

# Ile a la Crosse FRIENDSHIP CENTRE

## COMMUNITY PLAN

Aboriginal Friendship Centres of Saskatchewan

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## Table of Contents

1.	Introduction.....	2
	A Community-Based, Holistic Approach .....	3
	Values .....	3
2.	Community Priorities .....	4
3.	Ile a la Crosse Context .....	5
4.	Planning Process .....	6
	Process Goals.....	7
	Unified Approach.....	7
	Urban Indigenous People in Saskatchewan are: .....	7
	Vision: .....	8
5.	Barriers and Opportunities.....	8
6.	Needs and Gaps .....	9
	Gaps.....	9
	Community Needs.....	10
	Space Needs .....	10
8.	Priorities .....	10
	Friendship Center Main Priorities .....	11
	Indigenous Women Priorities .....	12

# ILE A LA CROSSE COMMUNITY PLAN

## 1. Introduction

The community planning process of the Aboriginal Friendship Centres of Saskatchewan (AFCS) is a province wide initiative of the AFCS which consists of several different engagement processes where the aim is to provide high level direction to the leadership of both the individual Friendship Centres and the AFCS on the areas of need in the community and options for some of options forward to meet these needs.

This process will allow the AFCS to see where there are synergies within members across the province, and where there could be joint action on specific areas of work, but also to see where innovation and individualized work within one or two members should be supported to help create capacity within these organizations as well.

The direction is obtained from engagement taken place over the last two years from various opportunities to meet with centres around topics such as MMIW2S, Infrastructure, Bill S2, and Indigenous Women's Economic Development and finally though direct drop into members over the last year.

This entire process is also designed to transform the relationship between the AFCS and its member organizations from one that was solely focused on the transfer of financial support and the monitoring of those resources to one that is designed to first provide support and then work though any concerns that may come up.

To focus and guide future support from the AFCS, a series of Community Strategic Plans (CSP) have been developed for participating communities in Saskatchewan. These communities include La Loche, Buffalo Narrows, Ile a la Crosse, Battleford, La Ronge, Meadow Lake, Prince Albert, Regina, and Qu'Appelle. These plans have also been designed to be easily connected to each other, and collectively to assist the AFCS in easily connecting themes to scale the voices of members for greater impact. The combined plans provide a Provincial picture of key priorities and project ideas and an indication of progress that is being made across Saskatchewan to increase the success of the member Centres communities. Thus, the CSP's provides a roadmap for the progress and success of Friendship Centres in Saskatchewan.

## A Community-Based, Holistic Approach

Workshop participants in gathered and engaged in a series of conversations about what community values exist in the community, what needs exist and what do you see for the future of your urban Indigenous communities and its success. Through these conversations, key priorities, and ideas for supporting the community of Ile a la Crosse and its community have been identified. With a common regional vision for Saskatchewan Friendship Centres that is

purposeful and reflects a course of action that is possible, this Plan provides guidance for the Friendship Centres moving forward and to help guide further progress for the upcoming future.

## Values

During engagement with the Ile a la Crosse Friendship Centre, conversations occurred around what the overall values of the Friendship Centre were; the following table includes values that were agreed upon by the Friendship Centre and those that utilize its services - it was also noted that these values also had a significant impact on the overall success of the Friendship Centre and its associated programs and services to the Indigenous community of Ile a la Crosse.

VALUES		
Community	Family & Friendship	Culture & Language Preservation
Hospitality & Service Delivery	Commitment	Volunteerism
Hub of the Community	Diversity	Transparency
Connection	Safe Place & Support	Mentorship
Basic Needs		Professionalism

## 2. Community Priorities

The Community Strategic Plan (CSP) for Ile a la Crosse is organized into three parts: vision, analysis of needs, and priorities for action. This plan presents an opportunity to better allocate resources, promote effective management, increase communication, build relationships, and address needs. For this Community Plan to be an effective tool for increasing support for the community it should be referred to often in the development of projects and programs. This plan incorporates diverse views from communities and provides guidance for establishing holistic and sustainable partnerships and provides one of the 10 strategic components needed by the AFCS to connect individual Friendship Centres together and to advocate on their behalf to receive the resources they need.

The Ile a la Crosse CSP takes a holistic approach and maintains a broad understanding of the needs of the community which means that individuals and communities are engaged, supported, and fulfilled by whatever they endeavor to undertake. Success in this sense means youth are able to grow and develop their talents; that the basic needs of adults are met and support is available to acquire life skills, education and work experience necessary for success;

and, that seniors and Elders remain engaged in their communities and can age without struggling.

Barriers to the urban Indigenous community are complex and need to be tackled from all sides. The holistic approach to this plan emphasizes the historical Friendship Centre wrap around service delivery approach that understands that all projects exist within a broader context. Each project addresses more than just a single need and that as many needs should be met as possible by one multi service organization. This plan can be used by Friendship Centres as a tool to help educate other service providers in understanding the broader context: their projects may have only one or two main objectives, but should be designed, implemented, leverage partnerships and be evaluated with an understanding of how this one project can affect the broader picture.

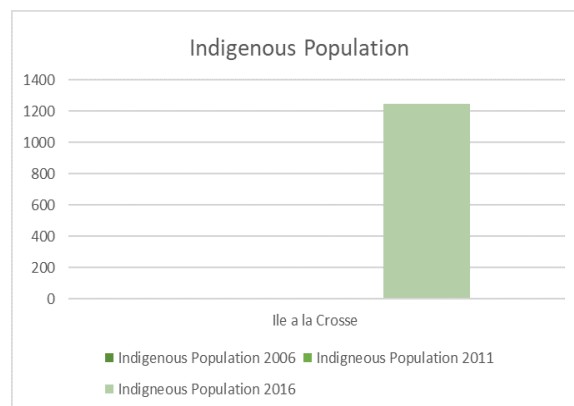
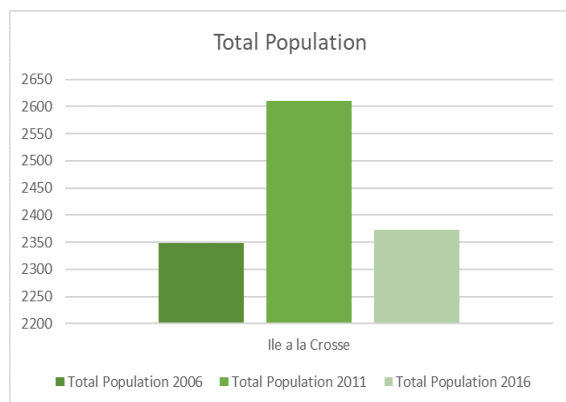
By identifying gaps between current and needed services, programs and supports, this plan can also act as a beginning for non-Indigenous service providers to connect with non-traditional partners like Friendship Centres to build long-lasting and productive relationships grounded in community. This plan recognizes the challenges faced by a diverse and often marginalized population and points the way toward a future where Indigenous people can thrive in the urban context.

The Indigenous population is diverse and dynamic, with wide-ranging challenges and needs that span demographic boundaries. While it is difficult to meet the individual needs of each member of the community, this plan focuses on the most common themes identified by participants and speaks to priority areas where change is most needed. By starting with fundamentals of access to and engagement in resources needed by the community, this Plan suggests that if the needs of those most challenged to success are met, opportunities for all community members will increase.

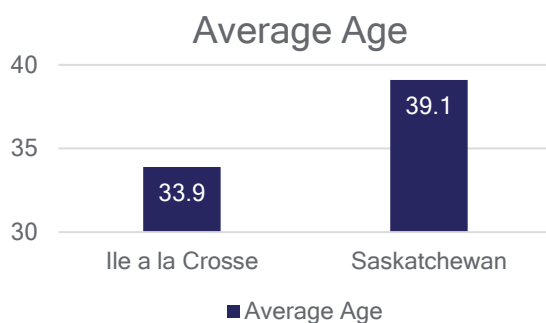
### 3. Ile a la Crosse Context

The term “urban Aboriginal people” refers to primarily to First Nations, Metis, and Inuit residing off reserve, Inuit territory, and metis homeland areas. While National Household Survey data describes the self-identified Aboriginal population, it has been suggested that this requirement for self-identification, coupled with the diverse backgrounds and rate of mobility among Aboriginal people may result in the under-estimation of the actual number of Aboriginal people who reside in these communities across Saskatchewan. This section is presented for context to understand the characteristics of the Aboriginal population in the Ile a la Crosse area.

Ile a la Crosse is in the northern region of Saskatchewan, with a population of over 2300 with over 1200 being Aboriginal. The Ile a la Crosse Friendship Centres service population is made up of 7370 point of service with Aboriginal clients in the 2018-2019 fiscal year.



While total population data is available data from 2006 and 2011 on the Indigenous community was not available. The tables above show the number for 2016 based on data from Statistics Canada. On average, Ile a la Crosse Aboriginal population is much younger than the province. The average age in Ile a la Crosse is 33.9<sup>1</sup> while the provincial average age is 39.1<sup>2</sup> a difference of almost 6 years.



## 4. Planning Process

This Plan is the result of a collaborative effort between the Aboriginal Friendship Centres of Saskatchewan, its member Friendship Centres and includes data obtained through the engagement processes from the province wide infrastructure study completed by Stantec and Praxis, the Indigenous Women's Economic Framework, and the CIIF engagement process. These engagements welcomed community, volunteers, employees and the collective leadership in the Friendship Centre and broader community leadership.

<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada. 2018. *Île-à-la-Crosse, NV [Census subdivision], Saskatchewan (table). Aboriginal Population Profile*. 2016 Census. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-510-X2016001. Ottawa. Released July 18, 2018. (Census Profile, 2016 Census Saskatchewan [Province] and Canada [Country], 2019)<sup>2</sup>

Participants engaged in a series of conversations about what the currently community looks like, the needs associated with this ecosystem and how to ensure the broader success of Indigenous communities as well as what the future looks like for them, and the paths that are possible to reach what community successes have been identified. Detailed notes were taken, which were subsequently synthesized and analyzed to support content development for this Plan.

## Process Goals

Participants in Ile a la Crosse engaged in three main conversations, with the goal of drafting the main components of the Community Strategic Plan by the end of the processes which included what the future vision was for the needs being met by a plan moving forward, the programmatic opportunities in the community of Ile a la Crosse and both challenges and changes required to meet some of these opportunities moving forward<sup>3</sup>

Future work in this area and implementation will build on this process by included other data collected during future engagement sessions prior to February and March 2020.

## Unified Approach

A single, unified vision for the province of Saskatchewan allows for each of the ten communities to engage with and respond to this work within their own context. A single process recognizes the interconnectedness of the province and encourages member Friendship Centres to engage with one another and with external stakeholders beyond the context of their own community, to develop partnerships and build the capacity needed to realize a common future. The result will be a clear and bold expression of urban Indigenous people engaging and succeeding at all levels.

## Urban Indigenous People in Saskatchewan are:

**Represented** and **accepted** as important, wise, and integral to the success of the province of Saskatchewan and its future. Urban Indigenous people are important **decision-makers** and the future of Canada's economy and **Friendship Centres** seen as important supporters and advocates for all urban Indigenous people and as places to **discover and develop** their skills for life and **future opportunities**.

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<sup>3</sup> Infrastructure Engagement Sessions held February 2020 in Ile a la Crosse



## Vision:

A Centre that has programs that meet the needs of seniors, youth, those who require shelter, mental health support, healing and grieving supports and those who need support with domestic violence. All these needs can be provided while at the same time continuing the history of the Friendship Centre creating progressive positive change in Ile a la Crosse.

## 5. Barriers and Opportunities

Exploring the barriers and opportunities for members of the Indigenous community in Ile a la Crosse that is supported by the Friendship Centres programs and Services means understanding the challenges and possibilities that exist today and into the future. In order to move forward, a strong understanding of the present-day circumstances is essential.

The barriers and opportunities that workshop participants identified for the urban Indigenous population in Ile a la Crosse are summarized below.

### Program Opportunities

- Healing lodge
- Mental health and addictions programs
- More cultural and community events for people to stay connected with culture
- Outdoor events and sports for the youth
- Home Counselling - to ensure privacy Specialised services for education
- In-house elder - Elder support and spiritual guidance
- Life skill programs
- Governance training

### Barriers

- A room set up in the style of a living room to attend to clients - a space with a couch and decorations
- A space separate from the offices for daytime programming. The lobby space cannot be utilized during the day for programming because it serves as a hangout spot for all
- The preschool could use a bigger facility. Graduation is usually scheduled in the summer to utilize the field
- Storage - Currently, some supplies are store in the furnace room and the old building. It's ideal to have better storage for the center



- Boardroom space - In the community, there is no space to rent a boardroom space. The Center can have a space that will be utilized by the Center as well as serve as a source of revenue for the center through rental.
- Vestibule at the entrance
- Cultural/spiritual room - The Center does not have a designated spot that is properly ventilated to hold cultural activities
- Healing lodge - a correctional institution that takes into consideration the cultures and traditions of the people
- Kitchen - The Center organizes cooking classes for its clients. There is need for more space, a bigger pantry and better ventilation in the kitchen.
- Better space for the youth center with a safe talk room space
- Renovations to the existing aboriginal head start facility to make it kid friendly
- One space - A multipurpose facility that houses all the programs and services offered by the Friendship Center.
- Women Shelter - There is no shelter for women in the community

## Success

In relation to participant conversations around what makes the Friendship Centre successful the follow was noted across the different areas of the Friendship Centre in Ile a la Crosse.

### *Community Partnership*

Many partnerships in the community to support community member's needs.

### *Staff*

High quality staff and continuous collaboration to deliver exceptional services to the clients

### *Leadership*

Good support and direction from the Centres leadership as well as the Friendship Centres overall leadership in the community

### *Open Space*

The Centre is a safe space to drop in for members in the community

## 6. Needs and Gaps

The Ile a la Crosse Community plan will provide a simple guide that can help the organization and the AFCS focus its efforts on meeting current and future needs in the community and also help orient organizations in areas of common interest with other member Friendship Centres to help elevate the voices and leverage individual resources to focus energy where it is needed to move communities forward. It will guide the decisions around which resources the Friendship Centre will put energy into obtaining and which programs and services to work on developing over time. The next stage of this process will be for the Friendship Centre to prioritize which needs need to be met at which time.

It will help the Aboriginal Friendship Centres of Saskatchewan position the collective membership as all Friendship Centres and the National Association of Friendship Centres begin work on program renewal to ensure provincial interests are considered during the development of a new multi-year funding agreement.

By ensuring a strategic position is obtained before moving forward, Ile a la Crosse can ensure that the main and most serious needs in the community are met as it begins to focus its energy on solutions of the following needs and gaps recognized in the community.

### Gaps

- Meeting Space
- Expanded funding for extended programs
- Large Event Space
- Recreation centre where people can hang out

### Community Needs

- Mental health and addictions support
- Wrap around support for staff, not just clients - PTSD support through debriefing. Ensuring staff have somewhere to go when they feel overwhelmed
- Adult education
- Full time paid elder in the Friendship Center
- More advanced health services that are not available in the community - specialized support

### Space Needs

- A room set up in the style of a living room to attend to clients - a space with a couch and decorations

- A space separate from the offices for daytime programming. The lobby space cannot be utilized during the day for programming because it serves as a hangout spot for all
- The preschool could use a bigger facility. Graduation is usually scheduled in the summer to utilize the field
- Storage - Currently, some supplies are store in the furnace room and the old building. It is ideal to have better storage for the center
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### Preschool

- Wheelchair accessibility - The preschool classroom is not wheelchair accessible

## 8. Priorities

This Community Plan is rooted in the idea that governments and service providers can and need to come together to work with the Ile a la Crosse urban Indigenous community to work toward the outcomes it wishes to see. The priorities in this plan are structured broadly with a broad understanding of what is currently happening and what needs to happen in the future using a holistic approach to address the needs of the urban Indigenous community.

### Friendship Center Main Priorities

1. Serving low income individuals

While this list is not exhaustive, it is broad enough that by focusing on a smaller number of themes, there will be an opportunity for the Friendship Centre to use its limited energy to work

towards building capacity that meets areas which will help it future meet the needs of the community as outlined in community discussions.

It is with the spirit of community wellness, collaboration and action that will help ensure the success of the development of an implementation plan that can help piece together the broader needs picture and path towards a provincial effort to best serve some of the most in need individuals across Saskatchewan.

## Indigenous Women Priorities

In cross referencing community voice with the Indigenous Women's Economic Framework, Indigenous women voiced their concerns and would like to see the following barriers targeted:

1. Mental health and addictions
2. High cost of living
3. Staff turnover in community organizations
4. Lack of services in the community and region
5. Underutilized programs

Indigenous women and their families wanted to continue to strengthen their family bonds and child belonging, working on community activities that are family friendly and do not involve alcohol, building life skills and focusing on cultural self-sustainability by way of connecting to the land and using traditional skills to be self-sustaining.