



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

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**April 7, 2022**

### **Budget 2022 fails to address urban Indigenous realities**

OTTAWA – The National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC), on behalf of the over 100-member Friendship Centres, expresses its disappointment and concern over the federal government's exclusion of urban Indigenous needs and priorities in the 2022 federal budget.

“We have been fortunate to have a strong working relationship with the federal government over the past few years to tackle dire needs – especially throughout the pandemic,” said Kelly Benning, NAFC President, “so we can't help but express our utter disappointment and upset that the life-saving efforts of Friendship Centres were not acknowledged or advanced under this budget. This will set us back unless quick action is taken.”

Friendship Centres stand at a crucial financial crossroad. Collectively, the Friendship Centre network, collectively serving over 1 million people every year, is the largest Indigenous owned and operated civil society network in Canada, employing thousands of Indigenous people and serving all Indigenous peoples, regardless of distinction or residency. A one-year extension on core Friendship Centre Funding through Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples (UPIP) was signed this past winter, with hopes of renewing and expanding programming announced in this budget.

Friendship Centres were on the frontlines of every major event during the last two years and well before, including acting as a key contributor to COVID-19 responses, contributing to local economies, responding to wildfires, devastating flooding, extreme heat and other emergencies, urban Indigenous health crises, addressing racism in health care – all while delivering ongoing cultural, economic, legal, and social supports that Indigenous people have come to expect. The uncertainty created by Budget 2022 puts significant pressure and stress on grassroots Friendship Centre efforts.

While Budget 2022 did not live up to the NAFC's expectations in addressing urban Indigenous community needs, the NAFC is hopeful that the funds announced for Indigenous peoples will achieve meaningful change. The NAFC is ready to build on our reputation of being a strong national partner to advance the MMIWG2SLGTBQQIA+ Action Plan, supporting Indigenous early learning and childcare, implementing childcare agreements with respect to Indigenous children, advancing Jordan's Principle supports for urban Indigenous children, supporting residential school survivors and implementing the Calls to Action, and playing a role in the rollout of the urban, rural, and northern Indigenous housing strategy.



# National Association of Friendship Centres

## Association nationale des centres d'amitié

“The federal government had the opportunity to demonstrate their commitment to Indigenous people, regardless of where they reside, especially as Friendship Centres continue to be a cornerstone in building back better,” said Jocelyn Formsma, NAFC Executive Director. “The 2022 Federal Budget has made it more difficult to do that. However Friendship Centres will continue our critical work nonetheless. We invite the federal government to reach out to us to close the gaps in this budget. It is never too late to come to the table.”

### FOR MEDIA INQUIRIES:

Bridget Bowman  
Communications, Policy and Research Manager  
[bbowman@nafc.ca](mailto:bbowman@nafc.ca)

*The National Association of Friendship Centres is a network of over 100 Friendship Centres and Provincial/Territorial Associations, which make up part of the Friendship Centre Movement—Canada's most significant national network of self-determined Indigenous owned and operated civil society community hubs offering programs, services and supports to urban Indigenous people.*