URBAN ABORIGINAL TASK FORCE
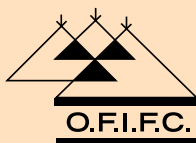
Kenora
Final Report

NOVEMBER 2007

Commissioned by

The Ontario Federation of Indian
Friendship Centres

The Ontario Metis Aboriginal
Association

The Ontario Native Women's
Association

URBAN ABORIGINAL TASK FORCE

Kenora Final Report

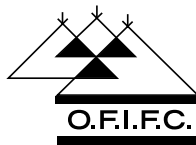# URBAN ABORIGINAL TASK FORCE

Kenora Final Report

NOVEMBER 2007

Commissioned by

The Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres

The Ontario Metis Aboriginal Association

The Ontario Native Women's Association

CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

The Joint Steering Committee of the Urban Aboriginal Task Force (UATF) is pleased to present the *Kenora Site Report* of the UATF Kenora community research project to the Board of Directors of the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres, the Board of Directors of the Ontario Native Women's Association, the Board of Directors of the Ontario Métis Aboriginal Association, the partner Ministries, and the Kenora Aboriginal community.

In early 2003 the Urban Aboriginal Task Force (UATF) was established with the aim exploring the issues facing the urban Aboriginal community in the province of Ontario. The idea was conceived of by the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres as a way to follow up on the work done by the original Task Force on the Needs of Native People in an Urban Setting, in 1981. While originally six community research sites were sought, the UATF settled on a final five: Sudbury, Ottawa, Thunder Bay, Barrie-Midland, and Kenora. Through ups and downs the UATF has persevered in seeking to explore policy questions from a grassroots, community-based perspective.

The Urban Aboriginal Task Force would like first and foremost to express its gratitude to all the community members who participated in the research and provided us with their input, insight and experience. Without you there would be no way of pushing the policy agenda forward in a constructive way, based on the real needs of the community as you have articulated.

The Urban Aboriginal Task Force equally wishes to thank our researchers for conducting the extensive research required for such a comprehensive approach to the subject of Aboriginal people in an urban setting in each of the research sites.

The *Kenora Site Report* is intended to provide support for the development of a strategic approach to resource allocations to address the needs of urban Aboriginal people. The *Kenora Site Report* is also intended as a tool for communities, government and other agencies to advance a renewed policy agenda based on a rigourous, community-based understanding of the effects and implications of current policy approaches and legislative frameworks. The Task Force believes this *Report* sheds new light on the on-going struggles and critical new developments taking place in urban Aboriginal communities across the province.

The *Kenora Site Report,* along with the four other site reports, will inform the preparation of the *Final Report of the Urban Aboriginal Task Force.* It is our hope that the *Final Report* will initiate a new wave of positive, cooperative policy, programme, and legislative change aimed at improving the quality of life for all urban Aboriginal people in Ontario.

Sincerely,

Sylvia Maracle
Executive Director, Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres
on behalf of The Joint Steering Committee, Urban Aboriginal Task Force

INTRODUCTION

Urbanization is a relatively new phenomenon, in the last 20 to 30 years. What is needed is a strong and supportive family. Education is the real key in this whole puzzle. You see the changes taking place as Aboriginal people become more educated. (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

1.1 Background

The Urban Aboriginal Task Force Study builds on the original *Task Force on the Needs of Native People in an Urban Setting*, published in 1981. We believe the original Task Force was the first major research on urban Aboriginal people in the country. Both the original Task Force and the Urban Aboriginal Task Force Study were initiated by the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres. The original Task Force was a partnership between the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres, the Ontario Native Women's Association, the Ontario Métis Aboriginal Association, and government focused on the issues affecting urban Aboriginal people. The original Task Force findings and recommendations resulted in the creation of new policies and programmes to address the needs identified.

The Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres (OFIFC) conducted a feasibility study for the Urban Aboriginal Task Force Research Project in January 2003. The OFIFC funded the study and contracted Don McCaskill to conduct the feasibility study. It culminated in a two day workshop held at the OFIFC office on May 5 and 6, 2003. The feasibility study included a literature review of relevant research pertaining to urban Aboriginal people and interviews with 35 stakeholders from Aboriginal organizations and provincial and federal governments.

The OFIFC then approached the original Aboriginal partners—the Ontario Native Women's Association and the Ontario Métis Aboriginal Association—to determine their level of interest in updating the 1981

report and determine the needs of urban Aboriginal people today. The Aboriginal partners identified and engaged a number of provincial and federal government representatives and a new partnership was established to update the research.

1.2 Initial research interests

Virtually all feasibility study participants supported a renewed Urban Aboriginal Task Force Research Project. Participants supported this study for the following reasons: lack of research, large numbers and high visibility of urban Aboriginal people; increasing awareness of challenging social issues and unmet needs of urban Aboriginal people; recognition by Aboriginal people and governments that governments are not effectively addressing these needs; governments' acknowledgment of jurisdictional wrangling and poor coordination of programs involving urban Aboriginal people; various Aboriginal constituencies interest in addressing urban Aboriginal self-government; and, recognition of Aboriginal people who are both economically successful (i.e. the emerging "middle class" of urban Aboriginal people) and wish to participate in Aboriginal cultural and social activities in the city.

1.3 The Task Force partners

Organizations and government came together as a partnership of Aboriginal organizations and federal, provincial and municipal govern-

TABLE 1A **Research priorities of the Task Force**

Research topics for all sites	Research considerations that span topics
Racism	Culture and identity
Homelessness and housing	Gaps and delivery of services
Poverty	Elders and long term care
Youth	Women and children
Women	Access to resources
Health	Assessment of Aboriginal services

ments. This group, the Urban Aboriginal Task Force, oversaw the research. The composition of the Task Force included representatives from the following organizations:

> Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centers
> Ontario Native Women's Association
> Ontario Métis Aboriginal Association
> Ontario Secretariat for Aboriginal Affairs
> Ministry of Children and Youth Services
> Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
> Ministry of Community and Social Services
> Statistics Canada
> Native Child and Family Services of Toronto
> Office of the Federal Interlocutor
> Urban Aboriginal Strategy

The Task Force oversaw the entire research project from the planning phase to the final reporting phase. Through a series of meetings in 2005–2006, the UATF chose five research sites; Sudbury, Ottawa, Thunder Bay, Barrie/Midland/Orillia, and Kenora. The Task Force also determined the province-wide research priorities and considerations noted in *Table 1A*.

The Task Force chose a community-based research approach and created Community Advisory Committees (CAC) in each of the research sites. The Task Force sought funding, hired the Research Director and Associate, and decided on the research tools for each site including: key informant interviews, focus groups, plenary sessions, literature reviews, life histories, and a community–wide survey. Once the local CACs were in place the Task Force met periodically, allowing the CACs to guide the research priorities and directions in a locally appropriate manner.

The firm Mukwa Associates was contracted to undertake the research for all sites. Mukwa Associates reported regularly to the Task Force and the Kenora CAC throughout the research. The contract for the research set out in its terms and conditions that the material produced as a result of the research agreement is the property of the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres.

METHODOLOGY: A COMMUNITY BASED APPROACH TO RESEARCH

2.1   The Kenora Community Advisory Committee

The Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres (OFIFC) invited representatives from Aboriginal agencies to an initial meeting to learn about the UATF and Kenora's inclusion as a research site. The Kenora Community Advisory Committee (CAC) was formed at an initial meeting in May 2006.

The composition of the CAC included the following members:

Don Coppenance	Ne-Chee Friendship Centre
Tanya LaForme	Ontario Métis Aboriginal Association
Vanessa Bennett	Ontario Métis Aboriginal Association
Martin Camerie	Kenora Métis Council
Anita Cameron	Ontario Native Women's Association

2.2   CAC local research priorities

The Kenora CAC began by reviewing the research priorities of the Urban Aboriginal Task Force Research Study and the literature from the local urban Aboriginal community. The CAC developed nine research priorities, as follows:

- racism/discrimination;
- service delivery to Aboriginal people (from Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations, as well as government);
- culture and identity;
- the emerging urban middle class;

- issues facing urban Aboriginal youth;
- issues facing urban Aboriginal women;
- issues facing Aboriginal men;
- poverty, homelessness, and mental health; and
- inter-generational impacts of residential school on survivors.

These research priorities complement several priorities identified by the Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS), such as service provision, culture, housing and government. Fortunately, many CAC members had involvement and expertise regarding urban Aboriginal issues from the UAS pilot project research, which they brought to the UATF research project.

The CAC met to hire the Research Site Coordinator (Tara Letwiniuk) and one Research Assistant (Fawn Wapioke), approve research tools, select and provide access to a diversity of community respondents, give feedback on the Final Report and communicate the findings to the community. The advice and direction of CAC members has been critical to the success of this research project.

2.3   Data gathering

Data collection, applying emergent-design research, included the methods recommended by the Task Force representatives (as listed above): key informant interviews, life histories, focus groups, and a community-wide survey. Community researchers conducted research from June 2006 until September 2006. The Research Site Coordinator and Research Assistant collected qualitative data through key informant interviews, focus groups, and life histories; and quantitative data was collected through the community survey.

The study included 280 respondents. The number of respondents varies by method and by question, based on how many people participated in any given method. All respondents always had the choice not to answer any question on any guide or in any group setting. An overview of the research methods is described in the following sections.

Kenora UATF research participants were predominantly Aboriginal (96%). This sampling was intentional, as the research sought Aboriginal participants to speak about their situation in Kenora. Non-Aboriginal respondents participated in the qualitative research through Aboriginal

and non-Aboriginal agency key informant interviews. Aboriginal respondents made up 100% of the quantitative research sample.

The research methods and the number of participants are shown in *Table 2A* below.

TABLE 2A **Sample of respondents per research method** (UATF)

Method/quantity	Sessions	Aboriginal respondents	Non-Aboriginal respondents	Total respondents
Key informant interviews	60	45	15	60
Life history	5	5	0	5
Focus groups	5	29	0	29
Community survey	n/a	186	0	186
Total	**n/a**	**265**	**15**	**280**

- 265 participants (95%) were Aboriginal respondents
- 15 participants (5%) were non-Aboriginal respondents
- 94 respondents (34%) participated in the qualitative research
- 186 respondents (66%) participated in the quantitative research

2.4   Interviews

Researchers developed six interview guides and the CAC approved them. The interview guides were structured, in that there was a series of set questions for participants to answer. The interview guides contained a mix of closed-ended and open-ended questions. The structured nature of the interview guide and questions did not prevent respondents from speaking outside of the question. Most commonly, research participants provided examples and stories to complement and expand their responses. Interviews were completed predominantly in individual settings, and in one instance, with three interviewees at once. Interviewees were recommended by the CAC or chosen by the researchers. Interviewees were sought because they met the criteria of the participant type (see column 2 of 2B). Participant numbers and type are shown in *Table 2B* below.

TABLE 2B **Sample of key informant interview respondents (UATF qualitative data)**

Interview type	Participant type	Aboriginal respondents	Non-Aboriginal respondents	Total respondents
Aboriginal agencies	Executive directors	20	0	20
Aboriginal agencies	Staff	19	2	21
Non-Aboriginal agencies	Executive directors	0	11	11
Youth	Youth coordinators	1	0	1
Government ministries and departments	Government representatives	0	0	0
Urban Aboriginal community	Community members	7	0	7
Total		47	13	60

- 47 key informant participants (78%) were Aboriginal respondents
- 13 key informant participants (22%) were non-Aboriginal respondents

Ethical research guidelines were developed and followed for the key informant interviews. These guidelines relate to a guarantee of confidentiality and anonymity for the research participants. In every instance interview respondents read an information letter and completed a consent form. Key informant interview participants were free to withdraw their consent at any time in the research process.

Interview analysis took place by thematic analysis. A team of researchers coded interview data using a coding manual developed by the researcher and vetted by the Research Director and Research Associate. Where applicable, researchers analyzed interview questions for frequencies and percentages of responses.

2.5 Life histories

Researchers completed five life history interviews with two women and three men, all long-time members of the urban Aboriginal community

in Kenora. Researchers are particularly grateful to these participants who generously shared their time and stories, which were at times difficult to tell. Life history participants received a $150 honorarium to recognize their contributions.

The life history guide was developed by the researchers: the CAC approved the guide and suggested participants. The life history guide was unstructured, using guiding topics for the respondents to speak to. The unstructured nature of the life histories made each one distinct, with respondents determining the foci and the emphasis placed on his or her story.

Ethical research guidelines were developed and followed for life history respondents. These guidelines relate to the research participants' confidentiality. Anonymity was not guaranteed, because of the detailed nature of the information about the individual's life; however, life history participants are not named in this report. Interview respondents read an information letter and completed consent forms, making explicit to the participant that anonymity was not guaranteed. The consent form also sought participants' permission to audio-tape the sessions. Withdrawal of consent was permitted at any time in the research process. None of the five respondents withdrew consent, and so all five life history interviews form part of the research data.

2.6 Focus groups

Focus group characteristics are that they have fewer than ten participants, use a non-structured approach, with the facilitator asking several broad questions, and they last from one to several hours. *Table 2c* below shows the sample of respondents for focus group sessions of the Kenora UATF research project.

The focus group guides were developed by the researchers, with input from the Research Director and Research Associate.

TABLE 2C **Sample of four focus group respondents**

Session type	Participant type	Aboriginal respondents	Non-Aboriginal respondents	Total respondents
Youth	Youth aged 14 to 30	8	0	8
Aboriginal women	Women aged 20 to 70	4	0	4
Residential school survivors	Aged 39 to 71	5	0	5
Homeless/street living	Women and men	7	0	7
Elders		5	0	5
Total		**29**	**0**	**29**

- 29 participants (100 %) were Aboriginal respondents
- 0 participants (0%) were non-Aboriginal respondents

2.7 Community survey

Researchers developed the survey, with CAC approval. Researchers conducted a pilot study with twenty participants. The researchers revised the survey for clarity and content, based on pilot study feedback and additional CAC vetting. The 10-page final survey consisted of a mix of 79 closed-ended and open-ended questions. The closed-ended questions required yes/no or forced-option choices. Open ended questions allowed for responses without prompts. The opening section of the survey contained three demographic questions on age, gender, and marital status.

Survey respondents received an information letter explaining the research, guaranteeing confidentiality and anonymity, and informing them of the option not to answer any question or to quit at any time during the survey. Respondents received a coffee coupon for participating.

Researchers approached CAC member agencies and other Aboriginal community organizations as survey sites. Researchers distributed surveys and, in most cases, were available to clarify any questions. Surveys

were also provided to organizations for distribution to staff and clients, without the researchers present. Individuals were asked to fill out a community survey in various public places such as shopping malls, at the National Aboriginal Day celebrations June 21, 2006, and at powwows across the Treaty #3 region over the summer of 2006. Thus the sampling techniques for the community survey yielded a high percentage of Aboriginal people associated with local Aboriginal agencies and attending community events.

Researchers analyzed the community survey data using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software designed for quantitative data analysis. Questions were run for frequencies, percentages of responses and cross-tabulations for the variables of gender, income, marital status and age.

2.8   Looking back, looking forward

This study of Aboriginal people in urban centres of Ontario was initially formed to update the 1981 Task Force. The data for the following chapters comes mostly from the qualitative and quantitative Kenora UATF research described above. Data from the 1981 study is not compared to data from the 2006 Kenora study: the earlier study aggregated local data and reported it at the provincial level. But between 1981 and 2006 there have been other localized research studies with Aboriginal people in Kenora. In the following sections and chapters of this report we integrate information from a UATF special run of the Kenora Statistics Canada 2001 Census data. This research is referenced as Statistics Canada 2006. As well, we build upon recent research done with the urban Aboriginal community of Kenora and relevant surrounding region. Specifically two studies are used: first, the May 2005 report entitled *A Sociological Analysis of Root Causes of Aboriginal Homelessness in Sioux Lookout, Ontario.* This report was commissioned by the Canadian Race Relations Foundation and sponsored by the Sioux Lookout Anti-Racism Committee and Nishnawabe-Gamik Friendship Centre; second, *No One Should Have to Live Like This,* which was commissioned by the Anamiewigummig Kenora Fellowship Centre. Both reports examined the growing problem of homelessness amongst urban Aboriginal people in communities in Northwestern Ontario.

The following chapters of this report explore the topics identified by the CAC using the methods described above. We begin by placing the UATF study into the context of Kenora and defining the urban Aboriginal population through data provided by respondents. It is important to note that this opening chapter is a snapshot of urban Aboriginal people over six months in 2006. The final chapter provides conclusions and recommendations from the study.

CONTEXT, DEMOGRAPHICS AND MOBILITY PATTERNS

I have been waiting a long time for someone to come and listen to us for many years. (ELDERS' FOCUS GROUP)

3.1   Placing the study in its urban context

Since its inception, the area surrounding the city of Kenora has played a unique role in the early history of Northwestern Ontario. This area has not only been a major water route and gathering place for the Anishinaabe people; the area also attracted the attention of early European settlers due to its strategic location and abundance of resources. Accordingly, the area around Kenora was of major importance during the fur trade and building of the national railroad connecting Eastern Canada with the West Coast.

The city of Kenora, comprising the amalgamated towns of Keewatin, Norman and Rat Portage, is built within the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe Nation that signed Treaty #3 in 1873. Currently, the population of Kenora is approximately 16,000 people but during the summer, with the influx of summer residents, that number triples to approximately 55,000. Not surprisingly, Kenora is not only a major hub for the seven First Nations that live within an hour's drive of the city, all with political affiliation to the Grand Council Treaty #3, but also for many First Nations in the far Northwestern area of the province whose political affiliation is with the Nishnawbe Aski Nation. As Northwestern Ontario's second largest city, next only to Thunder Bay, and because it is accessible by air, land and water, most of the 28 Ontario First Nations that have a political affiliation with the Grand Council Treaty #3 access the many commercial, educational, medical, and social services located in Kenora.

Historically, Kenora residents have relied upon the forest industry to provide employment. However, in recent years many of the mills and plants that had provided such employment have closed their doors due to a down-swing in the industry as a whole. These closures have resulted in a rise in layoffs and unemployment. Nonetheless, the importance of tourism should not be forgotten as many employment and commercial opportunities arise during the summer months.

Although some of the First Nations communities within an hour's drive of Kenora have their First Nation run primary school, most of the students from these First Nations access Kenora's secondary schools. In addition, Kenora has Confederation College which is a branch of the main campus in Thunder Bay. Confederation College offers post-secondary programs in many areas, including diplomas in Aboriginal specific areas, such as Native Child and Family Worker and Aboriginal Law and Advocacy. Many students travel from First Nations communities for education at high schools and Confederation College, far from their families. For many students it is their first time in the city. UATF research did not determine how many youth come in to Kenora to access secondary and post-secondary schooling.

Also within Kenora is the Lake of the Woods District Hospital that not only provides Western style medicine, but also contains the Native Healer Coordination Program. This program provides access to traditional Anishinaabe medicine and health practices for anyone requiring this service. The program has provided this service to First Nations patients at the Lake of the Woods District Hospital and to its referral population in the Treaty #3 area since 1982.

Given the close proximity of First Nations surrounding Kenora, the urban Aboriginal population in Kenora tends to be very fluid, even more than other nearby cities like Thunder Bay or Winnipeg. Some people come to the city and end up staying. Others stay to obtain a high school education, for example, and return home upon graduation. Some stay for a few weeks or months to be with family and friends. Many work in Kenora but live on reserve and commute daily or weekly.

With such a close proximity of First Nation communities surrounding it, and the availability of commercial, educational and medical goods and services, it is no wonder that according to the 2001 Statistics Canada Census and Aboriginal Peoples Survey, Kenora was the city in Ontario with the largest proportion (11%) of Aboriginal persons as part of the

city's total population. In comparison, the Aboriginal population of Toronto represents only 0.4% of that city's population.

The 2001 Statistics Canada Census identified 1,695 Aboriginal people living in Kenora. However, many people and organizations dispute this number as under-representing urban Aboriginal community members. Factors influencing this under-representation may include urban Aboriginal people who were incarcerated at the time of the Census, homelessness, non-Census participants, and/or residents who were not in the city at the time of the Census. The Census also does not capture those people who regularly access services in Kenora because those services are not available in the First Nation communities, or who commute on a regular basis for work, thus failing to provide a truly accurate picture of how or what urban Aboriginal services are being accessed or are needed.

Kenora has only one post-secondary institute, Confederation College. It is a publicly-funded, post-secondary institution with the main campus in Thunder Bay and area campuses located in Kenora, Dryden, Fort Frances, Geraldton, Marathon and Sioux Lookout. Confederation College offers a full range of programs and educational services with over 50 post-secondary diploma and certificate programs: Aboriginal Studies, Applied Arts, Business, Health Sciences, Technology and Skilled Trades and a new Applied Degree Program in Indigenous Leadership and Community Development.

3.2   Demographics

Sections 3.2 to 3.4 present a demographic profile of urban Aboriginal residents in Kenora with respect to gender, age, education and income.

3.2.1 Gender
The Kenora UATF respondents' gender profile is shown in *Table 3A.*

TABLE 3A **Gender profile of UATF respondants**

Respondent/method	Females	Males	Total
Key informant interviews (%)	61%	39%	100%
Quantitative date (%)	53%	47%	100%
Total	**57%**	**43%**	**100%**

As shown in *Table 3A,* 57% of all research respondents were female while 43% were male. This higher number of urban Aboriginal women respondents in the UATF research generally reflects the Statistics Canada Census data for Kenora. Within the Statistics Canada Census data for Kenora, 51.3% of people who identified as Aboriginal in the census were female while 48.7% of people who identified as Aboriginal were male (Statistics Canada, 2001).

The difference between the Census data and that collected in the Kenora UATF study cannot be easily explained. However, the difference may indicate that:

- women's issues are better documented in this report;
- urban Aboriginal men are not being reached through Aboriginal agency programs and services and through this research study;
- Aboriginal agencies in Kenora are proportionately staffed more with women than men; or
- there is heavy involvement of Aboriginal women in community development in Kenora

3.2.2 Education

Education levels are not only important to labour force participation, and therefore a means out of poverty for many Aboriginal people. Higher education levels also provide many intangible benefits including increased self-esteem. The data presented below draws from Statistics Canada 2001 Census data and the UATF qualitative and quantitative data, to portray improving but still low education levels for urban Aboriginal people in Kenora.

As can be seen in *Table 3B* on the next page, the 2001 Statistics Canada Census shows extremes within the levels of education for urban Aboriginal people of Kenora. In 2001, 47% of Aboriginal men had not obtained a high school graduation certificate. Thirty-nine percent of Aboriginal women had not obtained a high school certificate, while another 39% held trades, college or university certificate or diploma. The achievements of Aboriginal men and women are not comparable with their non-Aboriginal counterparts within the post-secondary categories. While more Aboriginal men (12%) had incomplete post-secondary education than non-Aboriginal men (4%), Aboriginal women within the same category at 8% are similar to their non-Aboriginal counterparts at 9%.

TABLE 3B **Educational attainment in Kenora**

Population 25 years and over by highest level of schooling, Kenora, 2001

	Aboriginal		Non-Aboriginal	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
	Percent			
Total	100	100	100	100
Less than high school graduation certificate	47	39	36	33
High school graduation certificate only	13	12	13	15
Some postsecondary education*	12	4	8	9
Trades, college or university certificate or diploma	25	39	33	30
University degree	2	6	11	13

* Some postsecondary education refers to those persons who pursued their studies past high school but who did not get a postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree. Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, 2001

Aboriginal men were also significantly less represented in the trades, college or university certificate or diploma category (25%) than their non-Aboriginal counterparts (39%); Aboriginal women were slightly more represented (33%) in the same category compared to their non-Aboriginal counterparts (30%). Fewer Aboriginal men and women held university degrees (2% and 6% respectively) than their non-Aboriginal counterparts (11% and 13% respectively).

According to this data from Statistics Canada, although Aboriginal women outstrip Aboriginal men when it comes to levels of post-secondary education, both genders lag behind their non-Aboriginal counterparts. The differences in the achievement rate for Aboriginal people in comparison to their non-Aboriginal counterparts may be explained in part by the impacts of poverty and lack of financial support.

Availability of funding is inarguably directly responsible for the lower levels of education for both Aboriginal men and women who come from families who simply cannot afford to send their children to college or university. As *Table 3F* shows, Aboriginal people in Kenora earn 36% less than non-Aboriginal people in Kenora, thus making financial assistance

- 39% of respondents had less than high school education; 57 respondents
- 20% of respondents had high school high school; 30 respondents
- 21% of respondents had some post-secondary education; 31 respondents
- 20% of respondents had completed post-secondary education; 30 respondents

Post-secondary degree **20%**

Less than high school diploma **39%**

Some post-secondary **21%**

High school diploma **20%**
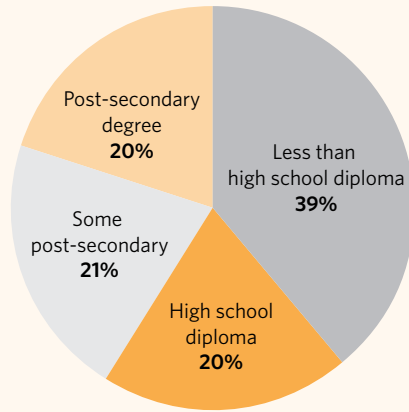
for post-secondary education crucial. However the research findings demonstrate that access to this essential financial assistance is limited by several factors. As one respondent to the UATF survey remarked,

> *My funding got cut by my band after my first semester. It was political as my family was in power but did not get re-elected.*
> (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

Kenora respondents repeatedly indicated lack of funds, from the Band Council or other sources, as the reason a diploma or degree was not obtained by those who had started their post-secondary education.

It should be noted that some respondents did not complete the educational questions, thereby resulting in a smaller sample than the total completed surveys.

In contrast to the 2001 Statistics Canada Census where on average 13% of male and female Aboriginal people completed high school, 20% of UATF survey respondents reported completion of secondary school as their highest level of education. The difference may indicate that secondary school completion for urban Aboriginal people in Kenora has increased over the past five years. Regardless, it should not be forgotten that a large percent (39%) of urban Aboriginal people in Kenora do not have high school diploma and only 1 in 5 (20%) have completed a post-secondary degree or diploma.

TABLE 3C **School attendance in Kenora**

Rates of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations, by sex and age group (Census 2001)

	Aboriginal			Non-Aboriginal		
	Both sexes	**Men**	**Women**	**Both sexes**	**Men**	**Women**
Age	**Percent**					
Total to 15+	18%	12%	24%	12%	13%	12%
15 to 24 years	46%	38%	56%	57%	26%	58%
25 to 34 years	13%	0%	25%	12%	12%	13%
Over 35 years	11%	7%	12%	3%	3%	4%

A shown in *Table 3c,* 2001 Statistics Canada data showed Aboriginal youth had lower school attendance rates at 46% than their non-Aboriginal counterparts at 57%. This difference was even more pronounced among young Aboriginal men at 38% in comparison to non-Aboriginal men at 56%. There was almost no difference between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal young women (Statistics Canada, 2006, Appendix, Table 3d).

TABLE 3D **Leaving school before completion (Quantitative data)**

Did respondent leave school?	No. of respondents	Percent
Yes	64	44%
No	80	56%
Total	124	100%

As noted in *Table 3D,* 44% of respondents left school before completing their high school diploma. Of these 124 respondents, 59 further provided the reasons for which they left high school before completing their diploma. The reasons are contained in *Figure 3B.* The main reason for respondents to leave school before completion of their high school diploma was related to family issues. As shown below in Section 3.4, the Aboriginal population in Kenora is quite young. Consequently, it may be possible to extrapolate that family issues such as lack of support or incidents of teenage pregnancies do not allow for people to complete their high school diplomas. Teen pregnancy was spoken of very clearly in the Youth Focus Group as a reason for both the non-

- 32% of respondents left school for family reasons
- 27% of respondents left school for health reasons
- 14% of respondents left school for work

Other **27%**

Work **14%**

Health issues **27%**

Family issues **32%**
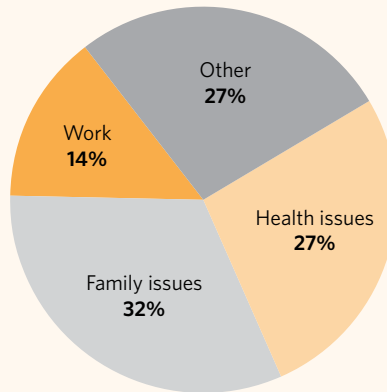
completion of high school and the lack of social and economic advancement of Aboriginal youth in Kenora.

> *The reason some youth drop out of school is because of the unstable home life and lack of encouragement from the school.* (YOUTH FOCUS GROUP)

> *Some youth have children early, so they are forced to drop out of school so they can support their child.* (YOUTH FOCUS GROUP)

Another notable finding is that Aboriginal youth leave school because they feel excluded. This exclusion is perpetuated by a predominantly non-Aboriginal student body, almost exclusively non-Aboriginal teachers and administrative staff, culturally irrelevant and inaccurate course curricula and overt and covert racism and will be discussed more fully in Chapters 6 and 8. This finding was made especially clear in the Youth Focus Group:

> *In elementary school you have to take French. It's hard to go from learning French in elementary school to learning Ojibway in high school.* (YOUTH FOCUS GROUP)

> *Teachers label you and as a result you have a more difficult time in school because of it.* (YOUTH FOCUS GROUP)

3.2.3 Age

Participants in the Kenora UATF research were strategically selected to be 18 years and older, for consent purposes. The research respondents' age range for the merged qualitative and quantitative data is shown below in *Table 3E.*

TABLE 3E **Age of respondents (UATF merged qualitative and qualitative data)**

Age	< 24	25–34	35–44	45–54	55–64	65+
Frequency	48	47	56	30	12	6
Percent	24%	24%	28%	15%	6%	3%

As shown in *Table 3E,* the majority of respondents were between the ages of 25 and 44, with the age group of 35 to 44 being the highest percentage responding. Overall, the UATF data confirms the general view that the urban Aboriginal population in Kenora is young.

Similarly, the 2001 Statistics Canada Census data, shown in *Figure 3c*, also demonstrates that the urban Aboriginal population in Kenora is much younger than the non-Aboriginal population. In 2001, half of Aboriginal people were under the age of 25. Only 4% of Aboriginal people were 65 years and over, compared to 16% of the non-Aboriginal population. Over one-third of Aboriginal people in Kenora were under the age of 15. For the reasons noted below, the Kenora UATF research does not capture the growing nuances of the Aboriginal population under the age of 18, as shown in *Figure 3c* from Statistics Canada 2001 Census.

While 2001 Statistics Canada data, as represented in the above chart, shows that Aboriginal people made up about 11% of Kenora's total population, it is notable that Aboriginal children represented about 20% of the city's children. In reviewing these figures it must be kept in mind that Census data population figures are widely acknowledged as an under-representation of the number of urban Aboriginal people in the city.

These figures demonstrate that Aboriginal youth will have a significant impact upon Kenora's future demographic profile. For the next fifteen years these children will be making their way through the education system, and into the labour force and the housing market.

FIGURE 3C **Population pyramid for the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations, Kenora, 2001**

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001
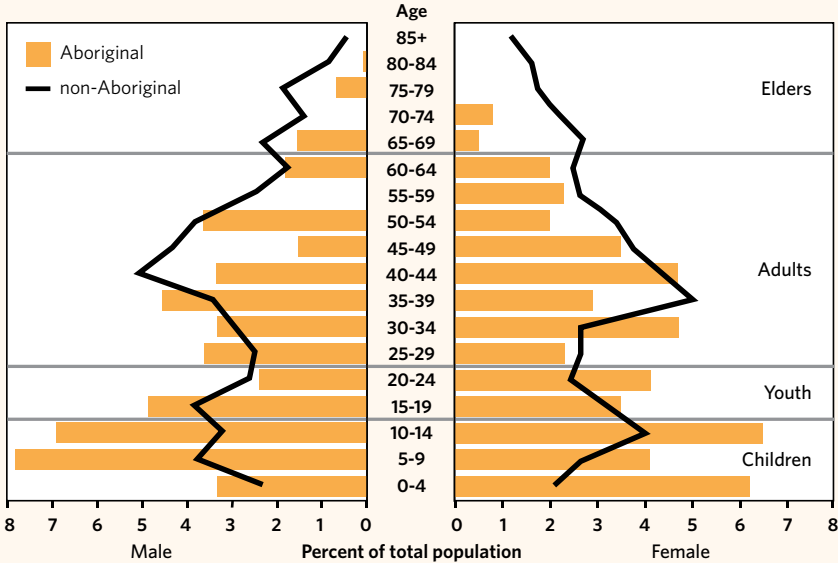
Aboriginal agencies, non-Aboriginal agencies and government have an immediate opportunity and a continuing obligation to nurture the potential of these youth in order to encourage their ability to make significant cultural, social, economic and/or political contributions to their families, Aboriginal nations and to Kenora. These children, like all Canadian children, have a right to access and experience the things necessary to their growth into healthy adults who lead fulfilling and productive lives.

UATF study findings cannot address this large and growing cohort of urban Aboriginal children and youth under the age of 18 because they did not participate in this research study. Despite this research limitation, recommendations and resulting programs and services must bear in mind the implications of the predominance of the young Aboriginal population of 2007 and beyond. The challenge is to work with Aboriginal youth to develop educational and employment initiatives that go beyond the current availability as will be discussed in Chapter 6.

3.3 Income levels for Aboriginal people in Kenora

Aboriginal people in Kenora earn less than their non-Aboriginal counterparts. According to 2001 Statistics Canada, Aboriginal people were earning only two-thirds of what non-Aboriginal people were earning in 2000.

The gap between the earnings of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people is smaller for women than it is for men. In 2000, Aboriginal women had median earnings of $17,284, which is 18% less than their non-Aboriginal female counterparts. Although Aboriginal men earned slightly more than Aboriginal women at $18,805, this represented 46% less than the median employment earnings of non-Aboriginal men in Kenora (Statistics Canada Census, Appendix, Table 6). Some of these differences may be due to different patterns of employment that are not explored here (e.g., full-time/part-time, seasonal or full-year/part-year).

In 2001, 15% of Aboriginal persons had total median incomes (from all sources) of $40,000 or over compared to 31% of non-Aboriginal persons. Whether measured in terms of average or median incomes, Aboriginal men had total incomes similar to those of non-Aboriginal women (Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, Appendix, Table 7).

FIGURE 3D **Median* employment earnings for the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations 15 years of age or older, Kenora, 2000**

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001
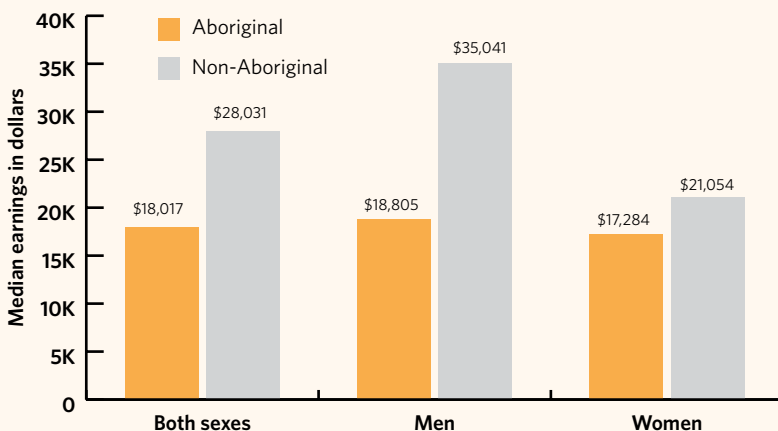
* The median refers to the point where half of the people are earning more and half of the people are earning less.

TABLE 3F **Median total income for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations, 15 years of age or older**

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001

Income	Aboriginal			Non-Aboriginal		
	Both sexes	**Men**	**Women**	**Both sexes**	**Men**	**Women**
	Percent					
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Under $20,000	56%	51%	59%	40%	28%	52%
$20,000 to 39,999	30%	27%	32%	29%	28%	30%
$40,000 and over	15%	21%	9%	31%	44%	18%
Average income	$21,956	$25,921	$18,262	$31,944	$39,437	$24,841
Median income	$17,954	$18,431	$15,345	$26,312	$34,868	$19,097

The information obtained through the UATF quantitative data for the Annual Family Income, as set out below, corresponds with the 2001 Statistics Canada Census data.

In comparing the data above to the data in *Figure 3E*, it can be seen that the annual family income is similarly distributed to the median total income for the Aboriginal population. Specifically, the larger percentage of Aboriginal

FIGURE 3E **Annual family income**

- the largest group, 55% of participants, reported earning less than $20,000 per year

- the next largest group, 27.5% of participants, reported earning $20–40,000 per year

- 7.5% of participants reported earning between $40–60,000 per year

- 10% of participants reported earning over $60,000 per year
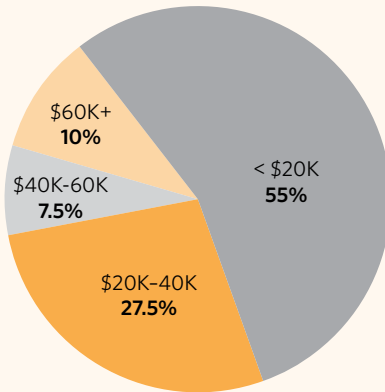
families, approximately 83%, has an annual income that is $40,000 or lower according to *Figure 3E*. In comparison, according to the data in *Table 3F*, 86% of the Aboriginal population has a total median income of $40,000 or lower.

TABLE 3G **Occupational distribution of the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations 15 years of age or older, Kenora, 2001**

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001

Occupation	Aboriginal			Non-Aboriginal		
	Both sexes	Men	Women	Both sexes	Men	Women
	Percent					
All occupations	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Management	7%	10%	4%	10%	10%	9%
Business, finance and administration	10%	4%	18%	13%	5%	2%
Natural and applied science	2%	4%	0%	4%	8%	1%
Health	6%	3%	10%	7%	3%	13%
Social science, education, goverment service and religion	17%	10%	25%	9%	6%	13%
Art, culture, recreation and sport	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	2%
Sales and service	34%	29%	43%	30%	24%	36%
Trades, transport and equipment operators	11%	20%	0%	18%	33%	2%
Occupations unique to primary industry	3%	6%	0%	2%	4%	1%
Processing, manufacturing and utilities	9%	14%	0%	4%	6%	1%

Another factor that affects employment earnings is occupation. *Table 3G* above contains data relating to occupation, obtained from the 2001 Statistics Canada Census. In 2001, 'sales and service' occupations topped the list for both

Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in Kenora (34% of Aboriginal people compared to 30% of non-Aboriginal people). However, the kinds of jobs people hold are profoundly shaped by gender. Men are much more likely than women to work as trades, transport and equipment operators or in occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities. Women are more likely to work in occupations related to business, finance and administration, to health and to social science, education, government service and religion. This holds true for both the Aboriginal and the non-Aboriginal population.

However, Aboriginal men are less likely than their non-Aboriginal counterparts to work as transport and equipment operators but more likely to hold occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities. Aboriginal women are more likely than non-Aboriginal women to have sales and service jobs and jobs in social science, education, government services and religion (Statistics Canada, Census, Appendix, Table 8).

Statistics Canada uses the concept of low-income cut-off (LICO) to indicate an income threshold below which a family will likely devote a larger share of its income on the necessities of food, shelter and clothing than the average family. In 2001, about one-quarter (24%) of Aboriginal persons were living under the LICO, compared to 7% of non-Aboriginal persons. Irrespective of the population group, a higher percentage of women than men were living below the LICO. *Figure 3F* shows the low-income cut-off for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, and was obtained from Statistics Canada, Census 2001.

FIGURE 3F **Low-income cut-off (LICO) for Kenora**

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001
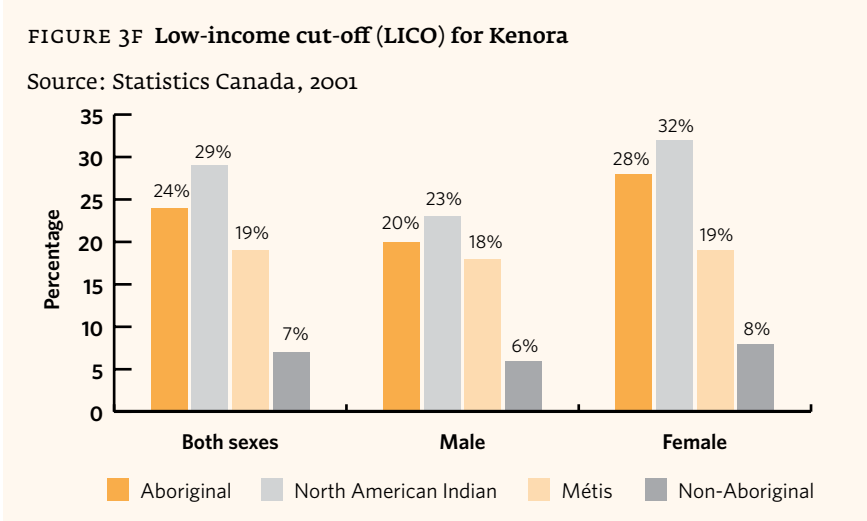
3.4 Residency in Kenora

When looking at the Statistics Canada 2001 Census population counts, it is important to remember that many people move between communities; for example, a person might move from a reserve community to a city and back again within the same year. The Census counts people where they are living on one particular day. In other words, on May 16, 2001 (the date of the 2001 Census) according to Statistics Canada there were 1,700 Aboriginal people living in Kenora. This count does not include all of the Aboriginal people who may have lived in Kenora at some point during the year, but only those who were living in Kenora and could be reached for the purpose of the Census and who identified themselves as Aboriginal on that day. It is also important to note that these figures do not include the significant number of Aboriginal people who live in Kenora but who are homeless, incarcerated or excluded because of other quality of life factors.

As shown in *Table 3H,* Aboriginal people move more often than non-Aboriginal people. In Kenora, 51% of the Aboriginal population lived at the same address five years ago, compared to 65% of the non-Aboriginal population. From 1996 to 2001, about 35% of Aboriginal people had moved at least once within Kenora, and 14% had moved to Kenora from another community, meaning another municipality, a reserve or settlement, or a rural area.

TABLE 3H **Mobility status of the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations 5 years of age or older, by sex, Kenora, 1996-2001**

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001

	Aboriginal			Non-Aboriginal		
	Both sexes	Men	Women	Both sexes	Men	Women
Residency status	**Percent**					
Total population (5 years and older)	100%	100%	100%	65%	66%	65%
Same address (dwelling)	51%	54%	57%	40%	28%	52%
Same community but different address (dwelling)	35%	36%	35%	24%	23%	25%
Different community	14%	10%	18%	11%	12%	10%

3.5 Housing

This section explores whether Aboriginal respondents rent or own their homes. As Statistics Canada (2006) notes, ownership or rental of housing is an important factor to consider when examing housing need.

TABLE 3I **Own or rent (Quantitative data)**

Do you own or rent	Frequency	Percent
Own	32	24%
Rent	101	76%
Total	133	100%

TABLE 3J **Own or rent, gender cross tabulation (Quantitative data)**

Sex	Own	Rent
Male	50%	42%
Female	50%	58%
Total	100%	100%

In Kenora, about 76% of respondents indicated they currently rent their place of residence and only 24% indicated they owned their own home. This finding is somewhat expected, given the income levels reported by survey respondents (see Section 3.5). *Table 3I* shows the quantitative data collected from UATF respondents. Of those that own their place of residence, 50% are male and 50% are female, as can be seen in *Table 3J*. Further, of those that rent their place of residence, 42% are male and 58% are female.

As the above information demonstrates, a great majority of all Aboriginal people in Kenora live in rental accommodations. This finding may be indicative of Aboriginal respondents' income levels; transience; seasonal/casual type of employment; lack of access to a down payment; temporary residence needs (for school or health of a family member); housing availability; eligibility criteria for loans and homes; overt, covert or systemic racism and/or conditions of homes available for purchase.

The Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) has housing programs available for First Nations residents on reserve, but similar programs are not available for Aboriginal people living in urban centres. Without increases to the income levels of Aboriginal people or some consistent housing program through which assistance is provided for housing purchase in Kenora, it seems likely that this rental trend will continue into the future. The issue of affordable quality housing is significant for Kenora. Aboriginal respondents consistently raised the need for safe, affordable housing in the qualitative research.

Affordable housing **22%** (131 respondents)
Transitional housing for men **10%** (61 respondents)
Transitional housing for women **10%** (58 respondents)
Housing locator services **9%** (56 respondents)
Middle income housing **13%** (131 respondents)
Home owner incentive **5%** (79 respondents)
Elderly housing **14%** (66 respondents)
Increased subsidized housing **11%** (66 respondents)

Percentage
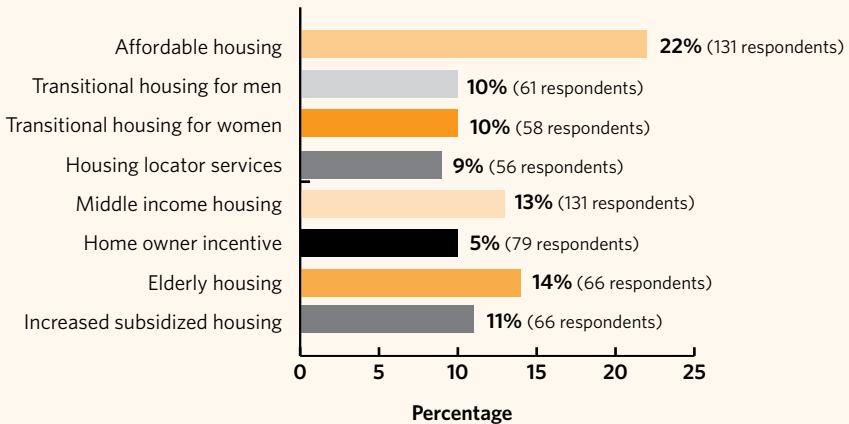
An issue for single mothers is affordable housing. In Kenora, you have to pay a lot for affordable, safe and comfortable housing.
(WOMEN'S FOCUS GROUP)

Paying a mortgage is cheaper than paying rent in this town. It would be fortunate for everyone to have the opportunity to buy a house but it is not that way. A lot of women end up in the Minto /Cambrian area (poor section of town). (WOMEN'S FOCUS GROUP)

*Figure 3*G shows the type of services respondents identified as required to meeting the housing needs of the Aboriginal population in Kenora. It should be noted that respondents were given the opportunity to choose from a number of types of housing services; consequently, the total number is based on multiple answers from individuals.

As demonstrated, the need for affordable housing is high on the respondents' list of housing services required. Given the few low-cost housing options available in Kenora, such a need is understandable.

TABLE 3K **Have you ever been homeless? (Quantitative data)**

Past homelessness	Frequency	Percent
Yes	58	38%
No	94	62%
Total	152	100%

A discussion relating to Aboriginal housing demonstrated that the issue of homelessness must be addressed. It is important to note that 38% of respondents reported that they have been homeless at one point in their life. While similar statistics are not available for the general population of Kenora, it is reasonable to infer that this percentage is probably higher than it is for the general population of Kenora.

3.6   Length of time living in the city

Figure 3H demonstrates the length of time that the respondent has lived in their current residence. The data demonstrates a large percentage of Aboriginal people have lived in the Kenora area for more than five years. However, this data does not provide any information as to the frequency of moving within the Kenora area.

It is interesting to note that Statistics Canada research has generally found that Aboriginal people move more often compared to non-Aboriginal people. According to the Statistics Canada 2001 Census, from 1996 to 2001 about 42% of Aboriginal people had moved at least once within Kenora, and 22% had moved to Kenora from another community, meaning another municipality, a reserve or settlement, or a rural area.

FIGURE 3H **Length of time lived in Kenora (Quantitative data)**

- highest percentage of respondents have lived in Kenora for 5 to 20 years

- lowest percentage of respondents have lived in Kenora for over 20 years
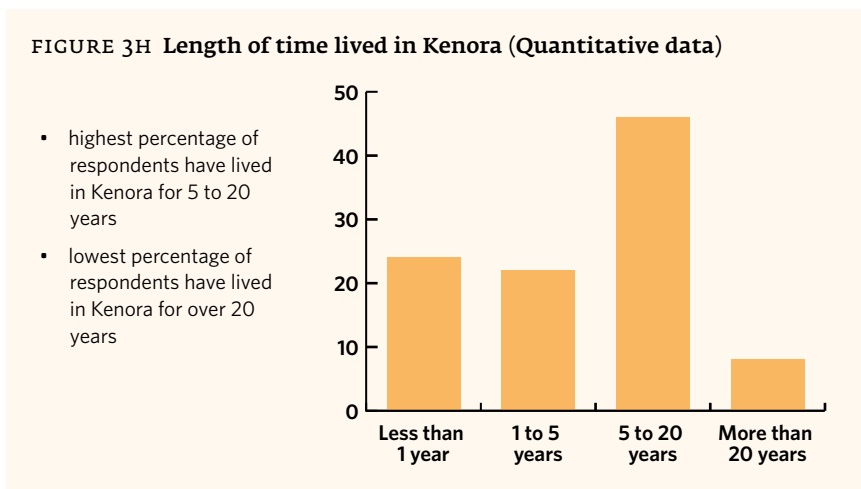
3.7 Maintaining links to the community of origin

The UATF survey findings showed that the Aboriginal people in Kenora maintain links to their communities of origin. As *Figure 31* demonstrates, approximately 84% of respondents visit their communities of origin at least once a year, with a large majority visiting multiple times. Such evidence suggests that Kenora's Aboriginal population is returning to their community of origin as a means of maintaining a connection with family and friends and Aboriginal culture, as well as a social connection with the community as a whole.

> *We always had a connection…we always had extended family who live at Whitefish Bay. I had older siblings who lived on the reserve. Aunties and uncles. And then of course, we always have that connection to the annual pow wow. So, we would go visit back and forth…and I still feel I have a pretty strong connection to the reserve to this day, even though I don't live there .* (LIFE HISTORY)

> *We live in town permanently. I used to go back home quite a bit when everybody was alive. I don't really have anything to go back to.*
> (LIFE HISTORY)

FIGURE 31 **Number of visits to community of origin (Quantitative data)**
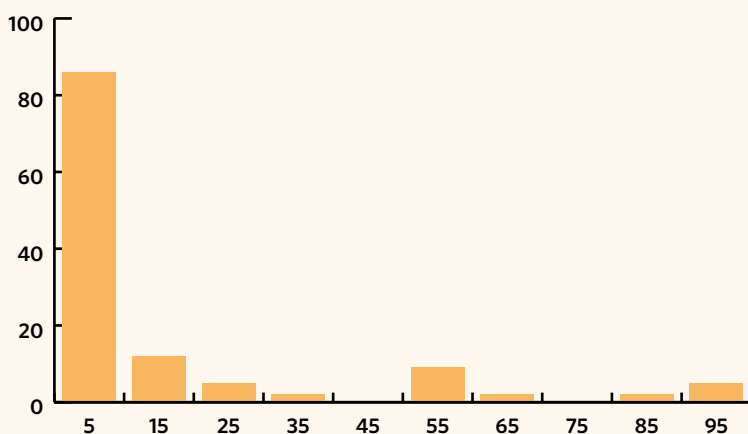
TABLE 3L **Maintain links to community of origin (Quantitative data)**

Do you maintain links to you community of origin?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	49	93%
No	4	7%
Total	53	100%

The high number of urban Aboriginal people who indicated in the community survey (quantitative data) that they visited their community of origin was similar to the data gained from the key informant interviews (qualitative data) contained in *Table 3L*. Ninety-three percent reported visiting their communities of origin. *Figure 3J* demonstrates respondents' reasons for visiting their community of origin.

This data demonstrates that the Aboriginal people living in Kenora not only maintain an important link to their community of origin by visiting on a regular basis, but that such visits are predominately related to social and cultural reasons. Such data indicates that the communities of origin continue to play a very important role to the urban Aboriginal population.

The data indicates that the community of origin plays a significant role in relation to the social and cultural lives of Aboriginal people even

FIGURE 3J **Reasons for visit to community of origin (Qualititative data)**

- 57% of respondents returned for family and friends; 119 respondents
- 21% of respondents returned for cultural reasons; 44 respondents
- 13% of respondents returned for holiday; 28 respondents
- 8% of respondents returned for employment; 16 respondents
- 1% of respondents returned for funerals and weddings; 2 respondents

Holidays 13%
Funerals and weddings 1%
Employment 8%
Family and friends 57%
Cultural reasons 21%
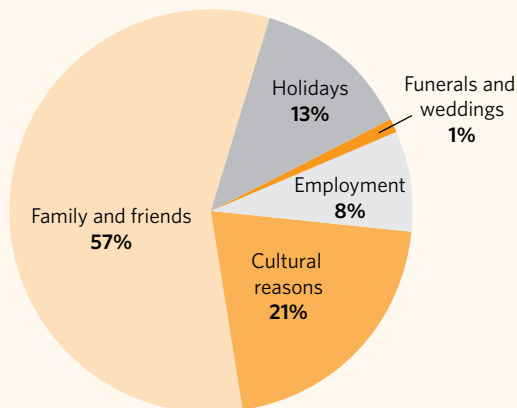
when they live in urban settings, and even, as indicated above in *Figure 3H,* when they have lived in an urban setting for a number of years. These findings speak to the duality of where "home" is for Aboriginal people living in Kenora and demonstrates the strength of the cultural connection that is maintained for urban dwellers. It may be that for some Aboriginal people the city provides for economic and service needs while the community of origin is where their social and cultural needs are met.

It is also important to note that the high percentage of respondents visiting and maintaining a link to their communities of origin may also speak to Kenora's proximity to several First Nations, such as Wauzhushk Onigum Nation, Grassy Narrows First Nation, Iskatewizaagegan #39 First Nation, Northwest Angle #33 First Nation, Northwest Angle #37 First Nation, Obashkaandagaang Bay First Nation and Ochiichagwe'Babigo'Ining First Nation. Due to the short distance between these communities and Kenora, respondents from these communities are able to travel to their community of origin within relatively short amounts of time by road—which could explain the higher percent maintaining links to their community. This proximity, combined with the high cost of housing in Kenora could explain why many Aboriginal people in Kenora decide to live on reserve but work in Kenora.

3.8   Health

> *Aboriginal people health care needs not being met, how to address this, it has to begin with reeducating parents. Questioning things, it all starts at home.* (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

Community survey participants were asked about how they maintain their health, and where they go to meet their health needs. *Table 3M* and *Table 3N* show the number of participants who have accessed a traditional healer and mainstream health services, respectively.

This data demonstrates that traditional healers and mainstream health services each play a role in the lives of a significant portion of the Aboriginal population in Kenora. Approximately 36% of respondents indicated that they have accessed a traditional healer, whereas approximately 78% stated that they have accessed mainstream health services.

TABLE 3M **Accessing an Aboriginal traditional healer (Quantitative data)**

Do you access traditional healers?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	58	36%
No	103	64%
Total	161	100%

TABLE 3N **Accessing mainstream health care (Quantitative data)**

Do you access mainstream health care?	Frequency	Percent
Own	128	78%
Rent	36	22%
Total	164	100%

Thus, more people access their health care from the mainstream health care system but a significant percentage use traditional healers.

From the quantitative data, of those accessing mainstream health services, 37% reported using a walk-in clinic, 30% reported using a doctor's office, 22% reported using the emergency room of the hospital, 11% reported using another source of health care, and 1% reported using an Aboriginal agency. Respondents were not asked to provide reasons for their health provider choices.

These findings of where Aboriginal people go to meet their health needs may relate to the issue that there are not enough family doctors to meet the need in Kenora. In addition, Aboriginal respondents in the qualitative research consistently made links between living conditions (housing), income levels, addictions and mental health. This connection was especially relevant for women and youth and is explored further in Chapter 6: Aboriginal youth in Kenora and Chapter 10: Aboriginal women.

SERVICE DELIVERY TO ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

There are two types of people: there are those that choose where they live and what they do, and then there are those that are put somewhere by the system. (ELDER'S FOCUS GROUP)

4.0 Background of Aboriginal social services

Not only has an infrastructure of Aboriginal social service agencies developed over the years to address the issues facing Aboriginal people coming to Kenora, mainstream agencies have also stepped up services to meet the needs of their growing number of Aboriginal clients. While such services are available for Aboriginal people in Kenora, the research has demonstrated that much remains to be done to fully meet the needs of Aboriginal people. In part, the problems continue to exist because of the significant number of Aboriginal people coming to the city, and the agencies having to exist and provide services with limited resources. As stated by one person working in a social service agency:

It is difficult trying to tackle long term issues with short term resources and projects. (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

Some (programs) are relevant and effective, but many government programs are not. Cutbacks reduce effectiveness and reach, and we are forced to provide services dictated by policy in Southern Ontario, not by need. (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

Respondents reported that often their initial experiences in the city were negative and set a pattern of challenges to overcome. Aboriginal newcomers often immediately face major struggles of adjustment to the city and struggle with finding housing, orientation to the city, transportation, lack of money and no support network. They sometimes possess little awareness of urban life and information about the limited services available to them. If this initial experience with the city is negative, long-term adjustment is more difficult. There needs to be some system in place to meet the immediate transition needs, the first phase of urban migration, to ensure that the adjustment process from the outset is a positive one. Ideally, the process should begin before the individual moves to the city. Information and orientation sessions about the city should be available in Aboriginal languages and in a user-friendly manner. This demonstrates the need for social service staff in First Nations communities to coordinate their services more effectively with agencies in Kenora. The strong links between the First Nation and city, as exhibited by respondents in the UATF study, shows that more cooperation and harmonizing of services would benefit Aboriginal people who move to Kenora.

A related finding pertains to the need to coordinate services between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal agencies in order to ensure an integrated and thorough approach to assist individuals and families during their initial transition to the city. Participants in the study spoke of the need for a seamless and holistic process to meet newcomers' needs when they first come, as well as to assist with their long-term adjustment. This process will require a great deal of coordination and cooperation among agencies, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, and the establishment of new working relationships.

For example, protocols and connections could ideally be established between Kenora and First Nations, as well as government ministries and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal agencies to establish programs to prepare potential newcomers to come to the city, then provide services when they first arrive including the following:

- initial meetings with newcomers;
- provision of basic needs such as housing and food; and
- provision of orientation to the city.

Finally, the study indicates that individuals need to have their long-term integration needs addressed. In this sense integration refers to integration into both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities in Kenora. UATF research found a large number of long-term Aboriginal residents of Kenora who continue to face serious problems and require programs and services. A different set of resources, skills and services are required, including: education, training, employment, peer mentoring, Aboriginal culture, affordable long-term housing, access to health services (including acquisition of a family doctor and access to traditional healers), adequate financial resources, recreational programs, the ability to cope with racism (and ultimately the removal of racism) and the development of stable healthy relationships.

The development of services that effectively address all three phases of urban Aboriginal life therefore include:

1. immediate transition;
2. short-term adjustment; and
3. long-term integration.

Clearly these phases require significant changes to the processes and services that are currently available. Many agencies, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, currently exist to meet many of these needs. But the kind of seamless, coordinated and integrated continuum of care articulated by participants as a need does not currently exist. Services are not effectively coordinated, there are gaps in services, and individuals sometimes fall between the cracks.

4.1   Evolution of Aboriginal agencies

Programs and services in Kenora have changed for Aboriginal people coming into the city. There are far more Aboriginal agencies available than there were in 1976 when the Ne-Chee Friendship Centre was the only Aboriginal agency in Kenora. Presently, there are eight Aboriginal service delivery agencies in Kenora that provide various services to Aboriginal people in Kenora.

An additional finding resulting from the research regarding Aboriginal service delivery agencies concerned the impact these agencies have had on employment opportunities and income for Kenora residents.

Aboriginal organizations in Kenora have become significant employers of Aboriginal people and provide the opportunity for employees of these agencies to enjoy a reasonable, middle class income similar to that of their non-Aboriginal colleagues.

Key informant interviewees and focus group participants also talked about service delivery from government and agency perspectives, while community survey respondents identified the services that they access. The following section on service delivery examines the current context of service delivery agencies and government particular to Kenora.

4.2 Major challenges in service delivery

As a Director my major challenge is always trying to tackle long term issues with short term resources and projects.
(KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

The general insecurity of government funding lessens (the) impact and effectiveness of what (the) program is trying to do.
(KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

It is obvious that effective, accessible and relevant service delivery is critical to the social, cultural, economic, emotional and physical well-being of urban Aboriginal people in Kenora. The Kenora research clearly demonstrates that despite the increase in service and delivery agencies, there remain major challenges to meeting the needs of urban Aboriginal people. As the above quotations indicate, government funding is often short term, impermanent, project driven and subject to cutbacks — thereby making it almost impossible for agencies to effect real change in the lives of Aboriginal people in Kenora.

In response to the question "What are the major challenges facing your organization today?" agency interviewees shared the following:

Adequate, reliable and consistent funding and less isolation — more partnering with other agencies. (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

Increased need for our services, increase cost to deliver those services, but no increases in funding. (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

Cutbacks in other sectors, education or housing, puts more pressure on us as clients come here to try and have those needs filled.
(KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

Funding instability, we see the claw-backs as an affront to nationhood.
(KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

Almost universally, responses to this question referred to funding challenges first and foremost. Other challenges included the struggle to be effective in the face of jurisdictional wrangling among the federal, provincial and municipal governments, and the false dichotomy created by on-reserve and off-reserve distinctions applied to funding and service delivery based on geographical boundaries. Much has been written on the lack of any coordinated urban Aboriginal policy or programming as well as unresolved federal, provincial, municipal and First Nation juris-dictional issues which adversely affect the Canadian urban Aboriginal landscape to a significant degree.

Urban Aboriginals (are) at a disadvantage because funding and services for community are based on on-reserve population, (and) don't account for urban population. (The service agencies) have had a hard time justifying finding support for them. In order to meet the needs of urban Aboriginal people, the social service agency may have to rob other programs. A decrease in support compounds the problem.
(KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

These jurisdictional complications have an even greater impact within Treaty #3 territory given the proximity of so many First Nations to Kenora and the resulting constant fluid movement of people between the city and their home reserve. Many people work in town but live on-reserve or work and live in town part of the year but live and work on-reserve for the remainder of the year. This situation of proximity creates a unique set of demands for Aboriginal social service agencies that are forced by governments to only deal in the absolute of on- or off-reserve.

4.2.1 Unique challenges facing non-Aboriginal agencies

Importantly, the respondents from non-Aboriginal agencies reported the percentage of Aboriginal clients served within a range between less

than 10% and up to 90%. As well, most non-Aboriginal agencies include Aboriginal people in their mandate to serve all people. Yet many non-Aboriginal agencies are challenged by the increasing numbers of Aboriginal clients, the lack of services in specific areas, a difficulty in recruiting Aboriginal staff and Board members, integrating Aboriginal cultural practices into the organization and service delivery, and the organizational challenges to culturally-competent service delivery, as the following respondents indicated:

> *(The agency) is far from Toronto, and (the people who make decisions regarding programs) have no clue (as to) what the hell is going on up north here.* (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

> *Isolation from community (presents a challenge) but (the agency) is now partnering more with other agencies.* (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

> *Lack of transportation for students (young mothers) to and from the program, especially from reserves as (the young mothers) cannot get a ride on the school busses because they have babies with them.* (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

> *Finding accommodations for homeless people. Places like the Adams Block and the Norman Hotel (both low-income residences) are gone. Landlords do not want to take in people because of the people's history.* (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

As the statements above demonstrate, non-Aboriginal agencies face a number of challenges in providing services to urban Aboriginal people. Although more and more Aboriginal people are accessing services from non-Aboriginal agencies, adequate funding to meet this increased demand for services is lacking. Such lack of funding is generally viewed as the decision-makers "down East" not being aware of the actual realities of Kenora, and thereby not developing programs and funding that meet the needs of these agencies. This is a serious challenge for non-Aboriginal agencies and Aboriginal clients alike because non-Aboriginal agencies in the UATF study provided programs and services that are not available through Aboriginal agencies, such as rehabilitation and sexual assault counselling.

In the youth worker interviews, respondents cited education and employment as the largest challenge facing their youth clients (27%) and like the respondents from Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal agencies, they also cited basic needs. In a related question, responding to gaps in services for urban Aboriginal youth, youth workers noted gaps that were very similar to the responses of the youth themselves in terms of the challenges in accessing employment and education, as well as addictions services. Youth perspectives on a range of topics are presented in greater detail in Chapter 6: Aboriginal Youth in Kenora.

A Government Focus Group participant echoed the need for transition services and linked those service needs to the growing youth population:

> *It seems that a lot of the emphasis should be around youth coming from remote areas they come here because they have children and they're very restricted in their communities. It would seem natural to have an emphasis on youth. The reason why people are moving is families. When I talk to people that's the reason. You're less likely to see older people moving to Kenora for services.* (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

Respondents spoke overwhelmingly of providing more supports for youth transitioning to adulthood, and transitioning to the city. Respondents described those transition needs in various areas—life skills, transitional housing, role models, employment opportunities, mentoring, educational counselling, emotional supports, apprenticeships, financial and basic needs provision. This describes a holistic approach to transitioning.

4.3 **Gaps in services**

Respondents from interviews, focus groups and plenary sessions identified gaps in services. In *Table 4A*, it is demonstrated that only 47% of respondents accessed services from an Aboriginal agency.

However, when asked the reasons why they did not access services from an Aboriginal agency, 40% of respondents indicated that there was a lack of need for such services, followed by a lack of awareness at 27%, the agencies as inaccessible at 19% and other at 14%, as shown in *Figure 4B*.

With these statistics in mind, it is clear that the rather low number of respondents accessing services from Aboriginal agencies does not reveal a preference for accessing services from non-Aboriginal agencies. Rather, it reflects a need to increase awareness of the Aboriginal services available and increase accessibility to them.

TABLE 4A **Access to Aboriginal agencies (Quantitative data)**

Do you access Aboriginal agencies?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	80	47%
No	89	53%
Total	169	100%

TABLE 4B **Reasons for not accessing Aboriginal organizations (Quantitative data)**

	Inaccessible	Lack of need	Lack of awareness	Other	Total
Frequency	10	21	14	7	52
Percentage	19%	40%	27%	14%	100%

As demonstrated in *Table 4c,* of those respondents that did access services from Aboriginal agencies, 79% accessed a health agency, followed by a social agency at 15%, and other agency at 6%. Clearly, the existence of Aboriginal health agencies within Kenora is very important to the Aboriginal population.

TABLE 4C **Types of Aboriginal organizations accessed (Qualitative data)**

	Social agencies	Health agencies	Other agency	Total
Frequency	11	55	4	70
Percentage	15%	79%	6%	100%

Respondents were asked to determine whether there were any gaps in the services available to Aboriginal people in Kenora. An overwhelming 76% of respondents stated that there were gaps in services for Aboriginal people in Kenora, while only 24% stated there were not any gaps. Similarly,

- 27% of respondents note a lack of general programs

- 21% of respondents note lack of funding for programs

- 4% of respondents note a lack of educational programs and employment

Employment **4%**

Education **4%**

Other **44%**

Programs **27%**

Funding **21%**
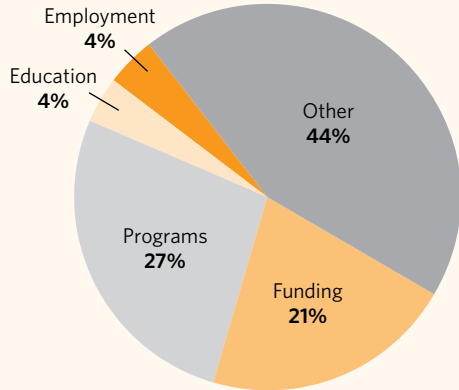
in the qualitative data, 76% of respondents also indicated there were gaps in services for Aboriginal youth, while only 24% stated that there were not any such gaps.

Respondents were further asked what types of gaps existed in the services available to Aboriginal people in Kenora, the results of which are shown in *Figure 4A*.

As demonstrated by the data above, additional programs were identified by 27% of respondents as required, followed by funding at 21%, education and employment at 4% each, and other at 44%.

Respondents also spoke to the gaps in services regarding youth such as mental health services, lack of educational support and no youth community centre since the Kenora youth community centre shut down in 2006 due to lack of funding.

When asked specifically how programs and services to Aboriginal people in Kenora could be improved, many respondents indicated that more funding is required to bring in more types of programs, and to strengthen the programs already available. As one respondent noted:

> *Long term (5 to 10 year) funding — only Friendship Centres have been successful in negotiating long term care, but rest are short term. Foster ways to lessen organizations competing with each other for funding. Coordinated efforts between organizations, programs and communities.* (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

Additionally, many participants spoke of the need for effective collaboration as there is too much waste through duplication of services between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal agencies. For example one interviewee pointed to the numerous employment and training agency operations in Kenora, specifically: Jobs Now, a federal government program; Ontario Works, a provincial initiative; Shooniyaa Wa-Biitong, which provides employment and training only to Treaty #3 citizens; the employment and training program at the Kenora Nechee Friendship Centre; and a similar program run through the Kenora Métis Association.

Another example of this type of duplication of services through agencies exists in relation to Tribal Councils. In Kenora there are three tribal councils: Bimose, Anishinaabeg of Kabapikotawangag Resource Council (AKRC); and Kenora Chiefs Advisory. Although each of these tribal councils represent different member First Nations, all of them offer very similar services.

Although many Aboriginal organizations based in Kenora have a mix of on and off-reserve programming, often the mandate of these Aboriginal organizations is to provide services exclusively to First Nations citizens of Treaty #3, despite that they are located in the city of Kenora. This creates a gap for Aboriginal people living in Kenora who are not members of a Treaty #3 First Nation, but who may be Métis, non-status or a member of a non-Treaty #3 First Nation, thereby leading to hardship and tension.

As this demonstrates, new service delivery models are required to adequately service and meet the needs of non-reserve based, non-Status and non-Treaty #3 urban Aboriginal people. It also shows, as mentioned previously, that there is a need for greater coordination of services between First Nations and urban Aboriginal agencies in terms of service delivery.

4.4   Growing cooperation among local aboriginal and non-aboriginal agencies

The balance of power between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations needs to be equalized. They don't recognize that they could also take direction from us. (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

Although there is a perception among Aboriginal respondents that non-Aboriginal agencies are out of touch with the needs of Aboriginal people,

there is also evidence of growing cooperation between Aboriginal agencies and non-Aboriginal agencies. Such cooperation is in response to service demands, insufficient funding and the growing cohort of young, poor Aboriginal people who are using agencies. Many of the interviewees at both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal agencies spoke to this growing cooperation generally and the improvement in collaboration, partnering and communication specifically.

However, it was made clear that the perception of Aboriginal organizations was that per capita they receive less funding than their non-Aboriginal counterparts. In addition, many respondents felt that as a means of cost cutting, non-Aboriginal agencies direct Aboriginal people to Aboriginal agencies.

It is clear that non-Aboriginal organizations do provide vital services that may not otherwise be available to Aboriginal people in Kenora. For example, Saakate House, a women's shelter in Kenora, has a large number of Aboriginal clients, many of them from First Nation communities surrounding Kenora, but does not receive any funding directly from these First Nations.

As was mentioned in the "Gaps in Service" section of this report, respondents believed that additional funding was required to bring in more types of programs, and to strengthen the programs already available. In the context of the growing cooperation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal agencies, such additional funding could be used to eliminate duplication and promote further cooperation by developing programs and services more relevant to the realities of the Kenora Aboriginal population.

4.5 Challenges to partnering

> *Non-Aboriginal agencies pass Aboriginal clients onto Aboriginal organizations. I don't want to say that it is racism.*
> (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

An important barrier to providing the continuum of care (i.e. a seamless and holistic process involving the meeting of immediate transition needs, short-term adjustment needs and long-term integration needs), as suggested by study participants, is the current lack of coordination

among agencies, especially among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal agencies. This is not unusual as organizations develop and grow based on meeting specific needs with specialized mandates that often correspond with funding priorities of governments. As governments do not address urban Aboriginal people specifically, agencies tend to chase dollars to meet their growing needs. The issue is particularly pressing now as an increasing number of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal agencies are servicing larger numbers of Aboriginal clients.

Many Aboriginal organizations believe they face additional challenges and demands in providing services compared to non-Aboriginal agencies, including:

- being in a disadvantaged position to compete for funding;
- receiving less funding than mainstream agencies to provide similar services;
- being burdened by elaborate application and reporting requirements;
- long delays in receiving funding from government;
- having to rely on short-term funding agreements;
- not having stable long-term core funding;
- having to be more accountable to the Kenora Aboriginal community; and
- providing a "culturally-based" approach to service delivery.

All of these factors require more time, effort and funding in order to offer appropriate and successful programs and services to Aboriginal people. The competition for funds due to government mandates and funding requirements also contributes to the lack of coordination among agencies.

4.6   The Priorities of Government

> Some (programs) are relevant and effective but many government-set programs are not. Cutbacks further reduce effectiveness and reach, and we are forced to provide services dictated by policy in Southern Ontario, not by need. For example, Ontario Works is increasingly intrusive and restrictive and provides not even enough assistance for the basics.
>
> (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

Both federal and provincial governments fund programs and services pertaining to urban Aboriginal people. For example, according to the Government of Canada, Urban Aboriginal Strategy, 2006, the federal government estimates that it invests approximately $270 million annually directly or indirectly in urban Aboriginal programming spread across 22 federal departments and agencies and through some 80 programs. The Urban Aboriginal Strategy reports that the federal government also recognizes some important issues that need to be addressed, including:

- ongoing jurisdictional confusion among the three levels of governments;
- numerous program priorities but limited funding capacity; and
- no single federal department with a mandate for urban Aboriginal issues.

Consequently, there is "a complex patchwork of individual programs and initiatives" which is "frustrating Aboriginal organizations, communities, governments and other partners" (Government of Canada, *Urban Aboriginal Strategy,* 2006, p. 7).

In 1998, the Government of Canada created the Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS) to work with partners to better address the serious issues facing urban Aboriginal people. Through a series of pilot projects in 12 cities across Canada (not including Kenora) the UAS funds programs and services relating to:

- improving the delivery of programs and services;
- Aboriginal organization capacity building;
- research;
- horizontal co-ordination among federal, provincial, municipal governments and Aboriginal organizations; and
- advocacy.
  (Anderson-Gill and Associates, *Urban Aboriginal Strategy Pilot Projects Formative Evaluation: Final Report,* 2005)

Similarly, the Ontario government has recognized the need for a new approach to Aboriginal people in the province, one that "calls for working together with Aboriginal people to build this relationship and through it build productive partnerships, collaborate on key initiatives and achieve real progress on shared goals" (Government of Ontario, *Ontario's New Approach to Aboriginal Affairs,* 2005, p. 1).

The provincial government funds a number of programs that relate to urban Aboriginal people, including: the Akwe:go Urban Aboriginal Children's Program in partnership with the OFIFC in Friendship Centres in 27 communities; six designated Aboriginal Children's Aid Societies; the Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy which funds several urban projects including the Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program; the Aboriginal Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and Child Nutrition Program; the Alternative Secondary Schools Program in eight Friendship Centres in Ontario; the Curriculum Review Project; the Multi Purpose Aboriginal Youth Centre Initiative; the Best Start Program; the Early Years Program; and the Community Action Program for Children (CAPC).

Despite efforts to improve, respondents in the study indicated that the cooperation among agencies shown at the community level could be significantly improved at the government level. Agency respondents talked about government needing better horizontal coordination across federal departments and provincial ministries, as well as better vertical coordination between levels of government. Both the federal and provincial governments recognize the need for clearer jurisdiction and better coordination of programs and services, and have committed themselves to work towards that goal. "The province will work with the federal government to foster a more constructive and co-operative relationship on Aboriginal matters." (*Ontario's New Approach to Aboriginal Affairs,* p. 4).

4.7   The Issue of Funding

Urban Aboriginal agencies are at a disadvantage because funding and services are based on on-reserve population and does not truly account for the urban population. (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

The general insecurity of government funding lessens the impact and long term effectiveness of what a program is trying to do. (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

All levels of government provide funding, directly and indirectly, for urban Aboriginal people. Funding of service delivery agencies can take many forms, including: population based; need based; formula driven; proposal based; and core funding. In terms of access to funding potential, the qualitative research revealed that non-Aboriginal agencies have more

funders per agency than Aboriginal agencies. In addition, more funding comes from other sources, particularly the local DSSAB, Municipality, Trillium Foundation, and the United Way — none of which reportedly fund any of the Aboriginal agencies in which the UATF research respondents work. Importantly, however, one non-Aboriginal agency receives First Nations funding.

Significantly, 92% of those respondents from Aboriginal agencies who were not satisfied with their funding responded to questions related to the funding process and amount of funding.

CULTURE AND IDENTITY

5.1 The challenges of being urban and Aboriginal

There is a sense of non-belonging for urban Aboriginal people. The living conditions on some reserves are really bad. When you ask for support from you community it is never given because you live off reserve.
(ELDER'S FOCUS GROUP)

It was really, really hard for me to accept being Indian because growing up on the reserve gave me a certain point of view, and then living off reserve gave me a certain point of view ...there was part of me that believed that being Indian wasn't necessarily a good thing. (LIFE HISTORY)

Kenora respondents consistently spoke about the importance of culture to the well being of urban dwellers, but just as consistently spoke about the lack or loss of culture experienced once off- reserve. The respondents from the community survey, key informant interviews, focus groups and life histories spoke about culture in a great diversity of ways. Patterns of responses did, however, emerge around the following themes:

- the importance of culture to overcoming the many negative impacts of the larger society, e.g. residential school, racism, etc.;
- the importance of strong culture to a healthy sense of identity;
- the misuse use of culture or spirituality by some Aboriginal people;
- the obvious omission and lack of integration of local Aboriginal culture within the city;
- the lack of central and open cultural events in Kenora; and
- the loss of language in the urban setting, especially evident among youth.

A very important finding from the study related to how important maintaining and enhancing Aboriginal language, culture and identity is to urban individuals. A related finding pertains to the frequent identity confusion that individuals experienced, especially in early life, as a result of many complex factors such as the effects of residential school, family dysfunction and racism. In addition, the desire to "better oneself" often leads to frustration when other Aboriginal people engage in activities that perpetuate stereotypes about Aboriginal culture and identity. As one of the respondents explained:

> Today's generation is becoming divided between those who choose to better themselves and seek higher goals and those who choose to engage in activities that perpetuate the image of the 'drunk Indian' and it frustrates a lot of people. (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

This 'crabs in the bucket' mentality was expressed by respondents, not only as a reason for identity confusion, but as a reason as to the manner in which Aboriginal people can be held back by other Aboriginal people.

Many individuals and organizations in Kenora continue to play a significant role in assisting individuals on their life's journey towards personal stability, healthy relationships and cultural awareness. However, the research also discovered that there are many people suffering from personal problems with little support from relatives, friends or mentors and who are alienated from the Aboriginal community and their Aboriginal culture. Notably there is a significant population of homeless and incarcerated persons who have little or no cultural support.

Such alienation severely limits access to Aboriginal culture within public forums, thereby leading to confusion regarding Aboriginal identity.

> Native culture is under the blanket, meaning it is not really expressed in public, more in private. (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

> There are not enough opportunities for youth to express their culture. (YOUTH FOCUS GROUP)

There were also individuals who have successfully adjusted to life in the city, often long-term residents who are part of the Aboriginal "emerg-

- 83% of respondents identified as being First Nation; 147 respondents

- 4% of respondents identified as being Métis; 7 respondents

- 2% of respondents identified as being Inuit; 3 respondents

Other
2%

Métis
4%

Inuit
2%

First Nation
92%
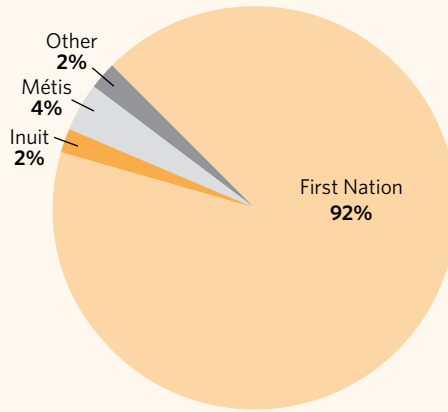
ing middle class" who are interested in maintaining (or reconnecting) with their culture but who do not participate in the Kenora Aboriginal community. Many do not feel comfortable going to existing Aboriginal organizations which they perceive as oriented to social services and only for people who are 'at risk.'

> *(Aboriginal middle class) involvement is limited. There isn't an Aboriginal component to mainstream Kenora activities like Harbourfest. But the Aboriginal community needs to take some ownership over this, to create that and share.* (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

All survey respondents were asked how they identify ethnically. Their responses are shown in *Figure 5A* above and *Figure 5B* on the following page.

Of those 160 respondents that answered the question regarding their ethnic identity, 52 further answered in relation to which First Nation ethnicity they identified.

As these figures demonstrate, the highest number of respondents identified their ethnicity as "First Nation," and of the First Nation ethnicity, Anishinaabe was the highest—which is not surprising given that Kenora is located in the middle of Treaty #3 territory. Indeed, during interviews many respondents indicated the importance of knowing the

history of the Anishinaabe Nation in Treaty #3 as informing their iden-
tity. As one respondent stated:

> *To have connection to identity — to become aware of where they come*
> *from, where their ancestors have been. When things change over time it*
> *helps them cope.* (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

Several respondents reported struggling with their Aboriginal identity
in their youth, often being ashamed of being Aboriginal. Most of these
respondents indicated that such shame was a result of racism shown by
non-Aboriginal people, but also sometimes from their own parents.

> *Sometimes we were called dirty Indians. We were called names and stuff*
> *like that. And so it did an awful lot for a kid's self esteem…there was this*
> *one family that was very, very racist. They made it known that they did*
> *not like Indians and walking down the road after school to go home she*
> *would say "Why don't you go back to where you came from?" Meaning*
> *me as an Indian person had no right to live in town.* (LIFE HISTORY)

> *Some of the things he said to us when we were growing up were that we*
> *were dirty Indians, we were little savages, we were dumb Indians. Things*
> *like that. Things that a father shouldn't be calling his own kids….So*

FIGURE 5B **First Nations tribal affiliation identity (Quantitative data)**

- most First Nations respondents (90%) identified as being Anishnawbe; 47 respondents
- 4% of First Nations respondents identified as being Cree; 2 respondents
- 2% of First Nations respondents identified as being either Oji-Cree, Haundenosaunee/Iroquois, or other; 1 respondent for each category

Anishnawbe **90%**

Other **2%**

Cree **4%**

Oji-Cree **2%**

Haudenosaunee or Iroquois **2%**
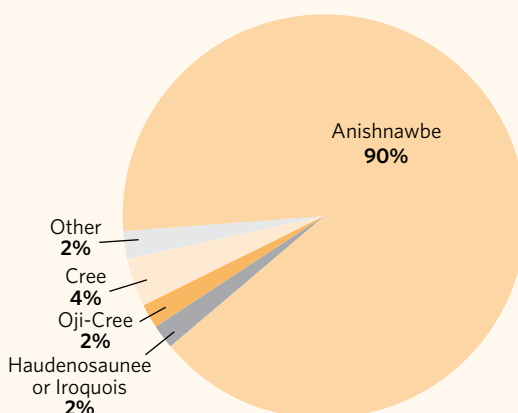
you kind of end up with some weird thought processes about who you are. (LIFE HISTORY)

Through various support mechanisms, most of the respondents were able to overcome many of these challenges and become proud of their Aboriginal identity.

I turned to the traditional way to clean me up. I went to Winnipeg to see a medicine man. I have been following the traditional way for about 5 years. I have started healing some people. (LIFE HISTORY)

In addition, some respondents spoke about the identity confusion caused by being raised in Kenora as opposed to on a First Nation:

So it was one of those situations where I kind of felt not sure where I belonged. When I was living back on reserve, even though I had friends and family there, I always felt that there was something different about me. I was treated sometimes differently, but even though I spoke the language …I always felt different. When we lived off reserve there was a feeling again, not really quite sure where we belonged. (LIFE HISTORY)

5.2   Cultural identity expression

When asked how they express their cultural identity, one respondent stated:

In my beliefs, how I live my life. Through my work at an Aboriginal organization and my volunteer work at the Métis Centre.
(KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

In expressing and participating in their traditional culture, 85% of the respondents reported that they participated in traditional activities while only 15% indicated that they did not. *Figure 5*c shows the range of activities of those respondents who participate in their traditional culture. It should be noted that respondents were given the opportunity to choose from a number of options, and consequently, the total number is based on multiple answers from individuals.

FIGURE 5C Participation in types of Aboriginal-sponsored events (Quantitative data)

National Aboriginal Day — **18%** (77 respondents)
Pow wows — **28%** (119 respondents)
Artistic pursuits — **5%** (21 respondents)
Traditional ceremonies — **17%** (74 respondents)
Feasts — **20%** (86 respondents)
Aboriginal sports — **9%** (37 respondents)
Other — **2%** (10 respondents)

Percentage
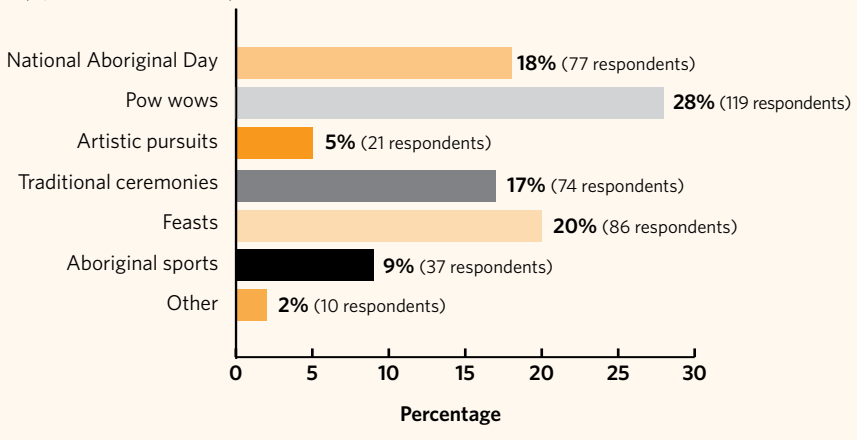
As demonstrated in *Figure 5c,* 66% of responses concerning traditional Aboriginal culture included spiritual events and practices such as traditional ceremonies, feasts and powwows. Some respondents from Aboriginal agencies noted that traditional culture is practiced within organizations through Elders, teachings, smudging and programs offered. In Kenora, the cultural activities on National Aboriginal Day represented a significant opportunity for cultural participation and expression in this urban setting.

> *Youth express their culture by attending pow-wows, sweats, Aboriginal events and by engaging in such activities as drumming, hunting and fishing.* (YOUTH FOCUS GROUP)

5.3 Languages Spoken

The survival of Aboriginal languages is of concern to many Aboriginal people, as the language is a transmitter of the culture from which the language arises. As shown in *Table 5A*, the majority of respondents felt that revitalizing Aboriginal languages is important.

The majority of respondents replied that they spoke an Aboriginal language. Although the type of Aboriginal language spoken was not

TABLE 5A **Importance of language revitalization** (Quantitative data)

Is language revitalization important?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	50	83%
No	10	17%
Total	60	100%

TABLE 5B **Ability to speak an Aboriginal language** (Quantitative data)

Do you speak an Aboriginal language?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	108	64%
No	61	36%
Total	169	100%

captured in the UATF quantitative data, a reasonable assumption can be made that the majority of respondents speak Anishinaabemowin (Ojibway or Anishnaabe language), based on the results of First Nation ethnicity.

Just as the percentage of respondents who spoke an Aboriginal language was fairly high, the level of proficiency was fairly high as well. As demonstrated in *Table 5c* below, 53% of respondents indicated that their level of proficiency was either good or excellent. However, 47% of respondents indicated that their level of proficiency was fair or limited. While these statistics are encouraging in one sense, they also demonstrate a potential need for services to raise the level of proficiency.

TABLE 5C **Language proficiency (UATF quantitative data)**

Range	Excellent to very good	Good	Fair to limited	Total
Frequency	39	23	56	118
Percentage	33%	20%	47%	100%

Respondents were also asked where they use their Aboriginal language. *Figure 5D* demonstrates that the use of Aboriginal languages takes place within more private settings, such as in the home, in spiritual pursuits and within the home community. It would be reasonable to infer that if an urban Aboriginal person did not have access to these more private settings, particularly traditional ceremonies and their home com-

FIGURE 5D **Usage of Aboriginal languages by speakers of Aboriginal languages**

- 28% use Aboriginal language in the home
- 26% use Aboriginal language in their home community
- 23% use Aboriginal language at traditional gatherings
- 13% use Aboriginal language at work
- 11% use Aboriginal language at school

Home
28%

Work
13%

Traditional gatherings
23%

School
11%

Home community
26%
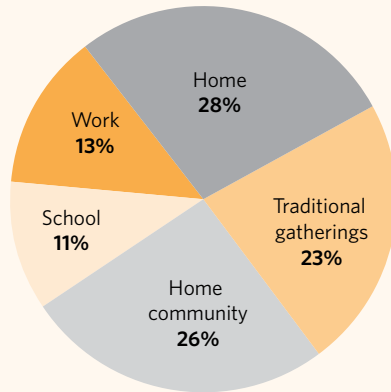
munity, the ability to learn and practice their Aboriginal language would not be present. This highlights the need for services for urban Aboriginal people to learn and practice their Aboriginal language, as well as the need for greater prominence and reflection of Aboriginal culture and society within the urban setting of Kenora.

5.4   Non-traditional cultural activities

TABLE 5D **Non-traditional cultural activities (Quantitative data)**

Do you participate in non-traditional activities?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	31	84%
No	6	16%
Total	37	100%

Of the respondents who replied to the question, a majority (84%) indicated that they participated in non-traditional Aboriginal cultural activities, while only 16% indicated that they did not. *Table 5D* provides a breakdown of the participation levels across a diversity of activities.

Included within these non-traditional activities were social gatherings, music, and arts and crafts.

FIGURE 5E **Participation in traditional Aboriginal culture, by income**
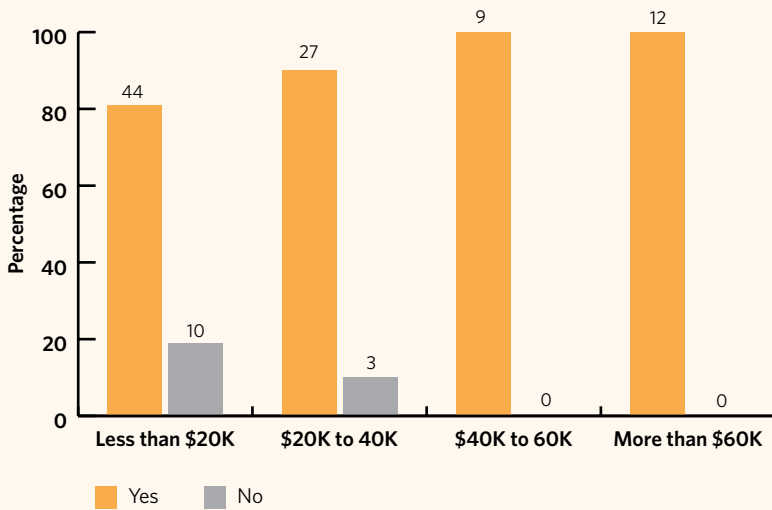
Figures on top of bars indicate number of respondents in each category

5.5 Income and Aboriginal culture

As demonstrated in *Table 5E,* when cross-referenced with income levels, it was found that as Aboriginal residents in Kenora earn more their participation in traditional culture and Aboriginal events increases.

Such an increase may be attributed to the basic needs of these individuals being met because of higher income, thereby freeing up time to engage in such activities.

ABORIGINAL YOUTH
IN KENORA

Youth are faced with racism when going into shops in Kenora. The manager will watch Native youth more than others.
(YOUTH FOCUS GROUP)

The barriers to success for Aboriginal youth living in Kenora would be family dysfunction — parents who don't care enough.
(KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

The Native people living on the streets of Kenora make us ashamed of who we are. (YOUTH FOCUS GROUP)

Aboriginal youth don't feel comfortable applying for jobs in Kenora. It's like employers don't care when they get resumes from Aboriginal people. They don't bother to read it or to give it a chance. (YOUTH FOCUS GROUP)

6.1 Youth Mobility

Economic research tends to show a general out-migration of youth from Kenora, yet Statistics Canada research shows that in 2001 almost half of the Kenora Aboriginal population of 1,695 was under the age of 25 (Statistics Canada, 2006). This trend in Kenora's Aboriginal population follows the general trend in the rest of Canada; generally, the Aboriginal population is young and growing.

This growing Aboriginal youth population and the larger community are challenged by disparities in high school completion levels and unemployment rates. For example, according to the Statistics Canada Census

data for 2001, the unemployment rate for the Aboriginal population was 15.9% — well above the percentage for the general population of Kenora.

As Aboriginal youth are moving to Kenora from outside communities and staying in Kenora, and as Aboriginal youth are born and raised in the city, the question of what educational and economic responses are necessary to accommodate this growing population and the specific challenges that they face must be explored. This section on youth provides the findings from interviews, focus groups and plenary sessions that focused on youth, with an emphasis on education and employment.

6.2 Youth and education

We drop out of school because of an unstable home life and lack of encouragement from the school. It is like the teachers already expect you to fail. (YOUTH FOCUS GROUP)

My son had a fight with the vice principal about racism. They were trying to teach him religion or something and my son said he didn't want to learn that. I said to the vice principal " How many Aboriginal people to you have working here" He goes "None." I said exactly. Why can't you just start with one? They can be a receptionist or custodian. How many students to you have here that are Aboriginal?" The principal replied there were about 30%. And then I said "Why can't you set aside one day to teach the non-Aboriginal kids about our culture? That principal said "Oh we have no time for that." (LIFE HISTORY)

The issue of education was found to be the primary concern facing Aboriginal youth in Kenora. As *Figure 6A* demonstrates, lack of education and employment skills is the major challenge facing Aboriginal youth in Kenora. Obtaining an education and employment skills are important for youth because each will have a large affect upon other aspects of a person's life, such as choice in housing, health, and as we have seen above, in the pursuit of traditional cultural activities.

I think if they had native teachers…that there would be a lot of attitude changes within the young native people or even the non-Aboriginal people. It would make their experience better with they are there.

Nowadays there's a lot of young native people that go and have degrees in teaching. But they're not unfortunately being hired by the school board in Kenora to teach. (LIFE HISTORY)

Participants in the Youth Focus Group identified the following challenges:

- **Racism and discrimination:** The youth spoke about racism they faced, especially from the police, recounting several encounters with police in which violence was done to the youth by the police. Youth Focus Group participants agreed that they had not experienced much overt racism at high school from other students, but that discrimination among Aboriginal students in school does exist. One participant said, "It is a rivalry for which reserve is better, for dominance, people usually only pick on people from other reserves."
- **Gang violence:** Youth reported there is a non-Aboriginal gang in Kenora called the KIB (Kenora Indian Beaters), who commit hate crimes and go after Aboriginal youth and adults when found alone on the streets.
- **Drugs and alcohol:** Youth Focus Group participants report substance abuse as a major challenge today, due to increased accessibility. As one participant said, "Drugs and alcohol are everywhere. It is something you can get whenever you want…whatever kind you

FIGURE 6A **Challenges facing Aboriginal youth (Quantitative data)**
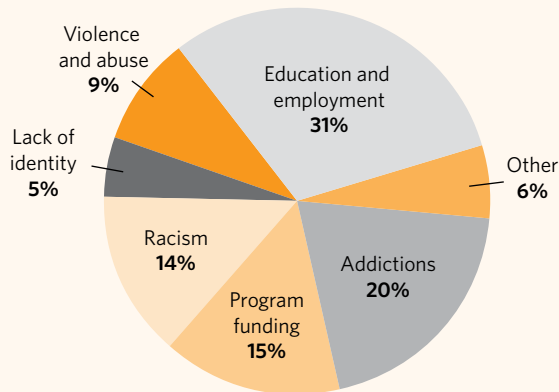
want. Youth just used to use weed a few years ago … now they're using all kind of drugs." Youth Focus Group participants listed several other reasons for substance abuse, including: problematic home life, parents that use drugs and alcohol, and the promotion of drugs and alcohol in the music that youth listen to, stating that rap music glamourizes that type of lifestyle and youth try to emulate rappers.

- **Abuse:** Sexual, physical and mental abuse is a predominant issue for Aboriginal youth living in Kenora. Youth spoke of predatory adults as being a big part of this problem. They also indicated there a lack of supports to deal with this.
- **High school drop-outs:** Youth Focus Group participants indicated that in their current experience, most Aboriginal students drop out before finishing high school and listed the main reasons for this as: drugs, lack of personal motivation, boredom, course curriculua that do not reflect Aboriginal reality or culture, all "white" teachers and administration, difficulties with teachers, pregnancy and child-rearing responsibilities.
- **Language and culture:** Although all eight of the Youth Focus Group participants stated at least one of their parents speak their mother tongue, only six of them indicated they know some of their language and all of those six stated they were not fluent. They spoke about the requirement to take French in school but not Ojibway, and how it is hard to switch from learning French to Ojibway language (Anishnaabemowin). One participant said, "There are not enough opportunities for youth to express their culture in Kenora. It's also difficult for youth to get involved in non-traditional events like sports because you have to have money and equipment."

According to Statistics Canada, national school attendance rates among Aboriginal youth (15 to 24 years of age) increased significantly from 1981 (46%) to 2001 (64%). Nonetheless, in 2001, 34% of Aboriginal men and 39% of Aboriginal women 25 years of age and over had less than high school as their highest level of schooling. The 2001 Aboriginal Peoples Survey found that among the off-reserve Aboriginal population in Canada, men and women had different reasons for not completing high school. For young Aboriginal men aged 15 to 34, the most commonly reported reason was "bored with school," while "pregnancy/taking care

of children" topped the reasons provided by young Aboriginal women in the same age group.

In Kenora, according to the 2001 Statistics Canada Census, only 43% of the total Aboriginal population between 14 and 24 years of age are attending school on a full-time basis, and only 4% are attending on a part-time basis. *Table 6A* and *Table 6B* demonstrate the 2001 Statistics Canada Census data relating to Aboriginal youth attendance at high school and the level of education of Aboriginal people in Kenora, respectively.

TABLE 6A **School attendance rates of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations, by sex and age group**

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001

	Aboriginal			Non-Aboriginal		
	Both sexes	Men	Women	Both sexes	Men	Women
Age	**Percent**					
Total population (15 years and over)	18%	12%	24%	12%	13%	12%
15 to 24 years	46%	38%	56%	57%	56%	58%
24 to 34 years	13%	0%	25%	12%	12%	13%
35 and over	11%	7%	12%	3%	3%	4%

In 2001, Aboriginal youth (15 to 24 years of age) had lower school attendance rates than their non-Aboriginal counterparts (46% versus 57%). The difference was especially marked for young Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal men (38% versus 56%), and almost non-existent between the corresponding female populations (56% versus 58%).

Furthermore, Aboriginal women have a greater tendency to return to school later in life than their male and non-Aboriginal female counterparts. For example, 12% of Aboriginal women 35 years of age or older were attending school in 2001, compared with 4% of non-Aboriginal women in the same age group. As demonstrated in *Table 6B,* 47% of Aboriginal men and 39% of Aboriginal women 25 years and over had less than high school as their highest level of schooling in 2001. Consequently, the levels of education, and the corresponding benefits, will be lacking as these youth grow into adulthood. When this level of attendance at school is juxta-

posed with the highest level of education obtained for Aboriginal persons 25 years of age and older, the percentages are quite close.

TABLE 6B **Educational attainment in Kenora**

Population 25 years and over by highest level of schooling, Kenora, 2001

	Aboriginal		Non-Aboriginal	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
	Percent			
Total	100	100	100	100
Less than high school graduation certificate	47	39	36	33
High school graduation certificate only	13	12	13	15
Some postsecondary education*	12	4	8	9
Trades, college or university certificate or diploma	25	39	33	30
University degree	2	6	11	13

* Some postsecondary education refers to those persons who pursued their studies past high school but who did not get a postsecondary certificate, diploma or degree. Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Canada, 2001

The Census data shows the following for Aboriginal people in Kenora:

- 47% of Aboriginal people reported their highest level of education as less than high school;
- 13% of Aboriginal people reported their highest level of education as a high school diploma;
- 12% of Aboriginal people reported their highest level of education as some post-secondary education;
- 25% of Aboriginal people reported their highest level of education with a trades, college or university certificate or diploma (below bachelor's degree); and,
- 2% of Aboriginal people reported their highest level of education with a university degree at bachelor's level or higher.

These figures clearly demonstrate that although there is an upward trend nationally for Aboriginal youth to obtain at least a high school diploma; however, the Aboriginal population in Kenora is not following

this trend. Although it is not possible to provide a definitive answer relating to the reasons why the Aboriginal youth population in Kenora is not at a minimum obtaining their high school diploma, the following remarks by youth may provide insight:

> It took a while to get respect of peers, even of the teaching instructors. Always felt like I had to prove myself. They expect you to fail.
> (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

> Western style of education may not fit. Traditionally there were no books or classrooms but they were well educated. It's the way we educate that doesn't fit. (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

> Excluded from school system. Doesn't address any barriers that Aboriginal people deal with. (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

> Too easy to quit (school). Too hard to get back in after.
> (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

Based on the comments above, it is clear that it is necessary to make the education experience, curricula and supports available more relevant to the realities of Aboriginal youth in Kenora, if they are to obtain a minimum of a high school diploma. Overcoming negative stereotypes of Aboriginal people is also necessary before Aboriginal youth will be able to truly benefit from the education system. A possible solution to these problems is the creation of an Aboriginal high school that could serve not only the urban Aboriginal population in Kenora, but also the youth in the seven First Nations surrounding Kenora.

6.3 Major social challenges for Aboriginal youth

In Kenora, there are a number of social challenges facing Aboriginal youth, as evidenced by the unmet needs of these youth. Participants in the Youth Focus Group discussed these challenges facing them:

> Drugs and alcohol are everywhere. It's something you can get whenever you want. Some youth are peer pressured into doing drugs...Its more of a problem now than it was in the past. (YOUTH FOCUS GROUP)

Sexual, physical and mental abuse are predominant issues that youth are faced with today. Sources of this abuse are older adults preying on youth and from older youth as well. It could also be from both inside and outside the family life. Abuse is a common thing for Native youth in Kenora. (YOUTH FOCUS GROUP)

I see other things happening around here too. Just last month I saw this French guy doing something to a Native girl. There's another guy around here that drives around and picks up young girls and makes them do things. (LIFE HISTORY)

One life history participant who had experienced a life of abuse worries that, for some young people, the problem is being passed down from generation to generation because that is what they know.

I have grandchildren too. I tell my daughter not to be like me to her grandchildren. But I see her doing things to them, like dragging them. I don't want them to do what I did. She's got a lot of anger and it just goes down with each generation. (LIFE HISTORY)

6.4 Aboriginal youth and crime

Importantly, the community survey revealed the perception that Aboriginal youth are increasingly involved in gangs and related crime activity. Eighty-one percent of respondents believed that Aboriginal youth related crimes are on the rise, while 79% of respondents believed Aboriginal youth to be involved in gangs. However, it is interesting to note that the Youth Focus Group participants did not themselves report an increase in gang involvement among Aboriginal youth in Kenora. They did however speak about the rise of non-Aboriginal gangs who commit hate crimes against Aboriginal youth and adults, citing the KIB (Kenora Indian Beaters) specifically.

While this data is alarming, it certainly is not surprising. While it is not within the scope of this report to canvas the reasons for a rise Aboriginal youth crime and involvement in gangs, or at least the perceived increase, in the context of what has already been discussed in this report it is reasonable to infer that the lack of education and employment opportunities, lack of adequate sources of funding and programming,

TABLE 6C **Rise in Aboriginal youth crime (perceived) (Quantitative data)**		
Is youth crime rising?	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Yes	78	81%
No	18	19%
Total	96	100%

TABLE 6D **Participation in Aboriginal youth gangs (perceived) (Quantitative data)**		
Aboriginal youth gangs	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Yes	71	79%
No	19	21%
Total	90	100%

lack of stable families and homes, and a disconnect from meaningful participation in the larger society could contribute to a rise in Aboriginal youth crime and involvement in gangs.

6.5 Programs for urban Aboriginal youth

Although lack of funding was clearly the underlying cause for needs for urban Aboriginal youth not being met, it is not clear what type of funding is lacking. However, based on the section of this report that discussed education and the data shown in *Figure 6A,* it is reasonable to infer that Aboriginal youth in Kenora require more funding to pursue education, training and employment opportunities and for rehabilitation.

When respondents were asked what can be done to better meet the needs of Aboriginal youth, the overwhelming response was for more programs, activities and supports. See *Figure 6B*. More specifically, the lack of a youth centre was frequently mentioned.

> *A place to go to hang out that was safe, stimulating and empowering.* (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

> *There is no youth centre, so a lack of activity. It would be good to get the youth involved in the decision making of a youth Centre.*
> (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

> *It is such a young population…so more group activities and inclusive activities. Need a youth centre and youth should have responsibility for decision making and running it.* (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

- 51% suggested more programs are needed; 23 respondents
- 20% suggested greater employment oppportunities are needed; 9 respondents
- 9% suggested more education is needed; 4 respondents

Other **20%**

More programs **51%**

Education **9%**

Employment opportunities **20%**
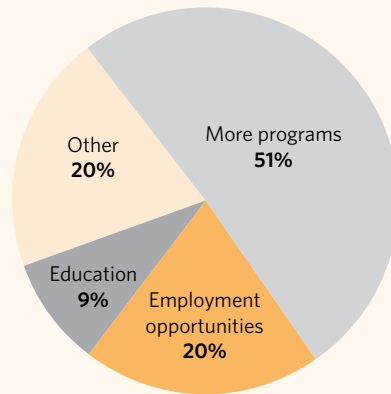
It is clear that the major social challenges facing Aboriginal youth in Kenora are the lack of funding and programs. Such funding and programs would significantly benefit the support of education, training and employment opportunities. However, it would also be beneficial for any additional funding and programs to take into consideration the realities that Aboriginal youth face in their lives, including their cultural lives. Funding opportunities and programs must account for and be sympathetic to these youth as Aboriginal youth, and must reflect the values inherent in the Aboriginal culture accordingly.

> *I see these youth, there is piles of them. Not like when we were growing up. They have to be heard, listened to and accommodated. I think Kenora and the First Nations around here are going to have, not necessarily a problem, but are going to have hassles. Nobody's really paying attention to them. And our current leaders just look at the youth... I don't know they just don't focus on the future. They only think of today.* (LIFE HISTORY)

> *You have to get them involved and build up their self-esteem. From there you could use the tool that I used, sports, which was basketball.* (LIFE HISTORY)

INCOME LEVELS
AND RATES OF POVERTY

7.1 Income levels

Aboriginal people in Kenora earn less than their non-Aboriginal counterparts. In 2000, Aboriginal people were earning only two-thirds of what non-Aboriginal people were earning.

Statistics Canada 2001 Census data shows the median income as $25,333 for all residents of Kenora, as shown in *Figure 7A*.

The gap between the earnings of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people is smaller for women than it is for men. In 2000, Aboriginal

FIGURE 7A **Median employment earnings* for the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations 15 years of age or older, Kenora, 2000**

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001
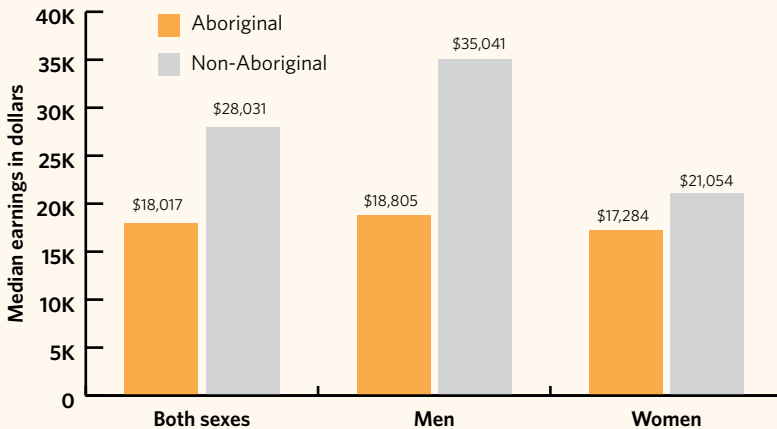
* The median refers to the point where half of the people are earning more and half of the people are earning less.

women had median earnings of $17,284, which is 82% of the amount for non-Aboriginal women. Although Aboriginal men earned slightly more than Aboriginal women ($18,805), this represents just 54% of the median employment earnings of non-Aboriginal men. As mentioned earlier, some of these differences may be due to different patterns of employment that are not explored here (e.g. full-time/part-time, full-year/part-year).

As demonstrated in *Table 7A*, in 2000, 15% of Aboriginal persons had total median incomes (from all sources) of $40,000 or over, compared to 31% of non-Aboriginal persons. Whether measured in terms of average or median incomes, Aboriginal men had total incomes similar to those of non-Aboriginal women.

TABLE 7A **Median total income for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations, 15 years of age or older**

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001

	Aboriginal			Non-Aboriginal		
	Both sexes	**Men**	**Women**	**Both sexes**	**Men**	**Women**
Income	**Percent**					
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Under $20,000	56%	51%	59%	40%	28%	52%
$20,000 to 39,999	30%	27%	32%	29%	28%	30%
$40,000 and over	15%	21%	9%	31%	44%	18%
Average income	$21,956	$25,921	$18,262	$31,944	$39,437	$24,841
Median income	$17,954	$18,431	$15,345	$26,312	$34,868	$19,097

The UATF survey also yielded information on income. Survey participants were asked to provide their annual family income; the results are shown in *Figure 7B*.

Another factor that affects employment earnings is occupation. As shown in *Table 7B*, in 2001 'sales and service' occupations topped the list for both Aboriginal (35%) and non-Aboriginal (31%) people in Kenora. However, the kinds of jobs people hold are profoundly influenced by gender.

FIGURE 7B **Annual family income**

- the largest group, 55% of participants, reported earning less than $20,000 per year
- the next largest group, 27.5% of participants, reported earning $20–40,000 per year
- 7.5% of participants reported earning between $40–60,000 per year
- 10% of participants reported earning over $60,000 per year

$60K+ **10%**

$40K-60K **7.5%**

< $20K **55%**

$20K–40K **27.5%**
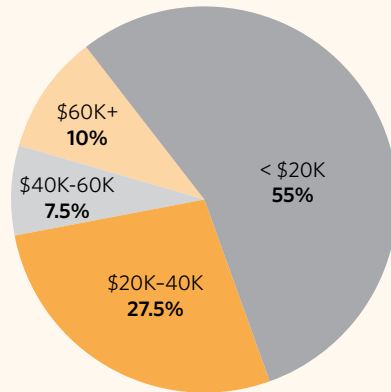
As discussed earlier, men are much more likely than women to work in trades, as transport and equipment operators or in occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities. Women are more likely to work in occupations related to business, finance and administration, to health and social science, education, government service and religion. This holds true for both the Aboriginal and the non-Aboriginal population.

However, Aboriginal men are less likely than their non-Aboriginal counterparts to work as transport and equipment operators but more likely to hold occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities. Aboriginal women are more likely than non-Aboriginal women to have sales and service jobs, as well as jobs in social science, education, government services and religion.

Education cannot be ignored as a direct factor in employment earnings. The expectations of the job market in Canada generally, as well as Kenora specifically, have changed. Whereas once a high school diploma was sufficient qualification for a decent job, today a college diploma or university degree is the basic educational requirement to secure a job that pays anything more than minimum wage. A direct correlation between the lower levels of education among Aboriginal people in Kenora and the lower standard of living and outright poverty many experience can therefore be drawn.

TABLE 7B **Occupational distribution of the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations 15 years of age or older, Kenora, 2001**

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001

	Aboriginal			Non-Aboriginal		
	Both sexes	**Men**	**Women**	**Both sexes**	**Men**	**Women**
Occupation	**Percent**					
All occupations	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Management	7%	10%	4%	10%	10%	9%
Business, finance and administration	10%	4%	18%	13%	5%	2%
Natural and applied science	2%	4%	0%	4%	8%	1%
Health	6%	3%	10%	7%	3%	13%
Social science, education, goverment service and religion	17%	10%	25%	9%	6%	13%
Art, culture, recreation and sport	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	2%
Sales and service	34%	29%	43%	30%	24%	36%
Trades, trasnport and equipment operators	11%	20%	0%	18%	33%	2%
Occupations unique to primary industry	3%	6%	0%	2%	4%	1%
Processing, manufacturing and utilities	9%	14%	0%	4%	6%	1%

Each of these survey instruments used different categories to capture the earnings of urban Aboriginal people in Kenora. Nonetheless, when taken together, the data points to a majority (55%) of urban Aboriginal people earning under $20,000. Importantly, the UATF data further shows an emerging minority of middle class Aboriginal people with 8% earning over $40,000 per year and 10% earning over $60,000 per year.

Nonethless, clearly the UATF research demonstrates that poverty is a pervasive and fundamental challenge for Aboriginal people living in Kenora. According to statistics released in May 2005 by the Canadian Council on Social Development based in Ottawa, in Canada the low income cut-off (or LICO), colloquially referred to as "the poverty line," is $29,596 for a family of four in a city with the population base of less than 30,000 (such as Kenora) (http://www.ccsd.ca/factsheets/fs_lico04_bt.htm). As stated earlier in this report, UATF data found that 55% of Aboriginal families earn less than $20,000 annually, confirming that over half of Kenora's Aboriginal citizens live well below the national poverty line for cities this size.

This figure tabulated through the UATF research in 2006 is much higher than that reported by the Statistics Canada 2001 Census. Using the low income cut-off (or LICO), the Census found that only one-quarter of Aboriginal people in Kenora were living below the LICO measure in 2000, compared to 7% for the non-Aboriginal population. Although it significant and must be mentioned, an explanation of this discrepancy is beyond the scope of this report.

7.2 A persistent search for basic needs

(There is) no housing supply on or off reserve. (There are) so little spaces available to rent (in Kenora). When landlords rent they choose non-Aboriginal people over Aboriginal people. (There is) nothing available in Kenora. Waiting for subsidized is about 2 years, if you're a priority.
(KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

Most of us only eat once a day during the week … on weekends we look in the garbage. Extra Foods throws food out on Saturday and some times we find good stuff in there and will have a cook up in the bush somewhere.
(HOMELESS FOCUS GROUP)

Housing for Aboriginal people that are living outside the reserve is an important issue. The high cost of living is difficult. Medical transportation is also an issue for Elders … when you need to go to Winnipeg or even just around Kenora. Without transportation it is difficult to get medication from the drugstores. (ELDER'S FOCUS GROUP)

TABLE 7C Unmet housing needs (Quantitative data)

Are your housing needs being met?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	15	14%
No	96	86%
Total	111	100%

We need an Aboriginal old folk's home. (ELDER'S FOCUS GROUP)

The data on income indicates that a majority of Aboriginal people living in Kenora continue to struggle to meet their basic needs, and as safe affordable housing is directly linked to income levels, it is understandable that housing was one of the most prevalent challenges consistently identified by the UATF research participants.

The research indicated clearly that the basic needs of many of Kenora's Aboriginal citizens are not being met consistently and effectively. Of all the basic needs, affordable, safe, and healthy housing was identified as the most pressing need. As *Table 7c* demonstrates, 86% of respondents felt that their housing needs were not being adequately met.

This finding is significant in that adequate and healthy housing is such a basic necessity affecting many aspects of a person's social, cultural, physical and economic security and well being. Indeed, many respondents in the Homelessness Focus Groups identified several factors relating to the failure of Aboriginal people's housing needs being met, including:

· employment;
· lack of affordable housing;
· landlords who will not rent to Aboriginal people, because they are Aboriginal or because they are seen as undesirable because of poverty and addiction issues; and
· the circular problem of not being able to get welfare without an address and not being able to rent housing without being able to prove to the landlord one on welfare or has money for a deposit.

What this research is telling us is that the lack of affordable, accessible and safe housing results in increased vulnerability to homelessness for Aboriginal people living in Kenora. This inaccessibility and heightened vulnerability was also highlighted in the *People Shouldn't Have to Live this Way* report on homelessness in Kenora, which clearly demonstrated

that this city already has the lowest vacancy rates and the highest rents in Northwestern Ontario.

That same report also highlights the increasingly urgent need for affordable housing in Kenora, stating that the demolition of 2 low income housing units in Kenora since 2005 has resulted in the loss of 60 units, with no current municipal plans for replacement. That same report also notes the increasingly high number of admissions at the local women's shelter, and concludes that this is indicative of an invisible homeless population composed of women and dependants. Given that the UATF research has shown that 55% of Kenora's Aboriginal residents live below the low income cut-off line, it is easy to see how adversely a lack of affordable housing can affect this segment of society in Kenora.

This fact was further highlighted by the participants of the UATF Aboriginal Women's Focus Group, who reported that safe, affordable and comfortable housing for single mothers was the most pressing challenge for Aboriginal women living in Kenora. The women in this group noted that Aboriginal women who do manage to get one of the few low income residences available in Kenora find themselves living the Minto/Cambrian area—an area that is notoriously unsafe.

The participants made it clear that the factors resulting in the failure of their housing needs being met were not necessary unrelated or experienced individually, but are often several sets of intersecting circumstances.

RACISM AND ABORIGINAL PEOPLE IN KENORA

They judge us by what is visible. They don't see the people working hard. (ELDER'S FOCUS GROUP)

Racism, I think it stems from this long history of residential schools... the number of schools in this area was really concentrated; there were five in Kenora area alone. They tried very hard to get rid of Indians here. Since it was so concentrated here I think that is where the racism comes from. For many years (before residential schools) there were not many Indians in town and then with the 5 schools suddenly there were lots. It made it seem that we came after the whites, not before, in their eyes. (RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS FOCUS GROUP)

The results of the community survey point to the continued and widespread problem of racism in Kenora. An overwhelming 94% of respondents stated that they have experienced racism in Kenora (see *Table 8A*),

TABLE 8A **Personal experience of racism in Kenora (Quantitative data)**

Have you experienced racism?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	149	94%
No	10	6%
Total	159	100%

TABLE 8B **Racism against Aboriginal people by non-Aboriginal people (Quantitative)**

Is racism a problem in Kenora?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	132	96%
No	5	4%
Total	137	100%

and 96% of the respondents stated that such racism was a problem between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people (see *Table 8B*). Forty-nine percent of respondents also indicated that they have experienced racism from another Aboriginal person.

> *Racism is less overt, more under the radar , for example, in the tone of voice or poor disrespectful treatment, or overt verbal slurs.*
> (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

> *You can still see that today ... where they look at Aboriginals differently. I remember being at a bookstore trying to buy a book. They'd come and chase me down when we were looking at books. "What's in the bag?" ... "Don't ever come in this store again!"* (LIFE HISTORY)

> *I am proud to use my status card, however, when presented there are signs of exasperation.* (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

In response to the question "Do you think that racism against Aboriginal people is a problem in Kenora?" one key informant interviewee responded:

> *Yes. There is overt racism in the Kenora police force, youth get jumped by non-Aboriginal gangs ,and it is expressed covertly through less opportunities in school and employment, in being treated disrespectfully by staff and doctors at the hospital and social service agencies who entirely ignore the cultural difference in their service delivery methods. Overt racism is the obvious but it is the covert that is hard to battle. The hidden agendas and attitudes. The school system is rife with this covert racism and shows in the many ways they (Aboriginal students) are treated differently. Why are the "applied classes" for less smart student predominantly filled with Aboriginal students? Why does no one in the school system, but the native parents ask this question? It is also apparent in the media, with its lack of positive content but plenty of negative focus, where Aboriginal accused are named way more than non-Aboriginal. Look at advertising, there is a lack of native faces in Kenora advertising and promotional materials. White privilege is an insidious attitude.* (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

Our children will be the first generation who will actually be raised by their own parents from birth and not be taken away to (residential) school at 4 or 5. The kids have a lot of confidence and determination and white people are not an obstacle to them in the same way as to us.
(RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS FOCUS GROUP)

As can be seen in *Figure 8A,* respondents asked where they most experienced racism answered that 26% of it occurred in public places such as malls and restaurants; 20% in schools; 16% in the workplace; 14% when attempting to obtain housing; and 24% in other places, such as when dealing with the police, in hospitals and in the courts. Fifty-four percent of respondents also reported feeling that racism was more of a problem today than it has been in the past.

Racism in Kenora is a problem for all respondents, regardless of income levels. As demonstrated in *Table 8c,* an overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that racism is a problem in Kenora, with 100% of those within the higher income brackets stating that racism is a problem. Those in lower income brackets, though not unanimous, clearly believe that racism is a problem in Kenora.

The research findings report that two groups within the urban Aboriginal population of Kenora, youth and street living people, experience targeted racism often and most specifically from the Kenora

FIGURE 8A **Places where racism occurs**

- 26% of respondents reported racism occurred in restaurants and malls
- 20% of respondents reported racism occurred in schools
- 16% of respondents reported racism occurred in the workplace
- 14% of respondents reported racism occurred with regard to housing
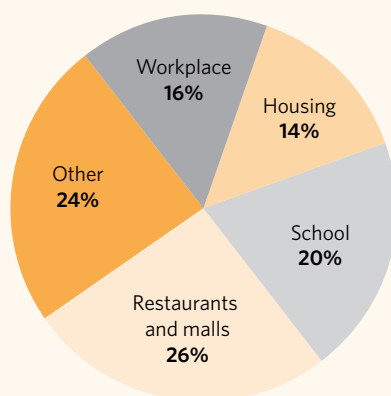
TABLE 8c **Is racism a problem between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, by annual household income (Quantitative data)**

	Less than $20,000		$20,000 to 40,000		$40,000 to 60,000		More than $60,000	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	52	95%	30	97%	7	100%	10	100%
No	3	%	1	3%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	55	100%	31	100%	7	100%	10	100%

Municipal Police Force (KMPS). Every single participant of the Urban Aboriginal Youth Focus Group recounted an interaction with the KMPS that was violent and, they felt, racially motivated. Participants recounted being roughly handled and excessively harassed, and several reported that KMPS officers used a Taser device on them. One 16-year-old female participant stated that she currently has a formal complaint against the KMPS for excessive force used against her.

Homelessness Focus Group participants made it clear that racism and violence is a normal part of daily existence for Aboriginal street people in Kenora and that this violence is manifested in several forms. Most disturbing of the discussions is the existence of what is known as the Kenora Indian Bashers or the KIB (Aboriginal youth in Kenora also spoke of the KIB). A previously mentioned, the Kenora Indian Bashers allegedly consist of a loosely organized group of non-Aboriginal men and/or youth that drive around the streets on a regular basis to look for vulnerable Aboriginal street people and youth and then beat them.

Participants indicated that as long as they are together in groups they are relatively safe, but if caught alone, they will be severely beaten with fists and in at least two incidents recounted by focus group participants, with two-by four planks. Participants spoke of several individuals that had been beaten by the Kenora Indian Bashers within the last six months. More disturbing is that participants indicated that the Kenora police know of the Kenora Indian Bashers but they do not do anything about the problem.

One Homelessness Focus Group participant recounted an incident of how his cousin was being roughed up by the Kenora Indian Bashers and the Kenora Police just happened to come along at that time and all they did was tell the non-Aboriginal men to leave him alone and go away. However, according to that participant no charges or any other substantial type of actions were taken by the police.

Homelessness Focus Group participants spoke about racism from the police forces in Kenora and several participants recounted personal incidents of violence with the Kenora Municipal Police Service and/or the Ontario Provincial Police. Some participants spoke of how the Kenora police "tease" and "harass" them on the street, calling them names and telling them to "take a walk" which is the terminology used to tell a street living person to leave town. Other participants spoke of constant harassment, even when they are not intoxicated and of no policing support from Kenora police when they are being victimized.

Homelessness Focus Group participants also spoke of police brutality, speaking somewhat vaguely of people being picked up by the police and driven into the bush and beaten or abandoned. One participant recounted an incident where one man was taken and severely beaten by the Kenora police who then took him to the hospital for treatment so he would not die, but said they found him that way. According to the participant, this man's injuries were so severe that he had to be sent to Winnipeg for treatment.

From the UATF statistical findings and the anecdotal evidence, it is clear that racism is an immediate and pervasive issue between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities in Kenora. Disturbingly, the findings suggest that racism is often expressed through violence focused on the most vulnerable groups in Kenora, namely Aboriginal youth and homeless people. Additional research on these two issues is most certainly required and appropriate actions need to be taken to ensure that such violence ceases to continue in the future.

The UATF research is neither the first nor the only directed research to report findings of racism in the justice system in Kenora. The *People Shouldn't Have to Live this Way* report on homelessness in Kenora spoke about the ongoing contention between Aboriginal citizens of Kenora and surrounding First Nations. This report recounts several incidents within the

Kenora justice system over the last decade that has caused public outcries of racism from local Aboriginal citizens. For example, as one UATF participant recounted:

> In 2000 local police were involved in a scandal involving the beating death of an Aboriginal man in downtown Kenora … the charges were eventually dismissed … this led to calls for significant changes in the way the city police investigate crimes as well as the way they treat First Nations people. (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

On the other hand, one life history respondent who had lived in Kenora all his life made it clear that things had improved in terms of racism:

> About the 80's it started switching. Its like the 70's was the Dark Age and the 80's kind of just, somebody opened the door finally, and said, "this is crazy." I see my kids totally different today compared to when I was a kid. I see interracial Aboriginal guys or whatever, being friends and playing with them. (LIFE HISTORY)

> The ticket agent said "giichi miigwetch" to me. This blond haired, blue-eyed lady … I was personally surprised that she made the effort to at least acknowledge that I was First Nation and she used a small word like miigwetch. (LIFE HISTORY)

Another life history respondent believes that there is still racism, but that it is more subtle and operates in more complex ways:

> I think that it's better for my kids simply because they are fair skinned. Your look at them and wouldn't tell that they are Aboriginal. She'd say some of the things that she heard, like, people would be talking in racist tones, and they'd forget. And then she would say something and they'd say, "Oh, no, no! Not like you!" Or, "No, those Indians aren't like you!" … people still have this idea that there are good Indians and bad Indians. (Life history)

When asked if reverse racism or discrimination against non-Aboriginal people by Aboriginal people was a problem, many respondents indicated that it does exist in some limited forms:

> *Social snubbing, rivalry between native and non-native students,
> bullying, lack of inclusion or invitations to participate in events or
> workshops when hosted by an Aboriginal organization.*
> (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

8.1 Discrimination among Aboriginal people

A significant number of respondents (49%) also stated that there was internal racism in Kenora, that is, discrimination among Aboriginal people themselves. When asked to speak about Aboriginal people discriminating against other Aboriginal people, respondents answered:

> *I think that discrimination among Aboriginal people does exist. On
> communities the family members of the Chief gets funding.*
> (LIFE HISTORY)

> *I tried to set up sports recreation for these youth … when I pushed the
> Chiefs, when I pushed the people in the nation they looked at me funny.
> "Why are you doing this?" … I have an issue with that … the current
> Aboriginal people. They all talk about it, there's no push. We don't do
> it.* (LIFE HISTORY)

> *People who are trying to better themselves are put down by other
> Aboriginals who say they are "apples". Townies versus reserve dwellers.
> Economic issues come into play too because Bands get paid per individual
> living on reserve so they pressure people to stay saying they are rejecting
> where they came from or they will call social services to take their
> children. There are also family hierarchies of power like for jobs in
> Aboriginal agencies in Kenora or with the Bands on reserve — if your
> family is in a position of power you get a job.* (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

> *The current Chief … his logic is, "Well you guys left the reserve so its your
> own fault. You made that decision, so I wash my hands."* (LIFE HISTORY)

ABORIGINAL HEALTH IN KENORA

Aboriginal clients present more significant health issues and are less likely to get involved in the care they're getting. Most accept what they've got, don't maximize advice and ability.

(KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

9.1 Health Access Sites

The community survey revealed some notable characteristics of urban Aboriginal health matters in Kenora. First, 78% of respondents tend to access mainstream health services as opposed to 36% who practice traditional wellness. Of those respondents who access mainstream health services, 37% visited a walk-in clinic, 30% visited a doctor's office, 22% visited the emergency room, 11% visited another mainstream service, and only 1% visited an Aboriginal agency. This last finding is interesting considering that 70% of respondents reported awareness of Aboriginal agencies.

TABLE 9A **Access to a family doctor** (**Quantitative data**)

Do you have access to a family doctor?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	114	71%
No	46	29%
Total	160	100%

As demonstrated in *Table 9A*, 71% of respondents have access to a family doctor, which is a high percentage given the context of the shortage of doctors within the Kenora area.

FIGURE 9A **Health problems for Aboriginal people**

- 21% city drug and alcohol abuse; 151 respondents
- 19% cited unemployment; 135 respondents
- 15% cited family violence; 108 respondents
- 13% cited suicide; 92 respondents
- 12% cited sexual abuse; 84 respondents
- 22% cited other problems; 156 respondents
- 726 respondents in total
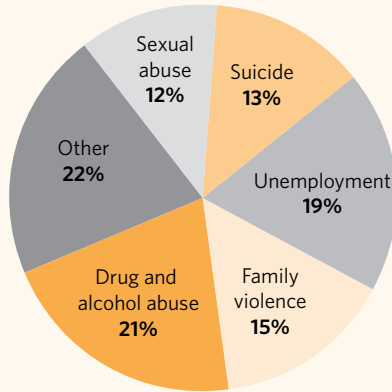
9.2   Perception of Aboriginal health problems in Kenora

Community survey respondents indicated an array of health problems for Aboriginal people in Kenora. Importantly, alcohol and drug use, unemployment and family violence are the health problems most frequently identified, followed by suicide and sexual abuse. Please note that respondents were given the opportunity to select from multiple types of health problems, thereby the data provided above does not match the number of participants.

Although not captured explicitly in the 'Other' category in *Figure 9A*, diabetes was almost universally identified by research participants as a major health problem for Aboriginal people in Kenora. This is consistent with the national rise of diabetes among Aboriginal people, and the disproportionate affliction rate of Aboriginal people compared to non-Aboriginal people.

Overall, 70% of respondents indicated that their health needs are being met, while 30% answered to the contrary. Respondents frequently expressed the improvement made in access to health care, both traditional and western approaches, with the opening of the Wassay-Gezhig Na-Nahn-Dah-We-Igamig, the Kenora Area Health Access Centre in downtown Kenora in the summer of 2006.

ABORIGINAL WOMEN
IN KENORA

10.1 General poverty and unmet needs

Through a series of focus groups and plenary sessions that specifically looked at the issues of Aboriginal women, this research has been able to document their many diverse and often difficult experiences living in Kenora.

Statistics Canada data shows generally that the size of Aboriginal families tends to be similar than that of non-Aboriginal families, but that most of these Aboriginal families are headed by single mothers. More precisely, in 2001:

- There was no difference in the proportion of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal families with three or more children (16%);
- Three in ten (29%) of Aboriginal families in Kenora were headed by a single parent, compared to 12% of non-Aboriginal families; and
- Of all Aboriginal families living in Kenora, 23% were lone-parent families headed by women and 6% were lone-parent families headed by men.

In Chapter 7: Income Levels and Rates of Poverty, it was shown that on average Aboriginal men make $18,805 annually compared to $17,284 for Aboriginal women. Given the challenges of working both within and outside of the home, the majority of Aboriginal single mothers tend to occupy the lower income brackets and many must access services in order to meet the basic needs of their families. Importantly, women tend to move residences approximately twice as frequently as Aboriginal men, with the notable differences in motivation being that Aboriginal women tend to move more for reasons of access to social services and because of safety concerns than do Aboriginal men.

When asked the reason First Nations women leave reserve communities for urban centres such as Kenora, participants provided a number of interrelated answers. Specifically, participants reported lack of services and supports, housing and employment on reserve; a chance for a better quality of life; violence and safety issues; educational opportunities; and a chance to offer a better life and more safety for their children.

> *Lack of power in band driven politics, to get away from violence and negative situations, more opportunity, work and partnership.*
> (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

> *To remove children from that environment. There was too much jealousy on the reserve—your life is not your own—they always butt in every aspect…both community people and politicians do this. Work hard to get ahead but then penalized by own community in the end.*
> (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

> *Because of the violence on reserves—it is unsafe for women.*
> (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

> *As a woman it is a struggle to remain traditional but survive your community.* (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

10.2 Services for Aboriginal women

> *Too few services to meet the needs of too many people. Women's shelter always full, rarely take referrals. Aboriginal women say they're not comfortable there. Need Aboriginal base shelter.*
> (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

Women respondents spoke passionately about the most challenging issues faced by Aboriginal women in Kenora. Affordable and safe housing, employment, and safety from violence and abuse were almost always the first three issues mentioned followed closely by lack of services and lack of transportation.

In terms of attempting to access basic services, many women expressed frustration with a lack of coordination of family support, health and food services, and having to travel across town within certain day

and time restrictions. Participants in the women's focus groups indicated that there are not any programs specifically designed for Aboriginal women. Most of the services available are non-Aboriginal programs where Aboriginal women do not feel comfortable, are feminist organizations where their ideology does not quite mesh with traditional teachings, or are for 'at risk' women.

Participants indicated that a place for single mothers would be a very good addition to the services available, and that generally, Aboriginal women need support in a culturally relevant and private manner. These participants also indicated that there is a need for support groups, and that there are also personal safety issues. Participants indicated that there needs to be commitment on the part of the city to support programs and proposals.

Participants further stated that there is also a need for parenting support groups. Concerns relating to these parenting support groups centre on how mothers could learn to raise children the way they were traditionally raised, prior to the fracture of families resulting from residential schools.

10.3 Education

With respect to education, participants reported that there are no supports available for young mothers to obtain an education. The only opportunity is to get a General Educational Development (GED) diploma, which is not always conducive to a working mother's schedule. Participants indicated that these types of programs are always the same, and suggested this is perhaps because it is difficult for some of the people developing these programs to look 'outside the box' and develop something that will work. Generally, participants felt that education gets into 'comfort zones,' and that the same programs continue to be offered unless someone challenges it.

Participants reported that childcare is another challenge to obtaining an education. One focus group participant stated that in Winnipeg, education is more accessible because childcare accommodated the schedule, and bus tickets were offered so that transportation was not an obstacle. In Kenora it seems that attempts to obtain an education are not sup-

ported at the social service level. The government pays $100 for children under the age of 6, which does not prove to help those people whose children are older. It is also difficult finding childcare on professional development days.

Participants reported that childcare subsidies can be damaging for those who might make more money because once a person makes enough money and begins to catch up, the government cuts the subsidy. Public transportation in Kenora is also wholly inadequate, as it is limited in geographic range and runs too infrequently. As a result, single mothers must either walk, when weather permits, to and from jobs and/or school or take unaffordable taxi transportation.

10.4 Racism

The research did not find that women perceived themselves to experience more or less racism that Aboriginal males based on gender. Women's Focus Group participants reported that they felt racism is still an issue in Kenora:

> Racism is still an issue in Kenora but it is subversive and hidden. You could feel the racism that still exists. Aboriginal people would hang out at the mall but they've taken out the benches so they have no where to sit. When you go into stores you feel like your constantly being watched. People working in stores will follow you around so bad to the point where you want to say 'I make more money than you why would I steal.' You could be constantly followed around the store or you could be completely ignored. People will cut in line in front of you like you are not there. There is an invisibility factor (to being Aboriginal in Kenora).
> (WOMEN'S FOCUS GROUP)

Those participants also indicated they are aware of anti-racism initiatives, but that such initiatives are politically driven and not really addressing the issues. Participants felt that such initiatives would be more effective if they came from the leadership. Participants also indicated that there is a need for cross-cultural training, referring to an 'Aboriginal perceptions' workshop that was held in the past and proved to have some

success. Participants felt that there is a great deal of systematic racism, and that non-Aboriginal people do not understand the situation or history of Aboriginal people.

10.5 Exploitation of young Aboriginal women

The exploitation of young Aboriginal women by both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal men was a major issue raised by the majority of women. Participants stated that young women are preyed upon in Kenora bars. Sometimes young Aboriginal women are prostituted by their boyfriends to pay off drug debts. Participants reported that it has become an accepted practice to take advantage of young Aboriginal women. Such actions take place in every day life and thereby create a vulnerability issue for these young Aboriginal women.

> Just last month I saw this French guy doing something to a native girl. There's another guy around here that drives around and picks up young girls and makes them do things. Older people usually get money for getting booze for the younger ones. Me and my girlfriend … we were sitting there drinking our pop and this guy came up to me and put his hand on my leg and said 'I want a blow job.' I see that same guy taking home young girls to his place all the time I see him getting girls drunk then taking them home. He's a dirty old man, he's around 58.
> (LIFE HISTORY)

Teenage pregnancy was also an issue that came up often in the UATF research. Girls becoming pregnant as young as 12 years of age is not considered unusual, and teenage pregnancy was universally cited as a major challenge, resulting in Aboriginal girls and boys dropping out of school and spiraling into a cycle of poverty that is almost impossible to break given the lack of real supports in Kenora.

10.6 The importance of women

Importantly, as shown in Chapter 3: Demographics and Mobility, the majority (57%) of the UATF research respondents were women. That Aboriginal women are the more prominent members of the community as directors

and staff of social service agencies, as well as more visible and available for this research, could explain this. Aboriginal women are thus occupying a dual role in Kenora: they are both the most violently oppressed members of the community and the most active in working to end that oppression.

> *(Aboriginal women) are integral to (Aboriginal) society. Because of women the culture has survived despite oppression, because of (Aboriginal women's) resilience. The gathering, social fabric is because of (Aboriginal) women.* (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

> *Behind every movement for change there has been a woman. The fetal alcohol program was brought here by a woman, the creation of childcare services, health access, and teaching of culture. They operate strongly but more behind the scenes as positions of power, like Executive Directors, are still held by men. They don't take a lot of credit for their efforts.* (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

Importantly, many of the respondents spoke to their shared family history of alcoholism, abuse and neglect, and how their practicing of traditional Aboriginal culture has helped them to move past those hurts.

> *Those that have persevered have gone forward, achieved success. Women that have progressed kept traditional teachings and spirituality.* (KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW)

One respondent spoke of the importance of her women mentors:

> *My mother has always been my role model…my mom was a survivor. She attended residential school. She probably went as far as grade six… raised 9 kids…lost a couple of kids…miscarried too because of vicious beatings…was widowed at a young age. She instilled in us certain values…taught us our language and a little bit of the cultural ways, but a lot of that was left to my grandmother…who was also my role model… she was the first one to put a beading loom in my hand.* (LIFE HISTORY)

ABORIGINAL MEN IN SUDBURY

Unlike that for Aboriginal women, several attempts by UATF researchers in Kenora to hold a Men's Focus Group failed to come to fruition. However, valuable data was gathered in the key informant interviews with questions regarding Aboriginal men in Kenora.

Overwhelmingly, the UATF research indicated that lack of employment and education are the two biggest hurdles for Aboriginal men living in Kenora. As demonstrated in *Figure 11A* below, 46% of respondents felt that the major challenge facing Aboriginal men was the lack of employment and education opportunities, followed by violence and abuse (28%), other (20%) and discrimination (6%).

Given this context, the information contained within *Table 11A* indicates that more services are required for Aboriginal men to obtain better employment and education opportunities, as 72% of respondents felt that the needs of Aboriginal men are not being met.

It can be extrapolated from the Kenora research that "other" most often referred to addictions and mental health issues.

TABLE 11A **Are needs being met? (Quantitative data)**

Are the needs of Aboriginal men being met?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	14	28%
No	37	72%
Total	51	100%

TABLE 11B **Awareness of services available to Aboriginal men (Quantitative data)**

Are you aware of available services?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	29	33%
No	59	67%
Total	88	100%

FIGURE 11A **Key challenges facing Aboriginal men in Kenora**

- 46% identified employment and education opportunities as a key challenge; 39 respondents
- 28% identified violence and abuse as a key challenge; 24 respondents
- 46% identified discrimination as a challenge; 5 respondents
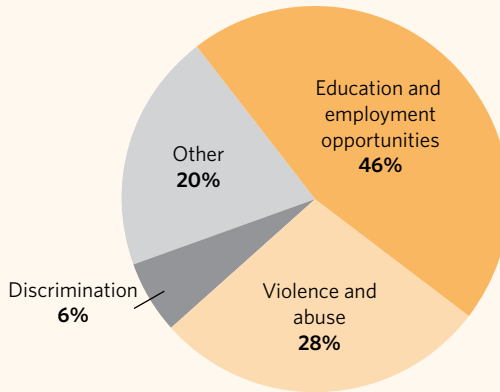
It is important to note that 67% of respondents are not aware of the services that are available to Aboriginal men in Kenora, as shown in *Table 11b.* This could indicate a lack of use of existing services.

From the above information it is clear that there are two pressing actions required to provide better services to meet the needs of Aboriginal men in Kenora: providing better employment and education opportunities, and raising awareness of the programs that are available. As shown in *Table 11c* below, better employment and education opportunities are identified by 48% of respondents as needs that are now unmet, followed by other (28%) and more funding (24%).

TABLE 11C **What are the unmet needs of Aboriginal men in Kenora?**

	Frequency	Percent
Better employment and education opportunities	14	48%
More funding	7	24%
Other	8	28%
Total	29	100%

As noted in *Table 11D,* 42% of respondents identified the means by which the Aboriginal men in Kenora can be better served. Respondents identi-

fied provision of better employment and education opportunities, as well as more funding, as means by which their needs could be better met.

TABLE 11D **How can Aboriginal men in Kenora be better served?**

	Frequency	Percent
Better employment and education opportunities	10	42%
More funding	10	42%
Other	4	16%
Total	24	100%

KENORA'S EMERGING MIDDLE CLASS

In Kenora, as previously discussed, the majority of Aboriginal people (55%) earn less than $20,000 per year. However, the current UATF data further indicates that 8% of the local Aboriginal population is earning over $41,000 per year and 10% is earning over $61,000 per year. Although one must be cautious when comparing Ontario-wide and Kenora-specific figures, these findings do suggest the emergence of an Aboriginal middle class in Kenora.

Our qualitative data revealed some notable characteristics of this emerging segment of the Aboriginal population. As discussed earlier, when cross-referenced with income levels, it was found that as Aboriginal people in Kenora earn more their participation in traditional culture and Aboriginal events generally increases.

The upper reaches of the Aboriginal middle class is therefore very much interested in traditional Aboriginal cultural learning and expression for themselves and their children. They tend to be supporters of Aboriginal art and language development and appear to be working towards expanding the cultural possibilities of what it means to be Aboriginal. It would be reasonable to infer that once a certain level of financial stability is reached, Aboriginal people are able to spend more time pursuing cultural activities.

In addition, a certain level of financial stability also indicates that awareness of social issues is more prevalent, particularly with respect to racism. As discussed earlier in this report, 100% of those in the upper income bracket identified racism as a problem in Kenora.

The emergence of an Aboriginal middle class in Kenora may be, at least in part, attributed to the rise in Aboriginal social service agencies. It is likely these agencies become medium- to large-sized employers of predominantly Aboriginal staff, thereby creating opportunities for Aboriginal people to earn a decent wage.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following discussion and recommendations are based on the findings of the study. Every effort has been made to ensure that empirical evidence in various forms from the study support the individual recommendations. They are intended as suggestions as to how to improve the overall situation for Aboriginal people in Kenora. Some of the recommendations are Kenora-specific; that is, they pertain exclusively to the local situation in the city. Other recommendations have a more regional or provincial focus and relate to larger issues and levels of government.

The data from the research clearly demonstrates that there are serious problems that need to be addressed if Aboriginal people are to take their rightful place as citizens of Kenora. Despite the socio-economic in-roads made in the last few decades, Aboriginal citizens of Kenora continue to be poorer, less educated, more at risk of homelessness, in worse health, and living with greater levels of violence than their non-Aboriginal counterparts. The UATF research clearly demonstrates that the average Aboriginal person in Kenora likely:

- is homeless, has been homeless, or is at greater risk of becoming homeless;
- is experiencing or has experienced some form of sexual or physical violence;
- is at greater risk of suffering physical abuse and discrimination at the hands of the local police force;
- has experienced overt racism in the form of physical violence or verbal slurs;
- has experienced covert racism in the way he/she is treated by businesses where he/she spends his/her money, by landlords, by his/

her doctor or dentist, by his/her neighbours or by his/her teacher or school administrator;

· has not been given a job because he/she is Aboriginal;
· has read negative media reports in his/her local paper and noticed a real lack of positive reporting about Aboriginal people by that same paper;
· has and continues to notice the almost complete invisibility of Aboriginal history and contemporary culture in Kenora;
· struggles to maintain his/her Aboriginal cultural identity in the city;
· has feelings of displacement, exclusion and unwelcome in his/her ancestral home; and
· is poignantly aware that his/her socio-economic reality as a citizen of Kenora is much different from most of his/her non-Aboriginal neighbours.

Aboriginal people make up a large, growing and youthful percentage of the city's population. It is in everyone's best interest to ensure that Aboriginal people can attain a satisfactory quality of life and become contributing members of the community. Poverty, lack of affordable housing, health care issues, unemployment, problems of mental health and addictions, racism, lack of support for Aboriginal culture and identity are all major challenges facing Aboriginal people in Kenora.

These issues are long-standing and despite the large number of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal agencies in Kenora that have been formed to address these needs, as well as significant federal and provincial government funding, there remain significant gaps and lack of coordination of services — especially for youth ages 7 to 17 and Aboriginal women. Respondents reported that governments have consistently avoided developing ministry structures with a mandate for long-term, stable programs and services with adequate funding to address the needs of urban Aboriginal people. In addition, existing programs and funding formulas sometimes do not "fit" the needs of service organizations or their clients. Clearly, new thinking and new approaches are required to address the issues and enhance the situation of all sectors of the Kenora Aboriginal community.

At the same time, there are numerous success stories and many of the programs and services offered have been effective in alleviating the

social and economic issues facing Aboriginal people. Government funding has assisted Aboriginal and mainstream agencies alike in their work. In addition, a substantial number of Aboriginal people have attained a satisfactory quality of life in the city. A small Aboriginal middle class is emerging in Kenora, but there is a need for these individuals to have a facility to practice their Aboriginal culture and support their identity with a view to becoming more active participants in the Kenora Aboriginal community.

13.1 Government mandate, funding and coordination

It is clear that there can be no solution to the problems articulated above without the involvement of all three levels of government. All levels of government are providing significant amounts of funding to a wide diversity of programs and services for urban Aboriginal people. At the same time, research respondents suggested that a number of barriers related to government mandates, programs, funding and coordination currently exist that inhibit effectively meeting the needs of urban Aboriginal people. Many individuals emphasized the fundamental problem of insufficient recognition of the changing demographics of Aboriginal people by government ministries at all levels; specifically, there is little acknowledgement, in terms of mandates and programs, of the significant numbers of Aboriginal people living in cities. It is only recently that governments have acknowledged that they have a role to play in providing programs and services to urban Aboriginal people; however, it remains the case that no federal department or provincial ministry has clear responsibility for Aboriginal people living off reserve. In addition, both federal and provincial governments have recognized the need to address jurisdictional issues and the necessity for greater cooperation and coordination with respect to urban Aboriginal people. However, many of the funding initiatives currently in place are provided to individual First Nations, Tribal Councils and Political Territorial Organizations, but very few are provided to urban Aboriginal organizations.

It is clear that it is time for all three levels of government—federal, provincial and municipal—to step up to the plate, accept their responsibilities for urban Aboriginal people, and enter into relationships with urban Aboriginal agencies. This commitment needs to involve more

than short-term programs, "strategies" or other temporary initiatives. It is critical that organizations with experience and expertise, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, work with governments to strengthen their services and develop new models of program and service delivery. In addition, new agencies (or new coalitions of existing organizations) need to be established.

Despite recognition of these concerns and talk about improving co-ordination, there is little horizontal or vertical coordination among the three levels of government, with each "passing the buck" for responsibility for urban Aboriginal people. In addition, there is little coordination among the many types of government programs available. There are "programs," "strategies," "technical assistance," "grants," "pilot projects," etc. available, but agencies are often unaware of them. Sometimes the mandate of the government program and the needs of established social service agencies are incompatible — government programs are usually short-term and heavily bureaucratic in terms of application, administration and evaluation.

There is also concern that there is a disparity in programs and funding between on- and off-reserve communities, with on-reserve programs receiving more government support than off reserve organizations and programs. For example, concern was expressed that the Cultural Education Program of the federal Department of Canadian Heritage was only available on-reserve despite the need for cultural centres in urban areas. There is also a concern that Aboriginal youth are alienated from the mainstream education system because of the lack of a culturally-based curriculum and the prevalence of racism.

Perhaps the most important issue for agencies is the lack of stable, long-term core funding for Aboriginal organizations. Many agencies receive substantial program dollars but not core funding to support the administration function of their organization (Friendship Centres are an exception but have had no increase in funding in recent years). Aboriginal agencies are often forced to rely on program funding which is time-limited and very time-consuming to administer because of onerous application processes and extensive reporting requirements. Furthermore, each government program has its own mandates, criteria and rules for access to funding.

There are attempts to address the problems at the government level but at times their mandates restrict what they can do. UATF research participants suggested the time has come for governments to shift their

policy and program priorities to recognize the pressing needs of urban Aboriginal people. At the same time, governments are searching for ways to more adequately respond. For example, the federal government is reviewing its Urban Aboriginal Strategy and the Ontario provincial government has included urban Aboriginal people in its *Ontario's New Approach to Aboriginal Affairs* (2005). In addition, new provincial government initiatives such as Local Health Integration Networks (LHINS) are emphasizing the need for "horizontality" and cooperation among existing service providers to maximize efficiency, coordination and effectiveness. Additional resources, creative thinking and new approaches will be required to take advantage of these opportunities.

Many respondents also spoke of a lack of awareness and appreciation of the situation of Aboriginal people living in Northwestern Ontario. There was a sense that government officials in the South of the province have extensive authority to make policy and program decisions that affect Aboriginal people in Kenora, without an in-depth understanding of the differences between the regions. There was recognition that geographical, financial and social barriers exist which can sometimes make communication and the involvement of Aboriginal people from Northwestern Ontario difficult; however, there is concern that Aboriginal people in Northwestern Ontario should have greater voice in policy formation and decisions that affect them.

RECOMMENDATION 1 **That government departments and ministries at the federal and provincial levels responsible for policy, funding and service delivery decisions affecting urban Aboriginal people of Northwestern Ontario make a greater effort to be informed about the situation of Aboriginal people in Kenora and involve them in decisions affecting their lives.**

RECOMMENDATION 2 **That the jurisdictional wrangling over who is responsible for urban Aboriginal people be resolved and that federal and provincial governments allocate units in all relevant departments and ministries to be responsible for urban Aboriginal affairs. Partnership Agreements among federal, provincial, municipal and First Nations governments should be negotiated. The scope and mandate of these units should be determined with full and meaningful consultation with Aboriginal people.**

RECOMMENDATION 3 That the federal government and government of Ontario establish an Inter-departmental Committee composed of representative of all ministries at both levels of government that are involved with urban Aboriginal people, with a mandate to coordinate policies and fund programs and services to urban Aboriginal people in Ontario. This Inter-departmental Committee would be charged in its mandate to coordinate and collaborate with local municipal governments, like Kenora City Council and First Nations governmental bodies, such as Grand Council Treaty #3.

RECOMMENDATION 4 That the government of Ontario fund a new body, the Kenora Urban Aboriginal Alliance to oversee and coordinate the development of appropriate programs and services utilizing a continuum of care model (i.e. addressing immediate transition needs, short-term adjustment needs and long-term integration needs) to provide coordinated service to Aboriginal people in Kenora.

RECOMMENDATION 5 That federal, provincial and municipal governments' consider funding a cultural/educational centre in Kenora. For example, Canada Heritage consider expanding the mandate of the Cultural Education Centres Program to include off-reserve urban communities.

13.2 Urban migration, service delivery and agency coordination

Perhaps the most important finding of the UATF study is the fact that despite the long history of Aboriginal people coming to Kenora and the significant number of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal social service agencies in place to meet their needs that such significant social problem continue to plague Aboriginal people in the city. The issues have been raised in various reports and fora over the years and people are well of aware of them. An infrastructure of Aboriginal social service agencies has grown up over the years to address the issues and, increasingly, mainstream agencies are stepping up to service the needs of their growing number of Aboriginal clients. Undoubtedly progress has been made but much remains to be done.

In part, the problems continue to exist because of the significant number of Aboriginal people coming to the city. Newcomers, often young people and women from Northern First Nation communities, with little urban experience, low levels of education and few marketable skills continue to move to Kenora. These newcomers most often come looking for work, educational opportunities and a better quality of life. With an increasingly young population new pressures on the community and social services sector are going to continue to grow.

Aboriginal newcomers often immediately face major struggles of adjustment to the city including such basic needs such as housing, orientation to the city, transportation, lack of money and no support network. They sometimes possess little awareness of urban life and information of services available to them. If this initial experience with the city is negative long-term adjustment will be more difficult. There needs to be some system in place to meet the immediate transition needs, the first phase of urban migration, to ensure that the adjustment process from the outset is a positive one. Ideally, the process should begin before the individual moves to the city. Information and orientation sessions about the city should be available in Aboriginal languages and user-friendly manner.

A related finding pertains to the need to coordinate services in order to ensure an integrated and thorough approach to assist individuals during their initial transition to the city. This will require a great deal of coordination and cooperation among agencies, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, and the establishment of new working relationships in order to diminish waste and improve the access to, and effectiveness of, service delivery.

Finally, the study also indicates that individuals need to have their long-term integration needs addressed, integration both into the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities in Kenora. A major finding of the study was that there exist a large number of long-term Aboriginal residents of Kenora who continue to face serious problems and require programs and services. A different set of services will be required including education, training, employment, peer mentoring, Aboriginal culture, affordable long-term housing, access to health service (including acquisition of a family doctor and access to traditional healers), recre-

ational programs, the ability to cope with racism and the development of stable healthy relationships.

Many agencies, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, currently exist to meet many of these needs. But the kind of seamless, coordinated and integrated continuum of care articulated by participants currently does not exist. Services are not effectively coordinated, there are gaps in services and individuals fall between the cracks.

An important barrier to providing the continuum of care suggested by study participants is the current lack of coordination among agencies, especially Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal agencies. This is not unusual as organizations develop and grow based on meeting specific needs with specialized mandates, often according to funding priorities of governments. The issue is particularly pressing now as more and more non-Aboriginal agencies are servicing larger numbers of Aboriginal clients. The research indicated that there currently are no significant or centralized efforts to address this issue and that coordination between agencies, although recognized as pressing and necessary, is discretionary and *ad hoc* at best.

It is clear from the research that many challenges to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cooperation and integration remain. Many Aboriginal organizations believe that they face additional challenges, compared to non-Aboriginal agencies, in providing services including; being in a disadvantaged position for the competition for funding, not receiving as much funding as mainstream agencies for providing similar services, being burdened by elaborate application and reporting requirements, long delays in receiving funding from government, having to rely on short-term funding agreements, not having stable long-term core funding, having to be more accountable to the Kenora Aboriginal community, and having to provide a "culturally-based" approach to service delivery. All of these factors require more time, effort and funding to offer adequate programs and services. Also contributing to the lack of coordination among agencies is the competition for funds due to government mandates and funding requirements.

The issue of recording the number of Aboriginal clients and targeting funding to Aboriginal people as a specific group was also reported as an issue, particularly by mainstream agencies who serve all groups but have significant numbers of Aboriginal clients.

A fundamental issue underlying all the discussions pertains to whether services provided to urban Aboriginal people should be delivered by an Aboriginal agency as a parallel service or whether services could be coordinated or integrated with mainstream agencies. There is no correct approach that is mutually exclusive given the complex nature of the Aboriginal population of Kenora and the nature of the delivery of social services. It is important to recognize the high-quality work being done by existing agencies and that these agencies require additional support to fulfill their mandates. It is also clear that Aboriginal clients must be comfortable with the service and it must be effective in meeting their needs. Frequently, services provided in a culturally-based way are seen as the most appropriate. It is apparent that both Aboriginal and mainstream organizations are involved with Aboriginal people and it is desirable for there to be some level of coordination of services to avoid duplication, make the best use of resources and expertise and most effectively deliver programs and services.

RECOMMENDATION 6 **That the province provide internet terminals in Treaty #3 communities in Cree, Ojibway and Oji-Cree where people can find out about services that are available before they come to the city.**

RECOMMENDATION 7 **That Aboriginal agencies in Kenora, as a first step, contact First Nations and enter into discussions with a view of establishing relationships and eventually developing protocols to provide programs and services to members of the First Nations who move to Kenora, including orientation programs to potential urban Aboriginal people before they move to the city.**

RECOMMENDATION 8 **That a new coordinating body be established to reduce the overlap of services in the Kenora area where long standing patterns of migration between Kenora and respondents' First Nations underlies the need for effective cooperation between on-reserve, off-reserve and non-Aboriginal service delivery agencies. That body would be composed of representatives of a wide range of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations and community leaders with a mandate to include:**

- **overseeing the development of a continuum of care model for providing programs and services to Aboriginal people in Kenora;**

- coordinating the provision of services by existing agencies and the establishing of new ones;
- providing coordination of new urban initiatives; and
- overseeing the implementation of the recommendations of this report.

RECOMMENDATION 9 That a series of transition programs and settlement services (e.g., orientation, host families, counselling, transportation, referral etc.) be put in place to facilitate the initial adjustment of urban Aboriginal newcomers in Kenora, especially youth and women.

13.3 Culture and identity

A very important finding from the study related to how important maintaining and enhancing their Aboriginal culture and identity is to urban Aboriginal people in Kenora.

Many individuals and organizations in Kenora continue to play a significant role in assisting individuals on their life's journey towards personal stability, healthy relationships and cultural awareness. But the research also discovered that there are many people suffering from personal problems with little support from relatives, friends or mentors and who are alienated from the Aboriginal community and their Aboriginal culture (however it is defined). This can lead to confusion regarding their Aboriginal identity.

There were also individuals who have successfully adjusted to life in the city, often long-term residents who are part of the Aboriginal "emerging middle class" who are interested in maintaining (or reconnecting) with their culture. Furthermore the Kenora findings report that higher income earners participate more in cultural activities in Kenora than lower income earners.

For many, in both of these groups, a major issue in this regard is the distinct lack of cultural activities and event in Kenora. It has been suggested that a dedicated Aboriginal cultural facility in Kenora would work to create a cultural space for expression and sharing. In a sense, it is surprising that in a city with such a large Aboriginal presence that no such facility exists in Kenora. By contrast, most ethnic groups in Canada living in urban areas are characterized by a wide array of related institu-

tions, both formal and informal, that play a critical role in maintaining an individual's cultural identity.

However, there are many reasons why such a diversity of Aboriginal institutions have not been established in Kenora, perhaps the most important being the social problems facing Aboriginal people and the related lack of resources in the community. The tremendous pressure to fulfill basic needs, address social problems and provide services has led to the development of a large number of social service-type agencies at the expense of cultural institutions. Even the Friendship Centre, which started out, in part, as a social/cultural "gathering place/drop-in centre", has increasingly been pressed into playing a social service function with little space to hold larges gatherings (although still maintaining some social and cultural programs). Some respondents mentioned the dependence on government funding (which is frequently not readily available for social and cultural facilities) as another factor as to why such a centre does not exist. Some study participants also mentioned divisiveness within the Aboriginal community itself as a factor.

It should be emphasized that some social and cultural events occur and programs are in place in Kenora (powwows, sweats, elder teachings, etc.) both within Aboriginal organizations and within the larger community. But respondents emphasized that there are not many such events and that Aboriginal culture in Kenora is more "underground" and not very visible.

RECOMMENDATION 10 **That a meeting of Aboriginal people in Kenora (to include existing leaders, rank-and-file community members and individual not currently involved with the community) be convened with a view to discuss the desirability of establishing an Aboriginal Cultural Centre in Kenora. If there is agreement, then a non-profit society be formed to conduct a needs assessment to determine the specific nature of such a facility. Initial funding for the facility should be provided by the federal, provincial and municipal levels of government (i.e. the city of Kenora might donate suitable land for the centre) as well as from a Building Fund set up to accept donations from the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community. Members of the Aboriginal community should be the prime sponsors of the centre with as little reliance in government as possible. The process of fund-raising and operation of the centre should be independent of any existing organization.**

RECOMMENDATION 11 That Aboriginal and mainstream organizations make a special effort to attract members of the Aboriginal "emerging middle class" who are not currently connected to the Kenora Aboriginal community to actively participate in their programs in a variety of capacities. This group constitutes an untapped resource with specific skills and experience that can contribute to services and programs and in turn expand and strengthen the community.

RECOMMENDATION 12 Given the large Aboriginal population in the Kenora area and their central role, as the First People, to its past and present development, that Aboriginal culture should be much more evident, visible and integrated into the Kenora landscape, architectural, socio-economic and governance structures and even the popular culture.

13.4 Aboriginal youth in Kenora

The research discovered that one of the most vulnerable groups in Kenora was youth, and the biggest challenge they face is education. Lack of education is directly related to the inability of youth to get stable, good paying jobs and starts a cycle of poverty, low self esteem and dependency that can be very difficult to arrest.

This group is particularly important because of the high percentage of youth among the Aboriginal population in Kenora. Coupled with high need, the research also revealed serious gaps in services where Aboriginal youth are concerned. Concern was expressed that there needs to be more organized programs in place for children and youth. For example, it was mentioned that after children leave the Aboriginal Head Start Program there is no similar program in the public education as a transition and that many students of all ages were struggling with the mainstream school system. In addition, unlike many other cities in Canada there is no youth centre in Kenora.

The importance of having positive role models and a stable Aboriginal identity was emphasized by many participants in the research. Three age groups were mentioned by research participants as having significant unmet needs. First, young children who are entering the public education system. It is critical for children to have an initial positive experience

with formal education if they are to succeed in the long-term. Parents themselves may view the educational system negatively or are not in a position to assist their children in school or create a positive learning environment at home due to poverty and/or instability.

Second, the late childhood to early adolescent ages (7 to 17) when youth are so vulnerable in terms of forming their identity and open to negative influences such as drugs, alcohol and gangs and criminal activity is a critical period to have services and programs available. The situation is particularly important when youth do not have a stable home environment, as is often the case in Kenora. It is also a time when youth begin to view going to school negatively and often begin to experience serious academic difficulties. The impact of negative stereotypes on the self esteem and identity is often very severe during this phase of adolescence and can lead to disengagement and disinterest, the major reason male Aboriginal youth gave for dropping out of school. This is a phase when positive Aboriginal role models and relationships are important for the youth's identity and self-esteem. Mentoring and big brother/sister programs can greatly assist during this phase.

Overt racism in school was not cited by the youth themselves as a major problem in Kenora, but more covert forms of racism were identified as problematic. Lack of First Nations staff and teachers, lack of culturally accurate and relevant curricula were all reported to contribute to the high drop-out rate of Aboriginal students. Drugs, teenage pregnancy, unstable and unsupportive home environments and boredom were also reported by youth themselves to be reasons for dropping out.

It is clear that a significant number of Aboriginal students do not feel comfortable in the existing schools in Kenora or that the educational system is not meeting their needs. An educational alternative is required. In many cities across Canada (Toronto, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Edmonton, etc.) the public education system has established "cultural survival schools" to meet the goals of providing a relevant educational experience in an appropriate setting with sound academic standards and a significant cultural curriculum. Various models exist for such schools.

Another barrier to receiving an adequate education and to finishing high school in particular, was teenage pregnancy. There is an increasing trend among Kenora Aboriginal youth, both on and off-reserve, of early parenthood. Girls as young as 12 or younger are getting pregnant and by

18 may have several children, often necessitating that one or both parents drop out of school to work and raise their offspring.

The lack of post-secondary education was also identified as a barrier to success for Aboriginal youth in Kenora. The majority of all research participants identified a lack of funding for post-secondary education as very problematic. Contrary to popular belief that Aboriginal people get free education, more often than not parents are too poor to pay for post-secondary education and funds transferred to the Bands for members educational purposes are far too inadequate to allow all the band members who wish to continue their education to do so. This issue is further complicated by many First Nations refusing to fund the educations of Aboriginal people who live in urban centres, regardless of whether or not they are officially Band members, in favour of those who live on reserve.

Aboriginal youth reported that they face a number of barriers in obtaining jobs including, lack of education and skills, racism and negative stereotypes, problems with transportation, lack of time management skills and lack of examples of successful Aboriginal businesses or positive role models. Youth pointed out that there are few examples of Aboriginal people working in high profile jobs in the service industry or in management positions in the private sector.

The third age group that was identified during the research was the late adolescence-early adult period (18 to 25). This is an age when youth can express their ideas and opinions and need a forum to present them. Often youth have distinctive vehicles of telling their stories such as characteristic music styles, language, clothes and expressions of their identity. This is a time when they can begin to take their place as contributing members of the Aboriginal community through such roles as "helpers".

Yet they are often marginalized in terms of not having their voices heard within the larger Aboriginal community and experience difficulties in establishing a successful career. For these issues to be addressed there needs to be a forum where youth can meet and independently communicate their ideas and reinforce their Aboriginal identity. Numerous examples of Aboriginal youth taking control of their representations currently exist in Canada including: the Native Youth Movement which has chapters in cities across Canada; Aboriginal youth magazines such as SPIRIT and Redwire; drum groups; and musicians such as Lucie Idlout, Skeena Rice, Brock Stonefish and Reddnation hip hop group.

Youth expressed the desire to become more organized and have a voice and to have a place to meet and "hang out". A physical centre which provides a setting for gathering, programming and recreation is critical for youth to engage in positive and healthy lifestyles. The establishment of such a centre have been recommended by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal people and the *Urban Aboriginal Youth: An Action Plan for Change Final Report.*

Youth organizations can serve to enhance many concerns including, the transference of skills and experience, allowing them to more formally present their views, promoting networks and solidarity, increasing their self-esteem, strengthening their cultural identity, promoting healthy attitudes and behaviour and integrating them into the Kenora Aboriginal community. Such an initiative can be supported by the federal government's Urban Multipurpose Youth Centres Initiative, especially if the program is modified to allow for long-term stable funding.

There also a need to have effective employment initiatives to assist Aboriginal youth enter the labour force and not just into low paying, dead end jobs. Examples of programs currently exist in other parts of Canada including the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce: Aboriginal Employment Initiative. The best practices of these programs need to be studied and implemented and modified to fit the situation in Kenora. All of these issues are long-standing, well-known and well-documented. Numerous examples of effective programs for youth exist in other parts of Canada.

RECOMMENDATION 13 **That Aboriginal leaders in the Kenora enter into discussions with the Kenora School Boards and Ontario Ministry of Education with a view to establish an Aboriginal Cultural School in Kenora. As part of the process to establish the school a study of best practices of various cultural survival schools in Canada be undertaken. The school should be geared to the needs of all Aboriginal students.**

RECOMMENDATION 14 **That the Ontario Ministry of Education and Kenora School Boards undertake a review of the curriculum in Kenora schools with a view to increase the amount of Aboriginal content e.g. add new courses (including Aboriginal language, history, contemporary issues and cultural courses).**

RECOMMENDATION 15 That the Kenora School Boards set employment targets for their schools as a proactive strategy for increasing the number of Aboriginal staff and teachers.

RECOMMENDATION 16 That the Kenora Aboriginal Head Start Program enter into discussions with Health Canada (and other appropriate government ministries) and the Kenora School Boards with a view to establishing educational "satellite programs" for Aboriginal children in Kenora schools as a transition from the Head Start Program to the public education system. The program should continue the model of the Head Start program in emphasizing both academic and cultural components.

RECOMMENDATION 17 That Aboriginal and mainstream agencies enter into discussions with governments with a view to establish additional youth programs such as, peer mentoring/tutoring programs, big brother/big sister programs, cultural events and programs, athletic and sports programs etc. for young Aboriginal youth in addition to the youth programs that already exist.

RECOMMENDATION 18 That an effort be coordinated to establish a Kenora Aboriginal Youth Council (or chapter of the Native Youth Movement). The organization, once established, should be operated by Aboriginal youth themselves. The organization should be provided a satisfactory place to meet and hold events and be given adequate funding to operate.

RECOMMENDATION 19 That a Youth Centre be established in Kenora and that youth are actively involved in the development and running of that centre.

RECOMMENDATION 20 That the impacts on Aboriginal students of the nature and timing of the per-capita funding of First Nation students' by the Department of Indian Affairs and the "zero tolerance" policy of the Kenora School Boards be examined with a view to reducing the attrition rates of Aboriginal students.

RECOMMENDATION 21 That an aggressive Teenage Pregnancy Education and Awareness campaign be launched immediately targeting both female and male Aboriginal youth and also parents. Increased access to birth control services be provided through schools and the Kenora walk-in Medical clinic, the downtown Kenora Health Access Centre, the First Nations health program at the Lake of the Woods District Hospital and all other relevant venues. In addition to educating Aboriginal youth regarding the prevention of pregnancy a component on substance abuse and fetal alcohol syndrome should be aggressively promoted.

13.5 Racism and Aboriginal people in Kenora

The research revealed that racism is a significant, long-term and continuing problem in Kenora. The problem is most acute in public places such as stores, restaurants, busses, in relations with the police, and in schools and is felt most intensely by the poorer members of the Aboriginal community. Participants spoke eloquently to the different overt and covert forms racism takes in Kenora. They also spoke to how street-living Aboriginal people are most vulnerable to racism and hate crimes. Respondents spoke often and indignantly about the KIB (Kenora Indian Beaters) who prey on vulnerable homeless and Aboriginal youth and how they feel the police are failing in their duty to stop this group and protect Aboriginal citizens from this predation.

Various forms of racism and discrimination, including systemic racism, are inevitable when there exists a serious imbalance in the power relations in the city and Aboriginal people are characterized by different cultural practices and behaviour, are poor and marginalized, and negative stereotypes exist. Under such conditions racism perpetuates itself. Racism over the long-term tends to subside when two conditions are present. First, when the minority attains a sufficient economic standard of living with its concomitant increase in power and influence within the city. Second, when there is a sufficient level of social, economic and political integration (not assimilation) and interaction between members of the minority and majority society, and individuals must communicate with each other face-to-face on common tasks with an attitude of respect

for them to get to know one another. When these two conditions exist it is possible for attitudes to change.

Participants note that some efforts at "public education" and "cross cultural awareness" training have taken place over the years but were too *ad hoc* and intermittent to effect any real or long-lasting changes in Kenora.

Another factor mentioned by respondents as contributing to racism related to the image of Aboriginals presented in the local media and more covertly the complete under-representation of the positive contributions of Aboriginal citizens of Kenora. While some attempts to change the approaches to media representation have been made some study participants believed that it was still an issue. Like so many aspects of Kenora's occupational structure, Aboriginal people hold few or no employment positions (with some notable exceptions), especially editorial positions, within the Kenora media infrastructure. How a group's stories are told and who tells them to the general public have significant implications for the general image of, as well as people's attitudes, toward that group. Aboriginal people need to tell their own stories. It is clear that Aboriginal people need to be more involved in influential and high profile roles in the media in Kenora to ensure that the picture is accurate and that they are seen as visible.

Another important, and sensitive, factor was uncovered by the research that may be contributing to this situation. That is, there is clearly a problem with internal divisiveness and discrimination among Aboriginal people themselves in Kenora. A substantial number of respondents had experienced racism from another Aboriginal person.

Respondents suggested that internal divisions were an important reason for the lack of progress regarding the development of the Aboriginal community in Kenora. It is also detriment to establishing a positive identity and willingness to get involved among young people. It creates a disincentive to becoming a community leader, particularly among members of the middle class. Leadership entails becoming vulnerable and requires support from the community, a norm that does not seem to be overly present in Kenora. In the long run, internal divisiveness serves to keep the group fragmented and will impede change. Respondents suggested that the topic, in the past, has been so sensitive that it has not been openly discussed, but that the time is right to open it up for dialogue.

RECOMMENDATION 22 That the Aboriginal community within Kenora and Grand Council Treaty #3 work with Kenora City Council, the local newspaper, radio stations and TV station, schools and any other relevant bodies with the view to transforming the invisibility of local Aboriginal culture and to ensure that Aboriginal people are telling their own stories with the view to improving the "public image" of Aboriginal people.

RECOMMENDATION 23 That the City of Kenora establish the office of Aboriginal Ombudsman as a middle management level with sufficient independence, authority and staff to investigate complaints of racism and discrimination so as to bring about necessary changes to racist practices.

RECOMMENDATION 24 That structures such as the Kenora Police Services Board have adequate Aboriginal representation in order to ensure that policies and procedures affecting Aboriginal people are effectively implemented.

RECOMMENDATION 25 That an informal group of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal leaders (in all sectors) be established to facilitate a series of meetings between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to openly address the issue of racism and examine ways to address it. The initiative should be funded by the City of Kenora.

RECOMMENDATION 26 That a workshop be convened between Aboriginal organizations and the various media organizations in Kenora with a view to discussing ways to involve Aboriginal people more in the media presentation of stories related to Aboriginal people (e.g. student co-op placements. apprenticeship programs, guest columnists and commentators etc.).

13.6 Aboriginal women in Kenora

Aboriginal women occupy two very notable positions within the Kenora community; they are both the most violently oppressed and the most socially active in working to end that oppression. Our research has

shown that within both of these social groups there are both gaps in services and agencies that require much needed enhancement and support.

In addressing theses unmet needs, an Aboriginal women-specific 'continuum of care' strategy will need to be developed. Importantly, this strategy will need to be responsive to a diversity of needs including those immediate transitional needs of new arrivals to Kenora, the short-term adjustment needs of those seeking to better integrate into the community, and longer-term professional and cultural needs of the more established residents. Research participants in Kenora also consistently noted the lack of Aboriginal specific women's services, indicated that the few mainstream services are comfortably accessed by Aboriginal women due to lack of cultural relevance and racism.

'At risk' Aboriginal women in Kenora require a coordinated and geographically consolidated array of services that are geared towards providing safe and culturally supportive spaces that respond to both immediate and the longer term transitional needs away from poverty and violence. These most vulnerable members of the community require basic services including those meeting needs for food, safe shelter, clothing, and transportation.

In transitioning out of abusive relationships, extreme poverty and violence, Aboriginal women require an array of counselling services including: addictions, mental health, relationship, life skills, and legal support. It is important that these services are offered in a culturally sensitive manner and that Aboriginal women be given direct access to these services. The provision of transitional housing is also a key factor as women move from shelters to more private and stable home environments. Education and training will be an important aspect of the movement to healing, as will mentoring and the building of new social networks and community.

For those professional Aboriginal women that have succeeded in college and university and who are working in the community and in the social services sector specifically, cultural activities and mentoring with Elders and traditional people has been identified as having a significant benefit to personal and community health and development.

Safe, comfortable and affordable housing was by far the most pressing need identified for Aboriginal women of Kenora. Transportation and culturally appropriate childcare was also of chief concern for all Aboriginal

women in Kenora and should be openly available at all levels in the community. Basic needs and transitional services should provide childcare and transportation as an integral part of the delivery of those services. As well, childcare must be available to those Aboriginal women at work and in school so as to support these efforts.

RECOMMENDATION 27 That a comprehensive urban Aboriginal Women's Strategy be developed for Kenora with the intent of coordinating existing social services and developing new programs and services that provide a continuum of care for all Aboriginal women in Kenora.

RECOMMENDATION 28 The immediate expansion of support services to Aboriginal women in Kenora including: those immediate transitional needs of new arrivals, the short-term adjustment needs of those seeking to better integrate into the community, and the longer-term professional and cultural needs of the more established residents, with specific priority given to the following:

- healthy food, safe shelter, clothing, and transportation;
- addictions, mental health, relationships, life skills, and legal counselling;
- transitional housing;
- education and training; and
- childcare and transportation as an integral part to the provision of all of these services.

RECOMMENDATION 29 That there be increased support for the work of existing agencies working with 'at risk' women and that government representatives and community leaders work collectively towards the creation of an Aboriginal women's safe house that will provide an array of basic needs services and be openly available during the day and night.

RECOMMENDATION 30 That there be increased levels of support for Aboriginal women's cultural activities in Kenora, including but not limited to working with Elders, ceremonial practice, and language development.

RECOMMENDATION 31 That outreach to Aboriginal middle class women through a series of workshops and open houses take place with the intent of developing an Aboriginal women's mentor program that will assist women at all levels of the community in their healing, educational, professional and cultural lives and in particular assist those Aboriginal women seeking to build new communities away from their former high risk social networks.

RECOMMENDATION 32 That an Aboriginal women's mentoring program should be established in Aboriginal service agencies with a goal of assisting women who are beginning their careers in urban Aboriginal agencies.

RECOMMENDATION 33 That an Aboriginal women's professional association be developed to provide a venue for women to network, invest collectively, and generally support each other in areas of finance and employment so as to assist Aboriginal women in securing their place in an emerging middle class.

RECOMMENDATION 34 That an immediate and aggressive public awareness campaign be launched as a strategic initiative to end the violence against Aboriginal women in Kenora through education, consciousness raising, media reporting and efforts to decrease the under reporting of violent incidences against Aboriginal women.

13.7 Health access

The research has demonstrated that Aboriginal people in Kenora suffer disproportionately from a number of serious health issues but that the majority of respondents (78%) stated that their health care needs were being met adequately. Fully 71% of the respondents had a family doctor and over one-third of the research participants use some form of traditional wellness.

One area of health that respondents reported as being a major challenge and also under serviced was regarding mental health and addictions. It was noted by many participants that there are no youth mental

health worker and very few for adults and that detox programs had very long wait times and were almost impossible to access.

And while physical health ailments are more obvious to detect, mental health issues are often more subtle and difficult to diagnose. Problem of high rates of suicide, alcohol and drug abuse, sexual abuse etc. are often the symptoms of underlying mental health illnesses. There was a clear recognition that there are not enough trained personnel or facilities to treat various forms of mental illness and that often individuals go untreated until a major negative event occurs.

It is clear that despite the Ontario government's *New Directions: Aboriginal Health Policy for Ontario* designed to address these issues in a comprehensive way, a great deal remains to be done. As is the case with so many of the issues discussed in this report, the health issues of Aboriginal people in Ontario are well-documented and recognized. There is an immediate need to articulate gaps in health services, support existing health agencies and develop strategies to address them.

RECOMMENDATION 35 **That a series of inter-agency meetings of representatives from existing health service agencies and relevant government health ministries be convened to discuss how to more effectively meet the physical and mental health needs of Aboriginal people in Kenora with a view to develop a holistic and coordinated continuum of care strategy to address those needs. Particular attention should be paid to mental health needs and to barriers to accessing health services.**

RECOMMENDATION 36 **Communication and collaboration among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal health agencies should be enhanced to maximize effectiveness and cultural relevance in service delivery.**

RECOMMENDATION 37 **That a Kenora Aboriginal Health Board be establish from the inter-agency meeting as a permanent body to monitor the effectiveness of the health services to Aboriginal people, including the new programs established. The Health Board should meet regularly, have a small support staff, coordinate closely with government health ministries and be funded by government. The mandate**

and authority of the Health Board should be officially recognized by governments.

13.8 Aboriginal men in Kenora

The UATF research indicated that lack of employment and lack of education are the two biggest hurdles for Aboriginal men living in Kenora. More specifically, forty-six percent (46%) of respondents felt that the major challenge facing Aboriginal men was the lack of employment and education opportunities, followed by violence and abuse (28%), and then discrimination (6%). Furthermore, from related findings it is reasonable to suggest that addictions and mental health challenges can account for those respondents (20%) that indicated 'other' as a major challenge.

As well, the data points to two additional considerations, namely: that the vast majority of respondents (72%) indicated that the needs of Aboriginal men in Kenora are not being met and that 67% of respondents are unaware of services relating to Aboriginal men.

RECOMMENDATION 38 **That, in their efforts to oversee and coordinate the development of appropriate programs and services utilizing a continuum of care model, the Kenora Urban Aboriginal Alliance include considerations specific to Aboriginal men in Kenora, namely:**

- **that outreach efforts be made to Aboriginal men in Kenora with the goal of enhancing awareness of existing programs and services;**
- **that efforts be made to enhance and further develop employment and education training opportunities that meet the particular needs of Aboriginal men; and**
- **that traditional, culturally based counselling services for Aboriginal men including, anger, relationship, and addictions counselling be supported and enhanced.**

REFERENCES

Anderson-Gill and Associates. (2005). *Urban Aboriginal Strategy Pilot Projects Formative Evaluation: Final Report.*

Aiken, Mike. (2007). *People Shouldn't Have to Live This Way: A Report on Homelessness in Kenora.* The Anamiewigummig Kenora Fellowship Centre. in partnership with Human Resources and Skill Development Canada and the Making Kenora Home Committee.

Sider, Deb. (2005). *A Sociological Analysis of Root Causes of Aboriginal Homelessness in Sioux Lookout Ontario.* Published by The Canadian Race Relations Foundation, Sponsored by Sioux Lookout Anti-Racism Committee and Nishnawbe-Gamik Friendship Centre.

Government of Canada. (2006). *Urban Aboriginal Strategy.*

Government of Ontario. (2006). *Imagine a Better Health Care System: A Plan to Make it Real.*

Ontario Ministry of Health. (1994). *New Directions: Aboriginal Health Policy for Ontario.* Toronto.

Royal Commision on Aboriginal Peoples. (1996). *Report on the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.* Ottawa

Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples. (2003). *Urban Aboriginal Youth: An Action Plan for Change, Final Report.* Ottawa.

Statistics Canada. (2001.) *Aboriginal Peoples Survey.* Ottawa.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The following research instruments were used during the study:

1. **Key Respondent Interview Guides**
   - Aboriginal Organizational Key Respondent Interview Guide—
     Executive Director
   - Aboriginal Organizational Key Respondent Interview Guide—
     Staff
   - Aboriginal Organizational Key Respondent Interview Guide—
     Youth Worker
   - Non-Aboriginal Organization Key Respondent Interview Guide
   - Government Key Respondent Interview Guide
   - Aboriginal Community Member Key Respondent Interview Guide
2. **Community Survey**
3. **Focus Group Questions**
4. **Plenary Session Questions**
5. **Life History Questions**

Copies of all research instruments are available upon request at:
The Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres
219 Front Street
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
M5A 1E8

VOICE: +1 416–956–7575   FAX: +1 416–956–7577

ofifc@ofifc.org   www.ofifc.org

CONTACT: Sylvia Maracle, Executive Director

Kenora
Final Report

Throughout 2005 and 2006, the Urban Aboriginal Task Force, a partnership of Aboriginal organizations and government agencies, oversaw community-based research in five urban sites: Kenora, Thunder Bay, Ottawa, Barrie/Midland/Orillia, and Sudbury. Designed to shed new light on on-going struggles and critical new developments taking place in urban Aboriginal communities across the province, the project investigated racism, homelessness, poverty, youth, women, and health, also considering broader concerns of culture and identity, gaps in delivery of services, Elders and long-term care, women and children, access to resources, and assessment of Aboriginal services.

The *Kenora Final Report* constitutes the fifth of the five site reports and with the other site reports will inform the preparation of the *Final Report of the Urban Aboriginal Task Force*. It is our hope that the *Final Report* will initiate a new wave of positive, cooperative policy, programme, and legislative change aimed at improving the quality of life for all urban Aboriginal people in Ontario.

Additional copies of this report are available for download from **www.ofifc.org**.