

*\$14.1M in funding from the Government of Québec*

## **A step toward better access to justice for Indigenous people**

**Montréal, June 7, 2021 - The Government of Québec announced an investment of \$14.1M, \$4M of which will be dedicated to the development of urban services for Indigenous people. This represents a step in the right direction for the improvement of access to support, intervention, and referral services in matters of justice for members of First Nations and Inuit communities. At the same time, this investment contributes to the recognition of their specific and urgent needs regarding frontline support.**

The Regroupement des Centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec (RCAAQ), who has been collaborating with the government for many years in the development and sharing of solutions regarding access to culturally safe and relevant services, considers that this funding will provide impetus to the important wave of efforts and resources that must be deployed to allow for equitable access and quality services in matters of justice for Indigenous people.

These amounts will mainly allow for the hiring of workers to assist Indigenous citizens in knowing more about their rights, and especially to allow them to exercise those rights in all safety. Whereas major issues related to justice experienced by Indigenous people were denounced and documented time and again, it is essential that concrete actions be undertaken to enhance a better understanding and re-establish their trust in the system. The funding announced today confirms this step forward.

According to the various results in ***Portrait : Urban Indigenous People and Access to Public Services***, published in 2018 by the RCAAQ:

- 56% of the respondents had been in contact with police services;
- Despite a remarkably high rate of victimization (31%), only 13% of all respondents had had recourse to the services of the Crime Victims Assistance Centre (CAVAC);
- Only 6.5% had benefited from the government program providing compensation for victims of criminal acts (IVAC), and 73% of all respondents declared they did not know about the program.

### **Quotes**

“These additional resources will contribute to the creation of safer spaces, in the respect of Indigenous values and cultural practices. They will allow us to continue our work aiming to guarantee a better social justice, and access to the same rights and opportunities for Indigenous citizens. ”

- Phillippe Tsaronséré Meilleur, RCAAQ President

“The Native Friendship Centres, by their actions on the field, contribute to our aspiration for a more just and equitable society. Respect for individual and collective rights for Indigenous citizens is fundamental to rebuild a relationship of trust and, in many cases, begin the healing process. ”

- Tanya Sirois, Executive Director, RCAAQ

**About the Regroupement des Centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec**

The RCAAQ represents 10 affiliated Native Friendship Centres established in the following cities: Chibougamau, Joliette, La Tuque, Maniwaki, Montréal, Québec City, Senneterre, Sept-Îles, Trois-Rivières, and Val-d'Or. For 50 years now, the Québec Friendship Centre Movement advocates for the rights and interests of Indigenous citizens in the cities of Québec by offering a continuum of frontline services. The mission of the Friendship Centres is to improve the quality of life for the urban Indigenous population, promote culture, and build bridges between peoples.

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**For information**

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