

COVID-19 MESSAGE FROM ISC BC REGION

UPDATE #83 / June 18, 2021

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



Good Afternoon,

Monday, June 21 is **National Indigenous Peoples Day**, a time to reflect on the contributions and experiences of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. While many community events may look different this year, we want you know that we are thinking of you during this challenging time. The legacy of residential schools and its ongoing impacts on First Nations is in sharp focus in the wake of the location of unmarked graves at the Kamloops Indian Residential School. We stand with you as a reminder of our collective strength that grows from truth-telling, the act of witnessing, and through taking important steps together towards reconciliation.

A **National Indian Residential School Crisis Line** has been set up to provide support to former Residential School students. You can access emotional crisis referral services. You can also find information on how to obtain other health supports from the Government of Canada. We encourage all those who need support at this time to reach out and know that support is always there for you through the Hope for Wellness Help Line at 1-855-242-3310 (toll-free) or through the online chat at hopeforwellness.ca open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

As we approach the summer solstice, more light brings hope during these challenging times. In Dr. Bonnie Henry's words, "this will be our summer of hope and healing from this pandemic." This week the Province of British Columbia announced that it is in Phase 2 of the **BC Restart Plan**. "This next step means seeing more of the people we love, visiting more of our favourite places and safely celebrating the major milestones we've missed," said Premier John Horgan.

This time of year also reminds us of beginnings and endings – the end of the school year and the start of summer holidays. As you contemplate your summer plans, we wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the graduating Class of 2021 – from kindergarten and elementary school to high school, university and beyond. Bravo!

Even as we see brighter days ahead and some aspects of life return to normal, the pandemic is still with us. So, for this next phase, we are reminded to follow the advice of our public health officials by getting vaccinated, using our layers of protection and following public health orders.

We continue to extend our best wishes to you and your communities.

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS HISTORY MONTH

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



UPDATES

Indigenous Community Support Fund

The recently announced Federal Budget 2021 proposed an additional \$760.8 million for the Indigenous Community Support Fund (ICSF). This includes:

- approximately \$200 million in direct allocations to First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities delivered in early June.
- approximately \$200 million in direct allocations to First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities delivered in Fall 2021.
- 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.

Earlier this week, a funding amendment with the value of your ICSF direct allocation was sent to your community. Please return the signed amendment as per the usual process at your earliest convenience. Once your signed amendment is received, BC Region will proceed with priority payments. A second direct allocation of an equal amount will be sent to your community in September 2021.

In the event your community's needs exceed the ICSF direct allocation provided, you are also eligible to apply for additional funding. The ICSF funding request process for needs-based activities recently reopened and requests are currently being accepted. Visit the ICSF [website](#) for more information on the proposal process eligibility, copies of the proposal template and instructions on how to submit your funding request.

Please send any proposals for needs that exceed the direct allocation to aadnc.isbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca.

If you have any questions, contact your funding services officer.

SECOND VIRTUAL SESSION OF OUR GATHERING 2021

Join us June 23-24 for the second virtual session of Our Gathering 2021, *kexwkexwntsút chet*, *tə sǫǫǫp ct* co-hosted by the First Nations Leadership Council, Indigenous Services Canada, and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada.



These half-day sessions are intended for Band Administration staff. All First Nations leadership are welcome to attend.

Agenda/topics [Register now!](#)

Administration is an integral part of day-to-day operations, and the work has only gotten more complicated during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. These sessions will provide an opportunity for those who work in First Nations Administration to connect with others from across the province and to hold discussions with representatives from ISC and CIRNA on a variety of topics relevant to Band Administration.

Should you have any questions about Our Gathering 2021, *kexwkexwntsút chet*, *tə sǫǫǫp ct* please email aadnc.recontre-ourgathering.aandc@canada.ca.

Canada renews the Indigenous Community Business Fund

This week, **Minister Miller announced \$117 million** to renew the Indigenous Community Business Fund (ICBF). The program supports the operation, adaptation, planning and reopening of First Nations, Inuit and Métis businesses by providing non-repayable financial contributions to Indigenous microbusinesses and community- or collectively-owned businesses across the country that do not qualify for other existing business supports.

Last year, the program funded a total of 559 First Nation and Inuit communities and 170 proposals from community businesses. Please visit **Indigenous Community Business Fund** for more details on eligibility and how to apply.

Call for applications for Own-Source Revenue in Indigenous Communities Initiative now open

As mentioned in **Update 82**, the Government of Canada has **created the Own-Source Revenue in Indigenous Communities Initiative (OSRICI)** to support communities that have experienced a reduction in own-source revenue because of the COVID-19 pandemic and, as a result, have struggled to continue providing core community programs and important services to community members. The call for applications is now open and communities can apply to access funding.

To be eligible, communities must be able to demonstrate a decline in own-source revenue. Support is available to assist with the preparation of applications and financial statements. For more information and for details on how to apply and access application supports, please visit the **OSRICI webpage**.

Expanding shelters network for Indigenous peoples

The Government of Canada, through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), with the help of Indigenous partners has selected recipients for the construction of 12 new shelters across Canada for Indigenous women, children, and 2SLGBTQQA+ people escaping family violence. One of these new shelters will be built in partnership with Lil'wat Nation.

The shelters will be Indigenous-led, and will provide vital refuge and culturally appropriate critical supports and services to help survivors of family violence recover from the trauma of their experiences, access support programming and create a stable environment where they can begin to regain an independent life.

To read the full News Release, please click on this link: www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/media-newsroom/news-releases/2021/expanding-shelters-network-indigenous-peoples

New Indigenous Affairs Advisor at the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA)

In February 2018, under the leadership of the CBSA Champion for Indigenous Peoples, the Indigenous Affairs Secretariat (IAS) was created. The IAS supports several key Government of Canada initiatives including the Deputy Minister's Task Force on Reconciliation and the Agency's response to the Minister's Special Representative's Report on First Nations' Border Crossing Issues. The IAS coordinates, supports and contributes to the work identified for improved border management. This work includes improved quality, timeliness and efficiency of border services delivery, improved relationships with, and outcomes for, Indigenous Peoples and strengthened engagement with, and inclusion of, Indigenous Peoples in border management, enforcement and services delivery.

Within the IAS are locally situated Regional Indigenous Affairs Advisors. They support Indigenous Affairs at the regional level and are a contact for Indigenous peoples in their region. One of the main components of the position is to provide support and consultation to Indigenous people and Nations regarding all matters pertaining to border crossing and Canada Border Services Agency programs and policies. Internally, the Regional Indigenous Affairs Advisors work on building cultural awareness of staff and provide assistance to regional employees on Indigenous matters.

Robin Rattlesnake has joined the CBSA as the Pacific Regional Indigenous Affairs Advisor. She can be reached at Robin.Rattlesnake@cbsa-asfc.gc.ca or at 604-761-4666.

Indigenous Personal Protection Equipment Suppliers

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Canada called upon all businesses to increase production of personal protective equipment (PPE) within Canada, to support Canada's purchases in response to COVID-19.

In response, a group of Indigenous Organizations have formed the **Indigenous Business COVID-19 Taskforce** and created the Indigenous Medical Suppliers Co-op, the largest database of verified Indigenous businesses that can supply PPE and other medical supplies and services to help combat COVID-19.

The Co-op is **available to assist** if you would like help connecting with Indigenous suppliers in the medical field. If an Indigenous PPE business in your community would like to join the Indigenous Medical Suppliers Co-op, please ask them to visit the **registration page**.

In addition, PPE can also be accessed through the **First Nations Health Authority**.

Services Offered by the Office of Small and Medium Enterprise

The Office of Small and Medium Enterprises (OSME) at Public Services and Procurement Canada is available to support Indigenous businesses that would like to sell goods or services to Government of Canada departments and agencies. OSME can provide seminars and one-on-one support to Indigenous businesses, Economic Development Officers, and community leaders to help them understand the federal government's procurement processes.

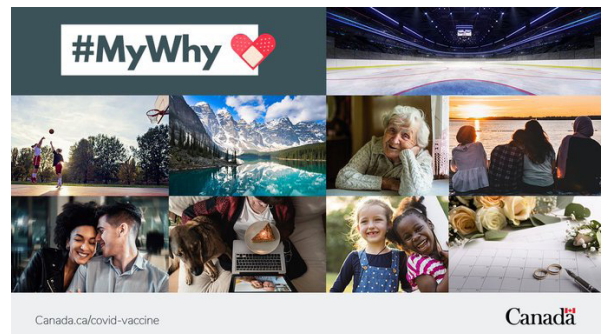
You can contact them at OSME-BPME-PAC@pwgsc.gc.ca.

Symptoms of anxiety and depression during the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has been stressful for many individuals, families, and communities who have all been affected in several ways. When surveyed, almost seven out of 10 Canadians reported that they have been negatively impacted by the pandemic, and almost two out of five Canadians reported feeling some level of distress over the past month.

#MYWHY: SHARING YOUR REASONS FOR GETTING VACCINATED FOR COVID-19

The Government of Canada has launched the "My Why" social media campaign to increase vaccine uptake through storytelling and user-generated content. Everyone in Canada is encouraged to help spread the news of personal vaccination stories using the hashtags: **#MyWhy** and **#COVIDVaccine**.



COVID-19 ACTIVITY SHEETS FOR KIDS

Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada has **recently posted** a set of educational and fun activity sheets on their website to teach the little ones about COVID-19. They address things like prevention measures and vaccination. You can **download a PDF version** to use at home or school.



As the pandemic continues, learning **how to cope with stress** can help minimize its effects on health and well-being. The Government of Canada supports Indigenous organizations and communities in developing mental wellness resources.

Links to more information can be found on [Indigenous Services Canada's mental health information page](#).

The Hope for Wellness Help line offers immediate, toll-free telephone and online-chat based support and crisis intervention to all Indigenous people across Canada. Help is available in English and French, and upon request in Cree, Ojibway and Inuktitut. Call the Help Line at 1-855-242-3310 or chat online at hopeforwellness.ca.

As well, in BC, 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
- VictimLink - For victims of family and sexual violence at 1-800-563-0808 (call or text)

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.

New “Ask the Experts” campaign encourages vaccine uptake

On June 15, Canada [launched the Ask the Experts advertising campaign](#). This campaign features short videos by trusted experts answering some of the most common questions people have about the COVID-19 vaccines. These videos will encourage vaccine uptake by providing people across Canada with credible COVID-19 vaccine information so they can make informed choices.

Visit [Health Canada's website](#) to hear directly from healthcare professionals and other experts about what vaccination means and does.



Reminder: Upcoming Application Deadlines – Infrastructure Canada

CANADA HEALTHY COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

The application period for the [second round of funding for the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative](#) closes on June 25, 2021. For more information, visit healthycommunitiesinitiative.ca.

GREEN AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY BUILDINGS PROGRAM

Infrastructure Canada is currently accepting applications for retrofits and new building projects for community buildings. \$150 million has been set aside for Indigenous applicants undertaking projects that will serve Indigenous populations and communities.

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 - \$25 million. For more details please see the [Infrastructure Canada](#) website.

PARTNER INFORMATION

Province seeks input from Indigenous peoples to shape future of reconciliation

The provincial government is [asking Indigenous peoples for additional feedback](#) on the draft action plan required under the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*. The consultation draft of the action plan identifies 79 specific actions developed in partnership by the Province, First Nations and Indigenous peoples to help advance the human rights of Indigenous peoples. It includes actions in the areas of self-determination and self-government, rights and title, ending anti-Indigenous racism and social, cultural and economic well-being. Feedback received between now and July 31, 2021, will be used to finalize the Declaration Action Plan scheduled to be released in the Fall of 2021.

For more information on how to share your feedback, please visit [Get Involved](#).

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.

- **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**
- **B.C.'s response to COVID-19** – Learn more about BC's four-step plan to bring us back together.
- **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.isbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca.

- **Acting Regional Director General**
Bill Guerin / 604-803-9476
- **Acting Associate Regional Director General**
Wendy Rogers / 604-363-8117
- **Residential Schools Information and Inquiries**
David Russell / 604-817-2644 /
Twitter: @davidsrussell
- **Director, Community Infrastructure**
Paula Santos / 604-790-8451
- **Acting Director, Programs and Partnerships**
Dena Duncan / 604-377-6721
- **Acting Director, Lands and Economic Development**
Angela McCarthy / 604-209-1251
- **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

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

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

- On June 15, 2021, **Westbank First Nation** celebrated Elders Day and the ongoing contributions their Elders make to their community, their government, and their youth.
- Check out this vaccine TikTok **video** created by James Smith Cree Nation (SK) students.

USEFUL LINKS

- **COVID-19 vaccines and Indigenous peoples**
 - » **COVID-19 vaccines: get the facts**
- **COVID-19 Awareness Resources and Videos**
 - » **COVID-19: How vaccines are developed (video)**
 - » **What you need to know about the COVID-19 vaccine for Canada (poster)**

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.

