



## Calling all UMACY Supporters!

Friday, November 13, 2009

Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre

1607 East Hastings Street

9:00 am

We need to stand together and voice our concerns about the delays in the renewal of the Urban Multipurpose Aboriginal Youth Centres (UMAYC) Initiative. On Friday we will gather at the Friendship Centre and board a bus to travel to Port Moody where the youth will deliver our UMACY petition to the Honourable James Moore's constituency office. James Moore is the Minister of Canadian Heritage and directly responsible for approving the renewal of the UMACY Initiative.

Please gather your youth, Elders and all supports of UMACY and come rally with us. We need to show how important the UMACY Initiative is to the youth. BCAAFC has chartered a bus and can accommodate 50 people on a first come first serve basis. Contact Tanya McKenzie, Youth Initiatives Director at [tmckenzie@bcaafc.com](mailto:tmckenzie@bcaafc.com), 1-800-990-2432, or 250-896-4931.

Additional transportation would be appreciated. If your organization does have transportation for their group, you should still come to the Friendship Centre so we can all depart together. There will be refreshments for everyone at 9:00am, followed by an update on the renewal situation and departure on the bus. We hope to arrive at the constituency office by 11:30am. The youth will present the petitions and personal testimonials, then appointed spokespeople will make prepared statements to the press. We should get back to the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre at 1:00pm.

If you plan on attending the rally, you can continue to gather signatures for the petition and personal testimonials until Friday and bring the additional sheets with you.

**Youth are strongly encouraged to wear their regalia and bring drums, rattles, or other traditional items.**



Canadian  
Heritage

Patrimoine  
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## Urban Multipurpose Aboriginal Youth Centres (UMAYC) Initiative

### Backgrounder

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**Urban Aboriginal Youth are the fastest growing segment of the population in Canada. They also have less access to education opportunities, employment, basic health care, social services, and sports and recreation activities.**

#### **NATIONAL HISTORY OF INITIATIVE**

In the late 1990s the Canadian government committed to establishing, "...a network of urban multipurpose Aboriginal youth centres, linked to Friendship Centres or other Aboriginal community organizations." Through this federal announcement, the Urban Multipurpose Aboriginal Youth Centres (UMAYC) Initiative was developed.

When development of the Initiative was complete, the UMAC Initiative was broken down into four (4) funding streams, each delivered by different administrators nationally. The purpose of the 4 streams is to distribute the UMAC funds nationally to as wide a range of urban Aboriginal youth as possible. The stream administered by the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC) is a more open allocation targeting all Aboriginal organizations, while the other 3 streams have more specific mandates. The NAFC manages more than 50% of the total funding under the UMAC Initiative and is responsible for the largest segment of the national urban Aboriginal youth population.

Officially launched in 1999, UMAC was the first national initiative targeted at urban Aboriginal youth. Originally approved to March 31, 2003, the Initiative was extended to March 31, 2005, to be included in an overall study of the 13 programs and initiatives of the Aboriginal Affairs Branch of the Department of Canadian Heritage. In May of 2005, the Minister of Canadian Heritage announced a five-year extension of the UMAC Initiative to operate until 2010.

#### **OBJECTIVES OF UMAC**

The UMAC Initiative is designed to provide urban Aboriginal youth with a wide range of culturally based programs, services and activities that are locally controlled and designed in conjunction with Aboriginal youth. Year-to-year programs, services and activities are structured in a manner that will empower Aboriginal youth to address the challenges they face and determine their own future with a sense of pride in a safe and culturally relevant environment. The Initiative is in support of measures that equip and encourage urban Aboriginal youth, regardless of status, culture or gender, to meet their challenges and improve their life prospects.

A key expected outcome of the UMAC Initiative is the enhancement of Aboriginal youth capacity, and an increase in the role of Aboriginal organizations, in particular Aboriginal youth organizations, with respect to planning, priority-setting and program design, implementation, management, delivery and administration to meet the needs and priorities of urban Aboriginal youth.

### **BCAAFC ADMINISTRATION OF UMAC**

The NAFC developed a regionalization model to successfully distribute funds nationally. The purpose of the regionalization is to provide direct administrative support to projects in their own regions. This includes setting up a Regional Proposal Review Committee (RPRC), comprised mostly of youth, to assess proposals and put forward funding recommendations.

The BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC) administers UMAC for the BC regional, including both a provincial allocation, as well as a Metro Vancouver allocation.

A separate Metro Vancouver allocation was allotted to accommodate for the high concentration of urban Aboriginal youth in this city, as well as the vast area needing to be covered, as Metro Vancouver encompasses 19 communities in total. A key difference of the Metro Vancouver process is the peer election of local community youth to the Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Youth Council (MVAAC), which serves a similar function to the Regional Proposal Review Committee in assessing and making recommendations for funding lower mainland projects.

### **STATISTICS FOR BCAAFC-UMAC**

Individual UMAC projects have enormous impacts in our communities, in our Friendship Centers, in the poverty stricken Vancouver downtown eastside, and more importantly with the individual urban Aboriginal youth participating every day.

Currently the BCAAFC administers 36 projects, 20 provincially and 16 in Metro Vancouver, for a total of \$2.68 M annually in project funding. In the first six months of programming this year, the UMAC projects experienced 34,500 points of service to youth, for a total of 22,700 hours of services and activities.

### **RENEWAL**

The current authority for the UMAC Initiative ends March 31, 2010. To date no renewal or extension of the Initiative has been approved. In fact, the annual Call for UMAC Applications has been postponed indefinitely by order of the funder, the department of Canadian Heritage.

Although a renewal of the program is being sought by the department of Canadian Heritage, internal delays with their evaluation process are cause for concern. During the last renewal process, approval wasn't received from Canadian Heritage until May 2005, and projects did not receive first payments until more than 7 months after the beginning of the fiscal year. The application and assessment processes are complex and require months to complete. In BC, there needs to be two (2) application and assessment processes, one provincially and one for Metro Vancouver, requiring even more time.

When projects experience funding gaps valuable employees, space, and resources are lost; not to mention the connection the youth have to the project. Stability and consistency are key to successful youth projects. The BCAAFC works hard to achieve this stability for their projects.

Along with renewal, the NAFC seeks funding enhancements to the UMAC Initiative. Cuts to the original funding allocation were received a few years ago, even though the number of youth being serviced steadily increases. The demand for project funds far exceeds the funds available.