

COVID-19 MESSAGE FROM ISC BC REGION

UPDATE #84 / July 2, 2021

This update and earlier editions are also available on the **First Nations Public Service Secretariat website.**



Good Afternoon,

Evacuation orders and alerts due to flooding and wildfire have come early to BC and our thoughts are with those communities now out of their homes or at risk. We are working closely with Emergency Management BC (EMBC) and affected First Nations to make sure they are supported and know where to seek assistance. After the immediate danger and response is over, we will work closely with EMBC to help impacted First Nations develop recovery plans. More information is [available online](#).

As we all shift from pandemic response to emergency preparedness, it's recommended leadership and administrators save EMBC phone numbers to your phone to ensure they are readily available during an emergency.

To contact Emergency Management BC's Emergency Coordination Centre, call 1-800-663-3456. Or, scan/click on the QR code on the right for the contact information for all EMBC offices.

More information from EMBC is [available online](#).

Fire and flood season has arrived as we continue to process the news from former residential schools.

We appreciate how these events have again brought back painful memories for residential school survivors and their families. Collectively they have shone a light on historical inequalities due to colonial policies in Canada and the systemic racism and injustice that persists.

As you know, many of our staff have been personally touched by these events and we are supporting them through conversations with Elders, smudging opportunities, and giving them room to experience their feelings. Other employees are listening and learning and remain committed to working with you and your communities towards reconciliation.

As part of National Public Service Week (June 14-18), BC Region committed to a "Make Space" initiative encouraging employees to reflect and build on their cultural competency and cultural safety. Employees felt this was a respectful way to mark National Public Service Week and move forward in a positive way. We too wear orange in recognition that **Every Child Matters**.

The Province has announced an important milestone in our collective battle against the pandemic. As of July 1, BC moved to Step 3 of its four-step restart plan. BC's rising vaccinations numbers and declining COVID-19 case counts



**EMBC
CONTACT
INFORMATION**
24/7 EMERGENCY LINE
AND REGIONAL OFFICES

During the hot summer months, please continue to follow public health advice and check on your elderly and vulnerable members to ensure they also remain safe. Resources are available online to provide [tips on beating the heat](#) and help in [recognizing heat-related illness](#).

VACCINES FOR COVID-19 ARE SAFE AND EFFECTIVE

A message from Dr. Shannon McDonald, Acting Chief Medical Officer at the First Nations Health Authority



Dr. Shannon McDonald
ACTING CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER, FIRST NATIONS HEALTH AUTHORITY BC



are being credited with allowing for the easing of restrictions which have kept us from gathering with our friends and loved ones for so long.

Nearly 80% of adults in BC have now received their first dose of vaccine. According to the First Nation Health Authority's (FNHA), **COVID-19 Community Situation Report**, as of June 23, 2021, more than 96,300 individuals 18+ years of age and more than 5,700 individuals ages 12-17 who are First Nations people have received one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. And 64.8% of all status and status-eligible First Nations people in BC age 18 and older have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine

Getting fully vaccinated is a step in the right direction toward saving lives and protecting each other. Our partners at the First Nations Health Authority say **two doses are the number one way to beat COVID-19**.

Finally, we have some news about BC Region we'd like to share. Allyson Rowe will be returning to our office as Regional Director General on July 12th. You may remember her as she was the Associate Regional Director from 2011-2017. Allyson's most recent experience was as a Director General for Employment and Social Development Canada.

Allyson also formerly held the position of Director of the Office of the Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians within ISC in British Columbia. Prior to joining the public service, Allyson practiced corporate and commercial law.

Allyson is Métis and originally from Winnipeg, Manitoba. She is looking forward to working with First Nations in BC again.

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](https://www.hopeforwellness.ca), open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

UPDATES

Get Prepared

As mentioned in our letter to Chief and Administrators in May, knowing what to do in an emergency is critical to ensuring the health and safety of your community members and protecting your critical infrastructure.

Advice from the Government of Canada is [available here](#) on how to prepare for the threat of wildfires and [here](#) for how to prepare for the threat of flooding. Both recommend families:

- Prepare an **emergency kit**.
- Have an emergency plan so family members can contact each other in case they are separated during an evacuation.

In addition, the Province of BC encourages evacuees to [register online](#).

In the event that your community may have to issue evacuation alerts or orders to your members, information from the Province on BC on [how individuals should prepare](#) may be useful for your members.

If you have livestock, leaving animals unsheltered is preferable, or if time and personal safety permits, evacuation away from the danger zone should be considered.

FIRESMART BC TOOLKIT

The **FireSmart toolkit**, a one-stop shop for resources, key links and assets to create FireSmart BC communications online.

Indigenous Community Support Fund (ICSF)

In June 2021, \$26.3 million was provided in direct allocations to First Nations (including Block, New Fiscal Relationship (NFR) Grant and Self-Governing nations). An additional \$26.3 million in direct allocation will be provided in September 2021. Direct allocations for off-reserve members/activities is also being considered.

First Nations are eligible to apply for additional funding, if your community's needs exceed the ICSF direct allocation provided (on and off reserve). The ICSF funding request process for needs-based activities recently opened and requests are currently being accepted.

BC Region's budget for needs-based activities is set at \$13.3 million. BC Region may request more funding from the national contingency if funding requests exceed regional budget.

BC Region's budget for off-reserve needs-based activities is set at \$12.2 million. There is **no deadline** for the Indigenous Community Support Fund needs-based funding. First Nations and Indigenous organizations are encouraged to send their requests for additional resources when needs arise. Requests will continue to be accepted and recommended until funds are exhausted.

It is recommended that applicants work with their First Nation Administrators to confirm the request for funding is based on need with no other funding sources available. It is also recommended your First Nation work together across departments to submit one application including all current needs for the First Nation.

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.

The second virtual session of “Our Gathering 2021, kexwkexwntsút chet, tə sǰəǰip ct”

Thanks to all Band Administration staff and leadership who were able to attend the second virtual session of “**Our Gathering 2021, kexwkexwntsút chet, tə sǰəǰip ct**” June 23-24, co-hosted by the First Nations Leadership Council, Indigenous Services Canada, and Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada. Technical and logistical support to put on the sessions was provided by the First Nations Public Service Secretariat.

The half-day sessions were well received and provided us with valuable feedback on how to serve your communities better. For example, in

SHARE WITH YOUR ADMINISTRATORS – ICSF REPORTING

The report for both on and off-reserve ICSF funding must be reported on one sole annual Activities and Expenditures report. The Annual Activities and Expenditures Report (DCI# 4548549) for the Indigenous Community Support Fund due date is July 31.

response to questions about how ISC is organized and how to access contact information for different programs, please see the First Nations Public Service Secretariat [Our Gathering website](#).

Legislation to implement UNDRIP becomes law

On June 21, the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act](#) received Royal Assent and immediately came into force. Developed with Indigenous Peoples, this Act creates a legislative framework to implement the Declaration in Canada. It requires the Government of Canada, in consultation and collaboration with Indigenous Peoples, to develop an action plan to achieve the Declaration's objectives and take all measures necessary to align federal laws with the Declaration.

The action plan, which must be developed in collaboration with Indigenous Peoples in two years, will include measures to:

- address injustices, combat prejudice and eliminate all forms of violence, racism and discrimination against Indigenous Peoples
- promote mutual respect and understanding, as well as good relations, including through human rights education
- ensure Canada is held accountable on progress through regular reporting and oversight

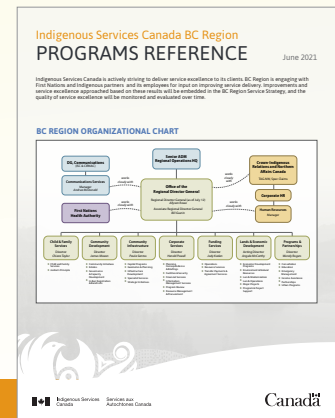
The Government of Canada will continue its collaboration with Indigenous partners, on a distinctions-based approach, to understand their priorities for the action plan and to identify measures to align federal laws with the Declaration over time. Engagement will be broad and inclusive, and include national and regional Indigenous organizations, Indigenous rights holders, modern treaty and self-governing nations, women's and youth organizations, 2SLGBTQIA+ Indigenous persons, urban Indigenous people and other Indigenous groups.

Government of Canada takes action to protect Canadians against hate speech and hate crimes

The Government of Canada is taking action to protect Canadians against hate speech and hate crimes to better protect Canadians from hate speech and online harms. *(We note this was an issue raised during the Our Gathering communications session in January with participants reporting on the impacts for communities and families.)**

The proposed legislation will help to ensure that individuals have access to appropriate tools and resources to seek recourse against purveyors of hate speech and perpetrators of hate crimes.

Canadians and stakeholders will have the opportunity to consider specific, concrete proposals, and provide input about the proposed approach during public engagement sessions over the next few months. Stay tuned for more information.



ISC BC REGION PROGRAMS REFERENCE 

*For tips on effective online communications see the [First Nations Communications Toolkit](#) – and for combatting abusive behavior such as cyberbullying please see Canada's [Cyberbullying web page](#).

Traditional Names Now Accepted on Passports and other ID

Indigenous peoples have long fought to reclaim their Indigenous names and all that they signify. In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Call to Action 17 directed all levels of government to enable residential school survivors and their families to reclaim and use their Indigenous names on all government documents.

In response to Call to Action 17, the **Government of Canada announced June 14** that Indigenous peoples can now reclaim their Indigenous names, as written, on passports and other immigration documents.

The change includes passports, travel documents, citizenship certificates and permanent resident cards for all Indigenous peoples. There is no cost until May 30, 2026.

For more information, please see: [Name changes – Passports – Canada.ca](#).

UPCOMING APPLICATION DEADLINE – 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 supports First Nations with residential school sites response

The British Columbia government has **allocated \$12 million to support First Nations throughout B.C.** with investigative work at former residential school sites, as well as cultural and wellness supports for communities and members experiencing trauma from residential school site findings. This new provincial funding will support First Nations with community-led strategies to identify, investigate, document, maintain, protect and/or commemorate residential school sites where children's remains may be located, as well as to provide community wellness, cultural and mental health supports.

The provincial and federal governments and the FNHA will work together to co-ordinate mental health and cultural supports for Indigenous peoples, including First Nations and Métis, experiencing distress or trauma as a result of findings at residential schools. The new provincial funding will support healing for survivors and families in both Indigenous communities and urban areas. More information on how First Nations can access the provincial funding for site investigation work and cultural and wellness supports will be shared in the coming days.

Province Extends Bill Supports for BC Hydro Customers in Financial Crisis

The Province of BC **has announced** it is extending BC Hydro's Customer Crisis Fund (CCF) to continue providing support for people in financial crisis and help avoid disconnections of their electricity service.

The CCF program allows eligible BC Hydro customers who are facing a financial hardship due to a job loss, injury, illness or loss of a family member, and possible disconnection of their service, to access grants of up to \$600 to pay their BC Hydro bill.

Since it was launched, the CCF has helped over 11,000 residential customers.

For more information please see: [BC Hydro's Customer Crisis Fund](#).

Pow Wow Pitch Competition Investing in Indigenous Entrepreneurs

Until July 15, Indigenous entrepreneurs can submit a 1-minute video business pitch as their entry into the [Pow Wow Pitch Competition](#). The top 25 entrepreneurs from each region — Atlantic Canada, Québec, Ontario, the Prairies, British Columbia and the Territories, — will pitch to a panel of judges for the chance to win their Regional Title and advance to the Turtle Island Grand Finale Live Broadcast to win prizes ranging from \$500 to \$25,000 for the Grand Prize winner.

Last year's Winner, [Sister's Sage](#), used the competition to grow awareness beyond BC and fund a new space to scale product manufacturing.

"Pow Wow Pitch has made me feel connected to an amazingly supportive network of Indigenous entrepreneurs," said Lynn-Marie Angus, Co-Founder and CEO of Sister's Sage. "Winning was a huge confidence booster for me not only professionally, but personally too! Pow Wow Pitch helped me get Sister's Sage more visibility, and in turn, inspire other Indigenous entrepreneurs to believe in themselves."

All entrepreneurs who enter the pitch competition will join the Pow Wow Pitch community, get access to a free Indigenous Startup Program, access more than \$1,000 worth of free technology, tools and support, and have the chance to have their products and services featured in the Pow Wow Pitch annual Mailer Box to 500 customers and on the Pow Wow Pitch Directory for socially-conscious customers looking to 'Buy Indigenous.'

Pow Wow Pitch is a grassroots community of Indigenous entrepreneurs purpose-built to provide a safe, collaborative, supportive and empowering platform for inspiration, education, mentorship, celebration, and reconciliation through entrepreneurship.

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
- **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.

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 \(poster\)](#)
- **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**
- **BC'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.