In 2017 Ministry of Indigenous Services (formerly Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada ‘INAC’) and the province of Ontario agreed to jointly fund a study of First Nation Child and Family Services, which is called the Ontario Special Study (OSS).

The purpose of the study is to develop options for a new First Nations child well-being policy, program delivery and funding approach that is child-centered, community-directed and supports better outcomes by focusing on prevention.
Undertaking of the Ontario Special Study

In support of providing recommendations and options for policy and funding reform of First Nation Child and Family Services in Ontario. The Chiefs of Ontario is coordinating the Ontario Special Study to identify the following:

• Establishing a baseline for current and existing programs and services (based on existing data), including:
  • An approximation of the number of First Nation children in care;
  • What is bringing First Nation children into care;
  • Challenges and strengths for First Nation children transitioning to/from care and while in care;
  • Outcomes for First Nations children after they leave care (e.g. education, employment, involvement with criminal justice system, continued involvement with child welfare system);
• Identify service/funding gaps (e.g. including infrastructure capital, gaps amongst service providers, gaps between federal and provincial departments/ministries); and
• Identify models/best practices which provide examples of successful outcomes for child and family well-being initiatives.
• Identify options for prevention based approaches that support child well-being
• Identify outcomes based funding approaches including formulas, delivery model options and/or other recommendations
• Identify recommended changes/alternatives to the IWA in the child welfare sector
• Identify and take into account factors affecting child and family services including remoteness, population density, high-risk areas, etc.
• Identify actual capacity building needs, funding levels, and possible strategies within communities – for First Nations to discuss whether appropriate at this stage
• Identify Successful Models – Community, Agency and/or models
• Identify other needs as it relates to child well-being e.g. water, housing, infrastructure
• Identify examples of how a reformed model could be better address community-directed needs and outcomes
• Identify examples of successful systems and outcomes that are community-driven
Funding Considerations in a new Funding Framework for First Nation Child and Family Services

- Population Densities (High & Low Populations)
- Remoteness & Isolation (NAN's CW Remoteness Project)
- High Risk Factors For Children and Youth (Crime & Substance Abuse)
- Indigenous Agencies (Prevention & Protection)
- Infrastructure Needs (Housing, Water, Community Facilities)
- Other Considerations

New CW Funding Framework
Ontario Special Study Next Steps

- Securing a project manager and economists (Dec 2018)
- Finalizing Ontario Special Report in the (Winter-Spring 2019)
- Presenting the Ontario Special Report Findings to Leadership (Spring 2019)
Social Assistance Update
On July 31st, 2018 Minister Lisa MacLeod, Ministry of Children and Community Social Services (MCCSS), announced the Ministry’s intentions to develop a sustainable social assistance program that moves away from the “...previous government’s patchwork system”. Minister MacLeod set an accelerated 100 day deadline to develop and announce the new social assistance system.

On November 8th, the Minister MacLeod announced that the province will be revealing its changes to Ontario’s social assistance plan on November 22nd.

On October 16th, The Chiefs of Ontario has submitted a letter and workplan outlining priorities for social assistance reform identified by the First Nation caucus members of the Joint Social Services Table.
Ontario’s New Social Assistance Plan Continued

The Chiefs of Ontario will be coordinating a conference call with the First Nation caucus members of the Joint Social Services Table on November 27th to discuss the new planned and proposed changes following the Nov. 22 announcement.

The Chiefs of Ontario will provide a more through update on Ontario’s new social assistance plan at the upcoming Ontario First Nations Caucus meetings during the AFN Special Chiefs Assembly December 4 – 6, 2018.