

Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians

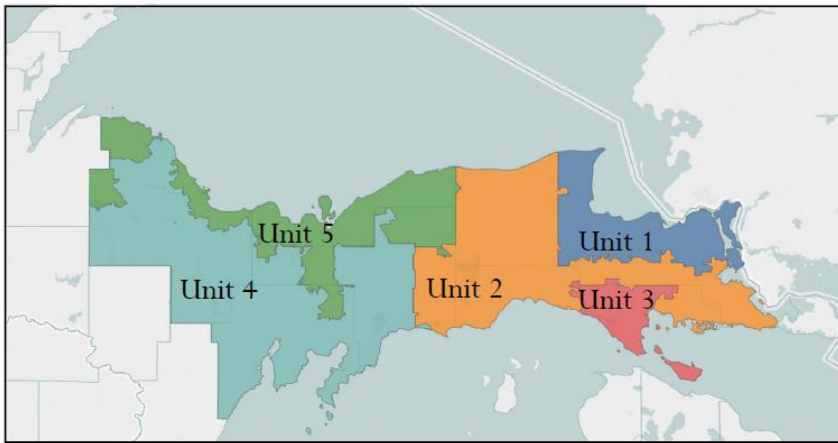
Board of Directors



Strategic Master Plan

Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians Board of Directors

The Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of 12 board members and one chairperson who are all elected into office. Board terms are four years, with elections held every two years. Half of the board seats are up for election during each cycle, with the chairperson seat up for election every four years.



Austin Lowes
Chairman



Tyler LaPlaunt,
Unit 5, Vice-Chairman



Kimberly Hampton
Unit 4, Secretary



Isaac McKechnie
Unit 1, Treasurer



Kimberly Lee
Unit 2



Darcy Morrow
Unit 4



Betty Freiheit
Unit 1



Shawn Borowicz
Unit 3



Lana Causley
Unit 2



Robert McRorie
Unit 1



Bridgette Sorenson
Unit 3



Michael McKerchie
Unit 1

Introduction

We are pleased to present the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians - Board of Directors Master Strategic Plan.

Our work is intended to contribute to the well-being of tribal members and the long term sustainability of our tribal resources and rights. This plan highlights eight areas where we focus our efforts:

1. Culture and Traditional Teachings
2. Sovereignty
3. Programs and Services
4. Inherent Rights
5. Representation, Advocacy, and Leadership
6. Workforce
7. Appropriations
8. Economy

Within this document, you will find that goals are established for each of these areas. The intention is to provide the membership, team members, and other collaborators a clear picture of where the Tribe is heading. As the various divisions and departments of the Tribe work on their individual strategic plans, they will be able to look to this Master Strategic Plan for guidance.

We look forward to working together to create a brighter future for our Tribe.

Miigwetch

Table of Contents

Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians Board of Directors 2

Introduction 3

Organization History..... 5

Guiding Principles 6

Value Statements..... 7

Description of our Flag 9

Vision 10

Purpose 11

Function Areas

1. Strengthen use of Culture and Traditional Teachings 12

2. Exercise Sovereignty 14

3. Strengthen Programs and Services for Membership 16

4. Protect all Inherent Rights of the Tribe 18

5. Represent Tribal Communities, Advocate for Membership and Strengthen Community Leadership..... 20

6. Promote and Recruit Effective Workforce..... 22

7. Appropriations and Financials 24

8. Strengthen our Economy..... 26

Thank you! 29

Organization History

The modern governmental organization of the Tribe traces to the Sugar Island Group of Chippewa Indians and Their Descendants, which was incorporated under Michigan law on December 24, 1953. The name of the corporation and of the Tribe was changed to “The Original Bands of the Sault Ste. Marie Chippewa Indians and Their Heirs” on February 28, 1959. It was as the “Original Bands” that the group sought federal recognition as an Indian Tribe. In the early 1970s, the leaders of the Original Bands of Chippewa Indians traveled to Washington and successfully submitted their historical findings and legal argument to the Secretary of the Interior, who granted the Tribe federal status in 1972.

Once recognized, the Original Bands became the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians. The land was taken into trust in March 1974, and Sault Tribe members adopted the Tribe’s Constitution in the fall of 1975. When the Tribe adopted its Constitution, it had fewer than 10 employees, almost no outside funding and no revenues of its own. It gradually opened member service programs such as health, housing, and education that were funded by the federal government and the State of Michigan. However, member needs far outstripped those meager funding sources. To close the gap, tribal leaders created a business-based economy. Businesses could provide added revenues and jobs for tribal members. The Tribe has built the tribal economy by providing employment and revenues to its people while making a positive impact on surrounding communities’ economic welfare.

Today the Sault Tribe membership is 49,186 strong. While the Tribe’s administration is located in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, its operations and economic impacts extend for hundreds of miles. The Tribe has landholdings, businesses, housing, and other service centers throughout Michigan’s Eastern Upper Peninsula.

The Tribe’s seven-county service area is made up of the easternmost seven counties of Michigan’s eastern Upper Peninsula—roughly the area east of Marquette to Escanaba.

Guiding Principles

The guiding principles of our values statements are based on the teachings of our Seven Grandfathers. In our Tribal community, we strive to know truth through the attainment of wisdom, love, respect, bravery, honesty, and humility.

Zaagidwin (Love) ~ to know love is to know peace

Mnaadendiwin (Respect) ~ to honor all of creation is to have respect

Aakdehewin (Bravery) ~ to face life with courage is to know bravery

Gwekwaadziwin (Honesty) ~ to walk through life with integrity is to know honesty

Dbasendizwin (Humility) ~ to accept yourself as a sacred part of creation is to know humility

Nbwaakaawin (Wisdom) ~ to cherish knowledge is to know wisdom

Debwewin (Truth) ~ to know of these things is to know truth

Value Statements

Our Value Statements are practical applications of our guiding principles. These values guide our actions and inform our decision-making processes as families and as a community. They are a declaration of who we are today and what we believe is most important in terms of commitment.

Zaagidwin (Love)

Encouraging and caring for one another is our way of life
Love is the heart of service to our people
Honor individual rights, family bonds, and tribal harmony
To love yourself is to live at peace with the Creator and in harmony with all of creation

Mnaadendiwin (Respect)

Honor our traditional roles and teachings
Honor ourselves, our families, and others
Care for all of creation
Commitment to value individual and community opinion
Listen and respond to the needs of each other
To be successful, we must work together in an open and honest environment

Aakdehewin (Bravery)

We strive for self-determination through leadership that is representative of the people
Stand up for your convictions—show courage in communicating and decision-making
Honor, protect, and maintain the integrity of treaty rights
Show courage in the face of adversity
Preserve our Anishnaabe rights

Gwedwaadziwin (Honesty)

Hold fast to the principles that guide us to protect our self-determination
Be honest with yourself
Accept and act on truths through straightforward and appropriate communication
Follow through on your commitments
Value honesty in thought, word, and deed

Dbasendizwin (Humility)

Recognize the human need for balance in life
Do not put yourself above others
Recognize your limitations—ask for help when you need it
Serve the needs of your family, community, Tribe, and creation
Have the ability to laugh at yourself
Have reverence for Mother Earth and protect all of creation

Nbwaakaawin (Wisdom)

Listen and use the wisdom of elders, tribal leadership, and spiritual leaders
Encourage the bright hopes that reside with the young
Encourage all to seek wisdom by reflecting on the teachings of our grandfathers
Honor our commitment to life-long learning and sharing knowledge
Listen to all points of view as the basis for a wise decision
Pass on the wisdom that we've acquired through life-long learning and spiritual reflection

Debwewin (Truth)

Faithfully apply the teachings of our Seven Grandfathers and trust in the Creator

Description of our Flag

Center of the Flag

TURTLE (Mishiikenh) represents to our people the Mother Earth we stand upon sustaining us with constancy and generosity and is the central aspect of the symbol. Turtle emerged from the water with earth on its back, providing a living place for human beings and all creatures between sky and water. Turtle is the medium of communication, the emissary of beings of this world and time and beings of another world and dimension of time. Turtle symbolizes thought given and thought received and represents clarity of communication between beings. Aqua-green symbolizes plant life and growing things.

CRANE (Ajijaak) represents to our people eloquence of leadership and direction. The voice of the Crane is unique and infrequent. When Crane speaks, all listen. Crane is the spokesperson for the clans.

MOUNTAIN ASH TREE (Mtig) is the sacred tree of the Anishinabek, noted for its medicine value. Its leaves, berries, and bark are used for medicines. The tree is able to survive in places where other trees cannot. The Mountain Ash is used as an example for strength, durability, and strong character by the people.



Outside Ring of the Flag

RAINBOW/Thunder Necklace (Nimkii kawaabgan) is the beautiful bridge to the spirit world and the colors of the universe. Red is symbolic of earth and fire. Yellow is the path the sun crosses through the sky. Blue is symbolic of sky and waters. From wherever we stand upon our Earth Mother, we have companionship of these four directions. We are cared for by our Earth Mother with her blessings of food, clothing, shelter, and medicine. We give thanks to our Earth Mother, the direction below us. The direction above recognizes the daytime and nighttime skies of our creation. This is where we look to acknowledge the Great Spirit, the Creator. The Creator gives us everything we know, like the rainbow, a beautiful bridge to the spirit world and colors of the universe. Therefore, our greatest acknowledgment is to the Creator of all the universe. We give a grateful thanks.



Board of Directors

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Vision

We, the members of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, shall provide for the perpetuation of our way of life and the welfare and prosperity of our people, and protect our property and resources for the next seven generations.

Purpose

The Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians is committed to communicating and working together to develop and implement programs and services to positively impact the lives of tribal members ~ strengthening our families and communities by sustaining the Anishnaabe bimaadiziwin (way of life).

1. Strengthen use of Culture and Traditional Teachings

Overview:

Our governing Board of Directors has a responsibility to the ones who have come before us and the ones who will come after us to support the perpetuation of Anishinaabe bimaadiziwin for our tribal community. The effects of assimilation are still present and felt today within our tribal community. By embracing the culture, traditions, and language, we foster healing and wellness within our tribal nation. We understand that we have a rich and unique history as Anishinaabe people and that it is the responsibility of tribal leaders to advocate for culture, traditions, and language.

FUNCTIONS:

- ✓ Support and encourage activities that strengthen tribal identities
- ✓ Advocate for accurate historical representation at the local, state, and national levels
- ✓ Ensure tribal youth and elders are actively engaged in shaping the future of our culture
- ✓ Strengthen gathering, sharing, and the protection of our cultural resources
- ✓ Provide meaningful consultation with local, state, and federal agencies
- ✓ Speak on issues that affect our tribal nation
- ✓ Ensure access to cultural teachings, traditions, language, and art
- ✓ Ensure that youth have an opportunity to be mentored by elders
- ✓ Assert, defend, protect and promote our culture

Goals and Objectives:

1 - To promote, and protect the Anishinaabe Bimaadiziwin (way of life), to honor the wisdom of ancestors and to ensure prosperity for future generations.

Objective 1.1 - Support learning, teaching, storytelling, the use of traditional foods, and the practice of traditional arts

Objective 1.2 - Support and increase language programs, activities, & initiatives

Objective 1.3 - Promote tribal history & traditions within our community and area schools

Objective 1.4 - Utilize volunteer & mentoring programs to share teachings, and strengthen our cultural identity

Objective 1.5 - Establish online marketing resources for supporting tribal arts and crafts to increase exposure for our commercial tribal artists

2. Exercise Sovereignty

Overview:

Our Tribe and all nations are affected by the presence and activities of other nations; our journeys are bound together. The Board of Directors assert, defend, protect & promote our inherent political rights as a sovereign nation in order to improve the economic, environmental, cultural and social prosperity of our people and our traditional territory, for the next seven generations and beyond.

Our Tribal history has set us on a path to where we are today. Each day of our journey has been shaped by both successes and failures. We recognize that advancing successfully is not measured in the details of each step, but rather in holding ourselves accountable to our shared values.

We strive to be participatory, equitable, inclusive, and consensus-oriented. In addition, we believe the Board needs to be transparent, accountable, and responsive.

FUNCTIONS:

- ✓ Assert, defend, protect, and promote our sovereignty
- ✓ Uphold the Tribe's Constitution
- ✓ Review and make amendments to the constitution and codes
- ✓ Strengthen Government-to-Government relations
- ✓ Self-govern, self-manage, and self-regulate
- ✓ Advocate for environmental prosperity
- ✓ Advocate for economic prosperity
- ✓ Advocate for cultural prosperity
- ✓ Advocate for social prosperity (including educational and health services)
- ✓ Provide leadership in good governance standards
- ✓ Place limitations on agreements

Goals and Objectives:

2 - To assert our tribal sovereignty, self-determination, and self-governance through ongoing advocacy and good governance practices

Objective 2.1 - Assert that Congress, federal departments, and states seek consent for all activities that impact our Tribe.

Objective 2.2 - Strengthen working relationships between federal/state/local, tribal elected officials, and tribal staff

Objective 2.3 - Provide guidance for establishing collaborative partnerships & maintaining alliances with other tribal nations

Objective 2.4 - Improve and enhance our organizational systems by statutes, policies, and procedures

Objective 2.5 - Utilize the use of central demographic information in departmental programming

Objective 2.6 - Review/utilize/modify previous relevant resolutions prior to enacting new resolutions

3. Strengthen Programs and Services for Membership

Overview:

Programs & services are provided to improve health, wellness, equality, and independence. Our families and communities thrive when there is stability and security.

It is, therefore, our responsibility as a Board of Directors to advocate for improved information to our communities, allocation of resources, and to remain committed to improving the quality of life for all tribal communities.

FUNCTIONS:

- ✓ Identify how programs and services can better serve the membership through coordinated efforts
- ✓ Encourage self-sufficiency within the community
- ✓ Advocate for needs assessments to shape services
- ✓ Identify and support funding to expand services
- ✓ Expand educational services and protect the tuition waiver
- ✓ Advocate for cultural sensitivity training

Goals and Objectives:

3.a - Have accessible core services that are welcoming and responsive to membership issues and strengthens the well-being of tribal members

Objective 3.a.1 - Set an expectation of continuously improving our services and assistance to tribal membership

Objective 3.a.2 - Ensure cultural education is provided across the tribal organization

Objective 3.a.3 - Encourage feasible collaboration and efficiency to expand & enhance services

3.b - Improve internal communications by creating, maintaining, and strengthening interactive networks between all programs and across divisions

Objective 3.b.1 - Promote innovative communication solutions throughout the Tribe

Objective 3.b.2 - Promote departmental data sharing and program coordination

4. Protect all Inherent Rights of the Tribe

Overview:

As a tribal nation, we have inherent rights that our leadership exercised when they signed the Treaty of 1836. The treaty recognized our historical sovereign status and has helped define our rights that we work to protect for the next seven generations and beyond.

The federal government is to be held to the most stringent “fiduciary” standards for lands and waters that are held in trust. The rights that we hold are constantly at risk with the varying assaults to the environment that sustains our fisheries and hunting grounds.

We work towards getting the federal government to align its agencies and programs to lead coordinated efforts to protect our ability to exercise tribal treaty rights. In addition, the Board of Directors enacts self-regulations to ensure that our Tribe is wisely using and conserving our natural resources for our ongoing use.

FUNCTIONS:

- ✓ Ensure pre-paid treaty rights are honored (environment, recreation, education, healthcare, eldercare, youth programming, & wellness)
- ✓ Protect treaty rights to gather, fish, hunt & trap
- ✓ Maintain, defend, assert, and secure treaty rights at all levels of government
- ✓ Establish agreements to uphold & protect our rights
- ✓ Utilize tribal alliances for the protection of shared resources (land, air & water)
- ✓ Ensure constitutional rights are defended
- ✓ Fight for improvements to child welfare
- ✓ Ensure external governments work with us and establish meaningful consent prior to enacting policy

Goals and Objectives:

4. – To ensure all inherent rights of the Tribe are protected and conserved for future generations

Objective 4.1 - Exercise our treaty rights

Objective 4.2 - Ensure prior consultations are used with the federal, state, and local governments

Objective 4.3 - Educate the federal, state, local governments on their trust responsibilities for the continual protection of the Tribe's treaty rights

Objective 4.4 - Utilize intertribal collaboration to effectively co-manage resources

Objective 4.5 - Collaborate with partners to achieve shared goals

Objective 4.6 - Ensure youth participate in the protection of treaty rights and governance

Objective 4.7 - Advocate and defend child welfare

5. Represent Tribal Communities, Advocate for Membership and Strengthen Community Leadership

Overview:

As elected officials, we have a distinct legal and political authority to represent and advocate for the interests of our community. The membership has entrusted us to lead and govern in an effective and fair manner. We also recognize our ancestor's vision of living a good life, being a part of a community and connected to a healthy environment. Therefore, it is our responsibility as a Board of Directors to advocate for fair treatment of our members, equal access to resources, and to instill the ancestor's vision within our future leaders.

FUNCTIONS:

- ✓ Provide processes for the development of consensus on policy and positions on issues.
- ✓ Establish policies based on experience, traditional ecological knowledge, science-based evidence, our way of life
- ✓ Provide legislative and federal/state government policy recommendations on behalf of the tribal community
- ✓ Enact tribal codes (laws)
- ✓ Help strengthen tribal identity & community/civic activity
- ✓ Improve access to services
- ✓ Advocate for access to education
- ✓ Empower youth & promote leadership for future generations
- ✓ Advocate for healthy communities
- ✓ Advocate for family stability
- ✓ Consult with elders

Goals and Objectives:

5.a - Have sustainable resources that support and advocate prosperous, healthy and substance-free Anishinaabek youth, families, elders, and communities

Objective 5.a.1 - Promote improvement of accessing Sault Tribe membership services

Objective 5.a.2 - Utilize demographics to aid in maintaining and distributing sustainable resources

Objective 5.a.3 - Protect, encourage and ensure full utilization of the tuition waiver

Objective 5.a.4 - Promote the benefits of mentoring programs across all services

5.b - Improve and strengthen external communications for membership interests, issues, and services

Objective 5.b.1 - Develop clear, consistent public communications that are delivered in “one clear voice”

Objective 5.b.2 - Redesign and repackage basic information to establish a unified image

Objective 5.b.3 - Inform the membership of upcoming program, services changes, and events

6. Promote and Recruit Effective Workforce

Overview:

We recognize that attracting and retaining an effective workforce allows us to provide quality services to our tribal membership. The Board of Directors provides organizational leadership empowering our workforce to achieve the vision, purpose, and goals of the Tribe. It is through our unified efforts that we establish effective operations. Effectiveness is improved through the retention of employees; therefore, it is valuable to provide career growth, training, safe workplaces, and recognition programs.

FUNCTIONS:

- ✓ Provide competitive salaries
- ✓ Communicate to create an informed workforce
- ✓ Promote training & career growth
- ✓ Promote a safe work environment
- ✓ Provide recognition programs
- ✓ Improve cultural sensitivity
- ✓ Value our employees
- ✓ Advocate for recruiting and retention in the workforce

Goals and Objectives:

6. - To have culturally sensitive, knowledgeable employees, that continually improve to serve our tribal membership

Objective 6.1 - Promote professional growth and development opportunities through an improved employee recruitment, retention and training process

Objective 6.2 - Promote staff participation in community development and volunteerism

Objective 6.3 - Advocate for improving competitive salaries/wages and benefits

Objective 6.4 - Establish guidelines to encourage community promotions and positive social media use

7. Appropriations and Financials

Overview:

We recognize that the review and approval of all budgets is one of the most vital activities that leadership is tasked with. By prioritizing our tribal needs, we can better determine the allocation of funding to our programs and services. Long-term appropriations are tied to the Board of Director's organizational goals. We strive to work towards a multi-year financial and operational plan allocating resources on the basis of our identified goals.

FUNCTIONS:

- ✓ Approve the appropriation of all funding based on short term and long term financial goals
- ✓ Determine the need and priority of services
- ✓ Review and update the appropriation process, financial reviews, programmatic, operating, and capital policies
- ✓ Direct program funding from various levels of government

Goals and Objectives:

7. - To strengthen fiscal stability and accountability across all tribal operations

Objective 7.1 - Utilize multi-year appropriation goals to provide consistency across operations

Objective 7.2 - Clarify expectations on handling financial changes across all areas of the Tribe based on goals

Objective 7.3 - Review and ensure alignment and consistency across policies, goals, and plans

Objective 7.4 - Clearly communicate long-term budget expansion or reduction goals

Objective 7.5 - Review budgeted spending levels for specific programs to ensure stability in areas of strategic importance

8. Strengthen our Economy

Overview:

It is our responsibility as a Board of Directors to establish a business portfolio and to advocate where necessary to grow our tribal economy. Our people have a long tradition of subsistence and commercial activities, cultural arts, trade, and specialized labor. We recognize solutions are beyond signal business ventures or even multiple business ventures. Only through the establishment of a healthy economic environment will we be able to witness a thriving community. We will foster the opportunity for quality jobs and improved quality of life.

FUNCTIONS:

- ✓ Support a business infrastructure that fosters business development and growth
- ✓ Establish Sault Tribe owned developments
- ✓ Promote and support Sault Tribe member-owned business developments
- ✓ Self-regulate, self-manage, and self-determine
- ✓ Diversify economic portfolio
- ✓ Through our business developments improve work/career opportunities for the membership

Goals and Objectives:

8.a - Promote a strong economic environment that is conducive to creating and sustaining profitable tribal businesses

Objective 8.a.1- Promote a one-stop-shop of federal and state resources that can be shared with Sault Tribe member-owned businesses

Objective 8.a.2- Create a networking environment between Sault Tribe owned businesses to support and foster growth

Objective 8.a.3- Provide one-on-one business support to Sault Tribe members

8.b - Establish an EDC to foster a business development climate with inherent qualities that allow it to be stable and membership focused

Objective 8.b.1- Monitor and review tribal business code authorizing tribal corporations

Objective 8.b.2- Establish economic plans for tribal community growth in consideration to its relationships with city, county, regional, state, and national economic growth

Objective 8.b.3- Leverage the tribally owned EDC and privileges and immunities of the Tribe

Objective 8.b.4 - Encourage the development of new Sault Tribe member-owned businesses/industries

Objective 8.b.5 - Leverage the local business infrastructure to strengthen and complement the tribal EDC

8.c - Promote development and investments

Objective 8.c.1 - Provide analysis and vet investment opportunities

Objective 8.c.2 - Establish/update long-range business plans to advance tribally owned enterprises

Thank you!

This strategic plan serves as a map for where we the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians Board of Directors envisions our future. The overarching goals provide a balanced framework of what needs to be done to reach our vision and fulfill our mission. By establishing this plan, all team members should clearly see this direction. We thank you for reviewing this document carefully and working together to paddle in the same direction for the benefit of the membership.





Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa
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