

COVID-19 MESSAGE FROM ISC BC REGION


UPDATE #41 / May 15, 2020

Good Afternoon,

Before we get into our updates we want to recognize three final winners from the Xyólheméylh (Fraser Valley Aboriginal Children and Family Services Society) contest for Indigenous children and youth in British Columbia to create videos or posters describing their feelings about social distancing and COVID-19. Congratulations to the poster winners – Myka Friesen (1st prize), Jada Michel (2nd prize) and Cora McIntyre (3rd prize). To see all the winning entries, [please click here](#).

Many thanks to Xyólheméylh for sharing.

Speaking about distancing and our response to COVID-19, we wanted to share this video with everyone:



STAY THE COURSE
Help limit the spread of COVID-19

A video message from the Secwepemc Kukukwpi7 (Chiefs)



UPDATE

The May long weekend is finally here with its promise of rest and relaxation. With it also comes the potential risk of sliding back on our efforts on physical distancing and staying home which have proved so effective in flattening the curve of COVID-19. We also know that many communities remain concerned about outside visitors at this time. As mentioned on the last update Indigenous Services Canada has been coordinating with other federal departments to get the **message out to recreational boaters** and others that now is not the time to travel through the West Coast.



Federal Wage Subsidy Being Extended To End Of August

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced today that the 75 per cent federal wage subsidy program is being expanded by three months (to end August) to assist employers as they look to reopen their businesses. With so many business closed or making little income, the **Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy** has evolved to a benefit looking to support businesses wanting to reopen, and bringing back workers, or hiring additional staff to accommodate the changed reality of COVID-19 and the public health prevention measures now required.

Canada Emergency Student Benefit application period launched today

The **Canada Emergency Student Benefit (CESB)** will be delivered by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), and will provide temporary income support to eligible

post-secondary students and new graduates who are unable to work or find work this summer due to COVID-19, or are working and are not making over \$1000.

Students are asked to register with [JobBank.gc.ca](https://www.jobbank.gc.ca) to find available opportunities to earn an income and meaningful work experience.

Additional support fund now available to businesses and communities

The new **Regional Relief and Recovery Fund (RRRF)** devotes nearly \$962 million—including \$304.2 million for Western Canada—to help more businesses and organizations in sectors such as manufacturing, technology, tourism and others that are key to the regions and to local economies.

Businesses interested in receiving support through this initiative are now invited to apply for the RRRF through their local regional development agencies. In BC please contact, **Western Economic Diversification Canada**.

Canada Emergency Commercial Rental Assistance Program portal opens

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation opened their portal yesterday for the **Canada Emergency Commercial Rental Assistance program (CECRA)** for small businesses. It provides relief for small businesses experiencing financial hardship due to COVID-19 and offers forgivable loans to eligible commercial property owners to:

- reduce the rent owed by their impacted small business tenants
- meet operating expenses on commercial properties

Property owners must offer a minimum of a 75 per cent rent reduction for the months of April, May and June 2020 and now includes commercial leasing on reserve.

New support for Canada's fish harvesters

On Thursday, the Prime Minister announced **new support for Canada's fish harvesters**.

In consideration of fish harvesters who are economically impacted by the pandemic but cannot access existing federal measures, the Government of Canada is

CANADA EMERGENCY WAGE SUBSIDY (CEWS) QUESTION & ANSWER TELECONFERENCE

The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) will host an interactive question and answer session for small and medium businesses on the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS). The session will respond to general questions about the CEWS and provide resources needed to apply.

Wednesday, May 20, 2020

12:30 - 1:30 p.m.

REGISTER NOW

committing up to \$469.4 million in new measures including the Fish Harvester Benefit, a program worth up to help provide income support for this year's fishing seasons to eligible self-employed fish harvesters who cannot access the **Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy**.

The investment builds on the \$62.5 million for the new Canadian Seafood Stabilization Fund announced last month to help Canada's fish and seafood processing sector.

PARTNER INFORMATION

K-12 students to have optional in-class instruction on June 1

The Province of BC has announced plans to support students attending provincial schools to return the classroom starting June 1 on a part-time basis. For kindergarten to Grade 5, this means most students will go to school half time (such as alternating days), while grades 6 to 12 will go to school about one day a week. Children of essential service workers and students needing additional supports will have the option to attend school full time. Families that decide not to send their children to class may continue learning from home. If parents have not heard from their schools by May 22, 2020, they are asked to contact their principal.

The Ministry of Education is working with all 60 school districts, independent school authorities, First Nations schools, teachers, school leaders, support staff, public health officials and all its education partners to coordinate the next steps for accommodating more students in class.

New dormant and orphan well restoration programs

In case you missed it, on Wednesday, **BC announced what it is doing to accelerate the restoration of more than 2,000 orphan and inactive wells.** Subject to reaching final agreement with Canada, Premier John Horgan said the programs will support upwards of 1,200 jobs, helping BC workers, the environment and our economy during these challenging times. Chief Sharleen Gale, of the Fort Nelson First Nation says this is “a win-win for the oil and gas sector and the environment. It will bring much needed local employment for former oil and gas workers and clean up dormant, legacy and orphan wells.” The plan was also commended by the West Moberly, Doig River, and Sauleau First Nations.

COVID-19 Community Response Fund for Vulnerable Populations

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and the Canadian Medical Association Foundation are **funding cities and communities to support vulnerable populations struggling with the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.** The funds could help communities secure

RESPONSE TO COVID-19 SURVEY

Share your ideas and input! B.C. has flattened the curve and we are preparing to carefully re-start services, the economy and our lives. Your input is important as we develop our action plans.

Share your experience during the COVID-19 pandemic

or repurpose facilities for overnight shelter or daytime use that allow for physical distancing or isolation; create or expand community hygiene facilities; provide emergency food access or emergency mental health services.

COVID-19 and returning to safe operation

Work Safe BC is partnering in the B.C. government’s phased approach for reopening BC businesses by developing resources for industries as they prepare to reopen, including a **general guide on COVID-19 and returning to safe operation; frequently asked questions; occupancy limit poster; and handwashing poster.** The site includes tips that may help you plan for the eventual reopening of Band Administration offices or other operations shuttered as part of your pandemic response.

WEBINAR ON FOOD SECURITY

Wednesday, May 20, 2020 • 11:00 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.

As part of their weekly webinar series, the First Nation Public Service Secretariat (FNPSS) is hosting a webinar next week on Food Security During a Pandemic.

Join Jeneen Hunt (Ditidaht First Nation), Anne Atleo (Ahousesht First Nation), and Milica Nauman (Indigenous Services Canada) for a webinar on “Food Security During a Pandemic”. This 45-minute session will include short presentations outlining food security challenges, opportunities, and innovative responses during COVID-19. There will also be time for participants to have their questions answered by panelists.

Registration: This event **requires pre-registration.** Once you have registered, you will receive a confirmation email with a link to join the webinar. Or, if you have difficulty registering, please e-mail mentorship@fnps.ca.

QUESTION OF THE DAY

Could I please get an update on the Estates unit's office closure?

On March 14, 2020, Indigenous Services Canada activated its business continuity plan. Since then, the services we provide to First Nations, including in the Estates unit, have been focused on essential services.

Payments on behalf of dependent adults and trust payments to those that are eligible are an essential service, and the BC Regional Office is continuing to make payments on behalf of dependent adult clients. New Estates work is being triaged, and when possible, urgent files are receiving action.

General information about Estates services for First Nations people is available [here](#). If you have questions or concerns about a particular Estate file please contact the Estates Officer for your community, or you can e-mail BCestates@canada.ca. You may also call 1-800-567-9604 and you will be redirected to someone who can assist you.

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** notified members that with the relaxation of the provincial lock down, the checkpoint was taken down. They also reminded members to keep up with physical distancing.
- **Okanagan Indian Band** shared tips from OKIB Public Safety office on protecting your home, family and the community.
- **Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc** provided a link to FNHA's Planning for Food Security - A Toolkit for the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- **Cowichan Tribes** posted info about assistance available to post-secondary students to purchase laptops.

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

- 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.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca.

