

21 of 25 BC Friendship Centres were contacted between May 1 to May 14, 2020. Questions regarding their operations and gaps were asked. The following is based on the responses and coded for themes.

- **All 21 friendship centres have remained open.**
 - 7 FCs have their doors open with limited hours and adjusted programing.
 - 14 FCs have their doors closed but are still offering programing through outreach and by appointments.
 - Programs include counseling services, food services, elder and single mother care packages with food, toiletries and crafts included, cultural workshops, anti-violence programming, youth programing, safe shelters, resume services, and much more.

- **Food Security: All 21 FCs noted food security as a need.**
 - There is need for resources to stock food banks/pantries, creation of hampers and delivery, making of bagged and hot lunches, supplying grocery vouchers, toiletries and cleaning supplies.
 - It was noted the BC Food bank is helping but in most cases clients and needs have increased 40-100%.

- **PPE: 17 of 21 FCs noted PPE supplies as a need.**
 - FCs argued PPE is necessary for programs that interact with at risk clients including in residential facilities, shelters and transporting clients.
 - FCs noted an urgent need for hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, masks, gloves, and general cleaning supplies.
 - 3 FCs noted a need for janitorial staffing for professional residential sanitization and concerns around extra costs associated with these services.

- **Mental Health: 15 of 21 FCs noted Mental Health support as a need. 4 noting it as their most pressing concern.**
 - The FCs are experiencing a high volume of advocacy, outreach and counselling requests. These services are oversubscribed, and funding and staffing is needed.
 - Specific concerns about high increases in domestic violence, suicide, and depression.
 - Counselling staff need counselling themselves but FNHA programs are also oversubscribed.
 - Elders, single mothers, victims of violence, and youth were noted as highest need for mental health support needs.
 - Serious concerns about the traumatic impact this will have for years post-COVID 19 on community members.

- **Technology: 12 of 21 FCs noted the need for technology support.**
 - FCs argue community members, especially elders, are experiencing challenges in keeping in contact with families, friends and supports.

Friendship Centres Gaps and Needs: COVID-19

- FCs discussed concern for individuals who don't have access to reliable phones or tech devices, making outreach challenging for at risk youth, expectant and single mothers, victims of violence, job seekers, and elders.
 - FCs noted that FC staff and community members are generally not prepared for work at home technology platforms (zoom, skype, etc.).
 - Training is needed as well as laptops, tablets and phones so those who are isolated can stay in touch with others.
- **Shelter: 6 of 21 FCs noted shelter as a need.**
 - FCs noted a need for more shelter services for the homeless, for people needing to isolate, and for victims of all types of violence in need of safe shelter.
 - 1 FC noted hotels that did offer safe housing for victims are refusing those sick or looking to isolate.
 - 1 FC noted the need for sheltering families and single moms in precarious positions or needing isolation.

Other needs noted by FCs.

- 5 FCs noted staffing concerns.
- 4 FCs noted a need for more naloxone and first aid kits.
- 3 FCs discussed concerns around children and youth who may not be able to access supports and resources during isolation.
- 3 FCs noted transportation concerns (poor public transit, FCs with buses need PPE to transport people).
- 3 FCs noted clothing, hygiene products, toiletries are always in need.
- 3 FCs discussed the need for laundry services for community members due to limited or no access to services.
- 3 FCs noted a concern around increased homelessness interactions and capacity, some concerns around security and capacity to support an influx of clients.
- 3 FCs had post-COVID 19 concerns, that after the restrictions have been lifted, services will still be required and likely to increase but funding will no longer be available.
- 2 FCs noted a desire for funding to offer staff hero or hazard pay.
- On a positive note, several FCs spoke of their communities coming together to support one another.