



anfca
alberta native friendship
centres association

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

DEEP ROOTS TO STRONG BRANCHES



2025 - 2026

"From Deep Roots to Strong Branches"

Grounded in Indigenous values, worldviews, and sacred teachings, ANFCA's deep roots represent the organization's enduring foundation and cultural grounding. These roots nourish its strong branches, symbolizing ANFCA's impact across Alberta. This report highlights how ANFCA supports and champions the Alberta Friendship Centre Movement through provincial advocacy, strategic community partnerships, holistic initiatives, and youth leadership development.



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ANFCA acknowledges that its offices and 21-member Friendship Centres are located across Treaty 4, 6, 7, 8, and 10 territories, the 22 Districts of the Métis Otipemisiwak, and 8 Métis Settlements, whose histories, languages, cultures, and traditions influence our work, our culture, and our Indigenous ways of knowing as both an Urban Indigenous organization and as Urban Indigenous peoples.

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Tansi,

This past year has been one of growth, transition, and continued commitment to the Friendship Centre Movement across Alberta. As President, I am proud of the work accomplished by our Association, and our member Friendship Centres. The strength of ANFCA has always been rooted in our collective voice.

This year has also reminded us of the importance of leadership, collaboration, and adaptability. As we navigated organizational changes and continued to strengthen ANFCA, our Executive Committee remained focused on good governance, advocacy, and supporting the sustainability of the Friendship Centre Movement. We continued to build relationships with government, community organizations, and Indigenous partners while advocating for the needs and priorities of Friendship Centres across the province.

I am particularly grateful to our member Centres. Your dedication and resilience are what make this Movement strong. Every day, Friendship Centre staff and volunteers show up for their communities, providing support, creating safe spaces, preserving culture, and ensuring Indigenous voices are heard.

I also want to recognize our Elders, whose guidance continues to ground our work in culture, connection, and community. To our youth, your leadership and vision are essential to the future of the Friendship Centre Movement. Your voices must continue to shape the work we do today and the future we build together.

Our Movement is built on relationships, belonging, and a shared commitment to making a difference. When we work together, our collective impact is greater.

On behalf of the ANFCA Executive Committee, I extend my sincere appreciation to our member Friendship Centres, staff, volunteers, Elders, and youth. I look forward in seeing what the next year brings.

Hiy Hiy

Miranda Ferguson
ANFCA President



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Ábawathtech,

Reflecting on the past year, "From Deep Roots to Strong Branches" is more than a theme for our Impact Report, it is a live depiction of our journey, grounded in ANFCA's 5-Year Strategic Plan. This year was defined by strategic evolution, major advocacy milestones, and deep heart-knowledge. Most profoundly, our Movement carried the weight of losing several beloved Matriarchs. These leaders were the bedrock of our Friendship Centres; their wisdom, fierce advocacy, and quiet strength nurtured the soil from which we grow. While we feel their absence deeply, we carry their teachings forward across all our initiatives.

Navigating transition requires clarity and unwavering purpose. I am immensely proud of the ANFCA team and Executive Committee, Together, we translated strategic goals into direct actions, held key advocacy meetings, and continued to strengthen our supports to Friendship Centres.

At the community level, the incredible work of Alberta's Friendship Centres continues to show immense reach, delivering nearly 1.4 million points of service, through over 1300 programs, including supporting over 17,000 students through the Weaving Wicihitowin for Learning (WWFL).

Our roots, embedded in Indigenous values, sacred teachings, cultural stewardship, and the enduring wisdom of the Friendship Centre leaders who came before us have provided the stability needed to weather these changes. Because of this sacred foundation, our branches have only grown stronger. They stretch further to uplift youth leadership, implement multi-gender initiatives, forge meaningful partnerships, and support the vital work happening at the local level. As we look forward and confident in the strength of our team and collective vision, we remain dedicated to empowering Friendship Centres and creating generational impact for all those to come.

Îsnîsh

Jeannette MacInnis
ANFCA



OUR VISION

Holistically healthy, culturally strong and thriving Friendship Centres communities

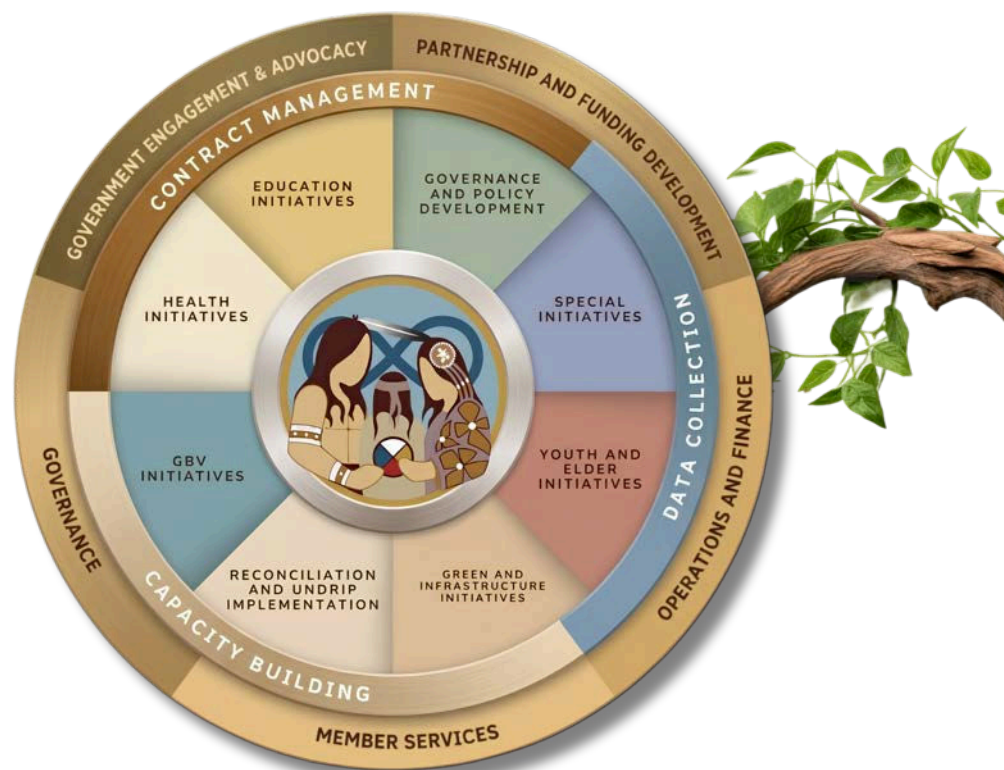
OUR MISSION STATEMENT

ANFCA supports and promotes culturally grounded Friendship Centres that, through program and services, engage with and improve the quality of life of Indigenous People living off- reserve/off-settlement in urban, rural and remote communities.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Culture is the foundation of ANFCA. ANFCA is committed to:

- Supporting the principles and community-based approach of the Friendship Centre Movement.
- Recognizing the autonomy and priorities of member Friendship Centres that uphold the Code of Ethics and responsibilities of the Friendship Centre movement.
- Building effective, vibrant relationships and partnerships through collaboration and reconciliation.
- Supporting member Friendship Centres in building and sustaining their capacity.



Alberta Native Friendship Centres Association (ANFCA) is dedicated to strengthening and supporting member Friendship Centres across the province. Through a comprehensive range of core functions and strategic initiatives, we work to advocate for Friendship Centres, build capacity, and foster self-determination. Our efforts are to ensure that Friendship Centres are well-equipped to provide vital programs and services, making a tangible difference in the lives of urban Indigenous individuals and families.

ALBERTA FRIENDSHIP CENTRES

Connecting Across the Land:

For over 70 years Alberta Friendship Centres have strived to improve the lives of urban Indigenous people in their communities delivering nearly 1.4 million documented points of service in 2025-2026.

Friendship Centres are the heart of connection, bridging Urban Indigenous communities with cultural strength, holistic well-being, and shared purpose. United as the Friendship Centre Movement of Alberta, they honour our shared heritage and forge pathways toward a vibrant and thriving future.

Alberta Friendship Centres comprise the largest Infrastructure of frontline Indigenous-serving organizations in the province of Alberta and are a critical partner in building a future that leaves no one behind. Friendship Centres welcome all community members regardless of place of origin or status.

They support and advocate for all community members who seek their services. This sense of inclusivity has earned Friendship Centres the reputation of caring, culturally-driven community organizations who are committed to improving Urban Indigenous peoples socio-economic situations.

2025-2026 DATA





A NEW HOME FOR ANFCA

Years in the making, the dream of completing the new office for Alberta Native Friendship Centres Association (ANFCA) has been held in the hearts of our leaders, staff, and community. After a long wait defined by patience, perseverance, and vision, that dream finally came to fruition.

The provincial offices were specifically designed to weave traditional Indigenous design elements together with modern, state-of-the-art features. This landmark achievement marks a monumental milestone in ANFCA.

ANFCA is proud to remain in Edmonton's Wîhkwêntôwin neighbourhood. Formerly known as Oliver, this historic area was renamed using the Cree (nêhiyawêwin) word meaning "circle of friends". There could be no more fitting or sacred place for the ANFCA to construct its home.

This space is far more than bricks and mortar; it is a physical representation of our growing branches. As we step into this new chapter, our custom-built space ensures that ANFCA remains strong, grounded, and ready to empower the Friendship Centre Movement for years to come.



SPOTLIGHT: THE GRANDFATHER TREE

When the ANFCA began the development of its new building, former ANFCA Provincial Elder, Dave Matilpi preserved a wooden staircase post from the original ANFCA Offices and transformed it into the Grandfather Tree, carrying our history forward into a new identity.

The piece tells a story from the base to the top:

- **The Base:** The Edmonton skyline recognizes the historic journey of Indigenous people coming to urban areas and seeking connection at Friendship Centres.
- **The Trunk:** Moving upward through the four colors and life stages (Child, Youth, Adult, Elder), the story integrates dreamcatchers, ancestral teachings, and Métis and sacred symbols (pipe, feather).
- **The Animals:** Alberta animal spirit guides including the raven, wolf, eagle, buffalo, and bear, bring lessons of family, strength, and community.
- **The Lodge:** At the summit sits the lodge and tipi, symbolizing the welcoming haven of the Friendship Centre and our ongoing connection to ancestral wisdom.
- **The Top:** Blue and white waters represent our most sacred medicine, surrounded by four Grandmothers and Grandfathers holding hands in balance and unity.

The Grandfather Tree honors Residential School Survivors, acknowledges the Red Dress movement, and reminds us that like a living tree, our communities thrive when nurtured. Today, it stands in the ANFCA Boardroom as a lasting bridge between our history, ancestral teachings, and future responsibilities.



ADVOCACY, PARTNERSHIPS AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

ADVOCACY

ANFCA maintained an active advocacy presence provincially to elevate urban Indigenous priorities and drive systemic change. In May 2025, ANFCA hosted strategic meetings at the Alberta Legislature with six Provincial Ministers, laying the groundwork for a second round of ministerial meetings planned for October 2026. Through sustained dialogue with government leaders and department staff, ANFCA ensures that public policies, legislative updates, and funding frameworks directly reflect the frontline realities and socio-economic contributions of Alberta's Friendship Centres.

PUBLIC AWARENESS

To meet evolving communication standards and serve member communities effectively, ANFCA redeveloped its provincial website in the fall of 2025. Alongside this digital infrastructure, ANFCA expanded its digital presence across social media channels to drive engagement. Modernizing these tools ensures seamless communication across Alberta's Friendship Centre Movement while connecting broader public audiences to the ANFCA and Friendship Centres.

PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMITTEES

Rooted in relationality and shared purpose, ANFCA's provincial impact is strengthened through strong organizational partnerships and committee leadership. ANFCA actively presented at multiple conferences, summits, and networking events across Alberta to build cross-sectoral allies and advance community-led solutions.

ANFCA continues to strengthen the collective circle across the province. In 2025-2026, ANFCA actively contributed to several key partner and government committees, including the Premier's Council for MMIWG; CFS Enhancement Act Review Committee; Alberta Medical Association Indigenous Advisory Committee; NAFC MMIWG Steering Committee; NGO Council, Alberta Human Trafficking Network, and the Alberta Teachers Association Indigenous Advisory Committee.



GOAL 2 – INCREASE ADVOCACY EFFORTS

INDIGENOUS GOVERNANCE

Throughout 2025–2026, the Governance Committee completed a multi-year review of ANFCA's governance framework. This included quarterly meetings and a two-day in-person governance workshop to review Board structure, voting, representation, legal responsibilities, and organizational risk. The Committee guided the final legal review and member engagement process, leading to the adoption of ANFCA's updated Bylaws in September 2025 and the beginning of work to align governance policies and procedures with the new framework. The new Bylaws provide a stronger, clearer governance foundation that balances accountability with Indigenous values, member participation, and the needs of Alberta's Friendship Centre Movement.

The Governance Committee strengthened intergenerational participation by reviewing how Elders and emerging adults participate in governance, including cultural knowledge sharing and succession planning. Legal guidance supported voting authority for the Provincial Emerging Adults Council representative, which was incorporated into the new Bylaws. Supporting Elder knowledge and emerging adult leadership strengthens succession planning and helps prepare the next generation of Friendship Centre leaders.

Provincial Emerging Adults Council

The Provincial Emerging Adults Council is a Standing Committee of cultural importance of the Board of Directors to have a voice in ANFCA business to the Board. The Provincial Emerging Adults Council (originally established in the 2003 Bylaws as Alberta Aboriginal Youth Council) is continued under this Bylaw.

The purpose of the Provincial Emerging Adults Council is to provide young adults and youth a voice and input to the Board on the affairs of the Association that affect the emerging adults and youth members of local Friendship Centres; to help the Association represent and advocate at the provincial level for emerging adults and youth, and the issues faced by emerging adults and youth of local Friendship Centres.

Elders Wisdom Circle

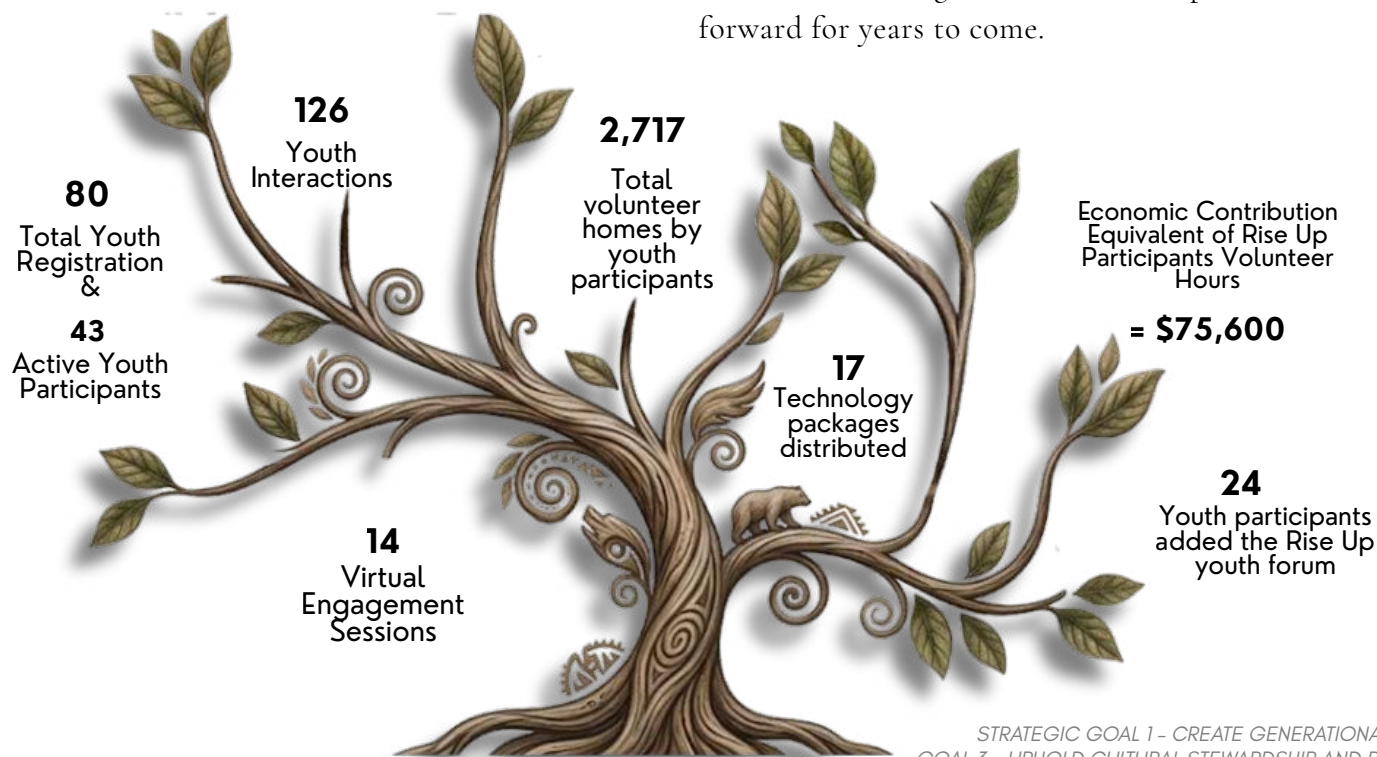
During 2025–2026, the Elders' Wisdom Circle continued to provide cultural guidance and Indigenous Elder perspectives to ANFCA and the Friendship Centre Movement. The Circle strengthened Youth–Elder connections, informed the Alberta Caregivers' Strategy, supported cultural stewardship through the Grandfather Tree, and ensured a smooth transition in Provincial Elder leadership. Together, these efforts strengthened cultural continuity, Indigenous leadership and ANFCA's commitment to serving Friendship Centres across Alberta.



RISE UP: EMPOWERING URBAN INDIGENOUS YOUTH

Rise Up: Empowering Urban Indigenous Youth creates culturally safe, accessible spaces across Alberta where youth can build leadership skills, deepen their cultural identity, and form meaningful community connections. Working directly alongside local Friendship Centres, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and facilitators, this initiative provides hands-on opportunities and mentorship that strengthen cultural ties, build personal confidence, and equip youth with the skills to lead within their communities.

Ensuring youth have access to culturally grounded spaces in urban environments is essential for building strong, resilient, and connected communities. Urban life can sometimes distance young people from traditional practices, Rise Up bridges this gap by embedding leadership development directly within community wisdom and cultural identity. By investing in youth today, this initiative breaks down social isolation, preserves vital cultural knowledge, and prepares a new generation of confident leaders to advocate for their communities and guide the Friendship Centre Movement forward for years to come.



STRATEGIC GOAL 1 – CREATE GENERATIONAL IMPACT
GOAL 3 – UPHOLD CULTURAL STEWARDSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION

The **Rise Up Youth Forum** brought together 24 dynamic urban Indigenous youth from across Alberta for a transformative three-day gathering centered on leadership, wellness, and cultural connection. The forum served as a vibrant space for young leaders to ground themselves in their identity while building lifelong bonds with peers, Elders, and mentors.

Through hands-on cultural workshops including traditional medicine box making, hoop dancing, and tea teachings, participants reconnected with ancestral wisdom and leadership practices.

Their shared stories of resilience, purpose, and pride inspired youth to embrace their heritage, stand strong in their identity, and step confidently into their roles as tomorrow's leaders.



“The Youth Forum helped me reconnect with my culture while giving me the confidence to step into leadership. I left feeling inspired and supported.”

Youth Participant

“I had the most amazing experience this weekend at the forum. I gained tons of knowledge & gained connections that will last a lifetime.”

Youth Participant



Graduates of Rise Up 2025 – 2026:
Youth that contributed over 120 hours of
volunteerism in their community.

RISE UP: BRAIDED PERSPECTIVES

Rise Up: Braided Perspectives is an innovative youth empowerment project designed to foster leadership skills, cultural knowledge, and personal empowerment among young people across Alberta. Through accessible virtual training, workshops, and an in-person multigenerational gathering, the initiative deepened awareness around crucial reconciliation frameworks, including the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 Calls to Action and the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The project successfully bridged communities by bringing Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth together to collaborate on reconciliation initiatives while connecting them directly with Elders and Knowledge Keepers.

By grounding youth leadership in cultural teachings and Elder wisdom, Braided Perspectives built a strong foundation for intergenerational knowledge exchange and language preservation. Meeting youth where they are virtually and across urban centers ensured equal access to meaningful opportunities regardless of location. The true impact of this project lies in its legacy: equipping a new generation of empathetic, culturally rooted leaders with the tools, relationships, and confidence needed to champion Truth and Reconciliation and UNDRIP across Alberta for years to come.



In August 2025, Rise Up: Braided Perspectives brought together participants from Friendship Centres across Alberta for a transformative Multigenerational Gathering at Métis Crossing. Set along sacred waters, youth, Elders, and community members engaged in deep, interactive conversations to reflect on shared histories and map out positive paths toward Reconciliation. Through collaborative visioning, participants authored powerful vision statements outlining the Canada they want to see and build for themselves and future generations by 2050.

Creating spaces for youth and Elders to stand together in dialogue ensures that future-focused leadership remains deeply rooted in intergenerational wisdom and traditional values. By articulating a clear 2050 vision, our young leaders and Knowledge Keepers are not just responding to the present, they are actively shaping systemic change, strengthening community bonds, and setting the direction for generations to come.



BUILDING OUR BUNDLES, TOGETHER

Launched in September 2025, Building Our Bundles, Together (YESS) supports urban Indigenous youth transition into meaningful employment. In partnership with Napi Friendship Centre and through participant-centred, culturally grounded mentorship, employment readiness training, accredited skills development, and hands-on work experience, the initiative provides individualized support tailored to each youth's unique strengths and goals. By addressing systemic barriers, the program helps participants build essential life and workplace skills, secure sustainable job opportunities, and grow their self-confidence.

Beyond job readiness, Building Our Bundles, Together grounds youth in their cultural identity, fostering resilience, self-worth, and a deep sense of belonging. Equipping young people with both practical career tools and strong community relationships empowers them to navigate their paths with confidence and become active contributors within their communities.



SACRED FIRE KEEPERS

Building on the foundation and community needs identified through ANFCA's Protecting Our Sacred Fires project (2021–2023), Sacred Fire Keepers is a heart-centered, prevention-focused initiative designed to confront human trafficking and sexual exploitation. ANFCA is developing two culturally grounded curricula specifically tailored for Indigenous parents/caregivers and Indigenous men/boys. Through community-centred, culturally safe training, the project equips Friendship Centre staff with the tools and expertise needed to deliver life-affirming workshops directly within local communities across Alberta.

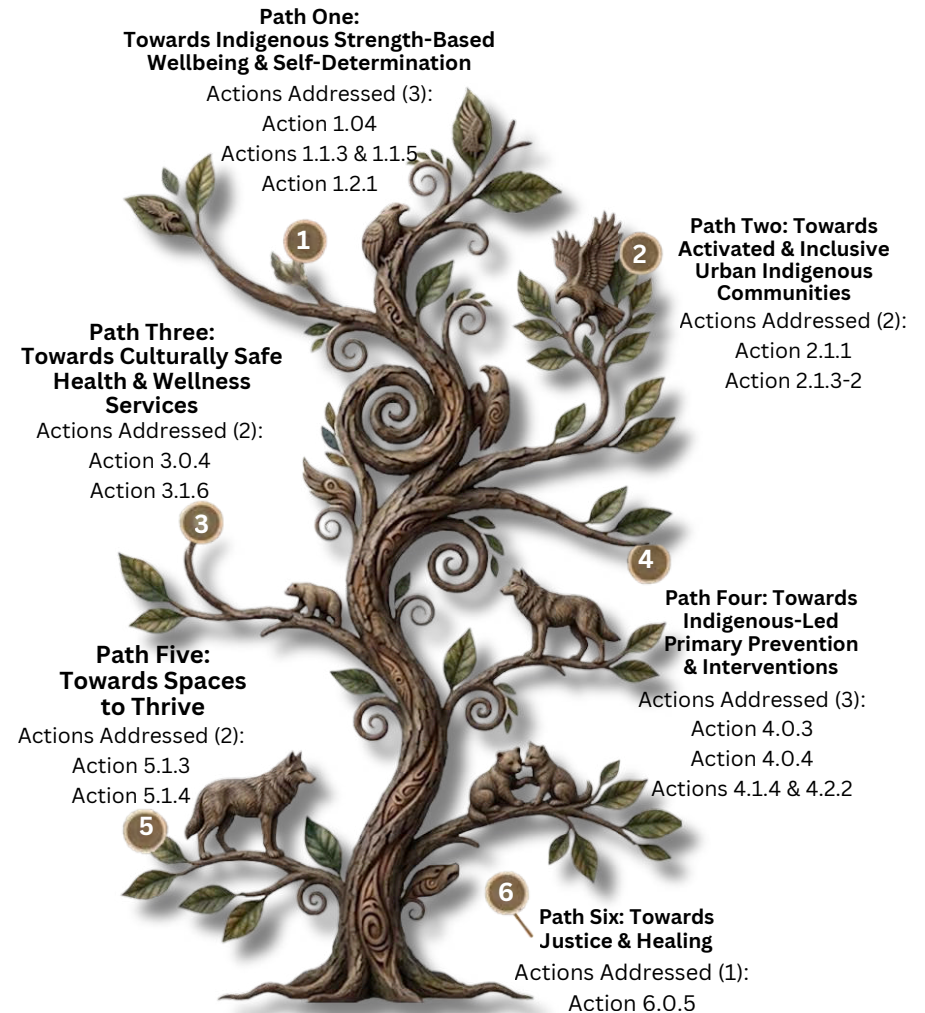
Human trafficking and sexual exploitation are ongoing realities affecting relatives in both urban and rural communities across Alberta. Sacred Fire Keepers meets this challenge with proactive, community-led action rooted in culture, spirit, and identity. By strengthening the frontline capacity of Alberta's Friendship Centres and honoring the learnings from Protecting Our Sacred Fires, this initiative works to interrupt cycles of harm, break through apathy, and wrap families in safety, dignity, and care.

STRATEGIC GOAL 1 – CREATE GENERATIONAL IMPACT

NAVIGATING TOWARDS THE NORTH STAR FRAMEWORK

Guided by the comprehensive Navigating Towards Our North Star framework, comprising 6 paths, 13 aspirations, and 59 actions, ANFCA remains steadfast in combating gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQIA+ peoples across Alberta. Throughout 2025/2026, ANFCA significantly advanced 13 key actions across all six framework paths.

By continuing to operationalize Navigating Towards Our North Star, ANFCA drives systemic change across healthcare, justice, and social sectors while supporting the frontline capacity of local Friendship Centres. Grounding prevention in cultural strength, restorative justice, and socioeconomic empowerment equips communities with the tools to interrupt cycles of harm, break silence, and expand safe spaces.



GOAL 7 – SUSTAIN AND BUILD INITIATIVES AND FRAMEWORKS

CENTRING RELATIONSHIPS: **WALKING TOGETHER ON SHARED TRAILS KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE**



ANFCA, in partnership with the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters (ACWS) and the Alberta Association of Sexual Assault Services (AASAS), co-hosted the second Gender-Based and Sexual Violence Knowledge Exchange in June 2025 titled Walking Together on Shared Trails. The gathering brought together member Friendship Centres, Women's Shelters, and Sexual Assault Centres alongside provincial leaders, Elders, and community advocates. Grounded in Indigenous teachings, 90 participants engaged in collaborative dialogues, celebrated local leadership, and participated in interactive sessions like World Café: Bringing Our Voices into One Song to build joint approaches to violence prevention.

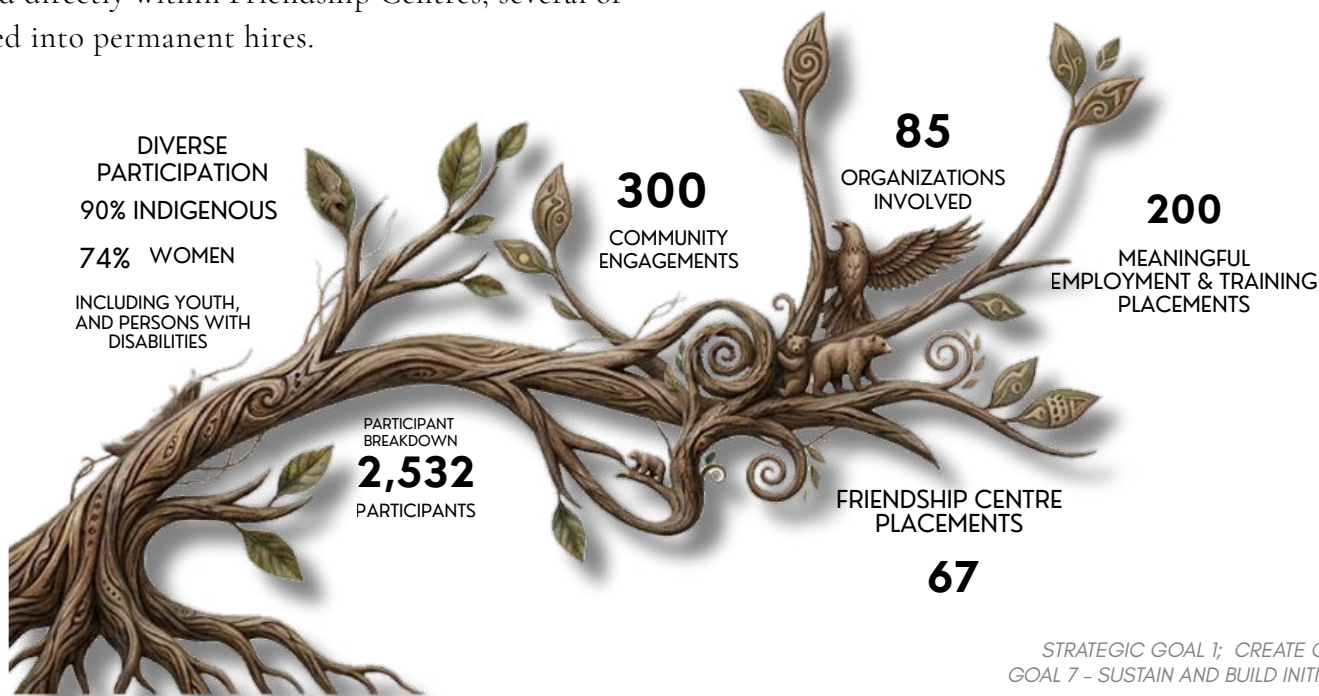
True healing and safety require cross-sectoral collaboration rooted in reciprocal care, trust, and shared wisdom. By bringing together front-line organizations across Alberta, Walking Together on Shared Trails breaks down silos between shelter systems, sexual assault services, and urban Indigenous Friendship Centres. Grounding this collective work in cultural teachings ensures that prevention, advocacy, and care strategies remain community-led and survivor-centered. Building authentic, unified relationships across these networks strengthens the province-wide safety net for Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse relatives.



COMMUNITY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (CWDP)

Through the Community Workforce Development Program (CWDP) pilot, seven Friendship Centres leveraged our unique wraparound service and case management model to bridge Indigenous job seekers with training providers and employers across diverse sectors. This highly successful initiative hosted 300 community engagements, bringing together 2,532 participants and 85 organizations. Of these participants, 90% were Indigenous, 74% were women, and there was strong representation from youth, persons with disabilities, and 2SLGBTQIAA+ community members. Ultimately, 200 individuals secured meaningful employment or training placements, including 67 work placements hosted directly within Friendship Centres, several of which transitioned into permanent hires.

The true power of this program extended far beyond basic funding, tuition, work gear, or transportation; it lay in individualized case management and holistic, relational support. For many participants, the greatest victories involved breaking down fundamental, everyday barriers to stability such as securing safe housing, accessing food security, building financial literacy, navigating mental health supports, and developing essential foundational skills. Even for those who did not immediately enter full-time roles, 100% of participants were connected to ongoing Friendship Centre programs and partner agencies.



STRATEGIC GOAL 1; CREATE GENERATIONAL IMPACT
GOAL 7 - SUSTAIN AND BUILD INITIATIVES AND FRAMEWORKS

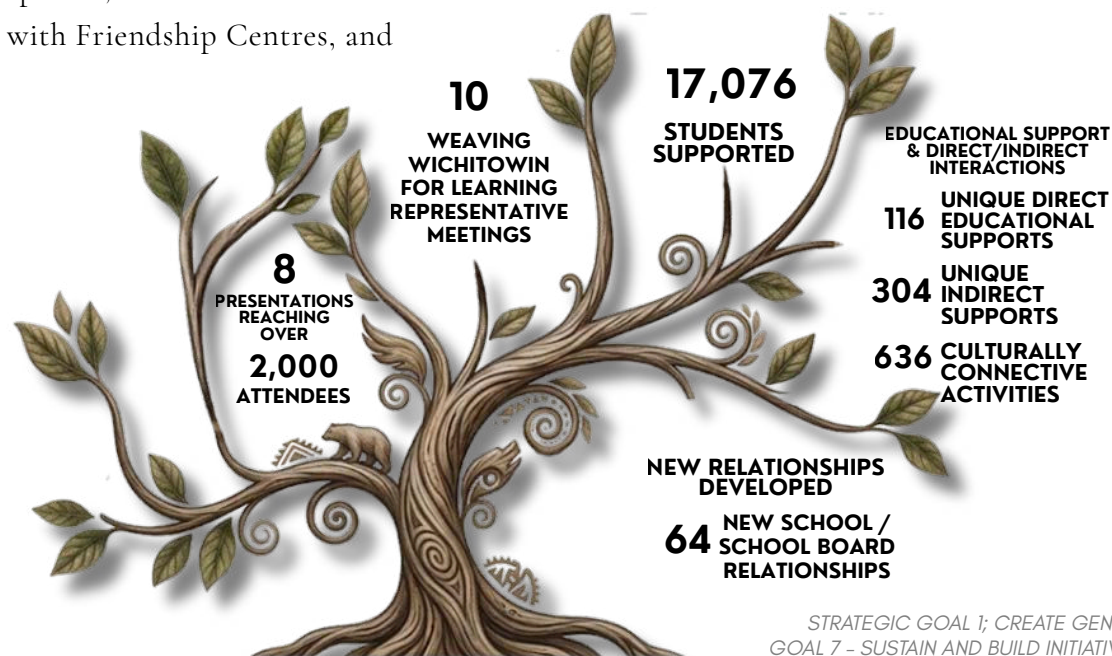
WEAVING WICIHITOWIN FOR LEARNING

Weaving Wicihitowin for Learning is ANFCA's three-year educational program dedicated to increasing direct and indirect educational supports for Kindergarten to Grade 12 urban and rural Indigenous students. Through Weaving Wicihitowin for Learning, Alberta Friendship Centres have created strong connections with schools, parents/caregivers, and students by providing educational supports such as tutoring, homework clubs, and cultural connections, including Indigenous language classes and traditional teachings.

ANFCA supports the delivery of Weaving Wicihitowin for Learning through resource development, stakeholder engagement, close collaboration with Friendship Centres, and program frameworks.

Through Weaving Wicihitowin for Learning, urban and rural Indigenous students have seen a steady increase in their academics, and most importantly, their connection to community and culture. As educational partners, Friendship Centres address educational, cultural, and well-being gaps to uphold and sustain Alberta's education system in Friendship Centre communities. Weaving Wicihitowin for Learning continues to increase student trust in educators, increase academic achievement, and strengthen relationships between students, their families, and the education system.

**2025-2026
DATA**



ANFCA FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

A snapshot of revenue generation and strategic resource allocation supporting Friendship Centres and urban Indigenous communities across Alberta.



Year Ended March 31, 2026 (with comparative figures for 2025)

	2025-2026	2024-2025
<u>REVENUES</u>		
Programs - Grants	\$13,000,272	\$13,003,586
Interest	200,631	345,990
Donations	40,905	46,372
Program Revenue	0	104,536
Other	700	6,654
	<u>\$13,242,508</u>	<u>\$13,507,138</u>
<u>EXPENSES</u>		
Friendship Centre Grants	10,737,955	11,320,423
Human Resources	1,759,407	1,488,650
Office Operations	193,824	36,325
General & Administrative	248,994	153,530
Other	0	0
	<u>\$12,940,180</u>	<u>\$12,998,928</u>
Excess of Revenues over Expenses	\$302,328	\$508,210

Direct Community Investment: Over 83% of overall annual expenditures (\$10.7M+) go directly to local Friendship Centres through community program grants.

Fiscal Responsibility: Maintained a stable surplus position (\$302,328 in 2025–2026) to ensure organizational sustainability and operational readiness for long-term growth.





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Gratitude to Our Community & Funding Partners

The strength, growth, and reach represented across this year's Impact Report are possible only through collective dedication, shared purpose, and strong relationships. We extend our deepest gratitude to the Elders, Knowledge Keepers, frontline staff, and dedicated volunteers at member Friendship Centres across Alberta. We also honor the leadership of our Executive Committee, Board of Directors, and standing committee members. Your tireless efforts, wisdom, and gifts of time and spirit form the sacred foundation upon which all our work rests.

We also raise our hands in sincere gratitude to the funding partners who make this vital work possible:

- Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)
- Department for Women and Gender Equality Canada (WAGE)
- Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)
- Canadian Heritage
- Alberta Ministry of Indigenous Relations
- Alberta Ministry of Arts, Culture and Status of Women
- Alberta Education

Your sustained investment and dedicated partnership directly empower the services provided by Alberta Friendship Centres. Thank you for walking alongside us on this journey as we honor our deep roots and build a lasting, generational impact.



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