

COVID-19 MESSAGE FROM ISC BC REGION

UPDATE #65 / November 9, 2020

Good afternoon,

We hope you and your communities are all keeping well. We note the Province of BC has enacted a series of **new restrictions for residents of the Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley** in a bid to slow the sharp increase in COVID-19 cases. We recognize this will impact many communities and urban members and applaud your ongoing efforts to manage this evolving challenge. We are working through the orders and recommendations related to workplace safety and travel to ensure we continue to be aligned with the directions of the Public Health Officer.

This week we commemorate the bravery and sacrifices of those Indigenous and non-Indigenous men and women who served—and continue to serve—Canada and Canadians. Wednesday is Remembrance Day, and Sunday was Indigenous Veterans Day. In case you missed it, we want to share **a video** about the role of Indigenous veterans in past wars. We are very conscious and grateful of the real gift their service and sacrifice has given us all.

Thanks to **the over 170 participants that joined last Friday's webinar** hosted by the First Nations Public Service Secretariat. As promised, this update will include Frequently asked Questions about the application-based ICSF process now underway. To view all the questions and answers raised during the technical webinars please **click here**.

Another technical webinar for First Nations hosted by the First Nations Public Service Secretariat is happening Tuesday, November 10, 2020, from 1:00p.m. - 2:00p.m. (PST). Join ISC staff to receive additional updates and answers to your questions.

Additionally, ISC will be hosting an application-based ICSF information webinar for urban Indigenous organizations on November 12, 2020 from 1:00p.m. - 2:00p.m. (PST).

If you have any questions, or wish to submit an application, please contact the ISC BC Regional office at **aadnc.isbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca**. Further details on how to apply, including selection criteria and examples of activities funded, are **available online**.

The deadline to submit **an application** is **November 30**, as funding must be disbursed by the Department by December 31, 2020. Applications can cover activities through to March 31, 2021.

ICSF TECHNICAL WEBINARS (FOR FIRST NATIONS)

Tuesday, November 10, 2020
1:00 - 2:00p.m. (PST)

REGISTER

Once you have registered, you will receive a confirmation e-mail from FNPSS with a link to join the webinar.

ICSF TECHNICAL WEBINARS (FOR URBAN INDIGENOUS ORGANIZATIONS)

Thursday, November 12, 2020
1:00 - 2:00p.m. (PST)

REGISTER

Once you have registered, you will receive a confirmation e-mail with a link to join the webinar.

**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.**



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

● Can we distribute funds to off-reserve members? What is the criteria for that?

Supports under the ICSF should be based on needs, and ideally should not duplicate other supports that may be available (e.g., temporary top up to Income Assistance rates both on and off-reserve).

Yes, absolutely, you can apply to support off-reserve members. Keep in mind that the intent of these funds is not to provide benefits to individuals and rather to support issues like food security for their members no matter where they live.

You are also encouraged to attend the urban/off reserve technical session on Thursday for more details on the urban and off reserve funding.

● Is this funding only available for members who are on income assistance?

Under ICSF, there is no requirement that those who benefit from services or supports be receiving income assistance. Income assistance rate increases have been provided since March in order to ensure that individuals on income assistance have additional resources to address pandemic-related costs.

This call for applications is to support COVID-19 response measures, both on and off reserve. Measures, such as initiatives to address food insecurity, should be based on need and should not duplicate support that is available through other programs. For example, separate allocations to provide top ups for income assistance have been sent previously and will continue as long as the Province provides rate increases.

● How much funding can you apply for under ICSF?

There is no funding limit per se, but your application must demonstrate that costs are reasonable and are based on need, and that ICSF or other COVID-related funding is insufficient to meet these needs. The funds available (\$159,827,361) under the application-based stream of ICSF are for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Nation communities as well as Indigenous organizations serving Indigenous peoples, including in those living in urban centres and First Nations community members living off reserve.

Additionally, your application should demonstrate how your project activities meet the need to prevent and control the spread of COVID-19. Funding applications should cover the period till March 31, 2021 and costs should be incremental to the allocations provided directly to First Nations in the first and second rounds of ICSF.

Please call us if you are considering a large request to help us understand community need.

● Would a COVID-19 isolation house meet the infrastructure criteria?

The funding is intended for minor capital and infrastructure adaptations that are needed, not for the acquisition of major capital. Minor capital allocations for buildings are also available through ISC's Capital Facilities and Maintenance Program. It includes buildings and facilities such as band offices, community centres, daycares, and fire halls. FNHA may be able to support enhancements to community isolation spaces such as retrofitting spaces, looking at temporary spaces or how the FNHA can connect with community cohorts for the regional health authorities.

● What is the difference between the ICSF funding for infrastructure and the Capital Facilities and Maintenance Program?

As you may be aware, on October 30, the Government of Canada **announced an investment of \$59.5M for the adaptation of community infrastructure in First Nation communities**, in response to COVID-19, through the Capital Facilities Maintenance Program.

Community infrastructure assets included in this investment will be daycare centers, band offices/community buildings, fire halls, women's shelters, Aboriginal Head Start on Reserve (AHSOR) sites, health facilities, long term care facilities and National Native Alcohol and Drug Abuse Treatment Centers. (As outlined in **Update 61**, ISC previously provided \$1.6 million nationally in minor capital funding

to First Nations with schools on reserve to support school adaptation. The funding aimed to address immediate public health and safety measures, including those related to minor capital investments to support physical distancing and enhanced health and safety practices.)

A funding application is NOT required for these funds. On November 5, your Funding Services Officer sent out a list of COVID-19 funding for your community, including the list of buildings for which we are providing this minor capital funding. (Please note that if your band office or other community building has not been included in this list, or if the funding you are receiving for these facilities is not sufficient to cover the adaptation costs, you can apply under ICSF for these costs.)

First Nations community leadership have the flexibility to determine what health and safety expenses are incurred, but the intended use of this funding is to support the adaptation of community infrastructure through investments in:

- plexiglass and safe space separators;
- marking floors with physical distance indicators, placing signs;
- hand washing/cleaning stations;
- hand sanitizer dispensers;
- redesigning of workstations to allow for social distancing (e.g. rearrangement of desks);
- flushing water lines;
- safety checks of existing HVAC systems;
- additional cleaning supplies for frequent cleaning & disinfection of common surfaces;
- appropriate personal protection equipment (i.e. masks, gloves)

Again, if your band office or other public buildings are in ISC's asset system, no application is necessary.

● Could rebuilding our community garden be funded as infrastructure?

Minor capital, such as tools or materials for this purpose, would likely be eligible under the Emergency Management/food security stream of the ICSF needs-based process. Your application would need to link capital purchase requests in your project to reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. This is separate from capital under infrastructure, which is more geared towards buildings. Please contact the ISC Regional office at aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca if you would like to discuss your request further.

OTHER UPDATES

Help for Employees Impacted by the COVID-19 Outbreak

The new restrictions for all individuals, workplaces and businesses located in the Vancouver Coastal and Fraser Health regions may impact the employment status of many British Columbians, including your members on and off reserve.

The Government of Canada has made temporary changes to the Employment Insurance (EI) program to better support Canadians looking for work. As of September 27, you may be eligible for EI if you:

- were employed for at least 120 insurable hours in the past 52 weeks
- received the CERB, the 52 week period to accumulate insured hours will be extended
- stopped working through no fault of your own
- have not quit your job voluntarily
- are ready, willing and capable of working each day (EI regular benefits)
- are temporarily unable to work while you care for someone else or yourself (EI maternity, parental, sickness, compassionate care, and family caregiver benefits)

If you are eligible for EI benefits, you will receive a minimum taxable benefit at a rate of \$500 per week, or \$300 per week for extended parental benefits. If you are not eligible for EI, you may be eligible for the proposed new benefits:

- Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB)
- Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit (CRCB)
- Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit (CRSB)
- Canada COVID-19 App and Daily and access trusted resources.

For a complete list of programs, services and resources available through the Government of Canada visit:

Canada.ca/coronavirus.

BENEFIT INFO FOR MEMBERS LIVING ON AND OFF RESERVE

Representatives from Service Canada and the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) joined the First Nations Public Service Secretariat on November 4, 2020 to explain the new COVID-19 supports, including changes to Employment Insurance (EI) and the new Canada Response Benefits.



[View full recording](#)

CANADA EMERGENCY BUSINESS ACCOUNT NOW OPEN TO BUSINESSES USING PERSONAL BANKING ACCOUNTS

The **Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA)** is available to businesses that have been operating out of a non-business banking account. To be eligible, businesses must have been operating as a business as of March 1, 2020, must successfully open a business account at a Canadian financial institution that is participating in CEBA, and meet the other existing CEBA eligibility criteria. The deadline to apply for CEBA is December 31, 2020.

New Supports for Businesses Facing Significant Public Health Restrictions

The Government of Canada has proposed a top-up under the new **Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy** to provide additional targeted, direct supports for businesses, non-profits and charities facing ongoing economic challenges amidst the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The new **Lockdown Support** would be available retroactive to September 27, 2020, until June 2021, during periods when businesses are facing eligible public health restrictions. The Government is providing the proposed details for the first 12 weeks of the program, until December 19, 2020. The proposed program would align with many aspects of the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy to provide a simple, easy-to-understand program directly to renters and property owners.

Please read this **backgrounder** for more detailed information about these business supports.

COVID-19 Measures for Persons with Disabilities

You may be entitled to receive a one-time, tax-free payment of up to \$600 to assist with additional expenses you may have during the pandemic.

The Government of Canada will provide the payment automatically to individuals who:

- Are holders of a valid Disability Tax Credit (DTC) certificate*;
- Currently receive Canada Pension Plan disability benefits or Quebec Pension Plan disability benefits; or
- Are in receipt of disability supports provided by Veterans Affairs Canada

The CRA can help you apply for this credit at no charge.

If you do not have a Disability Tax Credit certificate or if your certificate expired in 2019, you should send your completed T2201 application to the CRA. The application must be received by the CRA by December 31, 2020, to be considered for the one-time payment.

For more information, go to Canada.ca/disability-tax-credit or call 1-800-959-8281.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Rapid Housing Initiative

On October 27, 2020, **details of the new CMHC Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI)** were released. The initiative is intended to address the urgent housing needs of vulnerable Canadians by rapidly creating new affordable housing and supporting Canadians experiencing homelessness or living in temporary accommodation as a result of the COVID 19 pandemic. There are two streams for funding:

1. Major Cities stream (\$500M) for cities with highest severe needs, and are encouraged to apply a community benefits approach and push for projects targeting women, and the urban Indigenous population;
2. Project stream (\$500M) wherein Indigenous governing bodies and organizations will be eligible to apply and will be priorities. Standard Rentals, Transitional housing, Single Room Occupancy and Independent Senior's Living are some examples of eligible types of projects under this stream. Regional CMHC Specialists are available to advise and navigate Indigenous governing bodies and Indigenous organizations through submission requirements. Applications close for the Project Stream on December 31, 2020.

Details and application forms can be found [here](#).

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.

- **Regional Director General**
Catherine Lappe / 604-340-7703
- **Associate Regional Director General**
Bill Guerin / 604-803-9476
- **Director, Community Infrastructure**
Paula Santos / 604-790-8451
- **Director, Programs and Partnerships**
Wendy Rogers / 604-363-8117
- **Director, Lands and Economic Development**
David Russell / 604-817-2644
- **Director, Funding Services**
Jody Kaden / 236-334-4742
- **Director, Child and Family Services**
Chiara Taylor / 778-668-9067
- **Director, Community Development**
James Moxon / 604-367-8241
- **Director, Corporate Services**
Harold Powell / 604-219-1737