



Newsletter



A message from Executive Director

The fall season has carried significant change and exciting news for Mnaasged! The Ministry of Children Community and Social Services has granted us Stage C designation! We enter this Transition Phase with determination and hope for the future. More information can be found within this newsletter.

This is such a huge milestone for us. It's the result of years of hard work, dedication, and advocacy by so many people, past and present, who have believed in Mnaasged's vision and the importance of Indigenous-led child and family well-being.

Thank you,

Melissa Patriguin

Upcoming Dates

November 8th - Indigenous Veterans Day
November 11th - Remembrance Day

Office Closed - November 11th

Stage C Designation Obtained

This milestone marks a significant step forward in Mnaasged's journey toward full designation as an Indigenous Child and Family Well-Being Agency.

It is a true testament to the dedication and determination of our entire team, our leadership, our community partners, and all of our Board members who have continued to believe in and champion this work.

As we move into the Transition phase, we are excited to continue to work for our Member Nations and communities.

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Member Nations

Mnaasged is proud to have partnership with our communities

"Working together, we can move forward"



Remembrance Day - Indigenous Veterans Day

Indigenous peoples have served in every major Canadian conflict since the War of 1812.

For Indigenous communities, encompassing First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, this day holds layered significance. It recognizes the profound contributions of Indigenous service members while also highlighting historical injustices they faced, such as exclusion from ceremonies, denial of veterans' benefits, and loss of treaty rights upon enlistment.

As we approach November 11, 2025, these themes remain central to reconciliation efforts.



Quick Facts

World Wars I and II:

Over 4,000 Indigenous individuals served in WWI, and more than 3,000 in WWII, despite many being denied citizenship or voting rights at the time. They fought with distinction, earning numerous decorations, yet were frequently barred from wearing uniforms or participating in victory parades upon return.

Challenges Faced:

Enlistment often required renouncing treaty rights or reserve status. Post-war, many returned to communities ravaged by residential schools and received no pensions or land grants, while non-Indigenous veterans were compensated. In some cases, reserve lands were seized to settle debts for non-Indigenous soldiers.

Veterans Affairs Canada. "Indigenous Veterans." Accessed November 6, 2025.

<https://www.veterans.gc.ca/en/remembrance/people-and-stories/indigenous-veterans>

Active History. "Indigenous Veterans, the Indian Act, and the Origins..." March 27, 2018.

<https://activehistory.ca/blog/2018/03/27/indigenous-veterans-the-indian-act-and-the-origins-of-national-aboriginal-day/>

What Does Stage C Designation Mean?

Many have asked what this significant milestone represents for Mnaasged.

The designation process is how Indigenous Child and Family Well-Being agencies are formally recognized by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS). It unfolds in stages, starting with early planning and readiness, followed by demonstrating strong governance, community involvement, and service capacity.

With Stage C designation, Mnaasged is now entering the Transition Phase, the final step before becoming a fully designated Indigenous Child and Family Well-Being Agency. During this phase, we will undertake several critical steps, including:

- **Hiring and Training Staff:** Recruiting and training staff to deliver child welfare services, with placements in partner Children's Aid Societies (CASs) to connect with families, children, and youth who will be served by Mnaasged.
- **Service Parameters Agreement:** Establishing agreements with all First Nations whose members will be served, as well as any additional populations, such as Inuk and Métis families, if services are offered to them.
- **Finalizing the Transition Plan:** Collaborating with CASs on the transfer of jurisdiction, including forming committees to address services, data, IT, legal communications, and other critical areas.
- **Service Protocols:** Completing service protocols with key partners, including police, hospitals, health units, children's mental health services, violence against women programs, and school boards.
- **Securing Office Locations:** Establishing office locations throughout our catchment area to ensure accessible service delivery.
- **Negotiating with MCCSS:** Working on a new agreement with the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services to assume full responsibility for providing child and family well-being services for our member First Nations.

A Win for First Nation Families Powless vs Canada

Joanne Powless, a grandmother from the Oneida Nation of the Thames (Ontario), has been battling toxic mould in her on-reserve home since 2022. As primary caregiver to her two young granddaughters—who suffer from severe asthma worsened by the mould—Powless applied for funding under Jordan's Principle to remediate the home and cover temporary relocation costs (estimated at \$200,000).



**First Nations Child & Family Caring
Society**

Powless v. Canada Information Sheet
<https://tinyurl.com/PowlessvCanadainfo>

Broader Context

Despite medical letters from their pediatrician calling it a "life-saving necessity" and evidence of widespread mould, cracks, and foundation issues, Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) denied the request twice:

First in 2023, deeming it a "housing issue" not covered.
Again in 2024, after reconsideration, insisting Jordan's Principle doesn't apply to mould remediation.

Powless took the case to Federal Court in a judicial review, arguing ISC's narrow view ignored the children's health crisis and the principle's core: No First Nations child should face service denials due to jurisdictional disputes, fund first, sort later.

"This isn't just about walls—it's about breathable air for kids who deserve to thrive." –
Joanne Powless, 2025



QR Code
Powless v. Canada Information Sheet

Court Victory: A Win for Kids' Health Over Bureaucracy

In a landmark ruling on July 15, 2025 (2025 FC 1227), Federal Court Justice ... declared ISC's denial "unreasonable" and overturned it:

Key Findings:

- ISC took an "unreasonably narrow approach," treating the request as routine housing repair instead of a child health emergency.
- Failed to apply a substantive equality lens—considering systemic barriers like on-reserve housing shortages and mould's disproportionate impact on First Nations kids.
- Ignored the best interests of the children and medical evidence; no financial cap exists under Jordan's Principle.
- Ordered ISC to reassess the application promptly, prioritizing health needs.

The decision sets a precedent: Jordan's Principle covers preventive health supports, including environmental fixes that protect kids from harm.
But the Fight Continues: In August 2025, Canada filed a Notice of Appeal to the Federal Court of Appeal—criticized as a "collateral attack" on the principle itself. Hearings are slated for early 2026, potentially affecting thousands of First Nations children denied services amid recent ISC policy tightenings.

Recent Challenges:

Issue	Impact	Powless Case Connection
Narrow Denials	1,000+ requests rejected in 2024-25 (e.g., therapy, housing aids)	Highlights health vs. "maintenance" misclassification
Policy Shifts	ISC's 2024 "substantive equality" pivot cuts "non-essential" supports	Court ruled it must prioritize kids' unique needs
Broader Stakes	Could roll back gains for 170,000+ First Nations kids	Appeal risks limiting preventive care nationwide

Additonal Questions?

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MNAASGED HAS STAGE C

What does this mean?

Mnaasged is one step closer to achieving Ministry designation as an Indigenous Child and Family Well Being Agency!

This means that we are entering the Transition Phase and will be recruiting and hiring many new positions over the coming year. Keep checking our website for more information on jobs.

We would like to thank our Board, the Chiefs and Councils and you - the communities for your continued support over the years and we look forward to working with you all more collaboratively in the future.

Yawako, Anushiik, Miigwetch

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