



National Association
of Friendship Centres
Association nationale
des centres d'amitié

Food Security in the Friendship Centre Movement

Benefit of ISCF Funding

The Indigenous Community Support Fund (ICSF) has been a helpful federal government financial support that Friendship Centres across the country have accessed to provide, among other community responses, food security initiatives to help address the increased needs in urban Indigenous communities due to the COVID-19 global pandemic.

The Friendship Centre Movement (FCM) is comprised of over 100-member Provincial and Territorial Associations (PTAs) and Friendship Centres (FCs) across Canada from coast to coast to coast. For over fifty years, the FCM has been a trusted and community-driven network that provides a vast array of wrap-around services and supports for urban Indigenous communities. Our collective work reaches millions of points of contact in a year and hundreds of thousands of people every single day.

To date, the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC) has received nearly \$43 million in COVID-19 funding—\$6 million of which was earmarked to support food security. The success of the ICSF is due in large part to its flexibility. Friendship Centre efforts go beyond in-house programming. In-person deliveries of food hampers, traditional medicines, and elder and family check-ins provide opportunities for Friendship Centres to understand and address persistent food insecurities and put in place long term solutions, such as working appliances, and navigating medical, financial, social, and judicial supports.

It is important to acknowledge the dedicated staff and volunteers that have donated their time and services, and to partnerships with local food and community organizations and businesses for monetary and food donations.

At this crucial time, Friendship Centre funding needs to be secure and long-term to assist and empower urban Indigenous communities to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. The NAFC's network of Friendship Centres and Provincial and Territorial Associations have an excellent track record of filling gaps in programs and services





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for urban Indigenous people. Friendship Centres saves lives and keep people safe. We ask the federal government to continue to invest in these efforts, and more.

Quote

The food security funds provided by the federal government are a welcomed addition to the wraparound supports that Friendship Centres have been providing during and prior to the COVID-19 global pandemic. These supports are not limited to just food and supplies, but includes several other factors including, hand-picked traditional medicine delivery, homemade meals, cultural grounding, and in-person community delivery to combat pandemic loneliness, family check-in supports and more.

– Jocelyn Formsma, NAFC Executive Director





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Examples

Since March 2020, 21 Friendship Centres in Alberta have provided over 50,000 bread donations, brown bag lunches, hot meals, food hampers, and gift cards to local grocery stores, as well as emergency food hampers.

In Manitoba, one Friendship Centre received 4,390 applications for food and hygiene supports in October 2020 only, seeing a 10% increase in need since the summer. Another Friendship Centre saw a 5x increase in their food bank, from 50 hampers initially, to over 300 hampers monthly helping families and Elders.

In the Atlantic region, Friendship Centres have been providing wraparound supports for their community members with food support, medication, traditional medicine, and cultural supplies through contact-free deliveries.

In the North, a Friendship Centre is providing 400-600 lunches per week, and grocery support to over 400 households.

In British Columbia, a Friendship Centre has seen an increase of 70% in their food service operations, ICSF funding was used to increase capacity to meet this need. Another Friendship centre converted their Main Hall into a warehouse so that staff could prepare and bag meals and created a mobile outreach unit in their parking lot.

In Quebec, one Friendship Centre has been supported 50 families a week with food security and providing school materials to keep children and youth engaged in learning.

In Saskatchewan, Friendship Centre's have been partnering with local Food Banks to delivery hampers to their community members.





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Photos

Children's Snack Bags

Riverton & District Friendship Centre, Riverton, Manitoba



Food Hamper Production

The Pas Friendship Centre, The Pas, Manitoba





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Food Hamper Delivery
First Light Friendship Centre, St John's, NFLD

