

Annual Report

2023 – 2024



Children's Aid Society of Algoma
Société de l'aide à l'enfance d'Algoma

2022–2024

Strategic Directions and Priorities

Mission

The Children’s Aid Society of Algoma is committed to protecting children and promoting their well-being by working collaboratively with children, families and communities through service excellence

Vision

Protecting Children and Strengthening Families throughout the District of Algoma

Values

INTEGRITY

We will be open, transparent, reliable, trustworthy, sincere and honest.

EXCELLENCE

Children have the right to grow up safely in loving families and supportive communities with everything they need to flourish with connection to their culture, ethnicity, race and language.

COLLABORATION

We work together with children, youth and families, their communities and community partners in strengthening family connections.

INNOVATION

We approach every challenge and opportunity with openness and creativity while maximizing the strengths, resilience and resources of children, youth and families.

RESPECT

We foster a culture of equity, inclusiveness and diversity that respects each individual’s unique worth and inherent dignity.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We take responsibility for our work, our decisions and our results.

KATELYNN’S PRINCIPLE

The voice of the child is at the heart of everything we do.



A Message From Our Board President and Executive Director

This past year has again been challenging managing a significant deficit while ensuring a service system that is responsive to our communities while meeting both legislative and regulatory service requirements set out by the Ministry of Children and Community and Social Services (MCCSS). We have continued to advocate the need for MCCSS to ensure funding is at an equitable and sustainable level to ensure our agency is able to deliver services to the children, youth, and families within the district of Algoma. The Board, on behalf of the organization, has taken the position that further expenditure cuts would lead to diminished service for our community members who require child welfare services. The cost of care for complex youth or youth that have exhausted all family-based care is a driving factor of the current deficit.

Senior management has been working with our community partners and local service providers to create a comprehensive service model to address the needs of these youth in a fiscally responsible manner. The Board is committed to keeping our youth requiring care in their community rather than placing youth in outside paid facilities far away from their family, community, and friends. We will continue to work collaboratively with the Ministry with the hope of reducing our expenditures related to the cost of care, the sector also continues to advocate for a review of the 2013 funding formula to bring a sustainable funding model to the sector.

There has been a lot of organizational change this year with retirements and with staff leaving the field of child welfare for other employment opportunities. With the current and projected retirements in the coming five-year period, the focus has been on succession planning and the transfer of knowledge to our up-and-coming leaders within the organization. We have seen a surge of new supervisors over the last two years, a changing of guard, with that we have also experienced a surge of new workers. With this has come new learning, changes in team

constellation and a transfer of organizational knowledge. Our east district office has experienced both staff attraction and retention issues that have impacted service delivery. Recruitment for our Elliot Lake office continues to be challenging and has left the agency to make changes to its service model. Staff are travelling from Sault Ste. Marie to provide kinship services, resource services, assessment services and now the boundary for protection services has been expanded to assist service demands.

As an organization we are committed to providing services that keep families strong through early intervention, support and by linking families to appropriate community support. This is work our entire team is focused on. At the end of the fiscal year 82.9% of families we service receive support in their own homes and the family unit remains intact. Everyone needs help at times, and we work to provide culturally appropriate services that meet each family's unique needs. We strongly believe that children should be with family and when situations occur that require a child to leave their home, we seek placement with kin or in family-based care on a temporary basis. 93.1% of youth in care reside in family-based care. This includes youth placed within our kinship service program.

The agency underwent two residential service audits in May, our Extended Society Care (ESC) Review and the Foster Care Licensing. Overall, our ESC review noted our continued focus on planning with our children and youth in care on all dimensions, health, education, social/emotional skill, self-care/independence skills and permanency. The quality of relationships and stability of placements were also noted as positive for our child/ youth in extended care. In terms of Licensing, the Agency anticipates receiving a full license.

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From a governance perspective we are pleased to report that by the annual meeting, we will have a revised set of by-laws to approve that have been reviewed through the lens of compliance with the now proclaimed Ontario Not for Profit Corporations Act (ONCA).

The Board participated in a Board retreat with the Boards of Nogdawindamin, Community Living Algoma, THRIVE and Algoma Family Services. Algoma Family Services hosted the event this year with the agenda focusing on governance through the lens of equity and balanced score cards along with a presentation from our Local Health Table. Our agency will be tasked with hosting the next retreat in 2025.

The work of child welfare does not happen in isolation. We extend sincere gratitude to all who work alongside us to create a future that encompasses safety for children and youth. We especially want to thank our staff for continuing to deliver high quality services while managing organizational change this past year, to our resource families for your dedication to children, young people and families in our community who needed a helping hand and place to call home, to our community stakeholders for walking along side of us on our journey and helping us manage some complex care plans, and to our funders, the Ministry of Community and Social Services for their significant financial support over the past year. We cannot do this work without you!



SEAN SPARLING

Board President



TRACY WILLOUGHBY

Executive Director



Board of Directors

For the period of April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024

Sean Sparling

Board President

Michelle Sayers

First Vice President

Sherri Cleaves

Second Vice President

Marc Coletti

Treasurer

Nuala Kenny

Secretary

Ann Cuzzolino, Shelley Watt Proulx,

Veronica Udensi

Directors

Michelle Sayers

Indigenous Representative(s)

Senior Management

Tracy Willoughby

Executive Director

Krista Budau and Mary Jean Chartrand

Directors of Service

Dawn Dubois

Director of Legal Services

Dirinda Evans

Finance Manager

Peter Niro

Human Resources Manager

Working Together: Community Engagement

Tim Hortons partnered with Children's Aid Society of Algoma in the Holiday Smile Cookie Campaign in December and the Smile cookie campaign that occurred at the beginning of May.

Proceeds from the cookie campaign will go to support kinship service families. Staff jumped at the opportunity to decorate cookies for the week while increasing community awareness of the kinship program. The two cookie campaigns raised more than \$100,000.00 with half of the proceeds going to the kinship service program and the other half going to support Tim Horton's summer camp program for the youth of Sault Ste. Marie.

Thank you, Tim Hortons, and to all the sponsors for putting a SMILE on such a great program!



Community Gardens/ MNR Donations

For over 20 years our Wawa office has had the opportunity to provide a community garden to the community of Wawa. The project first start to of promoting community engagement, nutritional education and an opportunity for families and children to have fresh vegetables over the summer months. This project has been a long-standing service that the community looks forward to each year. The Garden is designed and managed by families in the community, providing them with valuable experience. In addition to the community gardens the MNR regularly donates moose meat and fish that can be distributed to families in need. Both these programs address food security in a community that is isolated and with few community resources.

Celebrating Staff

Our staff recognition program acknowledges and honours our employees who have given many years of dedicated service. The program is our way of saying thank you for their devotion, dedication and commitment to helping children and families in our community.

Congratulations and thank you to our employees who have achieved the following years of service!

April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024

Retirements

Nancy MacDonald
Melanie Mahler
Laura Flynn
Karen Sartoretto

Anniversaries

1 YEAR

Hannah Campbell
Cheyenne Carpenter
Mercedez Kilby
Shannah Desbois

5 YEARS

Ami Madsen
Shelley Cleveland
Kim Irvine
John Porco
Madison Policicchio
Mallory Marinich

15 YEARS

Pina D'Agostino
Lora Johnson
Jane Russell
Sherry Vaillancourt

20 YEARS

Kelly Middaugh
Betty Schwehr
Tracy St. Onge
Deb Nelson
Michele Trainor Schmidt
Jason McBurney

25 YEARS

Lisa Hutton

30 YEARS

Lesley Talentino
Dirinda Evans
Evelyn Provenzano

Celebrating Youth

As the #forgetmenot campaign reminded us all; youth in care are resilient and adaptable, but despite that strength they still need the same ongoing and unconditional love, support and encouragement, that their peers, who are not in the child welfare system receive, from their parents, friends and communities through their entire lives.

Through continued effort to promote interdependence over independence, the Agency has remained committed to affording youth in care equitable supports and conditions for future success. This year we celebrated youth in care on May 17th across the district.

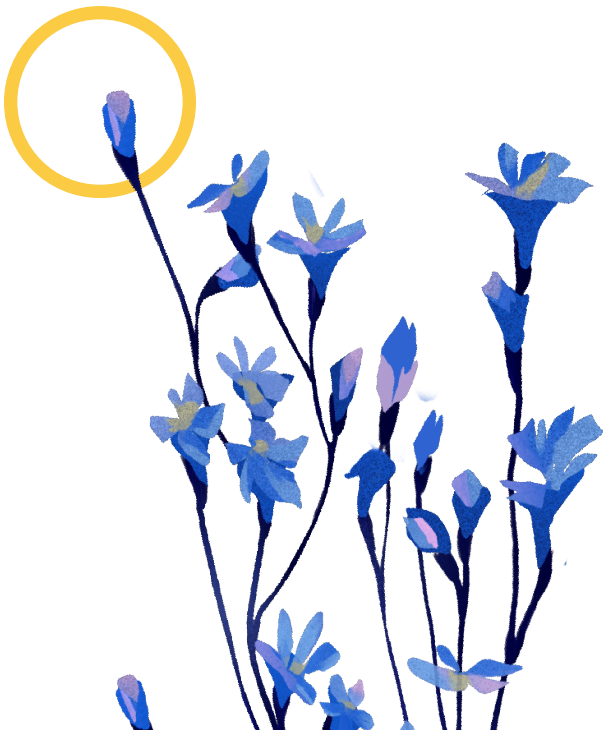
In honour of youth in care we are highlighting one of our youth who created a beautiful poem depicting her journey — enjoy.

I Remember

I remember the harsh words you told me
I remember you telling me that I was worthless
I remember all the hands-on
I remember calling and being told there was nothing that could be done
I remember crying in my room alone
I remember fighting for my life on a daily basis
I remember the lies I had to tell to protect myself and my sister
I remember the day we left
I remember the welcoming feelings
I remember the love I felt
I remember the comfort
I remember my first dinner in a better place
I remember the amazing people all around me
I remember meeting her for the first time
I remember all the kind things you told me
I remember the helpful things you taught me
I remember you and him telling me I had to leave
I remember the sad feeling I had
I remember what you did for me
I remember you helping me stay within the family
I remember Christmas of 2017 you telling me the best news ever
I remember our day
I remember the finish date
I remember the day I got to call you mom and dad
I remember starting to feel a part of something bigger

— **KAYLI RALPH-HURLEY, 2024**

Written by Kayli Ralph-Hurley, a young woman who wants to share her poem that represents her time before, during, and after her time in care, as part of her healing journey. Kayli has agreed to share her poem with all prospective foster/alternative care families to encourage them to open homes to youth like herself, as this was a life-changing experience for her.



Reconciliation



Land Acknowledgment

In the Spirit of Truth and Reconciliation, Children’s Aid Society of Algoma acknowledges that we are gathered today on the customary and traditional lands of the Anishinaabe and Cree First Nations throughout Algoma.

We acknowledge the land, the first nation, metis and Inuit peoples and recognize and respect Indigenous Peoples as traditional stewards of this land and the lands of Canada. We acknowledge and respect the enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories from time immemorial.

In an ongoing effort to make strides with respect to reconciliation, the Society continues to have in place an Indigenous Service team whose emphasis is on building relationships with various FNIM communities whose members reside in our jurisdiction and who are receiving services from Algoma CAS. The team participated in cultural training this past year with one of our First Nation communities. The Society continues to work closely with FNIM community representatives to ensure that ongoing consultation and service planning occurs which meets the needs of Indigenous children, youth, and families.

The Society continues to actively analyze our legal files with Indigenous children, youth and families. Reducing the number of Indigenous children in the care of the Society remains a priority for the Society. Currently, the Society has 19 active legal files involving children, youth and families with FNIM heritage. This represents 24% of our open court files. We are anticipating a resolution of 3–4 legal files in the near future.

Following the recent Supreme Court of Canada’s decision affirming the federal legislation, *An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families*, the Society remains committed to providing data and, in some cases, records in a timely manner to assist FNIM communities in their effort to develop and administer culturally sensitive child welfare services to their community members.

of Indigenous Youth in Care

- 2021/2022 – 38
- 2022/2023 – 39
- 2023/2024 – 32

of formal customary care (FCC)

- 2021/2022 – 1
- 2022/2023 – 3
- 2023/2024 – 0

of legal files involving Indigenous children and families

- 2021/2022 – 20
- 2022/2023 – 16
- 2023/2024 – 19

of FCC supervising for another agency

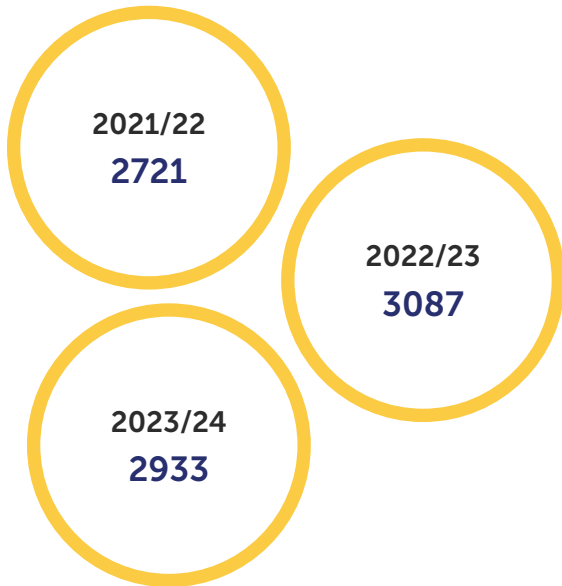
- 2021/2022 – 2
- 2022/2023 – 4
- 2023/2024 – 3



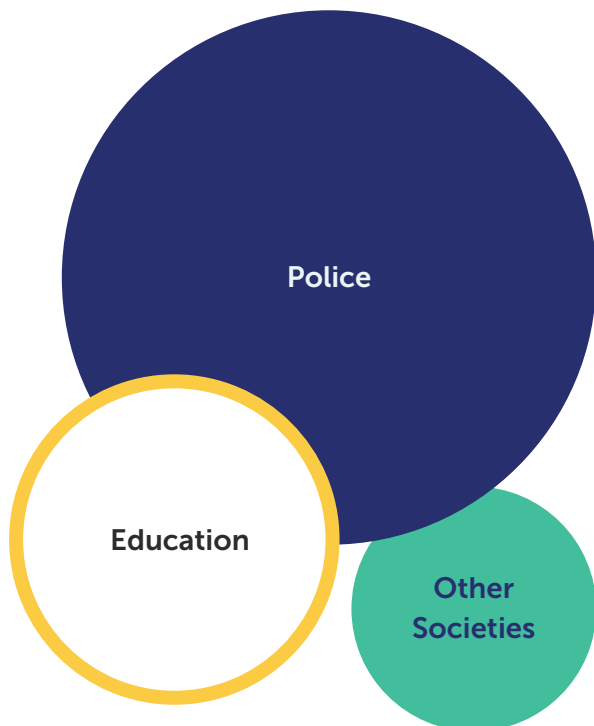
Service

Statistics

New calls received from people worried about a child



Top three callers



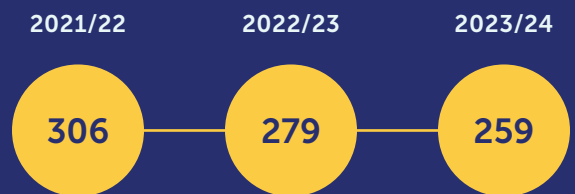
Families receiving initial assessment



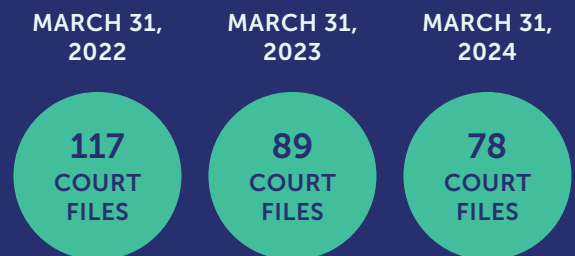
Investigations transferred to ongoing



Families receiving ongoing service



Matters before the court

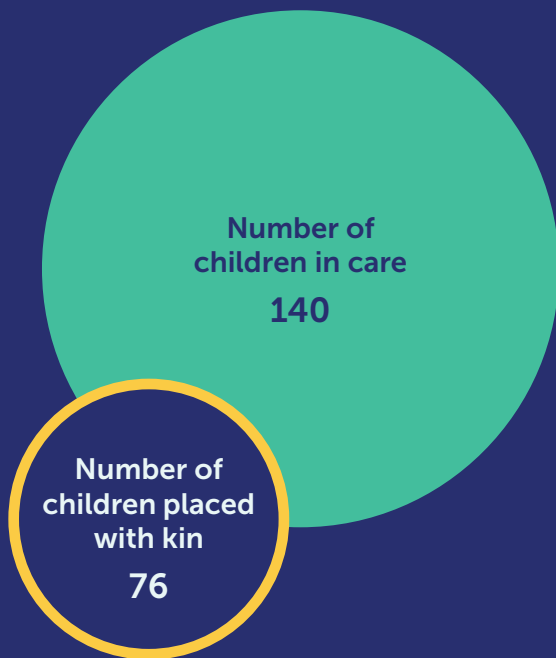


Average length of ongoing service

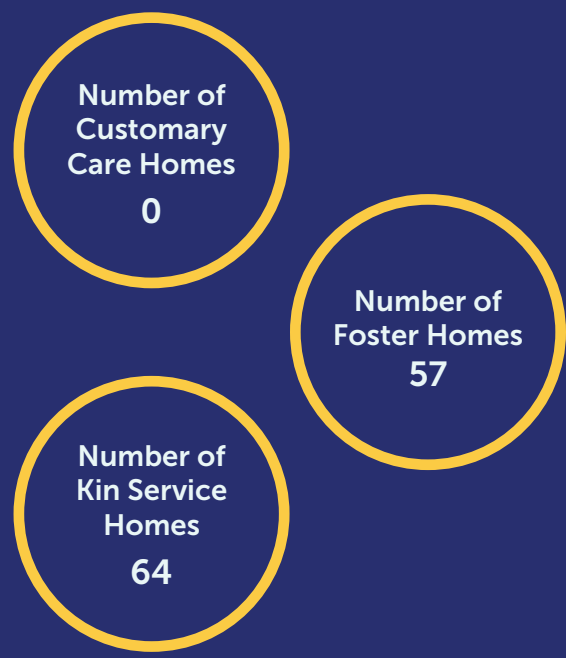


Statistics

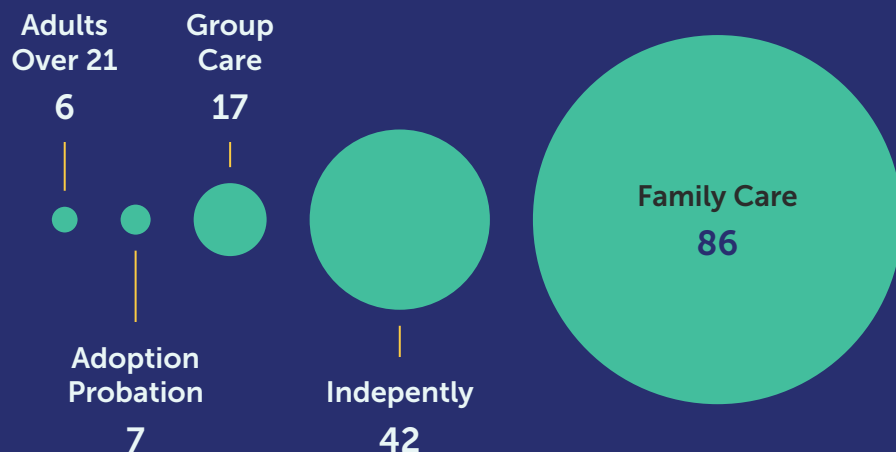
Children and Youth Needing Out of Home Care



Caregivers Providing Out of Home Care



Where Do Children and Youth in Our Care Reside?



Adoptions



Agency Financials*

Year ended March 31, 2024, with comparative information for 2023

	2024	2023
Revenue		
Province of Ontario	\$18,910,339	\$18,407,828
Other	\$1,158,619	\$1,459,241
Donations	\$5,508	\$7,773
Amortization of deferred capital contributions	\$29,274	\$30,814
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 20,103,740	\$ 19,905,656

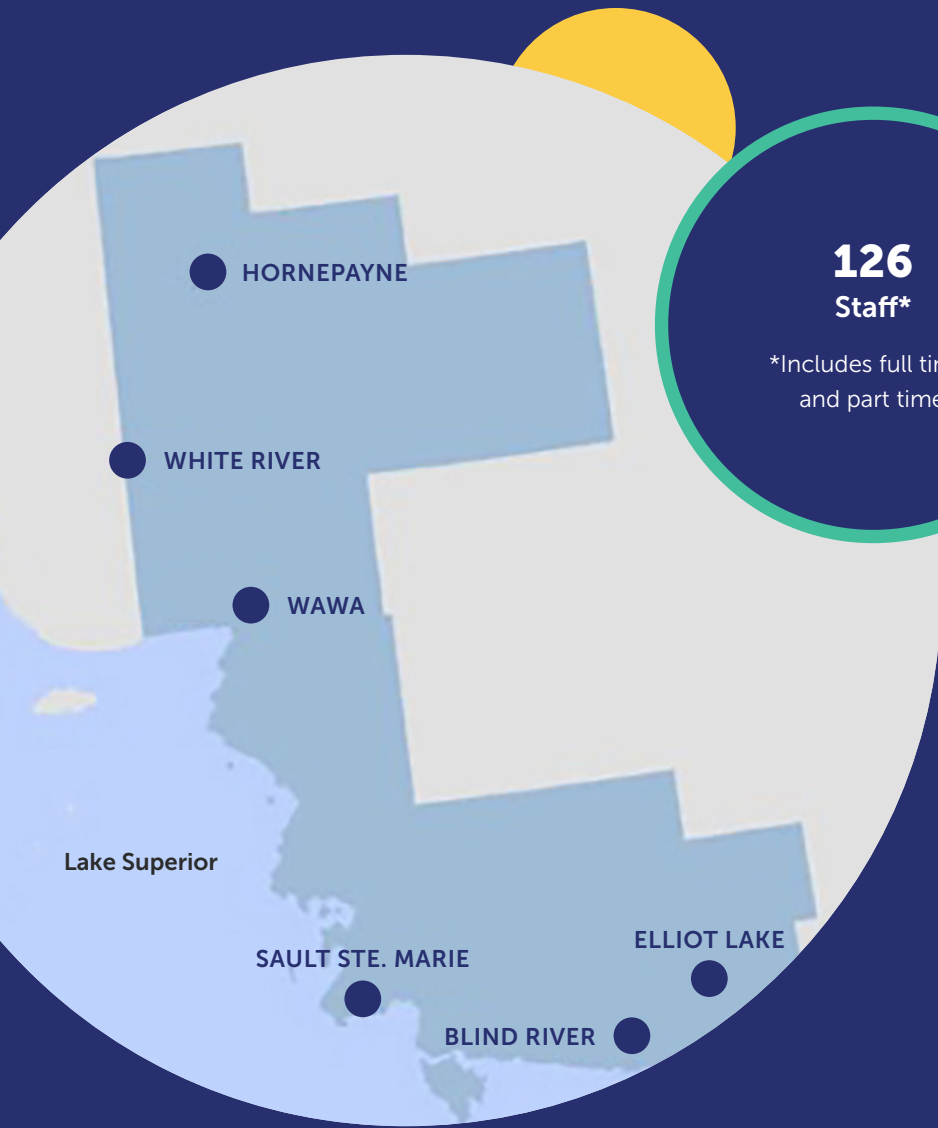
Expenses

Salaries	\$9,205,835	\$9,455,071
Boarding rate payments	\$6,465,440	\$4,289,225
Employee benefits	\$2,715,947	\$2,743,183
Client's personal needs	\$608,152	\$652,092
Building occupancy	\$916,043	\$812,038
Transportation	\$441,849	\$432,769
Emergency assistance	\$566,281	\$557,603
Purchased services – case related	\$511,323	\$266,909
Technology	\$559,573	\$198,465
Office	\$197,241	\$186,336
Program	\$367,407	\$742,026
Miscellaneous	\$47,811	\$80,670
Health services	\$209,190	\$247,233
Amortization of capital assets	\$81,889	\$80,249
Training and recruiting	\$83,635	\$71,280
Scholarships and RESP's	\$15,750	\$11,250
Purchased services – non-case related	\$84,317	\$201,471
Interest on long-term debt	\$3,836	–
Promotion and publicity	\$9,587	\$7,643
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 23,091,106	\$ 21,035,513

Deficiency of revenue over expenses before undernoted	\$(2,987,366)	\$(1,129,857)
Deficit relief funding	\$1,185,998	\$1,368,760
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses	\$(1,801,368)	\$238,903

* Complete audited financial statements available upon request through the Children's Aid Society of Algoma's finance department at 191 Northern Ave, Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6B 4H8

Agency Snapshot



126
Staff*

*Includes full time
and part time.



SAULT STE. MARIE – HEAD OFFICE
191 Northern Ave. East
Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6B 4H8



FAMILY CONNECTIONS
93 Pilgrim Street
Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6A 3E6



NORTH ALGOMA – WAWA
31 Algoma Street
Wawa, ON P0S 1K0

Service Area **Algoma District**

GEOGRAPHIC AREA 48,281.36 KM
POPULATION 118,103
0–17 YRS OF AGE 19,420
POPULATION DENSITY 2.419 PER SQ. KM



BLIND RIVER
9 Lawton Avenue
Blind River, ON P0R 1B0



EAST ALGOMA – ELLIOT LAKE
29 Manitoba Road
Elliot Lake, ON P5A 2A7

Contact us by calling 705-949-0162, or toll-free 1-888-414-3571