



BC Association of Aboriginal
Friendship Centres

BCAFC

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Budget 2026 Raises Concerns for Urban Indigenous Communities and Friendship Centres

VICTORIA, B.C. - As urban Indigenous families face rising costs, housing instability, and growing pressures on health and child welfare systems, BC Friendship Centres — the province's frontline Indigenous service providers — were left without new operational funding in Budget 2026.

BC Friendship Centres are not-for-profit, Indigenous-led organizations that promote, develop, and deliver accessible, culturally grounded programs and services across 25 communities throughout the province. Each Friendship Centre tailors its services to local needs, providing prevention-focused supports that stabilize families and reduce strain on public systems.

"While we welcome investments in health, children and youth, and community safety, it is deeply concerning that urban Indigenous people and Indigenous-led services continue to be overlooked in implementation," said Nox Stikine, Annette Morgan, President of the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres. "Friendship Centres are prevention infrastructure. When we invest in them, we reduce downstream pressures on hospitals, the justice system, child welfare, and homelessness. Stable operational funding for Friendship Centres is not only a social investment — it is fiscally responsible."

The provincial government's failure to include new operational funding for Friendship Centres in Budget 2026 signals a concerning gap between stated commitments to reconciliation and measurable investment in Indigenous-led infrastructure. Funding Indigenous organizations and prioritizing Indigenous-led initiatives results in programs and services that are culturally relevant and effective, and it also upholds the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples as recognized by national and international law, including the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (UNDRIP).

"Reconciliation must be measurable," said Celeste Hayward, Executive Director of the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres. "It must be reflected in how funding flows, how services are delivered, and how outcomes improve for Indigenous people living in

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urban communities. Indigenous families must have culturally safe navigation and service access in the provinces children and youth support system.”

Friendship Centres are ready to partner with the provincial government to improve the lives and futures of urban Indigenous people throughout British Columbia. We encourage Friendship Centres and Provincial/Territorial Associations to continue their outreach to their local government representatives and convey the importance of continued and sustainable investment in the Friendship Centre Movement. We urge community members and volunteers to share their views and the impact Friendship Centres have on social media. And we urge the government to reaffirm its commitment to Indigenous rights, recognize the significance of this Movement, and continue to **invest** in the vital work of Friendship Centres like ours.

Contact

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