

Our Road to Success - Our Future  
Leading At All Levels, Putting Our People First

# Strategic Directions



BEENDIGEN ANISHINABE  
WOMEN'S CRISIS HOME &  
FAMILY HEALING AGENCY



BEENDIGEN.COM

2023-2028



# Everyone deserves a life free from violence

Beendigen strives to empower and advocate for Indigenous women and children who are experiencing crisis and/or violence. One of our primary goals through our crisis home is to provide a safe space of shelter for women to find stability, support, and opportunities to heal.

Over the next five years, Beendigen will continue to deliver trauma-informed, culturally-relevant, essential services to vulnerable populations. Our wide-ranging services will continue to grow, evolve, and change to best suit the needs of Indigenous survivors of domestic abuse.

Our 2023-2028 Strategic Plan lays out the roadmap for how we will continue to support and empower Indigenous families and outlines our goals for how best to serve the community. The Strategic Plan was shaped by considering the most essential needs of those who we provide services to, while also considering what our staff will need to best deliver compassionate, vital, trauma-informed supports. Beendigen's strategic goals are also guided by traditional wisdom and the Seven Grandfather Teachings.

# Our History

Beendigen has been providing support to women and children in Thunder Bay since 1978. The agency was established to provide temporary shelter for Indigenous women and their children who were facing abuse and were in need of food and shelter.

Beendigen was founded by an informal Indigenous women’s association which was known as the Thunder Bay Anishinabequek. This association would gather to discuss issues that were relevant to them as Indigenous women living in Thunder Bay. From these discussions, the idea to establish a shelter to house women and children who were facing violent situations was born. The Anishinabequek wanted the shelter to be an environment that would nurture and honour Indigenous cultural connections and traditional knowledge. Beendigen’s first shelter was opened on Syndicate Avenue.

Over the years, the services and programs offered by Beendigen have grown and evolved to provide more supports in response to the needs of Indigenous women and their children. Three more locations were opened, all offering a range of different services and supports. Now, Beendigen consists of a women's shelter, a transition home, and three additional locations. The agency has a staff of close to seventy employees and offers up to fifteen programs, many of which branch out further into specific areas of support.



## 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.



# Cultural Framework

Cultural awareness, the Medicine Wheel Teachings, and traditional ceremonies are balanced with the educational components of individual and group programming. Elders play an important role at Beendigen as they promote a traditional and cultural component that Beendigen believes is vital to the journey of healing from abuse and trauma.

The Seven Grandfather Teachings – Honesty, Respect, Wisdom, Truth, Humility, Bravery, and Love – are incorporated into all of our teachings and form an important basis for what we do, the services we provide, and future planning.

The onboarding and orientation process for new staff emphasizes the cultural foundation of the agency. New staff are given the opportunity to engage in meaningful, educational training that allows for cultural competency and a greater understanding of Anishinabe customs and values.

Cultural activities are weaved into the daily operations of Beendigen. From drumming groups, to bundle-making, to doll-making, to sewing groups, to maintaining an agency medicine garden, experiences which foster greater cultural connections are crucial to the environment of the agency.

Cultural wisdom is also woven into our Strategic Plan. Cultural connection is at the core of how we developed our five strategic directions and mapped out what we are working towards accomplishing in the next five years.



## Strategic Direction 1:

**Beendigen, as an Indigenous organization, has a cultural foundation for all programs.**



### Goal 1.1: Articulate the cultural programming framework

Actions:

- Develop a committee to work with a consultant to create a cultural framework for healing and wellness
- Work with local Elders for wisdom and input

### Goal 1.2: The cultural foundation is integrated into all programs & services

Actions:

- All employees will receive training on Indigenous history and cultural competency
- Cultural teachings will be a core element of orientation for new staff
- Continued teachings on Staff Development Days & events within the organization
- Ensure the use of Knowledge Keepers in all programs and services



**Goal 1.3: Increase the presence of Grandmothers and Elders in the shelter and in all programs**

Actions:

- Schedule a Grandmother in the Crisis Home on a weekly basis, as funding allows
- Seek to increase funding capacity to incorporate Knowledge Keepers and Elders into programs more frequently

**Goal 1.4: Encourage the use of Indigenous languages as much as possible throughout the agency**

Actions:

- Form a committee internally that will develop ideas about how to promote the use of Indigenous languages
- Materials related to language education will be prepared for Beendigen sites

**Goal 1.5: Establish and maintain the Elders Sacred Circle support group to allow for opportunities to debrief**

Actions:

- Provide training on how to run a sacred circle to employees
- Establish a schedule for monthly sacred circle group with Elders and Knowledge Keepers

# Strategic Direction 2:

Beendigen has enhanced programming to uphold the wraparound services that work to support women and families.

**Goal 2.1: Provide programming with exceptional cultural supports for Indigenous women and families**

Actions:

- Utilize Elders for cultural knowledge and teachings
- Provide opportunities for cultural connection and experiences, like attending full-moon ceremonies, sweatlodges, etc.

**Goal 2.2: Ensure that service is trauma-informed and that programs have a strong cultural component**

Actions:

- Seek out training model that can be utilized by both current and new employees to ensure consistency
- Add trauma-informed training to training grid for new employees

**Goal 2.3: Increase the quality of services, regardless of where Indigenous women are on the spectrum of healing, so clients can gain knowledge and skills to rebuild their lives after violence**

Actions:

- Enhance training opportunities for employees so they are better equipped to work with and support clients as they heal
- Direct funding toward areas of greatest need for those who we serve in order to improve service quality







**Goal 2.4: Expand Talk4Healing Services into wider Canada**

Actions:

- Monitor call volume to ensure personnel coverage is effective
- Ensure presence at all large provincial Indigenous events to promote the helpline
- Monitor equipment to ensure it meets the needs of the personnel and program
- Increase promotion and advertising initiatives

**Goal 2.5: Continue to seek out funding opportunities for Crisis Home and Transition Home**

Actions:

- Develop and foster community relations that can lead to further knowledge of funding opportunities
- Ensure that finding funding is a key component of day-to-day management administrative duties

**Goal 2.6: Increase supports to clients (i.e., programs, recreational supports and activities, etc.)**

Actions:

- Seek out funding for childcare worker(s) in the Crisis Home and for clients attending programming
- Plan more accessible recreational activities the clients and residents can participate in

**Goal 2.7: Improve management of Wakaigin Housing and search for ways to increase transitional units**

Actions:

- Ensure Housing Coordinator has up-to-date training to work within the needs of the current housing crisis
- Seek specific funding to increase transitional housing units

**Goal 2.8: Increase children and youth activities in the Crisis Home and in overall programming**

Actions:

- Develop weekly programming designed for children and youth
- Start a youth-focused drumming circle

**Goal 2.9: Review all policies and operational practices to ensure they support the recognition of Indigenous individuals who seek out help and attend programs**

Actions:

- Dismantle the colonial practices that have been held up in Western society for centuries
- Continue to hold annual event "Honouring Indigenous Women's Day," which celebrates the accomplishments of Beendigen clients
- Seek out other ways to honour those who regularly work on their healing with the support of Beendigen's programs
- Strategize creative ways to celebrate and acknowledge small wins





# Strategic Direction 3:

Beendigen has enhanced partnerships with Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations in the Violence Against Indigenous Women and Families Sector.

**Goal 3.1: Beendigen has a stronger relationship with the Thunder Bay Police Service, including further development of current working protocols**

Actions:

- Determine new ways to partner and collaborate with the local police service
- Continue to work with all agencies listed on the current police protocol to ensure long-term support

**Goal 3.2: Beendigen assists families with child welfare concerns to support women with family reunification**

Actions:

- Continue to work with all Violence Against Women agencies as per protocol to ensure continued support and a mutually respectful relationship with the child welfare sector
- Incorporate more ties to cultural wisdom in the Family Court Support program to try to reduce trauma for clients

**Goal 3.3: Beendigen expands presence on community and provincial committees to maximize advocacy efforts for women who have experienced violence**

Actions:

- Seek partnerships in new areas that can help us in our mission to support Indigenous women
- Ensure that we are active and collaborative members on all possible committees related to VAW
- Maintain open, regular communication with external committees



# Strategic Direction 4:

Beendigen builds its funding foundation and capacity for a strong and stable organization.

**Goal 4.1: Beendigen pursues all opportunities for the acquirement of a building that will house programs and services under one roof**

Actions:

- Be diligent in our search for an appropriate, accessible building that will house all programs and services
- Work with all community partners and network in a productive way that could lead to an opportunity for a new building

**Goal 4.2: Beendigen's Wakaigin Housing stock is well-managed and well-maintained**

Actions:

- Perform quarterly maintenance on all amenities
- Perform regular quality inspections to ensure concerns are addressed by Housing Coordinator

**Goal 4.3: Beendigen maintains its funding base for the Crisis Home and all programs**

Actions:

- Review systems of reporting to ensure reporting is completed fully and accurately
- Review training procedures to ensure accurate reporting
- Ensure lines of communication with funders are strong





**Goal 4.4: Beendigen builds its organizational capacity to facilitate growth**

Actions:

- Update governance structure to ensure the Board of Directors has all the tools needed to assist Beendigen's overall mission
- Ensure Board is well-rounded and members offer a range of skills
- Foster and encourage collaboration amongst the team to increase morale, excitement, and productivity
- Seek opportunities for training and leadership development to promote continuous learning and skill-building

**Goal 4.5: Beendigen has an enhanced website and social media presence**

Actions:

- Update website visuals regularly
- Ensure website is always Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) compliant
- Monitor metrics on Google Analytics to see the sources of traffic coming to our website and then promote within these areas
- Increase our presence on LinkedIn
- Increase use of video content such as on TikTok and via Instagram/Facebook reels



# Strategic Direction 5:

**Beendigen is a healthy workplace built on strong relationships and culture.**

**Goal 5.1: Ensure there is an appropriate management structure to reflect the size of the organization and the number of programs**

Actions:

- Develop an organizational structure for current situation and plan for future growth
- Improve orientation and onboarding
- Define job duties clearly and stick within these definitions
- Encourage a collaborative, rather than solely top-down environment where everyone feels comfortable sharing ideas and concerns

**Goal 5.2: Prioritize the recruitment of Indigenous individuals**

Actions:

- Identify the best recruitment channels and seek guidance and training on recruiting Indigenous individuals
- Review job descriptions to identify potential barriers for applicants
- Review ads and recruitment materials for their Indigenous content
- Post ads on the Inclusion Network job website
- Review and assess workplace culture, climate, and conditions
- Train recruiters to help them become aware of the subtle attitudes and perceptions which may be influencing candidate selection

**Goal 5.3: Strengthen supports for staff well-being and self-care based on Indigenous culture**

Actions:

- Incorporate traditional healing practices into the workplace such as sweat lodges, smudging ceremonies, and access to Elders who can provide guidance and support
- Ensure all policies and procedures promote equity, diversity, and inclusion
- Use staff meetings and staff events as opportunities for team-building, learning, and fun

**Goal 5.4: Implement a performance evaluation process for staff**

Actions:

- Human Resources team uses a cultural lens to develop a new and effective performance evaluation process
- Ensure the performance evaluation focuses on measurable performance indicators
- Ensure employee feedback after the evaluation is specific and constructive



### **Goal 5.5: Enhance communication between staff and management and amongst staff**

#### **Actions:**

- Uphold an open door policy
- Incorporate team-building activities in all staff meetings
- Migrate toward, and encourage use of, Microsoft Teams messaging system as a streamlined, simplified method of internal communication

### **Goal 5.6: Maintain union-management relationships that are based on the Seven Grandfather Teachings**

#### **Actions:**

- Ensure transparent, frequent communication between union representatives and management team
- All interactions with the union should be based on mutual respect and a motivation to work together for the good of the agency, to reach common goals, and to benefit all parties

### **Goal 5.7: Provide ongoing staff training and professional development**

#### **Actions:**

- Assign personnel to stay up to date on relevant training opportunities for staff agency-wide
- Annual budget takes into account employee training and development into account and allot funds to this initiative

## **Conclusion**

The five strategic directions outlined in our 2023-2028 Strategic Plan will act as our guide for the next five years as we strive to support Indigenous women and families who are in need of a safe place to go while they recuperate and regain stability which will allow them to look at the road ahead and next steps.

In our plan, we have outlined goals which align with our overall mission and vision to enable Indigenous women to live free from violence. We have done so through a cultural lens, as we believe culture is vital to healing. Our team is committed to, and passionate about, showing up every day to strive to accomplish our strategic goals.

## **Board of Directors**

**President:** April Head

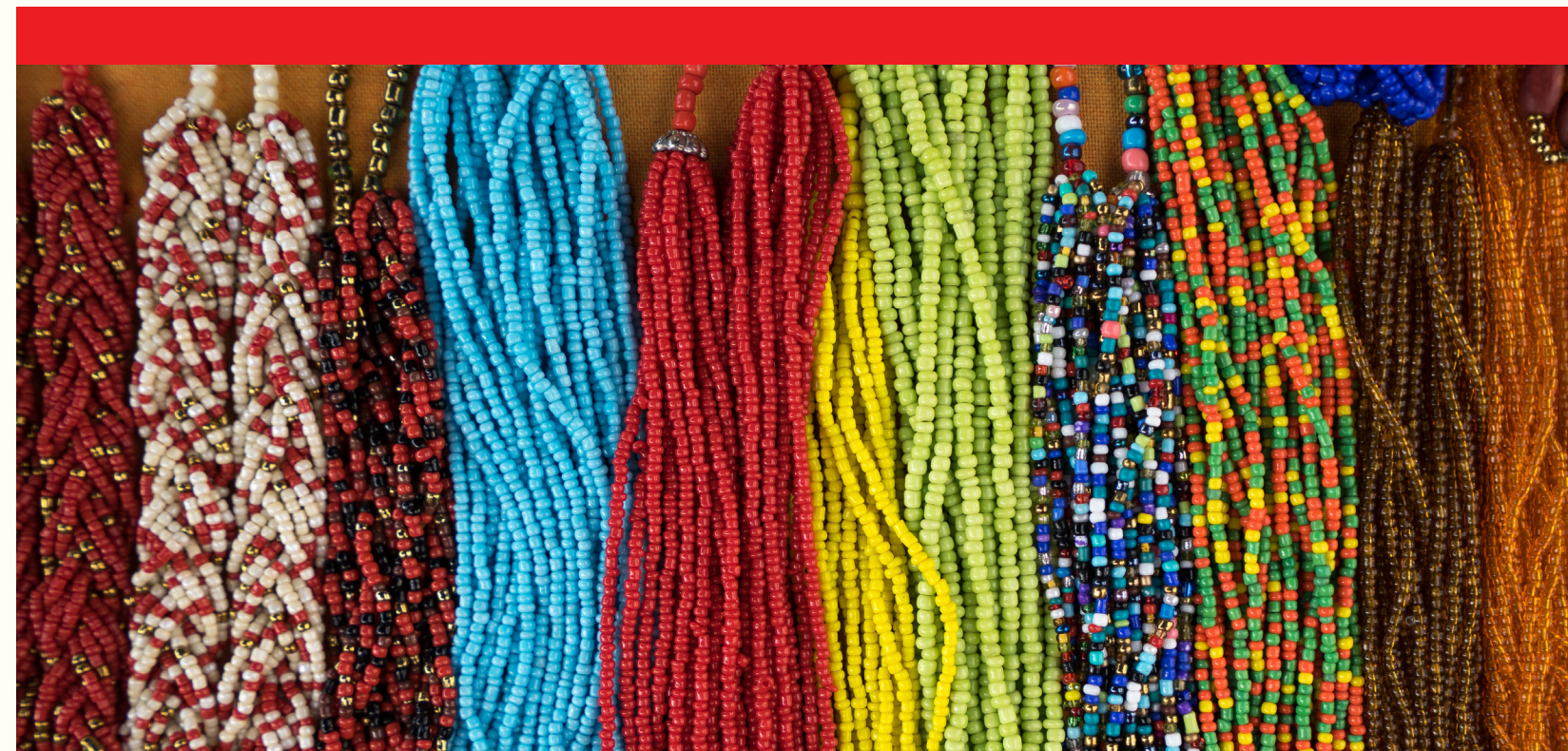
**Vice President:** Rosan Wesley

**Treasurer:** Kahla Moses

**Secretary:** Lisa Bishop

**Directors:** Jamilee Wanakamik

**Youth Representative:**  
Madison Wigwas



The beading motif is a prominent element of Beendigen's brand imagery. Beading as an art form is a way for Indigenous individuals to express their identities and an outlet for creativity. Today, beading is being reclaimed by artists as they connect with their heritage and cultural wisdom and histories. Beading promotes wellness and functions as a tool of healing for Indigenous peoples, which is why it has become an important part of Beendigen's imagery.





**Anishinabe Women's  
Crisis Home & Family  
Healing Agency**



## **Contact Beendigen:**

Administration Office:

Ph: 807-622-1121

Crisis Line:

Ph: 807-346-HELP (4357)

Toll-Free: 1-888-200-9997

Talk4Healing Helpline:

1-855-554-HEAL

[www.beendigen.com](http://www.beendigen.com)

## **Beendigen Sites:**

**Administration Office:**

100 Anemki Drive, Suite 103  
Fort William First Nation, ON  
P7J 1J4

Ph: 807-622-1121

**Healing Our Own Counselling Unit:**

125 South Syndicate Ave  
Victoriaville Centre  
Thunder Bay, ON  
Ph: 807-622-1121

**Transitional Housing Support Program,  
Family Court Support Program, Parenting  
Across the Life Cycle Program:**

235 South Syndicate Ave  
Thunder Bay, ON  
P7E 1E1

Ph: 807-622-1121

**Crisis Home**

Ph: 807-346-4357

**Memengwaa Transition Home:**

Ph: 807-611-1121



@beendigen



@BeendigenTbay