

# COVID-19 MESSAGE FROM ISC BC REGION

UPDATE #58 / July 23, 2020

Good Afternoon,

As the summer months bring warmer weather, and planned vacation time, it is a great opportunity to go out on the land. Outdoor activities can be beneficial for mental and physical health. Just remember to continue to limit the size of group gatherings, stay at least two metres (6 feet) apart, and wear a non-medical mask when physical distancing is not possible. This week saw a spike in the number of COVID-19 cases in British Columbia which is a reminder for us all to remain vigilant. Our priority remains supporting Indigenous leaders as you work to protect the health, safety and prosperity of your communities.

**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

In response to community requests and in accordance with the Government of Canada's **Directive on Open Government**, on Tuesday the names of First Nations and organizations that received funding from the **Indigenous Community Support Fund** were published on **our website** along with the total dollar figure allocated to each funding recipient.

We want to emphasize that the Government of Canada takes the privacy of First Nations and their citizens seriously and no individual person's information will be published; only the names of the First Nation or organization along with the amount received by that First Nation or organization.

The publishing of this information does not change the eligibility of any recipients for any future funding.

### **Income Assistance COVID-19 Funding for 2020-21**

As we have updated previously, Indigenous Services Canada has been mirroring provincial increases to social assistance since the start of the pandemic.

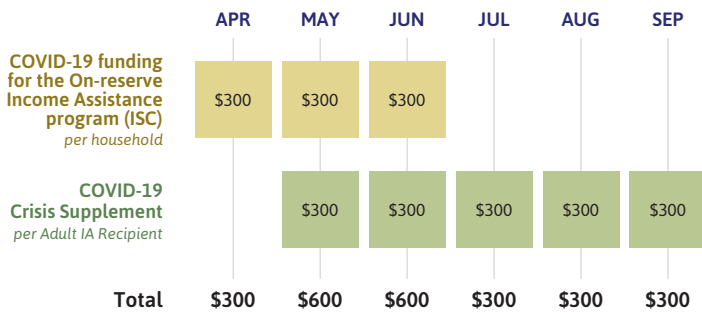
Following the provincial announcement on July 6, 2020, First Nations will continue to receive additional funds from ISC for the months of August and September to continue providing income assistance recipients with the monthly supplement of \$300 as a direct benefit.

Additionally, letters were sent to First Nations last week advising that a second retroactive supplemental allocation of \$300 per Income Assistance household will now also be provided for the months of April, May and June 2020.

This retroactive benefit may also be provided as either a payment to the household (direct benefit) or be held by the administering authority for payment of eligible expenditures on the households behalf (indirect benefit).

For the second retroactive supplemental allocation, any alternative options to direct benefit payments to support IA households must only include activities that are considered eligible expenditures under the **Income Assistance program's terms and conditions**, and cannot exceed the \$900 retroactive benefit maximum per

qualified household. Alternative options can consist of basic and special needs items, employment and pre-employment cost items, and/or employment and pre-employment financial assistance items that are available in BC. It is strongly recommended that all alternative options to direct payments be discussed with ISC prior to implementation to confirm eligibility.



Please note that ISC staff have hosted three information sessions and have been working with Band Social Development Workers in communities to answer any questions they may have.

For more information, or to discuss eligibility of alternative options, please contact the BSDW Policy Support Line, by phone (toll-free): 1-888-440-4080, or by email: [aadnc.tsdboutien-bsdwsupport-bc.aandc@canada.ca](mailto:aadnc.tsdboutien-bsdwsupport-bc.aandc@canada.ca), Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

## Proposed Changes to the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy

As first shared last week, the Government of Canada has **confirmed proposed changes to the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS)** that would broaden the reach of the program and provide better targeted support so that more workers can return to their jobs quickly as the economy restarts.

This support would continue to protect jobs and help Canadian businesses that are the most impacted. The proposed changes included in the Government's draft legislative proposals would:

- Allow the extension of the CEWS until December 19, 2020, including redesigned program details until November 21, 2020.
- Make the subsidy accessible to a broader range of employers by including employers with a revenue

decline of less than 30 per cent and providing a gradually decreasing base subsidy to all qualifying employers. This would help many struggling employers with less than a 30 per cent revenue loss get support to keep and bring back workers, while also ensuring those who have previously benefited could still qualify, even if their revenues recover and no longer meet the 30 per cent revenue decline threshold.

- Introduce a top-up subsidy of up to an additional 25 per cent for employers that have been most adversely affected by the pandemic. This would be particularly helpful to employers in industries that are recovering more slowly.
- Providing certainty to employers that have already made business decisions for July and August by ensuring they would not receive a subsidy rate lower than they would have had under the previous rules; and,
- Addressing certain technical issues identified by stakeholders.

The Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) protects jobs by helping businesses keep employees on the payroll and encouraging employers to re-hire workers previously laid off. Since its launch, about 3 million Canadian employees have had their jobs supported through the CEWS, and that number continues to grow. Stay tuned for more information.

## The Safe Restart Agreement

The Government of Canada has also **pledged more than \$19 billion to help provinces and territories safely restart their economies** and make our country more resilient to possible future waves of the virus.

This investment, through the Safe Restart Agreement, will help address the key priorities, agreed upon by Canada's First Ministers, for the safe restart of Canada's economy over the next six to eight months. It will support measures to increase testing and contact tracing of the virus to protect Canadians from a future outbreak, and support the capacity of our health care systems, including services for people facing mental health challenges. It will also assist with the procurement of personal protective equipment to help our essential workers, and in protecting the most vulnerable, like our seniors.

In addition, it includes actions to help Canadian workers during this challenging time, such as ensuring the availability of safe child care to help parents returning to work, and providing income support for people who do not have paid sick leave so all Canadians can stay healthy.

## PARTNER INFORMATION

### Capital Project Grants – intake applications open

Capital Project Grants provides \$5 million annually to not-for-profit organizations throughout B.C., to support the completion of inclusive, accessible capital projects that meet community-identified needs and priorities. The intake for applications opens June 19, 2020 and closes August 14, 2020. The Capital Project Grants program has been adapted to address some of the financial challenges that not-for-profit organizations are facing due to COVID-19.

Funding for 2020-21 will prioritize capital project applications that are facing increased demand for services due to the pandemic, as well as organizations that need to make modifications to facilities to support physical distancing, such as installing protective shields and barriers, kitchen reconfigurations, renovations to expand handwashing and hygiene stations. In addition, for projects directly related to COVID-19, the matching funds requirement has been lowered to allow grant funding to provide up to a maximum of 80 per cent of the total cost of projects, up to a maximum of \$250,000.

For information about the other types of grant funding offered through the Community Gaming Grant program, please review the [Community Gaming Grants](#) and [Parent Advisory Council \(PAC\) & District Parent Advisory Council \(DPAC\) Grants](#) pages.

## 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](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).

