



Nishnawbe Aski Nation
Decade Youth Council

CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

Article One: Name

The name of this group shall be the Nishnawbe Aski Nation Decade Youth Council.

Article Two: Objectives

The objectives of this group shall be:

1. To provide Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) youth, living in their communities and living in urban areas, with an opportunity of obtaining leadership skills and to promote youth empowerment.
2. To share ideas and successes of NAN youth, and other First Nations youth.
3. To be an advocating body of behalf of NAN youth at the regional, national and international level.
4. To improve the livelihood and hope for the future of Nishnawbe Aski Nation's youth.
5. To accept spirituality as an important foundation for a healthy, balanced lifestyle.
6. To recognize that belief in our culture and preservation of our heritage gives us strength and dignity.
7. To be honest, understanding, and respectful of the diversity and uniqueness of self, others and our environment.
8. To know the importance of refraining from the abuse of alcohol, smoking, and drugs to maintain physical and mental well-being in order to be a positive role model for present and future generations.
9. To preserve and protect each others individual First Nation heritage and stress strong family values.
10. For the members of the Decade Youth Council to interact and volunteer their time and talents to work towards improving and educating First Nation communities.
11. And finally, to make a personal commitment to strive toward reaching our full potential through our education, self-awareness and commitment to well-being.

Article Three: Members

Membership of the Decade Youth Council Executive (10) and the respective alternates (10) shall consist of any members of Nishnawbe Aski Nation, living on reserve or off reserve, including;

Section One

- Regularly attends meetings and other youth council activities
- Is committed to serving others and their community
- Exhibits high interests in cultural activities and no abuse of alcohol and/or other drugs
- Must be between the ages of 18-29

Section Two

Each member shall have the right to cast one (1) vote on any matter submitted to a vote by the entire membership.

Article Four: Officers

Section One

The Executive Officers of the Decade Youth Council shall consist of the following:

- One (1) Political Chair
- One (1) Social Chair
- One (1) Economic Chair
- One (1) Cultural Chair
- One (1) Recreation Chair
- One (1) Education Chair
- One (1) Health Chair
- One (1) Environmental Chair
- One (1) Urban Chair
- One (1) Crisis Chair

In addition to the Officers the Council will consist of eleven general members:

Eleven (11) General Members

All members will be representatives of Nishnawbe Aski Nation. The same person may not hold two or more offices. These members will server for a four-year term.

Section Two

The Urban Chair shall be responsible for the Urban portfolio and will advise membership on these matters. This portfolio relates to issues affecting the increasing numbers of off-reserve, NAN member youth.

Section Three

The Political Chair shall be responsible for the Political portfolio and will advise membership on these matters. Political participation relates to decision-making processes and distribution of power and giving youth a voice.

Section Four

The Social Chair shall be responsible for the Social portfolio and will advise membership on these matters. Social participation relates to family and community involvement and issues of self-esteem.

Section Five

The Economic Chair shall be responsible for the Economic portfolio and will advise membership on these matters. Economic participation relates to work and to development, requiring a solid education base.

Section Six

The Cultural Chair shall be responsible for the Cultural portfolio and will advise membership on these matters. Cultural participation relates to the arts, cultural values and expression, and spirituality.

Section Seven

The Recreation Chair shall be responsible for the Recreation portfolio and will advise membership on these matters. Recreational participation relates to sports, recreation and leisure activities of all forms.

Section Eight

The Crisis Chair shall be responsible for the Crisis portfolio and will advise membership on these matters. This portfolio relates to the suicide epidemic within NAN territory as well as other various mental health issues among NAN youth.

Section Nine

The Education Chair shall be responsible for the Education portfolio and will advise membership on these matters. The Chair will work in partnership with students, parents, teachers and the Deputy Grand Chief in charge of Education on issues relating to secondary and post-secondary education.

Section Ten

The Environmental Chair shall be responsible for the Environmental portfolio and will advise membership on these matters. This portfolio relates to land issues,

protection of the environment, and, the protection and management of natural resources.

Section Eleven

The Health Chair shall be responsible for the Health portfolio and will advise membership on these matters. This portfolio promotes the enhancement of health and well-being, considering the whole person (physical, emotional, mental, spiritual), wellness-oriented lifestyle choices, and active participation in personal health decisions and healing.

Section Twelve

All ten Executive members as well as their ten designated alternates will be nominated and elected for a term of four years, using the *model for traditional selection process*, as follows. A pre-selection process should be in place to streamline participants in order to prevent large numbers of nominees;

1. SETTING

- The setting for the process is set in a certain way with the drum being in the middle and other sacred items placed in certain places for the purposes as directed by the Elders and/or Traditions.

2. OPENING

- One drum beat
- People are led into the circle with a song
- Opening prayer
- Explanation of process

3. NOMINATIONS

- Nominator offers tobacco to the candidate, explaining why he/she chose this candidate
- Candidate takes tobacco and explains why he/she is the best candidate
- Nominations close

4. SELECTION

- Candidates stand towards the drum
- Delegates stand behind their choice
- Whoever has the least supporters sits down and those supporters stand behind the next choice
- This is done until there is one candidate standing and everyone stands behind him/her

5. INAUGURATION

- Honour song
- Passing of the sacred item's from the previous leader to the new leader
- Elders offer support and guidance to the leader

6. CLOSING

- Honour song
- Everyone dances behind the leader and out of the circle
- There is one drum beat to close the process

Section Thirteen

A roundhouse was often the traditional place where our elections took place. There are no roundhouses within NAN territory so the Decade Youth Council elections will take place on sacred grounds, either powwow grounds or within an Elder's lodge.

Article Five: Advisors

Section One

The appointed advisor(s), at least one and no more than three, for the Decade Youth Council shall be members of Nishnawbe Aski Nation or other respected leaders/elders/ youth who have demonstrated commitment to youth empowerment issues. The Decade Office of Nishnawbe Aski Nation will appoint each advisor.

Section Two

At least one advisor must be present at all youth council meetings and functions.

Article Six: Meetings

Section One

The Decade Youth Council, as a whole, shall meet four times a year, during each season of the year. A notice of time and place will be provided to all voting members prior to the next meeting. Meeting may be held by conference call, video conference or by similar telecommunications of electronic means.

Section Two

The Decade Youth Council will invite an Elder residing in the territory where each meeting is held to serve as a Special Advisor for that particular meeting.

Section Three

All regular and special meetings of the Decade Youth Council shall be conducted as such:

1. Elder blessing
2. Welcome/Introductions
3. Summary of previous meeting's minutes
4. Reports of Chairs
5. Old Business
6. New Business

7. Announcements
8. Adjournment and Closing Ceremony

Article Seven: Code of Conduct

All members of the Decade Youth Council who take responsibility to run the affairs of the Council are expected to abide by the Decade Youth Council Officer Contract and Code of Conduct. Nishnawbe Aski Nation will hold members who violate this contract responsible by the Council and, on a case-by-case basis.

Article Eight: Amendment of Bylaws

The bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the group by consensus, provided that the amendment has been submitted in writing.

6/18/03