



Deninu Kųę Community Wellness Plan

2024-2029

INTRODUCTION

Fort Resolution is a majority Dënesųłné community located on the southeastern shore of Tú Cho (Great Slave Lake) in the Northwest Territories. Fort Resolution is home to 412 residents, according to 2021 census data. Fort Resolution was established as a fur trading post in 1791 and today is the oldest continually occupied community in the Northwest Territories.

Fort Resolution has three governing bodies; Deninu Kųę First Nation (DKFN), the Fort Resolution Métis Government (FRMG), and the Hamlet of Fort Resolution. DKFN is headquartered in the hamlet of Fort Resolution, NT, and are signatories of Treaty 8 belonging to the Akaitcho Territory Government. DKFN represents approximately 320 Dene community members, while the FRMG represents approximately 105 community members of Métis heritage. Dënesųłné (Dëne dëdłné dialect) is the traditional language of the majority Dene residents of Fort Resolution, with some Michif spoken amongst Métis members living in the community. Many community members come from a land-based background and continue to rely on traditional harvesting and land-based resources for cultural continuance and to supplement their diets with locally sourced foods and

medicines. The community is accessible by road and lake, and has a functioning airstrip.

Deninu School is a K-12 school with a student population of approximately 105. It is the only public school in Fort Resolution. On June 12, 2018, the community celebrated the official opening of the Denínu Kųę Health and Social Services Centre, providing healthcare, social services and home care for the residents of Fort Resolution. The community has an annual fair and celebrates cultural events and traditions, such as hosting Dene hand games tournaments.

The community enjoys incredible views of Tú Cho and the many resources that come with living in their territory, such as abundant fish, wildlife, and medicines in surrounding rivers, lakes, marshes and forests. Nearby Mission Island is home to an excellent, accessible land-based camp capable of sheltering dozens of participants for community events. The community's historic arena was dismantled in Pine Point and rebuilt in Fort Resolution in the 1980s. Fort Resolution is a proud community with many reasons to be, firmly rooted in its history.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A community feast and public meeting was organized by DKFN for the evening of March 5th, 2025 in Fort Resolution to gather feedback for this plan. A consultation meeting was held with DKFN Chief Louis Balsillie and DKFN staff on the afternoon of March 5th, 2025, establishing context for the community planning exercise that evening. A professional facilitator led the community engagement meeting and was supported by a GNWT staff person to record community input contributing to the development of this plan.

A graphic facilitation approach was taken to facilitate two discussions - an adapted historical scan and a visioning discussion which contributed to the collection of many points of feedback. Using a visual tool depicting a musher on a sled being pulled uphill by a dog team on a journey with a halfway point indicating 'where we are today,' community members responded to the following focus questions:

- *What worked well in the past [to advance community wellness]?*
- *What would we like to see in the next five years?*

The feedback generated numerous data points, detailed in Appendix A, which the facilitator recorded, collated and analyzed. Many ideas were surfaced in the historical scan and visioning discussions, describing successful wellness promotion activities, programs, and ideas that have been established in the community over the years, as well as numerous possibilities for the future. Each question's feedback was condensed into several key ideas, summarized below and detailed in Appendix B.

What worked well in the past [to advance community wellness]?

1. Community-engaged Culture of Wellness
2. Wrap-around Child and Youth Services
3. Practicing Our Culture on the Land
4. Strong, Healthy Social Fabric

What would we like to see in the next five years?

1. Developing a Community Wellness Committee
2. Centring Our Wellness Within Our Language and Culture
3. Local, Accessible Wellness Programming for All
4. Preparing Our Young People for Their Future
5. A Strong Community Centred Around Wellness

The answers to the first question were combined with the answers for ‘What would we like to see in the next five years?’ in order to determine the community’s key wellness priorities. The following five main points can be used to navigate the development of wellness programming and services in the community of Fort Resolution over the next five years, especially if applied with an action plan. These community wellness opportunities can be interpreted as a five-year vision for community wellness, and can be viewed in Appendix C.

What are the community’s wellness priorities?

1. Ensuring the Continuance of Our Culture and Language
2. Establishing a Community Wellness Committee
3. Providing Local and Accessible Wellness Programming for All
4. Preparing Our Young People For Their Future
5. Reuniting Our Community Through Wellness

WELLNESS PRIORITIES, GOALS, AND ACTIONS

ENSURING THE CONTINUANCE OF OUR CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

Vision Young people grow up in Fort Resolution wrapped in their culture, seeing and hearing their language spoken at home, school, and around the community. There are regular opportunities for community members to access traditional knowledge, language instruction, and cultural teachings throughout the year. Land-based programming facilitates culture and language learning, bridging gaps between Elders and young people. A growing knowledge base is being captured with new media tools to ensure that the teachings available to young people today are available to young people and community members in the future. Our community sees the value of working together.

- Priority Goals**
1. Increasing the number of language speakers in the community and the presence and use of the language in daily life.
 2. Bridging the divide between Elders and young people to strengthen intergenerational knowledge learning.
 3. Create a traditional knowledge resource database for ongoing community access and future generations of learners.

- Programs and Plans to Address Goals**
- Establish a Traditional Knowledge table in the community to meet regularly and oversee the implementation of language programs and cultural teachings in daily life.
 - Produce regular adult and youth language classes and promote daily language circles in schools, community spaces and public offices.
 - Develop a structured, Elder-led workshop series in the community to share skills such as drum-making, beading and sewing, and land-based survival knowledge, supporting honorariums for participating Elders.
 - Implement language immersion programming integrated with cultural skills such as hunting, trapping, and medicine harvesting in multi-day land-based environments, such as Mission Island.
 - Begin a community-wide initiative to record and archive traditional knowledge, aural histories, and language lessons with video, audio and digital tools and create a platform for the community to access these cultural resources.
 - Collaborate with Deninu School to offer C.A.L.M. credits to young people who engage in traditional knowledge learning, sharing and documentation.
 - Consider opening a Traditional Knowledge and Cultural Centre for community members to gather in while engaging with cultural instruction or language learning.

WELLNESS PRIORITIES, GOALS, AND ACTIONS

ESTABLISHING A COMMUNITY WELLNESS COMMITTEE

Vision Fort Resolution has established a comprehensive community wellness infrastructure in the community, including dedicated wellness and language personnel, adequate funding, inter-agency collaboration, and structured events to support wellness initiatives. A community wellness committee is focused on creating sustainable systems for wellness programming and ensuring consistent health and wellness support for youth, Elders, and families. The wellness committee supports wellness workers by pursuing fundraising initiatives and coordinating the delivery of a wide range of wellness services. Community-wide engagement is fostered through awareness campaigns, fundraising initiatives, and regional partnerships.

- Priority Goals**
1. Establish and sustain a dedicated community wellness committee to oversee the coordination and delivery of wellness initiatives, fundraising campaigns, and programming.
 2. Secure and allocate additional long-term funding for wellness programming to ensure financial stability for wellness initiatives through fundraising, grant programs, and strategic partnerships.
 3. Strengthen inter-agency collaboration and community engagement among local organizations, schools, and regional organizations with regular land-based meetings or retreats to maximize the impact of wellness initiatives.

- Programs and Plans to Address Goals**
- Form a structured wellness committee with representatives from key sectors including Elders, youth, health workers, educators, community justice professionals and local leadership to hold regular meetings to assess progress and adjust initiatives to meet the needs of community members.
 - Hire and train dedicated wellness workers and a community language worker while ensuring that they have access to ongoing professional development resources and the wellness committee's support and guidance.
 - Identify and secure long-term, sustainable funding sources including public grants, philanthropic sector sponsorships, and fundraising events. Create a community wellness fund to support local wellness programs and initiatives. Host annual wellness fundraising events for the fund, such as tournaments, culture fairs, and donation campaigns.
 - Develop a monthly awareness campaign to promote wellness resources, services, and community involvement while using social media, newsletters, wellness fairs, and community meetings and events to share updates and success stories.
 - Strengthen partnerships between local health services, schools, Elders, and regional wellness organizations by hosting regional wellness workshops and knowledge sharing events. Establish formal agreements with regional and territorial organizations to provide sustainable wellness support.
 - Track progress and evaluate wellness initiatives by implementing a data tracking system to monitor the effectiveness of wellness programming, conducting an annual wellness assessment to identify areas for improvement, and using community feedback to adapt and refine initiatives based on changing needs.

WELLNESS PRIORITIES, GOALS, AND ACTIONS

PROVIDING LOCAL & ACCESSIBLE WELLNESS PROGRAMMING FOR ALL

Vision All residents of Fort Resolution have equitable and ready access to a wide range of consistent, reliable wellness services available in the community. Alcohol and drug-related detox, treatment, and aftercare programs are available at the local health centre and at land-based wellness camps established within the region. Everyone, from young people to Elders, have access to wellness programming, family nights, grief and trauma workshops, peer support, and mentorship, and dedicated wellness workers manage the provision of these services. The community applies a harm reduction approach while addressing intergenerational trauma and facilitating healing and wellness. Community members are able to get well in their community rather than being required to pursue healing in southern centres.

- Priority Goals**
1. Ensuring consistent and accessible local wellness services meet the needs of all community members.
 2. Supporting the establishment of a wellness office where community members can access wellness programs, support services, and treatment without leaving the community.
 3. Expanding land-based healing and trauma support programs in the region.
 4. Implementing a sustainable, community-wide harm reduction approach that supports healing, reduces substance-related harm, and provides pathways to recovery.

- Programs and Plans to Address Goals**
- Support a full-time community wellness worker to coordinate services, manage program delivery, facilitate inter-agency collaboration, and provide direct support to community members.
 - Centralize access to wellness programming, referrals, and crisis support for all members of the community by opening a wellness office.
 - Develop a peer-supported mentorship program to train community members to apply harm reduction principles while supporting others on their healing journeys.
 - Develop consistent land-based healing and aftercare retreats offering seasonal access to traditional healing practices, detox and recovery services, and Elder-led therapy sessions.
 - Organize consistent family wellness activities that include opportunities to engage with healing activities, traditional skills sharing, and structured workshops on topics such as grief and trauma, addictions recovery, and healthy relationships.
 - Establish a harm reduction strategy that includes substance use education, safe supply resources, and non-judgemental support while working with the local health centre to ensure access to harm reduction supplies and services.
 - Work towards establishing a local treatment and support system offering a combined therapeutic and traditional healing service approach on the land so that community members can heal without having to leave for southern centres. While this will require partnership with regional and national agencies, this work will bring specialized services directly to Fort Resolution and ensure consistent and culturally relevant care for those community members in need of support.

WELLNESS PRIORITIES, GOALS, AND ACTIONS

PREPARING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE FOR THEIR FUTURE

Vision Fort Resolution is an enriching environment where young people have access to quality education, career development opportunities, and meaningful community engagement. Graduation rates have improved as young people are supported through mentorships, volunteer initiatives, and hands-on job shadowing experience. A strong local network of partnerships with NGOs, business leaders, and training programs equips young people with the necessary skills and training for employment and entrepreneurship, contributing to a healthy local economy. The community prioritizes youth wellness by enhancing recreation programs, school lunch initiatives, and providing a dedicated youth drop-in centre. Climate change adaptation and awareness education are integrated into youth wellness education, ensuring that the next generation are prepared to build a sustainable and resilient future for Fort Resolution.

- Priority Goals**
1. Enhance educational and career development opportunities for young people to ensure they receive quality education, mentorship, and hands-on training to increase graduation rates and future employment opportunities.
 2. Strengthen community-based economic partnerships by building a focused local network of NGOs, businesses, and training programs to create more career pathways and entrepreneurship opportunities for young people.
 3. Support youth wellness and community engagement by expanding access to recreation programs, wellness initiatives such as nutrition and mental health support, and providing a youth drop-in centre.
 4. Integrate climate change awareness and sustainability education into community programming to ensure young people have the knowledge and skills to address climate change, ensuring a sustainable future for the community.

- Programs and Plans to Address Goals**
- Establish mentorship programs that connect students with local professionals, businesses, and skilled trades for real-world learning and career exposure.
 - Develop paid summer student placements and skill-building workshops with local business and organizations.
 - Create formal agreements with NGOs and industry partners to bring scholarships, training programs, and career readiness resources to Fort Resolution.
 - Create a youth business incubator that includes start-up funding, mentorship opportunities, and business development workshops.
 - Expand youth wellness and recreation offerings in the community by increasing funding for sports, arts, and cultural programs while ensuring access to a dedicated youth drop-in centre. Explore partnership opportunities for community-based arts programs with the Northern Arts and Cultural Centre.
 - Ensure that school lunch and nutrition initiatives provide students with access to healthy, balanced meals supporting their success and well-being.
 - Integrate climate awareness into the school curriculum and offer youth-led sustainability projects, such as community gardens or clean energy initiatives.
 - Empower young people in the community to take an active role in community decision-making through leadership workshops, volunteer opportunities, and governance training.

WELLNESS PRIORITIES, GOALS, AND ACTIONS

REUNITING OUR COMMUNITY THROUGH WELLNESS

Vision Fort Resolution is a strong, united community where people feel safe, connected, and empowered to raise their families. Community members come together through social events, music, and cultural activities. A community safety plan ensures that everyone feels secure, while initiatives like buying local and mutual support contribute to economic and social stability. Positive engagement and collective action contribute to the development of a vibrant, inclusive, and supportive community for all.

- Priority Goals**
1. Strengthen community safety and well-being by ensuring all residents feel safe and secure through a well-developed community safety plan and proactive community safety initiatives.
 2. Enhance social and cultural connections by cultivating a sense of community around arts, cultural programming, and social events.
 3. Supporting local economies by promoting a 'buy local' campaign, encouraging community-driven economic stability and shared financial support.

- Programs and Plans to Address Goals**
- Develop a community safety response program and implement first aid, overdose prevention, and emergency response training for community members volunteering to be first responders.
 - Establish annual community-wide festivals or gatherings around film, music, and other arts fields that celebrate local culture and traditional knowledge.
 - Develop a 'buy local' campaign by providing incentives for community members to support local businesses and artisans.
 - Establish a volunteer-based community mutual aid support networking project where residents can share resources, services, and skills to support one another in case of emergency.
 - Host regular town hall meetings and community discussions to ensure transparent, inclusive, and active participation in decision-making.
 - Consult with Elders to consider best practices and pathways forward for building a more united and cohesive community.

APPENDIX 'B'

What worked well (in advancing wellness) in the past?			What would we like to see over the next five years?					
Community-engaged Culture of Wellness	Wrap-around Child and Youth (Wellness) Services	Practicing Our Culture on the Land	Strong, Healthy Social Fabric	Develop a Community Wellness Committee	Centring Our Wellness Within Our Language and Culture	Local, Accessible Wellness Programming for All	Preparing Our Young People For Their Future	A Strong Community Centred Around Wellness
Having (hosting) sharing circles	Sports & Recreation for Youth	Elder's Knowledge	Open Door Policy	Community (Wellness) Fairs	Beading and Traditional Arts Nights	Addressing Intergenerational Trauma	Youth Career Development Training	Community Unification
Consistent Programs	School Lunch (program)	Annual Culture Camps	Adults' Social Events	A Community Language Worker	Winter Sports and Activities	Family Fun Nights	Students Volunteering for C.A.L.M. hours	Taking Back our Community
Addiction Support Programs	Quality Education	Denesūjīné Language Lessons	Social Activities	Dedicated Youth Worker	Traditional Knowledge/Culture Centre	Women's Wellness Programs	Summer Student Job Shadowing	Community Safety Plan
Awareness Campaigns (wellness)	Youth Networking Opportunities	Land-based Lifestyle	Healthy Local Economy	(Hosting a) Regional/Territorial Indigenous Youth (Wellness) Summer Camp	Community Garden	Men's Wellness Programs	Better Graduation Rates	Buying Local
Having Wellness Workers (in the community)	Drop-in Youth Centre	Community Hunts		Pre-natal & ELCC Workers	Enable Young Parents to Teach Our Culture	Youth Suicide Prevention Programs	Climate Change Adaptation	Bringing People Together with Music
Inter-agency Collaboration	School Trips			(Hosting a) Regional Wellness Workshop	Following Dene Laws	Healthy Family Programs	Housing Information Sessions	Shifting Community Attitudes
				Working With the School	(Educational) Medicine Walks	Building Self-Confidence	Employment and Skills Training	
				Wellness Fundraising	Skill Sharing Events	Harm Reduction Awareness	Inviting NGOs to the community	
				Progress Tracking	Traditional Knowledge Events	Local (Addictions) Treatment Programs		
				Forming a (Community) Wellness Committee	Denesūjīné Language Programs	Accessible Counselling		
				More (Wellness) Funding	Traditional Games Nights	Aftercare Programs		
				Fundraising for Elders Gatherings	Country Food Cooking Classes	Grief and Trauma Workshops		
				Supporting Community Athletics	Bridging Gaps Between Elders and Youth			

APPENDIX 'C'

What are our wellness priorities for the next five years?				
Ensuring the Continuance of our Culture and Language	Establishing a Community Wellness Committee	Providing Local and Accessible Wellness Programming for All	Preparing Our Young People For Their Future	Reuniting our Community Through Wellness
Beading and Traditional Arts Nights	Community (Wellness) Fairs	Addressing Intergenerational Trauma	Youth Career Development Training	Community Unification
Winter Sports and Activities	A Community Language Worker	Family Fun Nights	Students Volunteering for C.A.L.M. hours	Taking Back our Community
Traditional Knowledge/ Culture Centre	Dedicated Youth Worker	Women's Wellness Programs	Summer Student Job Shadowing	Community Safety Plan
Enable Young Parents to Teach Our Culture	(Hosting a) Regional/ Territorial Indigenous Youth (Wellness) Summer Camp	Men's Wellness Programs	Better Graduation Rates	Buying Local
Following Dene Laws	Pre-natal & ELCC Workers	Youth Suicide Prevention Programs	Climate Change Adaptation	Bringing People Together with Music
(Educational) Medicine Walks	(Hosting a) Regional Wellness Workshop	Healthy Family Programs	Housing Information Sessions	Shifting Community Attitudes
Skill Sharing Events	Working With the School	Building Self-Confidence	Employment and Skills Training	Open Door Policy
Traditional Knowledge Events	Wellness Fundraising	Harm Reduction Awareness	Inviting NGOs to the community	Adults' Social Events
Dënesųłı́né Language Programs	Progress Tracking	Local (Addictions) Treatment Programs	Sports & Recreation for Youth	Social Activities
Traditional Games Nights	Forming a (Community) Wellness Committee	Accessible Counselling	School Lunch (program)	Community Garden
Country Food Cooking Classes	More (Wellness) Funding	Aftercare Programs	Quality Education	
Bridging Gaps Between Elders and Youth	Fundraising for Elders Gatherings	Grief and Trauma Workshops	Healthy Local Economy	
Community Hunts	Supporting Community Athletics	Having (hosting) sharing circles	School Trips	
Land-based Lifestyle	Having Wellness Workers (in the community)	Consistent Programs	Youth Networking Opportunities	
Elder's Knowledge	Inter-agency Collaboration	Addiction Support Programs	Drop-in Youth Centre	
Dënesųłı́né Language Lessons	Awareness Campaigns (wellness)			
Annual Culture Camps				

