

The Brandon Friendship Centre has been incorporated since 1965 and providing programs and services to all people in the Brandon area. We are a status blind organization which means anyone needing services will be welcome in our organization.

Our services are varied and include an FASD program, 2 daycares serving 110 children under the age of 6, non-profit housing authority with 42 low income units, 8 unit transitional house, 14 units at Massey Manor, full time Cultural Worker, Brandon Access Exchange Service, Partners for Careers employment program, Casual job placement, Seniors Liaison Worker, Parent Child Centre, Adult Upgrading, prenatal nutrition, preschool program for 3 year old children, Youth Centre, Community Wellness and 2 Aboriginal Head Start Programs (one in Brandon and one in Portage La Prairie) serving 70 Aboriginal 3 & 4 year old children.

The majority of these programs are provincially funded, one through our local RHA, and 6 of them are federally funded.

In the fiscal year 2015 – 2016 we had 13,256 single users of our services come through our Organization. These people came to the various programs a total of 267,604 times in the year. As you can see we are a very active organization providing services in the community. We also employ over 75 people.

If our funding were stabilized, we would be able to guarantee programming to our clients and the community. Ever year, we feel in jeopardy of having our core funding cut or reduced; core funding which has not seen a substantive increase in over a decade. No one works for a non-profit hoping to get rich. We would be happy knowing we have jobs next year.

Another major issue which would have a huge impact on the people we serve would be an increase in the threshold a person on assistance could make before it was taken from their budget. It would not cost the government much as many of the people I know of are disincentivized to work for fear of anything happening to their assistance. They know they might be able to work for a while but will not be able to sustain it. This increase would lead to more people taking temporary work, which would build their employability and the soft skills needed to find and maintain long-term employment which would help to break the cycle of subsequent generations seeing assistance as the only option.

Please do not only think of this year in your budget. You have the opportunity to create positive change which will be felt for generations. Please think of how this budget can help your grandchildren's grandchildren.

Thank you.