

# COVID-19 MESSAGE FROM ISC BC REGION

## UPDATE #19 / April 9, 2020

Good afternoon. We all know that holidays can be an exciting and challenging time under the best of circumstances. With the Easter Holiday fast approaching and social distancing keeping us from gathering to celebrate in more traditional ways we hope you are planning a way to develop new family traditions and connect in a safe way.

### UPDATES

In yesterday's update we discussed mental health and wellness. Keeping our families and communities safe goes beyond the basics of COVID-19 prevention. In these uncertain times we also need to ensure that we are continuing to look after our mental health and support those who may be facing other challenges. For today's update, we wanted to focus on protecting the vulnerable in our communities.

Recently Prime Minister Trudeau announced additional funding for vulnerable populations, including: an additional \$40 million for women's shelters and sexual assault centres; \$10 million for indigenous women and children fleeing violence; and \$157 million for other shelters under the **Reaching Home Program**. Ten million dollars of this funding had been directed to Indigenous Services Canada to support 46 emergency Indigenous women and children's shelters on reserves and in the Yukon.

Do you know someone that might need help? If so, community members can call the First Nations Health Authority's 24/7 culturally safe KUU-US Crisis Response Services at 1-800-588-8717 (or 250-723-2040 for child and youth / 250-723-4050 for adult and Elder). Another option is the Hope for Wellness Help Line (1-855-242-3310). Online chat is available at [www.hopeforwellness.ca](http://www.hopeforwellness.ca). If you're unsure of what services are available, calling **BC 211** is one way to find information and referrals regarding community, government and social services in BC.

And lastly, over the weekend, funding agreement amendments for the Indigenous Community Support Fund allocation, as well as the Income Assistance

Special Needs Supplement will be sent out to First Nations in BC.

BC First Nations will receive the same amount of \$300 a month per adult as was announced by the Province of BC for current income assistance clients living on reserve. This came into effect the day the Province of BC announced its **New emergency supports for province's most vulnerable**.

Chief and Council are asked to review and confirm their acceptance of the amendment **AND** email the acceptance of the funding agreement amendment **as soon as possible**. Funds will be deposited in your account a week or so after we receive the acceptance of the amendment.

Should you require further information about the funding agreement amendment, please contact the Funding Services Officer assigned to your community.

We have received numerous requests with regards to funding that has gone out to First Nations in BC. We hope this chart is helpful.

Emergency Management Assistance Program	\$7.3 M
Income Assistance Special Needs COVID-19 Supplement	\$2.9 M
Indigenous Community Support Fund	\$39.6 M
Income Assistance COVID-19 Crisis Supplement	\$10.7 M
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$60.5 M</b>

## QUESTION OF THE DAY

### We have an election scheduled. Can we cancel it due to concerns of exposure to COVID-19?

Yes. New Regulations for Chiefs and Councils have been developed to assist in addressing any governance gap issues that may otherwise have been forthcoming. The new Regulations are relevant to elections held under the *Indian Act*, the *First Nations Elections Act* (FNEA) and, to some extent, First Nations conducting elections under their own custom code. The regulations provide for an initial extension of the term of office for a maximum of six months after the date the term of office would have normally ended. For First Nations holding elections under the *Indian Act* or the FNEA, the decision to extend the term of office must be recorded in a Band Council Resolution (BCR) and sent to the Department, any time within the last 90 days of the current mandate. The BCR must indicate the date on which the extension of the term of office will end and the new planned date of the election. That election must be held within the last 30 days of the extended term of office.

The Regulations do not provide any directives for Custom Election Code Bands, and these bands are therefore invited to refer to the applicable provisions of their respective codes. However, if the Custom Election Code does not provide for postponement of election in the current exceptional circumstances, the Regulations can serve as a guide.

ISC has shared the details of these new regulations with leadership of BC First Nations. Deciding whether or not to hold upcoming scheduled elections in the current context of the spread of COVID-19 remains with the leaders of affected communities, and as such questions regarding whether or not an election will take place should be directed to leadership.

## PARTNERS

- **Transport Canada**  
COVID-19 measures, updates, and guidance issued by Transport Canada

## UPCOMING WEBINAR

On Thursday, April 16, 2020, Catherine Lappe, members of our Executive Leadership Team, and representatives from the First Nations Health Authority, will be available to provide a **quick update on recent funding announcements** and how they support First Nation community needs during the pandemic. This session is a follow up to our Town Hall of April 3, 2020, where unfortunately due to technical issues a large number of participants were unable to join.

The webinar will be approximately 45 minutes and will include a moderated Q & A from participants. Thanks to the First Nations Public Service Secretariat for hosting and moderating.

Once you have pre-registered, you will receive a confirmation e-mail with a link to join the webinar.

**Thursday, April 16**

**10:00-10:45 a.m.**

**REGISTER HERE**

## NATIONAL INFORMATION

The Government of Canada has made announcements regarding financial assistance for those who will be impacted during these unprecedented times. You can find further information on how to apply for financial or economic support at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan.html>

- **COVID-19 First Nations Community Guide on Accessing Additional Supports**
- **Public Health Agency of Canada**



## USEFUL LINKS

- The Hope for Wellness Help Line is open 24 hours a day 7 days a week to support members of your community experiencing emotional distress and may be reached directly by dialling **1-855-242-3310** or via online chat at: [hopeforwellness.ca](https://hopeforwellness.ca)
- **Family Violence Prevention Program**
- **First Nations Health Authority**  
Summary Page of COVID-19 information and response.
- **COVID-19 BC Support App and Self-Assessment Tool**  
The app will let you receive the latest updates, trusted resources, and alerts. The Self-Assessment Tool is built in.

## REGIONAL CONTACTS

We've set up a dedicated email for any non-health COVID-19-related questions and requests:

[aadnc.isbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca](mailto:aadnc.isbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca)

The email address and other information are also available on the [FNPSS website](#).

