



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

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 9, 2021

Canadian Healthy Cities Initiative

COVID-19 has seriously impacted our access and use of public spaces. This is especially true in Indigenous communities that are already experiencing vulnerability as a result of systemic inequalities.

Friendship Centres and Indigenous communities have shown creativity and resourcefulness in improvising temporary and longer-lasting solutions that enable people to connect and access public spaces safely while still respecting public health measures, including social distancing and mask-wearing.

Public spaces are the glue to our Indigenous communities. They are a big part of what makes our community feel safe, vibrant and connected. The Healthy Communities Initiative will allow us to continue creating inclusive spaces and connections that foster belonging.

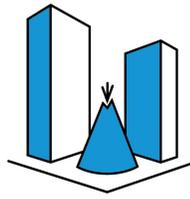
The Healthy Communities Initiative is a \$31 million investment from the Government of Canada to support communities as they create and adapt public spaces to respond to the new realities of COVID-19.

Funding can be used for adapting public spaces, or for programming or services that respond to COVID-19 and serve the public or a community disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Indigenous organizations and communities are encouraged to engage the community when designing their projects.

Healthy Communities Initiative projects will create safe and vibrant public spaces, improve mobility options and provide innovative digital solutions to connect people and improve health.

- **Creating safe and vibrant public spaces:** Projects that create safe and vibrant public spaces improve open spaces, parks, commercial main streets, and access to other public spaces. For example, these projects could create new pedestrian zones, revitalize an alleyway or build a pop-up ice rink.
- **Improving mobility options:** Projects that improve mobility options provide transportation options or adaptations for people to stay safe and physically distant while walking, biking or using public transit access. For example, these projects could add social distancing markings on sidewalks or create traffic calming pop-ups.





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- **Digital solutions:** Projects that provide digital solutions use data and technology in innovative ways to connect people, improve health or facilitate public engagement. For example, these projects could install free public wifi hotspots, develop a mental wellbeing app or use an online platform to create virtual town halls.

With funding between \$5,000 and \$250,000, the Healthy Communities Initiative aims to support local efforts to develop small-scale infrastructure solutions, programming and services for communities across Canada. Local governments, charities, Indigenous communities and non-profits are all welcome to apply for funding, this includes Friendship Centres.

Whether it's pop-up bike paths, community gardens, art installations or Wi-Fi hot spots or other programs and services, our community members want to be able to work, play and learn in safe, vibrant and inclusive spaces.

We know that our communities feel the pandemic's impacts more than others. Some lack public spaces they can access safely. This funding aims to help address that.

Organizations can apply to the Healthy Communities Initiative starting February 9, 2021, at 1:00 PM EST through March 9, 2021, at 5:00 PM PST.

Visit canadahealthycommunitiesinitiative.ca to find out more about how to apply, explore resources for applicants and sign up for community mobilization sessions.

For Friendship Centres requiring more information please contact the NAFC's Special Projects Advisor, Shady Hafez, at shafez@nafc.ca

FOR MEDIA INQUIRIES:

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The NAFC represents over 100 local Friendship Centres and Provincial/Territorial Associations in every province and territory in Canada (except Prince Edward Island). Friendship Centres are urban Indigenous community hubs that provide a wide range of programs and services for First Nations, Inuit and Métis people living in urban, rural, and northern communities. Collectively, Friendship Centres are the largest and most comprehensive urban Indigenous service delivery network in Canada.

