

Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council

2019-2020
Annual
Report



President's Welcome



Greetings!

It is with great humility that I bring greetings on behalf of my friends and colleagues at the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council. I have had the pleasure of serving as the TASSC President for several terms now, and I am pleased to share some of the tremendous work our Council and staff have undertaken this past year.

This past year has been one of growth and unity. We are honoured to have welcomed two new members to TASSC: Gabriel Dumont Non-Profit Homes (Metro Toronto) Inc. and the Toronto Inuit Association. TASSC's now 18-member agency coalition brings together a fantastic group of leaders who each bring such great gifts and skills to the work of our collective journey as a Council. This year sparked a fire in our Council that led us to begin to develop a sector-wide action plan we are informally referring to as the Toronto Aboriginal Action Plan.

Our collective imagination has led us to making some tremendous strides in the areas of policy, advocacy and building a sustainable legacy organization that is designed with our members in mind.

The TASSC staff, albeit small, are mighty, willing and always prepared to take us to the places we need to go. Their expert support, help to guide and facilitate the work of the Council towards achieving our collective vision for Toronto.

As a Council, we are active, we are engaged, and we are taking collective action toward city-building and change-making. We are truly humbled and honoured to be living in a time with an opportunity to do this important work together toward serving Indigenous Toronto.

All My Relations,

Larry Frost
President
TASSC Board of Directors

We asked TASSC staff to reflect and share their insights on this past year – What was most impactful? What might you have done differently? What gifts will you carry into the next year? Here are their shared messages.

Lindsay Kretschmer
Executive Director

I am deeply humbled to serve as their ED as they are truly an incredible group of humans who bring a wealth of knowledge and a myriad of gifts to make up our collective voice. While there is opportunity to re-imagine what we may have done differently, I believe that all things are by design. We have made incredible progress as an organization, as a people, and as a collective. I believe we are better together than apart and that is the beauty of TASSC. I have witnessed the power of community, strength and care and the kind of synergy that sparks a fire that is contagious. Nia:Wen Kowa and respect to all of our members, you are the fire that keeps TASSC burning so bright. TASSC is shining right now, and we will only continue to illuminate.



Kenda Hoffer
Financial & Operational Consultant

Memorable moments include our first ever Council Retreat which was awesome, we had a facilitator, discussed our vision / mission and made sure we were on the same page...we had good circles together. The holiday gathering was another first of its kind....we had awards for each person which was super fun...good to see the members as people and not just their titles...especially around the gingerbread person contest...I loved seeing the camaraderie...it was so awesome! I'm not really sure about what I would do differently...I think it was an awesome year, we've really grown and become a stronger team all around. The Council Retreat was truly an awesome couple of days where I could really see there are many strong and courageous individuals among our collective team...we are definitely stronger together in unity than separate silos...we are a strong and committed collective for the Indigenous community. I am very proud to be a small cog in this larger wheel.



Meet the TASSC Staff



Allison Palmer **Communications and Administration**

The most impactful moment of the last year at TASSC has to be the TASSC Retreat. It was an amazing experience to be a part of and is an excellent representation of how TASSC and its members work collectively to achieve amazing work. The passion and commitment from all the members motivate me to accomplish even more. One thing that I wish I could re-do about the last year at TASSC would be to not hesitate to provide an additional perspective. I wish I would have expressed my voice more often in times of discussions where a youth perspective could have been given. The most critical teaching that I am carrying into this year ahead is one of the grandfather teachings, honesty. The need for truth and transparency in our community is huge. This teaching will continue to guide my communications, with community and beyond, through my work at TASSC.



Talitha Tolles **Community and Capacity Development Coordinator**

One of the most impactful moments of the last year at TASSC for me has been watching the Council come together in unity when planning, innovating and action planning. TASSC is consistently learning and growing and it is a privilege to be part of a community of like-minded leaders who do their best each day for the Indigenous community in Toronto. One thing I wish I could re-do about the last year at TASSC is spending more time with community. Some of the most important lessons I have gained personally and professionally have come from listening, learning, and reflecting on teachings, stories and experiences from those in our diverse communities. I am someone whose natural gifts and abilities lie in connection, relationships, innovation and creativity. These are gifts that were passed to me by the Matriarchs of my family. I am looking forward to using these gifts in executing another incredible year at TASSC filled with growth, compassion, strategy and action.

Meet the 2019/2020 TASSC Council



Micheal Miller
ALS



Frances Sanderson
Nishnawbe Homes



Pamela Hart
NWRCT



Jeffrey Shiffer
NCFST



Andrea Chrisjohn
Council Fire



Larry Frost
NCCT



Suzanne Brunelle
TYRMTIC



Steve Teekens
NAMERES



Angus D. Palmer
Wigwamen



Nancy Martin
Miziwe Biik



Cathi Porciello
Gabriel Dumont



Patti Pettigrew
Thunder Woman's



Bryan Winters
TIA



Keith McCrady
2-Spirits



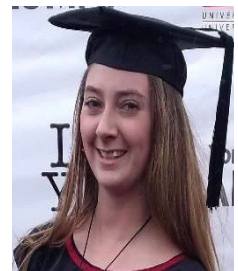
Millie Knapp
ANDPVA



Glenn Checkley
OAHAS



Tanya Senk
UIEC



Kanda Rogers
ALFDC



We Are TASSC!

Bringing the
needs of urban
Indigenous
Toronto to the
forefront, and
to all levels of
government
and non-
government
supporters

Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council (TASSC) is the leading non-profit research, policy and advocacy organization serving Indigenous Toronto. It aims to improve and enhance the socio-economic prospects and cultural well-being of Indigenous peoples living in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). TASSC is an Indigenous-led corporation supported by the coming together of a membership of Indigenous organizations and social services agencies who serve Indigenous people living in the GTA.

First established in the mid-1990s, TASSC's predecessor, Toronto Aboriginal Social Services Association (TASSA), was formed to collectively raise the issues and awareness of Indigenous peoples living in the City of Toronto and to share information across organizations. In May 2011, TASSA incorporated and became TASSC, a name more suited to the services TASSC provides as a Council. In 2011, TASSC released the Toronto Aboriginal Research Project (TARP), one of the most widely referenced research projects, completed by an urban Indigenous population of its kind. Key TARP findings and recommendations continue to be relevant almost a decade later. One of TASSC's key priorities is to mobilize and implement the TARP report's recommendations through consultation, collaboration and action.



TASSC is committed to building bridges for Indigenous people across the Greater Toronto Area in a responsive and evolving way. As a place-based, community-driven coalition of Indigenous organizations, agencies and leadership, the Council's efforts are directed by the experiences, diversity, and guidance of its members. We are a coalition, and as such, we remain responsive to remain relevant. Over the years, TASSC's focus has shifted and evolved from information sharing to advocacy to research, and many aspects in between. TASSC continues to revisit its mandate and mission as part of healthy cyclical organizational development to ensure the Council remains agile, supportive and effective in serving its members.

While TASSC's 18-member agencies have many different mandates and priorities, TASSC collectively shines a light on cross-cutting issues such as homelessness, poverty and social exclusion felt by so many in our city, while also celebrating our gifts, strengths and inherent powers. TASSC showcases the resilience and fortitude of Indigenous leadership and community agencies.

The role of TASSC is to bring forward solutions and challenges raised by and faced by the Indigenous community in Toronto and to take action that is community-driven and wholly designed with a vision for future generations. TASSC is both a catalyst and common ground for agencies to come together, create synergies and to take strength from and mobilize the teachings and knowledge that communities carry inherently within themselves.





The Work

For the last two decades, TASSC has been a prominent unifying voice and collaborative mechanism for Indigenous organizations serving Indigenous Toronto. The Council benefits from the input and insights of our active and engaged Indigenous leadership. TASSC in turn benefits its members through such mechanisms as:

- Monthly access to leadership networks to learn/share/connect on new programming and initiatives, and to share best practices and common concerns affecting the Toronto community
- Opportunities for collective participation in research, policy, community events/engagement, social planning, training, knowledge-sharing and advocacy
- A collaborative consensus based decision-making model as it aligns with Indigenous circle concepts
- Visible recognition on TASSC website, communication materials, social media
- Opportunities to influence social planning initiatives and sector (government, business, academic, health) consultations

Indigenous ways of knowing and being, traditions and teachings are foundational to all aspects of the work of TASSC. The use of the Seven Grandfather Teachings, (Wisdom, Love, Respect, Bravery, Honesty, Humility, Truth), the Good Mind and Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit, for example, establish and promote respect for those we deal with, and those who deal with us. TASSC is committed to the pursuit of a wholly Indigenous model of governance.

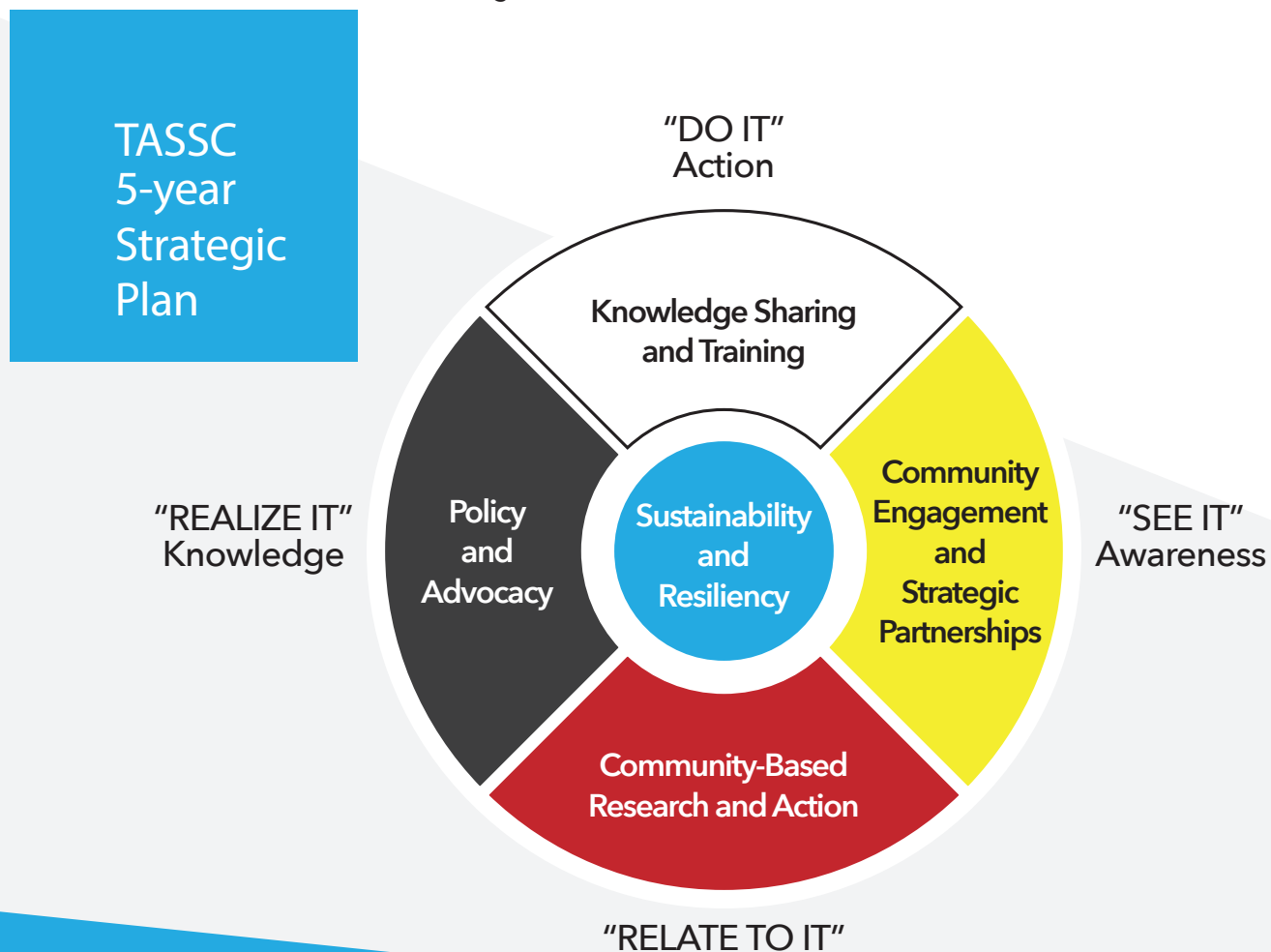
2019-2020 TASSC Projects

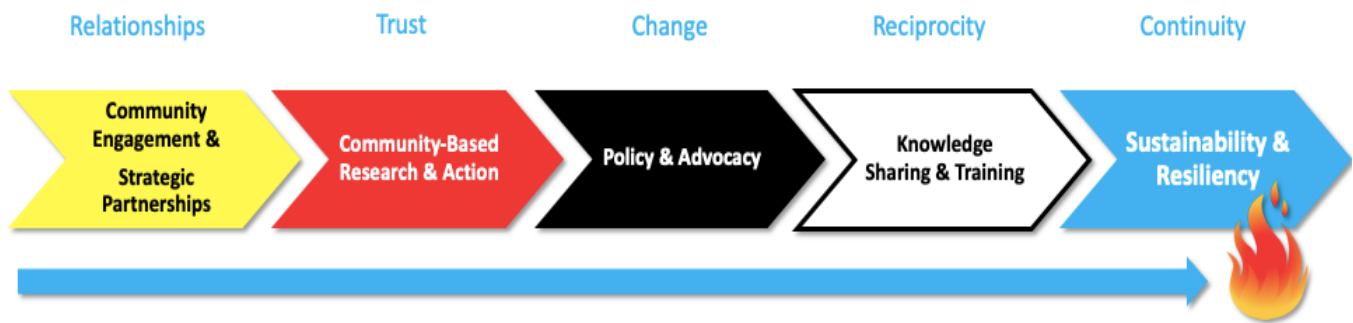


2019-2024 TASSC Strategic Plan

TASSC's strategic priorities were developed and are presented through a cultural lens to showcase the inter-relationship and inter-connectivity of each respective priority and the means by which priorities will be achieved through a balanced cycle in harmony with one another.

TASSC is in the early stages of implementing an appropriate evaluation framework to report on the results, achievements and impacts of the Strategic Plan over the next four years. While a more formal evaluation framework is developed, documenting and sharing our achievements and progress against the key desired outcomes remains important. The following are some of the key highlights, progress and achievements of the TASSC Strategic Plan.





EAST

Community Engagement and Strategic Partnerships begin in the eastern direction; representing the place of vision and seeing. This strategic priority sits in the east because in the absence of this, none of the other strategic priorities can be fully realised. The relationships we have with community (defined broadly) are key to achieving our collective vision.

SOUTH

Community-Based Research and Action is in the southern direction; representing our ability to understand, relate and gather the knowledge needed to prepare us for the western direction. Through the relationships established in the eastern direction, the Research and Action strategic priorities are more meaningful and purposeful as these strategic priorities are fully influenced, driven and designed through relationships and trust.

WEST

Policy and Advocacy sits in the western direction representing reasoning and ability to take what we have learned to apply it in an informed and targeted way. This direction allows for realizing key policy and advocacy areas and policy is informed by research, just as policy informs advocacy; which leads to systemic change, social transformation and greater self-determination.

NORTH

Knowledge Sharing and Training lives in the direction representing wisdom and action. Through what we have learned from our communities, partners, research, action, policy and advocacy efforts we are better positioned to take that knowledge and share it more broadly to ensure it is accessible to others and each other in a manner that supports cross-community capacity building, knowledge sharing and reciprocity.

CENTRE

Sustainability and Resiliency sits at the centre of the wheel as these are centrally connected to all of the strategic priorities, in balance. Sustainability and Resiliency are achieved through all strategic priorities being realized in a purposeful and actionable way that promotes growth and self-determination in a manner that allows for the work of TASSC to be collectively and collaboratively achieved by consensus as driven by the needs and voices of broader notions of Indigenous communities in Tkaronto; and that of the contributions, leadership and voices of member agencies.



**Partnerships
with non-
Indigenous
foundations,
allies and
social service
providers are
fundamental**

Community Engagement & Strategic Partnerships

TASSC is continuing to innovate and develop community engagement plans to support member agencies and community members to co-create guidelines on how to better engage each other. TASSC was thrilled to transition into a leadership role in the service integration of the Baby Bundle Project. Service integration, as envisioned by the Local Reference Group (LRG) of the Baby Bundle Project has set a commitment to develop new systems and relationships that lead to better service and outcomes for Indigenous peoples and families. TASSC had their first Local Reference Group meeting in February 2020.

Over the last year, TASSC has seen a large increase in community engagement in both physical and virtual spaces. TASSC has been successful in meeting a number of key initiatives and outcomes this year including increasing member agencies and TASSC visibility, building a larger TASSC network that focuses on community members, and enhancing online community information sharing and engagement tools. These successes are attributable to increased activity on the TASSC website and T'karonto Portal as well as social media platforms. Over the past year we have had an increase of over 1,800 followers on TASSC social media (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram). The T'karonto portal has had an increase of 22,140 page views and the TASSC website has had an increase of 13,172 page views.

TASSC's networks and partnerships are essential to our mission and vision for the future.

- Partnership and collaboration between Council members
- Partnerships with federal, provincial and municipal levels of government are critical
- Partnerships with non-Indigenous foundations, allies and social service providers are fundamental
- TASSC is committed to diversity and our Council includes member agencies serving First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities. We benefit from this diversity of culture and knowledge as it strengthens our decision-making processes and enriches our circle.

This year we were honoured to plan and host the first ever TASSC and First Nation Chiefs' meeting with Six Nations of the Grand River and Mississaugas of the Credit. In our efforts to increase the visibility of TASSC and TASSC member agencies across the sector, TASSC delivered promotional items and developed and launched the TASSC Logo Game. TASSC staff regularly promote TASSC and member agencies through meetings, events and social media channels. Forging new partnerships with the 416 MPs, establishing a formal MOU with the United Way Toronto, building a new way forward together with Toronto Foundation and beginning to establish a formal relationship with the City of Toronto were but a few of the partnership building highlights this year.

Key Outcomes:

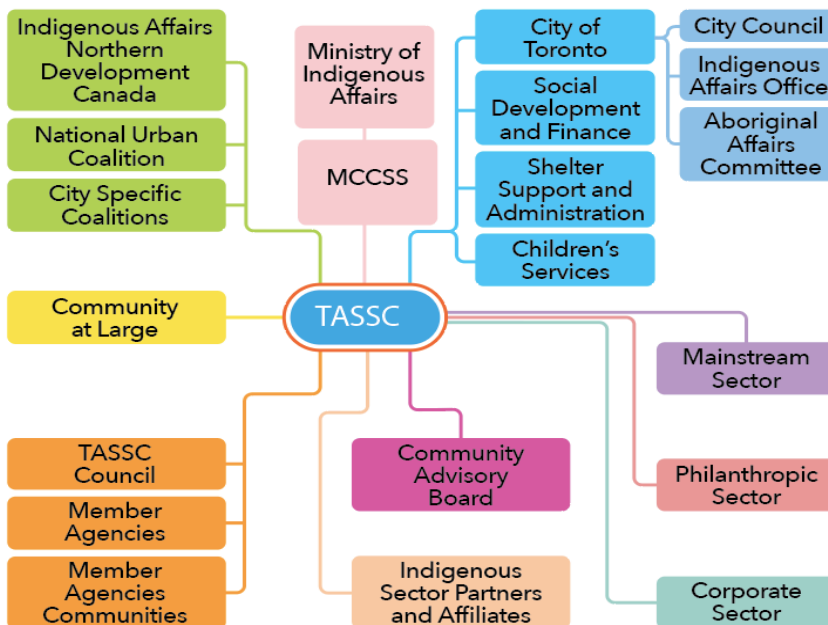
Greater Accountability Via Community Engagement Efforts

Increase in Cross-Sector Partnerships

MOUs and Traditional Protocols

Increased Member Agency + TASSC Visibility

Larger TASSC Network Made up of Community Members



Research must be thoughtful, actionable and grounded in Indigenous worldviews.

Community-Based Research & Action

TASSC, in partnership with St. Michael's Well Living House hosted the celebration and community report back of *All Our Voices* project this year. This research project originally began in 2016 and focused on understanding the needs of specific groups within Toronto's diverse Indigenous population to ensure greater inclusive and accessible programming and services. During this celebration the community themes and recommendations were reviewed and discussed among the sixty community members in attendance.

TASSC was successful in securing additional research funds to develop TARP 2: Ten-Year's in Retrospect (Ontario Government) and funds to undertake a second phase of our original Decent Work toward a Decent Work 2 project (Atkinson Foundation). These two research projects are significant undertakings that will be prominent activities for TASSC in the coming year.

TASSC is establishing a research framework to guide all research activities into the future. A critical feature of this framework will be ensuring all research projects are designed and implemented with utility and application in the everyday lives of Indigenous people.

Key Outcomes:

TASSC is Key
Source for
Local
Research

New
Partnerships
Cross-Sector

New
Research
Tools &
Methods

New
Relevant
Research
Initiatives

Research is
Accessible
to
Community

Bringing to the forefront the current lack of support and services specifically for First Peoples with research and advocacy underpinned by facts, figures and evidence.

Policy & Advocacy

TASSC ramped up its advocacy and policy development efforts in this year.

We participated in IRSS events where we supported member organizations' program activations. We supported advocacy efforts with the City of Toronto to help shape and inform greater inclusion in a city-wide grant making policy. We have also been active participants toward the development of a national urban Indigenous coalition, made up of 32 other cities across Turtle Island. Through advocacy efforts, TASSC also secured funds from the City of Toronto to undertake the first ever city-wide Indigenous approach to poverty reduction through the lens of prosperity.

TASSC attends monthly Toronto Indigenous Community Advisory Board (TICAB) meetings, Shelter, Support & Housing Administration (SSHA) meetings for the Toronto Street Needs Assessment, Baby Bundle Project Governance meetings, among others.

Key Outcomes:

Well-Defined
Policy
Positions

Clear
Advocacy
Parameters
& Targets

National
Coalition
Participation

Reporting
Mechanisms
to Monitor
Impacts

Self-
Determined
Measurable
Systemic
Changes



Creating space for others to come together, share their knowledge, skills, visions and abilities for the betterment of the whole.

Knowledge Sharing & Training

TASSC facilitated new synergies between the City of Toronto's Toronto Employment and Social Services (TESS) Division and several member agencies to undertake unique community-based initiatives, including activities supporting improved ODSP/OW outcomes and harm reduction training.

This year TASSC also facilitated an increased number of cultural awareness trainings in the GTA. Outreach and engagement about TASSC and its member agencies also increased opportunities for new potential partnerships and generated interest from sectors TASSC has not before engaged.

This year with the introduction of new TASSC staff and positions, we created new plans and approaches to ensure TASSC staff really know the TASSC member agencies and their training needs, to gain an understanding of how we can better share knowledge across the sector, and support learning outcomes.

Key Outcomes:

Increased
Member
Agency
Supports &
Capacity

Centralized
Local
Training
Initiatives

Economic
Opportunity
for Agencies,
Community
& TASSC

Robust
Knowledge
Sharing Hub
– Portal –

Greater
Synergies
Cross Sector
+ Systemic
Efficiencies

**Building
a legacy
organization
and elevating
the voices of
our members
together.**



Sustainability & Resiliency

TASSC was honoured to welcome two new Members to the Council this year: Gabriel Dumont Non-Profit Homes (Metro Toronto) Inc. and the Toronto Inuit Association. The gifts and knowledge our new members bring strengthen and bolster our collective work. Our Bundle grows with every new partnership and connection to community.

This year, TASSC benefitted from new revenue streams as a result of training workshops, increasing self-generated revenue from the previous year by 65 per cent. From an administration and operations standpoint, TASSC has transitioned to processing staff payroll internally rather than outsourcing. Our corporate administrative and financial processes have been reinforced and we have made remarkable progress in the area of revenue generation, increasing our funding stream by \$1M+ for planned activities, both through self-generated revenues and through new foundations and private donors.

TASSC engaged in a review of its Policies and Procedures to ensure completeness, accuracy and appropriateness of all organizational board-approved policies and their corresponding procedures. The TASSC Policies and Procedures manual was approved in January 2020. The Board established a sub-committee to conduct a By-Law Review starting in Fall 2019, with revised by-laws to be brought forward at the 7th Annual TASSC General Meeting (June 2020) for board motion and approval.

Finally, as a Council we made time and space to connect with our spirits and with one another in fun, sharing and memorable ways this year, through such activities as our Fall Retreat and our Holiday Party, and to celebrate our achievements, our progress and all the possibilities ahead.

Key Outcomes:

Increased
Financial
Security

Enhanced
Governance
Model

Broader
Networks

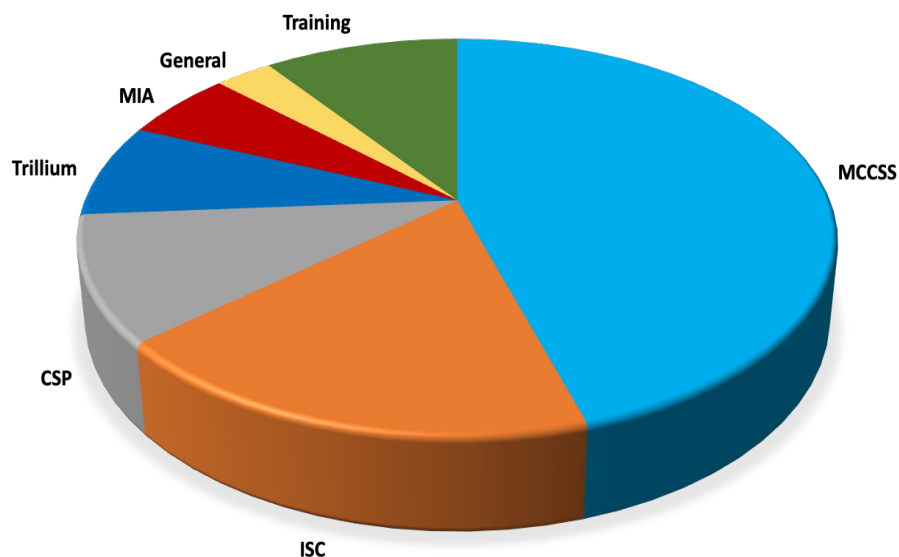
Operational
Health and
Growth

Greater
Member
Benefits
& Impacts



Financials

TASSC 2019/2020 REVENUE SOURCES

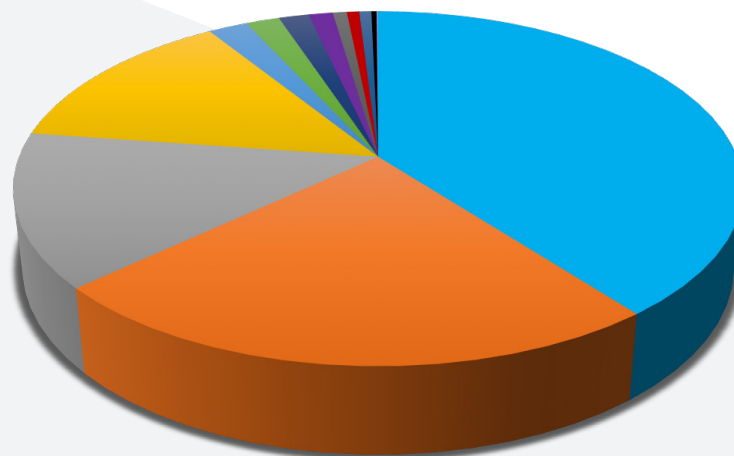


Key Highlights:

Increased Revenue by
65%

Generated \$1MM
in New Funding

TASSC 2019/2020 EXPENDITURES



Thank you to all of our partners, funders and friends of TASSC!

Nia:Wen, Marsee, Miigwech, Ay Ay, Yaw'ko, Qujannamiik, Thank You

To Our Executive and the Board of Directors for their Leadership, Vision & Collective Resiliency

TASSC 2018-2020 Executive Officers

Larry Frost, President
Steve Teekens, Vice-President
Angus D. Palmer, Treasurer
Jeffrey Schiffer, Secretary

TASSC Board of Directors

Keith McCrady, 2 Spirited People of the 1st Nations
Micheal Miller, Aboriginal Legal Services
Millie Knapp, Association for Native Development in the Performing & Visual Arts
Jody MacDonald, Gabriel Dumont Non-Profit Homes (Metro Toronto) Inc.
Nancy Martin, Miziwe Biik Employment and Training
Steve Teekens, Na-Me-Res (Native Men's Residence)
Larry Frost, Native Canadian Centre of Toronto
Jeffrey Schiffer, Native Child and Family Services of Toronto
Pamela Hart, Native Women's Resource Centre of Toronto
Frances Sanderson, Nishnawbe Homes Inc.
Patti Pettigrew, Thunder Woman Healing Lodge
Suzanne Brunelle, Toronto and York Region Métis Council
Andrea Chrisjohn, Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre
Bryan Winters, Toronto Inuit Association
Tanya Senk, Urban Indigenous Education Centre
Angus D. Palmer, Wigwamen Incorporated

TASSC Associate Members

Kanda Rogers, ALFDC
Glenn Checkley, OAHAS



TASSC: Shining a light on social change

A steadfast commitment to
Solidarity, Peace and Prosperity
for Indigenous Toronto



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