


COVID-19 MESSAGE FROM ISC BC REGION

UPDATE #32 / April 30, 2020


Good Afternoon,

We are facing a pandemic that continues to change the course of our daily lives. We have heard your concerns for the health and well-being of your communities, including your ongoing unease about the economic impact for First Nation and Indigenous businesses. The Government of Canada recognizes that Indigenous businesses and entrepreneurs are key drivers in economic development, contributing to the employment and wealth creation that is fundamental to the independence and sustainability of Indigenous communities. In this update we will review the many economic supports available at this challenging time.

Don't bring the COVID virus home



Help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Indigenous communities. Keeping it clean can keep yourself, your family and your community healthy and safe.



UPDATES

We would like to thank everyone who participated in yesterday's webinar with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA).

It was a very useful session with a lot of important information. For any questions pertaining to the **Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)** or other federal government benefits, please contact the Service Canada Community Outreach and Liaison Service at **1-877-631-2657**.

For your reference, the webinar was recorded and **can be viewed online**.

Indigenous businesses can often face unique operating challenges such as rural or remote locations, less access to capital due to legislative restrictions preventing them from leveraging equity under the *Indian Act*, to hesitancy of mainstream banks to provide affordable business financing.

In Budget 2019, the Government of Canada committed to \$100 million in funding toward the establishment of the **Indigenous Growth Fund**, complementing that

investment with a commitment to invest a further \$17 million over three years to expand the **Aboriginal Entrepreneurship Program**.

It's anticipated that the Indigenous Growth Fund could play a fundamental role in providing affordable capital to Aboriginal Financial Institutions in the economic rebuilding process as the pandemic wanes.

As shared in previous updates, the **Indigenous Community Support Fund**, announced March 18, gives Indigenous communities the ability to direct funds according to priorities and needs to best prepare for, prevent and respond to COVID-19. This is in addition to Indigenous-specific support available to First Nations and for Inuit health and emergency management on reserve. Indigenous businesses are reminded to consider all the measures that are currently being deployed for businesses, such as the **Business Credit Availability Program (BCAP)**, as well as the **Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA)**.

On April 18, the **Prime Minister announced a commitment of \$306.8 million in funding to help**



small and medium-sized Indigenous businesses, and to support Aboriginal Financial Institutions and Métis Capital Corporations to deliver emergency financing to these businesses. This funding will help an estimated 6,000 Indigenous-owned businesses to weather the COVID-19 crisis. The funding will allow for a combination of short-term, interest-free loans and non-repayable contributions.

On April 17, the Government of Canada announced **funding to support small and medium-sized businesses unable to access existing government COVID-19 support measures**, as well as support for rural businesses and communities, including access to capital through the Community Futures Network.

Indigenous businesses that have existing relationships with the major banks may choose to get support through them, however they will not be able to get support from both sources. Indigenous businesses are encouraged to take advantage of the measures that best suit their business' needs, and to work with their local Aboriginal Financial Institution to assess the best options for emergency financial support.

Indigenous businesses should contact their local Aboriginal Financial Institution (AFI) or the National Aboriginal Capital Corporations Association (NACCA) for assistance selecting the relief measure that best meets their needs. They can be reached at 1-844-827-0327 (toll-free); nacca.ca; info@nacca.ca. NACCA and the AFI network, acting as single window delivery partners and referral service, will connect Indigenous businesses to existing business supports provided by the federal government, including those provided by Regional Development Agencies (RDAs), as well as those included in the Government of Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan. In BC there are 11 AFI's:

- **Aboriginal Business & Community Development Centre** (Prince George)
- **All Nations Trust Company** (Kamloops)
- **Burns Lake Native Development Corporation** (Burns Lake)
- **CFDC of Central Interior First Nations** (Kamloops)
- **Haida Gwaii Community Futures** (Massett)
- **Métis Financial Corporation of BC** (Surrey)

- **Native Fishing Association** (West Vancouver)
- **Nuu-chah-nulth Economic Development Corporation** (Port Alberni)
- **Stó:lō Community Futures Corporation** (Chilliwack)
- **West Vancouver; Tale'Awtxw Aboriginal Capital Corporation** (West Vancouver)
- **Tribal Resources Investment Corporation** (Prince Rupert)

Federal, provincial and territorial relief measures announced in response to COVID-19 are intended to be complementary. Indigenous businesses are reminded to consider all the measures that are currently being deployed for businesses, such as the **Business Credit Availability Program (BCAP)**, as well as the **Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA)**.

We know more needs to be done to ensure that all businesses receive the help they need. We encourage Indigenous businesses and entrepreneurs to continue to assess their needs and reach out to their AFI or their Economic Development Officer here in BC Region.

INDIGENOUS BUSINESS SURVEY

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact economies, up-to-date information and data are critical to fully understand the extent of the disruption to Indigenous businesses.

The *Indigenous Business COVID-19 Response Taskforce* is conducting **The Indigenous Business Survey** to gather information to help advise the Government of Canada on policy decisions that directly impact Indigenous businesses.

Please click the following link to complete the survey: surveymonkey.com/r/c-19taskforce

PARTNER INFORMATION

On March 24, the Province established a webpage, **COVID-19 Economic Development Resources**, to communicate provincial and federal economic supports as well as other business resources. The Province's initial response to COVID-19 is outlined in the **BC COVID-19 Action Plan**. Check this site regularly for additional supports and actions as the situation evolves.

In addition, BC has published **COVID-19 Financial Supports for Small Business**.

The **BC Economic Development Association** has also compiled an extensive set of resources and guidance for businesses, economic developers and local leaders. In addition, it has developed a **COVID-19: First Nations Community Guide on Accessing Additional Supports**.

Finally, the Indigenous Business and Investment Council also has a **COVID-19 Resource Directory** for economic and business support information.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

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

- **Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc** posted information about the BC Emergency Benefit for Workers.
- **The Okanagan Indian Band** posted information on Facebook about BC's Temporary Rental Supplement.

QUESTIONS OF THE DAY

Who can I speak to for up-to-date information about CERB and other federal government benefits?

We recognize that during this unprecedented time there is so much information out there - which can make it difficult to navigate. 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 are available to offer alternate service delivery methods that will continue to support accessing critical programs, services and benefits. They can be reached at **1-877-631-2657**.

We depend on the tax/rent we receive from businesses on lease land, who are going to be affected. The band depends on this revenue stream to run the band and pay off loans. They are in the midst of having to lay off some of their staff. Will banks allow for delayed loan repayments?

On March 17, 2020, Bank of Montreal, CIBC, National Bank of Canada, RBC Royal Bank, Scotiabank and TD Bank all committed to work with personal and small business banking customers on a case-by-case basis to provide flexible solutions to help them manage through challenges such as pay disruption due to COVID-19; childcare disruption due to school closures; or those facing illness from COVID-19.

The supports announced by Canada's six largest banks include up to a six-month payment deferral for mortgages, and the opportunity for relief on other credit products. Other financial institutions have made similar commitments. Individual Canadians or business owners facing hardship are encouraged to contact their bank directly to discuss options that could be available to them.

For more information, please contact your financial institution directly.

NATIONAL INFORMATION

- **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**.
- 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**

USEFUL LINKS

- Economic measures to help stabilize the economy during this challenging period. As information is rapidly changing we strongly encourage you to 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**.

FREE WEBINAR

ISC BC Region Town Hall #3 with FNSA and FNEC

Please join FNPSS in welcoming Catherine Lappe, Regional Director General of ISC BC Region, who will be joined by Tyrone McNeil, President of the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNEC), Edith Loring-Kuhanga, President of the First Nations Schools Association (FNSA), accompanied by representatives of the BC Ministry of Education, to speak about First Nations' education in BC given the current COVID-19 pandemic. This webinar will be approximately 60 minutes and allow for moderated Q&As from participants.

Registration: This event **requires pre-registration**. Once you have registered, you will receive a confirmation e-mail with a link to join the webinar.

Friday, May 1, 2020

11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

REGISTER HERE