

ININEW
Friendship Centre

STRATEGIC PLAN 2026–2031

Message from Leadership

For more than 50 years, the Ininew Friendship Centre (IFC) has served as a place of support, connection, and advocacy for Indigenous people living in urban settings. Since its establishment in 1974, IFC has evolved alongside the needs of the community, expanding programs and services while remaining grounded in Indigenous values, culture, and community leadership.

Today, IFC provides a wide range of social service programs that support approximately 2,000 individuals annually through initiatives focused on housing and homelessness prevention, food security, family wellness, cultural revitalization, youth engagement, community development, and systems navigation. Operating from its primary location in Cochrane, Ontario, with additional Reaching Home programming in Moosonee, IFC continues to play a vital role in supporting Indigenous individuals and families throughout the region.

The next five years present both challenges and opportunities. Indigenous communities continue to experience disproportionate barriers related to housing, food security, mental wellness, access to culturally appropriate services, and economic stability. At the same time, there is a growing recognition of the importance of Indigenous-led organizations and culturally grounded approaches to community wellness.

This Strategic Plan reflects our commitment to ensuring that Indigenous ways of knowing and being remain at the centre of everything we do. It provides a roadmap for strengthening organizational capacity, maintaining high-quality service delivery, advancing cultural preservation, ensuring financial sustainability, and demonstrating strong Indigenous governance and leadership.

As we move forward, we remain committed to our vision of acknowledging our responsibility to support and empower Indigenous people.

The Ininew Friendship Centre was incorporated on November 19, 1974 and became a member of the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres (OFIFC) in 1975. The centre's founding directors are Marie Theresa Hall, Joseph Thomas Sackaney, Alice Anne Doris Louttit, Jacob Rupert's House Diamond, Marvin Gerald Lawrence Mountney, Richard Robert Moore, and Laughton Oconnel Binns.

About the Ininew Friendship Centre

The Ininew Friendship Centre (IFC) is an Indigenous-led, community-based organization mandated to provide social service programming and supports to urban Indigenous people in Cochrane, Ontario. Since 1974, IFC has worked to improve the quality of life for Indigenous individuals and families by delivering culturally relevant programs and services that respond to community needs.

Through its primary service location in Cochrane and satellite Reaching Home programming in Moosonee, IFC serves approximately 2,000 individuals annually. IFC's work is guided by the belief that Indigenous people thrive when they are connected to culture, language, community, and traditional ways of knowing.

Community Context

The communities served by the Ininew Friendship Centre continue to experience significant social and economic challenges that impact the well-being of Indigenous individuals and families. Housing affordability, homelessness, food insecurity, mental health concerns, and access to culturally appropriate services remain among the most pressing issues facing the region.

This Strategic Plan responds to these realities by focusing on five interconnected priorities: strengthening Indigenous ways of knowing and being, maintaining high-quality service delivery, enhancing organizational capacity, ensuring financial sustainability, and demonstrating strong Indigenous governance and community leadership.

Board of Directors / Executive Leadership Team

7 Board Members and 1 Executive Director

Haley Cochrane - President
Brent Linklater - Vice President
Onagoshi Haymond - Secretary
Bonnie Laforest - Treasurer
Peggy Forbes - Director
Betty Rickard - Director
Stacey Bellaire – Director
Tyler Beaton – Executive Director

Strategic Planning Process

This strategic plan was developed through a collaborative, community-informed process grounded in both Indigenous planning approaches and organizational data. Planning meetings and draft workshops were facilitated by an external contractor specializing in Indigenous strategic planning, Sean Monteith, ensuring the process reflected culturally appropriate methods and best practices.

The draft plan was further shaped through planning sessions held by the Board of Directors of the Ininew Friendship Centre, who are elected by membership, with additional support from the Executive Director, Tyler Beaton. Organizational priorities were identified by reviewing program data and service metrics to ensure decisions were evidence-informed and responsive to community needs.

Community voice was central to the process, with input gathered through an open survey campaign available both online and in-person. Staff across the organization were also consulted through dedicated surveys to ensure frontline perspectives were reflected. Together, these steps ensured the strategic plan is grounded in lived experience, operational knowledge, and community priorities.

Organizational Snapshot

The Ininew Friendship Centre is a community-based, Indigenous-led organization governed by a Board of Directors elected by membership, providing overall governance, accountability, and strategic direction.

Day-to-day operations are led by an Executive Director, who oversees organizational management and ensures alignment between programming, services, and community-identified priorities. The organization is supported by administrative and operational functions, including finance, coordination, communications, and facilities support, which ensure strong internal systems and accountability.

The Centre currently employs 34 full-time staff and 3 summer students, working collaboratively across departments and programs to deliver responsive, community-driven services.

Programming is delivered through a team-based service model, led by multiple Team Leads who oversee integrated clusters of service delivery. Across the organization, there are 22 active programs that span a wide range of supports, including:

- Housing and homelessness supports
- Health and wellness services
- Family and community support programming
- Youth-focused programming
- Cultural and language revitalization initiatives
- Justice, court support, and outreach services

This structure allows for coordinated, wraparound service delivery, ensuring individuals and families can access multiple supports through a seamless and culturally grounded approach. Overall, the organizational design reflects a balance of strong governance, effective operational management, and frontline service delivery rooted in community needs and priorities.

Vision

Acknowledging our responsibility to support and empower Indigenous People.

Values

Miyo'Pimatisiwin
(Living the Good Life)
ᐱᒫᑎᓯᐃᐧᐣ

Wahkohtowin
(Kinship, Relationship, Interconnection)
ᐧᐊᐦᑯᑖᐃᐧᐣ

Nikanitamowin
(Leadership Through Service)
ᓂᑲᓂᑕᒧᐃᐧᐣ

Kisewatisiwin
(Compassion, Kindness, and Care)
ᑭᓴᐊᐧᑎᓯᐃᐧᐣ

E Kistencikkatek Askiy
(Honouring and Considerate of the Land)
ᐁ ᑭᐢᑌᓐᒋᑲᑌᐠ ᐊᐢᑭ

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

Embody Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being

Why This Matters

Culture is foundational to wellness, identity, belonging, and self-determination.

Objectives

- Ensure all IFC programs and services are rooted in Indigenous cultural approaches and ways of being.
- Maintain and expand cultural resource programming opportunities.
- Strengthen Cree language integration and translation services.
- Increase access to evening and after-hours programming.
- Develop a knowledge repository of cultural teachings, Cree history, and Elder knowledge.

Success Indicators

- Cultural components incorporated into all IFC program areas.
- Increased participation in cultural activities.
- Growth in Cree language resources.
- Completion of a cultural knowledge repository.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

Maintain Excellence in Service Delivery

Why This Matters

IFC must remain responsive, accountable, and innovative in delivering programs that address community needs.

Objectives

- Conduct a comprehensive community needs assessment.
- Review and strengthen service programs using best practices.
- Implement program measurement and outcome tracking.
- Develop a supportive housing strategy by 2027.
- Establish IFC-specific program standards.

Success Indicators

- Community needs assessment completed.
- Annual program evaluations conducted.
- Improved outcome reporting.
- Housing strategy completed and implemented.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

Strengthen Organizational Capacity

Why This Matters

Strong organizations require strong systems, people, and infrastructure.

Objectives

- Develop short-term and long-term capital plans.
- Conduct an operational review.
- Complete a risk management assessment.
- Develop a recruitment and retention strategy.
- Explore future infrastructure opportunities.

Success Indicators

- Capital planning framework completed.
- Operational review recommendations implemented.
- Risk management framework established.
- Improved employee retention outcomes.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

Ensure Financial Stability Through Responsible Stewardship

Why This Matters

Long-term sustainability depends upon strong financial stewardship and diversified revenue opportunities.

Objectives

- Diversify revenue sources.
- Strengthen long-term financial sustainability.
- Pursue multi-year funding agreements.
- Explore entrepreneurial opportunities aligned with IFC's mission.
- Enhance financial monitoring and reporting.

Success Indicators

- Increased revenue diversification.
- Growth in multi-year funding agreements.
- Balanced annual budgets.
- Improved financial forecasting.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5

Model Good Indigenous Governance and Community Leadership

Why This Matters

Strong governance and meaningful engagement are essential to maintaining trust and accountability.

Objectives

- Strengthen communication and consultation.
- Conduct a governance review.
- Develop a Board Member Code of Conduct.
- Strengthen public communications and digital engagement.
- Build strategic partnerships.

Success Indicators

- Increased community engagement.
- Governance review completed.
- Code of Conduct adopted.
- Growth in strategic partnerships.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Progress on the Strategic Plan will be reviewed regularly by senior leadership and reported annually to the Board of Directors. Progress updates will inform future planning and organizational decision-making.

Closing

In closing, the Ininew Friendship Centre remains committed to supporting our urban Indigenous community through culturally grounded programs, compassionate service delivery, and collaborative partnerships that strengthen wellbeing and self-determination. We continue to see the strength and resilience of our clients and families every day, and we are reminded that our work is not only necessary, but vital.

As we move forward, IFC will remain focused on building stronger systems of care, deepening relationships with our partners, and ensuring that Indigenous voices remain at the Centre of every decision that impacts our community. Together, we can continue to create pathways that are rooted in dignity, culture, and hope for future generations. **Migwetch.**

Ininew Friendship Centre

Strategic Plan 2026–2031

Artworks by Adrien Nakogee