

# COVID-19 MESSAGE FROM ISC BC REGION

UPDATE #59 / August 14, 2020

Good Afternoon,

Hard to believe we're in mid August already, marking five months since the COVID-19 response forced us all to find new ways of living and working. The situation continues to evolve and I know many of us are looking to the fall and wondering what it will look like in terms of schooling, daycares, re-opened work places, and maintaining our safe practices. As always the health and well-being of you and your communities is top of mind for us.

**Stay the course**  
help limit the spread of COVID-19



Please watch this animated video:

**Physical distancing: Stop the spread of COVID-19 in Indigenous communities**



## UPDATES

### Additional funding for the Indigenous Community Support Fund

Indigenous Services Canada recognizes that First Nations, Inuit, Métis and Indigenous organizations require additional investments to prevent and control the spread of COVID-19, and to safely restart community programs and services.

On August 12, Minister Miller announced an **additional \$305 million in funding through the Indigenous Community Support Fund (ICSF)** to help Indigenous communities and organizations prevent, prepare and respond to COVID-19. These investments are an enhancement to the existing Indigenous Community Support Fund.

This \$305 million is the same amount as the original ICSF announced in March. First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities and organizations will again receive a formula-based allocation; however, given the inclusion of a needs-based component within the new \$305 million, the amount will differ.

Funding will be provided in two ways:

- 1. An allocation-based amount** that will flow on a distinctions-basis directly to First Nations, Inuit and Métis.
  - Allocations for First Nations will be directed to First Nation and self-governing communities.
  - Allocations for Inuit will be provided to Inuit communities through Land Claim Organizations in each of the 4 Inuit Nunangat regions.
  - Allocations for Métis will be provided to Métis communities through the five Métis National Governing members (Métis Nation British Columbia, Métis Nation of Alberta, Métis Nation-Saskatchewan, and Métis Nation of Ontario).
- 2. A needs-based process** in which all Indigenous communities and organizations, whether they be located on or off reserve, will be able to submit applications for needs-based support.
  - Details on the criteria and process for accessing funding through the needs-based process will be forthcoming and we will update you as soon as possible.



These funds will provide Indigenous communities and organizations with resources to implement their own solutions, informed by public health guidance, related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As was the case for earlier funding under the ICSF, this new funding can be used for a wide variety of measures such as supporting Elders and vulnerable community members, addressing food insecurity, educational and other supports for children, mental health assistance and emergency response services, preparedness measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, and more.

The new funding could also be used for education supports for communities with schools. Its flexibility allows for funding learning packages and supports for students on and off reserve. We are working internally and with First Nations and provincial partners to determine how best to support additional costs that will ensure a safe return to school, such as: transportation, cleaning and ventilation, technology, personal protective equipment.

## Indigenous Community Business Fund

BC Region is in the process of sending out letters which explain allocations through the **Indigenous Community Business Fund (ICBF)** to all First Nations in BC. As first announced in June, the intent of the \$117M fund is to reduce financial pressure and allow community-owned businesses and microbusinesses to strengthen operations and support viability during the pandemic, with the goal of positioning them for recovery. In particular, the fund seeks to provide support for businesses that do not qualify for other Government of Canada COVID-19 relief measures.

The ICBF has two funding streams. Stream 1 is an allocation that will be transferred directly to each community while Stream 2 is proposal based.

### STREAM 1: FUNDING ALLOCATION TO COMMUNITIES, TRIBAL COUNCILS OR INDIGENOUS GOVERNMENTS

Stream 1 funds are intended to support the local economy. No application is required; funds will be transferred to Recipients under the "Lands and Economic Development Services Program (LEDSP)" model as FIXED funding. Stream 1 funding for BC Region totals \$8,755,600 and will be distributed directly to all First Nations. The base amount for each First Nation

in BC is \$27,000 plus potential additional incremental funding based on population of total registered members and a remoteness factor.

Eligible uses of funds include:

- Meeting general economic development needs during the pandemic (e.g. community/collective economic recovery strategies, expert advice, general business support services.)
- Supporting micro-businesses with minimal employees (e.g., home-based single proprietorship or family run businesses) which could not access other federal programs..

A signed Amendment will be required for all Recipients. For Block and 10 Year Grant Recipients, funding will be transferred outside of Block and NFR-Grant funding.

Reporting requirements include narrative and financial reporting on use of funds.

**If your community would like to opt out** of receiving ICBF Stream 1 funds, please send an email to [aadnc.bcecddev.aandc@canada.ca](mailto:aadnc.bcecddev.aandc@canada.ca) as soon as possible and **no later than August 21, 2020**, in order for us to reallocate to another community in need.

### STREAM 2: SUPPORT TO COMMUNITY-OWNED BUSINESSES

Stream 2 funding through the Indigenous Community Business Fund is application-based and provides for non-repayable contributions to help support fixed operating costs of community-owned businesses which have been impacted by COVID-19 and which have not been able to access current Government of Canada business relief measures. BC Region will administer the \$8,755,600 available for Stream 2 funding and get these funds out as quickly as possible.

First Nations, Tribal Councils and Indigenous Governments can apply on behalf of community-owned businesses and funding will be approved based on need and availability of funds. A portion of the funding will be set aside to prioritize support for Indigenous businesses in the Tourism and Hospitality sectors. An applicant can submit funding requests for multiple eligible businesses. Please note that this fund is restricted to community-owned or Indigenous government-owned businesses.

All applicants will be required to provide business financial information to demonstrate need. More

information on Stream 2 funding, including the application form, is available at [www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1596809415775](http://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1596809415775).

ISC regional staff are available to support the development of your application. If you have any questions about either Stream 1 or Stream 2 funding, please send an email to [aadnc.bcecdev.aandc@canada.ca](mailto:aadnc.bcecdev.aandc@canada.ca).

## Temporary change to the minimum unemployment rate for the Employment Insurance program

Effective August 9, 2020, **a minimum unemployment rate of 13.1% will be applied temporarily for all EI economic regions across Canada.**

When individuals begin transitioning off of the CERB back to EI regular benefits at the end of August, those living in EI regions with an unemployment rate lower than 13.1% will have their EI benefits calculated on the basis of the 13.1% rate, while individuals living in regions with a higher unemployment rate will have their benefits calculated using the actual rate for that region.

This temporary measure will establish minimum entry requirements for EI eligibility across the country for Canadians to access the income support they need now or might need later as we continue to deal with the economic impacts of COVID-19. This is the first in a series of steps, to be announced in the coming weeks, that will help eligible Canadians transition from emergency income measures back into the EI system and into the labour force.

## Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy Calculator Updated

The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) has launched an updated and improved Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) online calculator. It will help small and large employers alike prepare to apply for the next period of **the CEWS program**, which opens for applications on August 17, 2020.

The CEWS calculator can be found on the **Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy web page**, which includes detailed information to help employers understand how the CEWS can support their employees and operations, who is eligible to apply, and how claim periods are structured.

The calculator uses a step-by-step approach to get employers to enter information about their business situation to provide an estimate of the subsidy they can expect to receive. The calculator also includes printable spreadsheet and statement features that employers can use to view their claim at a glance and enter required information into the CEWS application form quickly and easily.

## Expanded infrastructure program supports COVID-19 community resilience

British Columbia can now allocate up to \$412,968,016 (10% of its total allocation under the **Investing in Canada infrastructure program**) towards projects under a new Government of Canada COVID-Resilience funding stream.

Projects under the new stream will be eligible for a significantly larger federal cost share – up to 80 per cent for provinces, municipalities and not-for-profit organizations in provinces, and raising it to 100 per cent for remote, northern and territorial projects designated under the new stream. In addition to the new time-limited stream, a simplified application process for funding will ensure that projects can get underway as soon as possible.

To be eligible for funding under the COVID-19 Resilience stream, the project's eligible costs must be under \$10 million, construction must be started no later than September 30, 2021, and it must be completed by the end of 2021 (or by the end of 2022 in the territories and in remote communities).

The COVID-19 Resilience stream will fund the following types of infrastructure projects:

- Retrofits, repairs and upgrades for provincial, territorial, municipal and Indigenous buildings; health infrastructure; and schools;
- COVID-19 response infrastructure, including measures to support physical distancing;
- Active transportation infrastructure, including parks, trails, foot bridges, bike lanes and multi-use paths; and
- Disaster mitigation and adaptation projects, including natural infrastructure, flood and fire mitigation, and tree planting and related infrastructure.

Learn more about the **COVID-19 Resilience stream and how to apply**.

## **New COVID notification app now available across Canada**

COVID Alert, a **new national mobile app**, is available to Canadians for free download. The app, first developed in Ontario, helps notify users if they may have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.

Use of COVID Alert is voluntary, and serves as another tool to help limit the spread of COVID-19. Not yet available in BC, once the app is fully rolled out, users who test positive for COVID-19 will receive a one-time key from their health authority that they can enter into the app. When the key is entered, COVID Alert will notify other users who may have come in close contact with that person for at least 15 minutes in the past 14 days, so they can contact their local public health authority for guidance.

## **CECRA extended by one month**

The **Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA)** is being extended by one month to help eligible small business pay rent for August. All provinces and territories continue to participate in this initiative, and collaborate with the federal government to provide rent supports to those small businesses most in need.

To date, 63,000 small business tenants have been supported, representing over 616,000 employees, for a total of over \$613 million in rent support. Additionally, CMHC is working with large property owners to help provide CECRA to more than 20,000 small businesses. Thousands of new applications continue to be regularly submitted, demonstrating a strong interest in CECRA from property owners and small business tenants and the importance of this one month extension as businesses get through this challenging period.

## **Canada puts stricter rules on foreign nationals transiting through Canada to Alaska**

**Stricter rules and additional entry conditions are being imposed on travellers transiting through Canada to Alaska** for a **non-discretionary** purpose. These measures are put in place to further reduce the risk of

introduction of COVID-19 cases and to minimize the amount of time that in-transit travellers are in Canada. In-transit foreign nationals:

- must enter Canada at one of the five identified CBSA ports of entry (POE)
  1. Abbotsford-Huntingdon (British Columbia)
  2. Coutts (Alberta)
  3. Kingsgate (British Columbia)
  4. North Portal (Saskatchewan)
  5. Osoyoos (British Columbia)
- will be allowed a reasonable period of stay to carry out the transit
- will be limited to travel within Canada using the most direct route from the POE to the intended POE of exit, while avoiding all national parks, leisure sites and tourism activities
- will be required, before entering the U.S., to report to the nearest CBSA POE to confirm their exit from Canada

In-transit travellers will be issued a vehicle “hang tag” to be attached to their rear view mirror for the duration of their trip to or from Alaska to support compliance while they are in Canada. The front of the tag will make it clear that the travellers are transiting and include the date they must depart Canada. The back of the tag will remind travellers to comply with all conditions imposed upon entry and the Quarantine and Emergencies Acts and a list of public health and safety measures to follow.

## **The Canada Revenue Agency announces an extension to the payment deadline and offers interest relief on outstanding tax debts during the COVID-19 pandemic**

The CRA announced on July 27 that in addition to **measures already announced**, it is **extending the payment deadline from September 1 to September 30**, and applying relief to interest on existing debt. The previously extended filing due dates for individual, corporate, and trust income tax returns remain unchanged. However, recognizing the difficult circumstances faced by Canadians, the CRA will not impose late-filing penalties where a current year individual, corporation, or trust return is filed late provided that it is filed by September 30, 2020.



## More Federal Support For Canada's Child Care Sector

Canada is providing **\$625 million in federal support for Canada's child care sector** will help ensure that safe and sufficient child care spaces are available to support parents' gradual return to work.

Along with the agreements under the Multilateral Early Learning and Child Care Framework, this investment means the Government of Canada will invest almost \$1.2 billion to support child care in 2020-2021. 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.

## PARTNER INFORMATION

### Return to School Guidance

Individual First Nations have the authority to make decisions about the education of their learners based on local circumstances. To support those decisions the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and First Nations Schools Association (FNSEA) have provided an **update to support First Nations in planning for the 2020/2021 school year**.

Additionally, Public Health Canada has **released its K-12 Return to School Guidance information**.

### Emergency order enacted to provide medical-assured loading on ferries

The Province of British Columbia is using its extraordinary powers under the state of provincial emergency to ensure **BC Ferries can implement all procedures necessary to provide priority medical-assured loading on the first available vessel for any individual, their vehicle and an escort**, as part of the Province's continued COVID-19 pandemic response.

To access priority loading for medical treatment, passengers must provide a doctor's letter indicating the individual requires medical-assured loading for treatment at check-in, as well as a completed Travel Assistance Program form. The doctor's letter does not require a specific date or time, or number of occasions

the person travelling requires medical-assured loading to receive medical treatment, but may specify a period of time of up to one year from the date of the letter within which the individual requires medical-assured loading.

## USEFUL LINKS

- **Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Indigenous communities** – developed by ISC, this page provides health and financial support information for Indigenous communities.
- Find information on how to apply for financial or economic support from the Government of Canada at: **Canada.ca/coronavirus**.
- With the help of BCFC, the First Nations Public Service Secretariat has developed **a series of one-pagers on COVID-19 support and resources**.
- **Taking care of your mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic**
- **Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): Prevention and risks**
- 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.
- **Transport Canada – COVID-19 measures, updates, and guidance issued by Transport Canada**

## REGIONAL CONTACTS

We've set up a dedicated email for any non-health COVID-19-related questions and requests: **[aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca](mailto:aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca)**.

