

SUMMER LITERACY CAMPS



In partnership with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities

2024 National Report



EST. 1899

United for Literacy
Littératie Ensemble

Table of Contents

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Acknowledgements | PAGE 2 |
| Our Vision | PAGE 3 |
| 2024 by the Numbers | PAGE 5 |
| Reflections From the Communities | PAGE 6 |
| Activity Highlights | PAGE 7 |
| Youth Mobilization and Capacity Building | PAGE 9 |
| Letters of Support | PAGE 10 |
| Conclusion | PAGE 14 |
| Citation | Page 15 |
| Appendix A | Page 17 |

**SCHOLASTIC
EDUCATION**

FIRST BOOK CANADA 
Eliminating Barriers. Inspiring Young Minds.



**TD READY
COMMITMENT**

United for Literacy recognizes TD Bank Group as lead national sponsor of this program.

Acknowledgments

This year, United for Literacy was excited to partner with 90 communities nationwide to deliver our Summer Literacy Camps. We are thankful to our partners who facilitated our presence and welcomed us; and we are especially grateful to the campers and adults who participated in camp activities for another summer to remember!

Literacy is a community endeavor—it takes a village!

We would also like to recognize our funders and partners. Your support was felt, even from afar, throughout the season. This year, United for Literacy's summer programming was delivered with support from the following partners:

- Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation
- Amazon Canada
- Athabasca Denesuline Education Authority
- Bilijk (Kingsclear) First Nation
- Calm Air International LP
- Carrier Sekani Family Services
- Chalmers Community Renewal Initiative
- Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario
- Elmwood Community Resource Centre
- ESUMA (Kativik Regional Government)
- First Book Canada
- Government of Alberta
- Government of Canada
- Government of Manitoba
- Government of Ontario
- Hewitt Foundation
- Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization of Manitoba
- L'ICQ | Bibliothèque de Québec
- Let's Talk Science
- Makivvik Corporation
- Maskwacîs Education School Commission
- Millbrook First Nation
- North Star Air
- Nunastar Properties Fund for Northern Children
- Nunatsiavut Government
- Nunavut Department of Education
- Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association
- Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation
- Ontario Teachers' Federation
- Ontario Teachers Insurance Plan (OTIP)
- Pictou Landing First Nation
- Rotary Club of Winnipeg
- Scholastic Classrooms Care
- Sipekne'katik First Nation
- Sitansisk (St. Mary's) First Nation
- Squamish First Nation
- Sturgeon Lake First Nation
- Tachane Foundation
- TD Bank Group
- The McCain Foundation
- Wasaya Airways
- Welamukotuk (Oromocto) First Nation
- Winnipeg Goldeyes Field of Dreams Foundation
- Wotstak (Woodstock) First Nation

Our Vision

This summer, United for Literacy worked alongside Indigenous communities across the country to meet the summer learning needs of children and reinforce local capacity. The trust built over years of collaboration continues to make a difference! We are proud to reflect on the evolution of our partnerships as we see more and more communities deliver their own summer literacy programming. In the (almost) two-decades since the beginning of our Summer Literacy Camps, the vision for the Summer Literacy Camps has stayed the same:

1. Setting the Stage for Success by Addressing Summer Learning Loss

We love the summer holidays, but school closures between academic years affect learning. In fact, research shows that many education gaps among students occur during this time. This is called Summer Learning Loss. In fact, research shows that a lot of the education gaps among students occur during this time. While some students gain knowledge and others maintain what they learned in the previous school year, the average student loses up to three months of what they learned in the previous year.¹

Nearly half of children return to school after the summer having experienced losses in their basic literacy skills—this is seen more among children from low-income families. According to research, **25% of the socioeconomic learning gaps between start of the school year happened over the summer.**²

Like all of our programs, United for Literacy's Summer Literacy Camps are meant to help level the playing field. Each summer, we prepare campers to go back to school more interested and more confident in their reading writing, math, and science skills—all while having fun! In certain communities, United for Literacy we deliver our schoolyear programs a few months after camp to help learners connect with what they've learned in school through our Student-Centered Individualized Learning methods.



Reading outdoors in Sagkeeg First Nation (MB)!

2. Championing Reconciliation

We are also learners! United for Literacy's Summer Literacy Camps are delivered in partnership with more than 100 Indigenous communities. Each year, our partners help us to learn more about our role and responsibilities as advocates for reconciliation, as defined by each of the communities we serve.

Through this shared-learning approach, we are proud to champion the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation's six principles of ReconciliACTION which include:

- **Learning** the history between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples
- **Understanding** the history and legacy of residential schools
- **Exploring** the unique intersections between treaty, constitutional, Indigenous, and human rights we have in Canada
- **Recognizing** the rich contributions that Indigenous peoples have made to Canada
- **Taking action** to address historical injustices and present-day wrongs
- **Teaching** others. ³

The 2021 Census showed that 52% of Indigenous people living on-reserve had a high school diploma, compared to 73% for those living off-reserve and 90% of their non-Indigenous peers.⁴ By supporting community-specific, literacy-based education models that are rooted in Indigenous perspectives, we challenge these statistics.

3. Building Program Sustainability

United for Literacy's Summer Literacy Camps are not designed to last forever.

Though the need for literacy programming is continuous, Summer Literacy Camps are designed to equip communities to eventually deliver summer programming on their own. In many communities, there are existing local initiatives and experienced individuals who do important work to embed literacy and learning in children's programming, both during the summer and the school year.

Our camps have largely been in collaboration with local groups and individuals. This increases their capacity so they can successfully transition into community-developed and -operated activities. Our camp models include:



Fully staffed camps: Working in partnership with both local counsellors and those from the South, communities host a traditional Summer Literacy Camp. United for Literacy staff deliver weeks of day camps to help children improve reading, writing, and math skills in a fun environment.



Community-staffed camps: The partner community adapts the traditional camp model so that it can run with local staff only. This model regularly occurs in communities that have previously hosted the fully staffed program model. We hope a needs assessment will allow us to better understand which communities plan to shift to community-staffed camps.



Drop-in/Large group camps: These recurring, often outdoor, gatherings invite young campers to listen to a story, take part in a literacy game, and, of course, take a book home to enjoy.

2024 BY THE NUMBERS

United for Literacy was proud to reach **3,084** campers aged 5 to 12 across the country through a range of enriching summer learning activities.



Camper in Millbrook First Nation (NS) on a nature walk



Campers reading together in Fort McKay First Nation (AB)



Camper in Elmwood (MB) testing out her group project

This year, through our various Summer Literacy Camp models, United for Literacy:

- Distributed **15,874** brand-new books, including books by Indigenous authors
- Delivered **626** literacy kits
- Hosted **641** community visitors who came to host or participate in a scheduled camp activity
- Welcomed **183** guest presenters who shared their knowledge about diverse topics with campers
- Received **1,171** parent visitors to show them—in real time—what Summer Literacy Camps are all about
- Integrated **261** Let's Talk Science activities to campers as part of almost **33,540** total minutes spent on STEM learning

Campers across the country spent over **44,170** minutes reading, and more than **71,000** minutes were spent on physical and outdoor activities!



Aupaluk (QC) Camper showing off his creation!



Group Puzzles in Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation (SK)



Playing Limbo in Rigolet (NL)

Reflections From the Communities

Collecting feedback from campers, parents, and their communities is an essential part of our program design and delivery, which contributes to program improvements each year! To understand the successes and opportunities of our programming in 2024, United for Literacy surveyed camp program participants and stakeholders, including parents.



Reading at the playground
in Taloyoak (NT)

Here's what we heard from campers about their experience this summer:

- **90%** of campers said they **considered themselves to be a "good reader"** after camp
- **95%** said **reading is important**, and **91%** said they liked reading.
- **88%** said they **liked math after attending camp**, and **88%** said the same for **science**.

Here's what we heard from parents about the impact and benefits of camp:

- **90%** of parents surveyed said that **their child is reading more since attending camp**
- **99%** of parents said that **camp helped prepare their child to return to school**
- **100%** of parents said that **camp was valuable for their child, family, and community**

“Students had a blast! They were highly engaged in all of the activities and loved the field trips! I got numerous messages from parents thanking us for all the amazing activities and letting us know that the kids were loving it. They also thanked us for the field trips; none of our kids have gone anywhere because there's no money and no working transportation. Parents thanks us for giving them that.”

Community Partner, Pigeon Lake First Nation (AB)

Activity Highlights

Our camp turns learning into an adventure! Camp activities cultivate the curiosity shown by every camper. By the end of the summer, they are lifelong explorers of knowledge, ready to take on the world with the skills they gained and the fun memories they made. Each camp runs its own specific activities, creating many diverse experiences from one region to the next. Activities this year included:

Making a book at Pictou Landing (NS)

At the Pictou Landing camps, campers worked together to create a book! Through group discussion, the kids and camp counsellors decided on the idea for the story: Dug the Slug, camp mascot. Everyone came up with one activity that Dug the Slug would do during each month of the year. Campers then chose the activity they wanted to draw. At the end of the summer, each camper got to take a copy of the book home! They even had a chance to read the book to each other.



Family Financial Literacy community workshop in Sandy Lake (ON)

United for Literacy staff travelled to Sandy Lake and, in partnership with Camp Staff, hosted an evening workshop for parents of campers and community members. United for Literacy-developed Financial Literacy resources were shared with workshop participants, and everyone had the chance to explore with hands-on activities. After the workshop everyone joined together to prepare and enjoy a pizza supper.

Community Clean-up in Puvirnituk (QC)

In Puvirnituk, counsellors engaged campers in a clean-up of the school grounds and surrounding area. After collectively reading the book *Spencer the Siksik Cleans Up* with camp counsellors, campers took ownership of their space and worked on this as group!



Makkovik Zine Exhibition

This year, our Makkovik campers in Nunatsiavut (NL) each created zines, small picture books of their own thoughts and creativity. In their zines, campers showcased their literacy skills by reflecting on the theme of *Belonging; Culture, Language, and Community*. Through their zines, each child took home a reminder of the nature walks, arts and crafts activities, and writing prompts that made camp special! Once completed, parents and loved ones were invited to view the zines at an end-of-camp show and tell!



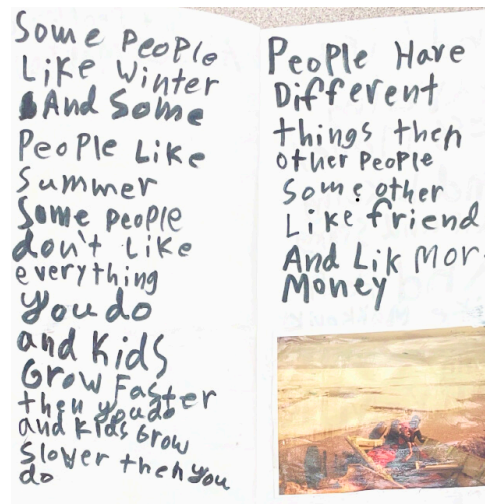
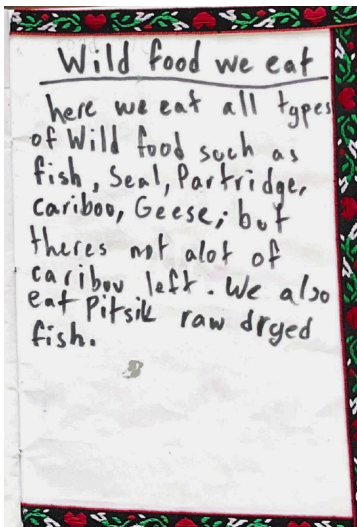
Zine viewing and hugs



An artist in her element

The activity allowed campers to explore their reading and writing skills, demonstrate their cultural knowledge, and showcase their unique perspectives on life in Makkovik.

Campers, counsellors, and the community all enjoyed reading the zines. The zines have been scanned so that they may be printed and shared for years to come!



Youth Mobilization and Capacity Building

Summer Literacy Camps contribute to the local economy through wages for local staff, honoraria to community members, and the purchase of materials, food, and services in communities. Each summer United for Literacy prioritizes youth employment opportunities in the communities where camps operate. Working as a camp counsellor and leading the day-to-day operations of running a busy camp gives youth a chance to develop a range of skills and experiences, from communication to time management. The training offered by United for Literacy further strengthens these skills.



Our team of counsellors in Kuujjuaq (QC)

We hope that many of the counsellors who participate in our Summer Literacy Camps today will become the camp organizers of tomorrow. Here is what camp staff across the country said about their camp experience:

- **95%** said that **camp provided them with a positive work experience**
- **98%** said that **camp helped strengthen their employment skills**
- **98%** said that **camp provided an enriching learning experience for campers**



“I really liked coming into work everyday to help encourage our campers to learn and utilize the skills they had and make them stronger.”

Camp counsellor, Sipekne’katik First Nation (NS)

“The most memorable experience was interacting with the kids and listening to their stories about how they love camp and why. I was able to develop more leadership skills through working this summer, and I think it has made a positive difference in the community because parents were able to come visit.”

Camp counsellor, Peavine (AB)



Letters of Support

Each year, community partners share letters of support to reflect on the successes and impact of our camp season. We are pleased to share with you a few partner reflections from the 2024 Summer Literacy Camps.



United for Literacy
212 Queen St Suite 301
Fredericton NB E3B 1A8

September 27, 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter of support and appreciation for the outstanding Literacy Camp held in our community of Wotstak this summer. Emma Warwick and Mackenzie Prudencio offered a program that not only engaged our youth in many aspects of literacy development but also pulled together a core group that read, played games, enjoyed outdoor activities and generally had a great summer together. Any apprehension I had about them being able to keep a rambunctious group engaged was quickly dissolved. These children had a great time!

This was my first summer involved and I was more than impressed with the program. I look forward to many more wonderful summers together!

Woliwon

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tracy Dunphy".

Tracy Dunphy RSW, BSW
Director
Wotstak Child & Family Services
Tracy.dunphy@gnb.ca

1 Sipsis Drive
Woodstock First Nation, NB E7M0J3
Telephone: 506-324-6250 Fax: 506-324-4462

Letters of Support Cont.



To: To Whom it May Concern

From: G. Tyrone MacPherson
Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, ADEA

Date: August 1, 2024

Re: Summer Literacy Camps

As the Superintendent responsible for our summer literacy projects, I want to take this opportunity to express my gratitude and support to both United for Literacy (UFL) and our local staff.

As a former Director of Education in another Saskatchewan First Nations community, I have had experience with United for Literacy since 2020. I have come to truly appreciate the positive effects that UFL Summer Literacy camps have for our children. This is exacerbated in the remote northern communities, where children do not have ready access to many services and supports found in southern communities. In my opinion, this increases the value and impact of conducting our camps. This summer, in

partnership with United for Literacy, we hosted a three week Literacy Camp with a focus on aboriginal children. Camps were held in Fond du lac, SK and Hatchet Lake, SK, both remote Denesuline communities. Providing camps in the far north comes with unique challenges and celebrations. It is my opinion that UFL staff were both proactive and flexible in our first attempts in hosting the camps. This summer, we were able to deliver an engaging three week program for over 50 of

our elementary students. Parents and students alike were appreciative of the chance to be part of the camp. We know the positive impacts that this will have on our students' education. It builds relationships, fosters academic and social pursuits, and mitigates summer loss of learning. We also learned some lessons that will inform our planning and operations in the summer of 2025. In closing, I want to recognize the support

from United for Literacy and the hard work of our staff, some of whom gave up summer holidays to make this happen. This was an excellent initiative and we look forward to continuing to grow our program next summer.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "G. Tyrone MacPherson".

G. Tyrone MacPherson
Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction
Athabasca Denesuline Education Authority

Letters of Support Cont.



MARTEN FALLS FIRST NATION #65

Ogoki Post, Ontario P0T 2L0 Tel: (807)349-2509 Fax: (807) 349-2511

October 15, 2024

Via Email - cmehagan@unitedforliteracy

United for Literacy

Suite #5895 Tungsten Street
Thunder Bay ON, P7B 6H2

AKenLon: Cathy Mehagan, Regional Manager

Dear Ms. Mehagan,

I hope this leker finds you well. I am wriLNg to express my strong support for the success of the summer literacy camp for the students in our community. As we know, literacy is a foundaLonal skill that plays a crucial role in a child's academic and personal development. A dedicated summer program focused on literacy can offer transformaLve benefits for our young learners.

The summer camp staff were able to provide engaging, hands-on acLviLes and instrucLon. The camp has helped reinforce reading and wriLNg skills, ensuring that children return to school ready to learn and succeed.

Literacy acLviLes oJen encourage discussions and sharing, helping children to arLculate their thoughts and feelings in a safe space.

The summer literacy camp helped bridge educaLonal gaps and created a more equitable learning environment. Tailoring the program to meet the diverse needs of our students ensured that all children had the opportunity to thrive.

In conclusion, the summer literacy camp is a vital resource for our community, fostering not only literacy skills but also a passion for learning that lasts a lifeLme. I support this iniLaLve and urge you to consider the posiLve impact it can conLnue to have on our children.

Miigwech.

Sincerely,

Susanna Baxter

EducaLon Director for Marten Falls First NaLon
Cell: 807-632-8386

Letters of Support Cont.

September 8th, 2024

Re: Literacy Camp

To Whom It May Concern,

I would like to provide a letter of support regarding the United for Literacy Summer Camp that is held on Tsuut'ina Nation each summer.

I had the opportunity to participate in this year's program as the Camp Administrator and worked alongside some fantastic Camp Counselors. During our time working for United for Literacy, we witnessed the positive impact that it had on the children who attended, and received encouraging feedback from their parents and guardians. Our camp staff and camp attendees shared the experience of building positive relationships and created lifelong memories by participating in a variety of unique learning activities.

As a school district, Tsuut'ina Education prioritizes enhancing literacy skills both in the schools and around the community. We believe that United for Literacy aligns with the values of education on the nation, and provides opportunities for children to participate in a safe, fun, and engaging learning environment over the summer. United for Literacy not only encourages building literacy skills that are effective for children of all academic levels, but also encourages incorporating vital cultural connections in their learning.

The value that the United for Literacy Summer Camp provides truly helps support the children and their families. Without United for Literacy, these opportunities would be greatly missed in the community. We would greatly appreciate the continuation of United for Literacy programs on Tsuut'ina Nation, and look forward to future opportunities that may be presented.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any further questions at 403-797-0042.

Kind Regards,



Sarah Jalsoviczky
Grade 4 Teacher
Chief Big Belly Middle School, Tsuut'ina Nation

See you next year!

As much as we love the summer holidays, without intervention, prolonged school closures leave many students vulnerable to Summer Learning Loss. Together, we are securing a more equitable future in more ways than one!

**Thank you for being our literacy partners.
See you next summer!**



EST. 1899

**United for Literacy
Littératie Ensemble**

Citations

[1] Munro, C. (2022). Learning Loss: A Summer Problem. *BU Journal of Graduate Studies in Education*, 14(2), 29–33.

[2] Davies, S., & Aurini, J. (2013). Summer learning inequality in Ontario. *Canadian Public Policy*, 39(2), 287–307. <https://doi.org/10.3138/cpp.39.2.287>

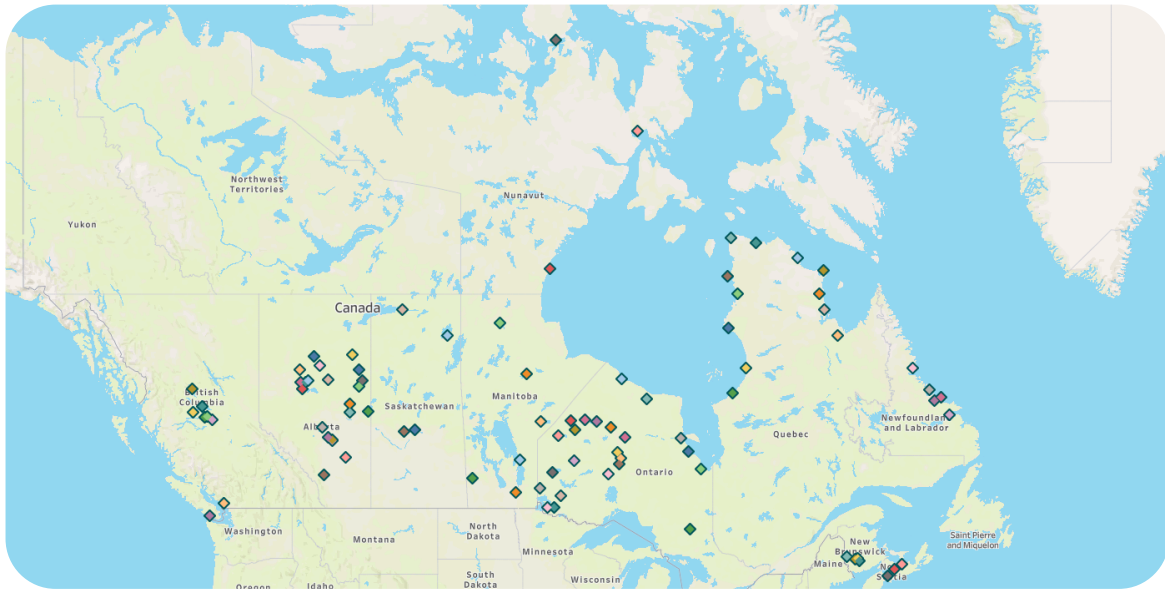
[3] NTCR. (2023, April 19). Reconciliation plans #94in94 Campaign. National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR). <https://nctr.ca/reconciliation-plans/>

[4] Passafiume, A. (2023, October 22). High school completion, income levels increasing for First Nations peoples: Statcan. [theCanadianpressnews.ca. https://www.thecanadianpressnews.ca/politics/high-school-completion-income-levels-increasing-for-first-nations-peoples-statcan/article_6a00f3b6-e166-59fa-9060-4f3e94d8af3c.html](https://www.thecanadianpressnews.ca/politics/high-school-completion-income-levels-increasing-for-first-nations-peoples-statcan/article_6a00f3b6-e166-59fa-9060-4f3e94d8af3c.html)



Fun on the playground in Umiujaq (QC)!

Appendix A: List of Camp Communities



The 2024 Summer Literacy Camps were hosted in 90 communities across 8 provinces and 2 territories:

Alberta (21)

Anzac
Atikameg First Nation
Beaver Lake Cree Nation
Cadotte Lake
Cold Lake First Nation
Conklin Métis
Ermineskin Cree Nation
Fort McKay First Nation
Gift Lake First Nation
Goodfish Lake First Nation
Grouard
Heart Lake First Nation
Janvier
Loon River First Nation

Paul First Nation
Peavine Metis Settelement
Peerless Trout First Nation
Pigeon Lake
Samson Cree Nation
Tsuut'ina Nation
Wabasca-Desmarais

British Columbia (7)

Carrier Sekani Family Services
(Stella'ten First Nation, Saik'uz
First Nation,
Wet'suwet'en First Nation,
Takla First Nation,
Nadleh Whut'en First Nation)
Pacheedaht First Nation
Squamish Nation

Manitoba (6)

Elmood/Chalmers
Split Lake (Tataskweyak)
St. Theresa's Point First Nation
Waywayseecappo First Nation
Bloodvein First Nations
Tadoule Lake

List of Camp Communities Continued

New Brunswick (4)

Sitansisk (St. Mary's) First Nation
Wotstak (Woodstock) First Nation
Welamukotuk (Oromocto) First Nation
Bilijk (Kingsclear) First Nation

Nunatsiavut (Newfoundland and Labrador) (5)

Hopedale
Makkovik
Nain
Postville
Rigolet

Nova Scotia (3)

Pictou Landing First Nation
Sipekne'katik First Nation
Millbrook First Nation

Nunavut (3)

Arviat
Taloyoak
Nauyasat

Ontario (25)

Attawapiskat First Nation
Bearskin Lake First Nation
Big Grassy First Nation
Cat Lake First Nation
Eabametoong First Nation
Eagle Lake First Nation
Fort Albany First Nation
Fort Severn First Nation
Kasabonika Lake First Nation
Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI)

Longlac

Marten Falls First Nation
Mattagami First Nation
Moose Cree First Nation
Muskrat Dam First Nation
Nakina
Neskantaga First Nation
Onigaming First Nation
Peawanuck First Nation
Sachigo Lake First Nation
Sandy Lake First Nation
Slate Falls First Nation
Wabaseemoong Independent Nations
Webequie First Nation
Whitesand First Nation

Saskatchewan (4)

Fond Du Lac Denesuline First Nation
Hatchet Lake Denesuline First Nation
Ahtahkakoop Cree Nation
Sturgeon Lake First Nation

Quebec – Nunavik (12)

Umiujaq
Akulivik
Aupaluk
Inukjuaq
Ivujivik
Kangirsuk
Kuujuaq
Kuujuaaraapik
Puvirnituq
Quaqtaq
Salluit
Kangiassujuaq