



BCAAFC | BC Association of
Aboriginal Friendship Centres

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Annual ‘Gathering Our Voices’ Indigenous Youth Leadership Training Event Scheduled to Return in March 2023

B.C. – August 31, 2022 – The Gathering Our Voices (GOV): Indigenous Youth Leadership Training event brings together over 1,000 participants from across British Columbia and Canada to learn from Indigenous leaders, celebrate culture, share knowledge, and foster relationships to create positive change within the lives of Indigenous youth and their communities.

GOV 2023 is scheduled to take place on the traditional territories of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations in the City of Vancouver from March 22 to March 25, 2023. Registration for the event will open at 10:00am PST on October 17, 2022.

GOV is co-hosted by the Provincial Aboriginal Youth Council (PAYC) and the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC). The 18th annual GOV event was cancelled in March 2020, just days before it was set to take place, due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The event organizers made the decision to postpone GOV until it could return safely.

“Indigenous-led initiatives are the most effective at reaching Indigenous youth,” said Leslie Varley, Executive Director of the BCAAFC, “we know that Gathering Our Voices has a long-lasting, positive impact on youth and their communities, with many youth telling us that their experiences at GOV profoundly influenced their path in life.”

BC Friendship Centres are Indigenous-led, social service organizations that provide culturally-relevant programs and services for Indigenous peoples living in urban areas and away from home. Indigenous youth are an integral part of the Friendship Centre Movement, preserving traditional knowledge and leading positive change with the vision for an equitable, vibrant society for all. GOV helps Indigenous youth access invaluable tools, resources, and partnerships to further their success.

GOV takes place over four consecutive days and includes keynote speakers, workshops, entertainment, career and education exhibitors, and an artisan marketplace. Applications are now open for individuals, groups, and organizations interested in collaborating with the 2023 event to be held in March.

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**For media and event sponsorship inquiries, please contact: communications@bcaafc.com
To learn more about Gathering Our Voices, please visit: gatheringourvoices.ca**