



# Memorandum

**Date:** January 6, 2022  
**To:** Members of the Board  
**From:** William (Bill) Bradica, Chief Administrative Officer  
**Subject:** **Endorsement of TBIFC Request for Support**

A letter from the Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre (TBIFC) was received on December 13, 2021 as a Request for Support to endorse a request for an increase in core funding for TBIFC and friendship centres across Ontario. TBIFC is an important community partner for TBDSSAB and delivers a range of community programs and services that positively impact our service recipients. TBIFC's existing core funding agreement expires in March 2022, and the organization has been significantly underfunded since 1996 when a reduction in federal core funding for Indigenous Friendship Centres was implemented. Core funding from the federal government remained at that reduced level from 1997 to 2014 when an increase was provided that did not reflect the cumulative cost of living increase or the large increase in the population served by TBIFC. Funding has remained at that inadequate 2014 level.

The following resolution is presented for the Board's consideration:

THAT we, The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board, endorse the request for support of the Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre (TBIFC);

AND THAT we direct Administration to draft a letter of support from the Board Chair on behalf of the Board, to be sent to Minister of Indigenous Service Canada, Patty Hajdu.

Sincerely,

William (Bill) Bradica  
Chief Administrative Officer

WB/cl



**THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY  
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD**

- Attachments #1 [TBIFC Letter to William Bradica, dated December 13, 2021](#)
- #2 [TBIFC Letter to Minister Hajdu, dated November 10, 2021](#)
- #3 [Friendship Centre Core Funding Overview](#)



## INDIAN YOUTH FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY

401 North Cumberland Street Thunder Bay, Ontario P7A 4P7  
Phone: (807) 345-5840 Fax: (807) 344-8945

December 13, 2021

Mr. William (Bill) Bradica  
Chief Administrative Office  
Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board  
231 May Street South  
Thunder Bay, Ontario  
P7B 1E5

Dear Bill:

**Request for Support from TBDSSAB – Friendship Centre Core Funding**

I write this letter to request support from the Thunder Bay District Social Services Administrative Board (TBDSSAB) in our efforts to renew and request additional operational funding for the Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre (TBIFC) and for Friendship Centres across Ontario as the current core funding agreement expires on March 31, 2022.

Established over fifty years ago, TBIFC is an urban Indigenous non-profit charitable organization providing about 30 core programs and services to Indigenous people living in the City of Thunder Bay. The Friendship Centre delivers a range of community programs and services in the areas of health and wellness, justice, family support, children and youth activities, education, employment, and skills development training. TBIFC programs provide comprehensive services and information, referral and advocacy services, community outreach, and partnership development. Its programs are culturally appropriate and incorporate traditional healing, cultural practices, and cultural integration in the delivery of community services.

About a month ago, TBIFC wrote a letter (please see attached) to the Honourable Patty Hajdu, MP, Minister of Indigenous Services Canada to request a meeting with myself and the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres to discuss the need for renewed and increased funding. We remain optimistic but have not heard anything to date.

TBIFC's annual core funding allocation for the period April 1, 1997 to March 31, 2014 was \$ 171,236. For the period April 1, 2014 to present, the funding level is \$ 205,207 / fiscal year. With a current annual budget in excess of \$6 million, TBIFC has seen a significant increase in the number of programs and services without an increase to its core funding allocation. We have seen expansion of services in homelessness, food security, mental health, senior support, and access to technology especially during this pandemic.

Our capacity limits have been challenged, however, TBIFC remains committed to serving the urban Indigenous population, and remains committed to working with our partners during this health crisis and in the upcoming years to come.

We truly hope that the TBDSSAB can help us by writing a letter of support. Until then, I say chi-miigwetch for your time and consideration.

Sincerely yours,

INDIAN YOUTH FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY

Charlene Baglien  
Executive Director

Attachments: Friendship Centre Core Funding Overview  
Letter to The Honourable Patty Hajdu, MP

cc: Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres  
TBIFC Board of Directors



## THUNDER BAY INDIGENOUS FRIENDSHIP CENTRE

401 N. Cumberland Street, Thunder Bay, Ontario P7A 4P7  
Phone (807) 345-5840 Fax (807) 344-8945  
[www.tbifc.ca](http://www.tbifc.ca)

November 10, 2021

**The Honourable Patty Hajdu, MP**  
**Minister of Indigenous Services Canada**  
**Suite 3 - 705 Red River Road**  
**Thunder Bay, Ontario**  
**P7B 1J3**

**Dear Minister Hajdu:**

**Re: Core Funding – UPIP**

It was my pleasure to speak with you briefly on November 2, 2021 in the context of funding for Friendship Centres. As the Executive Director of the Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre (TBIFC), which is located in your riding of Thunder Bay-Superior North, I appreciate your attention to the issues I bring forward both in your capacity as our *Member of Parliament* and as *Minister of Indigenous Services Canada*.

When we spoke, I mentioned our critical need for increased core funding to maintain and increase current levels of support to the urban Indigenous community in Thunder Bay. As a member of the *Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres (OFIFC)*, I want to bring your attention to the proposal, submitted by the OFIFC on June 18, 2021, for increased core funding for Friendship Centres across Ontario through the *Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples (UPIP)* initiative. This proposal merits your serious and urgent consideration as it reflects input from Friendship Centres across Ontario, including ours. Furthermore, there is additional pressure given current core funding arrangements expire on March 31, 2022, creating great uncertainty for us and Friendship Centres across Ontario.

As you are well aware, Friendship Centres like ours play a vital role in Indigenous community development and well-being. *Our Health Counts: Thunder Bay* estimates the Indigenous population of Thunder Bay at between 23,000 and 42,000, and in Ontario, 85.5% of the Indigenous population live off-reserve. TBIFC has been providing services in our community for over 50 years and have made real contributions to improving the quality of life and well-being of the Indigenous community in this city. As we continue to expand our services, including housing and expanded justice services, we maintain we are both an essential service and an essential voice in future developments with respect to Indigenous community life, locally and beyond. Yet, we must be adequately funded to maintain our excellent levels of service and accountability.

I kindly request that you give due consideration to the breadth and depth of Friendship Centre expertise, including ours, and recommend that you maintain and enhance support to our vital community organizations through a renewed and expanded UPIP agreement for Friendship Centres. The 29 Friendship Centres across Ontario, and the OFIFC, provide a level of service to community, including programming, advocacy, policy development, research and training across all social policy areas, and

Page 2

**Core - UPIP Funding**

value for money which is unparalleled. We must maintain our momentum if we are to make inroads on the issues which matter to us all, such as the *National Action Plan to End Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls, an Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy, an Indigenous Justice Strategy*, quality, and affordable child care, to name but a few.

My self and the OFIFC would welcome any opportunity to speak in more detail with you about their proposal and core funding generally. Please feel free to contact me at (807) 345-5840 Ext. 9041 or by e-mail [charlene.baglien@tbifc.ca](mailto:charlene.baglien@tbifc.ca) to arrange a meeting at your earliest convenience. Until then, Chi-Miigwetch.

**In Friendship,**

**INDIAN YOUTH FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY**



**Charlene Baglien**  
**Executive Director**

**cc: The Honourable Marc Miller, Minister of Crown Indigenous Relations**  
**The Honourable Greg Rickford, Minister of Indigenous Affairs Ontario**  
**Christiane Fox, Deputy Minister, Indigenous Services Canada**  
**Shawn Batisse, Deputy Minister, Indigenous Affairs Ontario**  
**Val Gideon, Associate Deputy Minister, Indigenous Services Canada**  
**Gertie Mai Muise, Executive Director, OFIFC**  
**Sean Longboat, Program Director, OFIFC**  
**TBIFC Board of Directors**

## Friendship Centre Core Funding Overview

### History

The Government of Canada and the Friendship Centre Movement (FCM) have enjoyed a long-standing relationship that has been vital to the growth and development of Friendship Centres in Canada. In 1972 the Government of Canada in partnership with the Friendship Centre Movement delivered core funding to Friendship Centres under the Migrating Native People Program (MNPP). The funding allowed Friendship Centres to expand beyond the scope of an informal gathering space for Indigenous people towards a program and service delivery model of support. In 1982 the program was renamed the Native Friendship Centre Program (NFCP) and saw a funding increase of 42%. In 1988 the program became the Aboriginal Friendship Centre Program (AFCP) and received permanent support through an evergreen funding agreement. The evergreen funding model stabilized funding and demonstrated the Government of Canada's commitment to Friendship Centres and urban Indigenous communities. The core funding model remained through the better part of two decades, when in 2014 the Government of Canada introduced the Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS) as a replacement for the AFCP. The UAS destabilized core funding by eliminating the evergreen funding envelope leaving Friendship Centres in a precarious position as core funding was contingent on annual application process. The Urban Programming for Indigenous Peoples program created in 2017 has provided core like funding for a five-year period and will end on March 31, 2022.

### Program Overview

Indigenous people continue to migrate to urban and rural communities throughout Ontario at a growing rate. Ontario is the province with the largest Indigenous population in Canada, home to 374,395 Indigenous people according to the 2016 Census. In Ontario, 85.5 per cent of Indigenous people live in urban areas. The Indigenous population grew 23.1%, between 2011 and 2016, much faster than the non-Indigenous population, which grew by 4.2%. In response to growing population demands, Indigenous people have coordinated social and organisational networks within communities to support one another in navigating the realities of urban living. This includes creating opportunities to access programs and services that are ingrained in Indigenous culture and tradition, while simultaneously addressing individual, familial, or communal needs. Urban Indigenous communities are well established, with multiple service organisations, recognized elders, and a multigenerational society integrating together in a collective urban Indigenous identity.<sup>1</sup> Friendship Centres are the largest and most significant urban Indigenous network in Ontario. Friendship Centre and other urban Indigenous organisations and communities have been instrumental in developing operating standards and norms around the provision of services and programs. Yet, many urban Indigenous communities still face unacceptable service gaps and social and economic disparities. The 2021 Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQAAI+ National Action Plan (NAP) identified that addressing systemic racism and injustices towards Indigenous people require recognition of the

---

<sup>1</sup> Urban Sub-Working Group (May 2021). *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and 2SLGBTQAAI+ National Action Plan: Urban Pathway to Reclaiming Power and Place, Regardless of Residency*. Retrieved from: [https://4c3tru4erdnui9g3ggftji1d-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/NAP-Urban-Framework\\_EN.pdf](https://4c3tru4erdnui9g3ggftji1d-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/NAP-Urban-Framework_EN.pdf)

realities of urban Indigenous people. The NAP encourages “all governments and organizations to find ways to address local community-based solutions, and at the same time, work toward high- level, common outcomes”.<sup>2</sup> The process of change must be appropriately resourced so it can be a sustained effort over multiple generations. The Friendship Centre community hub model provides wholistic, culture-based supports and services to assist urban Indigenous individuals and families in Ontario. Programs are designed to respond to community priorities, such as child welfare redesign, secondary and post-secondary education needs, ending violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, promoting better physical, mental, and spiritual health, and the need for socio-economic security and self-determination. Friendship Centres offer a centralized service organisation that reflects a model of service delivery that actively engages with its community members and adapts program and service delivery that tailors to emerging community trends and needs.

---

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.27.