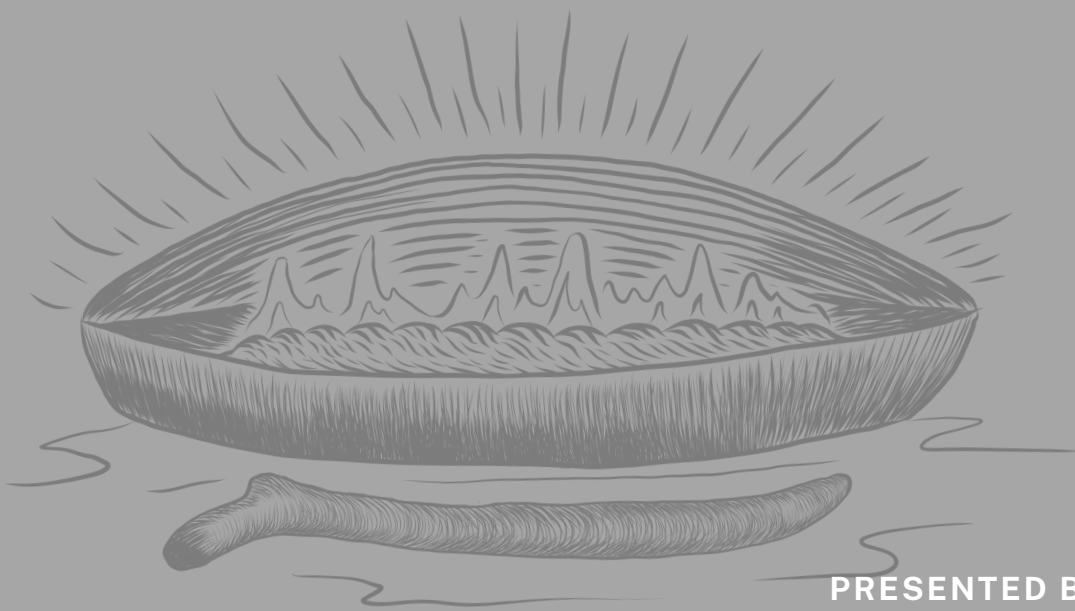


AUGUST 2021



FIRST PEOPLES JUSTICE CENTER OF MONTREAL

Annual Report 2020- 2021



PRESENTED BY

Rachel Deutsch
Catherine Irwin-Gibson
Ellen Filippelli



Words from the Director

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WORDS FROM THE DIRECTOR: REFLECTING ON A CHALLENGING AND TRANSFORMATIVE YEAR

This year was once again a milestone year for the First People's Justice Centre of Montreal. This year would never have been possible without the tireless efforts of our amazing team. The COVID19 crisis and resulting closure or reduction of services by different organizations had an important impact on the Indigenous urban community, notably for those experiencing homelessness.

Through the ever-changing COVID19 circumstances, our team navigated limited accessibility and contact, difficult health risks, emergency responses and constant barriers with grace, patience and quick creativity. They were able to balance community members' priorities with their own health and safety and kept the priority focused on justice. They deserve a huge round of applause!

Throughout this year, major issues of racial inequalities were at the forefront of our minds. Indigenous people continued to be targeted and discriminated against by the health system, the police system and the carceral system. We continued to strive, amidst limited available options, to support our community members as they faced these challenges.

The team welcomed two new members, Danielle Bigras in the Victim Services Program, and Ellen Filippelli, in our Reintegration Program. We also said farewell and thank you to Sarah Carriere who left to pursue new directions. Danielle Bigras joined us to fill in during Deseray Rich's maternity leave, while Ellen Filippelli came in to develop a whole new program, assisting community members exiting the carceral system, in an effort to lower recidivism rates for our Indigenous community members. When word of her program got out, she was immediately swamped! There is a huge need for this program and we look forward to growing it in the future. We are glad to have them both and enjoy their collaborative spirit and cultural healing focus.

Our Justice Services program continued to develop with Danielle Beaulieu, and expanded into a new Restorative Justice Program led by Amy Edward. Together with the team and our Advisory Committee, Amy developed the Justice Circle programming. This program will serve not only as a diversion from the Court systems, through the MJQ's Alternative Measures Program, but also as a way to address conflict that exists between community members, without having to go through the court system.

Our Connection to Community programming continues to evolve, as Corey Thomas brings his approach to community and compensatory hours. It is clear from his interactions with community members that they respect and appreciate him, and enjoy working with him. This trust from our community members is the FPJCM's most valuable asset.

Looking forward into the next year, the FPJCM will change its leadership structure to encompass one Executive Director and one Training and Development Lead. We hope that this change will ensure more sustainability and stability at a management level. The FPJCM has grown a lot in the last year, programming and scope of service has greatly increased, and the number of employees has multiplied.

We will be glad to have Rachel Deutsch back from maternity leave, and supporting our new Executive Director in the Training and Development capacity. Her relationship with partners, her vast experience in Social Work and funder relations will be an invaluable asset to the team.

Our outlook for 2021-2022 is teeming with exciting new developments. Just after the end of the fiscal year of 2020-2021, the Board hired Ellen Fillipelli as our new Executive Director! Her vision is one shared by the FPJCM: Through a strong connection to Indigenous culture and traditions, we can find healing and true justice, and confidently face the challenges that come at us. Ellen brings a wonderful set of assets and gifts, instilling confidence in the team. We are so very pleased to have her on board and leading the FPJCM into 2021 and beyond. Welcome Ellen!

-Catherine Irwin-Gibson, Interim Executive Director, 2020-2021



WHO WE ARE



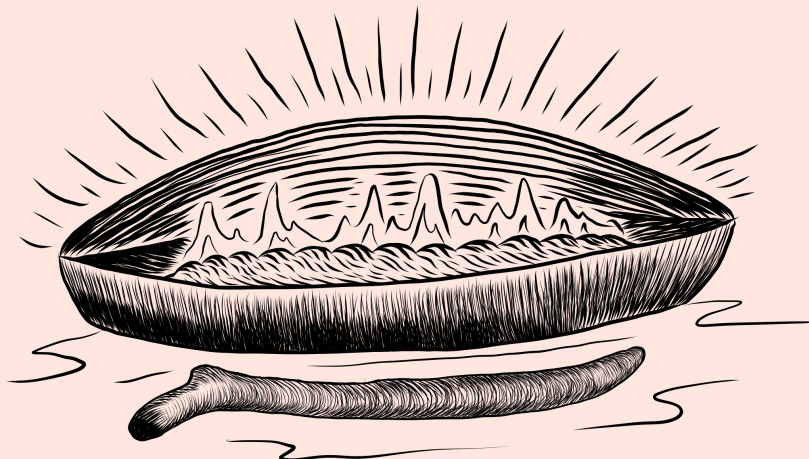
The First Peoples Justice Centre of Montreal (FPJCM) was incorporated in January 2014 and opened its doors in early 2017. The Center is a registered Charity.

The FPJCM came about as a community initiative, resulting from the Cabot Square Project, initiated in 2013 by the Justice Working Committee of the Montreal Indigenous Community NETWORK.

The FPJCM was created to provide services to Indigenous people involved with the justice system, including community-based prevention measures, support during court proceedings, incarceration, release, and reintegration. It offers free support to Indigenous people in Montreal involved with the justice system, as well as to those seeking help with issues such as substance abuse, healing, life skills, and anger management. The FPJCM promotes culturally appropriate alternatives to incarceration when possible, works with Elders, and is in the midst of setting up a Justice Circle to bring about accountability, community connection, and an increased sense of meaning into the justice process for both those who have harmed and those who have been harmed.

The FPJCM's vision is for:

Strong Indigenous communities that have access to Indigenous community-led justice processes rooted in decolonization, healing, respect, and Indigenous law.



The FPCJM's mission is to work in partnership with the Indigenous community and the justice system in Montreal in order to:

- Support, inform, and empower Indigenous people navigating the justice system and to offer holistic and culturally appropriate Indigenous justice services to the diverse Indigenous population living in Montreal.
- To create alternative Indigenous community-led justice processes rooted in Indigenous values in partnership with the Indigenous community in Montreal.

Our values are: Respect, justice, dignity, and compassion.

The contributions of sustainable funding from all three levels of government; federal, provincial, and municipal, as well as private foundations and donors is critical to the work and success of the Centre. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those that have contributed to funding the Centre.

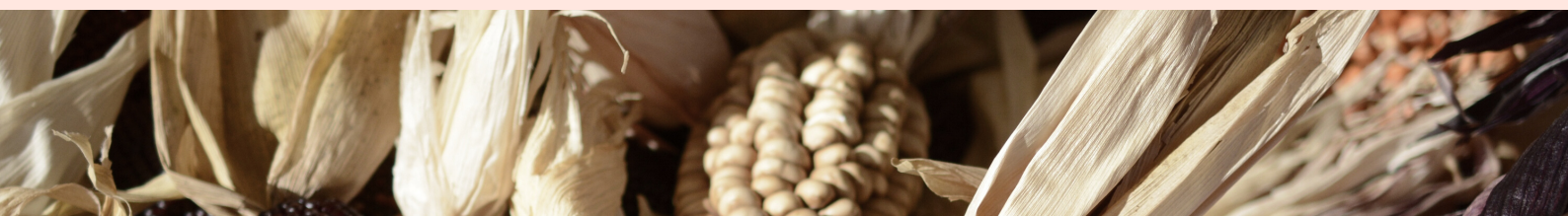
OUR COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Those accessing services at the FPJCM identify with many communities across Turtle Island. Around half of the people who use our services are Inuit. Cree community members make up the second-largest group of service users, followed by Mohawk, Mi'kmaq, and Algonquin.

For the first time, more men than women used our services, with a very small margin identifying as trans or Two-Spirit. The change in demographics was a result of our new Transition Program since it assisted men leaving the Federal prisons. In the future, this program will be expanded to include all genders.

The Indigenous people who use our services are seriously impacted by trauma resulting from the well-documented effects of Canada's history of colonialism, including Residential Schools, Federal Indian Dayschools, forced relocations, and injustices in the youth protection system. Tragically, Montreal saw an increase in death of many Indigenous community members during this past year and throughout the pandemic.

The FPJCM believes that our community members deserve assistance in becoming healthy, accessing justice, and moving on to a good life path. This is true for both those who have harmed and those who are harmed. Many times, Indigenous people experience both victimization and criminalization during their lives. Article 34 of the United Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) recognizes the right of Indigenous peoples "to promote, develop and maintain their institutional structures and their distinct customs, spirituality, traditions, procedures, practices, and juridical systems or customs in accordance with international human rights standards." This means that Indigenous people have a right to heal and to gain a sense of justice through Indigenous community-based and cultural means, such as those provided by the FPJCM.



Our programs

Victim Services

The Victim Services Program was launched in January 2020 through funding from Secrétariat aux Affaires Autochtones of the Quebec government for 2.5 years.

The project serves Indigenous people, particularly women and 2SLGBTQQIA+, who have experienced violence and are involved in the justice system, by increasing access to resources and providing services to help them heal while at the same time seeking justice. Violence can include physical violence, sexual violence, threats of physical or sexual violence, and psychological/emotional abuse either from an individual or as a result of the colonial system.

Due to the conditions imposed on our services because of the pandemic, for many months, the project was limited to online programming or one-on-one interventions outside of the office. We served a total of 20 individuals, including several who required assistance and support regarding the Sixties Scoop Class Action and the Indian Day School forms for the class action. Throughout the pandemic, the coordinator distributed almost 400 Violence Prevention bags to Indigenous women in the community.

The program also provided several group programs including weekly “Victim Drop-In Days,” “Mamu Debrief,” a monthly group support for Indigenous community workers and non-Indigenous workers working with Indigenous people, and a bimonthly support group for survivors of the youth protection system run by Tealey Normandin, a cultural resource.

In the winter, 2021, the Victim Services Coordinator planned and co-facilitated a debrief group with an Elder for intervention workers who are supporting the Indigenous community during the pandemic. Likewise, the team facilitated a debrief session following the February 14 MMIWG vigil.

The program regularly collaborates with Chez Doris, Native Montreal, Native Friendship Center, Resilience, Native Women Shelter, Montreal Indigenous Community Network, CAVAC, the MMIWG Regional Quebec Advisory for Families, and the Centre for Gender Advocacy.

In terms of systemic change, the FPJCM met with the Ministère de la justice and the Bureau d'aide aux victimes d'actes criminels to start discussions on how we can remove barriers to services for this population and provide restorative and alternative options for justice for victims.



Justice Services

In 2020-2021, the FPJCM continued to receive many referrals from partner organizations, defence lawyers, and the Municipal Court, as well as from individuals for self-referrals. In collaboration with our partners, the FPJCM provided a significant number of psychosocial follow-ups.

The Center focused on consolidating and developing support services for Indigenous people in conflict with the law, including referrals, intervention plans, healing groups, crisis and suicide prevention, accompaniments, the launch of the new PAJA program at the Municipal Court, and the development of the General Alternative Measures Program in collaboration with our Restorative Justice Program.

During the activity period between April 1, 2020 and March 31st, 2021, the FPJCM provided individual support to more than 60 individuals for a total of over 312 tracked interactions. This included intake, PAJA related follow-ups, wellness plans, referrals, crisis intervention, accompaniment, advocacy, and bail support.

Municipal Court Program

The FPJCM has made several adjustments and improvements to the Indigenous accompaniment program at the Montreal Municipal Court this year. This program is led by Danielle Beaulieu, Justice Support Services Coordinator. Drawing inspiration from specialized Indigenous courts, particularly in Ottawa and Toronto, the FPJCM aims to move from the PAJIC model to a more flexible justice process in terms of exclusion criteria and finalization. This includes a more holistic and harm reduction approach, along with an understanding of historic trauma, to the criteria for admission and finalization of the program.

As of August 2020, the PAJA (*Programme d'Accompagnement Justice Autochtone à la cour municipale de Montréal*) has been allocated a minimum of one court date per month for Indigenous community members seeking resolution for criminal infractions and tickets.

The Justice Support Coordinator participates in monthly preparatory meetings for the PAJA court dates, with an average of between 15-20 Indigenous files on the docket on those dates. These cases involve informal diversions, Gladue-type letters or considerations, bail support, etc.

Since April 2020, the FPJCM has been working with the crown to expand eligibility and build partnerships. The FPJCM provided training for DPPC in October 2020. An internal committee at the Municipal Court was established in the winter, 2020.

Several cultural elements have been introduced to the Indigenous court sessions at the Montreal Municipal Court: an Indigenous opening (usually in Inuktitut or Mohawk) before the session begins, providing bannock and other traditional foods, and inviting key resources to court dates (SPAQ Courtworkers, Open Door, etc.).

Between April 1, 2020, and March 31, 2021, the program was successful in assisting many Indigenous community members to avoid further judicialization at the Municipal Court and focused on creating a culturally safe and welcoming environment with restorative justice values.

The FPJCM collaborates with the Prosecution at the Montreal Municipal Court to work towards improving and expanding the PAJA program through many different measures outlined in our PAJA 2020-2021 Annual Report and Reflections Report. These steps include better identification of Indigenous offenders (ask the question systematically to anyone appearing in Court) in order to direct them to our adapted justice process. The goal is to commit to eliminating, over the next decade, the over-representation of Indigenous people in custody, to properly evaluate this process using a third-party evaluator, and to publish detailed yearly reports (Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action No. 30).

Connecting to Community

The Connection to Community program continues to identify systemic barriers for Indigenous people in Montreal as they navigate the justice system and will respond in creative and culturally appropriate ways to improve wellbeing, increase rights, and respond to the needs of the community. The program also provides opportunities for community members to carve, create art and heal.

In January 2021, Sarah Carrier moved on from the Connection to Community Caseworker position. Corey Thomas, who was previously the FPJCM administrative assistant, moved into the position. There was a breakout of COVID19 in the Indigenous community during the winter months and he recommenced outreach and emergency support to those on the street. This was an important change to the role, due to COVID19, providing resources, outreach on the street, and responding to immediate needs. This included food and supplies to people living on the street who could no longer access most of their usual services because organizations had shut down. The caseworker also collaborated with Resilience Montreal and Projets Autochtones du Québec on several occasions.

When measures eased in April, the caseworker resumed regular programming, including the wellness hangout and an arts-based group. The caseworker has also negotiated with Montreal probation services to ensure that a probation worker will come into the community to meet with their clientele rather than to require them to travel to the probation office for their meetings. Probation workers will alternate between meetings at the First Peoples Justice Center of Montreal and other Indigenous community organizations on a regular basis.

Restorative Justice and Alternative Measures

The FPJCM continues to develop its community Justice Circle, a model of Indigenous justice that will be used as a tool for community mediation and also for the Quebec alternative measures program (GAMP) currently being developed by the Ministère de la Justice. The objective of the Justice Circle is to provide restorative justice alternatives to the regular judicial process for members of Montreal's Indigenous community. Together with the individual, the FPJCM restorative justice program will develop a wellness plan that allows them to work on their stability and accountability with the support of community members.

The FPJCM is working towards implementing the General Alternative Measures Program (GAMP). We are working in collaboration with other Indigenous community justice organizations to ensure that the model reflects Indigenous values of justice and prevent unnecessary barriers from getting in the way of community members participating. To this end, since May 2020, the team has collaborated in creating proper protocol, verification, intake forms and other documents necessary for the GAMP. This has involved extensive collaboration with the DPCP and the Ministère de la Justice (MJQ). These documents include outlining:

- Formal agreement between FPJCM, MJQ and the DCCP and DPCP is still in negotiation.
- Collaborate with the Municipal Court to implement the protocol once it has been finalized and signed.
- Protocols with CAVAC (for victims) and Equijustice (for offenders)
- Consistent consultation meetings with the MJQ (both Indigenous and Restorative Justice Divisions)
-

The Restorative Justice Coordinator has drafted a detailed Handbook outlining the principles and framework for implementing the Justice Circle. This Handbook is the result of multiple consultation processes with FPJCM staff, board members, advisory committee team, and external research and will provide an excellent resource for the FPJCM and other Restorative Justice programs moving forward.

An internal committee has been set up between Indigenous organizations/Friendship Centres who are taking on PMR (i.e., Val D'or, Trois Rivières, etc.), MJQ and DCPC. This committee meets monthly.



Transition Program

The Transition Program was officially launched in October 2020 with one time funding from Heritage Canada's Anti-Racist Action Program. The project aims at providing support to Indigenous adults and youth leaving the mainstream justice and carceral system, and to those finalizing alternative restorative and indigenized justice processes. The goal is to create a sense of connection, pride and community amongst this target group, while addressing the recidivism and re-criminalization cycle.



Through this project, FPJCM also hopes to foster positive relationships between Indigenous communities and the criminal justice system. Activities will include providing yearly training to 45 judicial actors working with Indigenous youth and adults. It will also include individual and group support sessions through culturally-based programming as a way of addressing issues around trauma, grief, addictions, and healthy relationships. Participants will actively participate in all activities, including a data collection exercise on recidivism rates, whenever possible.

In September 2020, Ellen Filippelli, was hired as coordinator and quickly built up a case-load of individuals leaving the federal and provincial institutions, including through Section 84 and referrals from partner organization.

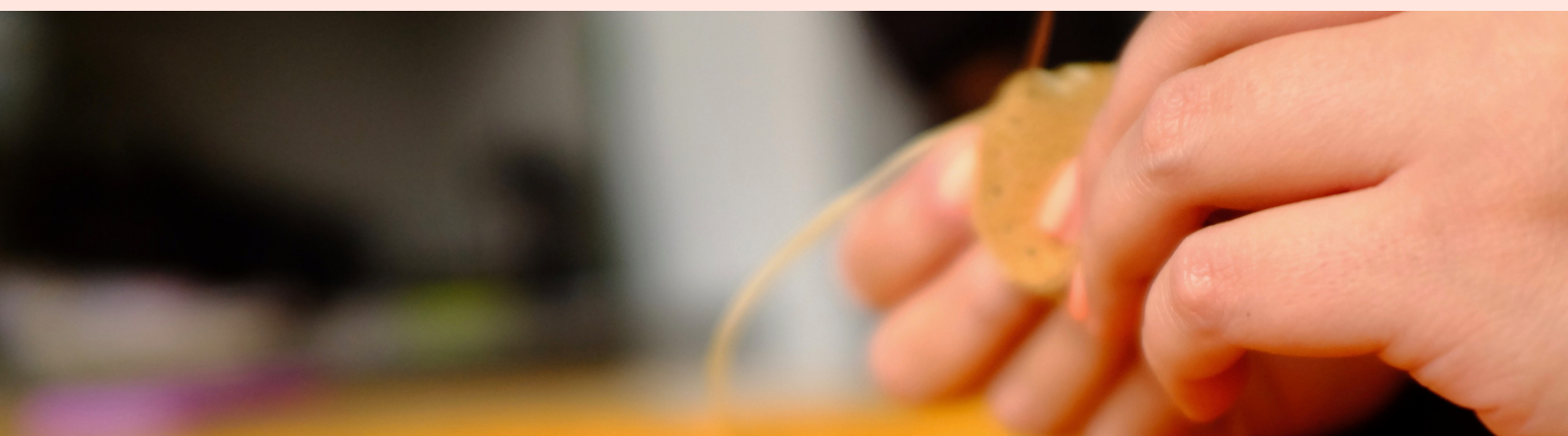
The FPJCM will work to ensure long term, sustainable funding for this much needed program.

Culture and Healing

All of the programs at the FPJCM provide cultural and healing components whether through visits with Elders, group sessions, ceremonies, traditional arts, and wellness gatherings. We also facilitate meetings with our in house Elder, Tom Dearhouse.

The Connections to Community Caseworker offered wellness programming by providing tools and materials to allow community members to carve, create art and heal. Weekly Indigenous Wellness hangouts also occurred throughout this period (with a break in the winter when lockdowns recommenced).

In 2021-2022, we look forward to continuing and expanding our cultural programming.



Capacity Building and Systemic Change

Sensitization and Committees

During the 2020-2021 year, the FPJCM sat on many community and judicial sector committees, where it was able to further educate partners about Indigenous realities in relation to the justice system. These committees include the SPVM's Comité Vigie Autochtone, the Comité régional de cohabitation de la Ville de Montréal, the Iskweu Project Committee, CAJI (Comité Accompagnement Justice Itinérance) and PAJA's Internal Committee. Starting with the onset of COVID-19, the FPJCM began regular meetings with a committee of Montreal's Indigenous organizations as well as the Montreal Indigenous Health Advisory Circle (MIHAC) in order to address common needs.

Learning

The FPJCM staff attended the following training in 2020-2021:

1. Supporting Victims in Indigenous Justice Processes Webinar (June 2020)
2. Training on Restorative Justice by MDRA Associates (June 2020)
3. Family Law Training (June 2020)
4. Online CSC Workshop on Reintegration (June 2020)
5. In House Restorative Justice Training (August 2020)
6. Corrections Canada training on s. 84 and 81 (October 2020)
7. Youth Protection Law Training with Me. Eve Laoun (November 2020)
8. Training on Board Roles and organizational structure (February 2021)
9. Training on Jordan's Principle (February 2021)
10. First Aid Training (March 2021)

A training on restorative justice and conducting justice circles was planned with Community Justice Initiatives (BC) for April 2020 but was postponed due to COVID regulations.

In February 2021, the staff met to conduct internal planning and evaluate their role in the continued implementation of the strategic plan, and then shared this with the Board in May 2020, in preparation for our next strategic planning session. The Centre strives to conduct an annual Strategic planning session to ensure the continued vision and strategic development of the FPJCM is aligned with our community members' needs.

Throughout 2020-2021, the FPJCM staff met quarterly with our advisory committee of Indigenous people with knowledge of the justice system for visioning, direction, and advice.

Focusing on systemic change

As part of the outreach work during COVID19 lockdown, the FPJCM has kept an inventory of tickets as well as testimonies about police intervention in order to advocate for change in the justice system. Community members in homelessness situations have particularly been targeted by the police and we are looking at how to assist community members with tickets and negative police interactions. The FPJCM has repeatedly called for a moratorium on ticketing people in homelessness for sleeping outside, loitering and public urination during the COVID-19 crisis since many shelters and resources can not accommodate the entire community.

The FPJCM has also advocated for improved police services and an end to discrimination through sitting on the Comité de Vigie with the SPVM and the City of Montreal and also through involvement with the Montreal Coalition to Defund the Police.

During the COVID-19 crisis, the FPJCM also sits on the Montreal Indigenous Health Advisory Circle (MIHAC) committee as well as the C-19 Community Response Working Group to discuss current and emerging needs of the Indigenous community with regards to health, homelessness and justice.

Through the Restorative Justice Program, the FPJCM has fought hard to develop alternatives to the mainstream justice system and to offer diversion options for Indigenous people facing incarceration.

Successes and Challenges

Due to COVID19 restrictions, many services and resources closed or considerably reduced their services which led to an increase in needs among those in homelessness situations.

All areas of the strategic plan have been advanced. Specifically, the two outlying areas (database development and transition/reintegration program) have both been significantly commenced and are underway.

A new database was launched in January 2021. All statistics have been updated in the database. However, our database continues to undergo development during the summer, 2021. This will significantly improve efficiency in reporting and forecasting service provision/requirements.

Finally, 2020-2021 was a year to update our governance documents, and as such, our Human Resource policies, Financial Policies and Governance Policies have all been developed and adopted by the Board of Directors.

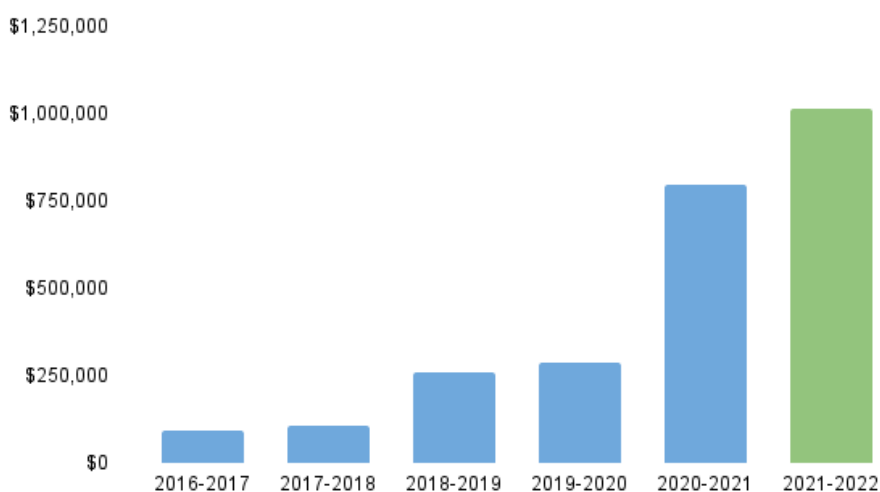
Financial Growth



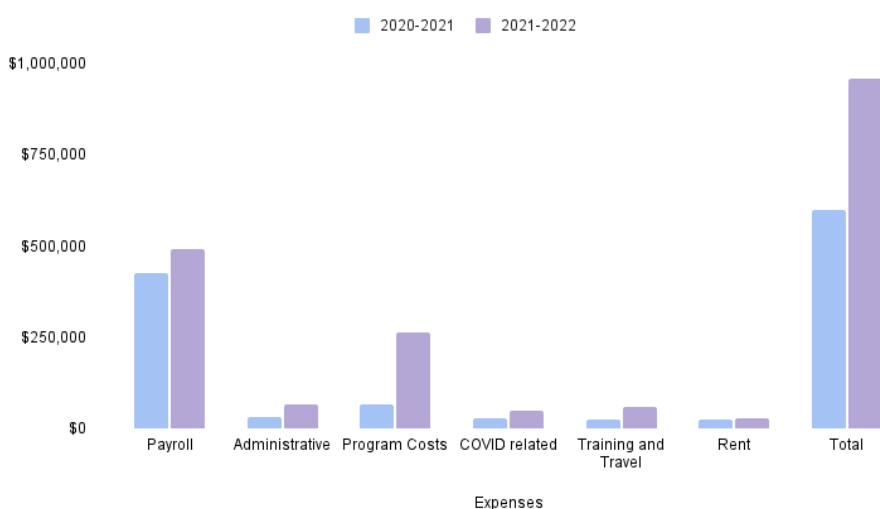
The FPJCM's finances have grown significantly in the last year. Our funders for 2021-2022 now include Justice Quebec, Justice Canada, Secrétariat aux Affaires Autochtones, Indigenous Services Canada, Makivik Corporation, Montreal Indigenous Community Network, City of Montreal, the McConnell Foundation and Heritage Canada. Many of these funders have been funding the FPJCM for many years or have renewed their funding agreements with us. We appreciate their continued support and look forward to continuing to develop our programming.

The FPJCM, as a registered Charity, is also receiving donations, through our partnership with CanadaHelps.org. We would like to extend our sincerest thanks to all those who have donated. We appreciate your ongoing support.

FPJCM Financial Growth Since 2016



2020-2021 Expenses and 2021-2022 Projected Expenses



Thank you to our 2020-2021 funders and to our individual donors who have generously supported us throughout the year.

Justice
Québec 

 **Indigenous Services** **Services aux**
Canada **Autochtones Canada**

Montréal 

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McConnell 