

PRINCE ALBERT FRIENDSHIP CENTRE

COMMUNITY PLAN

Aboriginal Friendship Centres of Saskatchewan

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PRINCE ALBERT 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 in the areas of need in the community and options for moving 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 through directly dropping into member centres 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 through 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 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 Prince Albert Friendship Centre 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 Prince Albert Indian and Metis 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 Prince Albert.

VALUES		
Teamwork	Hub	Inclusion
Safe Space	Support	Multi Layered
Respect	Culture	Belonging

2. Community Priorities

The Community Strategic Plan (CSP) for Prince Albert 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 Prince Albert 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.

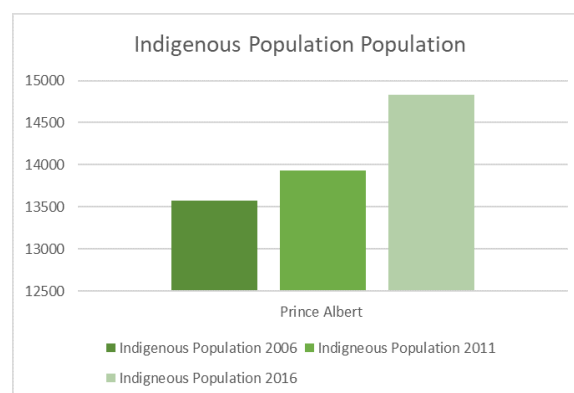
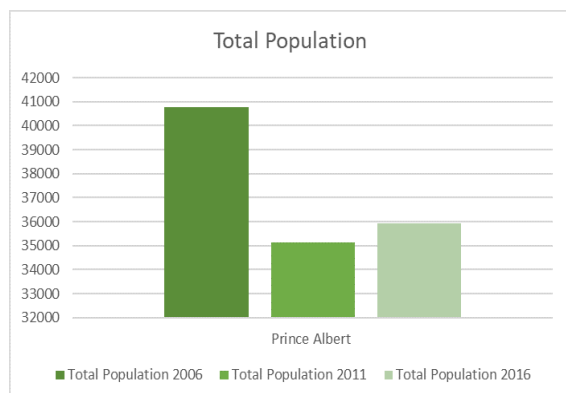
By identifying gaps between current and needed services, programs and supports, this plan can also act as a beginning for non-Indigenous service providers to connect with non-traditional partners like Friendship Centres to build long-lasting and productive relationships grounded in community. This plan 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.

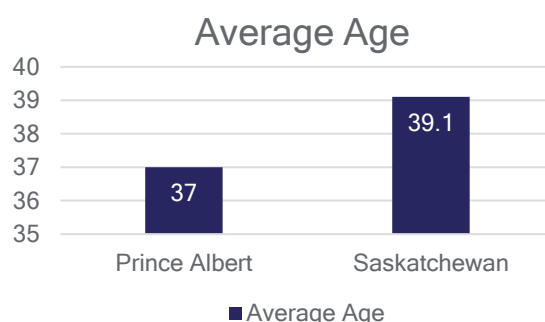
3. Prince Albert Context

The term “urban Aboriginal people” refers 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 Prince Albert area.

Prince Albert is in the northern region of Saskatchewan, with a population of 35,926 with 14,830 being Aboriginal. The Prince Albert Friendship Centre’s service population is made up of 7,601 clients being Aboriginal in the 2018-2019 fiscal year.



As in many communities throughout the country, Prince Albert Indigenous population is increasing. The tables above show the increase between 2006 and 2016 based on data from Statistics Canada. Prince Albert total Aboriginal population was approximately close to 15,000 in 2016, compared with the community's population. On average, Prince Albert Aboriginal population is younger than the provincial average. The average age in Prince Albert is 37.0¹ while the provincial average age is 39.1² a difference of over 2 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.

¹ Statistics Canada. 2018. *Prince Albert, CY [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)²

Participants engaged in a series of conversations about what the current 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 once 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 Prince Albert 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 Prince Albert and both challenges and changes required to meet some of these opportunities moving forward³

Future work in this area and implementation will build on this process by including 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**.

Vision:

³ Infrastructure Engagement Sessions held February 2020 in Prince Albert

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 Prince Albert.

5. Barriers and Opportunities

Exploring the barriers and opportunities for members of the Indigenous community in Prince Albert 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 Prince Albert are summarized below.

Program Opportunities

- Fundamental life skills trainings such as employment skills training, mentorship programs for youth and transition programs for individuals who are getting out of jail
- Supported housing
- Shelter for men
- Mental health and addictions program
- Support for individuals with FASD
- Court support workers

Barriers

- Reception Area - The reception area of the building is small and limits the number of clients that can be attended to. In the winter, the Center offers coffee to the unsheltered in the mornings. During this time, the reception area is always crowded. Also, during the income tax season the reception area is maxed out. Limited space for clients to hang out.
- Office space - There is limited workspace as staff grow leading to multiple individuals in small offices. Currently, some offices are overcrowded due to limited space. Also, some offices in the building get flooded in the spring.
- Funding - The Center desires a more structured and stable funding stream from the government. The instability and uncertainty of funding for programs leads to loss of competent staff at the end of the fiscal year.

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 Prince Albert.

Staff

In several conversations, the success of the Center was attributed to the passion and quality of staff members. The staff build good relationships with the clients and work collaboratively to deliver excellent services.

Leadership

Both board and the executive team of the Center provide clear direction to the staff.

Community Involvement

The Friendship Center is well recognized in the community for its contributions in helping the underprivileged and unsheltered.

Partnerships

In providing its programs, the Center has built strong strategic partnerships across the city.

Open Door Policy

The programs and services of the Center are open to anyone in the community and the clients feel welcomed and accepted.

6. Needs and Gaps

The Prince Albert 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, Prince Albert 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

- Wrap around housing support.
- Limited available infrastructure for expansion for programs and services.
- Multi Sectorial resources.

Community Needs

- Supported housing
- Shelter for men - There is only one shelter for men in the city
- Transportation needs - no transit opportunity for people released from prison to go to their community/reserve leaving them to commit another crime and start the cycle again
- Food security - The food bank is over tasked and under funded
- Family housing/shelter
- Mental Health and addiction services and support
- Support for individuals with FASD
- Fundamental life skills training prior to work readiness program
- System navigation to help clients link programs needed for their wellbeing - integration of services
- Youth programs and a hangout spot to keep them safe and out of trouble

Space Needs

Current Space

- Office spaces and washrooms -
- Better visibility and ventilation for existing offices.
- More washrooms for clients and staff.
- More office spaces in order to introduce new programs.
- Sound isolation and better acoustics for offices especially during discussions with clients.
- Kitchen - Expansion of the kitchen to better accommodate cooking classes and an improved pantry, cooler, fridge and floor for the kitchen.
- Security - The Center needs security cameras around the building and better lighting outside the building
- Gymnasium - Improved roofing and upgraded floors and acoustics for the gymnasium
- Access cards - most offices within the Center are locked to prevent theft. It would be ideal to upgrade the locks to access cards.
- Buzzer - the receptionists currently monitors the client washroom by ensuring its is always locked except when in use. Having a buzzer at the reception desk will be a more efficient manner of managing this process.

- Parking - More parking for clients and partners
- A panic button to insure safety of staff when interactions with the client escalate

New Space

- Supportive housing for individuals struggling with mental health and addiction issues
- Training room for new programs such as the employability skills training
- A cultural room with proper ventilation appropriate for conducting traditional activities
- Breakout rooms structured in a manner that is comfortable and less institutional to hold meetings with clients
- Urban sweat lodge

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 Prince Albert 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. Families
2. Community Engagement
3. Partnerships
4. Advocacy for the indigenous population in Prince Albert
5. Discount Grocery as a social enterprise to support current funding

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, there were barriers that Indigenous women and their families shared. The Friendship Centre was acknowledged for the hard work and dedication they have in the community, and continuing to address the following barriers is essential:

1. Lack of services, gaps in services, assistance in navigation, after hours supports
2. Racism and discrimination, including client-service provider imbalances
3. Lack of support for staff, educators and all family members
4. Loss of culture and cultural trauma
5. Lack of employment opportunities
6. Incarceration including safety, high Indigenous rates, housing and transportation before and after, access to services for those incarcerated, family members and victims

As the community continues to address these concerns, other priorities were shared and include:

1. More public awareness and understanding
2. Understanding divides including urban, rural and northern and what that means for Indigenous people accessing services from within and outside the community
3. Better understanding of Indigenous culture and ways to help improve services, an example would be to include recipes and traditional foods in food bank donations and meals
4. Continue to work to keep families together and support all family members