

RECLAIMING CHILD AND FAMILY JURISDICTION

T̂SILHQOT'IN NIDLIN

COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER #4

April 2024



T̂silhqot'in
NATIONAL GOVERNMENT



BACKGROUND

The T̂silhqot'in Nation has always practiced our right to self-government. As part of this journey, the T̂silhqot'in Nation has been working since 2020 to reclaim child and family services. **This work is called "T̂silhqot'in Nidlin" - translating to "we are T̂silhqot'in" - to encompass past, present, and future generations.**

The Nidlin Team has been busy working with community members, frontline workers, Leadership, and government partners to develop our Legislation, Service Model, and Jurisdiction agreement. This newsletter provides an update on our engagement and progress to date.



"The work this team is doing is not just for future generations, but it's also work to heal the generations before us. It's needed work."

- Chief Lennon Solomon,
Yunešit'in

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ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

As of March 2024, the Tsilhqot'in team has engaged with at least **292 COMMUNITY MEMBERS** at over **87 EVENTS**, as shown below:



We have held events in all **6 COMMUNITIES**, as well as in Williams Lake:



Completed Engagement Phases:

Our engagement phases have focused on the following:

PHASE 1 (2020 - 2022)

- Introducing Engagement Coordinators to communities
- Gathering and sharing information related to children and families
- Learning about T̂silhqot'in protocols and laws

PHASE 2 (JUL - SEPT 2023)

- Sharing back Phase 1 results
- Understanding current strengths and challenges
- Discussing sample scenarios related to child wellness
- Deciding new words for our T̂silhqot'in model

PHASE 3 (OCT - NOV 2023)

- Sharing back Phase 2 results
- Gathering ideas on service model
- Identifying key roles and responsibilities
- Understanding the importance of our Legislation and developing its content

PHASE 4 (DEC 2023 - FEB 2024)

- Sharing back Phase 3 results
- Discussing our Service Model and how we will put it into action
- Getting community feedback on draft Legislation

Upcoming Engagement:

PHASE 5 (MAR - APR 2024)

- Sharing back Phase 4 results
- Gathering feedback and answering questions about our transition to Jurisdiction
- Discussing governance structures

PHASE 6 (MAY - JUN 2024)

- Sharing back all phases
- Celebrating and understanding our Coordination Agreement and Legislation

Engagement will continue as we implement our Jurisdiction





ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

WHAT WE HEARD FROM COMMUNITY

Legislation

Our legislation is titled *T̄silhqot'in ʔEsqax Sutsel Jeniyax*. This translates to "T̄silhqot'in children growing up in a good way."

We presented highlights from the draft Legislation during engagements, and Community Members provided feedback including:

- Importance of matriarchs
- Need for a Tribunal to handle disputes
- Need for communities to work together for our children
- Need for power to be shared, not held with one decision-making body.



Emerging Service Model

Our collaborative service model allows us to move services from a central T̄silhqot'in Organization to communities as capacity grows. This will help ensure children do not fall through the cracks.

Community Members provided key feedback about our Service Model:

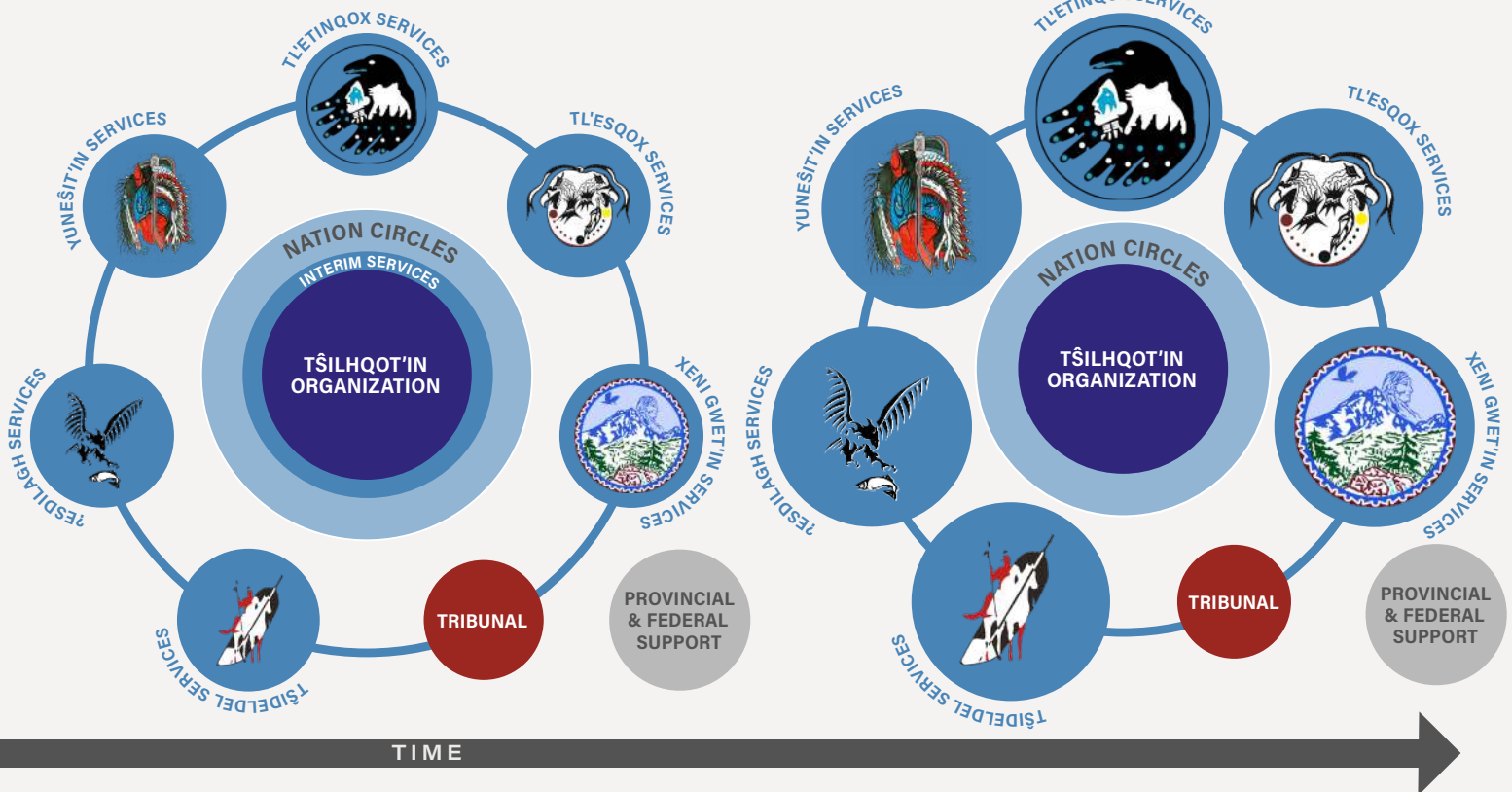
- Supportive of this model that allows us to build tools and capacity in communities
- Importance of working collaboratively to build community ownership of services
- We need to ensure off-reserve children and families are included in our service model.



“ We’re building something better than what the white people made for us. - Community Engagement Participant



“ Without proper tools, [our service model] will fail. - Community Engagement Participant





FRONTLINE WORKERS ENGAGEMENT

On January 16, 2024, frontline workers from Denisiqi Services Society and T̓ilhqot'in communities gathered in Williams Lake to learn about our work towards jurisdiction.

Frontline workers provided valuable feedback, including:

- We need strong coordination, communication, and governance
- We need clear processes and standards to implement our Legislation

They also identified key questions about our Service Model, which are guiding our next steps for transition planning.



[I'm excited for us to] create policy and procedures for our current families and future generations while honoring our past. - Frontline worker

T̓ILHQOT'IN LEADERSHIP FORUM

On February 22, 2024, T̓ilhqot'in Chiefs, Councils, and Women's Council attended a Leadership Forum. Over **55 PEOPLE** from **ALL 6 COMMUNITIES** attended to hear updates and provide direction on child and family jurisdiction.



We're definitely on the right track. The amount of work that's been done on this is a lot more than I had anticipated.

It's been a while since we had Council all together with the Chiefs in one room. It's a pretty powerful room right now.



DR. CINDY BLACKSTOCK KEYNOTE & HONOURING

On February 23, 2024, Frontline workers, Chiefs, Councils, and Women's Council were invited to learn from Dr. Cindy Blackstock, a Gitksan activist for child welfare and Executive Director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada. Dr. Blackstock provided a keynote address, followed by discussion, ceremony, and a shared meal.



The multi-generational strength we have is far stronger than our multi-generational trauma. - Dr. Cindy Blackstock

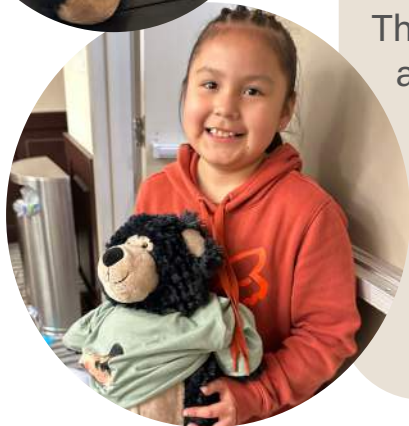


Ambearrister Honouring

Dr. Blackstock honoured the T̓silhqot'in Nation with an Ambearrister (ambassador + barrister) to witness and support our work towards Child and Family Jurisdiction. The Ambearrister is a friend of Spirit Bear, who witnesses all Canadian Human Rights Tribunal hearings on behalf of Indigenous children.

Our Ambearrister will be present for all discussions related to our Child and Family Jurisdiction.

We will be holding a contest to name our Ambearrister! Watch the TNG Facebook and Instagram pages for more information.





TRANSITIONING TO JURISDICTION

WHERE TWO RIVERS MEET

ʔAtish ʔElhixidlin is a special site within T̕silhqot̕'in Title Lands where the Dasiqox and T̕silhqox rivers meet. With a swift current at the junction, the two different colours of water run alongside each other, gradually mixing to become one.



Our transition to T̕silhqot̕'in Jurisdiction can be imagined like two streams - T̕silhqot̕'in and Provincial Jurisdiction - flowing beside each other and gradually merging to build towards full T̕silhqot̕'in Jurisdiction (see Page 9).

BENEFITS FOR COMMUNITIES

We are strongly advocating to bring positive changes to T̕silhqot̕'in communities through Jurisdiction, including:

- ✓ Requesting funding to **get ready** for Jurisdiction (training staff, creating policies, etc.)
- ✓ Following guidance from **Dechen Ts'edilhtan** (T̕silhqot̕'in Law) to improve programs
- ✓ Staying safe from **legal risks** until we have the tools to protect us
- ✓ Advocating for more funding for **prevention services**, with new supports for off-reserve families
- ✓ Calling for more resources to create **buildings and spaces** for services

Denisiqi will continue to improve services under Provincial Jurisdiction by:

- Providing more services in our own way
- Following community direction
- Integrating Dechen Ts'edilhtan (T̕silhqot̕'in Law) into everything we do.

After five years, the two jurisdiction streams will merge. We will practice full Jurisdiction using T̕silhqot̕'in law and policies.



TWO RIVERS MERGING TO ACHIEVE FULL JURISDICTION

Dasiqox

Tsilhqox

T̄SILHQOT'IN JURISDICTION

PROVINCIAL JURISDICTION

KEY ACTIVITIES IN YEARS 1-5



Enact *Dechen Ts'edilhtan* (T̄silhqot'in Law)



Continue and expand community prevention services



Train and build community capacity



Appoint governance bodies and hire staff



Develop policies and standards to implement law



Create Tribunal



Continue to make services more culturally safe and community-driven



Align programs and services with T̄silhqot'in Law



Provide full range of protection services in our own way



Build infrastructure in communities



Denisiqi may adopt T̄silhqot'in policies as they are developed

STREAMS MERGE AS WE PRACTICE FULL JURISDICTION (YEAR 6)



EMERGING GOVERNANCE BODIES

During the first five years of jurisdiction, we will set up strong governance structures at the community and Nation level. This will make decision-making clear and accountable.



A board of community experts will govern the central Tsilhqot'in Organization and provide funding to communities



An independent panel to resolve disputes and make decisions, eventually replacing provincial courts



Communities will decide their own governance structures based on capacity and community direction



Respected Aunts and Uncles will provide advice based on Tsilhqot'in values and culture

NEXT STEPS

During the next phase of engagement, the Nidlin team will focus on:

- Building community understanding and support for our transition to full jurisdiction
- Gathering feedback about putting our new service model into action
- Discussing community and Nation-level governance structures

Stay tuned for upcoming engagement events in your community!

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

✉ tevens@tsilhqotin.ca

☎ 250-302-3990

🌐 www.tsilhqotin.ca/familywellness



WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

We want to know what Community Members think about our work to reclaim child and family jurisdiction so far. Your feedback will continue guiding our legislation, service model, and jurisdiction agreement.

Please complete this survey and return to TNG by mail or by email to tevas@tsilhqot'in.ca

Each completed survey will be entered in a draw to win a \$300 gift card of your choice!

1 WHAT WILL TELL YOU THAT OUR TŚILHQOT'IN LAW AND SERVICE MODEL ARE STRONG?

Examples: fewer children are removed from our communities, we have more youth counsellors in communities, etc.

2 In the emerging governance model, communities will appoint representatives to a CFS authority. WHAT SHOULD THE ROLE OF THIS AUTHORITY BE? Check all that apply.

- MAKE FUNDING DECISIONS
- GUIDE POLICIES TO PUT OUR TŚILHQOT'IN LAW INTO ACTION
- PROVIDE DIRECTION AND SUPPORT TO THE CENTRAL ORGANIZATION
- SUPPORT COMMUNITY CAPACITY TO DELIVER SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS
- OTHER:





3 ARE WE ON THE RIGHT TRACK IN OUR WORK TO RECLAIM CHILD AND FAMILY JURISDICTION?

- YES
- IN SOME WAYS
- NO
- NOT SURE

Comments (optional)

4 WHAT QUESTIONS DO YOU HAVE?

If you would like to be entered in the prize draw, please provide your name and contact information:

Name: _____
Email: _____ Phone: _____

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING
THE SURVEY!

Please detach this page and return to the TNG team:

- By Mail: TNG Dasiqox Office
925 Second Avenue
Williams Lake, BC
V2G 4P7
- By Email: tevans@tsilhqot'in.ca

OR, COMPLETE
THIS SURVEY
ONLINE!



www.surveymonkey.com/r/Nidlinfamilywellness

