

# Annual Report

2024 – 2025



**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 & Executive Director

Over the past year, the Board of Directors of the Children's Aid Society of Algoma (CASA) has diligently monitored and supported the agency as it navigates significant systemic challenges and increasing service complexities. The cascading effects of multiple societal crises—including housing instability, rising costs of living, growing mental health concerns among children and youth, the opioid crisis, and gaps in health care access—continue to create severe strain on families within our community.

As the legislated child welfare agency for the District of Algoma, our mandate requires us to respond to all cases where child safety is at risk—without waitlists or exclusionary criteria. This obligation has placed increasing pressure on our agency's capacity and resources, particularly in securing placements for high-needs youth when family-based care is not an option. The rising cost of care remains our primary financial driver. The agency will be working on an alternative model this coming year with the hopes of reducing residential costs, while increasing outcomes by having youth supported in family-based care with additional support and intervention to ensure their success.

The Board commends the dedication of our agency staff, caregivers, foster parents and volunteers, who continue to ensure that families receive critical support. Their resilience and commitment are vital to fulfilling our mission.

In response to accumulative financial challenges, the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) initiated an operational review in July 2025 due to our ongoing deficit and inability to meet the ministry's accountability agreement established in 2015-2016. The report, expected by January 4, 2025, remains outstanding at the close of the fiscal year. The Board remains skeptical that the review will yield the necessary financial savings to ensure the long-term sustainability of the organization, however the funding formula was not in scope during the review, a critical aspect of financial viability.

Throughout this period, the Board appreciates the ongoing financial support from MCCSS, allowing operations to continue as we work on a deficit management plan that will reduce expenditures.

This year, the agency prioritized several critical areas to strengthen service delivery and internal capacity:

- **Succession Planning & Knowledge Transfer:** As senior staff approach retirement, efforts have focused on ensuring the seamless transfer of historical knowledge across organizational levels. New leaders and upcoming leaders have been provided opportunities for growth as they develop their leadership skills.
- **Implementation of Power BI Dashboard:** The integration of Durham's Power BI dashboard has provided staff with tools to track compliance with standards, meet case timeline requirements, and enhance oversight. Supervisors are now better equipped to monitor adherence.
- **Quality Assurance Capacity:** After a two-year vacancy, the quality assurance position was filled, bringing increased capacity for QIP auditing and reporting, ongoing training, and frontline staff support. Transferring the knowledge of CPIN sustainment will also be a priority and is in line with succession planning.
- **Digitization of Client Records:** Transitioning to electronic records has streamlined operations, reduced reliance on multiple databases, and facilitated easier record-sharing with external organizations and clients. The next phase of the project will involve the role-out of training for staff to ensure they are aware of how to access records in the new system.
- **Governance Strengthening:** The Board began revising policies and developing an inclusive governance manual, reinforcing best practices. The manual is designed to support the Children's

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Aid Society of Algoma and its Directors to effectively steward the organization on behalf of its stakeholders. Northern Boards also came together to participate in governance training.

- **Increased Responsiveness to Emergency Placements:** This past year senior staff worked hard at developing a casual staffing list and refurbishing a home owned by the agency to accommodate emergency placements. This resource has reduced the reliance of placing youth in hotels and has provided youth with a home environment until an appropriate placement can be identified.

The Board acknowledges the escalating financial pressures affecting child welfare agencies province-wide, with many now facing deficits. This is no longer a local management issue—sector funding has not kept pace with inflation and rising service costs. To fulfill its accountability agreement, the Board will work with the Ministry to highlight cost drivers impacting service delivery beyond allocated funding while taking all possible measures to reduce expenditures. Continued provincial advocacy will be crucial to emphasize the true costs of delivering child welfare services in 2025 and beyond.

To address these challenges, the agency will engage in a strategic planning cycle in Fall 2025 to ensure that its vision and organizational priorities align with community needs. This process will involve staff and community engagement, shaping service priorities for the next five years.

As the year ends, we also want to celebrate our Board members, staff, and foster parents for their ongoing commitment and dedication to help families and youth. Special recognition to our outgoing board members Sean Sparling, Ann Cuzzolino and Sheri Cleaves. Each have been strong advocates of our organization, and the services provided across the district. Thank you all for your continued support and advocacy.

## Board of Directors

For the period of 2024/2025

**Sean Sparling**  
Chair

**Michelle Sayers**  
Vice Chair

**Marc Coletti**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chair

**Pina Pacione**  
Treasurer

**Sherri Cleaves**  
Secretary

**Veronica Udensi**

**Ann Cuzzolino**

**Rose Cameron**  
Indigenous  
representative

**Nadia Zanatta**

**Matthew Nogalo**

**Mike Torresan**

**Ed Servant**

## 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



**SEAN SPARLING**  
Board President

**TRACY WILLOUGHBY**  
Executive Director



# Modernization of the Foster Care Program

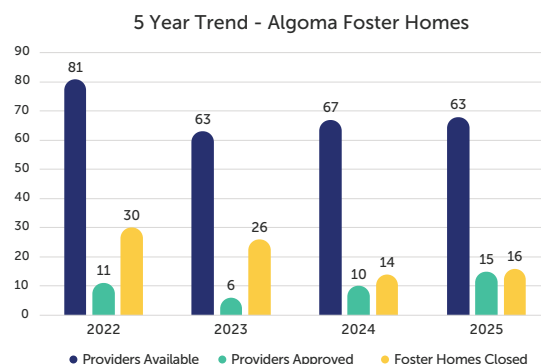
Modernization of the Foster Care Program remains a key priority. The goal is to enhance recruitment and support for foster families, developing specialized homes capable of managing the complex needs of youth while providing appropriate support. By doing so, the agency aims to reduce reliance on costly external placement resources.

Through continued advocacy, collaboration, and modernization, we remain focused on achieving the best possible outcomes for children, youth, and families across our region. The Board extends its sincere gratitude to staff, community partners, caregivers, and fellow board members for their unwavering commitment and leadership throughout this past year.



## Foster Parents Urgently Needed—Make a Difference Today!

The Children's Aid Society of Algoma remains dedicated to family preservation and in-home care whenever possible. However, when child safety necessitates out-of-home placement, foster families provide crucial temporary care.



Every child deserves a safe and nurturing home. Right now, high-needs youth are waiting for compassionate foster parents to provide stability, guidance, and support during a critical time in their lives. You can make an incredible impact by offering love, care, and mentorship to a child in need.

Foster parents receive training, financial assistance, and access to resources to ensure they can provide the best possible care. Whether you're a single individual, a couple, or a family, your willingness to step forward can change the lives of others.

Join the movement—become a foster parent and help shape a brighter future for vulnerable children.

**CONTACT YOUR LOCAL FOSTER CARE AGENCY TODAY TO LEARN MORE ABOUT HOW YOU CAN HELP!**

# 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, 2024 – March 31, 2025

## Retirements

Debbie Nelson  
Evelyn Provenzano  
Sheila Hackett  
Donna Waboose

## Anniversaries

### 1 YEAR

Erica O'Brien  
Dave Malar  
Halle Zachary  
Hussain Haque  
Cecile Keyes  
Ashley Morin  
Raquel Bellamy  
Peter Niro  
Megan Howard

### 5 YEARS

Tia Newport

### 10 YEARS

Kailyn McNichol

### 15 YEARS

Melinda Chapman

### 20 YEARS

Suzanne Olson  
Carol Cordell  
Melissa Gioia  
Laurisa Dumanski  
Georgina Hachey  
Karen Barbeau  
Kerri Melis  
Tara Fleet  
Tina Gauthier  
Eryn Proulx  
Jane Parniak

### 25 YEARS

Heather MacLachlan  
Marnie Poluk-Particelli  
Vicki Stewart  
Tara Fleet

### 30 YEARS

Lee-Ann Pettenuzzo  
Kim O'Reilly  
Wendy MacKenzie

# Celebrating Youth

YOUTH ARE AT THE CENTER OF EVERYTHING WE DO!

## Celebrating Youth in Care—Honoring Their Strength and Resilience

Youth in care demonstrate remarkable resilience, courage, and determination in the face of adversity. Their journeys, filled with challenges and triumphs, deserve recognition and celebration. By highlighting their achievements, whether academic successes, personal growth, or contributions to their communities, we affirm their worth and inspire confidence in their future.

Supporting youth in care goes beyond acknowledgment; it means advocating for opportunities, ensuring access to resources, and fostering environments where they can thrive. Their voices matter, and their dreams are valid.

Let's celebrate their strength, uplift their stories, and commit to building a world where every child in care feels seen, supported, and empowered to pursue their ambitions.



Here are some of the activities that have occurred throughout the year to celebrate and keep youth engaged with their peers, community and family.

### SOME OF THE YEAR'S HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

-  Youth in Care Day – May 14<sup>th</sup>  
(Sponsored by Sault North Rotary Club)
-  Dress Purple Day
-  Youth engagement session with the Board of Directors
-  Development of monthly youth engagement meetings
-  YouthCAN – Provincial & Zone Conference
-  Post secondary Tour trip
-  Book club (Sponsored by Sault North Rotary Club)
-  Back Packs for youth in care (Sponsored by Sault North Rotary Club)
-  Weekly Drop In Tutoring



# 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

2022/2023 — 39  
2023/2024 — 32  
2024/2025 — 25

### # of formal customary care (FCC)

2022/2023 — 3  
2023/2024 — 4  
2024/2025 — 0

### # of legal files involving Indigenous children and families

2022/2023 — 16  
2023/2024 — 16  
2024/2025 — 14

### # of FCC supervising for another agency

2022/2023 — 4  
2023/2024 — 3  
2024/2025 — 4

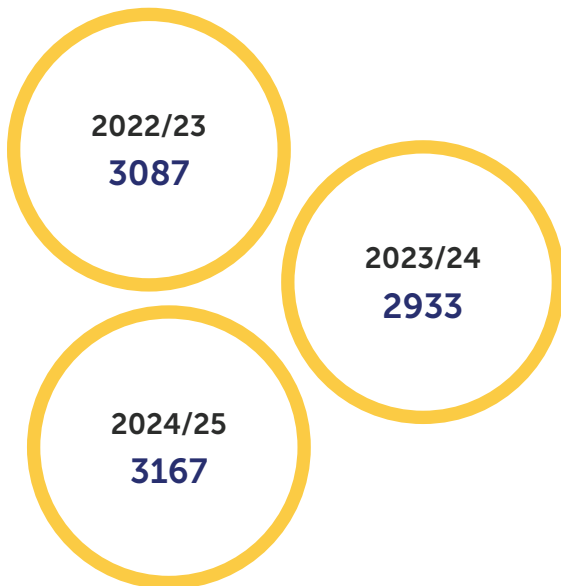




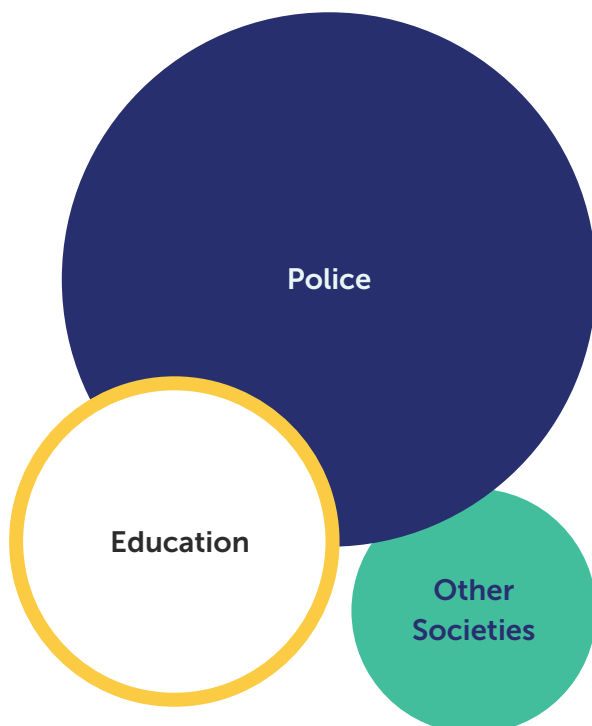
## Service

# Statistics

### New calls received from people worried about a child



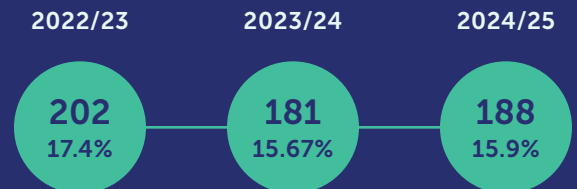
### Top three callers



### Families receiving initial assessment



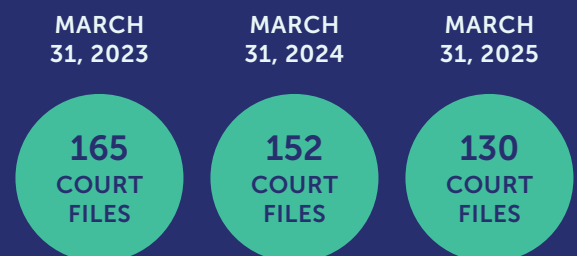
### Investigations transferred to ongoing



### Families receiving ongoing service



### Matters before the court



### Average length of ongoing service

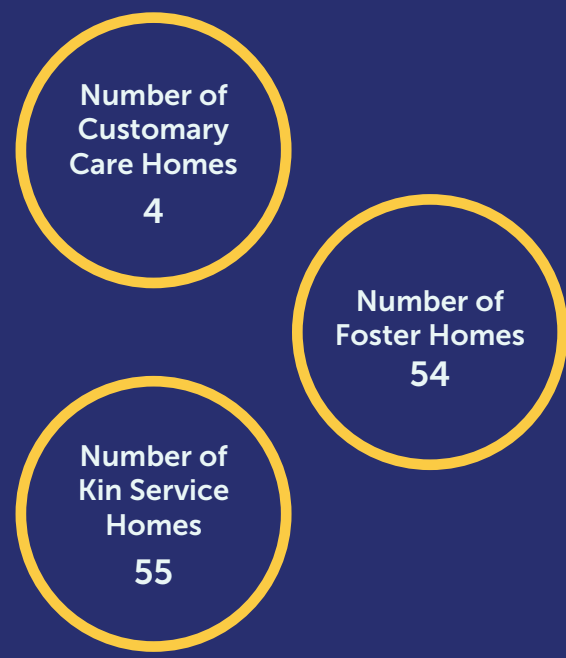


# Statistics

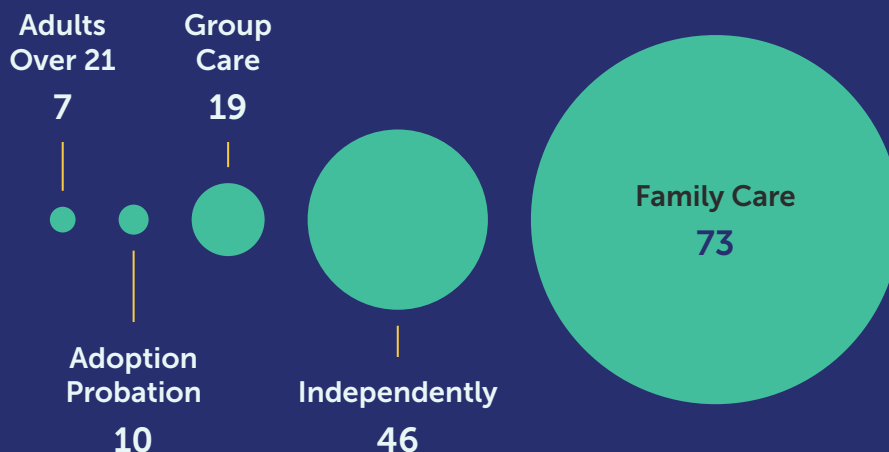
## Children and Youth Needing Out of Home Care



## Caregivers Providing Out of Home Care



## Where Do Children and Youth in Our Care Reside?



## Adoptions



# Agency Financials\*

Year ended March 31, 2025, with comparative information for 2024

	2025	2024
<b>Revenue</b>		
Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services		
Operating	\$18,957,813	\$18,733,545
One-time	\$1,118,994	–
Other	\$1,111,000	\$1,034,057
Province of Ontario	\$200,928	\$301,356
Donations	\$5,474	\$5,508
Amortization of deferred capital contributions	\$27,810	\$29,274
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$ 21,422,019</b>	<b>\$ 20,103,740</b>

## Expenses

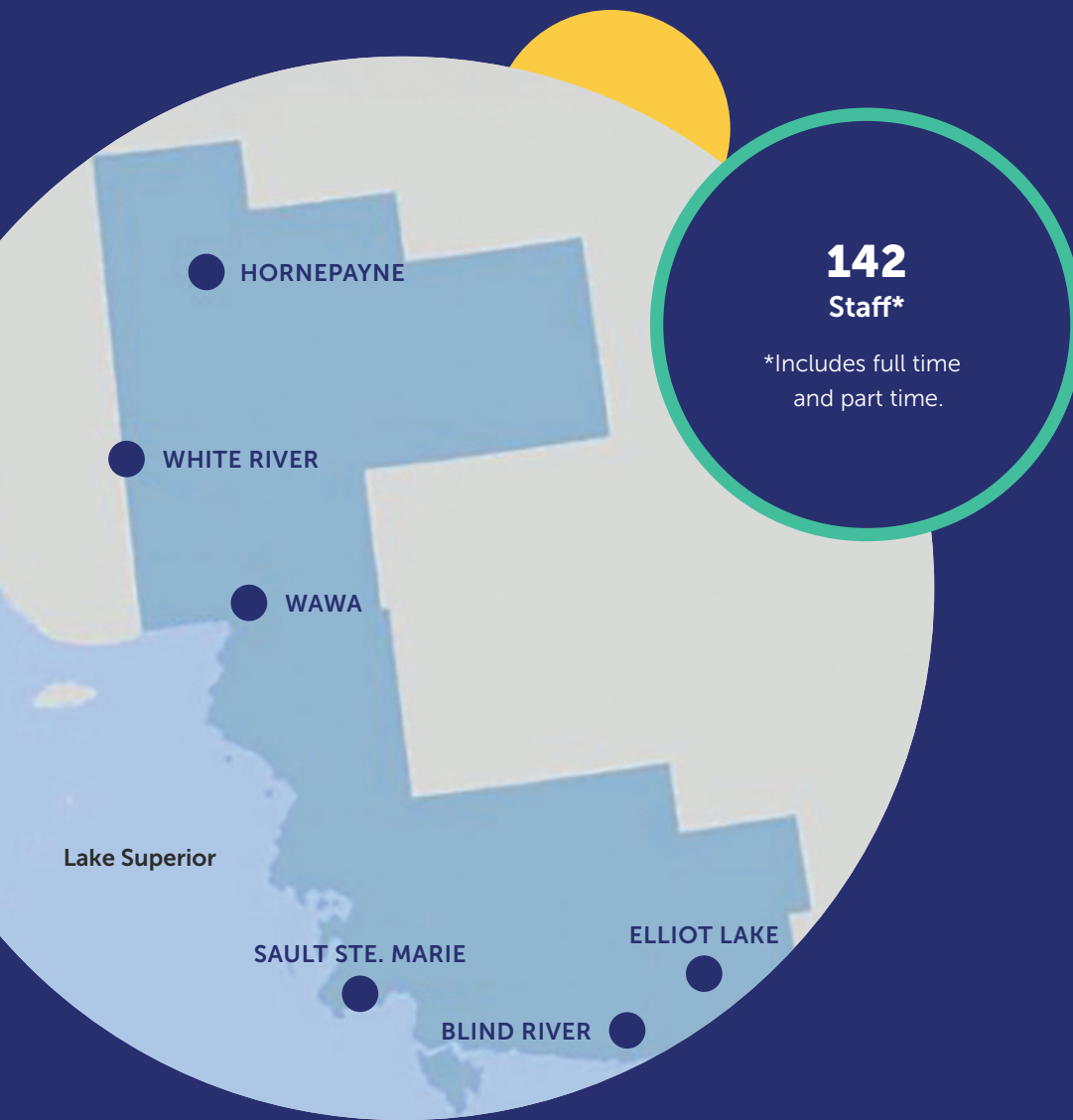
Salaries	\$10,105,270	\$9,205,835
Boarding rate payments	\$6,255,992	\$6,465,440
Employee benefits	\$3,077,511	\$2,715,947
Client's personal needs	\$631,001	\$608,152
Building occupancy	\$913,805	\$916,043
Transportation	\$501,630	\$441,849
Emergency assistance	\$645,977	\$566,281
Purchased services – case related	\$688,358	\$511,323
Technology	\$253,920	\$559,575
Office	\$217,072	\$197,241
Program	\$149,090	\$367,407
Miscellaneous	\$61,318	\$47,811
Health services	\$225,523	\$209,190
Amortization of capital assets	\$76,508	\$81,889
Training and recruiting	\$80,042	\$83,635
Scholarships and RESP's	\$10,000	\$15,750
Purchased services – non-case related	\$78,318	\$84,317
Interest on long-term debt	\$1,703	\$3,836
Promotion and publicity	\$8,271	\$9,587
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 23,981,309</b>	<b>\$ 23,091,108</b>

<b>Deficiency of revenue over expenses before undernoted</b>	<b>\$(2,559,290)</b>	<b>\$(2,987,368)</b>
<b>Deficit relief funding</b>	<b>\$2,981,006</b>	<b>\$1,185,998</b>
<b>Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses</b>	<b>\$421,716</b>	<b>\$(1,801,370)</b>

\* 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



## 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



## BLIND RIVER

9 Lawton Avenue  
Blind River, ON P0R 1B0



## EAST ALGOMA – ELLIOT LAKE

29 Manitoba Road  
Elliot Lake, ON P5A 2A7

## 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

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