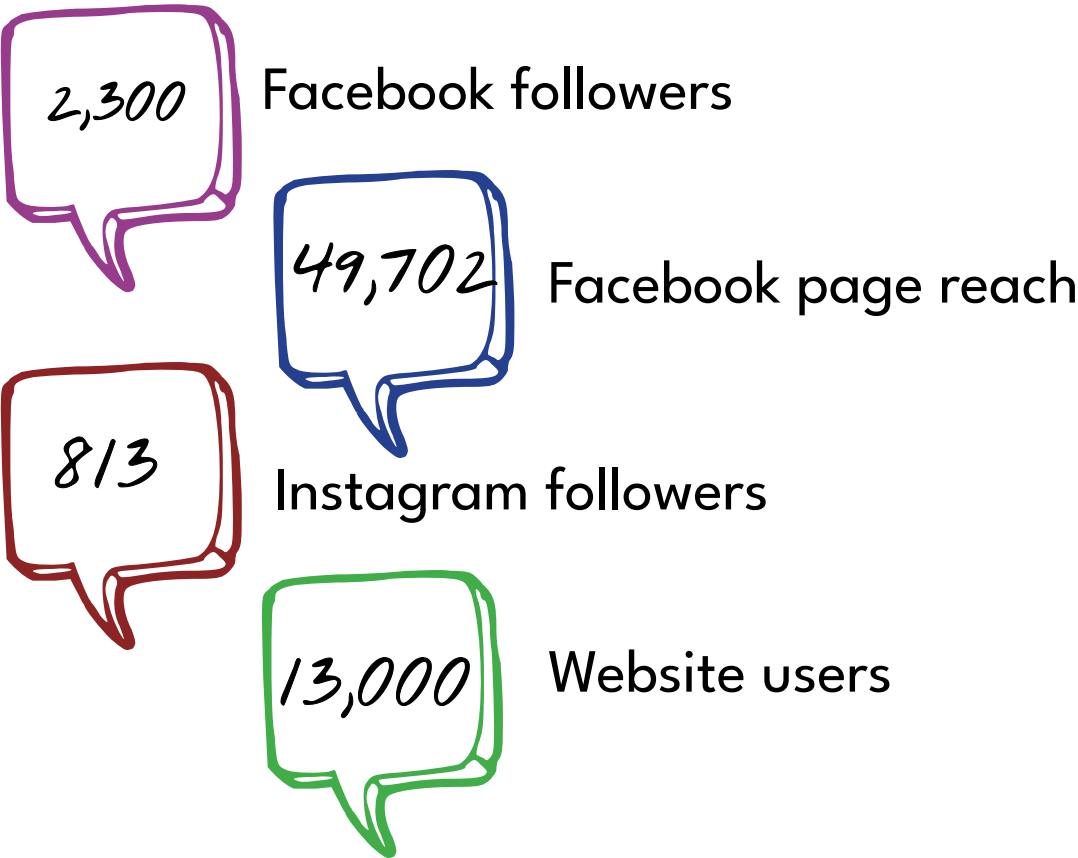
Red Dress Day was first observed in 2010, and was inspired by Jamie Black, a Métis artist based in Winnipeg. Jamie hung hundreds of red dresses around public spaces as part of a REDdress art installation to represent the many missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls across Canada. Jamie chose the colour red as a friend told her that red is the only colour spirits can see. The injustice and violence inflicted upon Indigenous women stems from systemic racism and a colonialist history in Canada.

During our Open House, we honoured our lost Indigenous sisters by reflecting on the difference their lives made as we beaded red dress pins. Red Dress Day is also about working toward a better future, one in which Indigenous women are able to live safe, full lives, and raise their daughters to do the same.



Communications

Stats from April 2022-April 2023



Beendigen's Communications personnel acts as a liaison between the agency, the public, and the media to ensure that what we do and the services that we offer are relayed in a clear and concise way so that our message reaches those who may need our support.

Our Communications Administrator maintains the agency's online presence on all social media platfroms and on our website. They are also responsible for designing both web and print advertisements to increase public awareness about what Beendigen does.

Communications also oversees the layout of important documents and reports such as the annual report and the strategic plan. It overlaps with graphic design, writing and editing, marketing, event planning, and website management.

Finance

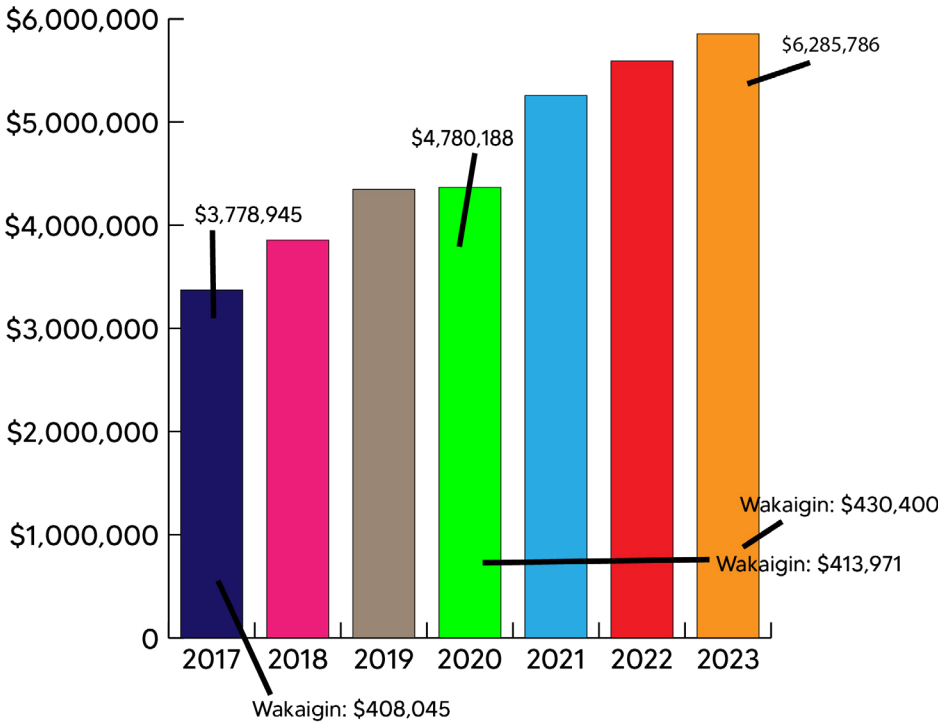
The finance department is a source of vital support for Beendigen's day-to-day operations as well as the agency's long-term successes. The Finance team works behind the scenes to keep the agency moving forward and follows the guidelines set out in the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles which has resulted in clean audits.

The department is responsible for Beendigen's payroll, accounts payable, receivables, and financial reports for 34 projects. Our primary funder is the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, and we have strong partnerships with our funders.

Our finance team develops a realistic budget that shows what we will spend throughout the year, and ensures funds are spent in accordance to funders' agreements.

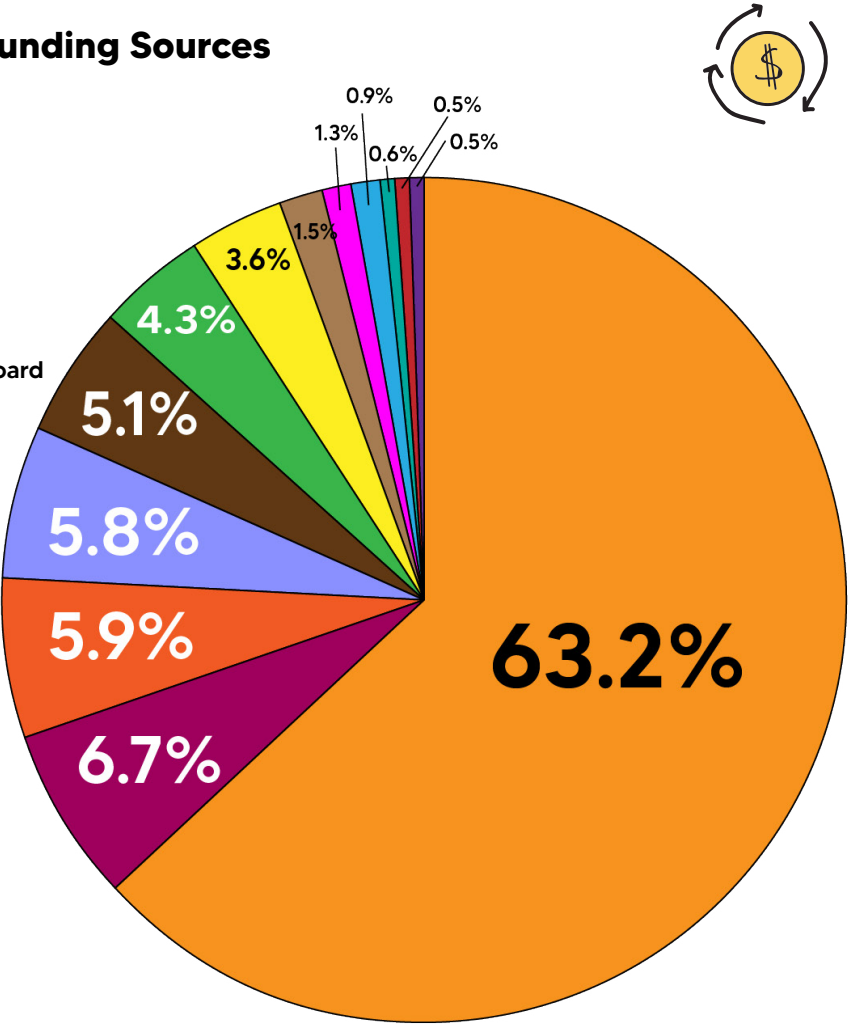
Information provided by the finance department allows Beendigen's Board of Directors and management to make strategic, well-informed decisions for the agency.

Total Revenue By Year



Beendigen Funding Sources

- Ministry of Children, Community, & Social Services
- Donations
- Women's Shelters Canada
- District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board
- Ontario Health
- Ontario Native Women's Association
- Public Health Agency of Canada
- Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services
- Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre
- Indigenous Services Canada
- Faye Peterson
- Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation
- Marjorie House

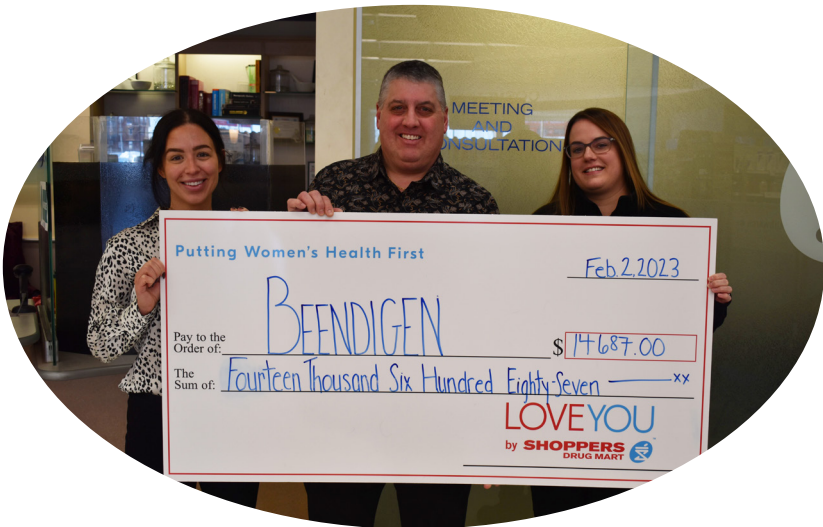


Chi-Miigwetch ♡
**We Can't Do What We Do
Without You!**

Throughout the year, we were blown away by the support we recieved from both the local community and beyond. From individual donors to organizations and initiatives like Royal LePage, the Jays Foundation, and the LOVE YOU by Shopper's Drug Mart campaign, we were able to better support our clients and provide them with healing tools that they can take into the next stage of their lives.

All of the donation funds we recieve go directly to the Indigenous families that we are supporting on their healing journeys. Every year we receive many thoughtful donations from our local community, and we are moved by the generosity that exists across Ontario.

Chi-miigwetch to all of our donors, big and small, we would not be here without your help!



Funders



Contact Beendigen:



Administration Office:

100 Anemki Drive, Suite 103
Fort William First Nation, ON
P7J 1J4
Ph: 807-622-1121



@beendigen

Crisis Line:

Ph: 807-346-HELP (4357)
Toll-Free: 1-888-200-9997



@BeendigenTbay



info@beendigen.com

Talk4Healing Helpline:

1-855-554-HEAL

www.beendigen.com

