



REGROUPEMENT
DES CENTRES D'AMITIÉ
AUTOCHTONES DU QUÉBEC

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release



Protecting Indigenous youth: Progress undeniably made, but urban Indigenous people must still be heard fully

Wendake, June 4, 2026 – The Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec (RCAAQ) salutes the Québec Ombudsperson's report on the protection of Indigenous youth, yet reiterates the importance of taking the reality of Indigenous people living in urban areas into account more fully.

The report highlights persistent structural issues, particularly in prevention, cultural continuity and collaboration between public institutions and Indigenous organizations. It also points out that Indigenous children and youth continue to be over-represented in youth protection, due in part to a lack of access to culturally appropriate and safe services.

However, the situation takes on a unique aspect in cities, where more than half of Indigenous people now live in Quebec. Indigenous families face specific challenges in urban settings. Greater mobility, severed ties with the community of origin, fragmentation of services and distrust of institutions are all factors that complicate access to resources and can delay interventions.

For the RCAAQ, this observation confirms the need to fully recognize the role of Native Friendship Centres. As Indigenous populations in urban settings continue to grow, their realities are underrepresented when developing public policy and organizing how services are delivered.

The report also highlights how, too often, urban Indigenous organizations are only involved later in families' trajectories, when early intervention is a key to avoiding youth placement.

The RCAAQ reiterates that implementing the recommendations will require:

- Formal recognition of Indigenous organizations' role in the urban ecosystem
- Structured participation from the earliest intervention stages
- Stable, long-term funding for preventive action

Finally, the RCAAQ stresses the importance of continuing to implement the Viens Commission (CERP) Calls for Action, which continue to be crucial to transforming relations between Indigenous people and public institutions.

"The report's recommendations cannot lead to positive outcomes without real and sustained involvement by Indigenous players on the ground. The RCAAQ is ready to work closely with public and community partners to develop sustainable solutions adapted to Indigenous needs, particularly for those living in urban areas."

- Tanya Sirois, Executive Director
Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec

About the Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec

The Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec is a network of 11 Friendship Centres in 14 cities and towns that offer First Nations and Inuit culturally relevant and safe services that contribute to the harmony and reconciliation between peoples in Quebec cities. Native Friendship Centres are the largest urban service



infrastructure for urban Indigenous people, offering a range of integrated services in a variety of sectors, including health, social services, justice, social inclusion, education, employability, early childhood, youth and much more.

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