

# BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres

Annual General Report 2021-2022



We acknowledge with respect and gratitude the communities who inform our work and allow us to work, play and reside on their traditional territories.

The BCAAFC resides on the traditional territory of the Lkwungen-speaking peoples and the WSÁNEĆ peoples, the traditional keepers of this land who remain here as the original and rightful stewards.

Each Friendship Centre is powered by multigenerational relationships, a deep understanding of the communities they are a part of, and a shared commitment to providing culturally-relevant social services to Indigenous peoples.

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# BC Friendship Centres



Cariboo Friendship Society (Williams Lake)  
Conayt Friendship Society (Merritt)  
Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre Society (Smithers)  
Fort Nelson Aboriginal Friendship Society  
Fort St. John Friendship Society  
Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association (Surrey)  
Friendship House Association of Prince Rupert  
Hiiye'yu Lelum (House of Friendship) Society (Duncan)  
Kamloops Aboriginal Friendship Society  
Kermode Friendship Society (Terrace)  
Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society (Kelowna)  
Lillooet Friendship Centre Society  
Mission Friendship Centre Society  
Nawican Friendship Centre (Dawson Creek)  
North Okanagan Friendship Centre Society (Vernon)  
Ooknakane Friendship Centre (Penticton)  
Port Alberni Friendship Center  
Prince George Native Friendship Centre Society  
Quesnel Tillicum Society  
Sacred Wolf Friendship Centre Society (Port Hardy)  
Tansi Friendship Centre Society (Chetwynd)  
Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Society (Nanaimo)  
Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society  
Victoria Native Friendship Centre  
Wachiay Friendship Centre Society (Courtenay)



# Friendship Centre Movement

The Friendship Centre Movement is made up of over 100 Friendship Centres from all across Canada.

Friendship Centres provide culturally-relevant programs and services for Indigenous people living in urban communities. Collectively, they are the most significant off-reserve Indigenous service delivery infrastructure.

There are 25 Friendship Centres across BC. Together, with over 1,200 employees, 600 partnerships and one million client interactions each year. The BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres is the umbrella organization for the 25 Friendship Centres in BC.

Today, Friendship Centres provide wraparound programs and services in every area you could think of. To many they are a safe space, second home, and place of learning. The history of the Friendship Centre Movement explains the gift Friendship Centres have for integrating knowledge networks from the past and present to guide and sustain progress.



"I've been involved with the Movement since 1957, when I started to dream about a gathering place for Indigenous people coming into Vancouver. I'm proud to say congratulations to the provincial organization for keeping the Friendship Centre member's safe and providing them assistance."

—Marge White, Founding Member

# A Brief Timeline

The Friendship Centre Movement in BC has been positively contributing to the health and wellness of Indigenous people for over 60 years.

When listening to stories from trailblazers, founders, and knowledge keepers within the movement, it is evident that Friendship Centres have been leaders in change, and while they have significantly evolved overtime, they have retained the core values that shaped their beginnings.


The movement transformed from a single referral centre to a network of 20 service centres between 1954 and 1982.

In **1954**, the Coqualeetza Fellowship Club formed to provide support to Indigenous students in Vancouver.

In **1963**, the Coqualeetza Fellowship Club changed its title to the Vancouver Indian Centre Society, recognized as a place for all Indigenous people transitioning into Vancouver.

By **1970**, it was common for government service agencies to refer Indigenous clients to their local Friendship Centre.





In **1972**, the Friendship Centres that had been established throughout BC formed a provincial body, the Pacific Association of Communications in Indian Friendship Centres (PACIFIC), to help the centres share information with one another.

In **1975**, the BC Government began providing funding to PACIFIC to distribute to the Friendship Centres.

BC Friendship Centres recognized the need for a provincial body to liaison with the BC and Federal Governments. In **1982**, they reinvented PACIFIC into the BC Association of Indian Friendship Centres, to represent the then 20 Friendship Centres in BC.

By **2002**, 25 Friendship Centres are members of BCAAFC.

**2022:** BCAAFC celebrates its 50th anniversary!

# The BCAAFC Celebrates 50 Years!

Since 1972, the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres' Provincial Office Team has had the honour of supporting the BC Friendship Centre Movement, representing the now 25 Friendship Centres across the province.

## Voices of Elders and Youth

The connections between Elders and Indigenous youth play an important role in shaping the future. The strengthening of these intergenerational relationships has been fundamental to the Movement. Elders and youth from Friendship Centre communities have shared their sentiments towards the Movement in celebration of the 50-year anniversary.





**Stanley  
Namox**



"It's such an honour to be a part of the Friendship Centre and congratulations on your 50th anniversary."

"We are celebrating with the goodness of our mother Earth, and the water, and what the creator has given us. For the whole of BC Friendship Centres around all of us, congratulations."

**Minnie  
Kenoras**



**Morgan Behn  
Tsakoza**



"What the Friendship Centre Movement means to me is helping one another and family. Congratulations BCAAFC!"

**Diana  
Charlie  
Iraheta**



"The Friendship Centre Movement means family, and being together as one. Congratulations to the BCAAFC!"

"The Friendship Centre Movement means to me standing together and decolonizing and reclaiming what was once tried to take away. Congratulations on your 50th year!"

**Avannnia  
Thomas Brown**

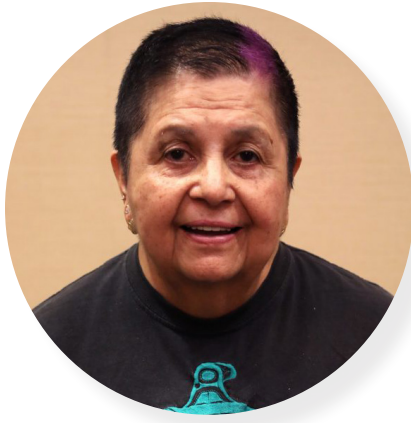


**Ralph  
Gouchie**



"We see a lot of work and growth that they're doing with the youth and Elders. The programs they have with the seniors, it keeps them busy. Congratulations!"





## Message from Dr. Sharon McIvor, President

What a remarkable accomplishment it is to celebrate BCAAFC's 50th anniversary. Initiated by young 1960s leaders across the country, like Elder Marge White, the Friendship Centre Movement has stood the test of time.

Those who are part of a Friendship Centre know the strong sense of togetherness that comes with being part of an unwavering and welcoming community. We saw this during the pandemic and the recent climate emergencies. Our priority was supporting our communities. Friendship Centre staff, volunteers and members live the Friendship Centre Movement through services and action meant for the betterment of our people, and community.

Sometimes that means hosting programming, or specific supports to address the latest re-opening of old wounds, with residential school unmarked graves. Other times it's helping out individuals who have nowhere else to turn – but it always means having an open door policy with a friendly welcome and a warm coffee with a snack. Not only did we work hard to keep our services going during the pandemic and climate emergencies, we did our best to push for better services for our membership with wise, culturally-grounded practices.

As we adjust to an uncertain era brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the reoccurring threat of natural disasters, our 25 Friendship Centres continue to thrive. This is due to the diligent staff and volunteers meeting a constant demand of unique problems to solve and challenges to overcome. Friendship Centres were helping other Friendship Centres during the pandemic, floods, heat domes and fires. I'm proud of our ongoing and age-old commitment to our unique and collective sense of openness, support, and community.

We know that traditional ways of educating our youth creates well-rounded and thoughtful leaders, who never steer too far from their roots throughout their lives. This unbroken chain of knowledge transfer from Elders to youth starts in our centres where youth come to play. Next, they start to help our Elders to carry things, and before long they are volunteering in the kitchen, and then on our Boards of Directors, always being mentored, often by an Elder. We mentor our youth through real experience from cradle

into young adulthood and beyond. It's important to acknowledge that BCAAFC's lasting legacy has stretched so long because of contributions from Elders and youth.

Staff at Friendship Centres live and breathe this reality each and every day. This is what makes our centres special – they care not only about the individual that walks through the door. Staff and volunteers see and nurture the potential in each person, including each other. Sometimes, it's a nod that says, 'I see you, I respect who you are' or a warm laughing hug to welcome back an old client who has turned their life around. Or, it's supplying a cup of tea and sandwiches while community members seek one of our services. Staff of Friendship Centres do what is needed at the right moment. These small gestures, these expert readings and responses of ancient and subtle body language are why community members come to us.

On this anniversary, I am especially grateful for the positive and constructive relationship with our members, Board of Directors and with Friendship Centre staff. My priority as President has been to ensure we build on our successes. Our Board has been committed to harmony and to working in consensus. We have supported strong organizational growth and cohesion at the BCAAFC level. We have worked to grow relations externally with government, and to advocate for urban Indigenous peoples throughout the province, without having to compete with our First Nations, Inuit or Métis family. We all have complex identities and each of these is welcome without judgement in Friendship Centres. I have valued the privilege of working with the BCAAFC and Friendship Centres and I thank all who have entrusted in me this responsibility.

There are many priorities that we continue to push. Despite the highest level of annual revenue generation we have ever experienced, our Board continues to advocate for improved funding and opportunities to put our Centre's in the best position possible to serve our membership. This goal is always front of mind.

As well, it is important to celebrate the important work BCAAFC has accomplished this past year, and over five decades of dedicated support of Indigenous peoples in urban areas to achieve their vision of health, wellness and prosperity. Congratulations to you all in helping BCAAFC achieve this milestone anniversary!

In Friendship,



Dr. Sharon McIvor



## Message from Leslie Varley, Executive Director

On BCAAFC's 50th anniversary, I want to congratulate those who have contributed to the Friendship Centre Movement on improving, and advocating for the wellbeing and rights of Indigenous peoples throughout British Columbia. The Friendship Centre Movement has 50 years of caring and integrated service delivery that has influenced countless people.

In the late 2000's while guest speaking at a cultural safety conference in Aotearoa (New Zealand), a few Maori leaders toured me through their community agencies. One of its agencies had a closet-sized bank, a social enterprise café, a convenience store, a child and youth service department, and health and mental health services.

They told me they had adopted a B.C. Indigenous service delivery model. "Oh, what model is that?" I asked. They replied that it's a wrap-around service model, where every door is connected to another, and is convenient for the client – hence the bank connected to the café. They said their people went there for services, and they wanted them to feel welcome and to stay, reconnect, socialize, and use more of their services. Their programming folks were even gathered in their board room for case-by-case client conferencing. "Oh I see," I laughed. "This place is just like a Friendship Centre!" I was really proud that the model was being acknowledged as a B.C. Indigenous model, and was being adopted by the Maori, a people I admire so deeply for their world leadership in cultural safety.

Today, BCAAFC is working to try to pull in more service pieces to make our centres and service delivery models better connected. It helps that the political landscape has shifted. The Friendship Centre Movement in B.C. holds unique status in which the Province now requires our voices to move forward in a good way on policy initiatives. We have contributed to this paradigm shift with proactive engagement – and this past year is reflective of our progress. We have contributed significantly to:

- An Action Plan on the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act;
- B.C.'s Anti-Racism Data Act;
- Increased action on new, province-wide Indigenous anti-violence initiatives that will assist Indigenous women and girls; and
- A piloted Safe Space racism reporting app with stunning results.

The year 2021 will be marked in B.C.'s history as a year of environmental crisis. Flooding, landslides, wildfires, and a first-ever recorded heat dome during the second year of a global pandemic meant that our Friendship Centres had to pivot in response to these multiple and overlapping crises. Of course they stepped up, they always do. Friendship Centre staff and volunteers provided shelter, food, and sent truckloads of essentials to Centres in need. Organizing and responding with compassion with members linking arms in the face of intersecting disasters – this is the heart of our Friendship Centre Movement.

I pause to hold my hands up high in humble respect to the incredible team at BCAAFC who pushed through their own challenges and have shown up to keep paddling the canoe. I gratefully thank and acknowledge our Board of Directors, who've been a stabilizing force, key thought leaders, and champions of the Movement.

I want to acknowledge our non-Indigenous allies too, including government agencies and not-for-profit organizations leading their own people through this new era of reconciliation. It is truly humbling to see so many key community leaders standing right beside us, pushing for important societal change.

On behalf of the BCAAFC Board of Directors and staff, we acknowledge and raise our hands in loving respect to all of our Elders who ambitiously and selflessly created and served in this Movement. We watch proudly as our youth continue to surpass all expectations by using their voices in profound ways. It is an exciting time to be involved with BC Friendship Centres. We at BCCAFC are honoured, privileged, and humbled to work on behalf of our membership.

Always in Friendship,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leslie Varley', with a stylized, cursive script.

Leslie Varley

# Provincial Aboriginal Youth Council

The mission of the Provincial Aboriginal Youth Council (PAYC) is to create a healthier future for Indigenous youth by amplifying their voices and taking action to create positive change at the local, provincial, and national level. PAYC works closely with the National Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres' (NAFC) Indigenous Youth Council to foster connections among Indigenous youth in the 25 BC Friendship Centres and beyond.

The elected council is made up of Indigenous youth who strive to uplift others and serve as role models in their communities; through their experience on PAYC, youth grow and develop their skill sets and strengthen their confidence as the next generation of leaders within the Friendship Centre Movement.

## Elders and Youth Gathering

In the fall and winter months, PAYC was well positioned to begin planning for the Elders and Youth Gathering, which took place May 4-5, 2022, on the traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations in Vancouver.

## What's Ahead

Youth have experienced heightened barriers to community engagement due to COVID-19 related health orders. In acknowledgement of these challenges, rebuilding a strong foundation for PAYC and supporting engagement between the council and Friendship Centre youth coordinators will play a key role in reconnecting with Indigenous youth across the Movement. We look forward to Friendship Centres' support in putting forth new youth for the council in the coming year.

### Elders and Youth Gathering 2022 (right)

PAYC collaborates with the Elders Council on the Elders and Youth Gathering, with the goal of creating an event that supports meaningful relationships between Elders and youth, promotes knowledge sharing, and builds community. This year's gathering was particularly important as an opportunity to connect in-person again.







# Provincial Aboriginal Youth Council

Reestablishing connections among Indigenous youth in the Movement is reflected in upcoming goals, which include:

- The development of a social media strategy to increase awareness for PAYC leading up to GOV.
- Organizing virtual events with Friendship Centre staff and youth groups.
- Supporting youth attendance at in-person gatherings, such as the NAFC Youth Forum and BCAAFC Annual General Meeting.
- Hosting an in-person planning session in the Fall.

The Annual Gathering Our Voices (GOV): Indigenous Youth Leadership Training event, postponed from 2020 to 2022 due to COVID-19, is set to return in 2023. PAYC co-hosts GOV and plays an integral role in ensuring that the collective voices of youth across the province are incorporated into the planning and implementation of the event.

## Thank You

Thank you to the Ministry of Indigenous Relations & Reconciliation (MIRR) for funding to support the

Provincial Aboriginal Youth Council's work, and to the Unified Aboriginal Youth Collective and National Association of Friendship Centre's Youth Council for their guidance and collaboration—we are strongest when we work together.



Elders and Youth Gathering 2022



### Conayt Friendship Society

Friendship Centre youth programming supports improved mental wellness of Indigenous youth and facilitates more opportunities for them to engage with their community. Conayt Friendship Society youth had the opportunity to go paddle boarding with a local outdoor activity provider, the Nicola Valley Paddle Company.

### Hiiye'yu Lelum (House of Friendship) Society

Friendship Centres are often approached by other community organizations for partnerships. Hiiye'yu Lelum Society youth are leaders in their community.



# National COVID-19 Response Funding

The Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) and the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC) COVID-19 response funding was administered to Friendship Centres for the purposes of achieving the following:

- To ensure that the best possible health and safety practices are implemented to reduce, as much as possible, the risk of transmission of COVID-19;
- To support the adjustment of programs and services so that they may continue running during COVID-19, while implementing necessary social distancing and health and safety measures;
- To provide community support in response to new challenges that arise from COVID-19;
- To support Friendship Centres in their continued mission to support urban Indigenous peoples through the safe delivery of programs and services.

The funding was distributed in four rounds throughout the 2021-22 fiscal, after which excess funds were redistributed to Friendship Centres requiring further funding and the application process for a fifth round of funding began.

Friendship Centres reported common themes in the activities and output of the funding, including:

- Staff retention and recruitment, staff wellbeing;
- Food security needs;
- Housing support;
- Mental health support;
- Acquisition of additional space and upgrades to existing spaces to fulfill the needs for safe program and service delivery.

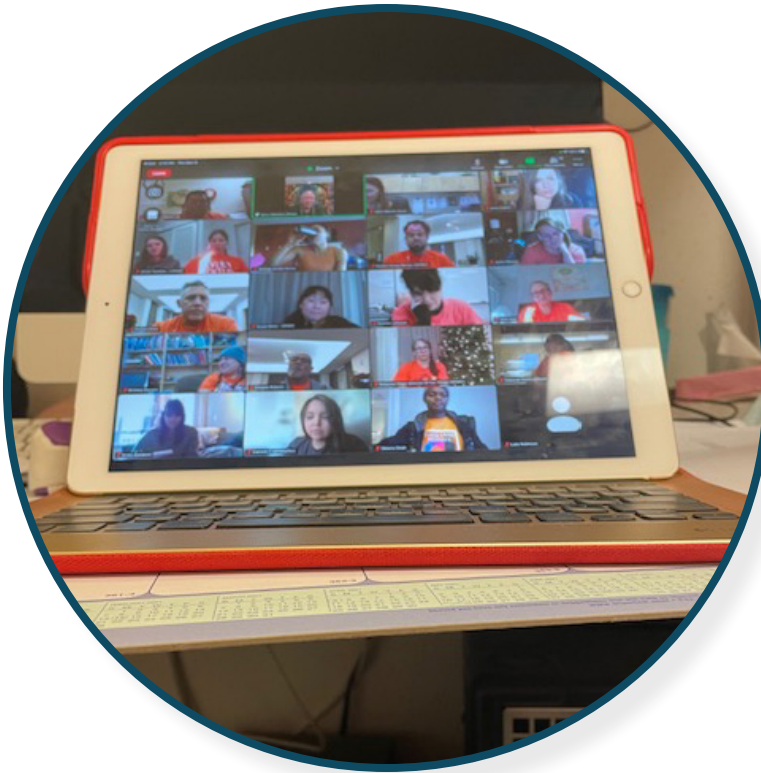
## What's Ahead

The NAFC will be distributing a fifth round of funding for the 2022-2023 fiscal year. These funds will continue to support Friendship Centres in their response to the ongoing and emerging needs of their communities during the global health pandemic of COVID-19.

## Thank You

Thank you to ISC and NAFC for national funding to support the Friendship Centre Movement response to COVID-19.





### **Friendship Centre House Association of Prince Rupert**

The Friendship Centre staff stayed connected to one another and clients through online platforms in order to continue serving their community during physical distancing requirements.

### **Fort Nelson Aboriginal Friendship Society**

The Friendship Centre provided Elders with tablets to help them stay connected during physical distancing requirements as a result of COVID-19. Zoom events were hosted for Elders, including bingo, musical entertainment, and storytelling.





# Provincial COVID-19 Response Funding

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Friendship Centres have been working to support and sustain clients' access to fundamental needs, such as shelter, food, clothing, and medical care, as well as responding to clients in crisis.

The Provincial COVID-19 Response Funding supports urban Indigenous peoples by providing Friendship Centres with the flexible funding required to urgently address ongoing, emerging needs of urban Indigenous communities throughout the current public health crisis.

## Providing Wraparound Support

Friendship Centres have used Provincial COVID-19 Response Funding for: new staffing positions to accommodate the increased demand for services; new programs designed to respond to COVID-related needs in the community; and, the coordination of COVID safety protocols.

Friendship Centre staff have recognized the opportunity to connect with clients while distributing food and

supplies and have offered mental health support, counselling, outreach, and program referrals to clients. An example of this is the Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Center's Don't Panic, Eat Bannock, Healing Ourselves program, where clients socialize and connect with staff and support resources, while enjoying a meal together.

Other Centres created outdoor kitchens complete with a covered dining area where clients can safely gather, receive counselling services, enjoy cultural activities, and get their food needs met. In this way, Friendship Centres have been hugely successful in preventing social isolation, and increasing access to mental health and wellness services.

## Preserving Community Connection

Over the summer months, there were a number of socially distanced outdoor events and activities that brought Elders together, along with the rest of the community, including BBQs, karaoke, bingo and bannock, drumming, and feasts.

The Friendship House Association of Prince Rupert hosted an art exhibit unveiling ceremony to showcase art pieces that their Elders, community members, and staff created. This project highlighted the role that art and culture can play in building community. The ceremony was led by Elders who were compensated with honorariums for their contributions.

### Adapting to the Growing Demand for Friendship Centre Service Delivery

Many Friendship Centre staff participated in training opportunities to meet the needs of an increased demand on Centres; such as Food Safe, First Aid, and Naloxone training.

Additionally, technological upgrades were necessary to address:

- Online programming and remote work;
- Preventing isolation in community;
- Communication and coordination for new COVID-19 related programs and services.

In the first and second quarter of the 2021-2022 fiscal year, Friendship Centres across BC hired **27** new staff to support the continued delivery of essential services.

### Sacred Wolf Friendship Centre Staff



# Provincial COVID-19 Response Funding

## What's Ahead

The Provincial COVID-19 Response Funding was a crucial addition to Friendship Centres' core funding. Each centre's experience and long-standing community relationships contributed to their ability to stretch the additional funding dollars provided in times of intense need.

The use of these funds, in addition to national COVID-19 funds, and on top of regular core funding, demonstrates the scale, necessity, scope and reach of Friendship Centre services. Our hope going forward is that the value of multi-year, flexible funding is recognized and provided in an ongoing way- not just in reaction to novel global disasters.

## Thank You

Thank you to the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation for funding to support Friendship Centres response to COVID-19 related community needs.



### **Cariboo Friendship Society**

The Friendship Centre provided tablet training to Elders to support an alternative form of connection when meeting in-person was not a safe option, while also increasing capacity to use new technology.





## Lillooet Friendship Centre

*Lillooet Friendship Centre (LFCS) remained open throughout COVID-19. We have been providing essential services to all who come through our doors even from outlying communities whose doors are closed. Food security and shelter remain some of our biggest issues. LFCS has been able to meet the demand being put on our food bank and shelter as a result of funding supports such as the Provincial COVID Response Funding and donations from community.*

## Nawican Friendship Centre

*Over the course of the pandemic, our Centre has gone from a gathering space with a soup kitchen and small but active client base, to a major social services provider with 24-hour staffing, high intensity cases, new contracts, and three facilities. Our community has begun to look to the experts on our staff to assist on complex cases and be involved in new pilot projects. We have new referrals every day, and regular requests for new and continued programming.*



# Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples

## Programs & Services

During fiscal year 2021-2022, Friendship Centres continued to persevere through the challenges faced by the COVID-19 pandemic. Many Centres remained closed to in-person gatherings, but managed to find creative ways to pivot their programming to fit the needs of their communities. Centres proved resilient in adapting to the changing needs of their communities, all while working with limited funding and, often, overworked staff.

The summer and fall of 2021 brought a series of devastating climate-related disasters to BC such as the heat dome, wildfires, flooding and mudslides. These events negatively impacted many Indigenous communities and their Friendship Centres. Centres came together to support each other, providing emergency supports such as temporary shelter, food, and clothing. Some Friendship Centres collected donations for those directly affected. Others opened their doors and donated space to Emergency Management B.C. or Red Cross personnel.

The remarkable work Friendship Centres do and the services they provide go beyond day-to-day programming.

## Organizational Capacity

Organizational Capacity (OC) funding is for Friendship Centres to maintain a stable financial base to deliver culturally-appropriate programs and services that support urban Indigenous peoples.

The OC funding supports the day-to-day operating costs for each Centre, including the salaries and benefits of key positions such as the Executive Director, and overhead costs such as rent, utilities, and office supplies. By providing for these expenses, the OC funding provides the stability necessary for Friendship Centres to pursue opportunities for growth, partnership building, and program and service enhancement.

The BCAAFC disburses OC funding to Friendship Centres on a quarterly basis throughout the fiscal year. The amount allocated per Centre includes a base



amount of \$120,000, plus an additional amount that is calculated using a points-based allocation model that considers various factors, such as the size and reach of each Centre, the number of clients they serve, and the number of programs and services they offer.



Thanksgiving at Mission  
Friendship Centre Society

## Funding Areas

The Programs and Services (P&S) funding supports the safe delivery of culturally-relevant programs and services to urban Indigenous peoples in six key areas:

- Women
- Vulnerable Populations
- Youth
- Transition Services
- Outreach Programs
- Community Wellness

# Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples

## Goals for Increasing Centre Capacity

The increasing rate of inflation continues to impact Friendship Centres and urban Indigenous peoples. Recruitment and retention of qualified candidates for key positions is an ongoing issue in the non-profit social services sector and it has only increased over recent years due to the ever-increasing cost of living, coupled with competing government agencies offering higher salaries. An increase in long-term core funding is needed to support the hiring and retention of new staff in Friendship Centres.

In addition to hiring needs, many Friendship Centres are occupying spaces that are in need of repairs which are not adequately covered by the current OC funding.

Friendship Centres received a large amount of funding to address COVID-related issues; while this temporary funding was critical in emergency response, the challenges exacerbated by COVID will continue to impact Indigenous peoples and communities long after COVID is over.

## What's Ahead

Friendship Centres have demonstrated their resilience in adapting to the changing needs of their communities. Longterm, multi-year funding is crucial in order for centres to continue delivering critical programming and services without interruption. In addition to increased funding, an increase in the allowable administration costs would help centres better manage their programs.

The BCAAFC continues to advocate for more robust core funding that accurately reflects the high rate of inflation and addresses the ever-changing needs of urban Indigenous populations. The current UPIP contract with Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) has been extended until March 31, 2023 while negotiations are underway for a new contract agreement.

## Thank you

Funding under the UPIP contract is provided by Indigenous Services Canada. We raise our hands to the National Association of Friendship Centres for their ongoing work to secure stable core funding.



### Kamloops Aboriginal Friendship Society

A participant from one of the Friendship Centre's moccasin making workshops.

### Conayt Friendship Centre Society

Conayt Elders show off the ribbon skirts they made for a MMIWG2S+ blessing ceremony.







## Tillicum Lelum Aboriginal Friendship Centre

*Since January we have been working with Vancouver Island University (VIU) Dental Hygiene Program instructors to find ways to promote oral health care. In March, Dental Hygiene students visited Elders at the New Horizon Program. They also did a fun, interactive presentation for the children at Thi Lelum Smuneem Child Care Centre. Throughout March, VIU and TLAFC worked together to plan the first ever Dental Clinic Day for Tillicum Lelum families at the university.*

## Wachiay Friendship Centre

*With help from our partners, funders and volunteers we delivered over 12,000 Good Food Boxes and 30,000 Hot Meals to community members in 2021-2022. Wachiay Friendship Centre is a community partner and funder in supporting the LUSH Valley Food Share. Indigenous families, individuals and Elders in need can sign up to receive a Good Food Box and Hot Meal delivered to your home by Lush Valley and paid for by Wachiay.*





## OoKnakane Friendship Centre

The Friendship Centre provides meals to the homeless and vulnerable members of the community, and delivers food hampers of fresh groceries to those in need.

## Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society

The Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society's annual Back to School Backpack Program is a half-day event to provide urban Indigenous children and youth with school supplies, as well as fun activities and a celebratory lunch for them and their families.





# Provincial Core Funding

## First Citizens Fund–Friendship Centre Program

The First Citizens Fund–Friendship Centre Program (FCF-FCP) provides funding to Friendship Centres to assist with the delivery of social, recreational and culturally-relevant programming for urban Indigenous peoples. FCF-FCP funding supports the administrative costs associated with the development, implementation and delivery of programming, as well as program-related materials and supplies. This fiscal, FCF-FCP funding was primarily used for staff salaries and programming-related supplies and materials.

## Provincial Capacity Funding

Provincial Capacity (ProCap) funding contributes to the core funding necessary for Friendship Centres to continue program and service delivery. Each Friendship Centre receives a base funding allocation of \$61,600, plus an additional amount that is calculated using a points-based allocation model.

ProCap funding can be used to strengthen and improve infrastructure through: Information Technology (IT) upgrades; staff training and development; and minor capital repairs or renovations.

## Human Resources and Small Capital Projects

This fiscal year, many Friendship Centres prioritized human resources training to strengthen their board governance and policies, as well as health and safety training to increase staff members' capacity to provide emergency support in their communities.

Friendship Centres are permitted to use up to \$15,000 of their allocation towards small capital projects. Centres were able to leverage these funds to make safety-related improvements to accommodate in-person client interactions, such as creating outdoor gathering spaces and expanding indoor spaces to meet social distancing requirements. This funding also contributed towards much needed building maintenance and upgrades, such as installing or repairing ramps and railings to provide safe access

for those with mobility issues. Additionally, there was an increase in technology related upgrades to better support the transition to work from home capabilities for staff, and online programming.

### Opportunities to Increase Funding Efficiency

The FCF-FCP and ProCap program funding streams are both allocated for a single fiscal year. The BCAAFC anticipates that each funding stream will be renewed for 2022-2023, but typically renewal of funding is not confirmed until many months into the new fiscal. This causes considerable planning challenges for Friendship Centres every year. Friendship Centres have expressed the need for multi-year funding allocations moving forward. Multi-year funding would greatly benefit Friendship Centres planning and development processes.

### Thank You

Thank you to the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR) for funding to support the delivery of culturally-relevant programming for urban Indigenous peoples across the province.



### Prince George Native Friendship Centre

*We had 83 staff and Board members attend and make drums through a project we created called 50 Drums for 50 Years. Each staff member made two drums, one to take away for themselves and one to gift back to the Centre. The drums the staff gifted to the Centre were painted by a young Métis woman who was a participant in our youth group 14 years ago. In total 171 drums were made.*



### **Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre Society**

Nisga'a and Tsimshian carver Mike Dangeli carved two poles, the Grandmother and the Brother, with the help of his two sons Nick Dangeli and Michael Daniel, to honour MMIWG. The beautiful Grandmother Pole was raised in September 2020 along Highway 16 at Kitsumkalum. The Brother Pole is now in Smithers, raised at the Cultural Centre on November 17, 2021.

### **Mission Friendship Centre Society**

Elders and youth at a Friendship Centre-coordinated event to support the connections between Elders and youth in the community.







### North Okanagan Friendship Centre Society

Marilyn Parker, Family Support Worker. The Friendship Centre's Family Support Program is a culturally-appropriate program that empowers families through one-to-one support.

### Quesnel Tillicum Society Friendship Centre

Quesnel Tillicum Society Friendship Centre mental health workers. Many clients are referred to the Centre by other community service providers.



# Data Strategy Development

Data is increasingly recognized as an invaluable resource that can be used to identify, inform and solve issues. Investing in data builds and strengthens a reliable foundation for data collection; which is a key part of representing the work of the Friendship Centre Movement in a true and meaningful way to empower positive change.

The work of a dedicated data position will help the BCAAFC establish best practices around data collection, management, and governance foundations to improve the control over ownership, and usefulness, of the data that Friendship Centres generate.

## Increasing Data Capacity

The Research and Data Analyst position was created in 2020. A *Path to a Data Strategy* roadmap was then developed in the 2020-21 fiscal to serve as a guide to improve data management. The following highlights our accomplishments since:

- Improvements in the BCAAFC's in-office data and records support. As part of the Path to a Data

Strategy the Research and Data Analyst evaluates data systems and provides support to increase the data capacity of the Provincial Office.

- Increased accessibility to BC Friendship Centre Movement data and core program narratives; resulting in improving statistical support to BCAAFC advocacy, policy and fund raising work.
- Advocacy for expanding the collaboration between the BCAAFC and NAFC in regards to an overarching National Data Strategy. Data governance and ownership are important components of self-determination. A data strategy establishes a data governance framework to help guide data decisions, solutions and maintenance going forward and support FCM strategic decisions.
- Working member of the National Data Strategy Working Group. This working group was established in 2021 and includes members from all Provincial Territory Associations (PTAs), the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC), and



representatives working on the Bridging Across Canada database pilot project. The working group is developing a national data strategy, titled North Star: A National Data Strategy for the NAFC and all FCM members.

### What's Ahead

The BCAAFC will continue to build towards a robust and sustainable data strategy, following the guidance of the National Data Strategy working group and, BCAAFC *Path to a Data Strategy* roadmap.

Continued collaboration with Friendship Centres and the NAFC will ensure we are implementing the best possible solutions to achieve shared objectives and maintain high quality data collection and records management across the Movement.

## *Path To A Data Strategy*

**Discovery:** Exploring current data positioning and establishing a baseline for improved data infrastructure.

**Recommendations:** Establishing best practices and implementing recommendations for improvements.

**Framework:** Creating a data governance framework to guide future decision making.



### Ki-Low-Na Friendship Centre

The Ki-Low-Na Friendship Centre invested time and funding into land-based programming in response to the need for outdoor programming. The #LandBack Adventure Program facilitated an overnight camping trip for Friendship Centre youth.

### Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association

On Truth and Reconciliation Day, FRAFCA hosted a table at a community event to share information on Friendship Centre programs and services and offer support to those interested in becoming involved with the Friendship Centre Movement.







**Mark  
Atleo**

"The Friendship Centre has been great to me. It's a great people place for all ages – whether it's Elders or youth. I've watched and learned these last couple of years volunteering at the Friendship Centre, and they've helped me a lot. Congratulations!"



**Jean  
Smith**

"[BCAAFC] have provided me with numerous opportunities to connect with community as an Elder. I've been involved with the Friendship Centre since 1969, so it's very important to me to be connected. Congratulations on 50 years – awesome work. It's beautiful to see how things have expanded from 1969!"



**Patti  
Elander**

"Friendship Centres have brought so much comfort to our families and especially to our Elders. Congratulations for all the good that you do and how you are able to instill our culture and tradition."



**Noella  
Gouchie**

"Pretty much everything, my whole life, is completely about the Friendship Centre. It's bringing the younger generations out to be a better person. To me, I would be lost totally without this Movement. Congratulations very much to the BCAAFC!"

# Economic Recovery Funding

The Economic Recovery (Eco Reco) Initiative was a one-time funding opportunity for Indigenous communities to provide funds for short term skills training. The goal of this funding was to support community recovery and resiliency for Indigenous peoples, whose employment, income, and livelihood was disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. In total, 99 community members had the opportunity to complete training within a supportive environment, and 80 participants reported obtaining employment following their training.

Six Friendship Centres received Eco Reco funding to deliver training programs in their communities.

## **Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre Society (Smithers)**

The Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre Society partnered with Native Education College to deliver a health care assistants training program. Eight participants joined the 10-month program, held in Smithers and Burns Lake, and six obtained immediate employment within Northern Health and the Gitxsan Health Society following completion of the program.

The recruitment of health care staff to northern BC has been identified as a priority provincially. Dze L K'ant overcame challenges regarding practicum placements and funding disruptions to ensure this training program was delivered successfully. Program feedback underlined the benefits of community-based programs that allow students and families to remain connected to their communities, and support the retention of skilled professionals in northwestern BC.

## **Wachiay Friendship Centre Society (Courtenay)**

The Eco Reco funding supported two programs delivered by the Wachiay Friendship Centre Society: The Health Care Assistants Training Program and Introduction to Commercial Screenprinting.

The Health Care Assistants Training Program was delivered in partnership with Excel College and had 12 participants. Six participants completed the program and found employment.

The Introduction to Commercial Screenprinting program was delivered through the centre's social



enterprise, Wachiay Studio, which offers services for artists, schools, community groups and individuals. 30 participants completed the program.

### **Friendship House Association of Prince Rupert**

The Friendship House Association of Prince Rupert delivered the Labour Market Preparedness Program, which included: Occupational First Aid Level 3; Introduction to Welding and Plumbing; Drivers License training; and a Jobs Club, with real time job opportunities.

The program had 31 participants in total:

- 12 participants completed Occupational First Aid Level 3 (OFA 3), nine of which found employment within two months of completion.
- Eight participants completed a three-day Introduction to Welding and Plumbing workshop, receiving hands-on training with a Red Seal trades instructor.
- Nine participants completed the Driving 2 Careers Workshop.

## **Program Statistics**

**6** Friendship Centre communities reached

**7** training sessions delivered

**99** Indigenous clients served

**80** clients gaining employment



### **Victoria Native Friendship Centre**

*Katherine Knott has had a long-time dream of becoming a firefighter and has been volunteering for her local fire station until a work injury in 2019. Still wanting to pursue her career goal, Katherine is now training to become a helicopter pilot, so that she can fight wildfires from up above. We are proud to be sponsoring Katherine in partnership with Curve Lake First Nation and WorkSafe BC.*

## **Eco Reco**

### **Prince George Native Friendship Centre Society**

The Prince George Native Friendship Centre Society facilitated Firefighting Training and Occupational First Aid Level 2 for 16 participants. All 16 participants were able to obtain sustainable employment as a result of the training. For six of the participants, this also meant moving away from homelessness.

### **Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society**

The Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society (VAFCS) Employment Services Program provides support with resumes and cover letters and connects Urban Indigenous participants with relevant academic advisors and/or potential employers. In addition, the program provides transit passes, as transportation is often a barrier to employment for participants. Due to its success, VAFCS has requested to extend the program to September, 2022.

### **Victoria Native Friendship Centre**

The Victoria Native Friendship Centre (VNFC) addressed barriers to employment including lack of education, transportation and a high cost of living in Greater

Victoria Area. The Centre created a mentorship program for Indigenous entrepreneurs. The program supported entrepreneurs at all stages of their business journey to reach out, find support, gain access to mentorship and business know how. This program supported a participant to attend flight school with the goal of becoming a helicopter pilot.

### What's Ahead

These funding outcomes provided further evidence for the value of employment services delivered by Friendship Centres, and underlined the need for long term funding to support sustainable employment service programs within every centre.

### Thank You

Thank you to the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training for the Eco Reco funding, and to Excel College and Native Education College for partnering with Friendship Centres to support the successful delivery of the training sessions offered.

### Wachiay Friendship Centre Society

*Arlene and Lisa are a Ts'msyen mother/daughter team who learned how to screen print in order to create a business that strives to share accessible Sm'algyax products that share meaningful messages, inspire Sm'algyax revitalization, celebrate their culture, and teach their language. Their passion for language revitalization is evident in their work, with proceeds being used to support Sm'algyax language revitalization. Through TikTok, their products with the message "No Pride in Genocide" went viral and sold out on Etsy within 3 hours, raising nearly \$900 for the Residential School Survivors society. Find their brand, Gawagani Artworks, on Etsy.com.*

# Education

## Post-Secondary Student Support Program

The Post-Secondary Student Support Program (PSSSP) provides eligible First Nations students with funding to access education opportunities at the post-secondary level, including university and college entrance preparation programs.

The PSSSP program was designed to fill a funding gap for students who are Registered Status Indians, but who do not have membership with their band and thus do not have access to education funding via a First Nations Band. The funding is prioritized to cover the cost of tuition, fees, and books for as many eligible applicants as possible.

## Emergency Post-Secondary Education Funding

Indigenous Services Canada also provided Emergency Post-Secondary Education Funding to further support students through the hardships caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The emergency funding was distributed to all

successful PSSSP applicants as an additional \$1,500 to their approved PSSSP funding.

## What's Ahead

The PSSSP contract has been renewed for an additional five years (fiscal 2022-fiscal 2026). The funding amount for each year is yet to be determined and will be negotiated on a year-by-year basis. The BCAAFC will continue to support Indigenous post-secondary students in their pursuit of higher education.

## First Citizens Fund Student Bursary Program

The First Citizens Fund (FCF) Student Bursary Program provides financial awards to Indigenous students enrolled in post-secondary education. To be eligible, students must be of Indigenous ancestry (status, non-status, Métis, or Inuit); be a permanent resident of British Columbia; and registered in a provincially-recognized post-secondary institution with a minimum GPA of 2.5 or a C+ grade equivalent. Applications from eligible students are assessed based on financial



need, giving priority to those who do not receive other financial support for their education.

### What's Ahead

The contract for the FCF Student Bursary Program has been approved for the upcoming year. The BCAAFC will continue to administer FCF Student Bursary funds to support Indigenous post-secondary students.

Each year, the BCAAFC receives hundreds of applications for post-secondary education funding. The BCAAFC Education Department will continue to advocate for increased funding to better accommodate the needs of Indigenous students, the increasing costs of post-secondary education, and the growing number of funding applicants.

### Thank You

Thank you to Indigenous Services Canada for funding to support the Post-Secondary Student Support Program and to the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation for funding to support the FCF Student Bursary Program.

## PSSSP Funding

**14** students supported for their Summer 2021 term

**46** students supported for their Fall 2021 and Winter 2022 terms

## FCF Student Bursaries

**29** students awarded \$900 bursary for Winter 2021 term

**14** students awarded \$900 bursary for Summer 2021 term

**26** students awarded \$850 bursary for Fall 2021 term

# BC Indigenous Youth 3C Challenge

The BC Indigenous Youth 3C Challenge provided Indigenous youth with a unique training opportunity to support Indigenous entrepreneurialism. Each 3C Challenge cohort included five days of facilitated business training and 45 days of Indigenous mentorship.

The 3C Challenge ran from 2018 to 2021, fulfilling its objective to empower Indigenous youth to explore entrepreneurship and gain new lifelong skills. The 3C project functioned as an innovative, partnership-driven complement to the Aboriginal Skills and Employment Training Strategy (ASETS) to support training-to-employment models and advancements in the Indigenous labour market.

## Program Accomplishments

The 3C Challenge continued to thrive throughout COVID-19, pivoting quickly to an online model that allowed for greater program enrollment. From 2018 to 2021, over 675 Indigenous youth from all over B.C. participated in the 3C Challenge.

The feedback and outcomes from each 3C cohort demonstrated the value gained by each participant, and the indirect value provided to their communities. Younger generations of Indigenous youth will benefit from the outcomes of the 3C Challenge in the years to come. There will be lasting employment and economic benefits, but also inspiration and empowerment from the participants who were involved in the 3C Challenge; their parents, sisters, brothers, friends, or community members were able to show everyone “they too can follow their entrepreneurial dreams.”

## What's Ahead

Going forward, feedback from the 3C Challenge will support the design and development of new employment and training initiatives.

Participants, facilitators and mentors identified opportunities for additional educational sessions covering financial and legal topics such as banking, licensing, permits, and contemporary technology for business, such as Shopify, Squarespace, and shipping software.

## Thank You

Thank you to Service Canada, the BCAAFC's program partners, the University of Victoria, Gustavson School of Business and National Consortium of Indigenous Economic Development, and the participants, facilitators and mentors who contributed to the success of the 3C Challenge.

## 3C Challenge participants



## Program Statistics

**10** cohorts from April to August 2021

**50** days of Indigenous business mentorship for each cohort

**53** distinct communities served

**143** Indigenous participants



# Employment, Life Skills, and Training

The Employment, Life Skills, and Training (ELST) program provides comprehensive, culturally-relevant support to help individuals achieve their goals, professionally and personally. The program offers one-to-one support and group training opportunities with a focus on meeting each client where they're at.

ELST Coordinators are available to support clients with:

- Resume and cover letter writing
- Job searches
- Assistance with form completion
- Career counselling
- Post job placement support

The ELST program offers financial support by providing funding for required equipment, work gear, childcare costs, books, training software, examination fees, and other course materials.

This fiscal year, Friendship Centres offered a variety of group training opportunities in-person and online, ranging from driver's license programs, to computer literacy, to barista training. The training and certification

opportunities in highest demand included: Occupational First Aid Level 1 (OFA 1), H2S Alive Course, Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS), Food Safe Training, Common Safety Orientation (CSO), Ground Disturbance Course, and Serving it Right Course.

Friendship Centres have seen an increase in clients requiring support to navigate career and life changes provoked by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including clients who have been absent from the workforce for over a year. Often the longer a client has been out of the workforce, the more challenging it is for them to obtain employment. The feedback from Friendship Centre clients demonstrates the value of the ELST program's inclusive approach to employment services, which offers solutions to meet the unique needs of each client.

## Feedback from ELST Coordinators and Clients

Many clients reported that they could not have attained employment without the support of the ELST program.

Recurring themes within ELST client feedback include:

- Access to work gear sourced and paid for by the program led to employment opportunities that were otherwise out of reach to clients who could not afford work gear.
- Training and support offered through the program increased participants' confidence in their abilities, which many attributed to their success.
- Post job placement support offered through the program helped clients retain employment and contributed to their confidence and feeling of safety on the job.

## Challenges Affecting Friendship Centres' Operations and Client Engagement

The primary challenge for Friendship Centres offering ELST programming was the recruitment and retainment of qualified candidates to fill the ELST Program Coordinator positions.

Five of the Friendship Centres experienced employee turnover for their ELST Employment Coordinator role, as well as turnover in executive positions within the

centre. The lack of qualified candidates is particularly acute in smaller communities, as the incentives and access to services are not available.

All Friendship Centres reported a shift in client engagement due to COVID-19-related barriers. As a result, client enrollment and interest in programs was lower than expected, and did not accurately reflect the growing need for support and requests for services.

## Client Reported Barriers to Employment

The most common barrier to employment that Friendship Centre clients report is not having a driver's licence, often due to an inability to pay off fines.

Additionally, many program participants who obtain their driver's licence can not afford a reliable vehicle. In relation, the second most common barrier reported is lack of transportation, as clients in smaller communities do not have access to public transportation. Lack of work experience is the third highest reported barrier.

The fourth highest reported barrier is lack of stable housing. This issue is felt throughout the province,

# Employment, Life Skills, and Training

however, it is extremely prevalent amongst participants accessing ELST programming. Many Friendship Centres have partnerships with BC Housing, but waitlists are long and there is a housing shortage throughout BC.

Discrimination because of gender, ethnicity or disability is another barrier reported by clients. The BCAAFC advocates for action against discrimination and racism and is involved in engagement for anti-racism data legislation to address this issue on a provincial level.

## What's Ahead

The ELST program successfully addresses the need for community-based employment and training support for Indigenous peoples. The program is providing pathways for clients to access higher education, higher level employment, and higher quality of life.

The goal is to strengthen and grow the ELST program to run in all 25 BC Friendship Centres. Long term, stable funding is needed to refine programming, gain client trust, build relationships with employers, and leverage community partnerships.

## Thank You

Thank you to the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training for funding to support the Employment, Life Skills, and Training Program.



**Computer literacy training at Friendship House Association of Prince Rupert**

## Kermode Friendship Society

*A Friendship Centre client has received work gear from Kermode Friendship Society to secure a position with a construction company as a labourer foreman. Their journey began with Kermode in June 2019 as a participant in the Key to Employment Program where they received the training needed to be on a construction worksite. The Friendship Centre client has advanced in their position with multiple contractors on the Kitimat LNG worksite. During their time with Kermode they have established a stable and growing wellness plan that has helped maintain sobriety and has contributed to positive relationships with family. They have also connected with Elders and cultural knowledge keepers, which has helped in regaining cultural connection to practice and teach old traditions.*





### Port Alberni Friendship Centre

The Friendship Centre put together “hiring packages” for clients to support their new employment journeys.

### Tansi Friendship Centre

The Friendship Centre supported clients in receiving their Environmental Certificates.



# Leading Indigenous Service Sector Training

The Leading Indigenous Service Sector Training (LISST) funding supports the BCAAFC's ongoing commitment to providing training and development opportunities for Indigenous peoples, with the goal of building capacity and increasing the number of skilled Indigenous workers in the social services sector. The BCAAFC administered LISST grant funding to Indigenous-led non-profit organizations to support training opportunities for their Indigenous staff.

The LISST grant funding provided opportunities for 96 Indigenous employees to complete certifiable skills training. Four Indigenous-led non-profit organizations outside of the Friendship Centre Movement accessed LISST funding, enhancing the BCAAFC's relationships with other social service networks.

## What's Ahead

Applications for LISST grant funding closed on March 17, 2022. A special projects team is determining the best use of the remaining LISST funds, taking into consideration feedback from Friendship Centre staff who have expressed the desire for an Indigenous

Master of Business Administration (MBA) program. The Indigenous MBA program would build off the success of the Management Training Academy, delivered by the BCAAFC, in partnership with the University of Victoria's Peter B. Gustavson School of Business, in the 2019-20 fiscal year.

## Social Services Sector Advisory Committee

The BCAAFC is an active member of the Social Services Sector Advisory Committee, chaired by the Ministry of Social Services and Poverty Reduction. This committee, made of leaders from the social services sector is committed to prioritizing reconciliation. The BCAAFC extends its deepest appreciation to our colleagues in the sector, for demonstrating their commitment to a reconciliation agenda. Special thanks to Rick FitzZaland of the Federation of Community Social Services for his leadership in setting the direction for the sector.

## Thank You

Thank you to the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction for Leading Indigenous Service Sector Training funding.

# Building Capacity to Address Indigenous Gender-Based Violence

The number of women and girls killed by violence in BC is among the highest by region in Canada (Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability, 2021). Indigenous women and girls are 12 times more likely to be murdered or missing than non-Indigenous women, a number that is even higher for Indigenous women and girls in the North (National Inquiry, 2019).

The BCAAFC has a long history of supporting work to end gender-based violence (GBV) against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. Supporting the development of long term solutions to end gender-based violence was a priority for the BCAAFC this past fiscal year.

## Women and Gender Equality Canada

The BCAAFC partnered with the Battered Women's Support Services (BWSS), Aboriginal Housing Management Association (AHMA), and BC Society for Transition Houses (BCSTH) to develop and deliver a curriculum designed to increase the capacity of

Indigenous women to address gender-based violence in their communities. This project is decolonizing anti-violence training by centering the knowledge and experience of Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, whose input and engagement is fundamental to the curriculum's creation and implementation.

## Addressing Gaps in Anti-Violence Support Services

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, most GBV organizations shut down for eight weeks. Intimate partner violence increased during this time, and Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people fleeing violence had nowhere to go for services or support. The gap in culturally-safe GBV support services available to Indigenous women remains a key safety issue.

Taking action to fill this gap, the BCAAFC, in collaboration with project partners, established an Indigenous women and 2SLGBTQQIA+ advisory committee to inform the design of a training curriculum specifically for Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people.

Advisory committee members call attention to the challenges and priorities within their own communities and collaborate to identify community-based strategies for addressing GBV.

### What's Ahead

Training will be delivered throughout the eight regions of BC, including all 25 Friendship Centres. Anti-violence advocates will be invited to share their experience and knowledge with trainees, which will help to enrich the program and strengthen networks.

There are three 15-day training cohorts scheduled, each with 36 Indigenous participants. The first cohort will run from April to July 2022, followed by the second cohort from September to November 2022, and the final training cohort from January to March 2023. For each trainee, honorariums, accommodation, travel, transportation and meals will be covered to reduce social and economic barriers.

Following completion of the training, trainees will have the knowledge and tools required to effectively



### Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre Society

At the Heart: MMIWG Commemoration Mural Project. Through this process, by harnessing the power of public art, the Dze L K'ant Friendship Centre brought their community together to honour local missing women and girls and to support their families healing.



# Building Capacity to Address Indigenous Gender-Based Violence

advocate for people in high-risk situations through post-mentorships, community-based supports and on-going experiential learning opportunities.

## Thank You

Thank you to Women and Gender Equality Canada for funding to support this project. The BCAAFC is honoured to work alongside the Battered Women's Support Services (BWSS), Aboriginal Housing Management Association (AHMA), and BC Society for Transition Houses (BCSTH) on this initiative.

## TELUS Mobility for Good Program

Increasing accessibility to mobile communication is one part of BC Friendship Centres' strategy to prevent violence against Indigenous women and girls and improve their safety.

The BCAAFC partnered with TELUS through the TELUS Mobility for Good Program to provide mobile phones to Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people who would otherwise not have access to cellular

communication while fleeing violence or in high-risk environments. The phones include one year of nationwide talk, text, and data.

Since the partnership was announced in September of 2021, the BCAAFC has received 200 phones from TELUS and has successfully distributed 147 to community members. The goal is to distribute 1,000 phones by the end of the 2022 year. The majority of phones will be distributed in areas identified as high risk for human trafficking and violence against Indigenous women and girls.

## What's Ahead

BCAAFC is pursuing ongoing improvements for this project to ensure the application and distribution processes are as streamlined as possible. Reliable WiFi and cellular service in remote locations and northern BC is also needed. There have been federal and provincial commitments to completing cellular coverage along Highway 16, which is known as the "Highway of Tears." Completing cellular coverage along Highway 16 was a recommendation from The Highway of Tears

Symposium Report (2006) and National Inquiry Into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2019).

### Thank You

We are grateful to partner with TELUS to provide access to cellular communication for Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people to support their safety and wellness.

MMIWG  
Awareness  
Event at  
Fort St. John  
Friendship  
Society



### Words from a partner:

*The Indigenous outreach team at Peers Victoria Resources Society connects with several Indigenous women with lived experience in homelessness, substance use, risks of violence, and multiple barriers. A barrier identified by the women we work with includes the financial and accessibility difficulties in obtaining a phone and phone plan. We generously received 11 phones and 1-year plans through BCAAFC as part of the TELUS Mobility for Good Programs. The phones have been received by the women who were in urgent need of them for safety, health, and resources connection reasons.*



# Doulas for Aboriginal Families

The Doulas for Aboriginal Families Grant Program (DAFGP) addresses health inequities related to birth by increasing accessibility to doula/birth keeper care for Indigenous families with the goal of supporting healthy births and post-partum outcomes. The DAFGP achieves this primarily through financial support (up to \$1,200 per birth) for Indigenous families in BC to access full spectrum, labour, birth and postpartum doula services and support. Doula care has been documented to lead to improved outcomes for birthers and their babies. This is especially important for Indigenous families, given the disparities that exist in healthcare services and outcomes for Indigenous people.

## DAFGP Cultural Safety Training

It is imperative that doulas provide anti-racist and culturally-safe care, and advocate for their clients amid ongoing systemic racism in healthcare. In recognition of this, the DAFGP supported the creation of an online cultural safety training, specific to birth

work. The training consists of four 10-minute video modules, and includes corresponding worksheets. Each module explores various sub-themes and topics, and cumulatively provides doulas with a background in the protective traditions of Indigenous birth, an understanding of what culturally-safe and trauma-informed care looks like, and the role of the doula in providing such care. The DAFGP requires that every non-Indigenous DAFGP registered doula completes this training in order to continue supporting DAFGP families.

## Circles of Birth Keepers

The Circles of Birth Keepers project began in the Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association (FRAFCA) to help support Indigenous birthwork by offering: skill-building and learning opportunities for parents, families and doulas; birth equipment loan programs; opportunities for knowledge exchange and speaker series for doulas.

The Circles of Birth Keepers project has since expanded into Sacred Wolf Friendship Centre (Port Hardy), Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society (Kelowna), and Kermode Friendship Society (Terrace), and the project continues to grow.

### Indigenous Doulas

The DAFGP strives to empower Indigenous people interested in supporting birthwork within their communities. The following opportunities helped to increase the number of Indigenous doulas available to support families:

- A four-day intensive Indigenous doula training was developed by Nicole Williams, an Indigenous birth keeper, and delivered to 20 Indigenous participants at the Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society in April of 2021.
- The DAFGP's Indigenous Doula Training was facilitated at Kermode Friendship Society in Terrace, and recently was privately funded by midwives in Hazelton.

In the 2020-21 fiscal year, the DAFGP secured additional funding to sustain the growing number of applicants and ensure every eligible family that applied was approved for doula support.

**435** Indigenous families in **82** communities across the province received support.

Since 2013, the DAFGP has supported over **2,241** families, with over **385** doulas registered to the program.





# Doulas for Families

## What's Ahead

The DAFGP is taking action on recommendations in three main areas: program delivery; capacity; and funding.

### Program Delivery

- Expand the Circle of Birth Keepers program and/or create networks of birth workers and gradually shift service delivery approach to a team-based model.
- Increase partnerships at the local level to connect birth workers and families to existing supports, programs and services.
- Increase partnerships at provincial and federal levels to support system level linkages, seek new funding avenues, and increase program awareness.
- Increase program awareness among health care providers and stakeholders.
- Streamline data collection and review data collection tools to improve data collection, protection and use.

### Capacity

- Ensure a culturally-safe, high-quality workforce by confirming all active birth workers have met program requirements, and by tracking family feedback on birth workers.
- Provide ongoing professional development opportunities.

- Host quarterly sharing circles for birth workers.
- Create mentorship opportunities for Indigenous birth workers.
- Promote and advocate to elevate the role of Indigenous birth workers in the mainstream health care system.

### Funding

- Increase the maximum grant allowance to \$2,000 for packages that include birth and post-partum services.
- Clarify the funding process for high-needs and high-risk clients.
- Determine a service delivery and fee model for the program.
- Provide payments to birth workers via Electronic Funds Transfers (EFT).
- Undertake a program-wide needs assessment to determine funding needs inclusive of potential program growth, changes, and innovations identified within this evaluation.

### Thank You

Thanks to the Provincial Health Services Authority, BC Women's Health Foundation, and additional funding from First Nations Health Authority, the DAFGP was able to fund more families than ever before in the 2021-22 fiscal year.



**Redwillow Dawn Morningstar  
Peters, DAFGP Doula**

# Child Care Planner

The BCAAFC Child Care Planner (CCP) supports childcare programs and services in each of the 25 Friendship Centres to best meet the needs of urban Indigenous families with children in the early years.

The CCP coordinates professional development opportunities that build childcare programming capacity within Friendship Centres and strengthen their relationships within the community. Building consistent and meaningful connections with Friendship Centre's Early Childcare Education (ECE)/Early Childcare Development (ECD) management and frontline staff is fundamental to this work.

## BCAAFC Early Years Community of Practice

This fiscal year, the CCP coordinated the first ever BCAAFC Early Years Community of Practice, an initiative bringing together 18 of the 25 Friendship Centres to share ideas, culture, experiences, strategies and celebrate the collective strength of Friendship Centre childcare programming.

The BCAAFC Early Years Community of Practice

gathering took place May 3-5 on Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh traditional territories in Richmond.

## What's Ahead

In order to provide meaningful support for BC Friendship Centres childcare programming, it is important to take into consideration the diversity of each Friendship Centre, their programs, and the urban Indigenous families they serve. In a short time, the BCAAFC Early Years Community of Practice initiative has proven to be a valuable form of sustained engagement between Friendship Centres and the CCP, contributing to effective support strategies that meet the unique needs of each centre.

Building off the success of the in-person gathering for the BCAAFC Early Years Community of Practice, three virtual gatherings will take place throughout the year to reconnect the group and continue important conversations to support the continued success of childcare programming. Going forward, the goal will be to host one in-person gathering each year, with supporting virtual sessions to follow.

Thank you

Thank you to the Ministry of Child and Family Development for funding to support the BCAAFC Child Care Planner position.



**BCAAFC Early Years Community  
of Practice Gathering**

## **Words from gathering participants:**

*The gathering captures the spirit of testimony and vision shared among the participants and facilitators. I am humbled to bear witness to this catalyst experience. I look forward to our continuous connecting.*

---

*It was so nice meeting people and being in person. This morning I passed on funding information from the workshop to someone so the ripples are already widening.*

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*I'm not exaggerating when I say this was the best conference I've ever been to! Thanks to everyone for making this week very special.*



## Aboriginal Infant Development Program and Aboriginal Supported Child Development Program Provincial Office

The Aboriginal Infant Development Program (AIDP) began operation in 1992 and is celebrating 30 years. Aboriginal Supported Child Development Program (ASCD) began in 2006. The BCAAFC has held the provincial office contract for AIDP since 2006 and ASCD since 2010. The AIDP/ASCD provincial office supports programs that support Indigenous children and their families. Visit [aidp.bc.ca](http://aidp.bc.ca) and [ascdp.bc.ca](http://ascdp.bc.ca) for more information.

### Provincial Accomplishments

In the 2021-2022 fiscal year, AIDP/ASCD regional advisors did regular check-ins to share ideas around navigating ongoing and emerging challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as promote self-care and ensure their team did not feel the isolation of the past two years. The AIDP/ASCD regional advisors also joined together to complete a strategic plan moving forward using Alderhill Planning Inc. This gave them an opportunity to re-group and evaluate where they are.



ASCD



AIDP



AIDP/ASCD Provincial Advisors, Diana Elliott and Jackie Watts, are members of the Ministry of Children and Family Development's Advisory Council, chaired by Honourable Mitzi Dean, to help guide the MCFD in funding services and supports that are accessible and inclusive of all children and youth with support needs.

In addition to the MCFD's Advisory Council, the AIDP/ASCD Provincial Office is represented on a number of committees, all dedicated towards improving and increasing support for children and youth with support needs and their families and communities.

Professional development opportunities are continued to be offered to early childhood development and child care providers through training modules coordinated by the AIDP/ASCD provincial office and are being formatted for online access. Professional Development funds are also available to IDP/AIDP and SCD/ASCD professionals through annual funding from MCFD.



AIDP/ASCD programs worked to ensure families did not feel left behind or isolated as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. All programs continued to provide ongoing communication, including information on socialization and child development. Activity bags were delivered to families' homes and food security initiatives included the distribution of meal preparation boxes and grocery store gift cards.

In 2022, the AIDP is celebrating 30 years of supporting Indigenous families in B.C. wherever they live. The AIDP has 55 programs plus four satellite offices with approximately 118 frontline workers.

### What's Ahead

Both the AIDP and ASCD programs continue to advocate for equitable funding to support Indigenous-led, culturally-safe programming to support children and their families. There are communities interested in implementing AIDP/ASCD programming without the

adequate funds to do so. Closing these funding gaps will have a significantly positive impact on the health and wellness of families and whole communities.

As part of AIDP's 30th anniversary celebration, the program is creating a volume II of The Teachings of the Elders. This will be a beautiful gift for AIDP workers and the families they serve. The volume is expected to be completed in August of 2022.

### Thank You

The Ministry of Children and Family Development provides funding for AIDP/ASCD under two-year contracts. For more information on the AIDP/ASCD programs, and their full annual reports, please visit each website at [www.aidp.bc.ca](http://www.aidp.bc.ca) and [www.ascdp.bc.ca](http://www.ascdp.bc.ca).

# Board and Councils

## Board of Directors

- Dr. Sharon McIvor, President
- Elijah Mack, Vice President
- Calvin Albright, Secretary
- Fabian Alexis, Treasurer
- Diana Charlie, Youth Representative
- Matthew Baran, Director
- Tami Omeasoo, Director
- Rosanna McGregor, Director
- Carol Camille, Director
- Cyndi Stevens, BC Representative on the NAFC Board

## Elders Council

- Marge White 'Na-cha-uks'
- Basil 'Buzz' Morissette
- Minnie Kenoras
- Laura Fortin
- Wally Samuel
- Stanley Namox

## Thank You

Thank you to the outgoing Board members, Joanne Mills (Treasurer), Cerelina Willie (Director), Kerry Chelsea (Director), and to Patricia Wilson (BC Representative on the NAFC Board), for sharing their guidance, knowledge and expertise.

# Closing Remarks

Our family at the BCAAFC is honoured to be celebrating the organization's 50th Anniversary Year. The BC Friendship Centre Movement continues to grow as an innovative social service network that reflects the priorities of urban Indigenous communities across the province.

The body of knowledge, experiences and expertise within our member centres provides invaluable solutions to nation-wide challenges. We know that services by and for Indigenous people are the most effective and long overdue for equitable funding.

While navigating the ongoing impacts of a global pandemic, we witnessed protests over land use, police violence, Treaty rights, racism in health care and the violation of human rights. We also responded to extreme weather resulting from the environmental crises we are facing. When other service providers closed their doors, Friendship Centres were a safe place for people to receive support and connection. Each year, Friendship Centres find innovative ways to meet the growing demand for their programs and services while funding lags behind. Basic core funding needs to be guaranteed, continuous, and competitive to provide a stable base from which all work can grow over the long term.

This fiscal year, 435 Indigenous families were supported through the Doula for Aboriginal Families Grant Program; 129 students received support on their post-secondary journeys; and over 1,100 Indigenous community members accessed employment and life skills services through Friendship Centres as a pathway to higher education, meaningful employment, and a higher quality of life. Collectively, we made significant advancements towards addressing gender-based violence to improve the safety and protection of Indigenous women, girl, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ in our communities.

On behalf of the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC) and our 25 member centres across the province, thank you for your work in helping to shape a society that is safe and equitable for Indigenous peoples. We look forward to the next 50 years and beyond.



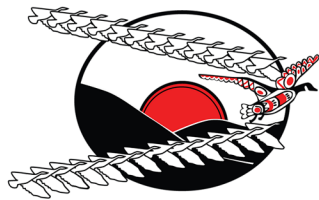
# With Appreciation

## Collectively, BC Friendship Centres Have Over 600 Community Partnerships

Thank you to our many funders and partners. Your financial contributions, collective knowledge, experience, and shared dedication to our cause helps us in the journey towards a vibrant society that supports the health, wellness and prosperity of Indigenous peoples.

## A National Network From Coast to Coast to Coast

We are proud members of the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC). Thank you to the NAFC Team for their guidance, advocacy, and support. We are so grateful for the support and shared success of our growing urban Indigenous family.



**BCAAFC** | BC Association of  
Aboriginal Friendship Centres



**National Association  
of Friendship Centres**





## Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association (FRAFCA)

The Friendship Centre's board, executive, and leadership team worked together to complete FRAFCA's new strategic plan.





**BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres**  
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