


COVID-19 MESSAGE FROM ISC BC REGION

UPDATE #45 / May 27, 2020


Good Afternoon,

Like most British Columbians we have been impressed by the daily briefings by Chief Medical Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry. Her catchphrase “be kind, be calm, be safe” has become an inspiration on how to weather the COVID-19 pandemic. We are therefore delighted to learn that the Gitksan have adopted Dr. Henry and named her “Gyaksit sa ap dii’m” meaning “one who is calm among us” at a ceremony in Hazelton, May 22 (she attended via Zoom). In today’s update we recognize all the community leaders who have shown calm through this storm.

Stay the course
help limit the spread of COVID-19



Please watch this animated video:
Physical distancing: Stop the spread of COVID-19 in Indigenous communities



UPDATES

Emergency Community Support Fund

For those of you looking for additional supports for off reserve members, the \$350 million **Emergency Community Support Fund** through Employment and Social Development Canada is specifically for charities and non-profits to respond to COVID-19. The investment will flow through three national intermediaries that have the ability to get funds quickly to community organizations that serve vulnerable populations. That could include urban Indigenous and off-reserve organizations, and potentially Tribal Councils. Proposals are already being accepted and can support a variety of activities that address a pressing social inclusion or well-being need caused by COVID-19, such as:

- increasing volunteer-based home deliveries of groceries and medications
- scaling up help lines that provide information and support
- helping vulnerable Canadians access government benefits
- providing training, supplies, and other required supports to volunteers so they can continue to make their invaluable contributions to the COVID-19 response

- replacing in-person, one-on-one contact and social gatherings with virtual contact through phone calls, texts, teleconferences, or the Internet

For more information on how to apply please visit:

- **United Way Centraide Canada**
- **Canadian Red Cross**
- **Community Foundations of Canada**

Question: If an organization didn't apply to the urban and off-reserve call for proposals under the Indigenous Community Support Fund (ICSF) but wants to provide supports to off-reserve members, how do we get the resources to do so, and where can we apply?

To those who have an interest in providing support to off-reserve members, you may also want to apply to the **Emergency Community Support Fund**.

Additionally, **\$75 million in new funding** was recently announced for Indigenous organizations providing services to Indigenous peoples in urban centres and off reserve.

This new funding will support more community-based projects that address the critical needs of Indigenous populations during this crisis, including food security, mental health support services, sanitation and protective equipment. It could also help with other needs, such as support for Elders, transportation, and educational materials for Indigenous children and youth.

ISC BC Region will be in touch with those organizations which applied to the Indigenous Community Support Fund to talk about eligibility for this new funding. More information will be available soon.

Government of Canada enhances Youth Employment and Skills Program to help create new positions for youth in the agriculture sector

On Tuesday, the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, the Honourable Marie-Claude Bibeau, announced an investment of up to \$9.2 million to enhance the **Youth Employment and Skills Program (YESP)** and fund up to 700 new positions for youth in the agriculture industry.

Eligible applicants include producers, agri-businesses, industry associations, provincial and territorial governments, Indigenous organizations and research facilities. The YESP will provide agriculture employers up to 50 per cent of the cost of hiring a Canadian youth up to \$14,000. Indigenous applicants and those applicants hiring a youth facing barriers are eligible for funding of up to 80 per cent of their costs. Employers may apply for this funding retroactive to April 1, 2020, with projects to be completed by March 31, 2021.

NEW - You may be eligible for support through other programs as well. **Answer some questions to find financial help during COVID-19.** While we cannot guarantee your eligibility, we can point you to the program details.

PARTNER INFORMATION

First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day Service Provides Culturally-Safe Primary Care for First Nations People in BC

In case you missed it, the First Nations Health Authority officially announced the launch of its **Virtual Doctor of the Day** on Monday. The program had an accelerated start in April in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The program—created in partnership with the Rural Coordination Centre of BC (RCCbc)—provides virtual appointments with doctors who are trained in the principles of cultural safety and humility, and are familiar with the unique aspects of rural and remote community health care. The launch was applauded by the **Honourable Marc Miller, Minister of Indigenous Services** and **Minister Carolyn Bennet, Crown Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs**.

The FNHA and Canadian Red Cross Partner on Disaster Response

Earlier this month the FNHA announced that it is expanding on a longstanding partnership with the Canadian Red Cross to collaborate on the **“Ready When the Time Comes” program**. Through this new agreement, the FNHA will provide up to 30 employees when required to the Red Cross for disaster response in BC. FNHA employees will have the opportunity to take a paid volunteer leave to support Red Cross operations in BC as needed, beginning in June 2020. They’ll receive emergency response training from the Red Cross, and serve during natural disasters as Emergency Responders. They will also receive additional training to ensure services are delivered safely within the context of COVID-19.

SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Your input is important as we develop our action plans to re-start services, the economy and our lives.

Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Community Housing Fund

As part of its commitment to provide safe, secure, affordable and appropriate housing for all Indigenous peoples, BC Housing has issued a Request for Proposals on May 27, 2020 for its Community Housing Fund. The RFP will be open until mid-January 2021, giving proponents time to prepare their submissions. In the meantime, BC Housing will proceed with pre-allocation to successful proponents as early as September 2020. For more information please visit the [BC Housing website](#). The Community Housing Fund will provide close to \$1.9 billion over 10 years to build and operate 14,350 affordable new rental homes for seniors, families, low-income and middle-income earners. As of December 31, 2019, 5,200 units are complete or in progress.

New funding to help sexual assault survivors

There is more help on the way for survivors of sexual assault through a **three-year, \$10-million grant program** to support the delivery of co-ordinated emergency sexual assault response services in regions throughout BC. Sexual assault disproportionately impacts women, girls and LGBTQ2S+ people. Indigenous women and girls are especially at risk of being targeted.

The Ending Violence Association of BC (EVA BC) has received the funding to administer the grant program, in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, the Ministry of Finance – Gender Equity Office and the Minister’s Advisory Council on Indigenous Women (MACIW).

This grant program will help organizations deliver community-based emergency sexual assault response services that are trauma informed and culturally appropriate. The services is aimed to meet the needs of sexual assault survivors around the province, including the unique needs of Indigenous communities and survivors.

WORKSAFE BC COVID-19 INFORMATION

- **Industry safety (B.C.’s Restart Plan, Phase 1)**
Agriculture, Construction, Forestry, Health care, Hospitality, Manufacturing (see also: Meat processing), Municipalities, Retail, Small business, Transportation
- **Returning to safe operation (B.C.’s Restart Plan, Phase 2)**
New: Child care; Gyms and fitness centres.
More info: General guide to reducing risk; Arts and cultural facilities; Education (K-12); Health professionals; In-person counselling; Offices; Parks; Personal services; Real estate; Restaurants, cafes, and pubs; Retail; FAQs; What workers should expect
- **Resources**
COVID-19 Safety Plan template and more resources
- **Additional information**
General health and safety; Reporting and payment deadlines; Claims

INDIGENOUSYOUTHRISE COVID-19 SUPPORT FUND

The We Matter **#IndigenousYouthRise COVID-19 support fund** is a grant to support Indigenous youth and promote community wellness during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Support Fund offers up to \$500 for online projects that occur in Canada and are Indigenous Youth led (ages 13-30).

How to Apply:

- The deadline to apply is June 15, 2020
- Send your questions and completed application to grants@wemattercampaign.org

Downtown Eastside supported through skills training, employment

Downtown Eastside (DTES) residents will use their knowledge of the community, while gaining valuable skills and paid work experience to support their fellow residents, though **\$200,000 from the Canada-BC Workforce Development Agreement**.

Known as “peers”, these resident trainees will benefit from a new grassroots approach to peer support. The Eastside Movement for Business and Economic Renewal Society (EMBERS) will deliver a variety of skills training and work with several DTES peer network organizations to identify peers who could be included in the project. Up to 40 peers will be supported over six months, with the goal of moving them to more permanent training opportunities and employment

Dormant well clean-up program nearly fully subscribed on first day

A new program to restore dormant and inactive wells, and bring support to B.C. workers in oil and gas service companies has seen significant interest from applicants. The first application to the **Dormant Sites Reclamation program** was received within 15 minutes of opening on May 25, 2020, and by the end of the day the Province had received over 1,100 applications from more than 80 service companies and contractors.

It is estimated that the program could support up to 1,200 jobs for British Columbians, many of them within the northeast region of the province. On April 17, 2020, the Government of Canada announced \$120 million in funding for B.C. to support the clean up of oil and gas sites. The Province rolled out three new programs on May 19, 2020, to bring this funding to BC industry.

INDIGENOUS FOOD SOVEREIGNTY LOGO COMPETITION

Calling all Indigenous artists! Design a logo that reflects Indigenous people’s relationship with the land and you could WIN \$500! The Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC) is calling all Indigenous artists to take part. The winning design will capture Indigenous perspectives on the land in relation to plants, trees and gardening. It will also help NWAC in their work advocating for the rights of Indigenous women, girls and gender-diverse people.

- **Deadline:** May 31, 2020
- **Prize:** \$500.00
- Send your design and a description via email to Shelley Charles (muskinozhe@gmail.com)

[More information here »](#)

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

We believe we are better when we share our knowledge. We are pleased to share resources and updates being offered by communities:

- **Binche Whut’en First Nation** posted COVID-19 is now in our communities, and Chief and Council are asking members to stay home and stay safe.
- **Quatsino First Nation** shared tips for staying calm in turbulent times as well as links for parents who are helping their children with learning at home.
- **Tsilhqot’in National Government** shared an update on COVID-19. As of May 25, the TNG EOC will be activated at EOC Response Level 1.
- **Shuswap Nation Tribal Council** posted information on a youth food sovereignty contest.
- **Okanagan Indian Band** shared a behind the scenes video of its food hamper program.

The efforts of First Nations in BC to protect their communities from COVID-19 are being recognized internationally as well as here in Canada. The BBC has recently posted a story titled **Why First Nations communities are uninviting visitors** highlighting why COVID-19-free communities are asking to be left alone.

NATIONAL INFORMATION

- **Practical advice, articles and information to help you #GetReal about how you really feel**
- **Taking care of your mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic**
- **Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): Prevention and risks**
- 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.**
- **Public Health Agency of Canada**
- **Resources for Canadian Businesses**
- **Transport Canada – COVID-19 measures, updates, and guidance issued by Transport Canada**

USEFUL LINKS

- For information about economic measures to help stabilize the economy, please visit the **federal** and **provincial financial supports** websites often for the latest information.
- First Nations Health Authority – **Information for community leaders**
- **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.
- With the help of BCFC, the First Nations Public Service Secretariat has posted a **COVID-19 Resources for All BC Individuals.**

REGIONAL CONTACTS

We've set up a dedicated email for any non-health COVID-19-related questions and requests:
aadnc.isbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca.

