

# COVID-19 MESSAGE FROM ISC BC REGION

UPDATE #56 / July 6, 2020

Good Afternoon,

We hope you and your communities continue to be well. Like us, you may have heard that Siksika First Nation in Alberta is dealing with a COVID-19 outbreak. We are saddened by this news, but heartened to see the community quickly mobilizing to share information and reminders on how to prevent the spread. We encourage you to view and share an **awareness video** they have created and posted to Facebook. To quote Siksika Health Services, “your actions can save lives. Practice physical distancing for your parents, grandparents and children. We’ll overcome COVID-19 together.” And as it says in the video, “the biggest work you can do is to open your hearts and your minds to see yourself as part of the solution.” Stay safe, stay calm and be kind.

**Don't bring the COVID virus home**



Help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Indigenous communities. **Learn how to wear a non-medical mask or face covering properly.**



## UPDATES

### Reminder: one-time tax-free payments for seniors are being issued this week

Seniors eligible for the Old Age Security (OAS) pension, the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS), or Allowances **will receive their one-time, tax-free payment this week without needing to apply.** Seniors who reside in Canada can expect to receive the payment by direct deposit or cheque this week, whereas seniors who reside outside Canada can expect this one-time payment in July for those on direct deposit, or by cheque with delays given international postal disruptions.

Through several measures, the Government is providing about \$900 for low-income single seniors and more than \$1,500 for low-income senior couples, in addition to their existing benefits, to help with extra costs during the pandemic.

### Canada and British Columbia invest in infrastructure

New investments in community infrastructure by the governments of Canada and British Columbia are going towards 92 projects across the province while also supporting economic recovery in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Thirty of these projects are getting underway in First Nation communities to help them meet their needs as they restart their economies:

### THE CANADA REVENUE AGENCY (CRA) OUTREACH PROGRAM

**Help make sure your members are getting the benefits and credits they are entitled to.** During the COVID-19 pandemic, CRA outreach officers are available to help you.

**Complete the online form** to make arrangements for a presentation by phone. For other ways to file your taxes, go to **doing your taxes.**



- 21 projects in the **Lower Mainland**, 9 of which are in First Nation communities – Bridge River Indian Band, Skowkale First Nation, Shxw'ow'hamel First Nation, Seabird Island Indian Band, Skwxwú7mesh Nation, St'atl'imx First Nation, Leq'á:mel First Nation, N'Quatqua First Nation, and Yale First Nation;
- 25 projects in the **Interior**, including one by Okanagan Indian Band and one by Skeetchestn Indian Band;
- 24 projects in the **North**, of which 12 are in First Nation communities – Alexis Creek First Nation, Sauteau First Nations, Doig River First Nation, Nuxalk First Nation, Lhtako Dene First Nation, Lheidli T'enneh First Nation, Kitsumkalum Indian Band, Nisga'a Village of Gitwinksihlkw, Prophet River First Nation, Taku River Tlingit First Nation, Tl'etinqox, and West Moberly First Nations; and
- 22 projects on **Vancouver Island**, of which 7 are in First Nation communities – Huu-ay-aht First Nations, Pauquachin First Nation, T'Sou-ke Nation, Dzawada'enuxw First Nation, Hesquiaht First Nation, Kwakiutl First Nation, and Toquaht Nation.

Funding is flowing under the **Investing in Canada Infrastructure Plan**. Among the projects receiving this

## ISC COVID-19 SURVEY

On July 6, Indigenous Services Canada reached out to all First Nation communities in BC with a reminder to complete the Department's COVID-19 survey.

The first set of questions are BC Region specific. Questions can be answered via email or through a scheduled call with your Funding Services Officer.

The second set of questions are being asked nationally and relate to the Indigenous Community Support Fund. Responses are being collected through SurveyMonkey using a unique community identifier.

Responses to both sets of questions are due by Wednesday, July 8, 2020. If you have not received the questionnaire, please contact your Funding Services Officer.

funding are improvements to community centres, health centres, storm water management, drinking water and wastewater facilities, cultural facilities and social support hubs.

## Rent Relief Program for Small Businesses extended

Finance Minister Bill Morneau announced on June 30 that the **Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA)** will be extended by one month to cover eligible small business rents for July.

In addition, to simplify the application process for all applicants, the government is removing the requirement to claw-back insurance proceeds and provincial rent supports from the CECRA forgivable loan amount for both existing and new applicants. Existing applicants who are affected will be notified and will have any previously clawed-back amounts restored to their forgivable loan.

## COVID-19 Economic Response Plan: Benefits for Indigenous Businesses

The Government of Canada has designed and launched a series of measures to provide timely and direct support to Canadian businesses in response to COVID-19. Indigenous businesses provide jobs, goods, and services to communities, and are an important part of the Canadian economy. Right now, they are facing challenges and economic hardships due to COVID-19. That is why the Government of Canada is taking action to make sure that Indigenous business owners have access to the support they need to get through this crisis.

First Nations, Inuit and Métis businesses have access to all measures provided through the Government of Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan, and are encouraged to review it to see what financial supports might be available to them. A fact sheet that provides more information on benefits provided, such as the Funding for small and medium-sized Indigenous businesses, Canada Emergency Business Account, Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy, the Regional Relief and Recovery Fund, and the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance for small businesses is **available here**. We appreciate your support in sharing this information widely.

For more information on the COVID-19 Economic Response Plan, visit: [Canada.ca/economic-response-plan](https://Canada.ca/economic-response-plan).

## Mandatory Requirements Under the Quarantine Act Extended to August 31

On June 30, **Canada extended the Emergency Order requirements related to mandatory isolation and quarantine** until August 31, 2020. Travelers entering Canada will continue to be required—whether they arrive by air, land or sea—to isolate for 14 days if they have COVID-19 or have reasonable grounds to suspect that they have signs and symptoms of COVID-19, or quarantine for 14 days if they do not have signs and symptoms of COVID-19. The Order also clarifies when travelers are required to wear a non-medical mask or face covering.

## PARTNER INFORMATION

### Emergency supports extended for vulnerable people

The Province is **extending federal employment insurance exemptions and the provincial temporary crisis supplement**. These extensions will help ensure people on income or disability assistance and low-income seniors will continue to have access to the supports they need during the pandemic.

On April 2, 2020, the Province announced a three-month exemption of all federal employment insurance benefits, including the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, for people already receiving income or disability assistance at that time. This exemption was put in place to ensure current clients whose employment may have been impacted by COVID-19 did not face any additional barriers and could fully benefit from federal emergency response programs.

This exemption, which now includes the Canada Emergency Student Benefit (effective May 1, 2020), has been extended for the duration of these federal emergency support programs so that eligible people will continue to fully benefit without any reductions to their monthly income or disability assistance payments.

## STATISTICS CANADA SURVEY

Statistics Canada has launched a survey to measure the impacts COVID-19 is having on Canadians living with long-term conditions and disabilities. The information will help decision makers implement appropriate support measures during and after the pandemic.

[Click here to participate.](#)

For those who are not eligible for the federal benefits, the Province's temporary COVID-19 Crisis Supplement, which has been provided since April, will be extended an additional two months.

### New community program empowers youth to 'Build Back Better'

On June 29, BC announced the **Youth Community Partnership**, a new \$5-million program to engage youth to work on community service projects so they can help their communities "build back better" from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Communities around B.C. can apply to fund a community-service project of their choosing – like trail building, beach clean-up or invasive species removal, upgrading local parks or working for a local charity. In turn, they provide skills and work experience to young people who are unemployed, between 15-29 years of age, through the project.

### Support service helps over 4,200 businesses during pandemic

The B.C. Business COVID-19 Support Service has **served more than 4,200 businesses through phone, chat and email since its launch** in April 2020, and has had more than 200,000 visits to **its COVID-19 web page**.

The support service is a crucial link that helps businesses navigate the supports and services offered by the provincial and federal governments, and industry and community partners, during the pandemic. It is operated by Small Business BC (SBBC), a not-for-profit organization that delivers a variety of services to B.C. businesses through financial support from the provincial and federal governments.

Numerous supports have been announced by the provincial and federal governments to support businesses that have been impacted by the pandemic.

The B.C. Business COVID-19 Support Service brings all the information together in one place, making it easy for businesses to access the resources they need.

## COVID-19 protection measures for inland ferries remain in effect

With increased travel a part of British Columbia's transition to Phase 3 of BC's Restart Plan, **passengers on the Province's inland ferry system are reminded to adhere to Transport Canada's COVID-19 safety protocols.** Most importantly, all inland ferry passengers travelling by vehicle must remain in their vehicles for the duration of the trip to help protect the safety of passengers and crew. Passengers crossing Kootenay Lake who are not prepared to stay in the vehicle for the full duration of the 35-minute sailing should consider driving the Kootenay Pass instead of taking the ferry.

All COVID-19 safety guidelines are set by Transport Canada to reduce the risks of COVID-19. Additional safety measures in place include:

- All passenger amenities aboard the ferry are closed until further notice to limit interaction amongst passengers.
- Walk-on passengers, cyclists and motorcyclists are encouraged to wear cloth masks or face coverings and maintain physical distance in designated zones.
- Walk-on passengers, cyclists and motorcyclists with symptoms of COVID-19 are not permitted aboard the inland ferries.

## 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.**

## NATIONAL INFORMATION

- **Accessing student financial benefits and support during the COVID-19 outbreak**
- **Accessing financial benefits and support during the COVID-19 outbreak**
- **On-line Resources for Indigenous Communities – Food and COVID-19**
- **Service Canada Programs and Services – for youth**
- **Service Canada Programs and Services – for seniors**
- **Service Canada Programs and Services – for businesses**
- **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**

## REGIONAL CONTACTS

We've set up a dedicated email for any non-health COVID-19-related questions and requests: **aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca.**

