

# COVID-19 MESSAGE FROM ISC BC REGION

UPDATE #62 / October 8, 2020

Good Afternoon,

As COVID-19 cases in community rise at an alarming rate, you are all very much on our minds. We are sensitive that the change of seasons, and the enduring nature of this pandemic, has brought new challenges and worries.

Our hearts go out to those mourning recent COVID-related losses, as well as the concerning rate of opioid related deaths, as well as to all communities struggling to contain outbreaks. First Nations continue to do a tremendous job in keeping the pandemic at bay, and we know communities with COVID have doubled down to support those infected and to contain it as quickly as possible.

We encourage you to take care of yourself while you work to keep your communities safe and healthy. There are tips and strategies on the [First Nations Health Authority website](#). In addition to maintaining a healthy routine, Dr. Shannon McDonald suggests individuals stay connected with others by video call, email, text, or phone. Certainly you are always welcome to reach out to us at the contact information below.

**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

During this week's **All Chiefs Meeting** and our **Town Hall in September**, we heard your ongoing questions when it comes to Government of Canada services and supports. We are pleased to be able to provide the following new information.

### Emergency Community Support Fund

Earlier this week the second round of the **Emergency Community Support Fund** became available. This round is open until October 30. Three national partners, including the **United Way** here in British Columbia are distributing the funds on behalf of Employment and Social Development Canada.

#### WHAT IS IT?

- Available to charities, non-profit organizations, including Indigenous organizations, across Canada.

- Grants of \$5,000 or more available to support Canadian non-profits' direct service delivery to those who are most vulnerable to the health, social and economic impacts of COVID-19.
- For-profit business are ineligible.
- Free personal protective equipment (PPE) and training to Prevent Disease Transmission for frontline workers responding to COVID-19 in low- and medium-risk environments.
- Supports direct service delivery to those who are most vulnerable to the health, social, and economic impacts of COVID-19.
- Successful applicants receive a 60-day supply of PPE.
- Successful applicants in Round 1 are not eligible to apply in Round 2 in order to offer the free training and PPE to as many community organizations as possible.



The **Canadian Red Cross**, Community Foundations of Canada and United Way Centraide Canada funded more than 7,000 projects over three months during the Fund's first round.

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● **If we have received other federal and/or provincial or territorial COVID-19 related funding, can we still apply to the Emergency Community Support Fund?**

Yes, for non-profit organizations, funding from the Emergency Community Support Fund can be used to enhance and expand your current COVID-19 funded community service so long as expenses are not counted twice. Please reach out to your **local United Way Centraide** for additional information.

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### **New Help for Shelters and Other Organizations Providing Gender-Based Violence Supports**

The COVID-19 pandemic has magnified systemic racism and the longstanding inequalities across our society and exacerbated the threats to the safety of Indigenous women, girls, and Two Spirit and LGBTQ+ people.

The Government of Canada has **announced up to \$50 million in funding to support organizations providing supports and services to those experiencing gender-based violence (GBV)**. This funding announced includes:

- Up to \$10 million for women's shelters and sexual assault centres to help them continue to provide their critical services safely;
- Up to \$10 million to support organizations providing services related to gender-based violence to Indigenous people off-reserve; and
- Up to \$30 million for other women's organizations to support the delivery of GBV supports, to help combat the spread of COVID, and to address the increased demand for services.

This announcement builds on previous emergency funding provided to women's shelters, sexual assault centres and other organizations providing gender-based violence services to ensure continuity of services at this challenging time. This brings the total COVID-19 emergency funding provided to GBV organizations to \$100 million.

### **NEED MORE INFORMATION ABOUT BENEFITS APPLICABLE TO COMMUNITY MEMBERS?**

The Government of Canada has an online navigator to help you find what federal and partner assistance might be available

If community members do not have access to the internet or face other barriers, a Service Canada Outreach Support Centre will ensure they get access to the critical benefits they need.

The outreach support center can be accessed by calling 1-877-631-2657. Outreach workers are available to assist from 8:30am to 4:00pm Monday to Friday.



**Find financial help during COVID-19**

### **New Recovery Benefits in Support of COVID-19 Response**

In addition to an expanded Employment Insurance program (detailed below) which has replaced the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), the three new temporary recovery benefits have been introduced to support Canadians who are unable to work for reasons related to COVID-19.

Canadians can now apply through the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) for the **Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit** and the **Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit**.

Effective October 12, the CRA will also open the applications for the **Canada Recovery Benefit**.

Eligible people can apply for these benefits online through the **CRA's My Account portal** or by phone through their automated toll-free phone line: 1-833-966-2099.



To ensure that the recovery benefits provide more targeted support for those people who continue to need it, the application process includes new elements, such as:

- shorter eligibility periods of one week for the CRSB and CRCB and two weeks for the CRB;
- retroactive periods, meaning that people will be required to apply after the period has ended;
- a 10 per cent tax withholding at source; and
- a three-to-five day window to receive payments for applications made by direct deposit, and a 10-12 day window by cheque by mail.

### Flexible, more accessible Employment Insurance system

As of September 27, 2020, EI is available to more Canadians, including those who would not have qualified for EI in the past, **supporting an additional 400,000 people through the program**. Canadians receiving EI are eligible for a taxable benefit at a rate of at least \$500 per week, or \$300 per week for extended parental benefits. Canadians claiming EI benefits for job loss would be eligible for at least 26 weeks.

The EI program will also allow Canadians with 120 hours of insurable work or more to qualify by providing a temporary, one-time credit of 300 insurable hours for those claiming EI regular and work-sharing benefits. Canadians claiming EI special benefits – including maternity, parental, sickness, compassionate care, and family caregiver – will be provided with a temporary, one-time credit of 480 insurable hours.

In addition, in light of the continuing pandemic, the waiting period will be waived for EI sickness benefit claimants to encourage compliance with public health measures. The requirement to provide a medical certificate will also be waived for all sickness claimants. Service Canada will retain the ability to request evidence of sickness for integrity purposes.

### Fish Harvester Benefit and Fish Harvester Grant application deadline extended

The Fish Harvester Benefit and Grant Program has been extended to October 19, 2020. The Program is delivering financial support to self-employed harvesters across

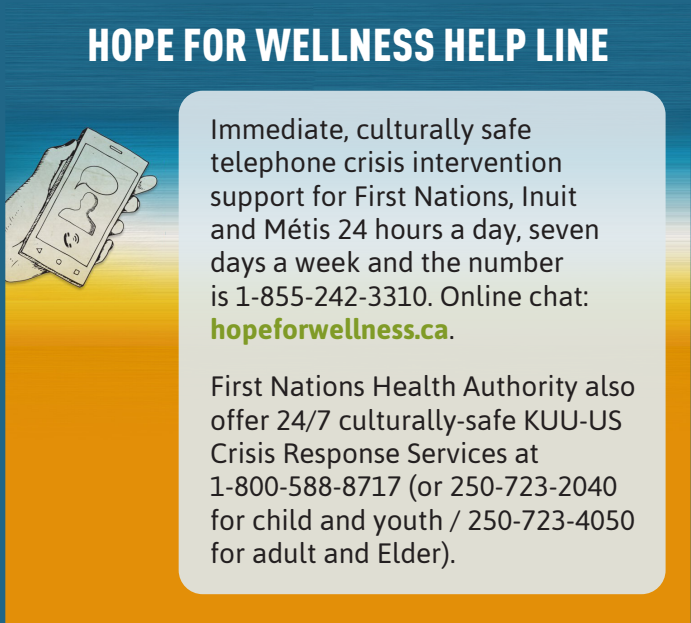
the country who are facing hardships brought on by the economic impact of COVID 19. The Program provides eligible Indigenous and non-Indigenous fish harvesters with the financial support they need right now, while also positioning the sector for a strong recovery in the long-term.

Harvesters are encouraged to visit the **Fisheries and Oceans Canada website** to find guidance on eligibility and what documentation is required to complete the application process.

### Off-Reserve Supports

How to support your off-reserve members continues to be a concern. Further to what we shared in **Update 61**, we recognize that in the first weeks of the pandemic response, communities had to cover everything and anything, including direct benefits to individuals on and off reserve and Indigenous organizations off reserve. It meant that many communities used resources from the first round of the **Indigenous Community Support Fund (ICSF)** to meet both on and off-reserve members needs.

Recognizing that the new round of ISCF allocations to First Nations will be about half the first round, we wanted to reiterate that there is a **needs-based component and details on the criteria and process for accessing funding are coming very soon**.



**HOPE FOR WELLNESS HELP LINE**

Immediate, culturally safe telephone crisis intervention support for First Nations, Inuit and Métis 24 hours a day, seven days a week and the number is 1-855-242-3310. Online chat: [hopeforwellness.ca](https://hopeforwellness.ca).

First Nations Health Authority also offer 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).

In addition, there are a number of other targeted funding supports that have come on stream since the first round of ICSF to address community needs and supplement costs.


The Government of Canada announced **\$270 million for to supplement the On- Reserve Income Assistance Program on May 29, 2020**. In BC Region, we have, since the start, matched the Province's \$300/month top up for IA and added a three month federal top up of \$300/household per month for three months.

Additionally, off-reserve members now have access in many places to groups we have funded through the **Indigenous Community Support Fund's off-reserve and urban stream**, and individual benefits such as **enhanced post-secondary supports**, and **Old Age Security increases**.



**THE REGISTRATION AND STATUS CARD SERVICE COUNTER IN VANCOUVER IS OPEN BY APPOINTMENT**

Please call **236-330-9961** to make an appointment before arriving. For application requirements, please visit [canada.ca/indian-status](https://canada.ca/indian-status) or call 1-800-567-9604.



**THE FLU SHOT:**  
Protect yourself, protect your community

Share traditions not the Flu! Getting the flu shot can help keep you and your community healthy.

## PARTNER INFORMATION

### Mental Wellness and Cultural Supports Available During the Pandemic

The ongoing pandemic has heightened BC's opioid crisis and impacted the mental health of many. Our partners at the First Nations Health Authority have **many resources** to help those coping with addiction, depression and anxiety.

The First Nations **Virtual Doctor of the Day** program enables First Nations people in BC with limited or no access to their own doctors to make virtual appointments. The intent of the program is to enable more First Nations people and their family members to access primary health care closer to home.

When it comes to mental wellness, the FNHA works with communities to deliver programs and services – such as treatment centres, counselling and crisis lines – and with partners across the province to address service gaps.

FNHA Health Benefits provides clients with access to Mental Wellness and Counselling services from a qualified mental health provider. All services require prior approval. A list of providers registered with Health Benefits, including those available to provide support over the phone or internet, can be found by visiting the FNHA First Nations Health Benefits Mental Health **Provider List** or by contacting 1-855-550-5454.

## QUESTION OF THE DAY

### I'm still finding the split of the old Department confusing. How can I find out whether a service or program is provided by Indigenous Services Canada or Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada?

There have been some big changes since July 15, 2019 when the legislation dissolving INAC and formally establishing the mandates of two new Departments ISC and CIRNAC came into effect. We know that there

continues to be uncertainty about the responsibilities of each department and which files reside where. This chart may help:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Indian Status</li><li>• Jordan's Principle</li><li>• Education</li><li>• Water</li><li>• Housing</li><li>• Community infrastructure</li><li>• Social programs</li><li>• New fiscal relationship</li><li>• Emergency management</li><li>• Lands and economic development</li><li>• Child and family services</li><li>• Income assistance and violence prevention</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Negotiating treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements on Section 35 rights</li><li>• Settling specific claims</li><li>• Consultation, engagement and the duty to consult</li><li>• National Action Plan on MMIWG</li><li>• Support to the Minister of Justice on UNDRIP legislation</li><li>• Redesign of the Comprehensive Claims and Inherent Rights policies</li></ul>
 <p>The Honourable Marc Miller <b>Minister of Indigenous Services</b></p>	 <p>The Honourable Carolyn Bennett <b>Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations</b></p>

Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) works collaboratively with partners to improve access to high quality services for First Nations, Inuit and Métis. Our vision is to support and empower Indigenous peoples to independently deliver services and address the socio-economic conditions in their communities.

Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) continues to renew the nation-to-nation, Inuit-Crown, government-to-government relationship between Canada and First Nations, Inuit and Métis; modernize Government of Canada structures to enable Indigenous peoples to build capacity and support their vision of self-determination; and lead the Government of Canada's work in the North.

Rest assured, both departments continue to work together to ensure there are no interruptions to inquiries, delivery of services or relationships with partners.

## USEFUL LINKS

- **Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Indigenous communities** – developed by ISC, this page provides health and financial support information for Indigenous communities.
- Find information on how to apply for financial or economic support from the Government of Canada at: [Canada.ca/coronavirus](https://Canada.ca/coronavirus).
- With the help of BCFC, the First Nations Public Service Secretariat has developed **a series of one-pagers on COVID-19 support and resources**.
- **Taking care of your mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic**
- **Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): Prevention and risks**
- 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.
- **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](mailto:aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca).

- **Regional Director General**  
Catherine Lappe / 604-340-7703
- **Associate Regional Director General**  
Bill Guerin / 604-803-9476
- **Director, Community Infrastructure**  
Paula Santos / 604-790-8451
- **Director, Programs and Partnerships**  
Wendy Rogers / 604-363-8117
- **Director, Lands and Economic Development**  
David Russell / 604-817-2644
- **Director, Funding Services**  
Jody Kaden / 236-334-4742
- **Director, Child and Family Services**  
Chiara Taylor / 778-668-9067
- **Director, Community Development**  
James Moxon / 604-367-8241
- **Director, Corporate Services**  
Harold Powell / 604-219-1737

