



BC Association of Aboriginal
Friendship Centres
BCA AFC

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Friendship Centres Urge Investment in Indigenous Infrastructure

Victoria, B.C. - Prime Minister Mark Carney's first federal budget, now approved by parliament, has raised significant concern regarding funding renewal for Friendship Centres. Despite Friendship Centres being the largest Indigenous service delivery infrastructure in the country, supporting more Indigenous people than every other Indigenous service provider in Canada combined, they were not mentioned in Budget 2025.

The vast majority of Indigenous people in Canada are urbanized. Friendship Centres are not-for-profit, Indigenous-led organizations that promote, develop, and deliver accessible programs and services to urban Indigenous people. The federal government's failure to include Friendship Centres in Budget 2025 demonstrates a glaring lack of commitment to the government's stated goals around reconciliation and threatens the stability of Indigenous infrastructure that millions of urban Indigenous people rely on.

"While we recognize that this budget does not allocate new dollars, we firmly believe that the current resources can be better utilized to enhance capacity within Indigenous communities," said BCA AFC President Annette Morgan. "Supporting Indigenous-led initiatives and organizations ensures that funding is directed where it is most needed—into the hands of those who understand the unique challenges and strengths of their communities. This is not a matter of preference; it is a matter of rights, dignity, and justice."

While the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC) has confirmed that there will be ongoing Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples (UPIP) funding past March 31, 2026, the total allocation has not yet been determined. Now that the budget has been approved, this absence of clarity and commitment is increasingly alarming. Friendship Centres are a significant employer of Indigenous people, particularly Indigenous women. Funding cuts could force Friendship Centres to reduce staff, and would reduce the reach and impact of this Canada-wide Indigenous service delivery infrastructure.

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"The Friendship Centre Movement has a long-standing history of providing culturally relevant and community-based services that improve the health and well-being of Indigenous people living in urban areas," said BCAAFC Executive Director Celeste Hayward. "We understand the needs of urban Indigenous populations, and we have a proven track record of delivering results."

Funding Indigenous organizations and prioritizing Indigenous-led initiatives results in programs and services that are culturally relevant and effective, and it also upholds the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples as recognized by national and international law, including the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP).

We encourage Friendship Centres and Provincial/Territorial Associations to continue their outreach to Members of Parliament and local government representatives and convey the importance of continued and sustainable investment in the Friendship Centre Movement. We urge community members and volunteers to share their views and the impact Friendship Centres have on social media. And we urge the government to reaffirm its commitment to Indigenous rights, recognize the significance of this Movement, and continue to **invest** in the vital work of Friendship Centres like ours.

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