

# COVID-19 MESSAGE FROM ISC BC REGION

UPDATE #47 / June 1, 2020

Good Afternoon,

It feels like there is a lot going on at the moment, here in BC, Canada and elsewhere. Much of it is unsettling especially when we are all already feeling the strain of the global pandemic. We note the hashtag #HealthNotHate is trending on social media and view it as a timely reminder that we really are all in this together. Please know we see you, and recognize the heightened challenges of these unprecedented times. In this update we'll focus on what's new and of use to protect yourself and your communities. As ever, we are here should you have any questions or concerns.

**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

On Friday the Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau announced an **additional \$650M in COVID-19 aid for Indigenous communities** including an additional \$270 million to supplement the On-Reserve Income Assistance Program.

The investment builds on the work already being done through the \$305 million **Indigenous Community Support Fund**, and the additional \$75 million provided for communities and organizations working with Indigenous peoples living in urban areas and off-reserve. This is in addition to \$15 million, announced in March, 2020, as part of the Indigenous Community Support Fund. This week ISC BC Region is contacting all applicants regarding their original submissions. The follow-up will include discussions around re-scoping proposals to demonstrate that activities address the needs of vulnerable populations, that a wider urban audience is identified and that partnering with other Nations nearby is considered. Furthermore, ISC BC Region will go over potential areas for improvement and give examples of how applicants can expand on their proposal without submitting a completely different request.

Additionally, a reminder that individuals and families living off-reserve are eligible for income assistance

benefits through provincial income assistance programs, as well as other support measures available through **Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan**.

Off-reserve members may also qualify for the **Temporary Rental Supplement** from the province as well which provides up to \$500 a month to help renters and landlords during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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.

### Food-Security Resources On-line

Indigenous Services Canada has compiled a list of food related resources which are targeted at or are relevant to Indigenous communities. It was sent to First Nations in BC this morning and is also **available on the First Nations Public Service Secretariat website**. The FNHA is one of the organizations highlighted including its **"Planning for Food Security – A Toolkit for the COVID-19 Pandemic"**. This resource includes ideas, templates, tools and information to support short, medium and



long term planning. The list of resources also identifies organizations like the **Breakfast Club of Canada** which are offering special grants during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Help for Canadian Communities

**The Prime Minister announced today** that funding delivered through the federal Gas Tax Fund will be accelerated this year to help non-Indigenous communities as quickly as possible while respecting public health guidelines. This means that \$2.2 billion in annual federal infrastructure funding will be delivered in one payment in June, enabling communities to address their immediate needs, while also planning the infrastructure they need for the future. The federal Gas Tax Fund includes 18 different project categories, including capacity building, sport infrastructure, and roads. Please find more information on the **federal Gas Tax fund** and how it's **working in BC** by clicking on the hyperlinks.

## PARTNER INFORMATION

### BC Strengthens Commercial Rent Program

BC businesses eligible for rent support from the federal government will be **protected from evictions through a new order under the Emergency Program Act (EPA)**.

BC Minister of Finance, Carole James said the federal launch of the **Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA)** program has been a welcome step and BC is moving to prevent landlords who are eligible for CECRA from evicting tenants. The move is meant to encourage landlords to apply for the program and give some temporary relief to businesses who have been hardest hit by the pandemic.

Eligible businesses whose landlords choose not to apply for the federal CECRA program will be protected from evictions due to unpaid rent payments through to the end of June 2020.

### Re-entry Tips for First Nations

The First Nations Health Authority has created a **Services Resumption Planning Guide**. It was designed

to support the resumption of FNHA internal services as well as support First Nations as they re-open their communities.

The guide is built on the 7 Directives and Shared Values and the recommendations of the British Columbia (BC) Public Health Office (PHO), the BC Ministry of Health (MOH), Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), WorkSafeBC and the Regional Health Authorities (RHA).

Additionally, Naut'sa mawt Tribal Council's COVID-19 Task Group has posted **helpful information on returning to work and reopening workspaces**. For example, it recommends that leadership gather a team to plan the return to work, including Human Resources, IT, health & safety staff and senior management to develop a Safety Plan and to begin the process of planning for employees to return to the workplace. A checklist provided includes advice about communications and signage, noting that it will reduce stress and anxiety if you create a mechanism for staff and members to provide feedback, concerns and suggestions.

Check out the Webinar: **Best Practices for Returning to Work and Reopening Workplaces** Part One. Part two will be available on June 3, 2020.

### FREE COVID-19 COMMUNITY OUTREACH PRINTING

Naut'sa mawt has a partnership with Staples Canada to provide free COVID-19 community outreach printing to BC First Nations. Please email [info@indigenousspring.ca](mailto:info@indigenousspring.ca) for more information.



### BC Seniors' Week

Did you know this is **Seniors' Week in British Columbia**? In recognition, Premier John Horgan and Ronna-Rae Leonard, Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors are encouraging us all to reach out to a senior in our life. "The COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately



affected seniors. If you're not already doing so, think about how you can offer a helping hand to elders in your community. Doing our part to keep B.C.'s COVID-19 curve flat is one of the best ways we can honour seniors," they said.

To support seniors during COVID-19, BC is funding added supports through local community service agencies and the expansion of BC211 to the North and Interior. Now, seniors throughout the province can dial 211 to connect with local volunteers who are ready to help with things like picking up groceries and prescriptions, meal delivery, friendly phone calls and virtual social visits.

### Be aware of increased scams and fraud threat levels

The **Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre**, and the **Canadian Centre for Cyber Security** are warning all Canadians of an increase in the number of scams and fraud attempts (many through deceptive emails that appear to be from known and legitimate senders) and are alerting of an elevated risk to the cyber security of Canadian organizations and individuals.

As COVID-19 continues to spread globally, fraudsters will try to profit from the confusion and uncertainty created. This increased threat level suggests that all of us need to raise our level of vigilance.

### TAKE MEASURES TO PREVENT FRAUD

- Inform employees of the increased threat level and the types of situations where scam or fraud attempts may be suspected. For example, be suspicious and confirm any email communications that ask for (or require action in respect to) personal or business information, financial or banking information – **regardless of the source of the email.**

### PUT PREVENTATIVE MEASURES IN PLACE

- Develop a clear and straightforward protocol for how suspected scam or fraud attempts are to be scrutinized to determine if they are legitimate or not. For instance, if a request seems suspicious, employees can be instructed to first do an online search to independently verify its authenticity, or, even better, call the presumed sender to **validate verbally** when key financial information or a financial transaction is involved. A second person can review the results before further action is taken.

### STRENGTHEN CONTROLS

- Review and strengthen the approval processes in place. Ensure that a second layer of approval is put in place for situations where risk and materiality are relatively high.

### ACT PROMPTLY IF AN INCIDENT OF FRAUD OCCURS

- It's recommended that Indigenous Communities and partners potentially affected contact the appropriate policing authority and any other partners or suppliers that could be impacted by the situation (e.g., financial institutions, Departments, Tribal Council, business partners, etc.)
- A report to the Assessment and Investigation Services Branch of CIRNAC and ISC can be made at [aadnc.cnap-nacc.aandc@canada.ca](mailto:aadnc.cnap-nacc.aandc@canada.ca) or by phone at 1-855-504-6760.
- A **report to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Center** could also be made.

### FREE WEBINAR

The First Nations Public Service Secretariat is hosting the following Webinar:

#### **"Reconciliation in a Time of Uncertainty" led by Dr. Robert Joseph.**

Join Dr. Robert Joseph, Hereditary Chief of the Gwawaenuk First Nation and renowned peace-builder and advocate for reconciliation, for a webinar on "Reconciliation in a Time of Uncertainty". This 45-minute session will include a presentation from Chief Joseph on the impacts of COVID-19 on reconciliation in Canada and the opportunities emerging from this crisis for new ways of working and being together.

**Registration Details:** This event requires **pre-registration**. Once you have submitted your registration, you will receive a confirmation email with a link to join the webinar.

**Wednesday, June 3, 2020**

**11:00 a.m. - 11:45 p.m.**

**REGISTER 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:

- **Huu-ay-aht First Nations** shared that they will begin their restart plan on June 1. As part of the plan, their government team will slowly resume working in the office. They also shared that cultural support is available for their members.
- **Tseshaht First Nation** shared a flowchart (from the Government of BC) that shows the things people need to consider before hosting or attending social gatherings.



- **Ucluellet First Nation** shared that the restrictions on access to hitaču have been lifted but everyone on Yuułuꞑiꞑath lands is advised to continue adhering to the guidelines issued by the Province of British Columbia and BCCDC with respect to COVID 19 response measures.
- **Lheidli T'enneh** issued a flood watch notice advising that the nearby rivers may peak above normal flows in the upcoming week. They also shared information on online courses offered by the Prince George Nechako Aboriginal Employment and Training Association.
- **Westbank First Nation** shared sandbag locations in their community and asked property owners in flood prone and low-lying areas to consider how they will protect their properties.
- **Stó:lō Nation** shared information on five summer student positions. They also reminded everyone to complete the BC CDC COVID-19 survey.
- **Nisga'a Lisims Government** shared two job opportunities in their government.

- **Okanagan Indian Band** shared a video of their Food Security Team harvesting xw uw tł'm'itp (Western Labrador Tea), which will be distributed in next month's food hamper distribution.

## 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](https://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](mailto:aadnc.isbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca).

