

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

### **About the National Youth Forum and Aboriginal Youth Council**

Every year the NAFC, in conjunction with the Aboriginal Youth Council (AYC), hosts an annual Youth Forum for the Youth members of the Friendship Centre Movement. With input and feedback from the youth membership, the AYC chooses workshops for the Forum, while the host Friendship Centre typically selects the theme. Social and fundraising activities are organized by the host Friendship Centre, AYC and the NAFC.

The 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Youth Forum will be held July 13-15, 2019 at the Sandman Lodge, in Lethbridge, Alberta. There will be potentially up to 80-100 participants, all youth between 14 and 24 years of age. There may also be Elders sitting in as observers and to support the youth.

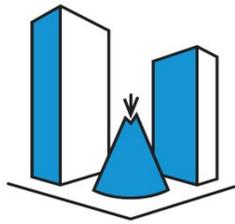
The Friendship Centre Youth Movement continues to grow rapidly and its strength can be attributed to the participation of Youth within local Friendship Centres and their respective regions.

The Aboriginal Youth Council (AYC) utilizes the Youth Forum to discuss ideas at a national level and hold their elections. The Youth Forum is an opportunity for the Friendship Centre Movement (FCM) youth to connect with each other and build solid relationships that may not be possible via telephone or email. The FCM youth and the AYC get to experience their own form of an Annual Meeting and can feel like their voice is heard.

The Annual Youth Forum provides the opportunity for the youth to be involved and give direction to the initiatives of the Aboriginal Youth Council (AYC). In addition, the Annual Youth Forum:

- Provides a national youth voice to the NAFC;
- Generates ideas for youth programs;
- Creates unity;
- Promotes and facilitates communication and information sharing;
- Fosters education and leadership training;
- Provides youth with skills and knowledge to increase their employability;
- Provides a place for decision making that affects youth;
- Promotes volunteerism;
- Identifies current youth issues on a community level and nationally;
- Promotes social conscience and responsibility on several relevant issues; and,
- Assists local youth in finding a place within the Friendship Centre Movement, including both cultural identity and general identity as a young person





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You can see the current members of the AYC here: <http://nafc.ca/en/who-we-are/aboriginal-youth-council/>

### **About the National Association of Friendship Centres**

The National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC) represents the 106 urban based Indigenous Friendship Centres across Canada and 6 Provincial and Territorial Associations (PTAs) that make up the Friendship Centre Movement. The NAFC is a long-standing national Indigenous organization with reach across Canada, from coast to coast to coast, serving First Nations, Inuit and Métis, including Indigenous peoples living in urban, rural and northern communities.

The NAFC's mandate is to improve the quality of life for Indigenous peoples in an urban environment by supporting self-determined activities which encourage equal access to, and participation in, Canadian society; and which respect and strengthen the increasing emphasis on Indigenous cultural distinctiveness.

The NAFC is governed by both a volunteer Executive Committee and a volunteer Board of Directors, both of which include a Youth member.

The first Friendship Centres emerged over sixty years ago when Indigenous people living in the city saw a need for a place for fellow Indigenous people to go for support in navigating mainstream systems and adjusting to their new surroundings. These first Centres did not offer much in the way of formal services but rather they helped form a sense of community and belonging that was vital to the successful transition of individuals and families who had made their way to the city in search of a better life.

A movement emerged from these humble beginnings and today there are 106 Friendship Centres across Canada from coast-to-coast-coast. Friendship Centres are Canada's most expansive and recognizable urban Indigenous service delivery infrastructure offering a full suite of culturally responsive and status blind programs and services to the more than 780,000 Indigenous people who call the city their home.

You can learn more about the NAFC here: <http://nafc.ca/en/>

