



BC Association of Aboriginal
Friendship Centres

BCA AFC

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Thousands of Indigenous Youth Gather in Vancouver for Gathering Our Voices 2026

VANCOUVER, B.C. — The BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCA AFC) is proud to welcome more than 2,000 Indigenous youth, chaperones, Elders, and community members to Gathering Our Voices 2026 at the Vancouver Convention Centre from March 17-20, 2026.

Now in its 22nd year, Gathering Our Voices (GOV) is the largest Indigenous youth leadership conference in Canada. The annual event brings together Indigenous youth from communities across British Columbia to connect with culture, develop leadership skills, and build relationships that strengthen their communities.

Throughout the week, delegates will participate in workshops, cultural activities, and inspiring plenary events. Youth will learn from Indigenous leaders, artists, athletes, and change-makers while exploring topics such as wellness, education, career development, cultural identity, and community leadership.

“GOV is about uplifting Indigenous youth and reminding them that they belong in every space they choose to step into,” said Nox Stikine, Annette Morgan, President of BCA AFC. “When Indigenous youth come together to share their stories, culture, and dreams for the future, the energy is powerful. Gathering Our Voices creates a space where young people can see their potential reflected back to them.”

In addition to workshops and cultural programming, the conference features major events such as a Cultural Exchange, Fashion Show, Career and Education Fair, and the Honouring Feast for youth in and from care — all designed to celebrate Indigenous creativity, knowledge, and leadership.

“The success stories we hear from previous delegates are amazing,” said Celeste Hayward, Executive Director of BCA AFC. “The youth who attend this conference return home inspired, connected, and ready to lead. Some of the youth become chaperones, staff

BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres
551 Chatham St | Victoria, BC | V8T 1E1 | www.bcaafc.com
(Office) 250-388-5522 or 1-800-990-2432 | (Fax) 250-388-5502



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members, or professional performers at GOV. Investing in Indigenous youth is investing in the future of our communities.”

Gathering Our Voices is hosted by BCAAFC in partnership with their Provincial Indigenous Youth Council. They are honoured to have the support of numerous community partners, the host Nations, Friendship Centres, sponsors, volunteers, and Elders who help make the gathering possible each year.

Contact

Nicole Hall

nhall@bcaafc.com

236-361-9408

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