

**REGULAR MEASURING
AND
REPORTING
OF
OUTCOMES**

**SMALL
BUSINESS
SUPPORT**

**ECONOMIC
SELF-RELIANCE
FOR INDIVIDUALS
AND FAMILIES**

**ECONOMIC
INITIATIVES
AT ARMS
LENGTH
FROM
POLITICS**

**JOINT
VENTURES
AND
PARTNERSHIPS**

**GENERATING
INCOME
FOR THE
FIRST NATION**

**JOB
CREATION**

**HUMAN
RESOURCE
DEVELOPMENT**

PATHWAYS TO PROSPERITY DEVELOPMENT



SECTION TWO: PROSPERITY DEVELOPMENT

This section deal with goals to support the prosperity of the individuals and families that make up the Missanabie Cree First Nation as well as the economic wellbeing of the Nation as a whole. Its goals and strategies look for a balance between increased economic activity and a commitment to the stewardship of the land. The following goals are part of this section: 1) create pathways through which every Missanabie Cree individual and family can make the journey from chronic poverty and dependency to having enough (sufficiency) and self-reliance, 2) increase the own-source income of the Missanabie Cree First Nation to a level that will enable the community to cover all of its social and economic needs and obligations without reliance on government funding, and 3) shift our political and policy environment away from enabling dependency and entitlement thinking and behaviour toward self-improvement and self-reliance.

Definition

The ultimate source of all wealth and prosperity is the earth. In the traditional past, people understood this because they lived directly off the land. The economic issues of today are very different, but the basic challenge is the same: How can Missanabie people earn a living by what they can harvest from the earth, produce or manufacture, sell or barter or by providing services to others? At all levels the Missanabie Cree can be considered to be prosperous when its individuals and families are able to adequately meet their basic needs through viable economic activity, whether that be through employment, business or traditional pursuits.

Prosperity for the Missanabie Cree First Nation as a whole is another aspect of this topic. In order to sustain its operations and services and to achieve its aspirations, the Nation needs adequate sources of revenue. Clearly, the revenue it receives as transfer payments from the Federal and Provincial governments are not sufficient for this purpose. The Nation will also need to generate own-source income from a variety of activities—including its own economic development ventures as well as wise investments in businesses jointly owned and managed with other partners.

A key consideration in this regard is ensuring that the collective resources of the Nation (e.g. lands, capital and infrastructure) are utilized in ways that are consistent with sustainable stewardship and ethical practices, while at the same time ensuring the prosperity and wellbeing of the present and future generations. In other words, land and resources should be developed according to best ecological yet profitable principles.

Issues, Challenges, and Opportunities

Individual and Household Prosperity

1. A significant proportion of Missanabie Cree members are living below the poverty line, either because they are receiving income support payments that are lower than the poverty line, or because the income they earn is not sufficient to meet basic living needs (e.g. minimum wage jobs).

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2. Children are particularly impacted when they live in families without adequate income, especially if their families also have significant wellness and other barriers preventing them from living with dignity.
3. Some Band staff may fit into the category of living below the poverty line. Single mothers and youth are also often in this position. Some Elders also live in poverty and are at risk of being taken advantage of by relatives who seek access to their few resources.
4. Dependency thinking (in some cases intergenerational) is keeping some people trapped in reliance on social assistance. Wellness issues are also a major barrier for some members.
5. Many Band members have not had the opportunity to acquire the life and job skills they need to gain meaningful employment that provides them with adequate income.
6. Many Missanabie Cree members who would like to create or expand businesses need access to credit, training, and other incubation services in order to be successful.
7. Missanabie Cree members are scattered across Ontario and beyond, making it very difficult for the band to deliver services to them.

The Prosperity of the Nation

8. The Band (as an entity) has been struggling with a debt load that is rooted in long past business ventures that have collapsed. While debt amount is not insurmountable, it still causes severe hardships on a day-to-day basis for band operations.
9. The Band has many possible options for revenue generation, including joint ventures in mining, forestry and tourism, as well as options in manufacturing or service industries. Other possibilities include a variety of user fees or taxes that could apply to land use by non-members or even by members under certain conditions.
10. The ability to respond constructively to the many economic challenges and opportunities the Nation is facing is severely hampered by the lack of capable human resources to do the work needed to make progress, which of course is rooted in the sheer lack of money to hire the people that are needed.
11. While the Band is in the process of establishing its land base, it has a real challenge to find funds to provide basic services to its members, since it does not receive the usual per-capita dollars for health and social services programs that most reserved based community take for granted. Even once the Band has a community living on its land base, it will continue to be difficult to balance services and benefits for on-reserve members with those that live elsewhere. This is because most federal government funding is limited to on reserve members only. The economic base from which to fund services to offer to reserve members needs to be generated in some other way.
12. The Band's current revenue-generation initiatives (e.g. Island View Camp, and the gravel works) need to be reviewed to ensure that they are operating at an optimal profit making level and in consistency with high environmental stewardship standards.
13. The Band also needs solid governance and management structures as well as competent human resources to create the legislative frameworks and operational plans (e.g. such as zoning regulations, land management plans and codes, environmental sustainability codes,

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risk management protocols, etc.) to be able to move forward in creating and enabling need for business development. While these frameworks can be developed fairly quickly by basing them on existing codes of other First Nations (with appropriate adaptations), the absence of land use zoning and environmental regulations can be a serious impediment to business development.

14. A nation is not merely a political or economic unit. It is also (and more deeply) a web of human relationships. The quality and characteristics (good and bad) of those relationships can have a huge impact on that Nation's ability to realize its economic potential. Missanabie Cree was torn apart as a Nation, its people scattered, and many all but lost their connection to their own identity and to the circle of the people. Where that circle is now being re-established, barriers such as mistrust, disunity and conflict, as well as a deep need for healing and recovery, are not just social problems. They are also economic barriers that need to be overcome.

Goal One: Create pathways through which every Missanabie Cree individual and family can make the journey from chronic poverty and dependency to having enough (sufficiency) and self-reliance

This goal means that:

- *The absolute impact of poverty on peoples' lives will be reduced (especially for dependent persons (children, elders, disabled) and those struggling to improve themselves.*
- *Household income will increase to allow families to live with dignity.*
- *The number of households living below the poverty line will decrease.*
- *The source of individual and family income will gradually shift from dependency on government social assistance and other fixed income sources to a pool of wealth generated by the First Nation and its members.*

Strategy #1: Support the development of human resources for economic improvement, taking into account the reality that:

- Not all community members are the same, and therefore have different learning and support needs,
 - Most people need a combination of: a) personal growth and healing, 2) life skills, 3) upgrading, d) reconnection to their cultural roots and identity, 5) job skills, 6) social support, and 7) connection to real employment or business opportunities.
 - Even after completing much of that journey, many will still need technical training or support to advance toward realizing their full potential.
 - Missanabie people live in scattered locations across Ontario and beyond.
- a. In response to these realities, we plan to establish the Missanabie Cree Community College as a central hub and clearing house for helping community members to achieve their learning and self-development goals utilizing a strategic combination of virtual (on-line) courses and services and face-to-face programs delivered wherever clusters of students reside; or

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- b. Work together with the Northeast Superior Development Corporation and its partner communities to establish a Regional Development College that will focus (in part, at least) on human resource development for employment or business success. *[Note: It is already one of the goals of the Northeast Superior Regional Chiefs' Forum (and its Regional Development Corporation) to establish a regional college.]*

Strategy #2: Expand the mandate and bolster the capacity of the non-profit Missanabie Cree Development Corporation to serve as a coordinator of community economic development services aimed at helping individuals and families to improve their economic capacity, prospects and opportunities. Given the scattered nature of the Missanabie people, this coordination role will serve as a virtual hub to broker the following services for community clients in their home areas:

- Assessment
- Personal growth and healing services
- Life skills training
- Upgrading
- Job skills training
- Connection to employment and business opportunities

Strategy #3: Establish a Life Path Improvement Program designed to be delivered anywhere, using a combination of the following:

- Individualized assessment and life path planning
- On-line (virtual) support groups of peer learners
- Some distance-delivered courses
- Some in-depth immersion courses delivered in central locations for cluster of learners
- Partnership links with existing services available in areas close to where students reside
- One-on-one life coach/mentorship support

(Note: a more detailed description of the elements of a life path program is included at the end of Goal One.)

Strategy #4: Establish a small business support and incubation service. This service will:

- Be capable of working with entrepreneurs and businesses in the major centres where Missanabie Cree people are living through virtual links
- Be linked to local business development programs and have signed MoUs spelling out the services Missanabie Cree members will receive in their home areas
- Provide a counselor to work (on-line or by telephone) with each client as a mentor/coach
- Provide access to needed training, learning, healing, support and technical services
- Provide access to credit through savings and loans, micro-credit and linkages to business development funding

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- Provide access to business opportunities available to Missanabie Cree people through its joint ventures, contracts, IRAs and regional business connections

Strategy #5: Develop employment opportunities that fit with the interests and capacities of the people. A major component of our strategy to lift our members and families out of poverty is through the creation of employment opportunities. Priorities for employment development include the following:

- Employment located within reasonable commuting distances of our Missanabie homeland
- Youth employment, apprenticeships and training
- Employing our own professionals and trained individuals so they can come home
- Employment in our own joint ventures, community-owned business, community agencies, departments and entities
- Employment in or near the places where our people are living

Strategy #6: Collaborate with Nishinawbe Aski Nation (NAN) and the Mushkegawuk Employment and Training services (METS) to take full advantage of their employment and training services and programs, to which our people are entitled by way of MCFN membership in those organizations.

Strategy #7 Concentrate on creating jobs that pay a “living wage” (i.e., that pay enough to meet the basic cost of living) and not on minimum wage jobs

Strategy #8 Where feasible, develop social enterprises (businesses that perform some social goal on a not-for-profit basis), which covers costs of operations and paying a living wage to employees from the proceeds of the business. (Examples: elder care, childcare, community restaurant, etc.).

Strategy #9: Communicate opportunities to all of our people utilizing a web-based members-only access channel that will enable us to continuously post all training, apprenticeship and employment opportunities to our members. Those who lack web access will be able to subscribe to a regular postal service that gives the same information.

Strategy #10 Conduct and maintain a Missanabie community human resources assets inventory for jobs and contracts and utilize this inventory to the fullest extent possible in developing economic opportunities for our people. When Missanabie Cree members have the capacity to fill any position or contract, they will be given the right of first refusal, before opportunities are announced to the general public.

Strategy #11 Develop a measurement system. Based on the principle that whatever you measure tends to improve, we will develop a combination of measures that, when applied to individuals and household, will determine who is living “in poverty” and who is not. It is important to define “poverty”. The Canadian government uses the low-income cut-off (LICO), but many First Nations and

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also many professional researcher have shown that LICO figures are simply too low to cover basic necessities in most northern and remote communities.

For this reason, Missanabie Cree First Nation will develop a “poverty index” that takes into account the cost of a healthy food basket, rent, heat, clothing, uninsured health care, transportation, communication, education, children’s recreation and other basic needs for family wellbeing. The index will be adjusted to fit the circumstances wherever our Missanabie people are living.

Strategy #12 Measure regularly. Once our measurement system is developed, we will collect basic outcome statistics at least once a year to determine to what extent our programs and strategies are working, and what we need to change or add about what we are doing to reach the goal of reducing individual and household poverty.

Elements of a Life Path Program (see Strategy #2 above

What is needed is an interconnected web of programs, services and incentives that all work together for one common purpose—to support and assist individuals to move from dysfunction and dependency toward wellness, productivity and self-reliance, or what some have called “an honourable existence”.

One way of measuring progress can be referred to as the “ladder of capacity development”, which describes four levels or stages that an individual on the journey might move through: Stage One – Unemployable and dysfunctional, State Two Marginally employable and wounded, Stage Three – Employed and working on themselves, Stage Four – Leaders.

Category	Indicator	Steps Needed
Stage 1 - Unemployable and dysfunctional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ does not seek employment ◆ chronic pattern of substance abuse and ill health ◆ does not benefit from normal employment programming support ◆ has special needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ healing ◆ sheltered workshops ◆ life skills ◆ sheltered work experience ◆ remedial learning
Stage 2 - Marginally employable and wounded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ unreliable work patterns ◆ frequently absent from work ◆ frequently in conflict ◆ low level of productivity ◆ personal crises as a lifestyle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ healing and personal growth workshops ◆ life and other relevant skills ◆ training ◆ work experience ◆ more responsibility and rewards that go with it
Stage 3 - Employed and working on themselves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ can hold a job in right kind of environment ◆ advancing in personal and job skills ◆ on a healing and learning path 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ life skills ◆ job skills ◆ wellness ◆ technical support and coaching ◆ specialized training

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ has taken responsibility for own development ◆ is sometimes supportive of others working up the ladder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ career planning
Stage 4 - Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ creatively using gifts ◆ emotionally competent ◆ have good human relationships ◆ able to manage money ◆ healthy families ◆ could hold a job on or off reserve ◆ capable of running own business with support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ opportunities for continuous improvement in knowledge and skills ◆ access to funding ◆ job and business opportunities ◆ on-going personal wellness work ◆ a pattern of reaching out and helping others up the ladder

Essentially, *what is needed is a coordinated sequence of experiences and supportive program opportunities that systematically help individuals to move up through the levels of the “ladder of capacity”*. The following characteristics would need to be built into such a program effort.

- a. This **integrated program effort** needs to be planned, implemented and maintained under one umbrella administration.
- b. There needs to be an **integrated case management approach** across all departments and programs.
- c. A **single entry point** and one integrated intake process is also necessary.
- d. There also needs to be a **monitoring and measuring** system that enables us to track the progress individuals are making as a result of the support and encouragement of our programs, and also allows us to change and further develop our programs as needed.

Key Program Elements From the Participants’ Perspective

From the standpoint of the program as experienced by participants, the following elements need to be addressed or built into the front-line program.

- a. Life-Path planning
- b. Healing and personal growth opportunities, learning about culture, history and identity
- c. Membership in a “core group” that bonds/grows together and mutually supports one another on the journey
- d. Life skills training
- e. Basic education opportunities (literacy and numeracy)
- f. An incentive system, involving income subsidization and top-offs as a reward for progress
- g. Job skills training
- h. Work experience and apprenticeship
- i. Exposure to entrepreneurship and small business training and experience
- j. Exposure to real employment and business opportunities
- k. Long-term support (3-5 years) through ongoing core group cohorts that continue to meet and receive program support, as well as extended financial incentives
- l. Personal counseling and employment services
- m. Involvement and support for participants’ families in the growth process

Key Program Elements from the Standpoint of Inter-department Collaborative Planning, Implementation and Evaluation

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At the inter-departmental and community level, the following additional elements need to be in place.

- a. Coordination of all related programs under an **inter-departmental management team and single coordinator**, preferably located under the same roof
- b. Work plans and business plans from all departments that outline how they will play their assigned role in an integrated program delivery approach
- c. An integrated (across all departments) intake, screening, referral and case management system that brings together all services for any one person into a single working framework (i.e., social assistance, child protection, health, education and training, housing and employment services). This will create a “one-stop shopping” for community members and will enable departments to coordinate their efforts in assisting individuals. It also prevents individuals from “falling through the cracks” or from playing one program off against another.
- d. The creation of economic and employment opportunities, so that as individuals work their way “up the ladder”, there are real opportunities of which to take advantage.
- e. A comprehensive public education, communication and engagement strategy focused on: 1) **influencing the public mind** to shift from dependency and entitlement thinking to a shared consensus valuing self-reliance, community service and mutual care for those who need it; 2) **providing a clear understanding** of what the journey is from poverty and dependence to self-reliance and prosperity (i.e., a vision of what it takes to succeed) with communication oriented to school children and youth as well as to the community; 3) **educating** community members about the practical steps they can take for self and family improvement; and 4) **engaging** community members in co-learning and action strategies leading to improved levels of personal, family and community wellbeing
- f. Begin public education at the school level with a strong emphasis on the importance of staying in school, help young people to develop a positive vision for themselves so they can “see” possibilities for themselves and their own future (as part of this initiative, develop a *junior business program* through which young people can get hands-on experience building a business and making money)
- g. Developing community consensus in traditional values and principles to guide the journey to prosperity

Goal Two: Increase the own-source income of the Missanabie Cree First Nation to a level that will enable own community to cover all of its social and economic needs and obligations without reliance on government funding¹

Strategy #1: Formulate direct joint ventures and partnerships with companies capable of: a) providing our people immediate access to jobs in the mining and forestry sectors, b) providing us a 51% ownership in these ventures; and c) guarantee

¹ This amount needs to be calculated based on present and anticipated memberships statistics, demographic data, the calculation of unmet social needs (income, health care, education, etc.). It is important to note that this goal does not imply letting the Federal Government “off the hook” for its fiduciary responsibilities to our Nation; only that we don’t want to have to rely on them since they have proven to be consistently unreliable.

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that our people will always have the right first refusal on all jobs and contracts that are made available to these companies. [Note: 7 such joint ventures have already been formed in the following sectors: explosives, camp operations and catering, camp and operations security; engineering and surveying; drilling and equipment leasing and maintenance.

- Strategy #2: Regional First Nations partnerships. Missanabie will continue to work in collaborative partnerships and networks such as the Northeast Superior Regional Chiefs' Forum (NSRCF), the Northeast Superior Development Corporation, as well as with other First Nations and Indigenous networks and organizations that can bring us economic opportunities and services.
- Because we are a very small First Nation, we cannot achieve the economy of scale that a larger, well-established (on its land base) First Nation can. For many aspects of economic development, membership in the NSRCF has proven to open doors and provide real benefits and opportunities that working in isolation simply cannot bring to us.
- We will therefore continue to develop these alliances and invest in collaborative opportunities whenever, after due diligence, it seems right to do so. One clear benefit of the Northeast Superior Development Corporation will bring is the provision of high-quality technical services, which we cannot, at this time, afford to retain in house, but which we badly need to ensure that our economic choices, investments and pursuits bear fruit.
- Strategy #3: Keep economic development at arms length from politics – It is a well established fact that First Nations that maintain a strict separation of politics from programs and economic ventures do much better than those that have not yet made this important shift.
- All of our economic ventures will be managed and controlled by one of our development corporations and not by the elected Chief and Council. At the same time, we understand that there is a strong role for Chief and Council to play in securing opportunities and partnerships in ensuring diligence is done and that transparency and accountability is always impeccably maintained so that our people can clearly see what is being done in their name.
- Strategy #4: Strategic land use. The first Nation has been awarded 15 sq. miles of land (soon to be transferred to reserve status) to be utilized as our initial land base. Under our upcoming TLE settlement, we will be able to identify an additional 70 sq. miles of land. This land will be selected very strategically to maximize economic opportunities. Not only do we want land in our traditional territory, but we also want “pods” of land in such locations as along the trans-Canada corridor or in the heart of cities like Toronto, Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie and Thunder Bay for future business development purposes, as well as land suitable for agro-business development. Acquiring parcels outside our traditional territory may require such strategic swaps, trades or sales of some parcels to acquire others, but we understand that acquisition of the right land in the right places will be an important strategy to bolster our economic development prospects.

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- Strategy #5: Lever Trust funds – We propose to lever funds from our future settlement transfers to finance investment in lands and businesses with guaranteed returns to the community.
- Strategy #6: Invest in and grow a gradually increasing number of profitable Band-owned enterprises – By utilizing the best professional services available, leveraging our land and settlement funds, and through strategic partnerships with already successful business ventures, we will invest in and grow promising business venture. These ventures will be managed through one of our development corporations. We propose to find or further develop businesses in or near our Missanabie homeland, as well as in locations where a significant contingent of our population lives.
- Strategy #7: Protecting people and the environment will always take precedence over profit making. We recognize that our very survival as a human family depends on the sustainability of the natural world, and that, as Indigenous people, we have a sacred duty to be stewards of the land. Our values do not, as we understand them, prevent us from pursuing resource-based economic development opportunities, but they do require us to ensure that human wellbeing and environmental sustainability never fall victim to economics “success” in any economic venture we pursue.
- We understand that acting as guardians and protectors of Mother Earth is critical to our economic success. If we are not thinking 7 generations ahead, we are not grounding our economic development in our Cree culture and values. Our goal is Mino-pimatisi-win (the good life) as defined by the Seven Grandfather teachings. We understand that unless there is Mino-pimatisi-win, profit does not lead to prosperity. Rather, it leads, as we see in the society around us, to self-destruction, greed, and environmental crisis from which many will not survive. We choose the more sustainable path for our people and our Nation. This means that every economic venture must be weighed in the balance of Mino-pimatisi-win.
- Strategy #8: Measuring Mino-pimatisi-win – The Band and staff of our Economic Development Corporation will develop a set of evaluation indicators that will be used to measure whether or not and to what extent economic projects contribute or detract from Mino-pimatisi-win. These measures will pay close attention to the impacts of projects and initiatives on both sustainable human wellbeing and sustainable environment. Every project our First Nation undertakes will need to pass the Mino-pimatisi-win test and keep on passing as long as the project continues.

Goal Three: Shift our political and policy environment away from enabling dependency and entitlement thinking and behaviour toward self-improvement and self-reliance.

- Strategy #1: Openly advocate to our members that MCFN is committed to supporting anyone prepared to work hard to improve themselves economically

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Strategy #2: Educate our membership about how chronic patterns of addictions and dependency are patterns of life we have chosen, that they can be overcome and, in fact, must be overcome if we are to escape intergenerational poverty.

Strategy #3: Share models of First Nation economic success from across Canada so our people can see what possibilities are “out there”.

Strategy #4: Change our collective “narrative” (the story we tell ourselves). For years, many of us have been telling ourselves that “they” owe us because of what “they” took and what “they” did to us. We will shift that narrative to include what we have done to ourselves and the fact that we are done waiting.

The Harper Government is clearly on a path of reducing Federal funds to First Nations. We will no longer passively wait as our population grows and the money available (even in the best future scenario) is shrinking. The money we need to live with dignity is just not going to be there for our people. It may not be fair, but that is the new reality. Of course, we will keep negotiating and fighting for our rights, but we will also pull together and move forward under our own steam.

It means that if we want a better future, than we are going to have to work hard and work together to build it. This “new narrative” will need to be repeated many times before it sinks in. The implication of this shift in narrative is a shift in policy orientation toward supporting our members who are willing to work hard and work together for progress.

Strategy #5: Two-Year Action Plans – The MCFN’s development corporations will work with Chief and Council and community members to develop a renewed Economic Action Plan that fits within the framework of CCP goals and strategies, but specifies realistic, concrete and measurable objectives that match current levels of possibility and capacity. The implementation of these plans will be closely monitored.

Strategy #6: Monitoring and reporting on economic development progress – We will develop a report card that can be used to regularly and systematically measure and monitor progress toward greater individual, family and Nation prosperity. We will use such indicators as the following;

- The number of individuals and families living below the poverty line
- The number of new jobs created within the community
- The number of private small business start-ups in the community
- The amount of revenue generated by Band-owned enterprises
- The amount of revenue from Band-owned enterprises that is being re-invested into community wellbeing and prosperity initiatives

The Development Corporation will be required to issue a report card at least twice a year and to continuously improve indicators and data collections strategies. These economic report cards will be published for the entire community to see

