

A large, stylized feather graphic on the left side of the cover. The feather is white with grey and blue diagonal stripes. It has a grey shaft and a grey base. An orange ribbon is tied around the base of the feather. The background is a solid blue color.

# TORONTO ABORIGINAL SUPPORT SERVICES COUNCIL

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ANNUAL REPORT  
2020-2021





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## PRESIDENT'S REMARKS

**As I complete my first year as President of the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council, I am conscious of the responsibility and importance that this position carries.**

Having served on the TASSC Board of Directors for more than 20 years, I have had the honour and privilege of being led by, and serving alongside, leaders in the Toronto Indigenous community.

As everyone knows, the past two years have been challenging times for all of us. First and foremost, I extend my well-wishes for the health and safety of each of you. As we work diligently with government and community partners to keep our organizations, agencies and community informed and provide support, it is important to remember that we are all in this together.

The pace required to adapt to these changing circumstances is unprecedented. We know this situation will continue to evolve, and so too will our responses. But I assure you that we continue to be committed to leading in this important time, and will continue to provide updates and details to our TASSC organizations to help ensure the health and safety of our community.

The success of TASSC, like any organization, is not only dependent on a strong Executive but is also heavily reliant on the strength of member organizations

that work collaboratively with each other. TASSC membership has changed throughout the past 20 years but the dedication has not. TASSC's directors are comprised of varying backgrounds, all of whom work very hard for TASSC with one main goal in mind: to serve our communities to the best of our abilities and to be the resource for all things Indigenous in the Toronto area.

I am grateful for being entrusted to take this leadership role and for having had the privilege to learn from the greatest, my colleagues, on how to move TASSC forward. I am also grateful for the opportunity to work together with the many dedicated individuals that are involved with TASSC.

I want to express my thanks and deep appreciation to TASSC's Board of Directors, executive team and staff for the resilience and collaboration they have demonstrated under extraordinary time constraints, pressures and circumstances. Our collaboration and cooperation together will make all the difference in securing the best possible outcomes, while taking care of each other.

**FRANCES SANDERSON**  
**PRESIDENT OF TASSC**



## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REMARKS

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**It is with gratitude and humility that I acknowledge our friends and funders first; for without you, so much of what we were able to do this past year would not have been possible.**

It is with gratitude and humility that I acknowledge our friends and funders first; for without you, so much of what we were able to do this past year would not have been possible. To each of our relentless allies we see you and we appreciate you.

I offer thanks to the members of TASSC and to those who have acted with, kindness, friendship, gratitude, humility, and integrity. Your passion and commitment to this work is truly awe inspiring. I see you.

To the team which is small but mighty, I extend my most sincere appreciation and thanks to you for all you do to support us in keeping this canoe afloat. You

are the bones and of this organization. Keep shining.

To the countless urban Indigenous community members, I extend my acknowledgements and gratitude to you. You are the reason we do what we do.

To my children and to your children who are watching; I hope you will continue to be strong carriers of our culture, languages and commitment to social change and reclamation of our identities and to be a force even greater than we ourselves could have ever imagined possible. Dream bigger than us.

**NIA:WEN KOWA.**  
**LINDSAY (SWOOPING HAWK) KRETSCHMER**

# OUR TASSC COUNCIL

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## Nia:Wen, Marsee, Miigwech, Ay Ay, Yaww'ko, Qujannamiik

The TASSC Team extends its gratitude and thanks to the leadership, kindness and care of the Council in this challenging year. Thank you to our member agencies for your patience, persistence, and fortitude.

- 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations
- Aboriginal Legal Services
- ANDPVA/Arts Indigena
- Gabriel Dumont Non-Profit Homes Inc.
- Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre
- Miziwe Biik Aboriginal Employment and Training
- Native Canadian Centre of Toronto
- Na-Me-Res (Native Men's Residence)
- Native Child and Family Services of Toronto
- Native Women's Resource Centre of Toronto
- Nishnawbe Homes Inc.
- Thunder Woman Healing Lodge Society
- Toronto Inuit Association
- Wigwamen Incorporated
- Urban Indigenous Education Centre – TDSB
- Aboriginal Labour Force Development Circle
- Toronto and York Region Métis Council
- Ontario Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Strategy

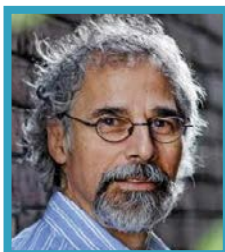




KEITH MCCRADY



SAM MARACLE



JONATHAN RUDIN



MILLIE KNAPP



JODY MACDONALD



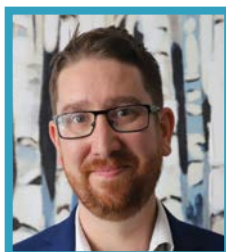
NANCY MARTIN



STEVE TEEKENS



LARRY FROST



DR. JEFFREY SCHIFFER



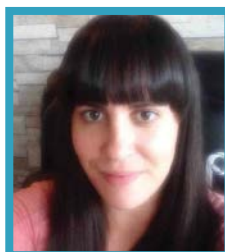
PATTI PETTIGREW



PAMELA HART



FRANCES SANDERSON



MEGHAN YOUNG



SUZANNE BRUNELLE



ANDREA CHRISJOHN



BRYAN WINTERS



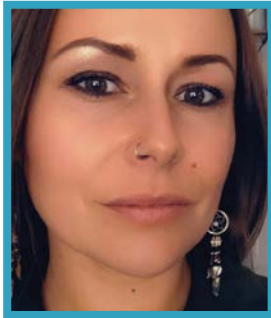
TANYA SENK



ANGUS PALMER

# REFLECTIONS FROM THE TASSC TEAM

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LINDSAY KRETSCHMER

**This past year has been an incredible learning journey for all.**

It has been filled with change and movement that has taken us in new directions and challenged us in many interesting new ways. The members of TASSC supported community in responsive and realistic ways and our funding relationships saw significant and positive transformations which will strengthen our relationships well into the future. I am grateful to our Elders and those who came before me as they continue to remind us of the value and importance of community, culture, and humility. While we moved into the space of proactive and responsive fundraising, we maintained and exceeded some of our project aims:

- We launched our new Tkaronto Indigenous Peoples Portal and App
- Hosted our first ever TASSC virtual summit
- Kickstarted TARP 2 and the Indigenous Prosperity Projects
- Released an Indigenous and Equity Position Paper
- Participated in the National Coalitions Leadership Table and Many Other Roundtables
- Strengthened and established new partnerships and relationships
- Increased our collective visibility
- Fundraised over \$20 MM for member COVID response efforts
- Co-Hosted a Vaccine Day where over 650 People were vaccinated
- Supported SSHA Cultural Awareness Training Efforts
- Participated in the City's Equity Responsive Budgeting Process
- Built stronger relationships with the Mayor of Toronto
- Created the TASSC Friends and Partners forum for networking and information sharing
- Presented to Parliament to the The Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs
- Designed and implemented the first ever fully "Self-Determined Funding Accountability Framework" and advocacy approaches
- Created the underpinnings of a new Relationship and Reconciliation Readiness Tool
- Completed the TASSC Members Landscape Survey
- Established the way forward for Indigenous Governance developments for TASSC
- Supported launching a new funding framework approach with SDFA



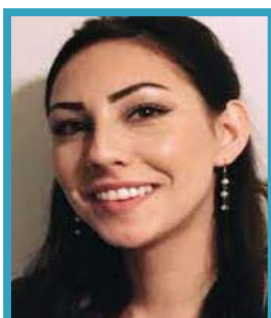
KENDA HOFFER

**The 2020-2021 fiscal year was without a doubt one of the most amazing years and yet also one of the most difficult years in the face of living through the Covid-19 worldwide pandemic.** I was very humbled and honoured to be part of the TASSC team as the small cog in the overarching wheel of this very dynamic collective group. My main focus was raising, tracking, disseminating and reporting on over \$20M funds raised. It was amazing to see the variety of ways that each member agency self-determined their spending and ensured that the community received the specific support that they needed, especially on the ground level. Although these Covid-19 funds took over the majority of our year focus it is exciting to begin the other work that TASSC is part of which includes but not limited to TARP2.0, Poverty Reduction Strategy, and our very first Summit. I am looking forward to the year ahead and being part of such a great group of agencies.



SABINE SAROYAN

**What an honour to support the work of an incredibly motivated collective of community leaders during this past year.** The Council's commitment to the safety, well-being, comfort and care of the Indigenous community has been the constant driver galvanizing their collective efforts, while the unflappable TASSC team worked to ensure community agencies had the dedicated support that they really needed during some extremely trying times. It has been inspiring to see the bringing together of TASSC's trusted partners, as well as some newly welcomed friends to the TASSC circle in solidarity and friendship, all for the greater good of the city and for all those who choose to call it home. I am grateful for the opportunity to have contributed in small ways, for the trust shared with me, and for the steadfast, supportive and caring team I have had the privilege to work alongside during an otherwise surreal 2020.



ALLISON PALMER

**Something I learned over the last year from our Council is that we really are the epitome of 'stronger together'.** Our collective strength has allowed us to provide support and hope to the community members of ours that needed it. I am very proud and honoured to be a part of this group for that reason. Something that I am grateful for in my personal life is my friends, family and roommates who have kept me grounded, provided excellent company and amazing support during this pandemic.

# WE ARE TASSC!

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**Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council (TASSC) is a non-profit corporation mandated to initiate, amplify and champion policy, advocacy, research, community engagement and training & capacity building services within the Indigenous social services sector in the City of Toronto.**

At its core, TASSC operates as an Indigenous social planning table and community coalition focussed on improving well-being outcomes for Indigenous people, families and communities living in Toronto.

TASSC's membership includes 18 Indigenous agencies, organizations and designated social services providers for Indigenous people living in Toronto, including housing, children's services, shelter services, child and

family services, women's programs, mental health, employment, education, legal, arts and cultural programs and more. TASSC is governed by a Board of Directors appointed from designated Indigenous social services agencies and organizations, which applies a consensus-based governance model in its' decision-making. TASSC entrusts implementation of its strategic priorities under the leadership of a strategic operations team.



# COMMUNITY-DRIVEN LEADERSHIP AND COLLABORATIVE ACTION FOR GOOD

**The work of the Council is largely centred around collective impact and action planning; delivering and evaluating time-limited community-directed projects and initiatives; and, building and nurturing meaningful relationships in and across the non-profit, private and public sectors.**

This is a consistent and shared space for community organizations' leadership to engage in strategic discussions that impact community well-being; to come together to coordinate or implement activities that affect the broader community; and, to together explore new ways of responding to the changing community needs by sharing the stories of T'karonto from their perspectives and realities. TASSC is a coalition of community agencies and leaders working as one to transform the city for good, through a governance model that is self-determined and grounded in years of experience and commitment to the community. As highlighted throughout our Annual Report as well as the special content we have dedicated to our remarkable COVID-19 story, our greatest successes this year were seeded in solidarity and unity for the betterment of our people.

By investing time and energy into a model of governance that offers effective leadership, collaboration, and meaningful

engagement today, we believe we can achieve our goal to help create and enable networks and systems of change that will impact the political, social and cultural environment for future generations to come. Where TASSC member agencies expertly and independently respond to their important and distinct mandates, they come together under the TASSC umbrella to address layered, complex and interconnected matters faced by the community. Harnessing that collective wisdom, knowledge and energy and directing it towards greater community well-being is at the heart of TASSC's reason for being.

TASSC is committed to building bridges for Indigenous people across Toronto and to bringing together the hearts and minds of community leaders to become even better listeners, storytellers, advocates, analysts, and evaluators for the betterment of the communities we serve. TASSC works to convene key stakeholders, partners, friends and allies from across the sector in action-oriented ways.



TASSC is made up of **18 MEMBER INDIGENOUS SOCIAL SERVICE AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS**, each with its own independent Board of Directors, inclusive of **+100 COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP VOICES**, actively engaged with a combined membership of more than **3,000 COMMUNITY MEMBERS**

# THE VIRTUAL WORLD BECAME OUR REALITY

Like so many other community agencies and organizations, the drastic and almost immediate need to re-direct all of our direct engagement and community-based work online presented us with new challenges of how to keep connected through virtual means alone. We stepped up to that challenge by:

- Increased activity on the TASSC social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram)
- Updated sections of TASSC's website
- Portal re-design and community feedback sessions
- Amplifying member agencies social media and communications
- Collecting and re-circulating relevant and up-to-date info relating to COVID-19 supports, COVID-19 testing, vaccine days/sites
- Using virtual meeting technology, met frequently and often to keep at the forefront of community needs and emerging information, and kept connected to one another



TASSC's presence, engagement and following has increased across all social media channels over the past year and continues to grow.

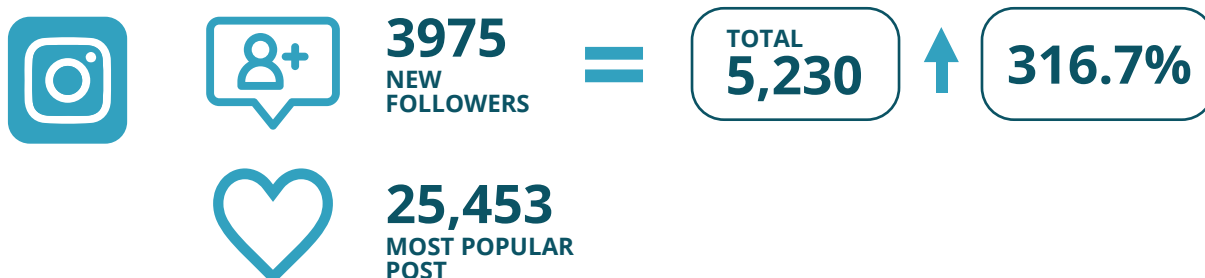
#### COMMUNICATIONS REPORT TWITTER 2020-21



#### COMMUNICATIONS REPORT LINKEDIN 2020-21



#### COMMUNICATIONS REPORT INSTAGRAM 2020-21



In this year, TASSC advanced the re-designed Indigenous Peoples' Portal. The re-development of the Portal, informed primarily through community engagement sessions, aims to increase the user experience and expand the types of information available for users. The Indigenous Peoples' Portal is a one-

stop source for Indigenous Toronto to access information about careers and jobs in various sectors, volunteer opportunities, health events and information, access to food services and community meals, housing info, a marketplace, community events and up-to-date agencies' contact information.

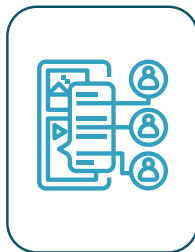
# COVID-19 COMMUNITY RESPONSE: OUR COVID-19 STORY

**It's almost unreal to glimpse back at the unprecedented but not unusual TASSC story this year.**

Like the rest of the global community, TASSC faced the many operational, logistical, social, mental and emotional challenges brought on by the pandemic just as the 2019-20 fiscal year drew to a close. So much in our world has changed, and likely, will not be the same again. While each of the TASSC member agencies has their own incredibly inspiring, sometimes heart-wrenching and always hopeful expressions of resilience to share through their own stories, here are some of the extraordinary organizational experiences of this year.



**COLLABORATION  
& COORDINATION**



**COMMUNICATIONS  
HUB FOR  
COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT**



**FUNDRAISING  
AND ADVOCACY**



**NEW AND  
ENHANCED  
PARTNERSHIPS**

We still vividly remember how TASSC burst into action with the first call-out for emergency food hampers and basic emergency goods as early as March, and we began to gather around one another (virtually!) for information, to coordinate, and for opportunities to take collective action. For most of our member agencies, and for the TASSC

staff, the momentum started in mid-March and never stopped. Relying on first instincts would prove to be the key factor that would sustain our Council through the worst periods of the pandemic – stay united, listen to the communities' needs, act nimbly and thoughtfully, and draw on one other for strength, wisdom and support.



TASSC member agencies collectively operate **MORE THAN 1,100 DEDICATED INDIGENOUS HOUSING UNITS**

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TASSC was steadfast in advancing weekly, then bi-weekly Partners and Friends meetings throughout the pandemic. The openness and generosity of some of our

newest partners, the commitment of our long-time supporters, and the comfort of standing with one another in making important choices were critical features that highlighted this year of virtual engagement. Over the last year we welcomed many new partners and friends to the Circle, including 211 Central, Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment Ltd. (MLSE), Auduzhe Mino Nesewinong, University of Toronto, Centre for Community Partnerships, Toronto Foundation, Ontario’s Anti-Racism Directorate, new and growing engagement with City of Toronto divisions, and Toronto Police Services.



# COVID-19 COMMUNITY RESPONSE

**As the world pivoted to online programming and virtual communications to clients and community members, TASSC and TASSC member agencies hosted and participated in countless roundtables and virtual conferences, joined new networks, and even prepared ground for our first virtual T'karonto Summit, held in June 2021.**

Through tenacious advocacy, TASSC prioritized establishing appropriate and reasonable emergency response resources on behalf of our member agencies. We were relentless in our call to action for dedicated resources for urban Indigenous community organizations, and our Friends and Partners

showed up with respect, care and generosity to help meet those needs. With the dedicated resources of nearly \$20M that TASSC generated through multiple avenues, TASSC member agencies were better equipped and resourced to provide for the communities they serve through:



**SALARIES FOR NEW AND NEEDED STAFF**



**TRADITIONAL MEDICINES**



**TELECOMMUNICATIONS:  
AIR TIME, PHONES, DATA,  
ACCESS TO CONNECTIVITY**



**ARTS AND CULTURE  
ACTIVITIES AND  
RESOURCES**



**HEALTH & SAFETY: PPE,  
APPROPRIATE SPACES,  
CLEANING, MAINTENANCE,  
STAFF NEEDS**



**HOUSING SUPPORTS,  
HOTELLING, AND  
EMERGENCY SHELTER AND  
SERVICES**



**FOOD - DAILY MEALS, FOOD  
CARDS, FOOD HAMPERS,  
TO-GO FOOD, FOOD AND  
GROCERY DELIVERY**



**HOUSEHOLD ESSENTIAL  
ITEMS**

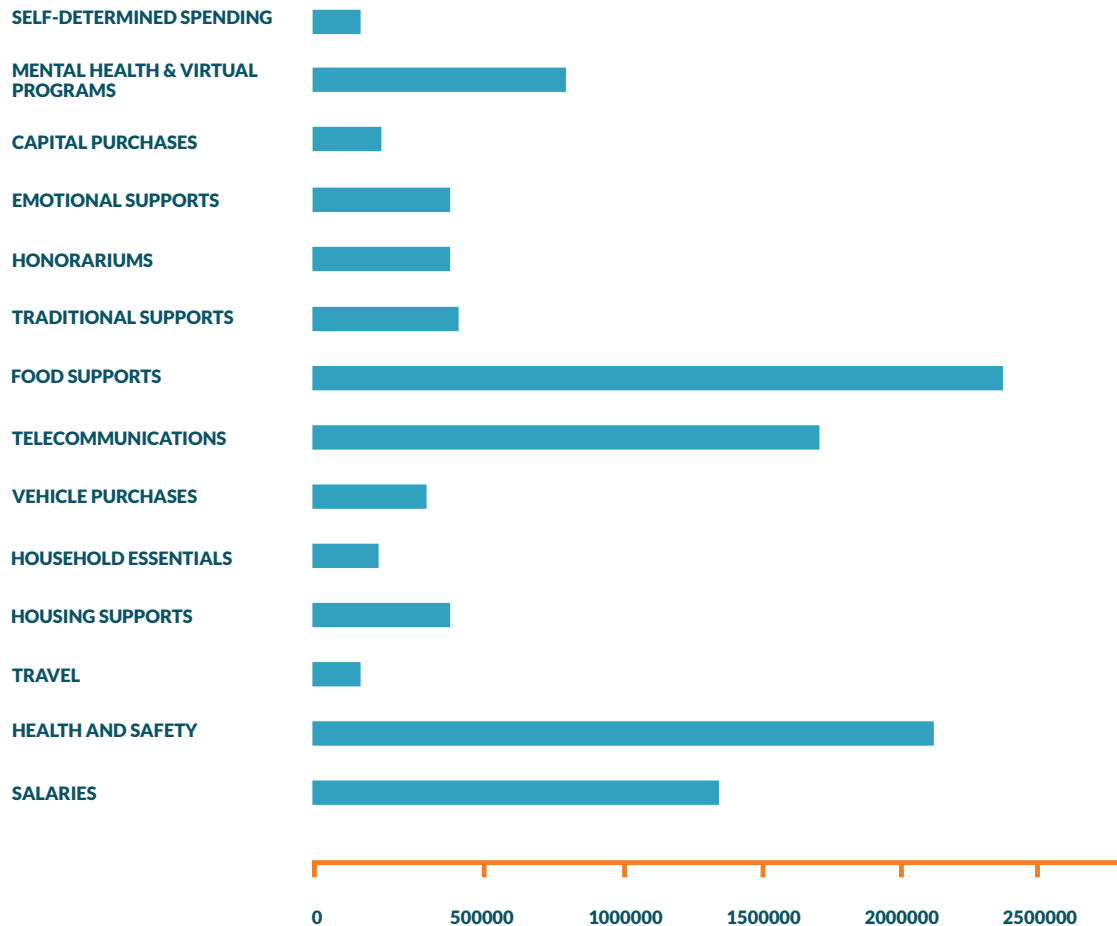


**TRANSPORTATION COSTS**



**EDUCATION MATERIALS**

## AGENCY COVID FUNDING



## TASSC expresses our gratitude to all of our members, friends and partners for coming to stand with us in 2020-21.

Particularly amplified in these past 18 months, TASSC has demonstrated that, with the right resources and people in place, urban Indigenous community-led organizations have capacity to fulfill a

critical engagement, coordinating and connecting role for communities, organizations, and with various levels of governments, as well as private and other public partners.

# NEW OPPORTUNITIES AND FRIENDSHIPS MOVING FORWARD

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We again offer many thanks for the launch of Indigenous Services Canada's Indigenous Community Fund, and we strongly support ongoing dedicated resource allocation for urban Indigenous community organizations as we move through each next phase to come.

TASSC acknowledges the friendship extended by the Mayor of the City of Toronto and the Mayor's Office, and we look forward to continuing to take bold steps together for the betterment of this place so many of us call home.



“

I just wanted to thank you so so so so much for my sons backpack. The thoughtful gifts that were put in are beautiful. The orange shirt day book and the shirt brought a tear to my eye. I have been wanting the book especially to teach him. And the dinosaur book just put the icing on the cake. Nya:wen from the bottom of my heart.”



TASSC member agencies collectively operate close to **80 SERVICE LOCATIONS AND OFFICES** across the GTA to serve the Indigenous community

# STRATEGIC PLAN IMPACTS

Even though many of this past year's scheduled events and planned-for activities were delayed or deferred to prioritize community response and recovery efforts, our work continues to align with and contribute to many of our key goals as set in TASSC's Strategic Plan including:

- Increased TASSC's Visibility
- Increased TASSC's Member Agencies' Visibility
- New Cross-Sector Partnerships
- Increased Member Agency Supports & Capacity
- Robust Knowledge Sharing Hub (Portal)
- Increased Financial Security
- Greater Member Benefits and Impacts
- Broader Networks



TASSC member agencies employ **NEARLY 700 FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES**, an additional **100+ CONTRACT AND PART-TIME JOBS**, with **NEARLY 70% OF ALL EMPLOYEES IDENTIFY AS INDIGENOUS**

# SUSTAINABILITY AND RESILIENCY

## TARP 2, T'karonto Prosperity Research Project and the Indigenous Toronto Action Plan

Over a decade ago, TASSC published the Toronto Aboriginal Research Project (TARP) Report, the largest and most comprehensive study ever conducted of Aboriginal peoples in Toronto. Key findings from TARP are still relevant today when it comes to matters of systemic racism, notions of visibility, and issues of access to basic needs and services experienced by Indigenous people every day. Prior to the pandemic shifting the course of our regular activities, TASSC had just engaged in advancing TARP 2: A 10-year Retrospective Review research project that will be ongoing through 2022, generously supported by the Province of Ontario. TASSC is also currently engaged with the City of Toronto to conduct the T'karonto Prosperity Research project as part of the City's Poverty Reduction Strategy. These two projects will converge to generate an

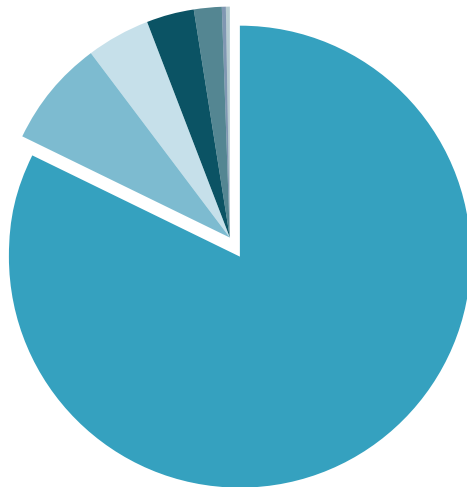
integrated, multi-year, community-driven Indigenous Toronto Action Plan.

The Indigenous Toronto Action Plan will be complementary to the provincial Urban Indigenous Action Plan, the TRC Calls to Action, MMIW Calls to Action, and will be specifically actionable to the GTA. The Action Plan by design is meant to pair specific individuals and entities with key commitments toward changemaking that affect the lives and wellbeing of urban Indigenous individuals and families in the Greater Toronto Area. The Indigenous Toronto Action Plan will be a uniquely made-for-T.O. product, but we anticipate it is a model that can be shared with any interested urban centres in future. We invite all our partners to participate in the developmental stages of the Indigenous Toronto Action Plan.



# FINANCIAL POSITION 2021

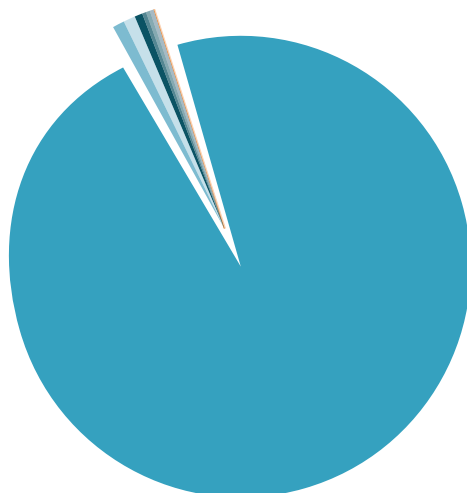
## REVENUES 2021



- INDIGENOUS SERVICE CANADA
- CITY OF TORONTO
- MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS
- COVID 19 RELIEF FUNDING
- MCSSS
- TRAINING
- OTHER GRANT REVENUE AND OTHER

TOTAL  
**\$21,206,982**

## EXPENDITURES 2021



- COVID RELIEF EXPENSES
- SALARIES
- PROJECT CONSULTANTS AND CONTRACTORS
- PROJECTS
- COLLECTIVES
- OFFICE
- OCCUPANCY
- PROFESSIONAL FEES
- AMORTIZATION
- ADVERTISING AND PROMOTION
- INSURANCE
- TRAVEL
- INTEREST AND BANK CHARGES

TOTAL  
**\$20,571,560**

# THANK YOU TO ALL THE FRONT-LINE STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS!



TASSC member agencies report combined service volumes averaging upwards of **200,000 POINTS OF SERVICE ANNUALLY**

# THANK YOU

A special thank you to all of our countless partners, friends and allies.  
We appreciate you!



# TASSC

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Shining a light on social change

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

