URBAN INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND PUBLIC SERVICE ACCESSIBILITY IN QUEBEC:

A Provincial Overview, 2025



REGROUPEMENT
DES CENTRES D'AMITIÉ
AUTOCHTONES DU QUÉBEC

We would like to thank all the Indigenous people who took the time to complete the questionnaire, as well as everyone who participated in the survey, analysis, writing, and editing.

Tshinashkumitin!
Woliwon!
Mikwetc!
Nià:wen!
Welalin!

Tshi nashkumitin!
Migwech!
Migwetc!
Tiawenhk!
Nakurmik!

Wliwni!
Merci!
Thank you!

It was coordinated by the RCAAQ's Observatory of Urban Indigenous Realities.

The following collaborated on the project:

- Centre d'amitié autochtone Capetciwotakanik
- Maniwaki Native Friendship Centrei
- Centre d'amitié autochtone de Lanaudière
- Centre d'amitié autochtone de Manicouagan
- Centre d'amitié autochtone de Sept-Îles
- Centre d'amitié autochtone de Trois-Rivières
- Val-d'Or Indigenous Friendship Centre
- Chibougamau Eenou Friendship Centre
- Centre d'entraide et d'amitié autochtone de Senneterre
- Centre MAMUK
- Native Montréal
- Native Friendship Centre of Montréal Inc.
- Centre d'amitié autochtone de Québec
- Société immobilière du RCAAQ
- Projet autochtone du Québec (PAQ)
- Southern Quebec Inuit Association

And, expertise was provided by these people and organizations:

- Knowledge Circle of the Observatory of Urban Indigenous Realities
- BC2 – Urban planning and land-use consulting firm
- LGP - Firme de développement économique
- Mona Belleau – Inuk population survey specialist
- Peter Allan ᖃᑕᐃ McKitrick – Inuk quantitative data specialist
- Véronica Gomes – Doctoral candidate in sociology with a specialization in feminist studies at the Université du Québec à Montréal
- Amélie Blanchet-Garneau – Associate professor in the Faculty of Nursing at the Université de Montréal, researcher at the Centre de recherche en santé publique
- Anne-Marie Leclerc – 2024–2025 scientist in residence at the RCAAQ, member of the Knowledge Circle and academic researcher at the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières

Graphic design

Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec

Revision and translation

Confluence Communication

To cite this source:

Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec (RCAAQ). (2026).
Urban Indigenous People and Public Service Accessibility in Quebec: A Provincial Overview, 2025.

The reproduction of this publication, in whole or in part, is authorized provided that the source is mentioned.

85 Bastien Boulevard
Wendake, Quebec G0A 4V0
1 877 842-6354 • info@rcaaq.ca • rcaaq.ca

ISBN : 978-2-923951-64-5
Legal deposit, Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, 2026.

This project was supported by the Women's Program of Women and Gender Equality Canada.

Femmes et Égalité des genres Canada
Women and Gender Equality Canada
Canada

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of abbreviations and acronyms 4
List of tables and figures 5
Indigenous realities in Quebec 6
Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec 8
Observatory of Urban Indigenous Realities 8
Methodology 9
Highlights 10
Respondent profile 12
Pride in identity 14
Service appreciation 17
- **Satisfaction with services used in 2023–2025** 18
- **Perception of services** 19

Barriers faced by Indigenous people regarding urban service delivery 25
Supplementary data 26
Conclusion 28
References 29

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CALAC Centres d'aide et de lutte contre les agressions à caractère sexuel

CAVAC Crime Victims Assistance Centres

DYP Director of Youth Protection

IVAC Compensation for victims of crime

NAFC National Association of Friendship Centres

NPS Net Promoter Score® (customer recommendation index)

RCAAQ Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

TABLE 1 Number of Respondents by City Visited Most Often and Number of People Living Most of the Time in an Urban Centre or in a Community 7

TABLE 2 Satisfaction Score Regarding Services Used in the Last 12 Months at the Provincial Level for Each City with a Native Friendship Centre 19

TABLE 3 Level of Trust Score Regarding Services at the Provincial Level for Each City with a Native Friendship Centre 20

TABLE 4 Level of Accessibility Score Regarding Services at the Provincial Level for Each City with a Native Friendship Centre 22

TABLE 5 Level of Consideration of Indigenous Realities Score in Services at the Provincial Level for Each City with a Native Friendship Centre 24

FIGURE 1 Level of Satisfaction Regarding Services Used in the Last 12 months at the Provincial Level 18

FIGURE 2 Level of Trust Regarding Services at the Provincial Level 20

FIGURE 3 Level of Accessibility of Services at the Provincial Level 21

FIGURE 4 Level of Consideration of Indigenous Realities in Services at the Provincial Level 23

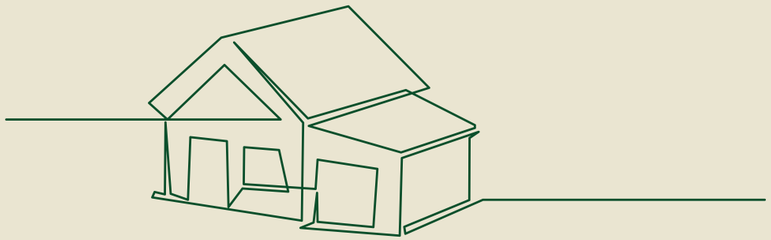
INDIGENOUS REALITIES IN QUEBEC

The Indigenous presence in urban areas[1] in Quebec is unfolding within a dynamic, complex, and still insufficiently documented context. No less than 64% of Indigenous people live in Quebec's cities (Gagnon et al., 2023). This population is characterized by rich cultural and linguistic diversity; a young demographic profile; high mobility; and varied residential, family, and career paths (RCAAQ, 2018, 2024). While the city is a temporary stop for many seeking specialized services, for a growing number of Indigenous people, it represents a place of long-term, and even intergenerational, settlement (RCAAQ, 2018, 2024). Yet, despite the demographic and social significance of Indigenous people in urban settings, there is still limited scientific knowledge and empirical evidence about their realities, particularly in the area of access to services. This hinders the development of tailored and culturally safe public interventions.

To help bridge this knowledge gap, the Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec (RCAAQ) conducted an initial large-scale survey in 2018 on the realities of urban Indigenous populations and the challenges they face (RCAAQ, 2018). This initiative, which fostered a deeper understanding of the issues experienced by these populations, their interactions with public services, and the systemic barriers they encounter, significantly influenced the work of the Viens Commission (CERP, 2019) and the development of services dedicated to urban Indigenous people.

Building on the relevance and positive impact of this initial survey, the RCAAQ conducted a second data collection among more than 2,000 Indigenous respondents (RCAAQ, 2026). This survey aimed to draw an updated overview of urban Indigenous realities in Quebec by documenting experiences, needs, strengths, and concerns related to key themes such as housing, health, education, gender and sexual diversity, family, and cultures. Analyzing this data provides a better understanding of the diversity of pathways and lived realities of Indigenous people in urban settings, while supporting the development of concrete action strategies that promote the recognition of their collective rights and interests in cities.

Among the respondents, 71% stated that they live most of the time in an urban centre (city, town, or municipality) and 29% in an Indigenous territorial community (reserve, Cree or Naskapi land, or Northern Village). And within that 29%, three out of four Indigenous people have lived in an urban centre at some point in their lives. Overall, therefore, the results indicate that 93% of Indigenous respondents to the survey have current or past experience living in an urban centre.



[1] The term "Indigenous presence in urban areas" refers to Indigenous individuals who reside in or are passing through cities and thus live outside territorial communities.

TABLE 1

Number of Respondents by City Visited Most Often and Number of People Living Most of the Time in an Urban Centre or in a Community

City visited most often	Total number of respondents	Number of respondents who live most of the time in an urban centre	Number of respondents who live most of the time in a community	Number of respondents living in a community who have previously lived in an urban area
Baie-Comeau	47	24	23	18
Chibougamau	29	14	15	12
Gatineau	61	54	7	6
Joliette	58	49	9	7
La Tuque	183	158	25	17
Maniwaki	37	29	8	6
Montréal	206	170	36	32
Québec	416	241	175	131
Roberval	137	48	89	70
Senneterre	78	76	2	2
Sept-Îles	185	76	109	66
Trois-Rivières	169	142	27	22
Val-d'Or	221	215	6	6
Other cities	134	98	36	33
I don't visit any city[2]	42	28	14	8
Total	**2003**	**1422**	**581**	**436**
Percentage	100%	71%	29%	22%

Cities offer access to a variety of services in education, healthcare, employment, and more. They are therefore essential hubs for meeting many individual and collective needs of Indigenous people. Beyond residential statistics, it is vital to emphasize that Indigenous people maintain continuous links with cities, whether they live in them or not. This reality reflects the complexity of their pathways and the importance of the relationship between Indigenous populations and urban areas. It underscores the need to keep documenting, understanding, and sharing urban Indigenous realities, as well as the necessity of adapting service provision accordingly.

[2] The question, "Which of the following cities do you visit most often?" provided a list of cities where Native Friendship Centres are located and where a certain number of Indigenous people are documented. The response option "I don't visit any city" appears to have been interpreted by some respondents as a way to indicate that they do not visit any of the cities on the list. This would explain why these individuals also indicated that they live in an urban area most of the time or have previously lived in an urban area.

REGROUPEMENT DES CENTRES D'AMITIÉ AUTOCHTONES DU QUÉBEC

Founded in 1976, the RCAAQ is the provincial association that represents and coordinates the 11 Native Friendship Centres in Quebec, which are also members of the National Association of Friendship Centres (NAFC). All affiliated centres[3] share the same vision and are located in Quebec urban centres where there is a significant Indigenous presence. In addition to being true frontline service hubs for Indigenous people in cities, Native Friendship Centres in Quebec are incubators for initiatives that revitalize culture, affirm identity, and foster citizen involvement among urban Indigenous populations. As the largest infrastructure of services for Indigenous people in cities in Quebec[4], the Native Friendship Centre Movement's mission is to improve the quality of life of urban Indigenous people, promote Indigenous culture, and build bridges between peoples.

The RCAAQ is a key partner on urban Indigenous issues and a central player in promoting equity in service delivery for Indigenous people in cities. Through its unifying expertise and mission, the RCAAQ contributes to developing concrete solutions and innovative public policies for the wellness of Indigenous people living in or passing through Quebec's urban areas. The RCAAQ has been working for many years, by way of research projects, evaluations, and consultations, to better document and understand the Indigenous presence in Quebec's cities.

OBSERVATORY OF URBAN INDIGENOUS REALITIES

Established in 2022, the Observatory of Urban Indigenous Realities (hereinafter "the Observatory") aligns with one of the RCAAQ's key strategic priorities: contributing to the generation of better knowledge and a deeper understanding of Indigenous realities in cities. Its mission is to gather, understand, and share knowledge on urban Indigenous issues, focusing its actions on using First Nations and Inuit knowledge and expertise for the benefit of society as a whole.

The Observatory supports the Quebec Native Friendship Centre Movement by enhancing and providing access to knowledge on urban Indigenous realities. Grounded in Indigenous ways of knowing, its approach leverages research, evaluation, and knowledge mobilization to inform action and maximize impact on the ground.

The Observatory serves society as a whole and collaborates with a broad network of partners to offer effective solutions to identified challenges. It ensures that its work is available to anyone who would like to better understand Indigenous realities and contribute to the advancement of Indigenous issues in Quebec.

[3] At the time of this publication, the member organizations of the RCAAQ are the Chibougamau Eenou Friendship Centre (created in 1969), the Val-d'Or Indigenous Friendship Centre (created in 1974), the Centre d'amitié autochtone Capetciwotakanik (La Tuque) (created in 1975), the Centre d'entraide et d'amitié autochtone de Senneterre (created in 1978), the Centre d'amitié autochtone de Lanaudière (created in 2006), the Centre d'amitié autochtone de Sept-Îles (created in 2006), Native Montréal (created in 2012), the Maniwaki Native Friendship Centre (created in 2016), the Centre MAMUK (created in 2018), the Centre d'amitié autochtone de Trois-Rivières (created in 2018), and the Centre d'amitié autochtone de Manicouagan (created in 2023).

[4] The Quebec Native Friendship Centre Movement is made up of affiliated Native Friendship Centres, the RCAAQ, the Société immobilière du RCAAQ, and the RCAAQ Early Childcare Centre.

METHODOLOGY

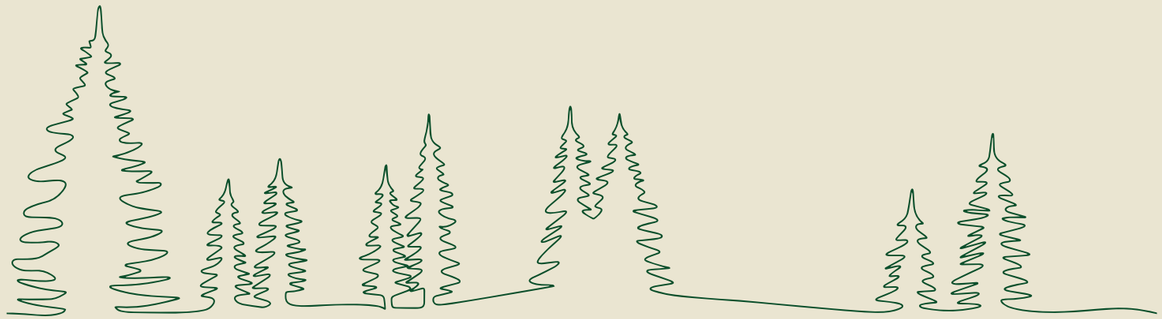
The methodology for this survey addresses three major challenges: the scarcity of data on urban Indigenous populations, the limitations of self-identification in administrative data sources, and the difficulty of capturing certain lived realities. The recruitment strategy was developed primarily around the participation of Indigenous organizations to ensure the authenticity of respondents' Indigenous identity.

Data collection took place from July 2024 to March 2025 and targeted Indigenous individuals aged 18 and older, regardless of their primary place of residence. Recruitment was conducted mainly through Native Friendship Centres and partner organizations in Quebec cities, with targeted efforts to reach underrepresented groups. In total, 2,003 completed questionnaires were collected.

The questionnaire, consisting of at least 52 questions with numerous branching sequences, covered several themes. It was developed based on existing sources (both Indigenous and public surveys) and was then validated and pretested with Indigenous and non-Indigenous specialists from various disciplines. Particular attention was paid to clarity, accessible language, and minimizing framing bias.

Statistical weighting was applied to certain data from the 2025 survey to better reflect the target population (RCAAQ, 2026). Because the 2018 survey was not weighted (RCAAQ, 2018), comparisons must be drawn using unweighted data only.

To learn more about the methodology behind this survey, see the methodological report *Urban Indigenous People and Public Service Accessibility in Quebec: A Provincial Overview, 2025*, available online on the RCAAQ website (2026).



HIGHLIGHTS

93%

of respondents **currently live** or **have previously lived in an urban centre.**

63%

have experienced racism or discrimination at some point in their lives.

40%

have an **annual household income** of **less than $40,000.**

42%

speak an Indigenous language.

55%

feel that, over **the last five years, changes have improved the availability of services for Indigenous people** in their city or region.

68%

of those who live in a city most of the time **have always lived in an urban setting** or **have lived there for at least a decade.**

68%

are **parents.**

77%

take part in **cultural** or **traditional activities.**

81%

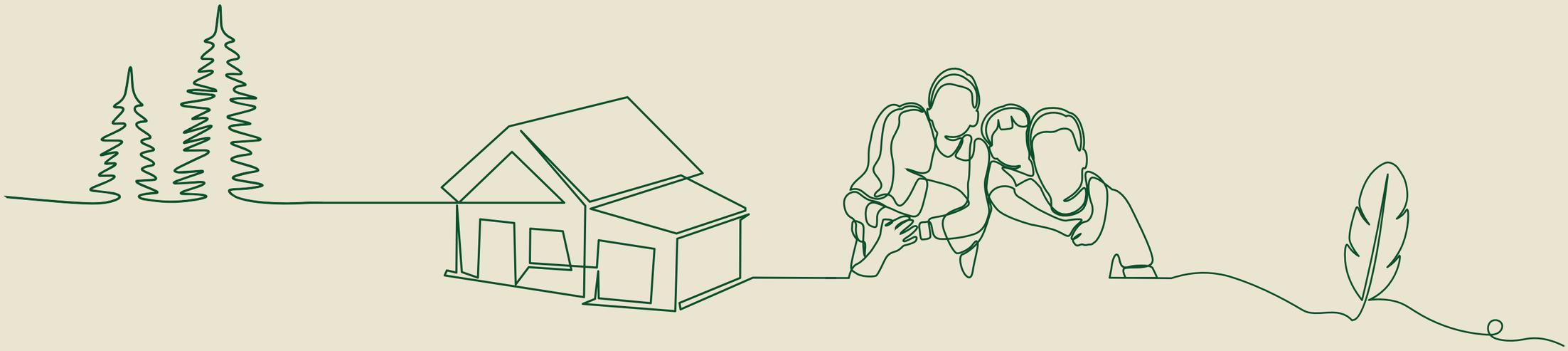
state they are **proud to be Indigenous.**

33%

have seriously considered suicide at some point.

13 %

do not have permanent housing.



RESPONDENT PROFILE

Indigenous identity

96% First Nations (1,924 respondents)

3% Inuit (61 respondents)

1% Métis of Canada (18 respondents)

Gender identity*

65% identify as women (1,310 respondents).

31% identify as men (618 respondents).

2% identify as two-spirit (41 respondents).

1% identify as gender-diverse (18 respondents).

Sexual orientation

80% identify as heterosexual.

12% identify as sexually diverse.

8% preferred not to answer.

Age[5]

The average age of respondents is 42.

Their median age is 40.

11% are aged **18 to 24.**

25% are aged **25 to 34.**

23% are aged **35 to 44.**

19% are aged **45 to 54.**

15% are aged **55 to 64.**

6% are aged **65 to 74.**

1% is aged **75 or older.**

Respondent age was calculated using birth year only. A variance of ±1 year should be taken into account.

*1% of respondents preferred not to answer this question

[5]Note that the survey was administered to individuals aged 18 and older, which impacts the average and median ages.

To ensure accurate presentation, the following data have been weighted and apply to all Indigenous people in the province of Quebec..

Employment status of Indigenous people in Quebec

46% work full-time.

17% have various employment statuses (part-time work, self-employed, seasonal work or other).

31% are unemployed.

7% are retired.

Annual Indigenous household income in Quebec[6]

40% of households have an annual income **under $40,000.**

19% have an annual income between **$40,000 and $70,000.**

9% have an annual income between **$70,000 and $100,000.**

13% have an annual income of **$100,000 or more.**

19% of respondents preferred not to answer or did not know their annual household income.

Total annual household income includes the income of all individuals contributing to the family's financial support.

[6]The annual household income data presented here does not account for household size. Income adequacy to support a household's needs is significantly influenced by the number of household members. Further research on this issue is planned for the future.

PRIDE IN IDENTITY

As part of the survey, an open-ended question asked respondents, “In a few words, what makes you proud to be [First Nation or Inuit or Métis of Canada]?” After analysis of the responses, here are the main terms, concepts, and themes expressed that characterize Indigenous identity pride, accompanied by a selection of insightful quotes.



Je suis fière de faire partie d’une Première Nation et d’honorer l’histoire de mes ancêtres en préservant leurs traditions, leurs belles valeurs et leurs coutumes. Ces précieux héritages, transmis de génération en génération, continuent d’enrichir nos vies et de guider nos enfants aujourd’hui.[7]

Nous sommes un peuple résilient et fort.[8]

De parler encore ma langue, même si je suis urbaine.[9]

It is amazing to be around native people! They make you feel at home no matter where you are.[8]

When we were kids, we rejected everything Indigenous to avoid facing discrimination and were embarrassed by the judgment of my parents’ behaviour. But once returning to the community as an adult, I came to understand how the trauma from my grandmother’s residential school experience was intergenerational and the cause of much of the embarrassment I once felt. So I am proud since I get to honour my grandmother’s survivorship and my healing, which makes me very proud.

I am proud to be First Nation especially in a city environment because a lot of people don’t know much about us or don’t think we exist. Also, a lot of people think that I am Middle Eastern or of another ethnicity, but I always tell them I am a First Nations person.

Avoir une relation d’humilité face à mon Créateur et à sa création et faire partie d’une grande famille qui a survécu à tant de choses et qui, surtout, aspire à beaucoup mieux.[10]

I am proud of my ancestors. They beat the incredible odds. As an extension of them, I am proud.

Identité culturelle et travailler en milieu allochtone. Ça me fait rendre compte que notre culture est précieuse. J’ai été victime de discrimination et j’ai vécu des moments difficiles. C’est ma fierté qui me permet de m’en sortir.[11]

La résilience des Autochtones malgré ce qu’ils ont pu vivre. Nous restons près de nos valeurs et de nos croyances. On avance vers l’avenir en restant authentiques.[12]

[7] I am proud to belong to a First Nation and to honour the history of my ancestors by preserving their traditions, their beautiful values, and their customs. These precious legacies, passed down from generation to generation, continue to enrich our lives and guide our children today.

[8] We are a resilient and strong people.

[9] Still speaking my language, even though I live in the city.

[10] Having a relationship of humility before my Creator and His Creation, and being part of a large family that has survived so much and, above all, aspires to much better.

[11] Cultural identity and working in a non-Indigenous environment. It makes me realize how precious our culture is. I’ve been a victim of discrimination and gone through difficult times. It’s my pride that helps me get through it.

[12] The resilience of Indigenous people despite everything they have been through. We stay close to our values and our beliefs. We move forward into the future while staying true to who we are.



SERVICE APPRECIATION

The disparities between public services for Indigenous people and for the general population, which were documented as part of the Viens Commission (CERP, 2019), persist to this day. Support, collaboration, and co-construction remain as relevant as ever to reduce these gaps.

A significant proportion of Indigenous respondents (55%) feel that, over the last five years, changes have improved the availability of services for Indigenous people in their city or region. However, 18% do not share this view, and 27% were unable to take a stance on the issue, suggesting that recent changes may not be pronounced enough to be noticed by everyone.

The 2018 *Provincial Overview* examined how various public services were adapted to Indigenous values, cultures, and realities (RCAAQ, 2018). These dimensions, tied to the concept of cultural safety, highlighted a unique perception of the relationship between Indigenous populations and public services.

The current survey wanted to deepen and refine the understanding of respondents' experiences and dealings with available service sectors and their perceptions of them. Therefore, the survey looked into satisfaction with specific service sectors that had been used between 2023 and 2025, alongside levels of trust, perceived accessibility, and the consideration of Indigenous realities in targeted sectors.

These questions used rating scales[7] to score respondents' experiences and perceptions. Inspired by the net promoter score (NPS) framework, this approach helped better visualize, analyze, and interpret the significance of the survey results (RCAAQ, 2026).

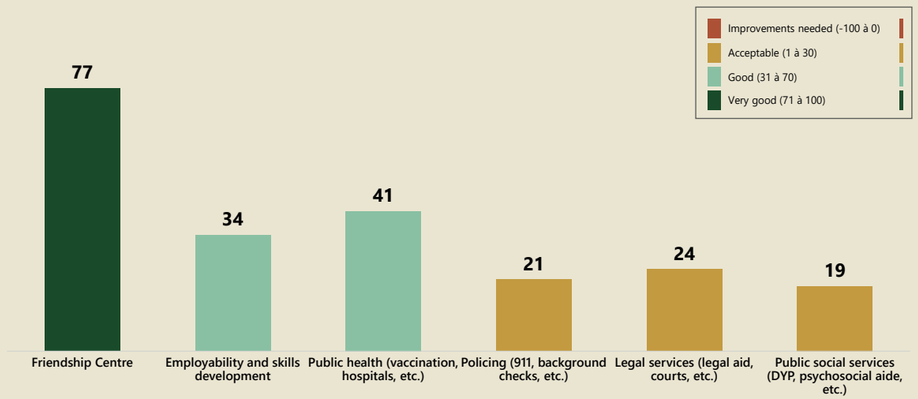


[7] In the evaluations of satisfaction, trust, and consideration of Indigenous realities, scoring scales ranged from 1 to 5, where "1" indicated a negative experience or perception and "5" represented a positive experience or perception. The scale used to evaluate accessibility relied on qualitative ratings with the following options: "Inaccessible," "Limited access," and "Accessible" (RCAAQ, 2026).

Satisfaction with services used in 2023–2025

At the provincial level, satisfaction results indicate a favourable evaluation of the services used between 2023 and 2025, while revealing significant disparities across sectors. While Native Friendship Centres stand out in this regard, the other public service sectors receive relatively positive results, albeit with room for improvement. However, a breakdown by major city reveals that certain sectors remain more polarized, with both positive and negative experiences. Note that only respondents who indicated using services in the past 12 months were eligible to evaluate the service sectors.

FIGURE 1 Level of Satisfaction Regarding Services Used in the Last 12 months at the Provincial Level



While overall province-wide satisfaction is rather positive, some specific sectors and cities stand out markedly, while others show higher concentrations of dissatisfaction. These disparities demonstrate that the service experience is heavily influenced by local practices, actual resource accessibility, and interaction quality. They also reinforce the importance of ongoing efforts to enhance all services, not just those with lower scores, by focusing on standardizing culturally safe practices so they are applied more consistently across cities.



TABLE 2 Satisfaction Score Regarding Services Used in the Last 12 months at the Provincial Level for Each City with a Native Friendship Centre

	EMPLOYABILITY AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT	PUBLIC HEALTH (vaccination, hospitals, etc.)	POLICING (911, background checks, etc.)	LEGAL SERVICES (legal aid, courts, etc.)	PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES (DYP, psychosocial aide, etc.)
Province of Quebec	34	41	21	24	19
Baie-Comeau	50	60	33	0	80
Chibougamau	NA	27	33	50	80
Gatineau	25	7	50	-33	-50
Joliette	NA	45	29	33	27
La Tuque	92	47	38	24	4
Maniwaki	-100	12	67	25	0
Montréal	4	30	-11	0	-11
Québec	53	55	41	20	18
Roberval	67	60	41	45	60
Senneterre	75	51	56	0	0
Sept-Îles	27	24	57	29	23
Trois-Rivières	25	45	0	42	48
Val-d'Or	48	21	-16	36	4

Perception of services[8]

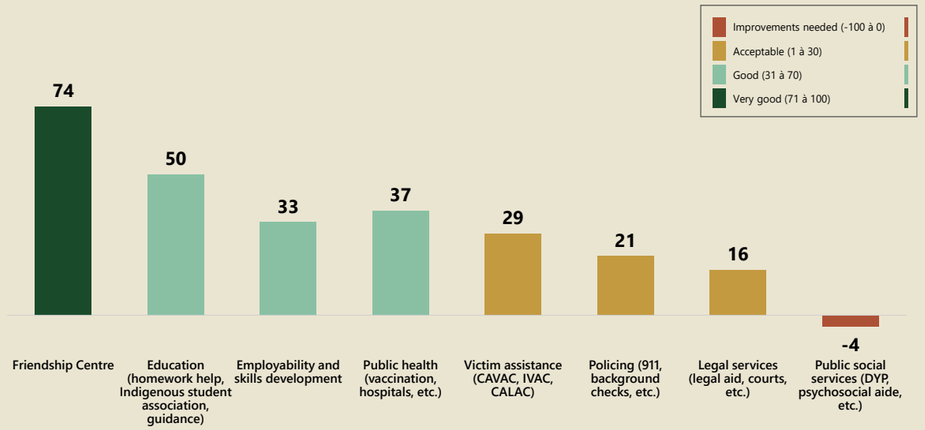
TRUST IN SERVICE SECTORS

Establishing trust is a cornerstone of the relationship between Indigenous people and the various actors within the urban service system. This trust—whether directed toward individuals, professional environments, institutions, or the system as a whole—influences not only access to the services but also the quality of Indigenous people's experiences. Trust thus helps overcome historical and systemic barriers, which then fosters engagement and collaboration between communities and service providers.

The results regarding trust in service sectors reveal a more nuanced picture than those for service satisfaction. It should be noted that trust builds slowly and remains highly sensitive to experiences of racism, discrimination, and lack of recognition of Indigenous realities, as well as past interactions with institutions. At the provincial level, a hierarchy among sectors emerges. Some services command higher levels of trust, whereas others garner a higher concentration of negative responses.

[12] The evaluations presented in this section address trust level, accessibility, and the consideration of Indigenous realities. Respondents had the option to evaluate all the service sectors but could also specify that they were unfamiliar with a given sector and chose not to rate it. Ratings were therefore completed only by respondents who felt able to evaluate the sectors in question.

FIGURE 2 Level of Trust Regarding Services at the Provincial Level



The city-by-city results also highlight significant disparities. They show that trust is tied not merely to the sector itself but also to how services are delivered locally (welcoming practices, continuity, interpersonal accessibility, the presence or absence of trained and/or Indigenous staff, as well as complaint and redress mechanisms). In this sense, a low level of trust should be interpreted as a signal of a fragile relationship between Indigenous people and the institutions involved, rather than a mere temporary dissatisfaction.

TABLE 3 Level of Trust Score Regarding Services at the Provincial Level for Each City with a Native Friendship Centre

	EDUCATION (homework help, Indigenous student association, guidance)	EMPLOYABILITY AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT	PUBLIC HEALTH (vaccination, hospitals, etc.)	VICTIM ASSISTANCE (CAVAC, IVAC, CALAC)	POLICING (911, background checks, etc.)	LEGAL SERVICES (legal aid, courts, etc.)	PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES (DYP, psychosocial aide, etc.)
Province of Quebec	50	33	37	29	21	16	-4
Baie-Comeau	44	28	54	30	57	39	37
Chibougamau	12	6	12	12	32	21	-16
Gatineau	65	59	16	6	7	-18	-15
Joliette	52	20	18	40	45	13	8
La Tuque	39	29	32	34	16	-1	-28
Maniwaki	40	40	14	10	7	21	-5
Montréal	39	11	5	9	-32	-4	-20
Québec	59	42	56	18	48	17	2
Roberval	59	56	57	55	45	31	6
Senneterre	21	44	44	33	21	33	-8
Sept-Îles	46	33	20	30	12	22	-7
Trois-Rivières	54	29	49	48	31	23	6
Val-d'Or	56	39	34	27	-4	24	-8

Overall, the findings related to trust show that, despite positive signs in some sectors, the relationship of trust remains uneven and varies widely from one city to another. These results reinforce the importance of addressing the key drivers of trust (cultural safety, anti-racism and anti-discrimination efforts, continuity and quality of interactions, and support mechanisms) to reduce disparities and promote service access that is truly safe and sustainable.

ACCESSIBILITY OF SERVICE SECTORS

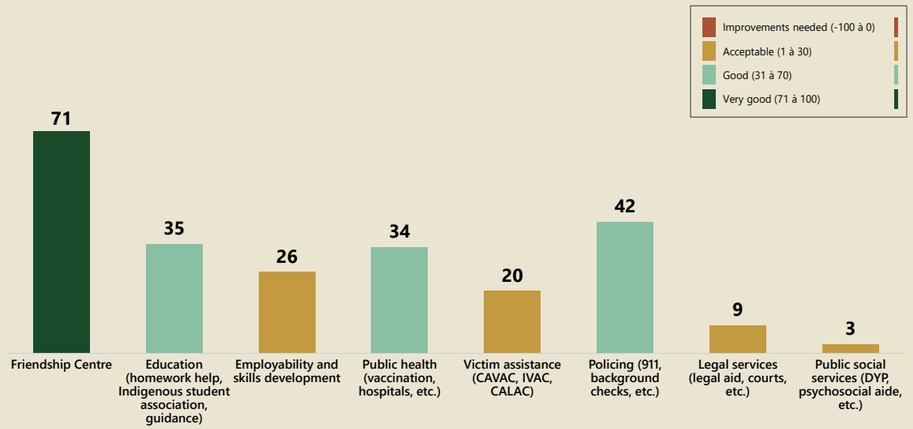
For Indigenous people in cities, accessing services involves an additional challenge, in that accessibility means more than just physical or geographic availability, encompassing a relational dimension. Indeed, the access experience can be influenced by the quality of interactions, respect for cultural realities, and trust in professionals. Relational accessibility is often highlighted as a key factor governing how Indigenous people use and perceive services, particularly in an urban context.

Accessibility challenges can take the form of limitations or barriers—such as lack of awareness of services, discrimination, or inadequate linguistic and cultural support—that make services difficult to navigate without making them completely unreachable. They can also manifest as a complete lack of access, whether due to a lack of tailored services or to a hostile environment.

This is why accessibility in urban areas must be addressed from multiple angles, including relationships with professionals, consideration of individual needs, and the fight against systemic discrimination.

The findings on accessibility shed light on an important distinction between the theoretical availability of services and people's actual capacity to access them in cities. At the provincial level, perceived accessibility appears overall nuanced, with a non-negligible proportion of respondents reporting limited access, or even inaccessibility, depending on the sector.

FIGURE 3 Level of Accessibility of Services at the Provincial Level



Disparities across cities and service types are particularly pronounced: within the same sector, some cities skew toward "accessible," while others aggregate perceptions of "limited access" or "inaccessible." This variability suggests that accessibility is heavily influenced by local factors (wait times, eligibility criteria, service continuity, available information), as well as relational and cultural dimensions (welcoming practices, cultural safety, fear of judgment or racism) that can turn an "existing" service into one that is barely or not at all usable.

TABLE 4 Level of Accessibility Score Regarding Services at the Provincial Level for Each City with a Native Friendship Centre

	EDUCATION (homework help, Indigenous student association, guidance)	EMPLOYABILITY AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT	PUBLIC HEALTH (vaccination, hospitals, etc.)	VICTIM ASSISTANCE (CAVAC, IVAC, CALAC)	POLICING (911, background checks, etc.)	LEGAL SERVICES (legal aid, courts, etc.)	PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES (DYP, psychosocial aide, etc.)
Province of Quebec	35	26	34	20	42	9	3
Baie-Comeau	26	38	57	56	77	48	32
Chibougamau	18	33	28	-6	27	42	28
Gatineau	3	-18	21	24	27	-20	-22
Joliette	30	50	32	28	63	48	21
La Tuque	35	15	38	20	31	3	-5
Maniwaki	50	60	51	14	41	17	-9
Montréal	29	9	5	-4	5	-11	-23
Québec	54	34	52	5	68	10	26
Roberval	49	56	69	56	71	38	19
Senneterre	29	38	95	33	72	42	4
Sept-Îles	26	19	16	28	32	6	5
Trois-Rivières	43	22	39	38	50	8	14
Val-d'Or	18	15	-7	1	5	-2	-27

As with trust levels, the results on service accessibility show that perceptions remain uneven and largely dependent on local contexts and service types. Addressing situations of limited access and inaccessibility requires acting on both the structural organization of services (wait times, pathways, information, and criteria) and the lived experience (cultural safety, quality of interactions, anti-racism efforts) to ensure that access is tangible, safe, and equitable from one city to another.



CONSIDERATION OF INDIGENOUS REALITIES IN SERVICE SECTORS

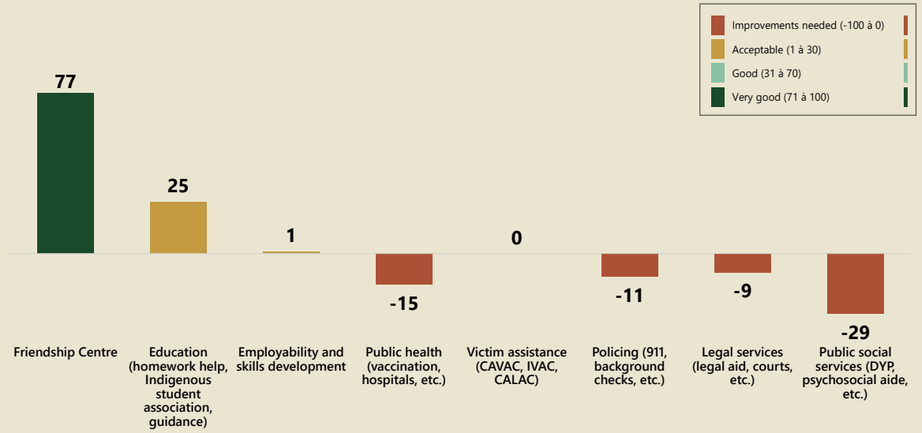
A service approach tailored to Indigenous realities addresses the distinct needs of First Nations and Inuit, particularly in urban settings where life pathways, cultural roots, and service access experiences differ from those in traditional community settings (RCAAQ, 2022).

It was therefore essential to address whether Indigenous realities are considered in the delivery of services, be they public, community-based, or private. The goal was to guide practices toward greater recognition of Indigenous realities and to tangibly improve the accessibility, quality, and relevance of services. Taking into account the experiences, traditions, and specific concerns of different Indigenous populations directly reduces barriers to service utilization and fosters trust built on mutual respect.

Evaluating how service sectors consider Indigenous realities highlights a cross-cutting issue: beyond satisfaction, trust, and accessibility, this metric evaluates whether the people concerned feel that services genuinely recognize the realities, backgrounds and needs of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis.

At the provincial level, results lean toward a perception of distinctly insufficient consideration, with meaningful recognition present in some sectors while remaining severely deficient in others.

FIGURE 4 Level of Consideration of Indigenous Realities in Services at the Provincial Level

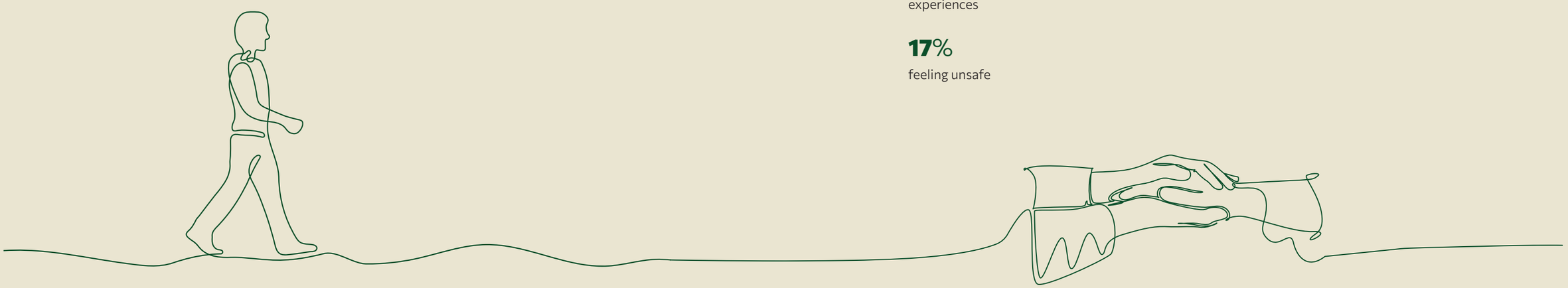


City-by-city variations are pronounced, showing that local practices (staff training and awareness, cultural safety protocols, partnerships with Indigenous organizations, and service adaptability) directly influence perceived consideration. A low score on this dimension serves as a warning sign: it can reflect a lack of recognition and respect for Indigenous realities that threatens to erode trust, limit service usage, and uphold existing barriers.

TABLE 5 Level of Consideration of Indigenous Realities Score in Services at the Provincial Level for Each City with a Native Friendship Centre

	EDUCATION (homework help, Indigenous student association, guidance)	EMPLOYABILITY AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT	PUBLIC HEALTH (vaccination, hospitals, etc.)	VICTIM ASSISTANCE (CAVAC, IVAC, CALAC)	POLICING (911, background checks, etc.)	LEGAL SERVICES (legal aid, courts, etc.)	PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES (DYP, psychosocial aide, etc.)
Province of Quebec	25	1	-15	0	-11	-9	-29
Baie-Comeau	26	14	26	37	49	19	13
Chibougamau	18	11	20	0	27	17	28
Gatineau	-3	-35	-52	9	-55	-60	-67
Joliette	-4	0	-11	20	5	-3	-21
La Tuque	18	-8	-3	1	-5	-10	-37
Maniwaki	65	0	-22	-14	-11	4	-27
Montréal	12	-14	-33	-17	-51	-18	-39
Québec	20	-6	-20	-20	-10	-19	-39
Roberval	43	1	0	15	14	-7	-29
Senneterre	14	12	3	8	-9	29	-32
Sept-Îles	30	17	-14	11	-7	-5	-15
Trois-Rivières	29	1	-1	6	-6	-5	-21
Val-d'Or	43	29	-19	12	-13	6	-16

Overall, the findings indicate that accounting for Indigenous realities remains a priority area for improvement in several sectors, with significant gaps in some cities. Taking action on this front—namely through cultural safety practices, concrete service adaptation mechanisms, and sustained collaboration with Indigenous organizations—is essential to build trust, enhance the service experience, and achieve lasting reductions in access barriers.



BARRIERS FACED BY INDIGENOUS PEOPLE REGARDING URBAN SERVICE DELIVERY

Identifying the barriers that prevent Indigenous people from seeking services is essential to understanding urban experiences and the challenges in meeting the needs of individuals, families, and communities. In the 2018 survey, 57% of respondents reported having been victims of racism within Quebec's public service network (RCAAQ, 2018). The current survey updates these experiences of racism, which fluctuate alongside sociopolitical dynamics. From 2023 to 2025, more than one in four Indigenous people (28%) reported being a victim of racism or discrimination because of their Indigenous identity, while 63% reported having been a victim of racism or discrimination at some point in their lifetime. It is therefore unsurprising that the following continue to be the primary barriers encountered:

21%
fear of racism

20%
fear of judgment tied to cultural identity

18%
past negative experiences

17%
distrust of services

17%
feeling unsafe

Wait times to access services (19%) and the lack of Indigenous staff (19%) also represent significant obstacles preventing Indigenous people from seeking urban services. Indeed, prolonged delays can heighten institutional distrust and deter service usage, while a lack of Indigenous representation within organizations and institutions can amplify feelings of isolation and being misunderstood.

All of these obstacles prevent Indigenous people from feeling safe and seeking the help they need when they need it. The service sector evaluation results demonstrate the above observations and show that improvements remain necessary. Despite the efforts of several players, more than one in two Indigenous people (56%) report facing barriers that prevent them from accessing services to meet their needs.

In this context, the service offering provided by Native Friendship Centres effectively addresses both the professional and relational needs of their clientele, helping to strengthen Indigenous people's trust and ensure timely access to essential resources.

SUPPLEMENTARY DATA

The following section presents selected data on themes relating to the main service sectors addressed in this report. While not an exhaustive analysis of each topic, this information aims to better contextualize the lived realities of respondents and provide background for the evaluation results presented earlier, particularly regarding satisfaction, trust, accessibility, and the consideration of Indigenous realities within services. Further topic sheets are planned for future publication to outline specific profiles and explore key themes in greater depth.

Health

24% of respondents live or have lived with a serious illness.

46% use traditional medicine or traditional practices for their healthcare.

31% went hungry at some point between 2023 and 2025 due to a lack of money.

54% rate their physical health positively.

23% rate their mental health positively.

7% live or have lived with challenges related to a disability.

	SATISFACTION	TRUST	ACCESSIBILITY	CONSIDERATION OF INDIGENOUS REALITIES
EVALUATION SCORES **Public health**	41	37	34	-15

Social services

29% of respondents were placed outside their family of origin during childhood by Youth Protection (DYP).

33% have seriously considered suicide at some point.

35% live or have lived with a mental health issue.

33% live or have lived with alcohol or drug addiction.

52% rate their mental health positively.

18% struggle or have struggled in their role as a parent.

	SATISFACTION	TRUST	ACCESSIBILITY	CONSIDERATION OF INDIGENOUS REALITIES
EVALUATION SCORES **Public social services**	19	-4	3	-29

Justice, police services, and victim support

29% of respondents have been involved with the justice system.

21% report having needed legal advice.

29% have been victims of a criminal offence.

15% have been arrested by the police in their lifetime.

28% have experienced family or spousal violence.

19% have experienced sexual violence.

	SATISFACTION	TRUST	ACCESSIBILITY	CONSIDERATION OF INDIGENOUS REALITIES
EVALUATION SCORES **Legal services**	24	16	9	-9
EVALUATION SCORES **Policing**	21	21	42	-11
EVALUATION SCORES **Victim assistance**	NA	29	20	0

Education, employment, and skills development

18% have no diploma.

41% have obtained a high school diploma or vocational diploma.

16% have obtained a college diploma.

24% have obtained a university degree.

64% report obstacles that impeded their educational success.

20% have experienced difficulty finding employment.

	SATISFACTION	TRUST	ACCESSIBILITY	CONSIDERATION OF INDIGENOUS REALITIES
EVALUATION SCORES **Education**	NA	50	35	25
EVALUATION SCORES **Employability and skills development**	34	33	26	1

CONCLUSION

The findings presented in this overview show that a high proportion of respondents perceive an improvement in service delivery over the last five years. This observation reflects the progress made despite disparities across sectors, cities, and lived experiences.

However, the cultural relevance of public services remains a central issue. Trust, accessibility, and the consideration of Indigenous realities continue to be influenced by experiences of racism and discrimination, fear of judgment, past negative experiences, and the presence or absence of culturally safe practices.

In this context, Native Friendship Centres in Quebec remain essential players that complement the existing service network. Deeply rooted in Indigenous realities, cultures, and needs, they help effectively address community needs in urban settings, strengthening trust, access to resources, and overall wellness for individuals, families, and communities.

Despite a perceived improvement, fear of racism remains a significant barrier to accessing services. Native Friendship Centres stand out for the trust they inspire, their accessibility, and their relevance, whereas several public service sectors still have progress to make to better account for Indigenous realities.

This survey helps better document urban Indigenous realities in Quebec, highlighting key advances, ongoing needs, and action levers to strengthen. Building on this momentum, the Observatory of Urban Indigenous Realities is committed to continuing its work of knowledge generation, mobilization, and sharing to deepen the understanding of urban Indigenous realities in Quebec, as well as to continue supporting lasting structural changes in service delivery and fostering better access, recognition, and wellness for Indigenous people in cities.



REFERENCES

Gagnon, M., Radu, I., & Lévesque, C. (2023). *Profil démographique de la population des Premières Nations et du Peuple Inuit dans les villes du Québec, 2001 à 2021.* ODENA Research Alliance, Réseau de recherche et de connaissances relatives aux peuples autochtones (DIALOG Network).

Gouvernement du Québec. (2019). *Public Inquiry Commission on relations between Indigenous Peoples and Certain Public Services in Québec: Listening, Reconciliation and Progress. Final report.* Gouvernement du Québec.

Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec. (2018). *Urban Indigenous People and Public Service Accessibility in Quebec: A Provincial Overview.*

Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec. (2024). *Indigenous People Facing Justice and Public Security: Overview of Urban Issues in Quebec.* RCAAQ.

Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec. (2026). *Methodological Report. Indigenous People and Access to Services in Urban Areas: An Overview of the Situation in Quebec, 2025.*

Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec (2022). *A New Path to Forge: Toward Equitable Access to Health Care in Urban Settings for Indigenous Peoples.*

