

COVID-19 MESSAGE FROM ISC BC REGION

UPDATE #81 / June 4, 2021

This update and earlier editions are also available on the [First Nations Public Service Secretariat website](#). 

We are heartbroken over the tragic news that came out last week about the former Kamloops Indian Residential School. We are profoundly saddened by this discovery and our thoughts go out to Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation and all those impacted by the legacy of the Indian Residential School system.

Over the coming days, weeks and months, conversations about the experiences and memories of survivors of the Kamloops Indian Residential School and other residential schools are likely to continue. Experienced and culturally competent counsellors are available if members want to talk, are distressed, or triggered by painful memories.

The [First Nations Health Authority \(FNHA\)](#) has a list of [supports available](#) for those who may need them:

- 24-hour KUU-US Crisis Line at 1-800-588-8717
- Tsow-Tun-Le-Lum Society at 1-888-403-3123
- Indian Residential School Survivors Society at 1-800-721-0066 or 604-985-4464

A National Indian Residential School Crisis Line has been set up to provide support for former Residential School students and those affected. Emotional and crisis referral services can be accessed by calling the 24-hour line at 1-866-925-4419.

You can also access the [Hope for Wellness Help Line](#) at 1-855-242-3310 or connect to the online chat at hopeforwellness.ca.

As June 1, 2021, marked the beginning of National Indigenous History Month, we are reminded of the need for all Canadians to deepen their understanding of Indigenous peoples' distinct histories, customs, spiritualities, and languages. Doing so is essential to promoting a society based on mutual respect, understanding, and fairness.

In his [statement](#), Prime Minister Justin Trudeau called on all Canadians to “play a role in amplifying the voices of Indigenous peoples, dismantling systemic racism,

inequalities, and discrimination, and walking the path of reconciliation together.”

He also stated that in order to build a better future, Canadians must acknowledge the truth about residential schools and address these historical and ongoing wrongs.

Six years ago, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) charted a path forward for reconciliation for everyone in Canada. The Honourable Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, [issued a statement](#) to mark the Anniversary of the TRC's Calls to Action.

In her statement, the Minister recognized the pain still being felt in many parts of this country and expressed that there is still much more work to do.

“Reconciliation is about healing. Reconciliation requires acknowledging the truth. Reconciliation requires each of us to do our part to understand the pain and work in partnership with Indigenous peoples on the path forward.”

That path includes the [National Action Plan](#) to Address Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ People. [Announced June 3](#), it will inform the Government's work in the short term and help cultivate transformative change over time. More details are available further in this Update.

The Government of Canada is committed to working with First Nations and Indigenous Peoples to build a true nation-to-nation relationship based on the recognition of rights, respect, cooperation, partnership and trust. In BC Region, we will work with communities and partners, such as the First Nations Health Authority, to determine what assistance we can provide.

As ever, please reach out through the contact information at the end of the Update should your community have additional needs at this time.

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS HISTORY MONTH

We recognize the history, heritage and diversity of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples in Canada



UPDATES

Next Allotment of the Indigenous Community Support Fund Announced

This week, the Government of Canada **announced \$760.8 million in funding** proposed in Budget 2021, a portion of which will be allocated through the needs-based funding request process that just reopened. Of the total funding, \$200 million is being directly allocated to communities in early June and a further \$200 million will be directly distributed to communities in Fall 2021. We are pleased to note first allocations are being distributed to communities in BC now.

A further \$360 million in needs-based COVID-19 support for Indigenous communities and organizations, including \$150 million to support Indigenous peoples living in urban centres and members of First Nations living off reserve

The **Indigenous Community Support Fund (ICSF)** provides Indigenous leadership and organizations with the flexibility needed to design and implement community-based solutions to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of Indigenous Peoples. Communities and organizations have used ICSF investments for a variety of measures, such as promoting food security, improving mental health support services and ensuring the distribution of emergency equipment.

To date, over \$1.8 billion in support has been announced through the ICSF.

Please note that First Nations, Inuit and Métis also have access to other support measures available to Canadian individuals, businesses and industries through the Government of Canada's **COVID-19 Economic Response Plan**.

Family Violence Prevention Program

Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)'s **Family Violence Prevention Program (FVPP)** funds family violence prevention projects. The goal of the program is to improve the safety and security of Indigenous women, children and families.

The program supports activities that increase awareness of family violence and provide families and communities with:

- tools to address violence such as treatment and intervention
- culturally sensitive services (Elder and traditional teachings including 'healing ceremonies')
- awareness and self-development projects

Eligible activities include:

- individual or group counseling to help women, children, youth and men dealing with family violence and related issues such as residential school trauma, and
- culturally sensitive services associated with residential school survivor support

We accept applications year round for consideration. Please contact **Mercy Mura**, Regional Program Development Officer, 604-505-9138 for more information.

Federal contribution to the National Action Plan to Address Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls And 2SLGBTQIA+ People

The Honourable Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, ISC Minister Marc Miller, and other federal Ministers, **held a press conference Thursday** to speak to the federal contribution to the National Action Plan to Address Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQIA+ People.

Budget 2021 includes historic investments that will support the implementation of the initiatives in the Federal Pathway and contribute to ending this national tragedy. To help build a safer, stronger, and more inclusive society, Budget 2021 proposes to invest an additional \$2.2 billion over five years, and \$160.9 million ongoing. This investment would support:

- the preservation, restoration, and promotion of Indigenous cultures and languages;
- fostering health systems free from racism and discrimination where Indigenous Peoples are respected and safe;
- supporting culturally responsive policing and community safety services in Indigenous communities;
- improving access to justice for Indigenous Peoples and support the development of an Indigenous Justice Strategy to address systemic discrimination and the overrepresentation of Indigenous Peoples in the justice system;
- enhancing support for Indigenous women's and 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations; and,
- working with Indigenous partners to ensure that appropriate monitoring mechanisms are in place to measure progress and to keep the government accountable, now and in the future.

Budget 2021 proposes more than \$18 billion in investments to further narrow gaps between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, support healthy, safe, and prosperous Indigenous communities, and advance meaningful reconciliation with First Nations, Inuit, and the Métis Nation. The work to develop the National Action Plan and the Federal Pathway have informed these investments.

THE PROVINCE OF BC RESPONDS TO THE NATIONAL ACTION PLAN TO ADDRESS MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN, GIRLS AND 2SLGBTQIA+ PEOPLE

British Columbia has made significant commitments to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, including the introduction of the Declarations on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act to align laws with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The Province committed to the development of a **Path Forward** to end violence and supported Indigenous-led community dialogue sessions in 2019 and 2021 to inform this work. B.C.'s Path Forward reflects community-based priorities and sets a solid foundation with early strategies for a path forward to ending violence. The Province is making an initial investment of up to \$5.5 million in 2021-22, with additional investments under consideration.

To continue work on the Federal Pathway, the Government of Canada will collaborate with Indigenous partners on an Implementation Plan. This will ensure current and future measures are implemented in a way that meets the needs of the communities they are meant to serve.

Prince George Indigenous organizations celebrated for response to COVID-19

On May 27, **Minister Marc Miller congratulated** the Prince George Nechako Aboriginal Employment and Training Association (PGNAETA) for its response to the COVID-19 pandemic. During a virtual news conference, Minister Miller announced \$291,173 through the Indigenous Community Support Fund (ICSF). "PGNAETA is a true success story of this work," he said.



PGNAETA joined forces with the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council, Prince George Native Friendship Centre, Central Interior Native Health Society and Carrier Sekani Family Services to support Elders, children and vulnerable community members. We thank them and so many organizations across BC who are working tirelessly to meet communities' needs during these exceptional times.

In closing the event, Karin Hunt, executive director of PGNAETA said, "I have seen the heart of our community today." A recording of the event is [available here](#).

The Minister was asked if he could provide a breakdown of all the support provided to communities to date.

As he noted, that information is publicly available and we are pleased to [provide the link here](#).



PREGNANT WOMEN PRIORITIZED FOR THE COVID-19 VACCINATION

In case you missed it, Dr. Unjali Malhotra, FNHA Office of the Chief Medical Officer, posted a message urging pregnant women to go and get their COVID-19 vaccine.

[READ DR. MALHOTRA'S COMPLETE MESSAGE ►](#)

COVID-19 prevention and risks: Life after the vaccination

As more people get vaccinated and COVID-19 case numbers go down, it will be **safer to lift restrictive public health measures**. Lifting restrictions this summer will be a decision made at the regional level based on current conditions.

The Public Health Agency of Canada has produced a printable PDF titled **Vaccinated against COVID-19? Here's what happens next** to outline what to expect in the spring, summer, and fall once more people are vaccinated and less people are getting sick with COVID-19.

Infrastructure Canada and Community Foundations of Canada announce projects from the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative and launch a second round of funding

The **second round of funding for the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative** opened May 14, 2021. Applicants can apply for funding ranging from \$5,000 to \$250,000 for eligible projects, within an overall envelope of \$31 million in federal government funding. Local governments and a variety of community-led organizations are eligible to apply, including charities, Indigenous communities, and registered non-profit organizations.

Organizations interested in submitting an application are encouraged to visit healthycommunitiesinitiative.ca to learn more about the program, eligibility criteria and how to apply. Organizations can also register to attend information sessions on the program.

The application period for the second round of funding will close on June 25, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. PST.

Investing in young Canadians

Young Canadians have been among the most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, having experienced the highest job loss and the worst mental health decline of any age group. They have also sacrificed a lot to protect older relatives including their parents and grandparents.

As part of Budget 2021, the Government of Canada **has announced it plans** to spend over \$5.7 billion over the

ADVICE FOR MEMBERS WHO MAY BE STRUGGLING TO PAY THEIR TAXES

If any of your members are struggling with their tax payments, let them know they can work with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) to find ways to pay their tax debt based on their financial situation. Payment arrangement rules have been expanded this year to give people more time and flexibility, based on their ability to pay.

Individuals can make partial payments to the CRA to reduce the amount of interest they need to pay on unpaid amounts. Or, if they can't afford to pay their taxes in one payment, they may be able to **set up a payment arrangement** with the CRA.

If anyone is unable to pay their tax debt in full immediately, please let CRA know as soon as possible so that they can work with members to determine a payment arrangement.

To see all the payment options go to canada.ca/payments.

Please note, the CRA will not deduct your Canada child benefit (CCB) payments if you have amounts owing due to being ineligible for COVID-19 Canada Emergency or Recovery Benefit payments.

The CRA can apply your goods and services tax/harmonized sales tax (GST/HST) credit payments to pay tax debts and other government debts. As a temporary measure in response to COVID-19, the CRA will not deduct your GST/HST credit payments to repay tax debts and other government debts, including amounts owing due to being ineligible for COVID-19 Canada Emergency or Recovery Benefits.

For more information about taxes and benefits for Indigenous peoples, visit www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/indigenous-peoples.html.

next five years to support young Canadians to help them recover and rebuild from the pandemic. The funds will go towards creating 215,000 new training and work opportunities and expanding access to income supports, grants, and student loan repayment options.

We will share details here once they are available.

PARTNER INFORMATION

Emergency preparedness funding benefits First Nations

The pandemic has shown the importance of emergency response and preparedness. The Province of BC **has announced** a \$7.5 million top up to its Community Emergency Preparedness Fund (CEPF). As well, \$1.7 million through its Emergency Support Services (ESS) stream, which will target projects that build local emergency management capacity through volunteer recruitment, retention and training, including in-house training, and the purchase of ESS equipment. The ESS stream will benefit 17 First Nation communities.

CEPF is a suite of programs designed to enhance the resiliency of local governments, First Nations communities and their residents. The Province provides the funding, which is administered by the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) and has supported projects in seven areas:

- Flood Risk Assessment, Flood Mapping and Flood Mitigation Planning
- Emergency Support Services
- Emergency Operations Centres and Training
- Structural Flood Mitigation
- Evacuation Route Planning
- Indigenous Cultural Safety and Cultural Humility Training
- Volunteer and Composite Fire Departments Equipment and Training

More information on the CEPF program can be found on the [UBCM website](#).

New Foundry BC app transforms access to vital services for youth, caregivers

We've all witnessed the impact the pandemic is having on mental health. Youth and their caregivers around British Columbia now have faster, easier access to mental health and substance use services and supports through the new Foundry BC app.

Co-created by youth for youth, the Foundry BC app offers young people aged 12 to 24 and their caregivers access to integrated health and wellness services through their mobile device or an online web portal: www.foundrybc.ca/virtual.

Services offered through the app and web portal include drop-in and scheduled counselling, primary care, peer support and group sessions.

The Foundry BC app is available for download through the Apple Store and Google Play store.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

We believe we are better when we share our knowledge. We are pleased to share resources and updates being offered by communities:

- **Takla Nation posted this notice** to its members on Facebook about an upcoming **Virtual Wellness Gathering** on June 18th, being offered at no cost by Camp Kerry, a national organization which has been supporting those coping with serious illness, grief and loss since 2007. [Click on the link](#) for more information or to register to the event.

Does your mask fit properly?



A properly fitting mask can protect you and others from getting COVID-19. A proper mask should have multiple layers, completely cover the nose, mouth, and chin, and fit snugly over the lower face so there are no gaps or air leaks between the mask and your skin.

DOWNLOAD THE INFOGRAPHIC 

INFRASTRUCTURE CANADA CALL FOR APPLICATIONS FOR THE NEW GREEN AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY BUILDINGS PROGRAM

Infrastructure Canada is currently accepting applications for retrofits and new building projects for community buildings. Applications are being accepted on an ongoing basis for projects under \$3 million and until July 6, 2021 at 23:59 PDT for projects from \$3 million to \$25 million.

For more details please see the [Infrastructure Canada website](#).

STILL TIME TO APPLY FOR THE BC RECOVERY BENEFIT

The **BC Recovery Benefit** is a one-time direct deposit payment for eligible families, single parents or individuals. Benefit eligibility is based on net income from your 2019 federal tax return. Members must apply before June 30, 2021 to receive the benefit.

BENEFIT RATES

The amount you're eligible for will be automatically calculated based on your net income. Applicants must complete a federal 2019 income tax return to receive the benefit.

USEFUL LINKS

- **COVID-19 vaccines and Indigenous peoples**
 - » **COVID-19 vaccines: get the facts**
 - » **Moderna COVID-19 vaccine: what you should know**
 - » **Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine: what you should know**
 - » **Canada's COVID-19 Immunization Plan**
- **COVID-19 Awareness Resources and Videos**
 - » **COVID-19: How vaccines are developed (video)**
 - » **Vaccine development and approval in Canada (infographic)**
 - » **What you need to know about the COVID-19 vaccine for Canada (poster)**
- **Taking care of your mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic**
- **Protect your health and your community** – Preventing infection, handwashing and drinking water advisories, how to prepare, what to do if you are sick or caring for someone sick
- 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.
- **New financial support** – Developed by ISC, this page provides financial support information for Indigenous individuals, students, businesses, organizations and communities.

REGIONAL CONTACTS

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

- **Acting Regional Director General**
Bill Guerin / 604-803-9476
- **Acting Associate Regional Director General**
Wendy Rogers / 604-363-8117
- **Director, Community Infrastructure**
Paula Santos / 604-790-8451
- **Acting Director, Programs and Partnerships**
Dena Duncan / 604-377-6721
- **Director, Lands and Economic Development**
David Russell / 604-817-2644 /
Twitter: @davidsrussell
- **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

Should you have any COVID-19 health-related questions, the First Nations Health Authority would like you to use the following:

- **For general inquiries:** covid19needs@fnha.ca
- **For FNHA and community health care providers (CHNs, HD, etc.) or CDE planning questions:** CDMgmt@fnha.ca
- **For individual health care and COVID-19 questions:** 811 or primary care provider or contact the First Nations Virtual Doctor of the Day 1-855-344-3800 or email virtualdoctor@rccbc.ca.

Should you have any questions regarding the Emergency Management Assistance Program, please contact our Duty Officer at 604-209-9709 or bcaandc.do@canada.ca.