

COVID-19 MESSAGE FROM ISC BC REGION

UPDATE #20 / April 14, 2020

UPDATES

We hope that despite these challenging times, you have all enjoyed a restorative long weekend. Rest, relaxation and connecting with our loved ones - even while social distancing - are vital in maintaining our energy and optimism. We know this is especially important as the days give way to weeks and the prospect of months of uncertainty lie ahead.

As we enter our fifth week of working remotely to support your communities, we want to help alleviate some of that uncertainty by continuing to share the latest developments and important information and resources.

Funding Agreement Amendments

Over the Easter long weekend, emails about funding agreement amendments were sent to all First Nations in British Columbia. We now wish to transfer the Indigenous Community Support Fund funding to your First Nation to cover extraordinary costs related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including for protecting the health and safety of your First Nation and supporting you in responding to public health threats.

You are encouraged to review the funding agreement emailed to Chief and Council which includes funding for the **Indigenous Community Support Fund** and the latest Income Assistance COVID-19 Crisis Supplement. *(On April 2, 2020 the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction announced its intention to provide an automatic \$300-monthly COVID-19 crisis supplement for the next three months. ISC is mirroring these supports for on-reserve income assistance and disability clients.)*

In order to accept this amendment, please have an individual with signing authority reply to the email accepting the funding with a copy to all individuals with signing authority for your First Nation. If you have any questions about the funding, please contact the Funding Services Officer assigned to your community. Funds will be deposited in your account a week or so after we receive the acceptance of the amendment.

Additionally, the **Terms and Conditions of the Emergency Management Assistance Program** have been temporarily amended to allow the flexibility needed for the First Nations stream of the Community Support Fund.

The funding can be used for measures where no other source of funding is available and may include, but is not limited to:

- support for Elders and vulnerable community members,
- measures to address food insecurity,
- educational and other support for children,
- mental health assistance and emergency response services, and
- preparedness measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The amendments to the Terms and Conditions contain time-limited exceptional changes to the program to assist First Nation communities deal with exceptional circumstances and challenges that exist for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic. These amendments will be in place until March 31, 2021.

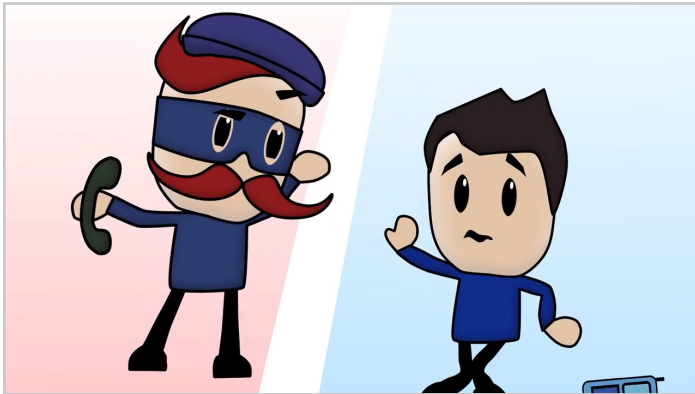


Service Canada Outreach

Service Canada is taking steps to ensure everyone can connect and get the full benefit of the Government of Canada supports available in these challenging times. To support access to critical programs and services for clients, including First Nations members, without access to technology, Service Canada Community Outreach and Liaison Service staff are contacting communities to offer alternate service delivery methods that will continue to support accessing critical programs, services and benefits.

Community Outreach and Liaison Service staff will be available to answer live calls and ensure that clients get assistance with accessing critical services such as Employment Insurance. The **Service Canada Outreach Support Centre** can be reached at **1-877-631-2657**.

Fraud Warning



Also, be aware your members may be vulnerable to a new fraud. Text messages are circulating saying recipients have received a deposit for the **Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)**. Beware it is a scam. Do not reply or click on the link, delete the text and warn others. It's the latest attempt by unscrupulous fraudsters to get personal information and money by posing as the Canada Revenue Agency. Tips are available to help protect community members from fraud and **slam the scam**.

Please let members know that if they are applying for the CERB, they should make sure they have the right link or number. Here are the two ways to apply:

- Online at Canada.ca/Coronavirus
- By automated toll-free phone at 1-800-959-2019 or 1-800-959-2041

Continued efforts to limit the spread of COVID-19

There are good reasons to believe the impact of COVID-19 will be mitigated in our different communities by the actions we are taking now. Social distancing and isolation are working. By slowing the spread of the disease compared to other jurisdictions, we have given ourselves the gift of time: time to come to terms with a new way of working; and, time to plan and prepare our communities to protect our most vulnerable members. Keep up the good work. We truly are all in this together.

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

QUESTION OF THE DAY

Are there any templates available for Band Office Continuity plan during COVID 19?

ISC does not have any business continuity templates, however, we do provide funding that may support business continuity planning as does the First Nations Health Authority.

The proposal based, Professional and Institutional Development Program (P&ID), can support the development of Business Continuity Plans.

The Emergency Management Assistance Program can support developing and updating Emergency Management Plans, as well as conducting simulation exercises to test these plans. There is no application deadline and enquires can be forwarded to aadnc.bcemu.aandc@canada.ca.

The First Nation's Health Authority supports communities to develop Communicable Disease Emergency Plans which complement Emergency Management Plans. For more information, contact the FNHA Health Protection team at 1-844-364-2232.

USEFUL LINKS

- **Indigenous Community Support Fund: Urban and off-reserve Indigenous organizations and communities**
- **Family Violence Prevention Program**
- **First Nations Public Service Secretariat**
- **First Nations Health Authority**
Summary 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.
- 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

NATIONAL INFORMATION

The Government of Canada has made announcements regarding financial assistance for those who will be impacted during these unprecedented times – these individuals and business are encouraged to apply for assistance. You can find further information on how to apply for financial or economic support at:

Canada.ca/coronavirus and **Questions and Answers on the Canada Emergency Response Benefit**.

- **COVID-19 First Nations Community Guide on Accessing Additional Supports**
- For a great description of what flattening the curve means, consider watching **Prime Minister Trudeau's video tweet**
- **Public Health Agency of Canada**
- **Resources for Canadian Businesses**
- **Transport Canada – COVID-19 measures, updates, and guidance issued by Transport Canada**

REGIONAL CONTACTS

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

aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca

The email address and other information are also available on the **FNPS website**.