



BC Association of Aboriginal
Friendship Centres
BCAAFC



Gathering *Our* Voices

MARCH 17-20, 2026
VANCOUVER, B.C.

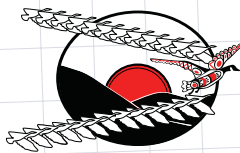


Welcome to GOV 2026

The BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC) is honoured to host Gathering Our Voices 2026 on the traditional and unceded territories of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Sḵw̓x̓wú7mesh (Squamish), and səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. We extend our deep gratitude to these Nations for their generosity, knowledge, and guidance, and for welcoming Gathering Our Voices to their territories in a good way.

Each year, BCAAFC has the privilege of co-hosting Gathering Our Voices alongside the local Friendship Centres. For GOV 2026, we are proud to work in partnership with the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society (VAFCS) and the Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association (FRAFCA), whose leadership and collaboration are integral to this gathering.

The BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres extends its sincere appreciation to the partners and sponsors whose contributions support the delivery of Gathering Our Voices 2026.



BC Association of Aboriginal
Friendship Centres

BCAAFC



Welcome from səlilwətał Tsleil-Waututh Nation

At ʔo: si:y ém nə siyéy ə,

Friends and Relatives,

ʔəm i ce:p kʷətɬʷiləm ʔə tə təməxʷ wə čłwet ʔə tə məsteyəxʷ təń l ʔ

xʷməθkʷəy əm ʔi? sqǰxʷəm əx ʔi? s-əlilwətał

We are səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh Nation), “People of the Inlet.” Our traditional territory encompasses səlilwət (Burrard Inlet) and the waters draining into it. For generations, Tsleil-Waututh People have thrived in our traditional territory and today, we are steadfast in our commitment to maintaining a sacred trust to protect and restore our traditional territory. In our dynamically evolving world, our commitment to our səlilwətał cultural values, hən ǰ əmiń əń language, and the teachings of our Ancestors keeps us firmly rooted. These principles direct our efforts to sustain and improve the quality of life for both our youth and the wider community.

I warmly welcome all youth participating in this year’s Gathering Our Voice conference. I hope that you will feel empowered by the new skills, enhanced knowledge, and dynamic connections that you gain, which will support you in making a difference in your communities. You are the leaders of today as well as of the future, helping to create a world in which everyone can thrive.

Congratulations to the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres for hosting such an important annual opportunity for Indigenous youth.

I wish you all a meaningful and memorable experience!

Chief Justin George

On behalf of səlilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh Nation) Council!

Welcome from Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw

Greetings from the Squamish Nation!

We are honoured to welcome all the participants, volunteers, Elders and staff, attending the Gathering Our Voices conference being held in the city of Vancouver in the heart of Squamish territory.

To introduce ourselves, we are the Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh – descendants of the original Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh– speaking villages throughout the watersheds of the Squamish River, Mamquam River, Howe Sound, English Bay, False Creek, and Burrard Inlet.

In 1923, several Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh communities that were Indian Bands joined together and amalgamated to become the Squamish Nation, or Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw.

“...for the good government of the tribe, which would have as an ultimate result the abolishment of ill feeling that has arisen in past transactions, and which we know will henceforth bring about a brotherly feeling among each and every member of the Squamish people.”

The Amalgamation document was signed by 76 citizens of the Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw and sixteen chiefs for each of the Indian Bands at the time.

Today, the Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw is governed by the Squamish Nation Council, or Nexwsxwníwntm ta Úxwumixw, which is elected for a four-year term and oversees the administration and finances of the Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw and associated entities.

The Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw believes sustainable economic development is integral to our strategic plan. The Squamish Nation



will continue to value sustainable economic development that provides economic, ecological, and social benefit to our community. The Squamish Nation is moving forward with good governance principles in support of sustainable economic development.

With over 4,100 members, the Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumíxw is one of the largest First Nations in British Columbia. The Squamish People, or Skwxwú7mesh Stélmexw, live on one of the nine communities stretching from North Vancouver to the northern area of Howe Sound.

It is with immense joy that we welcome all the Indigenous Youth from across the province as they participate in a gathering that will help to shape their futures in positive ways.

Chet kw'enmantúmi,
From the Squamish Nation

Welcome from Musqueam

si:yém̓ tə siyéy̓ə ct ʔəni ce:p kʷətɬw̓iləm ʔi ʔə tə n̓a šxʷməθkʷəy̓əməʔt̓ təməxʷ, tə šxʷʔaməts tə shəñq̓əmiñəmqən.

Friends and relatives, welcome to the ancestral territory of the hənq̓əmiñəmqən speaking Musqueam people.

We're honoured to welcome all of you and we acknowledge our ancestors who have walked this land since time immemorial, and we thank them for allowing us to gather here today.

To the youth joining us from Nations near and far: welcome. You carry the strength, the stories, and dreams of your communities with you. This gathering is a place to connect, learn, and celebrate who you are. We hope you leave feeling inspired, empowered, and proud.

hay ce:p qal̓ to the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres, the organizers, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and supporters who made this gathering possible, and most of all, we thank you - the youth - for being here and for continuing to shape the path forward.

yəxʷyaxʷələq Chief Wayne Sparrow



Welcome from BCAAFC's Board

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres, I am honoured to welcome you to Gathering Our Voices.

We are proud to gather on the traditional territories of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations, and we raise our hands in gratitude to the Elders, Knowledge Keepers, youth, chaperones, volunteers, exhibitors, facilitators, artists, presenters, and partners who have travelled from across the province and beyond to be here.

Gathering Our Voices is more than a conference—it is a celebration of Indigenous youth leadership, identity, and connection. It is a space where young people come together to share stories, strengthen culture, build skills, and imagine the futures they want to lead. Every year, we are reminded that Indigenous youth are not only the leaders of tomorrow, but leaders today.

As the provincial association representing Friendship Centres across British Columbia, BCAAFC is deeply committed to supporting urban Indigenous communities and creating spaces where youth feel seen, valued, and empowered. This gathering reflects the strength of community collaboration and the power that emerges when Indigenous voices are centred.

To the youth here today: your presence matters. Your ideas matter. Your voices matter. We encourage you to take up space, ask questions, learn from one another, and carry these connections forward into your communities.

Thank you for being part of Gathering Our Voices. May this week inspire you, strengthen you, and remind you that you are never walking alone.

Sincerely,

Nox Stikine, Annette Morgan,

President of the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres

Welcome from BCAAFC

Welcome to Gathering Our Voices 2026 and thank you for joining us.

As the Executive Director of the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres, it is an honour to welcome Indigenous youth, chaperones, community leaders, and partners to this powerful gathering. We are grateful to be together on the traditional territories of the of the x^wməθk^wəyəm (Musqueam), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish), and səilwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples and thank them for welcoming us to their lands.

BCAAFC is proud to organize Gathering Our Voices each year in partnership with Friendship Centres, Indigenous communities, and supporters who share a commitment to youth leadership and wellbeing. This conference is built with intention—to create a safe, inclusive, and inspiring space where Indigenous youth can learn, connect, and celebrate who they are.

Throughout this gathering, you will hear stories of resilience, creativity, and leadership. You will gain tools, build confidence, and make connections that extend far beyond this week. We encourage you to participate fully, support one another, and take what you learn back to your families and communities.

Thank you to all our wonderful collaborators for the care, dedication, and hard work that make Gathering Our Voices possible. And thank you to the youth for showing up for yourselves this week. This space is for you. Your leadership, your perspectives, and your futures are at the heart of everything we do.

We are honoured to walk alongside you during this gathering. Welcome, and we hope your time here is meaningful, empowering, and unforgettable.

In friendship,

Celeste Hayward, Executive Director

BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres

Welcome from FRAFCA

On behalf of FRAFCA, we are honoured to do our work on the unceded, ancestral, and traditional territories of the ǫʷɑ:ńłəń (Kwantlen), Semiahma (Semiahmoo), and ǫíćəý (Katzie) Nations. We are so happy to welcome you all here today for this amazing gathering to celebrate all of you. We're honoured to be gathering on the unceded, ancestral, and traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. We thank the lands and the people who have cared for it for generations.

To all the youth here, this space is yours. This conference is about you, your voices, your stories, and your leadership. At FRAFCA, we truly believe that when our youth come together, something powerful happens. Ideas grow, confidence builds, and connections are made that last far beyond this gathering. We love supporting youth initiatives because we see the strength, creativity, and vision you carry. Your voices matter, not just in the future, but right now. When you speak, when you share, when you lead, you help shape the path forward for your communities and for the generations coming after you. We hope you take up space here. Ask questions. Try new things. Meet new people. Laugh, learn, and know that you belong in these rooms. We are proud to stand alongside you and to support you as you step into your leadership in your own way, at your own pace.

Welcome to Gathering Our Voices 2026. We're so glad you're here.



Welcome from Danielle Bergevin

Minister of Youth, Métis Youth BC Chairperson

Taanishi mii zaamii - hello my friends.

I am excited to be gathered here with you at GOV 2026, hosted this year on the unceded and traditional territory of the xwmaSkwayam (Musqueam), Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh (Squamish), and salilwata4 (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. I would like to thank the Elders and Knowledge Carriers whose teachings and leadership guide gatherings like this. I am also grateful to the organizers who created this space for us.

Spaces like this, where Indigenous youth can gather, learn from one another, laugh, and just be, matter to me deeply. It is especially meaningful to see so many of us joining from Nations and communities across Turtle Island.

To the youth gathered in this space, I want to acknowledge that getting here is not always easy. Showing up, travelling, and stepping into a space like this takes courage. Your presence here matters.

No matter where you are traveling from, how much or how little you know about your family history, or how you identify, you matter, and you belong here. Gathering Our Voices reminds us that when we come together in community, each bringing our unique gifts, strengths, and stories, we are stronger for it.

By coming together in these spaces, we learn how to work together and how to rest in the strength of culture. We also learn how to take care of ourselves and each other, and how to carry these teachings back to community.

While we are gathered here together, I hope you encourage one another and lift each other up. I also hope that you remember that you belong in every room, every space, and every conversation.

The path you are walking now is already lighting the way for others, and by being here you are part of something bigger. I wish each of you an excellent gathering. My hope is that you leave here feeling connected, to yourself, to one another, and to the strength of culture.

Maarsii (Thank you)

All My Relations,

Danielle

About BCAAFC

The BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres (BCAAFC) is the umbrella organization for 25 Friendship Centres located throughout the province.

Friendship Centres are Indigenous-led, non-profit organizations that deliver programs and services to support the health, wellness, and prosperity of Indigenous peoples living in urban communities and away from home. You can find a full list of all the B.C. Friendship Centres at www.bcaafc.com.

BCAAFC supports and promotes B.C. Friendship Centres, maintains communication between Friendship Centres, the National Association of Friendship Centres, and our many partners, and supports the development of programs to improve the quality of life for Indigenous people in B.C.

Some of these programs include the TELUS Mobility for Good program, a partnership with TELUS that involves distributing mobile phones to Indigenous women and girls who otherwise would not have access to cellular communication; the Post-Secondary Student Support Program, which provides eligible First Nations students with funding to access education opportunities at the post-secondary level, including university and college entrance preparation programs; and of course, co-hosting the annual Gathering Our Voices conference with the Provincial Indigenous Youth Committee (PIYC)!

Visit our booth in the Exhibitor Fair and find us on social media to learn more about what we do:



Instagram:
@bcfriendshipcentres



Facebook:
BCAAFC



**National Association
of Friendship Centres**



Provincial Indigenous Youth Council

The Provincial Indigenous Youth Council (PIYC) is made up of youth ages 14 to 24 who are involved with B.C. Friendship Centres. PIYC represents youth voices at a provincial level and implements initiatives to benefit Indigenous youth. PIYC encourages and supports B.C. Friendship Centres in developing strong local youth councils and acts as the liaison between Friendship Centre youth councils and BCAAFC. They are a kind, creative, and energetic team who are always looking to welcome new members!

The Provincial Indigenous Youth Council is an integral part of planning and designing GOV — like advising on workshop selection and hosting GOV events — to make sure this event reinforces a positive sense of identity for Indigenous youth. Look for PIYC members in their pink shirts or wristbands at GOV and chat with them about everything they do and how you can join PIYC.

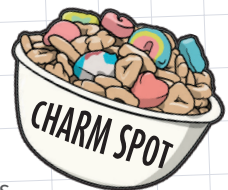
You can learn more about our PIYC members at gatheringourvoices.ca/event

DOOR PRIZE! Delegates who visit the PIYC table can enter to win a beaded lahal set.

Charms

They're always after me Lucky Charms!

As a special memento of your time at GOV, every swag bag includes a charm-ready lanyard! Charms can be collected at select plenary events (such as the Opening Ceremonies and Dance Party), as well as in the Elders and Cultural Support Rooms. Quantities are limited, so arrive early and start collecting!





Health and Safety

The health and safety of our delegates is our #1 priority. Each year, BCAAFC staff undergo First Aid and Naloxone Training in preparation of the conference. Should you need a hand at any time, please reach out to a staff or volunteer. We are always nearby in case you have questions or need a hand.

Group Safety

One of the most common safety issues at GOV is delegates getting lost or separated from their group. We encourage you to eat meals with your group and to determine a consistent meeting spot (like the Information Desk or the lobby of the Pan Pacific Hotel) to meet at after events or workshops. Make sure you have the correct contact information for your group members, that everyone's phone is consistently charged, and check in with each other often.

Substances

GOV is a dry event. We ask participants to avoid the use of any substances while at GOV. If you do use substances, please don't do so alone! And please talk to a staff member, volunteer, medic, or Cultural Support Worker if you or someone else needs care. Our #1 priority will always be your safety and well-being.

First Aid

We have trained medics on site at GOV all week. There is a First Aid room in the following locations:

- » Vancouver Convention Centre, East Building
Meeting Room #6 (on the second floor)
- » Pinnacle Hotel Harbourfront
Port of Sydney meeting room (on the 3rd floor)
- » Mulgrave School

Many GOV staff, volunteers, and chaperones are also trained in First Aid. If you need help, go to the First Aid room or ask someone in a black, red, or green GOV shirt to help you and they can call for a medic.

Colour Codes

I'm Blue (Da Ba Dee)

Delegate
Chaperone
Elders Council
Special Guest
Staff
Provincial Indigenous Youth Council
Volunteer
Facilitator
Cultural Support
Artisan
Exhibitor
Photographer

Lanyards and Wristbands

Yes—even more colour codes

Please ensure you have your lanyard and wristband on at all times. They are your ticket into our plenary events, including Opening and Closing Ceremonies, the Talent Show, Movie Night, Dance Party, Fashion Show, and the Cultural Exchange. They also give you exclusive access to the Career and Education Fair.

Orange and white lanyards

When someone is wearing a white lanyard, it means they consent to being in photos. An orange lanyard means they do not want to have their photo taken. Please be respectful of everyone's choices and always ask permission before you take photos or videos of your fellow delegates.

The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower lanyards

This is a simple tool that anyone attending GOV can voluntarily wear to share that you have a disability or condition in public spaces that may not be immediately apparent – and that you may need a helping hand, understanding, or more time and space, particularly in busy, crowded and loud spaces. We will have lanyards with sunflowers on them at registration for anyone who would find self-identifying helpful.

Please note: BCAAFC has several photographers on-site who are well-versed on our lanyard system. We use these photos in our communications materials such as social media posts, on our website, and in our reports. Facilitators are not permitted to take photos of delegates.

Meals at GOV

Please refer to your agenda for meal times and locations.

Tuesday, March 17

Fruit Smoothies at Opening Ceremonies.

Wednesday, March 18

Breakfast and Lunch.

Thursday, March 19

Breakfast and Lunch; Snacks at the Dance Party and Movie Night.

Dinner for those attending the Honouring Feast.

Friday, March 20

Breakfast.

Getting Around

♪ I've been everywhere, man ♪

Most of our workshops will take place at the **Vancouver Convention Centre** and the **Pan Pacific Hotel**, which are conveniently connected.

For off-site workshops and the Movie Night, we are pleased to provide complimentary shuttle busses that align with your workshop schedule.

Bus Pick-Up Point: In front of the **WEST** Convention Centre.

There is no bus to the Pinnacle Hotel. It is a short walk from our main venues. (See our helpful maps!)

This year, we do not have busses shuttling delegates and chaperones directly from our hotel blocks as they are a short distance from our main venues.

Please see the enclosed bus schedule for more information. A copy of the schedule is also available in the GOV app and on our website at gatheringourvoices.ca/venue.

Volunteer (while at GOV)

Good Vibes, Good Deeds

If you are 18+ and would like to sign up to volunteer whilst you are at the event, we would be thrilled to have you join us! You can sign up in the Volunteer Room in room 7 on the East Meeting Level of the Vancouver Convention Centre, scan the QR code below, or email volunteers@bcaafc.com.



Please note: While we appreciate the interest, chaperones may not volunteer as we expect you'll be busy assisting your delegates.

Info Desk

Can't find your group? Lost a sweater? Want to know what the references in the coloured program subtitles are?? Come visit our friendly volunteers and/or staff at our Information Desk in the Vancouver Convention Centre. We'll have a Lost and Found and smiling faces available to answer your questions.

We will also have a limited number of personal supply items like feminine hygiene products, toothbrushes, and deodorant for anyone who forgot some things!

LOCATION

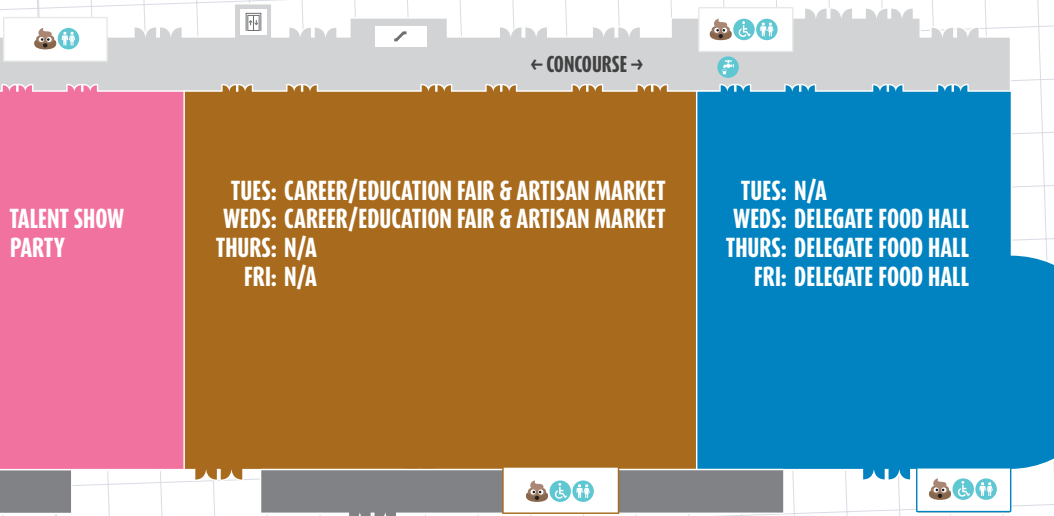
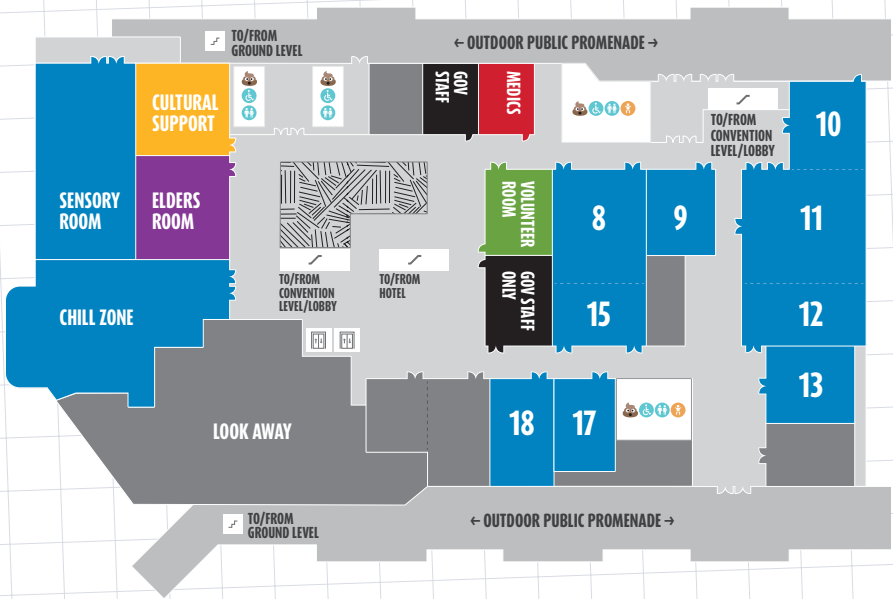
Vancouver Convention Centre – Main Lobby.

HOURS

- » Tuesday, March 17: 9:00 a.m. - 6:30 p.m.
- » Wednesday, March 18: 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. & 6:30 p.m. - 10:30 p.m.
- » Thursday, March 19: 9:00 a.m. - 10:30 p.m.
- » Friday, March 20: 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Vancouver Convention Centre EAST

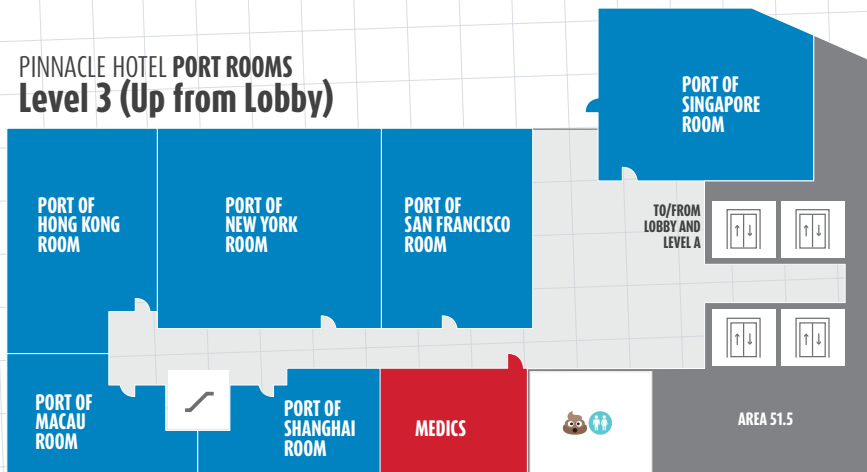
Meeting Level



More Maps

♪ Oh say say say, oh say say say ♪

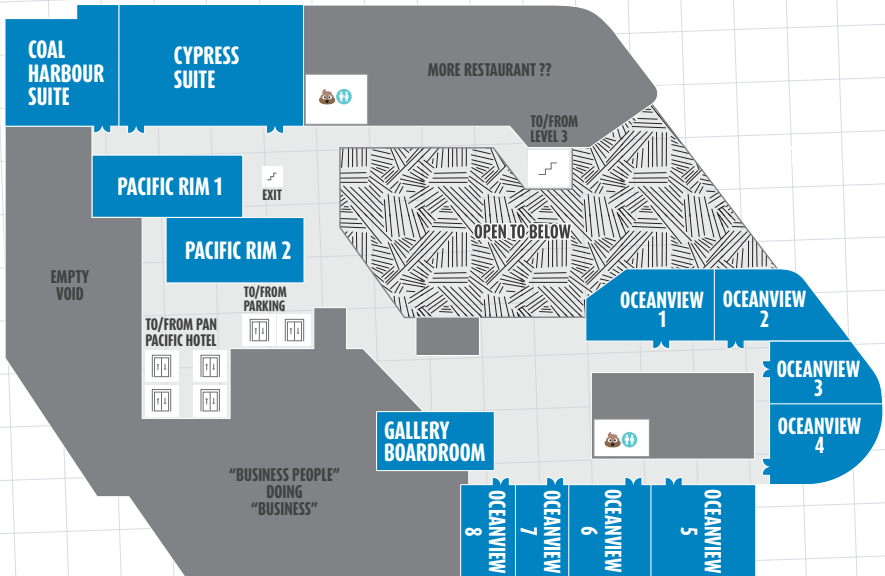
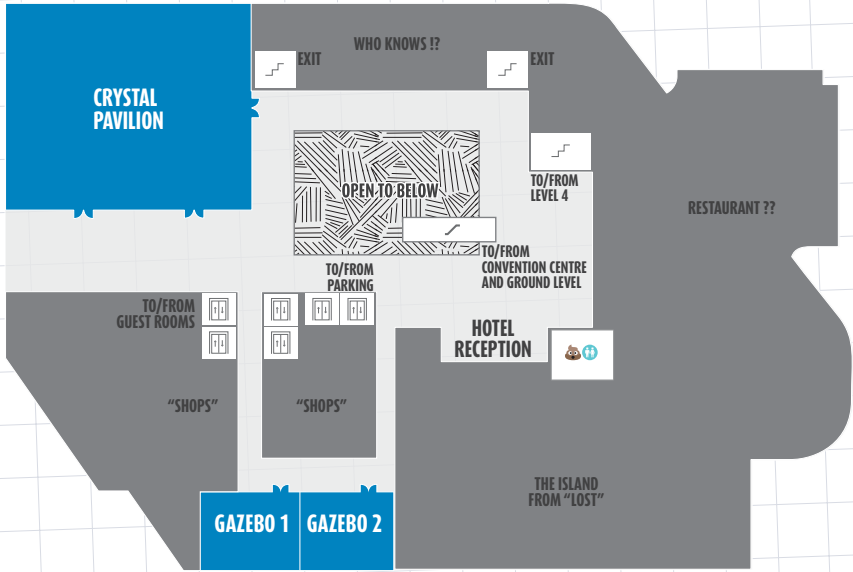
PINNACLE HOTEL PORT ROOMS Level 3 (Up from Lobby)



PINNACLE HOTEL CORDOVA LEVEL Level A (Down from Lobby)



Pan Pacific Hotel **LOBBY LEVEL**
LEVEL 3



Pan Pacific Hotel **RESTAURANT AND GALLERY**
LEVEL 4



The Chill Zone

Metaphorically chill, not like... just a cold room or something

The Chill Zone serves as a sanctuary for any GOV attendees seeking a safe place and some quiet. It has been curated with the intention of providing attendees with a peaceful environment where they can participate in crafting, drawing, or find a spot to take a nap. There will also be a sensory room connected to the Chill Zone this year.

LOCATION

Vancouver Convention Center - South Foyer (2nd floor)

HOURS

- » Tuesday, March 17: 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- » Wednesday, March 18: 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- » Thursday, March 19: 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- » Thursday, March 19: Pop-up Chill Zone at the Dance Party
- » Friday, March 20: 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Career and Education Fair

The Career and Education Fair is an opportunity for youth to learn about the different initiatives organizations are leading throughout the province and connect with potential future employers!

LOCATION

Vancouver Convention Centre – Exhibition Hall B

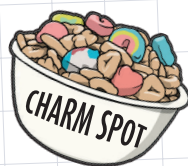
DATES

- » Tuesday, March 17
- » Wednesday, March 18



DOOR PRIZE! Delegates who visit enough exhibitors to complete a BINGO will be entered to win a laptop. BINGO sheets will be available at the fair – ask a staff member or volunteer if you need help!

Cultural Support Room



The Cultural Support Room is a safe space to step away and receive cultural supports for any reason. You can connect with trained Indigenous counsellors from Tsow-Tun Le Lum. They will be wearing red shirts, name badges, and are well-prepared to support anyone in culturally safe ways and will be offering traditional medicine.

You can also ask any staff (in black shirts) or volunteers (in green shirts) for help and they will connect you with someone who can provide you with the support you need.

If you see someone else needing help, look for First Aid workers, the staff members in black shirts, or the volunteer in green shirts.

LOCATION

Vancouver Convention Center - Meeting Room # 3 (on the 2nd floor)

HOURS

- » Tuesday, March 17: 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- » Wednesday, March 18: 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- » Thursday, March 19: 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- » Friday, March 20: 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Artisan Market

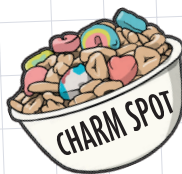
Treat yourself! We have handpicked some of our favourite Indigenous artisans who are ready to wow you with their handmade products at a variety of price points. Check out the full list of vendors on our website: gatheringourvoices.ca/vendors

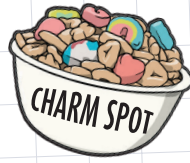
LOCATION

Vancouver Convention Centre – Exhibition Hall B

DATES

- » Tuesday, March 17
- » Wednesday, March 18





Elders Room

Stop by the Elders Room to connect with members of the BCAAFC Elder's Council (Marge, Bill, Christine, Wally, and Stan) as well as Elders from the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society and Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association.

The Elders Room is a quiet, safe space to sit, chat, or learn about traditional teachings, crafts, and practices. Youth can stop by and visit whenever they want or need. The Elders are here to support you and they are very happy to do so. So, make sure to stop by and say hello!

Visiting Elders are also welcome to visit the room and spend time eating, talking, or resting.

LOCATION

Vancouver Convention Center – Meeting Room #2 (2nd floor)

HOURS

- » Tuesday, March 17: 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
- » Wednesday, March 18: 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
- » Thursday, March 19: 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
- » Friday, March 20: 9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Entertainers

 **Here we are now, entertain us** 

Each year, PIYC and BCAAFC work together to select a mix of talented Indigenous musicians and inspiring keynote speakers. Check out the GOV 2026 lineup below!

- » Madeline McCallum
- » Ashley Callingbull
- » DJ Kookum
- » DJ Handsome Tiger
- » DJ O Show
- » Simbiyez Wilson
- » Savy
- » PINDN
- » Patrick Aleck
- » Aidan Thorne

You can find their social media links and bios at gatheringourvoices.ca/entertainment



Scavenger Hunt

Ready to explore the waterfront? Here's how to complete the GOV 2026 scavenger hunt:

Step 1: Take Your Photos

Take a photo of yourself or your group in front of each of the following art installations:

1. THE DROP

A large blue raindrop sculpture that appears to have just landed on the seawall, inviting reflection on our connection to water and the waterfront. **LOCATION:** The Northeast corner of the Vancouver Convention Centre East.

2. THE SALISH SEA: THE JOURNEY WITHIN

A contemporary Coast Salish-inspired artwork that honours the enduring presence of Coast Salish Peoples and welcomes visitors to this land and water. **LOCATION:** Walkway beside the Vancouver Convention Centre East.

3. OLYMPIC CAULDRON

A lasting symbol of the 2010 Winter Olympics, this striking steel and glass monument represents the five Olympic rings. **LOCATION:** Jack Poole Plaza, next to the Vancouver Convention Centre West.

4. DIGITAL ORCA

A pixelated orca sculpture by Douglas Coupland that blends tradition and modern design, celebrating Vancouver's harbour. **LOCATION:** Jack Poole Plaza, beside the Vancouver Convention Centre West.

Step 2: Show & Enter

Once you've collected all four photos, head back to the Info Booth and show them to a team member by end of day on Thursday. You will be entered into a draw to win 2 BC Lions tickets. The first 1,000 youth to complete the scavenger hunt also receive a charm.

DOOR PRIZE! Youth who complete the scavenger hunt will be entered to win BC Lions tickets.

Plenary Events

Plenary, Plesiosaurus, Plexiglass, Pleasantries, Pleather

Due to capacity constraints, GOV events are reserved for youth delegates and chaperones. Exhibitors, entertainers, and workshop facilitators are welcome to attend in a volunteer capacity but must register to do so ahead of time.

Chaperones and delegates must have a GOV lanyard and wristband on to enter the plenary events.

Please refer to the separate Agenda document for the exact times of plenary events.

Opening Ceremonies

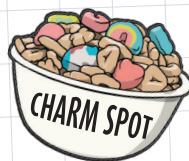
Each year, our Opening Ceremonies are thoughtfully designed to honour the culture and protocols of our Host Nations and to welcome you onto their territories in a good way. We'll be drawing door prizes, sharing live entertainment, and introducing you to the Host Nations and other key people who make GOV happen. It's a way to kick off the week so you can feel grounded, connected, and confident that you're exactly where you're meant to be.

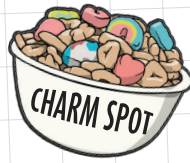
LOCATION

Vancouver Convention Centre – Exhibition Hall A + Ballroom C

DATE

Tuesday, March 17





Cultural Exchange

The Cultural Exchange is a vibrant celebration of Indigenous identity and connection. This special plenary will feature performances from talented entertainers from the local host Nations, sharing songs, dances, and cultural expressions that honour the lands and communities welcoming us.

Youth delegates who signed up will also take the stage to share their own cultural performances — from drumming and singing to dancing and storytelling. Together, these performances create a powerful space of pride, learning, and mutual respect.

LOCATION

Vancouver Convention Centre – Exhibition Hall A + Ballroom C

DATE

Wednesday, March 18

DOOR PRIZE! Youth who perform in the Cultural Exchange will be entered to win a painted drum.

Volunteer Appreciation Dinner

Volunteers are an integral part of GOV and a huge part of what makes GOV so successful every year. To show our gratitude for all their hard work, volunteers are invited to join us for a celebration with entertainment and a delicious meal to show our appreciation.

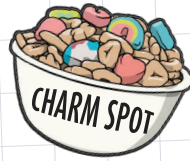
LOCATION

Pan Pacific Hotel – Crystal Ballroom

DATE

Wednesday, March 18

DOOR PRIZE! Volunteers will be entered to win an iPad for every shift they attend. The winner will be announced at the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner.



Talent Show

Are you a dancer? A singer? A magician? Can you juggle bananas? Perhaps you've got another dazzling skill up your sleeve? Well, this is your time to shine! Step into the limelight and register for the GOV talent show.

Every year, we roll out the GOV red carpet and give youth the chance to showcase their talents in a supportive, lively, and loving space. To perform at the talent show, you need to register ahead of time. There is a mandatory workshop to help prepare for the event.

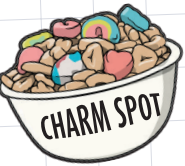
LOCATION

Vancouver Convention Centre – Exhibit Hall A + Ballroom C

DATE

Wednesday, March 18

DOOR PRIZE! Youth who perform at the Talent Show will be entered to win a Purdy's gift basket.



Fashion Show

Get ready to cheer, celebrate, and be inspired as we showcase an incredible collection of designs by Pam Baker, a renowned fashion designer, artist, and entrepreneur of Squamish/Kwakiutl/Tlingit/Haida descent.

Pam is the creative force behind Touch of Culture, TOC Legends Designs, and Copperknot Jewelry, and has been designing one-of-a-kind pieces and coordinating fashion shows since 1988. Her work blends culture, innovation, and artistry, and we are honoured to feature her on the GOV stage.

LOCATION

Vancouver Convention Center – Exhibit Hall A + Ballroom C

DATE

Thursday, March 19

Door Prize! Youth who sign up for the fashion show workshop will have the opportunity to step onto the stage and be entered to win a beaded medallion!

Honouring Feast

The Honouring Feast is our way of showing youth who identify as having had an “in care” experience that we love them and care about their wellbeing. This is a safe space for youth to share a special meal together and receive gifts. You are strong, resilient, and loved and we want to celebrate you.

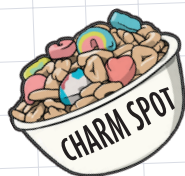
Please note: This is a ticketed event. Youth need to identify in their registration as being a youth in care or having been in care to attend. Chaperones are not required to attend but are welcome to attend should their youth ask for their support or company.

LOCATION

Pan Pacific Hotel – Crystal Ballroom

DATE

Wednesday, March 18



DOOR PRIZE! Youth who attend the Honouring Feast will be entered to win a medicine pouch.

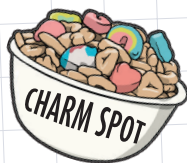
Kids4Cameras

Hosted by the Prince Rupert Friendship Centre, Kids4Cameras is a donation-based youth photography program that gives young people the tools, mentorship, and experiences to see the world through a creative lens.

From capturing stunning wildlife to storytelling through portrait and cultural photography, every click of the camera helps build confidence, connection, and purpose.

Kids4Cameras will be shadowing photographer Geoff Howe throughout the week and are well-versed on our photography guidelines. We can't wait to see GOV through their lenses!

Dance Party



The Dance Party is a substance-free event with yummy snacks, great music, cultural supports, and a designated Chill Zone. Delegates of all ages are welcome to participate!

LOCATION

Vancouver Convention Center – Exhibition Hall A + Ballroom C

DATE

Thursday, March 19

Movie Night

Forgot your dancing shoes or craving a quieter evening? Groups are welcome to skip the Dance Party and join us for a Movie Night instead. We'll be screening *Saints and Warriors* (2025), a documentary following the Skidegate Saints of Haida Gwaii as they defend their championship at the 2024 All Native Basketball Tournament. As a new generation rises and the Saints face the twilight of their dynasty, the film reveals how true victory is measured not only in points, but in the strength to protect who you are, on and off the court.

Following the screening, director Patrick Shannon (Nang K'uulas), an Indigenous-Haida filmmaker from Haida Gwaii, will join us for a live Q&A. Popcorn and a drink will be provided.

Please RSVP at gatheringourvoices.ca/movie-night if you're planning to join, so we can ensure we have enough refreshments!

PLEASE NOTE: Delegates under 18 must attend the movie night with their chaperone.

LOCATION

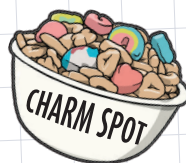
VIFF Centre: 1181 Seymour Street

DATE

Thursday, March 19

TRANSPORTATION

Our private bus shuttles will pick delegates and chaperones up from the Vancouver Convention Center and drop them back off after the movie. Please refer to the bus schedule for details.



Dance Party Rules

Safety is our top priority, both at the Dance Party and throughout GOV. All patrons attending the Dance Party must follow these simple rules:

- » All attendees must have a visible GOV wristband and be wearing their lanyards/name tag to enter the event; attendees must keep their lanyard/name tag and wristband on at the event.
- » Groups will not be allowed to enter the dance after 8:30 p.m.
- » Groups must arrive and leave the dance party together. Chaperones will be asked to confirm that all members of the group are present before the group will be permitted to leave. Groups are permitted to split up provided a chaperone is still present with each part of the group. This applies to group members over the age of 18.
- » Attendees agree to follow the rules and guidelines of the host venue (i.e., Not entering restricted areas, observing hotel quiet hours).
- » All bags, purses, and packs coming into the event will be subject to search. Youth and chaperones will have the option to keep their bags with them or leave them securely at the coat and bag check.
- » No external food or drinks are permitted (water and snacks will be provided at the dance party). Attendees arriving with food or drink will be asked to dispose of it before entering, finish consuming it before entering, or leave it in the secure coat check.
- » Banned substances are any substance that has the potential to impair, excluding prescription medications. This includes but is not limited to alcohol, cannabis, vaping, and other recreational substances. Attendees arriving with banned substances will be asked to dispose of them before entering or leave those items in the secure coat check at the discretion of the chaperone.
- » GOV is a dry event. Alcohol and non-prescribed substances are not allowed at any GOV activities or venues.
- » If prohibited substances are found (excluding prescribed medications and cigarettes), they will be confiscated and you and your group may be asked to leave. If you choose to use substances outside of GOV spaces, please prioritize your safety and never use alone.
- » Your safety is our top priority. If you or someone else needs support, please reach out to a staff member, volunteer, medic, or Cultural Support Worker — we're here to help.

Closing Ceremonies



Join your GOV friends and family as we reflect and celebrate an amazing week together! We will take time to offer thanks for the hard work that goes into GOV, give away some awesome door prizes, and close this year's event in a good way — honouring the ways of our host Nations.

LOCATION

Vancouver Convention Centre – Exhibition Hall A + Ballroom C

DATE

Friday, March 20

Great Giveaway

This year, the highly anticipated Great Giveaway event will continue as the finale of GOV. Immediately following the closing ceremonies, youth delegates will have the opportunity to attend the giveaway and select a gift to take home. Gifts include sporting equipment, art supplies, puzzles, books, and more.

Please follow the direction of staff and/or volunteers.

Every youth delegate will have an opportunity to pick no more than one item to take home.

PLEASE NOTE: If you are taking a larger item, please check-in with your chaperone to see if you have the space to travel home with it.

LOCATION:

Vancouver Convention Center - Exhibition Hall B

DATE

Friday, March 20 – Immediately after the Closing Ceremonies



Crisis Text & Phone Lines

KUU-US Crisis Line Society - 24-hour crisis line for Indigenous people across B.C. Youth number: **250-723-2040** or toll free at **1-800-588-8717**.

Kids Help Phone - Free, 24/7, and confidential services for all young people across Canada. Text **686868** or Call **1-800-668-6868** and press **3**. Or visit KidsHelpPhone.ca/Indigenous

Hope for Wellness Help Line - Online chat available in Cree, Ojibway, Inuktitut, English, and French at hopeforwellness.ca or 24/7 telephone at **1-855-242-3310**.

VictimLinkBC – A free, confidential, multilingual service available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call or text **1-800-563-0808** or email 211-VictimLinkBC@uwbc.ca

Suicide Crisis Help Line - A safe space to talk, 24/7 every day of the year. Call **988** or text **988**.

Crisis Text Line - Text **HOME** to **741741** to connect with a Crisis Counselor. Free confidential 24/7 support.

Time for an Encore!

Since 2018, Encore has partnered with BCAAFC to support GOV with professional AV technology. For GOV 2026, Encore has expanded their role as a sponsor and strengthened their commitment to supporting Indigenous youth.

This year marks the launch of our new “Make Your Moment” Bursary, created in partnership with Encore. Indigenous youth ages 16–24 can apply to receive up to \$1,200 to support studies in Hospitality, Event Planning, Film Production, Broadcasting, or Audio Engineering. Visit: bcaafc.com/education.

Encore also offers a free **Introduction to Event Technology and Hospitality Certification**, giving youth the opportunity to explore careers in live events and production. **Visit Encore at the Career and Education Fair or sign up for their AV Skills Workshop.**

GOV 2026 Sponsors

Thank you for helping to make GOV happen



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Thank you for your generous donations in support of GOV



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