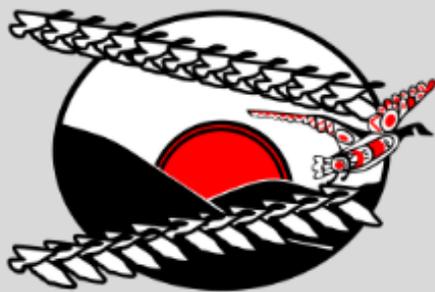


**BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres
Three-Year Strategy (2018-2020)**



Executive Summary

Indigenous people living in Canada experience high rates of poverty, homelessness, unemployment and violence due to the intergenerational impacts of colonialism, racism, discrimination, and trauma. Friendship Centres are community organizations that alleviate the disproportionate risks Indigenous people face by providing culturally-relevant, holistic programs and services that empower individuals and communities. This support helps ensure the next generation is well-equipped to overcome societal and cross-generational challenges and break the negative trends seen statistically in Indigenous populations across Canada.

The BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC) is the umbrella association for the 25 Friendship Centres in BC. These centres form a dynamic network that must continually evolve in a landscape that is constantly unfolding triumphs and setbacks. This evolution is powered by tradition, collaboration, trust, and strong leadership.

In 2011, the BCAAFC and member centres created a 20-year plan to guide the work of the Friendship Centre Movement in BC. In 2018, the BCAAFC and member centres revisited the strategic priorities and key outcomes of the 20-year plan to develop a three-year strategy relevant to the current landscape and organizational structure of BC Friendship Centres.

Core opportunities identified within Friendship Centres and their communities involved taking steps towards the self-sustainment of each centre, through new partnerships, improved internal and external communications, professional development opportunities and the development of standardized resources.

The Friendship Centre Movement has been a positive influence in BC for the past 60 years. Strengthening BC Friendship Centres helps to ensure they will continue to be a place to be heard, a place for innovation and enterprise, and a place to preserve cultures and histories for years to come.



1.0 Background

History of the Friendship Centre Movement in BC

The history of Friendship Centres in British Columbia dates back to 1954, when a group of Indigenous people living in Vancouver formed the Coqualeetza Fellowship Club to provide culturally relevant support services to Indigenous students moving to the city. In the years following, the organizers found themselves responding to an increasingly high number of requests for services from both students and new residents. In 1963, the Coqualeetza Fellowship Club changed its title to the 'Vancouver Indian Centre Society,' marking the beginning of the Friendship Centre Movement in BC.

The BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres

Officially formed in 1972, the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC) works collaboratively to promote and deliver accessible programs and services that target urban Indigenous peoples and support their vision of health and wellness. Today, the BCAAFC is the umbrella association for 25 Friendship Centres throughout the Province of BC.

Mission & Mandate

The BCAAFC is a registered society within the province of BC. The purposes of the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres are:

- To promote the betterment of Friendship Centres in the Province of British Columbia.
- To establish and maintain communications between Friendship Centres and other Provincial Associations and the National Association of Friendship Centres.
- To act as a unifying body for Friendship Centres. To provide an association for government agencies to communicate through and obtain information from. This, in no way takes away a Friendship Centre's right to negotiate directly with any agency.
- To advise the government, as requested by the collective centres.
- To support the development of programs to improve the quality of life for Indigenous people living in BC.

Vision

The BCAAFC works collaboratively with its member centres and partner organizations, united under the shared vision of a vibrant society that supports the health, wellness and prosperity of Indigenous people.

Values

- **Transparency** – we will use resources efficiently and effectively in order to further the organization's mission to serve our members.
- **Advocacy** – we will advocate for support resources and work with other organizations on collective issues.
- **Communication** – we will communicate what we are doing and how we can work with other organizations to advance services for our members and community.
- **Upholding Traditions and Cultures** – we will practice our culture and traditional teachings to ensure our youth have access to our Elders and traditions.
- **Integrity** – we will act with integrity in the work that we do, the people that we interact with and in the decisions we make, being accountable to each other and to those whom we serve.

- **Collaboration** – we will work together to ensure we provide the best programming and work to advance our people and community’s needs.

20-Year Plan Summary

In 2011, the BCAAFC and its then 23 Friendship Centres came together to develop a strategic plan to guide their work for the next 20 years. This strategic plan was to serve as a road map for advancing the movement in a culturally centered and responsible way. The plan was guided by feedback from members through group discussions. Discussions were facilitated to answer three fundamental questions identified by the BCAAFC Executive Committee.

Discussion Questions	Common Themes
What are our hopes for the Friendship Centre Movement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-sufficiency - Foundational decision making and planning by the people that deliver the programs along with funders and government - Financial stability
What are our hopes for each Friendship Centre?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunities for Friendship Centres to feed into community development - Owning our facilities and providing holistic services to the whole community using Indigenous approaches - Strong leaders and role models for the community - Housing advocacy in each Friendship Centre across BC
What will have changed in 20 years?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase the number of Friendship Centres within the BCAAFC - Good relationship with provincial and federal levels of government, and Indigenous partners - Organized in urban communities, with a voice and political representation, ensuring that we’re a real community

Common themes were identified and, from them, **eight strategic priorities** were established:

- Support for the proposal writing process
- Governance
- Succession planning and mentorship
- Enhancing the public profile of each Friendship Centre
- Self-sufficiency and sustainability
- Improving Friendship Centre relationships
- Human resource development
- Advocating for Elders and youth

From these priorities, the BCAAFC’s **Governance Goals** were established:

- **Advocacy** – to create strategic linkages and secure the resources necessary to develop and implement satellite services.
- **Broaden Reach and Collaboration** – enhance the service reach of the Friendship Centre Movement in BC. Formalize relationships with other entities.
- **Social Enterprise** – strive for continual improvement in financial, social, and environmental wellbeing.
- **Language & Culture** – liaise with external bodies to protect, preserve, promote, and practice Indigenous languages, cultures, and traditions.
- **Finance & Policy** – ensure balanced operation of the BCAAFC through progressive capacity, capital, cash flow and investments.

- **Strategic Opportunities** - conduct an internal analysis of the organization and identify strategic opportunities to pursue.

Key outcomes of the 20-year plan were identified as:

- Happy and healthy Elders
- Healthy Indigenous workforce
- Reduced racism and better community relations
- Greater degree of self determination
- Strong Indigenous youth leaders
- High quality services
- Improved Indigenous service delivery capacity

3-Year Plan Summary

Between 2011 and 2018, the BCAAFC and its member centres developed and met objectives under the eight strategic priorities established in the 20-year plan.

In January of 2018, the BCAAFC Board of Directors held a planning session with an external facilitator to begin work on a three-year strategic work plan that would reflect the goals of the 20-year plan, as well as changes in organizational structure, programs and the staff of the BCAAFC.

Group discussions were facilitated with members to gather feedback on the progress of the key outcomes identified in the 20-year plan. Each group was asked five of twelve discussion questions, under five topics: Governance, Advocacy, Communication, Capacity Development, and Collaboration. Many ideas were shared and common themes were identified.



Topic	Discussion Questions	Common Themes
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What will ensure the long-term success of the BCAAFC movement? - How can we ensure the BCAAFC is relevant to the Friendship Centres? - Ten years down the road of reconciliation, what does our movement look like? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transparency - Board training on a local level - Unified contract process - Improved communication - Opportunities for members to structure membership meeting agendas
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What do you think the BCAAFC should be doing in terms of advocacy for your Friendship Centre? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of an urban health strategy that includes: mental health, home care, and direct services - Process to coordinate, establish and maintain communications between government, Friendship Centres, and First Nations organizations and communities - Long-term stable funding - Advocate for youth by youth
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do we better communicate with your centre? - What is the best way to engage your centre? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased communication from board of directors - Increased communication from BCAAFC through reports, social media, networks and newsletters - Meeting locations in Victoria or Vancouver to save costs and travel equalization - Engage Elders and youth more by bringing them together more often
Capacity Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What are some of the capacity strengths, gaps, weaknesses and opportunities in your own FC? - What are your identified needs? - How can we strengthen language and cultural connections in each of our centres? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Professional development for centres for staff and board - Satellite support services in more towns - Training in report writing and research gathering - Infrastructure development - Increased educational opportunities for the youth
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What do you see as key areas for external collaboration? - Who do we need to be better aligned with? - Who are our potential partners? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - United voice for both BC and national centres—we are stronger together - Non-government partners for home, health and environmental organizations - Collaborate with on-reserve organizations - Culturally sensitive seniors care and healthcare - Increase collaboration with non-Indigenous youth agencies

2.0 Situational Analysis

“—we are stronger together”

Together, Friendship Centres are the largest infrastructure serving the urban Indigenous population in BC. Each Friendship Centre (FC) is unique to the communities it serves and strives to fill gaps in social services.

Friendship Centres work against high unemployment rates, cutbacks in government spending and general economic uncertainty. A high percentage of FC executive directors are predicted to be retiring within the next few years. Professional development opportunities will be an important part of succession planning within each centre.

Creating partnerships with urban and on-reserve communities and organizations will increase opportunities for innovation and further common goals that support the vision of a vibrant, diverse, nurturing society.

Establishing priorities for the next three years based off feedback gathered from member centres will help ensure we are on-track to meet the key outcomes identified in the 20-year plan.

3.0 Core Opportunities

Within Friendship Centres | Professional Development & Collaboration

Taking steps to help each of our centres reach a position of self-sustainment will ensure Friendship Centres keep their doors open for another 60+ years. One of the greatest assets each Friendship Centre has is connection to a network of caring individuals, united under the common goal of improving the quality of life for Indigenous people. Strengthening communication and collaboration between centres helps to ensure this wealth of knowledge is utilized.

Training opportunities for members helps equip each centres' staff with the skills and knowledge they need to maintain and advance the success of their Friendship Centre.

Creating spaces for each centre to share their own successes and learning opportunities has the potential to inspire and guide the development of external, localized partnerships within other centres.

Within Communities | Partnerships & Economic Stability

Building external, non-government partnerships is a priority within the BC Friendship Centre Movement. Connecting with urban and on-reserve communities and organizations will allow Friendship Centres to expand the quality and reach of their programs and services.

Internal and external communication will provide a strong foundation for collaboration, innovation and new partnerships. All of which will be an integral part of identifying pathways to diversifying funding, creating independent sources of revenue and establishing financial stability. This stability will support Friendship Centres' future contributions to community development and Indigenous political representation.

4.0 Goals and Tactics

“The more people who understand the objectives of the Friendship Centre Movement, the greater our influence will be.”

The BCAAFC is committed to active listening; furthermore, the BCAAFC is looking forward to providing more opportunities for dialogue and shared understanding between the BC Friendship Centres.

Sharing knowledge is foundational to the Friendship Centre Movement, both among centres and externally. The more people who understand the objectives of the Friendship Centre Movement, the greater our influence will be.

For the next three years the BCAAFC will focus on training opportunities for member centres’ staff, improved communications, and an increase in partnerships to better serve our communities.

Goal	Tactics
Provide professional development opportunities that support each Friendship Centres growth and succession planning within centres.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learning Academy - Training Academy - Non-Profit Management Mini-MBA program - Standardized resources for all member centres
Improve BC Friendship Centres internal and external communications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internal monthly newsletters - External quarterly newsletters - Increase media coverage of Friendship Centres - Conduct an internal analysis of the BCAAFC - Linkages with key ministers
Increase BC Friendship Centres partnerships with urban and on-reserve communities and organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide more opportunities for centres to share their knowledge and experiences with one another - Standardized resources for proposal writing and contract development - Liaise with external bodies to protect, preserve, promote and practice Indigenous languages, cultures and traditions - Linkages with key ministers



5.0 Evaluation

The BCAAFC Three-Year Strategy 2018-2020 will be evaluated at the end of each fiscal (March 31). With the successful implementation of this strategy, BC Friendship Centres will enter the 2021 fiscal year with a greater sense of: self-sustainment, unity within the Friendship Centre Movement, and connection to their community.

Goal	Evaluation Criteria
Provide professional development opportunities that support each Friendship Centres growth and succession planning within centres.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Upskilled FC staff - FC staff retention - FC staff growth - Launch of Mini-MBA program, staff enrolment - Peer Resource, Response, Review and Restore Committee “PR4C Toolkit” completed - Access to PR4C Toolkit resources
Improve BC Friendship Centres internal and external communications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internal monthly newsletters - External quarterly newsletters - Increase in media coverage of Friendship Centres - Increase in BCAAFC website traffic - Increase in social media engagement - Linkages with key ministers
Increase BC Friendship Centres partnerships with urban and on-reserve communities and organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New external partnerships, both urban and on-reserve communities and organizations - Access to PR4C Toolkit resources for proposal writing and contract development - Collaboration with non-Indigenous youth agencies

What’s Ahead

The past couple years have included significant changes to the BCAAFC board structure and funding model. Transparency and open-communication have been an important part of working through challenges during this transition period. Moving through periods of change together is a vital part of advancing the Friendship Centre Movement. Recognizing new opportunities and the unique pursuits of each centre allows the BCAAFC to develop tools and resources that support the growth of BC Friendship Centres. Connecting our work to the goals outlined in this three-year strategy will position us to fulfill the key outcomes identified within the 20-year plan; bringing us closer to our vision of a vibrant society that supports the health, wellness and prosperity of Indigenous people.