

COVID-19 MESSAGE FROM ISC BC REGION

UPDATE #54 / June 23, 2020

Good Afternoon,

We hope you had a memorable weekend and were able to take in some form of celebration for National Indigenous People's Day on Sunday. Normally, we would have gathered in communities to honour and celebrate with First Nations in British Columbia however, the realities of COVID-19 meant that we celebrated in a way that kept Elders, children and communities safe.

As many of us start planning our summer holidays, we wanted to let you know we will be sharing these updates on an as needed basis. With the official start of Phase 3 of BC's COVID-19 response plan just around the corner, we are finding there is less and less COVID news to share. Thank you all for your hard work to help flatten the curve. Take care and stay safe.

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

Extensions to temporary lay-off periods announced

On June 23, the Honourable Filomena Tassi announced **changes to extend time periods for temporary layoffs** to allow employers more time to recall laid-off employees. The temporary changes will help protect the jobs of federally regulated private-sector employees and support employers facing economic hardship as a result of the pandemic.

Prior to these changes, employers could temporarily lay off their employees for up to three months if no notice with a recall date was provided, or for a period of up to six months if they provided a notice with an expected recall date, before the lay off became a termination. The changes announced today temporarily extend these time periods by up to six months:

- For employees laid off prior to March 31, 2020, the time period is extended by six months or to December 30, 2020, whichever occurs first.

- For employees laid off between March 31, 2020, and September 30, 2020, the time period is extended until December 30, 2020, unless a later recall date was provided in a written notice at the time of the layoff.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Over the next few days, Indigenous Services Canada will be reaching out by email to all communities in BC to follow up on a number of items raised to the department during COVID-19.

The first set of questions are BC Region specific, and the second part will focus on questions being asked nationally relating to the Indigenous Community Support Fund.

Please stay tuned for more information from your Funding Services Officer.

Returning to a new normal over the next few weeks and months

On June 22, the Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos made a **statement on the easing of restrictions related to COVID-19**. With the curve flattening across Canada, the heads of federal departments and agencies have received guidance to support planning for eventual increased access to federal worksites. It has been developed in close collaboration between the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, Health Canada and Public Services and Procurement Canada.

At this time, a small group of employees are working at 1138 Melville to ensure the continued delivery of essential services and the rest are working remotely. It is uncertain when more ISC staff may return to the office. Many public servants will continue to work remotely for the foreseeable future, as we move into the recovery phase of Canada's response.

Re-opening access to federal worksites will be gradual and will vary from organization to organization, according to their own operational circumstances. As plans unfold, the health and safety of employees will be the priority as will the continued safe delivery of regional activities. Our eventual return to the ISC office will take into consideration the local public health situation and the nature of the work.

Canada announces 500 new green job internships for youth

On June 19, the Honourable Seamus O'Regan announced **\$15.8 million to create green jobs and training opportunities for Canadian youth in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM)** in the energy, forestry, mining, earth sciences and clean technology sectors. The funding is part of the \$9-billion Government of Canada COVID-19 response for students announced by the Prime Minister on April 22, 2020.

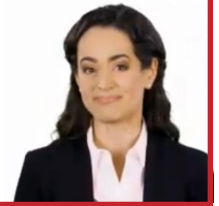
Organizations will provide 500 green job internships, ranging from six to 12 months in length, for youth to gain valuable on-the-job experience and explore careers in the natural resources sectors.

The jobs are supported by Natural Resources Canada's Science and Technology Internship Program, part of the Government of Canada's Youth Employment and Skills Strategy. They will enhance the employability skills of

workers aged 15 to 30 in STEM, increase the number of skilled young Canadians in the workforce and advance Canada's climate change goals.

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**.



PARTNER INFORMATION

Pandemic supports to continue through the summer

The Province is extending interim measures, including **a new round of funding and supports for children with special needs and youth aging out of care**, to help children, youth and families through the ongoing pandemic.

A final round of the short-term Emergency Relief Support fund for children and youth with special needs and their families will provide a direct payment of \$225 per month for up to three months to assist eligible families. This will be available from July 1 to Sept. 30, 2020.

Flexible parameters regarding autism funding and the temporary suspension on maintenance payments for children on special needs agreements will remain through to Aug. 31, 2020. Flexible use of respite funding will continue for families until March 31, 2021.

11 new Regional Business Liaison positions for BC's North

On June 18, **Northern Development announced that it has approved funding for 11 positions** through its

Regional Business Liaison program. Positions have been approved for: Community Futures Nadina, Community Futures Peace Liard, Community Futures Cariboo Chilcotin Coast, Community Futures Fraser Fort George, Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako, Fort Nelson Chamber of Commerce, Fort St. John Chamber of Commerce, Community Futures Sun Country, Community Futures North Cariboo, Haida Gwaii Community Futures, and Community Futures Pacific Northwest.

The funding is a one-time offering to provide additional community resources to support small- and medium-sized enterprises during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Province extends deferral of electricity costs for industries impacted by COVID-19

To further support B.C.'s mining, forestry and other industries impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of BC and BC Hydro are **extending the opportunity for companies to defer electricity bill payments** for another three months.

As part of the BC Hydro COVID-19 Relief Program announced on April 1, 2020, eligible industrial customers with accounts in BC Hydro's Transmission Service rate category (rate schedules 1823 and 1828) were given the opportunity to defer 50% of their electricity bill payments for the March to May 2020 billing period.

To protect jobs in communities throughout B.C. and support a return to normal operations, BC Hydro will allow eligible industrial customers to continue to defer a portion of their bill payments for another three months, to the end of August 2020. The deferred amounts will be repaid over a future nine-month period and are subject to interest.

More than 1,100 tourism businesses accessing COVID-19 supports

Over 1,192 tourism businesses have registered in the BC Tourism Resiliency Network, with more registering each week. The BC Tourism Resiliency Network is available to support the 19,000 tourism-related businesses in the province and is delivered through B.C.'s regional destination management organizations.

These organizations have extensive knowledge of the tourism sector and local challenges, and strong relationships with tourism operators. The network

was supported through an additional \$600,000 from the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture. Additional resources available through the BC Tourism Resiliency Network include access to program experts in finance, human resources, business strategy, marketing and a digital-information hub and webinars.

Province announces next steps to support renters, landlords

The Government of British Columbia **is extending the temporary rental supplement (TRS) until the end of August 2020** to continue to support renters and landlords.

It will also maintain the moratorium on rent increases and evictions for non-payment of rent, while enabling other notices to end tenancy to resume.

People who have already been approved for the TRS do not need to reapply. They will receive an email asking them to confirm they plan to live at the same address through July and August. New applications will also be accepted until Aug. 31 and will be eligible for a supplement for the month they are received and all subsequent months.

The Province is committed to giving people advance notice before lifting the moratorium on evictions for non-payment of rent at a future date.

LOCAL FOOD INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada has **launched a second call for proposals under the Local Food Infrastructure Fund**. The Fund aims to strengthen food support organizations and to help improve access to safe and nutritious food for Canadians at risk. Applications will be accepted on a continuous basis until funding has been allocated. Projects valued at up to \$250,000 will be accepted.

Indigenous groups are encouraged to apply!

To apply online, download, complete and submit the **Project application form (PDF)**. Or you can apply by email to aa.fc.foodprograms-programmesalimentaires.aac@canada.ca.

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**

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.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca.

