Strategic Plan | 2023 – 2026
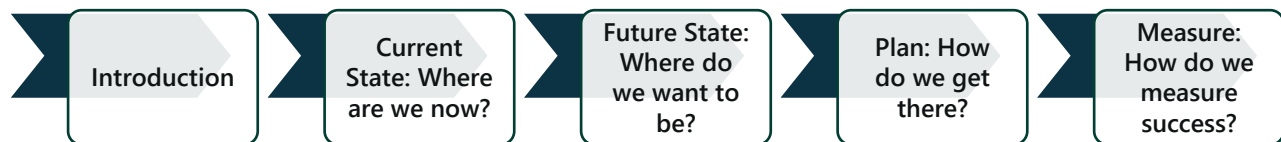
August 2023

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Gitga'at Nation Council (GNC) Strategic Plan, developed by the GNC, illustrates our path to supporting the GNC Departments and the Nation through economic prosperity, transparent governance, and community development. The development of our Strategic Plan will enhance annual workplan and budget development by GNC departments to support the strategic directions of the Nation though specific, planned, and orchestrated activities. The intent of this high-level Strategic Plan is to provide direction for all departments and initiatives of the Nation, such that activities are coordinated and consider financial, human, land, and other implications.

The roadmap outlined in our Strategic Plan has been set out with all Gitga'at members in mind. Our Strategic Plan tells a story of who we are, where we are today, how we plan to realize our goals in the future.

1.2. LAYOUT OF REPORT

This report is organized according to the following sections:

Introduction	Current State: Where are we now?	Future State: Where do we want to be?	Plan: How do we get there?	Measure: How do we measure success?

1.3. PROJECT METHODOLOGY

The development of the GNC Strategic Plan was supported through an engagement session in April 2023. The methodology to develop this Strategic Plan featured four phases as outlined below.

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
Initiate Project	**Engage & Discover**	**Document & Validate**	**Finalize Report**
• Conduct kickoff meeting to confirm objectives, define dates, and identify engagement methodology • Collect and review relevant background material • Develop final draft of strategic planning presentation	• Engage with Gitga'at members: ○ Membership Survey (Full survey analysis found in Appendix 2 of this report) • Facilitate Strategic Planning session with Gitga'at Council	• Capture outcomes of engagement sessions • Draft Strategic Plan • Communicate back to GNC	• Incorporate feedback and final comments from all stakeholders • Finalize the GNC Strategic Plan • Present to Chief and Council for approval

2. CURRENT STATE: WHERE ARE WE NOW?

2.1. BACKGROUND OF GITGA'AT FIRST NATION[1]

The Gitga'at First Nation is based in Txalgiuw (Hartley Bay) where the community has existed for millennia in the lands and waters of the area. Approximately 130 members currently live in Hartley Bay with other members residing in other BC cities such as Prince Rupert, Terrace, Vancouver Island, and Vancouver.

Gitk'a'ata Territory is the ceremonial and political foundation of the GFN. Historically, the Nation has had very close ties to the lands and waters of our territory. An example of this is seasonal food gathering where members who live elsewhere return home to join their family for harvest. Within our territory, several sites are spiritually enriched by the traces of ancestors. These locations include petroglyphs, burial sites, shell middens, culturally modified trees, and other important historical and/or archaeological sites. An important part of Gitga'at culture is connecting with our ancestors and cultural heritage, and these sites are one way to do that.

For governance and administration, the Nation has a fully elected band council, but the foundation of social and ceremonial power in the community is derived from customary structure. This is based around the Sm'ooygyet (Real Person) who represents three clans or crest groups: Gispudwada, (Blackfish or Killer Whale), Laxsgiik (Eagle), and Ganhada (Raven). Upholding traditional values is important, and the Nation does everything possible to protect and celebrate our culture.

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[1] Gitga'at First Nation Website. Our Community, Culture, Lands, Water, and Current Projects. https://www.gitgaatnation.ca/gfn. (Accessed May 2023).

2.2. STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS

Within the strategic planning approach undertaken, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SCOT) were identified for GNC's consideration.

Strengths	Challenges
Education, Training, & Employment • Employment opportunities for Members • Members in Nation leadership roles • Educated Nation • Eductaion – School, Committee Capacity Building • Ability to build from within Policies & Procedures • Fiscally responsible • Current policy and procedure compliance Unity • Stand together on big issues • Supportive in crisis • Awareness of who we are • Vision Language, Culture & Traditions • Strong relationship with the natural world • Language and culture • Concrete Hereditary Leadership • Matriarchs • Elders Territory • Large territory • Surviving from territory • GOLD – stewardship of Territory Economic Development • Demonstrated ability to align with key players • Gitga'at Development Corporation (GDC) Community Infrastructure Multi-tasking	Capacity Building • Small population capacity limits • Some employees stretched / one support for many Managers Mentorship • Mentoring skilled people in forestry etc. • Lack of mentorship or succession planning Communication • Lack of communication • Misinformation • Misunderstanding and miscommunication Employment & Accountability • Responsibility to employer and job • Accountable to work, life, actions People Dynamics • My way or the highway attitude • Disrespect & abuse • Lack of empathy • Judgement and jealousy • Change adverse Health & Wellness • Mental and emotional health • Dealing with the effects of Residential School System • Addiction Territory • Isolation • Vast territory • Reach – flow of information • Territorial challenges – neighbors • Overlap – territory • Traditional food security Funding Access • Inequitable federal funding Price Increases • Freight $ • Fuel $ Political Landscape • Turnover in ISC – lack of continuity Patriarchy Time Matriarchs not included in decision-making

Opportunities

Language, Culture & Traditions
- Cultural revitalization
- Culture informing child welfare
- Culture camps – youth and adults
- Branding culture – clothing, merch

Education, Training, & Employment
- Catered education
- Educate all age groups about the Territory
- Training for members

Health & Wellness
- Nation healing

Funding Access
- Grants

Territory & Resources
- Surf dam – demo for future resources (salmon)
- Rights and title
- Fisheries reconciliation
- Enhanced control over resources
- Pristine area – lands and sea
- Run of River Power
- Eco Tourism
- Granite
- Gold as in the substance
- Water – export rights
- Water license and bottling

Partnerships
- JV Partnerships PR and Kitimat
- Tsimshian leadership collaboration

Economic Development
- GDC
- Revenue projects where members get dividends
- Escort tug of big tankers

Community Infrastructure
- Food security, greenhouse
- Mini home community
- Improved power access – Terrace to Prince Rupert)
- Hydrogen

Youth

Reconciliation

Equality

Kyel "2.0"

3. FUTURE STATE: WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE?

3.1. GNC VISION

The Gitga'at First Nation is a responsible government that brings forward teachings from our past that instructs us to advance our language and protect the environment. Within the ancestral framework, and in partnership with our Hereditary system, Adaawx (def), Ayaawx (def), and Gugwilx'ya'ansk (def) we take a proactive role to improve the health and wellbeing of our members and those yet unborn. We live our culture.

3.2. GNC MISSION

The Mission of the Gitga'at First Nation is to promote, maintain, and protect our inherent and constitutional rights and title. This is accomplished by:

- Recognizing, honoring, and promoting Gitga'at culture systems, traditions, and practices.
- Providing services that are proactive and support healing and healthy Individuals and families through the promotion and practice of our language, culture, and identity.
- Developing and maintaining relationships that advance the Gitga'at worldview.
- Acknowledging and addressing current financial, administrative, capacity, and infrastructure challenges.

3.3. GNC VALUES

In pursuit of our Vision, we will conduct ourselves in a manner that is consistent with who we are as a people. We will act with respect, honour, and integrity embracing the following values. We will:

- Utilize collaboration as a vehicle for collective success, approaching others in a spirit of trust, mutual respect, and sharing.
- Be transparent in our work welcoming points of view that may differ from our own, understanding that our collective strength is directly tied to our diversity of opinion and background.
- Practice our culture, traditional knowledge, and teachings, paying respect to our Ancestors, each other, and to the land, water, air, and all it provides for our healing and sustainable use.
- Create the conditions for healing, dignity, and wellbeing, where our people, particularly our youth, can realize their full potential.
- Be innovative and creative as we find new ways and means to capitalize on the opportunities before us.

4. OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Below is a visual representation of Gitga'at nation Council's strategic directions that were discussed during the planning session.

INCREASE CONTROL OVER TERRITORIAL RESOURCES

- Elevate government to government (G2G) approach on territorial resource stewardship
- Enhance key regional / stakeholder relationships
- Prioritize increased ownership of industries (forestry 5-year plan); water license

FOCUS ON ORGANIZATIONAL TRAINING, MENTORSHIP & CAPACITY

- Identify and provide additional education, training and mentorship opportunities for GFN Leadership, Staff, and Membership
- Review organizational structure and establish a workforce strategy to manage staffing needs and employee succession (review and revise human resource function)
- Develop a community entrepreneur support program

INVEST IN COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

- Develop Land Use Plan and framework for land development
- Expand community lands
- Increase access to healthy, affordable, suitable housing for all members
- Commence planning process for the development of desired community projects
- Generate capital budget and explore funding avenues

MITIGATE & RESEARCH EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

- Continue to plan for future generations – review and document historical use of lands and resources
- Plan for adverse climate impacts (e.g., flood mitigation strategies)

PROMOTE LANGAUGE & CULTURAL REVITALIZATION

- Explore options to continue to advance, protect, and promote language and cultural knowledge
- Facilitate the generational knowledge transfer – traditional harvesting
- Generate a traditional knowledge database

CONTINUE TO ENHANCE MEMBERSHIP SUPPORTS

- Develop a Strategic Communications Plan – increase community engagement, foster a safe and open environment for all
- Generate targeted investments and supports for community Youth and Elders

FOSTER HEALTH & WELLNESS

- Continue to provide a high quality, culturally relevant, trauma-informed approach to providing health services
- Develop a sustainable and collaborative food security strategy
- Focus on the prevention and treatment of substance misuse

5. IMPLEMENTATION WORKPLAN

The Strategic Directions above inform the development of individual Gitga'at Nation Department workplans as captured in the below graphic (and attached as Appendix 1 of this document). Gitga'at Department Leaders are encouraged to use this approach and template to draft objectives, key activities, budget, responsibilities, timelines, success indicators, and potential risk considerations that support the achievement of each of the Nation's Strategic Directions.

In summary Department Leaders take a two-part approach:

1. Review Gitga'at Strategic Directions

2. Generate Workplan (See example below)

STRATEGIC DIRECTION: INVEST IN COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE (EXAMPLE)

Operational Objective #1: Increase access to healthy, affordable, suitable housing for all members					
Key Activities	**Budget**	**Responsibility**	**Timeline**	**Success Indicators**	**Potential Risks**
Step 1	$	Lead: Support / Input:	o		o
Step 2	$	Lead: Support / Input:	o	o	o
Step 3	$	Lead: Support / Input:	o	o	o

Frame out objectives specific to the Department that support the overall Nation Strategic Directions	Develop support steps, timelines, etc. to support implementation

For example: A Strategic Direction of the Nation is *"Invest in Community Infrastructure"*, as shown in Section 4.

- An Objective within this Strategic Direction is "*Enhance access to adequate housing for membership"*, which could include Key Activities such as: *Develop Housing Plan consisting of: a) Plan for members to finance and construct homes, b) Lots for new homes to be developed, c) Confirmed servicing requirements, d) Plan for construction (designs, budget, quotes, PM, required financing), Apply for funding to ISC Housing Support Program (HSP)*, with a Timeline of "*By September 2023*", with a proposed Budget of "*$25,000*", a proposed Responsibility of "*Housing Manager, Nation Administrator*". Success Indicators such as "*Developed plan, Submitted application to ISC HSP program, Approved proposals, Constructed Homes".* Potential Risks: "*Absence of new community homes / missed projects to benefit community – overcrowding, inability for off-reserve members to return home".*

Gitga'at Department Leaders are responsible for creating workplans that support the Nation's Strategic Directions as identified In Section 4.

6. MEASURE: HOW DO WE MEASURE SUCCESS?

Gitga'at Department Leaders monitors the progress every month and conducts a more detailed review with the GNC every quarter (and on an annual basis to ensure that progress is on track).

To do this, the following questions will be asked:

- o What objectives have been completed?

- o What objectives have not been completed, and why?

- o What needs to change to complete the objectives? Or do the objectives need to change?

Strategic Plan
2023 - 2026

APPENDIX 1 – DEPARTMENT WORK PLAN TEMPLATE

1. STRATEGIC DIRECTION:

Operational Objective #1:					
Key Activities	**Budget**	**Responsibility**	**Timeline**	**Success Indicators**	**Potential Risks**
Step 1	$	*Lead:* *Support / Input:*	○	○	○
Step 2	$	*Lead:* *Support / Input:*	○	○	○
Step 3	$	*Lead:* *Support / Input:*	○	○	○

APPENDIX 2 – MEMBERSHIP SURVEY OUTCOMES

Membership Survey

To obtain broad feedback on this plan, Gitga'at Members were issued an 11-question survey in March / April 2023 prior to the interactive planning session with Gitga'at Nation Council (GNC). The survey included the following elements:

- Gitga'at Members beliefs related to high-level visions, values, and goals for the Nation
- Gitga'at Members (on and off-reserve) community services and programming knowledge, expectations, and interests
- Areas that GNC can better support Gitga'at Members

A total of 69 Gitga'at Members participated in the survey.[2] The largest age demographic represented is 40 – 55 years old followed by those 55 years and older. Over half of respondents reside in Hartley Bay, with responses coming from other members living in Terrace, Saskatchewan, Vancouver, West Vancouver, Burnaby, Surrey, and Mission.

Survey Objectives

Ensuring Gitga'at Members have an opportunity to provide input on the strategic planning process

Understanding Gitga'at Members beliefs related to high-level visions, values, and goals for the Nation

Providing a summary of Gitga'at Members service and programming interests and areas that Gitga'at Nation Council can better support Gitga'at members

The following highlights selected components of Gitga'at Membership feedback from the survey.
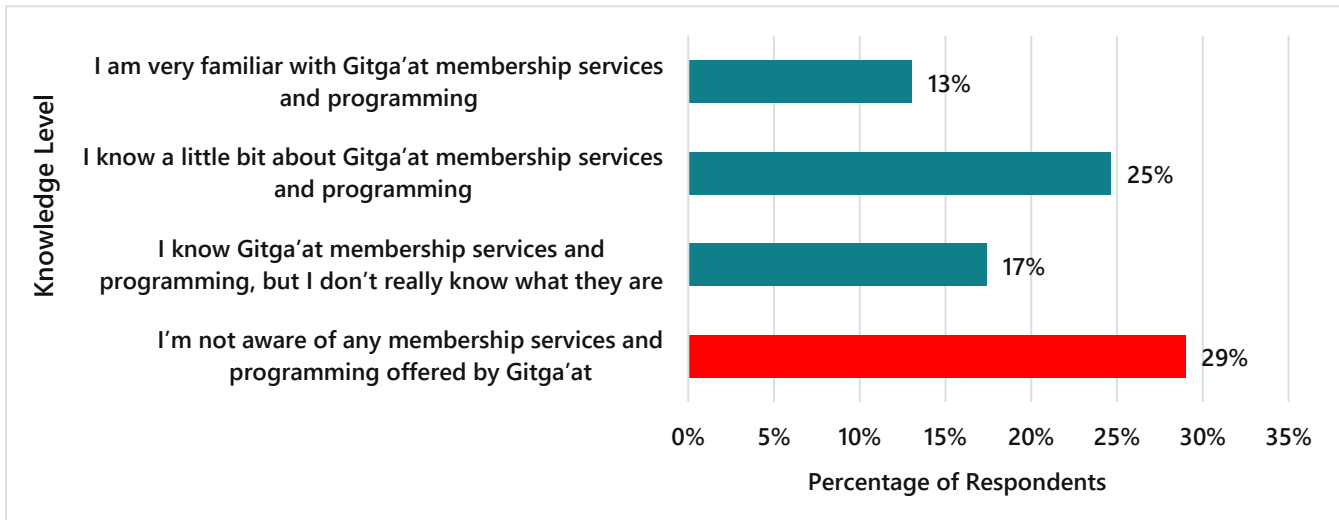
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[2] 69 responded. 54 fully complete. 15 in progress.

Community Services & Programming | Knowledge

Gitga'at members have some familiarity of Nation programs and services, but 60 percent of respondents are either not aware of programs or do not know what they are (as shown in Figure 1 below).

Figure 1: Knowledge of Gitga'at Membership Services & Programming

Community Services & Programming | Service Expectation

With regards to service expectation, Gitga'at Members were asked to rate how strongly they agree with the following statement: "*I receive the service I expect from the following Gitga'at Departments / focuses*".

Top rated Gitga'at Departments / Focuses = Combined "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" responses:

1. Education Skills & Training
2. Administration
3. Emergency Response & Management
4. Health

Figure 2 below outlines the top performing Gitga'at Departments / Focuses in terms of service expectation for all departments within the survey.

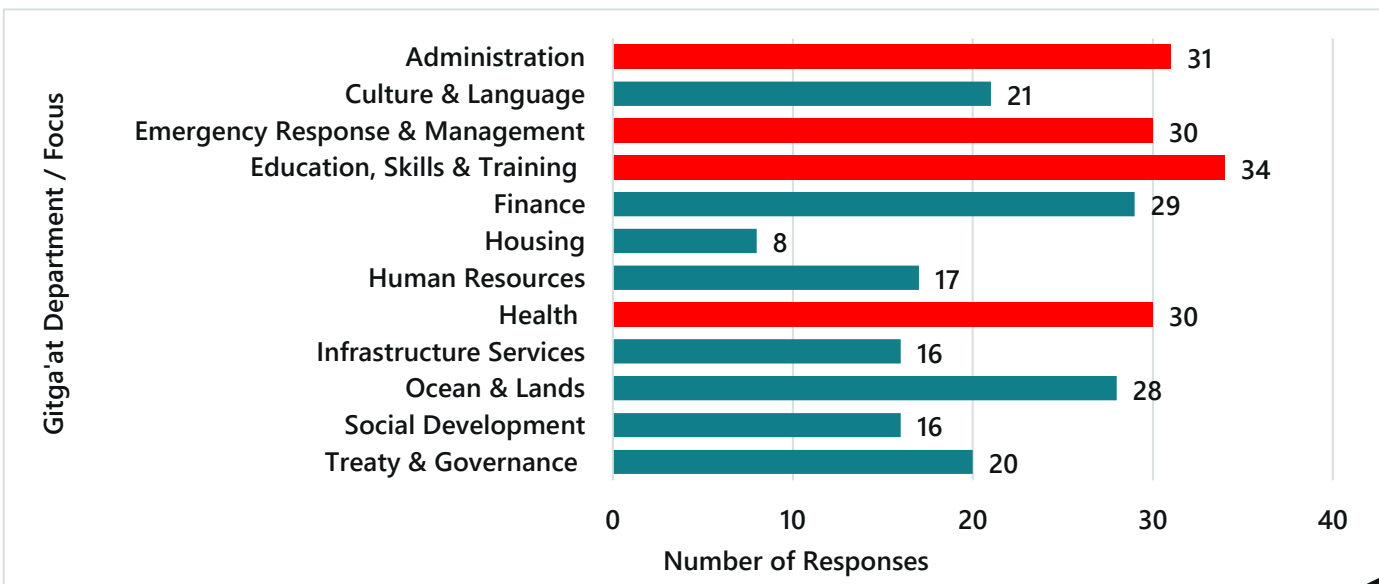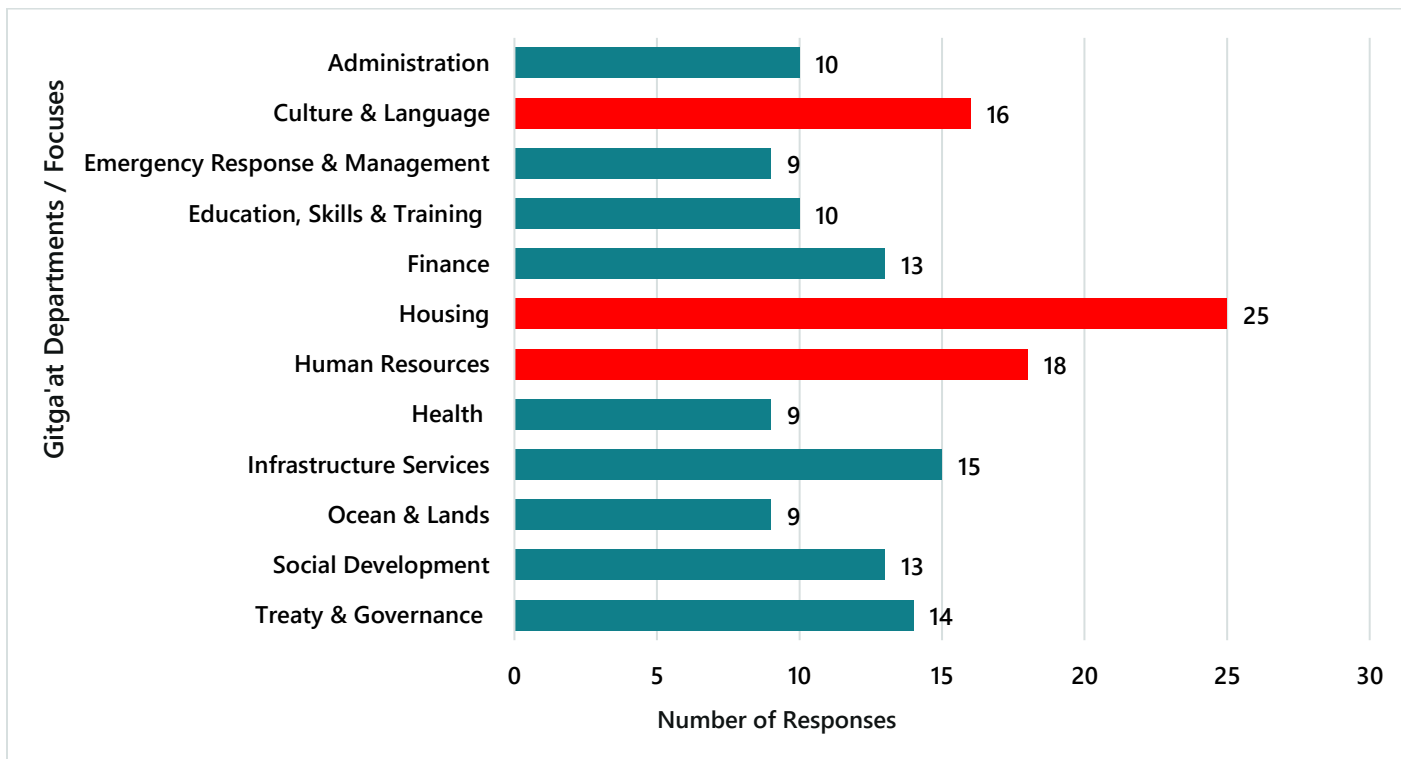**Figure 2: Top Rated Gitga'at Departments / Focuses**

Figure 3 below outlines the lower rated Gitga'at Departments / Focuses (Combined "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree") in terms of service expectations were:

1. Housing
2. Human Resources
3. Culture & Language

Figure 3: Lower Rated Gitga'at Departments / Focuses

Community Services & Programming | Order of Importance

Q: Please rank the following Gitga'at Departments / focuses in order of importance to you:

Higher Importance ⭐

1. Health
2. Housing
3. Eductaion Skills & Training
4.

Lower Importance

1. Social Development
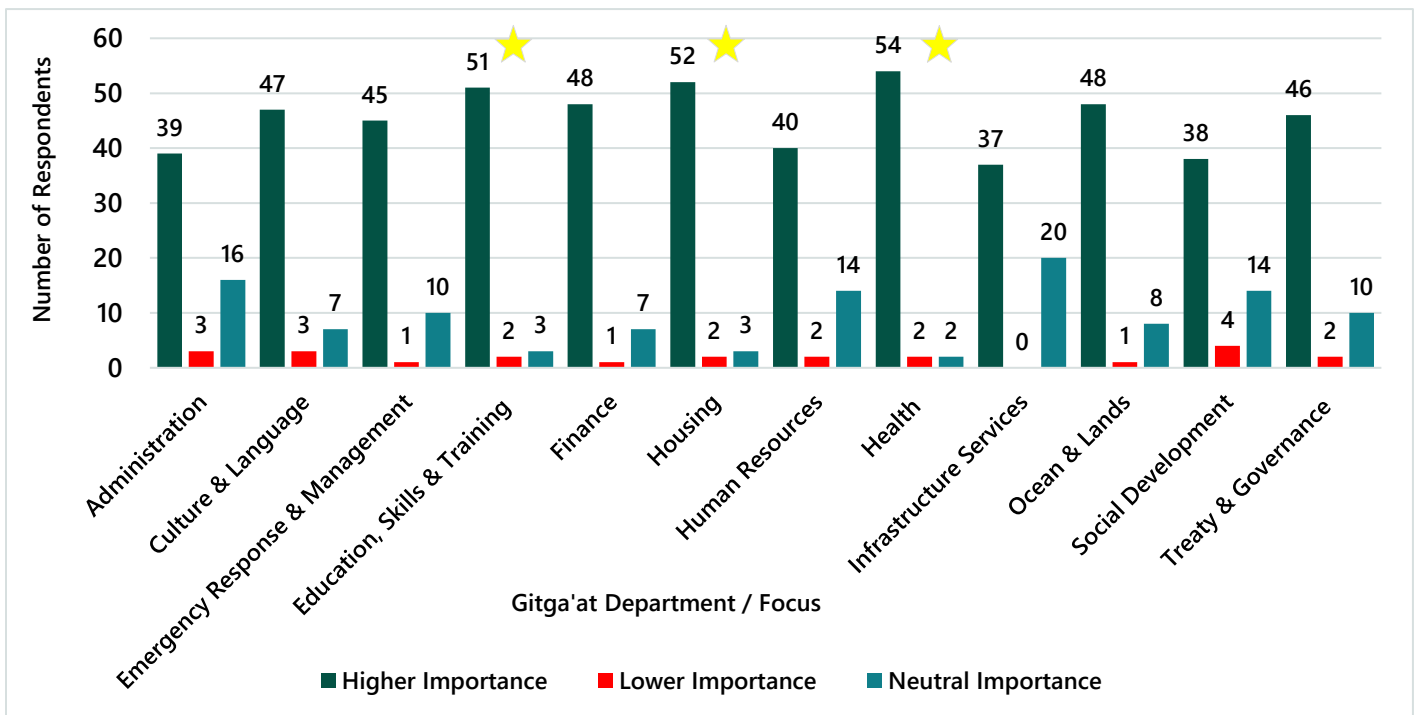2. Administration
3. Culture & Language

Neutral Importance

1. Infrastructure Services
2. Administration
3. Human Resources
4. Social Development

See

Figure *4* below for the overall Gitga'at Departments / focuses importance ranking.

Figure 4: Gitga'at Department / Focus Importance Rating

Community Services & Programming | Additional Programs & Services

Following the ranking exercise, was an open text response opportunity for members to expand on their previous selections and discuss whether there are additional programs / services they would like to see offered in the community – and if yes, what programs / services?

Q: Are there additional programs / services you would like to see offered in the community in the future?

Over 50% of respondents indicated that there are additional programs / services that they would like to see offered within the community. Additional programs and services indicated by survey respondents include:

Community Services & Programming | Off-Reserve Membership

As the needs and desires of membership off-reserve are likely to differ from those members who reside on-reserve, a series of questions were generated to ensure the voices and perspectives of off-reserve members were meaningfully incorporated. Off-reserve members were asked the following, with results shown in Figure 5 below.

Q: In your personal experience, which Departments or programs are best meeting your needs as a Gitga'at member living off-reserve? Select all that apply:

Top Rated

1. Education Skills & Training
2. Administration
3. Ocean & Lands

Lower Rated

1. Social Development
2. Infrastructure Services
3. Human Resources

Figure 5: Off-Reserve Department Satisfaction
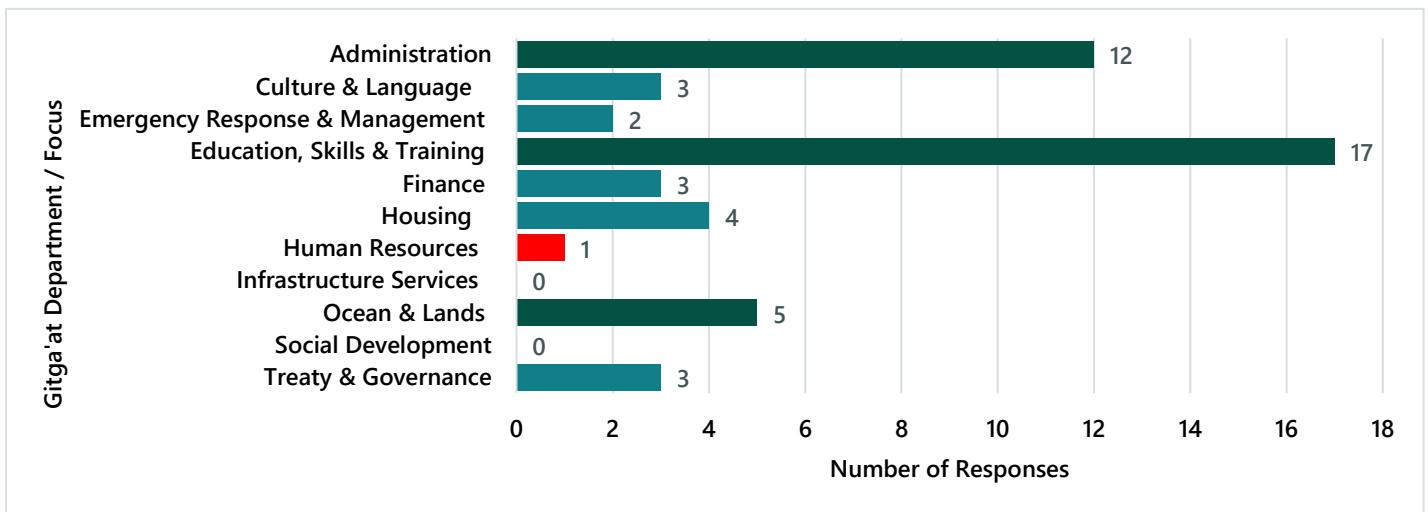
Q: you have any comments, questions, or concerns regarding how Gitga'at Departments or programs are meeting your personal needs as a member who lives off-reserve?

Greater Nation Department Transparency

Enhanced Communication with Off Reserve Membership

Regular Updates to Off Reserve Membership – Monthly or Quarterly

Equality in Service Provision – On and Off Reserve

Enhanced Cultural

Gratitude For

Greater Elder

Opportunities to Support Off

Community Today | All Respondents

Finally, all survey respondents were asked concluding overall visioning questions related to A) Community Today, B) Community Future. See the reflections and insights provided by membership below.

Q: What are some things you would like to see for your children and grandchildren that do not exist in the community today?

Increased Housing Availability & Home Ownership

Increased Business Activity and Sustainable Employment

Greater Overall Programming for Youth

A Program for Nation Girls and Boys – Culturally Relevant Boy Scouts & Girl Guides

After School Activities for Community Youth

Enhanced Community Infrastructure, Landscaping

Enhanced Cultural Programming

Organized Youth Visits to Academic Institutions

Supporting Infrastructure

More Community Events / Gatherings and Field Trips

Greater Investment in Youth Mentorship

Off Reserve Youth Engagement / Involvement in Cultural Activities

Community Future | All Respondents

- Membership Fully Engaged in Culture & Traditions
- A Unified & Highly Educated Nation Leadership
- Inclusiveness for All Members Near and Far
- A Membership with a Strong Foundation of Pride
- All Youth Graduating High School and Completing
  - Further Education
- Greater Engagement – Increased Voter Turnout
- Membership in all Significant Gitga'at Positions &
  - Departments
- Meaningful Employment for all Members
- Land & Water Security

- Peace Between All Members Through Healing Wounds of the Past
- Self Reliant Community that is Economically Independent
- Increased Availability of Community Homes
- Greater Equality in Service Provision Between On and Off Reserve Members
- Spaces for Elders to Age In-Place Comfortably
- Healthy Community – In Mind, Body, and Spirit