



## STAFF REPORT

**Title:** Letter of Support - Cold Lake Native Friendship Centre

**Meeting Date:** April 22, 2025

---

### **Executive Summary:**

The Cold Lake Native Friendship Centre is seeking funding from Alberta Mental Health and Addiction to establish a culturally relevant recovery program that blends western recovery models with Indigenous Healing methods.

The centre is seeking \$100,000 from the Government of Alberta for startup and licensing costs. The project will teach clients life skills and help to onboard and train staff to implement the centre's planned cultural programming.

Administration has prepared a draft letter of support for Council's consideration. Administration's recommendation is to pass a motion authorizing a letter of support from the City of Cold Lake on behalf of the Cold Lake Native Friendship Centre's Mental Health and Addiction funding application.

### **Background:**

Kokum's House Transitional House provides 10 recovery beds for culturally rooted, long-term recovery support for men in northeastern Alberta, with a focus on addressing addiction challenges. Operating in Cold Lake, Kokum's house services Indigenous and non-Indigenous men from nearby communities, including Cold Lake First Nations. The home offers a safe, structured environment for recovery that integrates traditional teachings, land-based healing and peer mentorship. Since its strong community partnerships to address the unique needs of men seeking to rebuild their lives through culturally safe support systems.

Kokum's House is seeking to incorporate Elder-guided teachings, land-based activities, and community support in an effort to address the root causes of addiction and trauma.

By providing ongoing cultural engagement and peer mentorship, the project seeks to increase the efficacy of recovery by fostering a sense of belonging and accountability, reducing isolation, and improving long-term success rates. This holistic, culturally driven approach enhances the efficiency of recovery by addressing the entire person, not just the symptoms of addiction.



This philosophy guides the Kokum's House Traditional House model, and the Cold Lake Native Friendship centre hopes that funding will allow it to formalize and expand its philosophy into a sustainable recovery program.

From March 2024 to March 2025 Kokum's House has helped 63 men in various stages of recovery and homelessness. Of these, 28 men have gone on to be employed full-time, and are living on their own. Another 10 have went on to rehab and left before completing or were removed from house for substance abuse. Nine (9) men have gone on to further their treatment at different facilities while eight (8) have gone onto their home communities and families and remain in recovery. Another eight (8) are currently residing at Kokum's House and either waiting for AISH approval or are working towards acquiring safety tickets needed for employment.

All clients are required to Volunteer for Bingos and at Kokum's Corner Thrift Store a part of the Kokum's House Program.

**Alternatives:**

- Council may pass or defeat a motion authorizing a letter of support from the City of Cold Lake on behalf of the Cold Lake Native Friendship Centre's Mental Health and Addiction funding application.
- Council may respectfully decline to provide a letter of support to the Cold Lake Native Friendship Centre at this time.
- Council may accept this report as information.

**Recommended Action:**

Administration recommends that Council pass a motion authorizing a letter of support from the City of Cold Lake on behalf of the Cold Lake Native Friendship Centre's Mental Health and Addiction funding application.

**Budget Implications (Yes or No):**

No

**Submitted by:**

Kevin Nagoya, Chief Administrative Officer