

Nishnawbe-Aski Nation Justice System - A Future Vision 2012

In 2012, the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation (NAN) Justice System, governed by NAN, is based on a model of restorative justice and the values of the Nishnawbe-Aski Nation. The Justice System is fully integrated with all its components (courts, police, lawyers, judges, corrections, Community Justice Committees, NALSC, etc.) interconnected and interdependent. The Justice System has the full support of NAN First Nations.

The NAN Justice System is staffed primarily by First Nations members who are trained in restorative justice, NAN's cultural identity and the Euro-Canadian legal system. The System has a central court system as well as decentralized legal services within each community.

Nishnawbe-Aski Legal Services Corporation - A Future Vision 2012

In 2012, Nishnawbe-Aski Legal Services (NALSC) plays an important role in assisting in the development of the NAN Justice System. NALSC continues to change and evolve as it consults with and responds to the needs of the communities. Elders and community members participate in the development of NALSC's vision.

NALSC manages the delivery of a wide range of legal services (including legal aid), restorative justice, public legal education, corrections, child welfare, victim services and prevention programs designed to eliminate legal/social problems (e.g. family violence, addictions, child abuse). NALSC has one head office and services in each community. Head office is staffed by lawyers, public legal educators, Restorative Justice Workers (RJW), Community Legal Workers (CLW), two assessment officers and area director.

Vision Results in 2012

The results of the two visions will be:

- A self-governed, self-sufficient and effective NAN Justice System;
- A system governed by NAN traditional practices and laws, established through Restorative Justice, that exists in harmony with federal and provincial legislation;
- One justice system for everyone that maintains consistent through leadership changes;
- A system that has flexibility in allowing individual communities create their own variation of the justice model and a system that incorporates the valuable roles of elders;
- A strong cultural identity and commitment to empowerment and personal healing that includes a community approach;
- Stronger communities and families with reduced crime rates and fewer social problems;
- Strong individuals who have self-respect, self-esteem and are empowered;
- Increased participation in the justice system by First Nation communities at the local level;
- The diversion of a majority of all criminal and family matters to restorative justice;
- Individuals, communities, agencies and organizations value and support the NAN Justice System and NALSC.

Note: The strategies to achieve these vision results will necessarily change over the years as the environment changes.

Strategic Priority

Priority: Restorative Justice and Alternative Processes

Restorative Justice and Alternative Processes were chosen as the top priority because it offers NALSC the greatest opportunities and the best results. Three major goals have been identified.

1. Restorative Justice System

Goal	Outcomes
To enhance and maintain a well-funded restorative justice system that is available and responsive to diverse communities, recognized by funders and the legal system, and supported by all stakeholders.	<p>Increased ability to address community level issues or disputes.</p> <p>Ability to measure success and build a database.</p>

2. Capacity

Goal	Outcomes
To build capacity in restorative justice.	<p>Capacity in, and interrelationships between, CLW's and RJW's to deliver restorative justice is strengthened.</p> <p>The restorative justice model is showcased.</p> <p>Community members are engaged through community development.</p> <p>Credibility of restorative justice, alternative processes and NALSC is enhanced.</p> <p>Positive impact on public legal education and law reform activities is evident.</p>

3. Partnerships

Goal	Outcomes
To partner with all parts of the justice system.	<p>Individuals, communities and groups are brought together to learn and participate in creating a NAN justice system based on restorative justice and alternative measures.</p> <p>Increased NAN control of justice system in areas of legal aid, NAN Law Society and restorative justice.</p>

Moving Forward

The strategic plan, as defined by the vision, mission, values and strategic priority, will be considered and discussed by NAN communities, Chief and Council, NALSC Board and Staff. A consultation process will build consensus and commitment to the vision.

In the meantime, NALSC will strengthen its Restorative Justice system, capacity and partnerships through a variety of short and long term strategies.