OUR VISION:
We are living Mino Biimadziwin — The Good Life.
We honour the spirit of our ancestors and seek their wisdom to guide our Peoples back to balance and wellness.
We are happy, healthy, respected and self-determining.

OUR MANDATE:
We provide culturally safe programs and services that focus on wholeness and wellness and that build on the strength and resilience of Indigenous Peoples.

OUR VALUES & BELIEFS:
Indigenous Traditional Knowledge… is enshrined into the Heart of our Organizations’ practice.
The laws of our Creator and the knowledge of the Ancestors… is incorporated into the work that we do.
We honour our responsibility to the children… those who are here now, and those still waiting to come — Seven Generations from now.
We understand that our attitudes, actions, behaviours and practice constitute the “sum of the whole” and that these reflect greatly on the reputation of Ka Ni Kanichihk.

AT KA NI KANICHIHK, WE:
• Walk our talk
• Share the strength, health and wellness of Indigenous Peoples
• Provide welcoming and culturally safe spaces
• Walk in balance, with strength, values and Indigenous Knowledge
• Value reciprocity, belonging, mastery and generosity
• Believe in independence and interdependence with all our relations
• Deliver high-quality and culturally-informed programs in partnership with our community
• Develop resilient and authentic leadership
“Building our future together.” These impactful words have thoughtfully guided us past our 14th milestone year into new horizons. Recognizing that no one person or organization can do important and meaningful work alone, we look forward to continued, shared successes in the years to come — this, alongside those with whom we so closely work.

Looking back, this past year has been filled with much planning and preparation for the growth and change strategy that lies ahead. There have been many accomplishments, as well as key learnings. It’s with this stronger foundation and knowledge that we move forward.

In a time of growth and change, we planned for the next milestones through a five-year strategic plan. In doing so, we looked to the community, stakeholders and our partners as we shaped our future.

The term “building” is defined on many levels at Ka Ni Kanichihk. Our physical space and location; our programs; our capacity; our staff and Council; and our community are all inclusive within the vision we see. This is reflective in our broader plans.

Honouring our gifts and reclaiming our culture are implicit in the work we do and the way we do it. This is central to our vision and how we move forward together. Our journey is always mindful of this goal. We look forward to sharing our vision for the future and building our future together.

On behalf of Ka Ni Kanichihk’s Council, we are thankful for the community we serve, our stakeholders and funding partners, our dedicated staff and, most importantly, the families who participate in our programs and services.

Miigwetch, Ekosi, Merci,

Makade Migizi Ikwe
Sharon Parenteau, Co-Chair

Bezhig Binese Ikwe
Kimberley Puhach, Co-Chair

PHOTO: Ka Ni Kanichihk Council Co-Chairpersons Kimberly Puhach (left) and Sharon Parenteau (right) present KFB 2016 Grandmother inductee Sarah Barbara Yellowback (centre) with Starblanket. 15th Annual Keeping the Fires Burning (June 16, 2016).
EXECUTIVE & ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS’ REPORT

Boozhoo, Tansi, Relatives!

With a funding commitment from the Province of Manitoba’s Early Learning and Child Care Program, Ka Ni Kanichihk’s vision to both expand its current day care capacity and establish an Indigenous Early Learning Centre is closer to becoming a reality. Ka Ni Kanichihk’s Capital Expansion Committee has been meeting regularly for several months to design and launch its expansion project that will also add an additional 16,404 square feet to its current footprint — this, while increasing the number of child care spaces to 48. Our expansion project will also include a dedicated cultural space, a commercial kitchen and additional training and office space.

Ka Ni Kanichihk moved into its present building in 2006 and, since then, the number of our services has grown by 70% — far surpassing our building’s current physical capacity. This vision aligns with Ka Ni Kanichihk’s strategic direction and public policy, including the Environics Institute’s “Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study,” which noted: “Canadian cities are becoming sites of connection, engagement and cultural vitality for large numbers of Aboriginal people. Education, good jobs and careers is their [Indigenous people surveyed] top priority, and an enduring aspiration for the next generation, and at the same time, expressed hope that younger members maintain connections to their cultural communities and experience life without racism. Indigenous people said that it is very important for them to have Indigenous led services.”

The expansion project will support Ka Ni Kanichihk’s new and visionary strategic direction — Building Our Future Together — and fulfills its commitment to offer effective and culturally safe services to community members.

Significant resources have been dedicated to create the Building Our Future Together — Mino Biimadziwiiwin — Strategic Plan (2016 – 2021): a yearlong effort that was inclusive, involving all staff, Council and a broad range of community stakeholders, including current and former participants, community leaders, organizations and funders. A consultant conducted and analyzed feedback from interviews, focus groups and surveys to identify strategic goals and objectives. Staff also completed comprehensive program reviews to identify gaps and to make improvements; designed and implemented a dynamic mentorship model and training for all program staff; and implemented pre-and-post program surveys to measure program outcomes.

Affirming the importance of ongoing support and supervision in achieving intended outcomes, Ka Ni Kanichihk redoubled its efforts to ensure that program supervisors were equipped with professional development and learning opportunities — including core supervisory training. Program supervisors were also provided with regular support meetings, biweekly supervision, program managers meetings and team-building activities. An “Employee Handbook,” outlining Ka Ni Kanichihk’s procedures and operations to assist staff’s understanding, was also completed.

Ka Ni Kanichihk’s priority of embedding cultural safety and reclamation in each program workplan ensured that participants, from infants to Elders, were able to learn and celebrate their full, cultural inheritance: laws and language; songs and ceremonies; relationships with each other; and mindfulness that each individual must be respected in their re-learning process.

We have been fortunate to have had another great year full of success and achievement. We know that success is the result of a dynamic and skilled team of committed individuals: program staff, community partners, program participants and our Council members — all of whom share a common vision of Building Our Future Together. Indeed, we are grateful for each and every contribution to Mino Biimadziwiiwin.

Miigwetch, Ekosani,

Leslie Spillett, Executive Director

Yvonne Jordaan, Associate Director

PHOTO: Architect’s rendering of Ka Ni Kanichihk’s Building Expansion proposal.
A 14-day student exchange with the St. John’s Native Friendship Centre was the very first time that many of the 10 Restoring the Sacred youth had visited another Canadian province. During time spent together in Newfoundland and in Winnipeg, youth had the opportunity to build relationships by sharing cultures and experiences. Another first, for many of the 34 youth participants, included a couple of 2-10 week intensive courses — one, in Broadcasting and Communication, and the other in Indigenous Cuisine, which both built essential skills, cultural knowledge and career connections. Youth worked alongside communication industry representatives, journalists, producers and videographers to produce four videos that depicted life events and issues important to youth. These opportunities — alongside over 580 after-school hours spent learning, sharing, growing and healing — supported 20 rural and northern youth who relocated from their rural and northern communities to attend high school in Winnipeg. Through peer mentorship and workshops ranging from awareness on sexual exploitation, gangs, drugs, various social and recreational activities and access to ceremonies, 18 youth successfully completed their academic year, with two program participants graduating and moving on to post-secondary education studies.
MYTEAM (MANITOBA YOUTH TRANSITION,EMPLOYMENT AND MENTORSHIP)

Karen Markham, Program Coordinator
Isca Spillett, Mentor
Clandelle Johnston, Mentor
Craig Beaulieu, Mentor

“MYTEAM has been a huge support system for me. It’s the first program that benefited me spiritually, emotionally and physically. If it weren’t for MYTEAM, I wouldn’t be the person I am today. They helped me achieve my goals but, more importantly, they helped me find myself. Because of MYTEAM, I am in school, have my own apartment and have a part-time job. I also attended my first sweat lodge ceremony and received my spirit name as a participant of MYTEAM. Thank you, MYTEAM!” — MYTEAM Participant

The words of a MYTEAM (Manitoba Youth Transitional Employment and Mentorship) youth best reflect the importance of this intensive, two-year youth mentorship program that has, since 2012, supported 58 youth to transition out of child welfare and into independent living. In addition to individual mentorship, MYTEAM brings participants together each week to engage in learning opportunities that build independence as well as cultural and recreational activities — all designed to meet aspects of the program’s “pillars”: housing, education, employment, training and self-development. This year, 21 participants are engaged in education or employment, 11 have graduated with a high school diploma, 23 have accessed housing, and seven have enrolled in post-secondary education.

KISTESIMAW: “OUR ELDEST BROTHER”

Cathy Menard, Program Coordinator
Patrick Thomas, Youth Mentor
Blake Shingoose, Youth Mentor

Kistesimaw provided individual and group mentorship to 12 boys (under age 12) and their families — involving them in weekly recreation, skills-building and cultural activities all focused on increasing self-awareness, building belonging, mastery, independence and generosity: all essential components of Dr. Martin Brokenleg’s “Reclaiming Youth at Risk” model. Kistesimaw works in partnership with Manitoba Justice’s Turnabout program to ensure that youth have positive, culturally safe after-school activities and connections to healthy, Indigenous male role models.

“A lot has come out of it, especially respect. He talks with me now rather than yelling.” — Kistesimaw parent
**OSHKABAYWIS: “MY HELPER”**

Cathy Menard, Program Coordinator  
Nicole Martel, Mentor  
Charity Seymour, Mentor

A partnership with Manitoba Justice, Community and Youth Corrections, Oshkabaywis ("My Helper") continues to reduce gang involvement and violent offences among female Indigenous youth through positive mentorship relationships, cultural reclamation and connecting to community resources. “Life is the classroom to learn how to negotiate life's struggles in a good way,” Oshkabaywis supported 16 participants and made 9,135 contacts in the areas of life skills, community resources, cultural connectivity, support and advocacy.

“I felt great about having a mentor because I wasn't on the right path and my mentor helped me to that direction. I learned I could do things I couldn't do before like attending programs. I am more independent.” — Oshkabaywis participant.

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**THE BUTTERFLY CLUB**

Jenna Vandal, Program Coordinator  
Justice Stevens-Illsley, Facilitator

Like the metamorphosis of a butterfly, 35 Indigenous girls, between the ages of 9 and 13, came together. Over 30 weeks, they engaged in a process of self-discovery, personal empowerment and cultural reclamation that has been transformational. Girls emerged from shyness and found their voices through song and ceremony. They discovered a safe space in which they could explore themselves and their relationships and, in the process, built positive self-esteem and identity; leadership and empowerment; and affirmed friendships. Girls' power was celebrated in each weekly activity, including self-defense and wilderness survival training, drum and moccasin making and sweat lodge and pipe ceremonies.

“The girls already have the ability and power within them to be change makers, leaders and to make a better future for themselves and their families. The Butterfly Club just hopes to ignite their curiosity and determination.” — Justice Stevens-Illsley, Butterfly Club Facilitator
Honouring Gifts is a 40 week/full-time career exploration program that celebrates the strength and courage of young Indigenous women — all of whom are sole parents — and which provides a structured, culturally-based curriculum that nurtures their spirit and assists them to identify their skills, natural abilities and to explore and to set education and attain career goals. Program staff and cultural knowledge-holders provide consistent mentorship, counselling, support and advocacy focusing on eliminating individual and institutional barriers. Program outcomes for the 18 mothers were excellent, with an 82% completion rate. Nine students (50%) are now enrolled in post-secondary institutions, including the University of Winnipeg, Red River and Yellowquill Colleges, while seven have secured employment.

We are teaching and learning...

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

INFORMATION AND OFFICE ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANT PROGRAM (IOAA)

Dana Connolly, Program Coordinator
Dianne Baron, Life Skills and Employment Development Counselor
Frederick Edwards, Computer Instructor
Doris Der, Business Instructor

“Today was a bitter sweet day, although I accomplished a year and a bit of school and programming at Ka Ni Kanichihk, I will miss this truly special and empowering place. I have done so much healing, learning and growing; mentally, spiritually and as a parent. I can honestly ponder the question, “Where would I be now if I did not come to Ka Ni Kanichihk?” I will always remember the first time I stepped foot in the building and was immediately greeted by the smell of sage and cedar burning. I knew I had just entered a safe place, a different and sacred place. As I welcome the challenge of year 2 of school starting in the fall at Red River, I will miss Ka Ni and all the amazing staff and instructors. This place will forever hold a special place in my heart and I will do whatever it takes in my journey to continue to support this place. Thank you for having me.” — IOAA Student Facebook post.

This student was among 19 women who completed Ka Ni Kanichihk’s Information and Office Administration (IOAA) program, while 17 are currently enrolled in Red River College’s Computer Applications for Business program. The 86% graduation rate reflects the strength and determination of the women who were enrolled, alongside the dedication of staff who provide a safe space, high quality instruction, encouragement and support. Nine women (47%) were offered summer employment at the end of the 8-week work practicum and are now employed in various workplaces, including Assiniboine Credit Union, City of Winnipeg, McDonald Youth Services and Eagle Urban Transition Centre.

“Yesterday, I had a conversation with the project officer with Employment Manitoba, who funds a large number of students in the IOAA program. She called to commend Ka Ni Kanichihk for having such successful outcomes. She also mentioned that she has 10-15 projects under her portfolio at any given time and has never seen a program as successful as IOAA in terms of retention, attendance and academic achievement. She strongly believes that the student’s success is directly related to community-based programming and the additional supports and services Ka Ni Kanichihk offers.” — Dana Connolly, Program Coordinator.
SISTERS OF FIRE (FORMERLY ABORIGINAL WOMEN RESPONDING TO THE AIDS CRISIS)

Laverne Gervais, Program Coordinator
Kim Melnyk, Facilitator

“Sisters of Fire” (formerly Aboriginal Women Responding to the AIDS Crisis) supports Indigenous women living with HIV. Sisters of Fire (a name given to women in ceremony) inspires something unique in each of the 18 Indigenous women who are involved. For some, the name speaks to the strength, resilience and power of Indigenous women. For others, it inspires women who live with HIV to take responsibility, to be the leaders and educators on HIV prevention, health services, research and education. And for all of the women involved, Sisters of Fire is a safe place to come together to share, plan, give and receive support and healing through ceremony and action. Sisters of Fire collaborated with community individuals and organizations to plan and host the 2016 Peer Forum, the World AIDS Day and Heart Medicine Women’s Gathering that, combined, reached over 250 Indigenous women and men living with, or affected by, HIV in Manitoba. Through partnerships with the Canadian Association of HIV Research (CAHR), HIV is Not a Crime Training Academy and the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, Sisters of Fire has informed and connected with 100s of policy influencers and researchers throughout Canada and internationally.

“By using our voices and our stories we empower and educate each other and de-stigmatize HIV.” — Sisters of Fire participant.

COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT SERVICES

HEART MEDICINE HEALING LODGE

Rachel Bach, Program Coordinator
Geraldine (Gramma) Shingoose, Elder

Ka Ni Kanichihk is fully committed to ending violence against Indigenous women and girls in all its forms. In January 2016, Ka Ni Kanichihk hosted Ending Violence Against Women Core Training in Winnipeg for individuals and organizations to learn about gender-based violence, structural oppression, colonialism and the importance of culturally-based services for victims and survivors of sexual violence. The 23 participants in this five-day conference reported the training to be a transformative experience and essential to their ability to do work in this area and be effective agents of social change.

In April 2016, Ka Ni Kanichihk hosted its 3rd annual Heart Medicine: Decolonizing Love & Sex event. The event brought together 100 Indigenous women of all ages for healing, ceremony, learning and dialogue. Keynote speaker, Kristen Lindquist, spoke about Indigenous love praxis and imagining and embodying resurgent love, intimacy and connection with all our relations. The day included a series of fun and interactive workshops focused on self-care, traditional knowledge and knowledge sharing. Participants reported wanting more — more activities, more information and more events — demonstrating the need to continue this work and efforts to decolonize and Indigenize work which seeks to end violence.

As a continuation of the partnership with the UN Initiative: Winnipeg Safe City, Ka Ni Kanichihk successfully developed and launched the first culturally-based and Indigenous-led program in Canada for women who have experienced sexual violence. The Heart Medicine Lodge program piloted its new curriculum with a small group of women over 12 weeks. The program embeds Indigenous teachings and ceremonies; each participant was provided the opportunity to experience a cedar bath ceremony, pipe ceremony, sweat lodge and full moon ceremony as part of their healing journey. By the end of the 12 weeks, participants reported feeling connected to each other and to Ka Ni Kanichihk and that they felt strengthened through their participation in the program.

“Now I know how strong I am.” — Heart Medicine Lodge participant.
Incorporating both Traditional Indigenous ways of healing and Western modalities, Medicine Bear Counselling, Support and Elder Services provides opportunities for 87 individuals from 30 MMIWG families to heal from complex trauma and grief within a culturally safe and supportive environment. Medicine Bear also hosted a gathering with 23 MMIWG family members from 8 rural and northern families in The Pas, Manitoba. At this gathering, Medicine Bear sought to create a space of sharing, connection, healing and understanding through teachings and ceremony. In preparation for the National MMIWG Inquiry, Medicine Bear provided supports throughout the two day MMIWG pre-Inquiry, the 6th Annual Wiping Away the Tears Family Gathering and the Justice Practitioners’ Summit on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Medicine Bear worked hard to incorporate access to Elders, ceremonies and connections to other MMIWG families on a regular basis through various programming activities, including cedar baths, full moon ceremonies, sharing circles and group sessions. Within the last year, Medicine Bear held 37 group sessions with an average of 14 participants in attendance, while participants also accessed 80 hours of one-on-one time with Elders.

“Medicine Bear has become a very important part of my life and healing. The supports and cultural teachings are always available. Staff is extraordinary and is always there for me during the ups-and-downs of grieving and its challenge. The Traditional teachings and ceremonies have helped me find my way back to my culture. I am in my second year as a Sundancer and will be doing my third year next June. I have also gently reintroduced my family back into our culture by attending Traditional ceremonies. Also important is the weekly beading/sharing circles where we come together to bead, feast and bond. There, I am able to find some peace, as we are all going through the same pain and trauma. It’s a time when we can just forget the sadness and be there for each other and especially laugh together. Laughter is our healing medicine. The love and support Medicine Bear gives me truly has helped me in many ways. It is a place where I can release my pain and find laughter. It’s a perfect balance.” — Medicine Bear participant.
Ka Ni Kanichihk’s Medicine Children’s Lodge provides culturally safe child care for 16 infants and preschool children whose mothers are participants in IOAA and Honouring Gifts programs. Women are able to check on or nurse their children during the day. In the evening and on weekends, the day care becomes a child minding space for MYTEAM, Medicine Bear Counselling and Heart Medicine parents who are attending evening programs.

Over the past year, both staff and the children have spent time learning about culture from Traditional knowledge keepers. As part of their regular day, children and staff smudge together, sing songs and drum.

“We were on the bus one day and my child was belting out the bear song. A woman sitting close to us thanked him for the song and said his singing made her smile.” — Parent.

“When my child started kindergarten, they brought out North American Animals and, one by one, my child was able to share the Anishinaabe teachings for each animal doodem. When the teachers asked where she had learned this, she said, “From their aunties at daycare.”” — Parent.
Over 600 people attended the 15th Annual Keeping the Fires Burning event on June 16, 2016 to celebrate and honour our Elders for their contributions in preserving, protecting and promoting Indigenous Traditional Knowledge and Practice. Honoured Elders, selected by various First Nations and Metis organizations, included: Senator Murray Sinclair, Sarah Barbara Yellowback, Laverne Contois, Nelson Bunn, Norman Meade, George McKay and Denise Thomas.

A $2,500 scholarship, named for Oscar Lathlin — a respected political leader from the Opaskwayak Cree Nation — was awarded to Cheryl James and Kevin Settee, who were selected for their leadership and commitment to cultural continuity and community wellness.

Keeping the Fires Burning is the largest, Indigenous cultural celebration of its kind in Manitoba. It is reconciliation in action.
The Building Aboriginal Cooperative Capacity project, a first of its kind project hosted by Ka Ni Kanichihk Inc., was launched in 2014 and intended to animate a discussion with Winnipeg’s Indigenous community about the potential of co-ops as a viable economic option. Funded by Neighbourhoods Alive!, with additional funding secured in 2015 from the Winnipeg Foundation and Cooperatives and Mutuals Canada, the project focused on gathering information, building relationships and creating opportunities to learn more about the cooperative movement, gauge interest and opportunities and determine leveraging potential within the already active and robust Manitoba cooperative sector. Over 100 Indigenous leaders, community organizations and community members were involved in the development of the strategic plan that will also inform the broader provincial cooperative strategy.

As a result of the community consultations, networking with stakeholders and other key activities, significant learnings and outcomes have been achieved. Some of these key outcomes include:

- The development of a strategic plan for the urban Indigenous community on Cooperative Development;
- The creation of a Resource Guide on Indigenous Cooperative Development that is available as a handbook and electronically on our website;
- Indigenous community, organizations and people see the value and benefit of further exploring cooperatives as a social and economic pursuit;
- Networking and relationship-development within the robust Cooperative sector of Manitoba, which includes participation on the Provincial Strategy working groups;
- Implementation of an Advisory Committee made up of committed individuals from the community;
- Establishing priorities based on community-identified need in the areas of Housing, Culture and Professional Services as cooperative business ideas; and
- An understanding of the importance of continuing the work by implementing Phase 2 of this project that would support an Indigenous Cooperative Developer.
It was a difficult decision to let go of Ka Ni Kanichihk’s At Our Relative’s Place and Ki Ma Mina: two programs that together provided 16 specialized community homes for Indigenous youth. Structural barriers — especially the challenge of identifying fully-trained and experienced families to care for youth who were being sexually exploited — seemed insurmountable. Prior to Ka Ni Kanichihk’s Council making the final decision to end this service, Council, Management and program staff did everything possible to ensure high-quality service to its stakeholders and program participants. Despite the challenges, Ka Ni Kanichihk successfully transitioned Ki Ma Mina — the licensed home — to the Blue Thunderbird Lodge. Ka Ni Kanichihk remains steadfast in its commitment to “deinstitutionalize” Indigenous youth caught-up in Manitoba’s Child Welfare System.

Ka Ni Kanichihk values the many partners and stakeholders who contribute to its vision and the wellbeing of the community. There are many: traditional knowledge keepers, advisory committees, community coalitions, business workplaces, educational institutions, community based organizations, researchers, community and specialized policing and community members.

Miigwetch,

Youth Agencies Alliance
Sexually Exploited Youth Community Coalition
Gang Action Interagency Network
Winnipeg Indigenous Executive Circle
595 Prevention Team
Ma Mawi Chi Itata Centre
Ndinawemaagan Endaawaad
Spence Neighbourhood Association
IRCOM
Sprucewoods Sundance
CAAN
Two Spirit People of Manitoba
Nine Circles Community Health Clinic
University of Winnipeg, Global College Klinic
Winnipeg Police Service – Community Relations Unit
Project Devote Family Liaison
Red River College
University of Manitoba
Centre for Aboriginal Human Resource Development

2015-2016
KA NI KANICHIHK
GOVERNING COUNCIL

ELDER
Jessie Howell

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
Co-Chairs: Kimberley Puhach & Sharon Parenteau
Treasurer: Mary Jane Loustel
Secretary: Brett Huson

COUNCIL MEMBERS
Audrey Richard
Gwen Cook
Helen Robinson Settee
David Milward
Edith Turner
Ocean White (Youth)

MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONS
Executive Director: Leslie Spillett
Associate Executive Director: Dodie Jordaan
Director of Finance: Rick Loftson
Finance Clerk: Loretta Smith
Human Resource Administrator: Melanie Brass
Information Technology Specialist: Anthony Henderson
Executive Assistant: Kimberly Hodgson
Reception & Administration Assistant: Jessica Macaig
Ka Ni Kanichihk is grateful for the support of its funders: federal, provincial and municipal governments, corporations, foundations and individuals.

Ekosani,

PROVINCE OF MANITOBA
Family Services
Jobs and the Economy
Children and Youth Opportunities
Manitoba Justice
Status of Women

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA
Health Canada – Public Health Agency
Justice Canada
Status of Women
First Nations Inuit Health Branch

CITY OF WINNIPEG

FOUNDATIONS AND OTHER
The United Way of Winnipeg
Centre for Aboriginal Human Resource Development
Manitoba Association of Friendship Centres
Canadian Women’s Foundation
Co-operatives and Mutuals Canada
The Winnipeg Foundation

2015/16 REVENUE:
- 45% Province of Manitoba
- 20% Government of Canada
- 12% Other
- 11% Agency Billings
- 9% Foundations & Other Organizations
- 3% City of Winnipeg

2015/16 EXPENSES:
- 58% Salaries & Benefits
- 22% Programming
- 20% Operating