

# UPDATE FROM ISC BC REGION

## UPDATE #86 / August 10, 2021

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

Good Afternoon,

Our thoughts remain with those who have been on alert or evacuated due to the wildfires that are raging across the province. Many thanks to the emergency responders and First Nation leadership, staff, and members who are working tirelessly in what is a volatile, stressful and intense situation. Taking time to address our wellness and mental health are crucial at this time. We encourage you to continue sharing with your members the culturally-appropriate supports that are available through the [First Nations Health Authority \(FNHA\)](#).

We have found it very valuable to connect with so many of you during the Friday All Chief's Town Halls to coordinate and share updates and information on the response to wildfires in the province. We've heard your concerns about the need for more communications and this Update will be used as one way to relay important information. Additionally, a Question and Answer document summarizing questions from the first two sessions will be posted to the First Nations Emergency Services Society website August 13.

Recently, we had the pleasure of welcoming our Minister, the Honourable Marc Miller to British Columbia. He began his trip at Semiahmoo First Nation where he congratulated the community on lifting the long-term drinking water advisory. During visits to the former Alberni residential school, the former Kamloops residential school, and the former St. Joseph's residential school, he offered support to community members, listened to their stories, and recognized their resiliency during these challenging times. In discussions with First Nations' leadership, Minister Miller agreed that First Nations need to be partners in emergency management. For more information about the community visits, please see the following [news release](#).

Although immunization numbers are impressive, with increasing case counts and the rise of the Delta variant, we are reminded that the COVID-19 risk still remains. Nineteen days after getting her first vaccine dose, Dr. Shannon McDonald, Chief Medical Officer of the First Nations Health Authority, was diagnosed with COVID-19. However, thanks to the vaccine, her illness was mild and she made a full recovery. [Hear her story](#) about why she decided to #VaxToTheMax.

Finally, we want to close by sharing a [Statement from the Prime Minister](#) about the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples. "Canada cannot move forward as a country if First Nations, Inuit, and Métis continue to be held back by colonial structures, systemic racism, and discrimination. As we celebrate the contributions Indigenous communities have made in forming the nations we know today, we continue to work with them in full partnership to advance reconciliation in a tangible way and ensure Indigenous peoples can succeed and prosper."

Thank you, and stay safe everyone.

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://hopeforwellness.ca), open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

### EMBC CONTACT INFORMATION

Save EMBC phone numbers to your phone to ensure they are readily available during an emergency. The EMBC 24/7 Emergency Line is 1-800-663-3456. This QR code links to the contact information for all EMBC offices.

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



## UPDATES

### All Chiefs Town Hall on Wildfires

Continuing our commitment to work with First Nation leaders to improve the emergency response process, increase and coordinate communication, and have ongoing discussions and engagements, Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), in partnership with the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) and Emergency Management BC (EMBC) began hosting weekly town halls for Chiefs on July 23. These sessions will continue every Friday morning until at least the end of August. The town halls are a forum for First Nations leaders to have direct access to leadership from ISC, FNLC, EMBC, FNHA, and First Nations Emergency Services Society (FNESS), to ask questions and raise concerns around this season's wildfires. We hope that you're able to join us each Friday from 9:30-11am for these conversations. If you'd like to be included in the email invite, please contact: Alexis Fells, Program Advisor at [Alexis.Fells@canada.ca](mailto:Alexis.Fells@canada.ca).

### Emergency Management funding programs at ISC

In partnership with First Nation communities, provincial and territorial governments, and non-government organizations, ISC's **Emergency Management Assistance Program** (EMAP) helps communities on reserve access emergency assistance services. ISC provides funding to First Nations through EMAP to build resiliency, prepare for emergencies (e.g. wildfires, flooding, severe weather events) and respond to them across the four pillars of emergency management: Non-structural Mitigation, Preparedness, Response and Recovery.

#### Under EMAP, ISC has the following funding programs:

- Response and Recovery, including the Building Back Better Policy on a needs-basis;
- Non-structural Mitigation and Preparedness (NSMP);
- Capacity Enhancement; and
- Firesmart (In BC, the wildfire-related aspects of the FireSmart program are delivered by the FNESS. Approximately \$2.4 million is invested annually)

Through the **Non-structural Mitigation and Preparedness funding** stream, ISC contributes to:

- Non-structural mitigation projects, such as hazard risk and vulnerability analyses, flood plain mapping, and other technical studies such as debris flow or geotechnical studies;
- Preparedness projects such as creating or updating emergency preparedness plans, conducting exercises, and participating in training that is not already offered through EMBC's services; and
- ISC can also contribute to minor capital, including items such as EOC kits, satellite phones, or other equipment that will enhance community-level emergency preparedness. We are also now able to fund 911 mapping.

Those wishing to make a financial donation to assist the wildfire response can do so online at [redcross.ca](https://www.redcross.ca), by calling 1-800-418-1111, by texting FIRES to 45678 or by contacting their local Canadian Red Cross office.

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**.

### DEADLINE EXTENSION FOR 2021-2022 FNESS-ISC FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

The new intake deadline for the 2021-2022 FNESS- ISC On-Reserve Operational Fuel Treatment and On-Reserve FireSmart™ Programs is **Thursday, September 30, 2021**.

For details on the funding opportunity visit the [FNESS website](#).

**Capacity enhancement funding under EMAP** was introduced under Budget 2019. BC Region receives approximately \$1.3 million per fiscal year, and these funds are supporting Nation and aggregate-level Emergency Preparedness Coordinator (EPC) positions. There are currently 11 EPCs in place, and ISC hopes to expand this program over time. Currently, permanent emergency coordinators have been funded through: Ktunaxa Nation, Lillooet Tribal Council (Lillooet)/St'át'imc Tribal Council, T̓silhqot'ín National Government, Southern Dakelh Nation Alliance, Secwepemc Health Caucus/Shuswap Nation Tribal Council, Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, 3Nations Society, Nlaka'pamux Health Services Society, Syilx Tribal Council – Okanagan Nation Alliance, Naut'sa mawt Tribal Council, WSANEC Nation, and North East Area partnership. As well, temporary positions have been funded to support a position at FNESS and the FNLC. The capacity funding and EPCs are not intended to displace the role of communities, or their priorities. Instead, the EPCs are able to provide overall additional assistance in terms of capacity, and to support the communities they serve in accessing the various funding supports and advancing their emergency preparedness programs.

You can access [daily situation reports](#) and other useful information on their the [First Nations Emergency Services Society](#) website.

## **What Should You Do If There Are Concerns About Potential Water Shortages In Your Community?**

With the extended hot dry weather in the province, it is likely a good time to review tips for potential water shortages and drought conditions.

### **1. CHECK YOUR EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN**

What does it say about water shortages? If you don't have an emergency response plan, or it doesn't cover prolonged water shortages, then begin adding to your Emergency Response Plan to reflect measures that could be taken for any future water shortages.

### **2. ESTABLISH YOUR RESPONSE TEAM**

This may include your water system operator, public works manager, Band manager and a councilor(s). Your Circuit Rider can also be a resource for the team at this stage. Determine roles and responsibilities so you can develop an action plan. Your team should meet at least daily to update what they have been working on, what impact it's having, and what's still left to do.

### **3. IF YOU HAVEN'T BEEN DOING THIS ALREADY, IMMEDIATELY BEGIN TO MONITOR YOUR WATER CONSUMPTION**

You need to know how much water your community is using and at what rate so that you can estimate how many days of water you might have left. Track this regularly so you can monitor changes over time.

### **4. ADVISE RESIDENTS TO REDUCE THEIR WATER CONSUMPTION**

If you're going door-to-door to advise residents, ask to also inspect water services inside the home to make sure they are not leaking. Leakage from faucets and toilets can add up to significant water waste. If these are leaking, they should be repaired.

## 5. START A PROGRAM OF LEAK DETECTION AND REPAIRS IN YOUR COMMUNITY'S WATER DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

Even small leaks can account for large losses of water! The most common area for leaks to occur is at service connections – where the services meet the main distribution line – and also at hydrants and in unoccupied buildings. These are good places to start looking for and repairing leaks.

## 6. LET COMMUNITY MEMBERS KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING

Have a means of letting residents know what's happening and reinforce what they should be doing to conserve water. This could be via a community Facebook page, flyers delivered to each house, or regular community meetings. This ensures everyone is informed.

## 7. IF WATER LEVELS ARE STILL DECREASING, INVESTIGATE ALTERNATE SOURCES OF WATER

This could include water hauling or bottled water companies.

## 8. IF YOU NEED ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE, CONTACT YOUR CAPITAL MANAGEMENT OFFICER TO SEEK ADVICE

## 9. ONCE THE EVENT IS OVER, DOCUMENT YOUR ACTIVITIES AND UPDATE YOUR EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

### **The Renewed Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund Open for applications**

In view of the devastation caused by this year's wildfires we wanted highlight that Infrastructure Canada has launched a [call for applications](#) for the renewed Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund (DMAF).

The DMAF is a national merit-based contribution program intended to support infrastructure projects designed to mitigate current and future climate-related risks and disasters triggered by natural hazards, such as floods, wildland fires, droughts and seismic events.

Eligible projects include new construction of public infrastructure and/or modification or reinforcement of existing public infrastructure, including natural infrastructure, that prevent, mitigate or protect against the impacts of climate change, disasters triggered by natural hazards, and extreme weather.

Further to Budget 2021 which announced an additional \$1.375 billion to renew the DMAF, including a minimum of \$138 million of DMAF funding allocated to Indigenous recipients and the addition of a small-scale project stream, eligible applicants will now have the opportunity to submit projects under the following two streams:

- Small scale-projects: projects with total eligible costs between \$1 million and \$20 million;
- Large-scale projects: \$20 million and above in total eligible costs.

Projects will be assessed for eligibility and merit criteria on a competitive basis with the first round of submissions for the large-scale project stream having a closing date of October 15th, 2021, and the small scale project stream having a closing date of November 15th, 2021.

Further information on the DMAF, including the applicant's guide, eligibility, and how to apply, is available at the following link:

[www.infrastructure.gc.ca/dmaf-faac/index-eng.html](http://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/dmaf-faac/index-eng.html). Projects submitted to Infrastructure Canada under previous intakes will have to be re-submitted through the application portal accessible via their website.

The following mailbox is in place for questions related to the program:

[infcdmaf-faac.infccanada.ca](mailto:infcdmaf-faac.infccanada.ca).

## Education Funding at a Glance

With August here, September is just around the corner and many of you will be wondering about education supports available as you look to another school year and the potential impact of COVID-19. We wanted to recap what supports are available.

Budget 2021 saw the extension of COVID-19 related Emergency funding into 2021-2022 under the following Education Programs:

- Elementary and Secondary Education Program;
- Post-Secondary Student Supports Program; and
- Post-Secondary Partnerships Program.

### ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAM

For 2021-2022, BC Region received \$11,513,880 COVID-19 related Emergency funding for Elementary and Secondary Education. In 2020-2021, ISC flowed this funding to First Nations who operate schools and the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) flowed funding to First Nations with students ordinarily resident on reserve enrolled in off reserve schools. In 2021-2022, ISC will flow these additional funds to all BC First Nations, based on a per-student calculation using 2020-2021 Nominal Roll data.

As with last year, the funds can be used to support expenses such as (but not limited to) those outlined below, regardless of where the student is enrolled in school:

- salaries for teachers, custodians and bus drivers
- hiring of additional personnel (i.e. tutors, etc.)
- access to technology
- purchase of e-learning software
- development of take-home learning materials

### EMERGENCY POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION (PSE) FUNDING

Budget 2021 included a commitment for COVID-19 related Emergency PSE funding for First Nations students for two years. For 2021-2022, BC Region

received \$10,209,030 for COVID-19 related Emergency PSE funding. This is in addition to the existing Post-Secondary Student Supports Program (PSSSP) regular allocation and Budget 2019 enhancement funding. Each BC First Nation will receive this additional funding, based on a per-capita calculation.

The goal of this additional PSE funding is to ensure that First Nations post-secondary students have the supports they need to progress with their studies and to graduate. Existing PSSSP National Guidelines will apply.

### **POST-SECONDARY PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM**

For 2021-2022, BC Region received an additional \$3,691,220 for COVID-19 related Emergency PSPP funding. This funding will be administered by FNEESC, working with the Indigenous Adult and Higher Learning Association, in order to support First Nations and First Nations-established post-secondary institutes in delivering activities which remove barriers to access to post-secondary education and training due to COVID-19.

### **New Canada Student Financial Assistance program began August 1, 2021**

In 2020, the Government doubled Canada Student Grants (CSG) for one year. This investment helped cover approximately 90 per cent of the average undergraduate tuition in Canada for students who needed it the most.

As of August 1, 2021, the Government is **extending the doubling of CSG for an additional two years**. This means that the maximum amount available for the CSG will be up to \$6,000 for full-time students and \$10,000 for students with disabilities until July 31, 2023. The Government is also making permanent the flexibility for students to use their current year's income when applying for the CSG, so those in financial need will not have their previous workforce participation count against them.

### **More support for families**

Canada recently announced that families entitled to the Canada Child Benefit (CCB) for a child under the age of six with a net income of \$120,000 or less in 2020 **will receive one tax-free payment of \$300 per child**. Families entitled to the CCB for a child under the age of six with a net income above \$120,000 in 2020 will receive one tax-free payment of \$150 per child.

Through this measure, parents will receive a total of up to \$1,200 for each child under the age of six in addition to regular CCB payments in 2021. The first and second CCB Young Child Supplement payments of up to \$600 combined were issued on May 28, 2021. The third payment was issued July 20, 2021, and the final payment will be issued on October 29, 2021.

For the 2021-22 benefit year, the maximum annual CCB is \$6,833 per child under the age of six and \$5,765 per child aged six through 17, representing over \$350 more per child than when the CCB was first introduced in 2016.

## **DETAILED EXPLANATION OF EMERGENCY POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION FUNDING**

### **First Nations Funding Agreements (including 10-Year Grant recipients)**

- This emergency funding will be going out as FIXED contribution (including for 10-Year Grant recipients), and therefore subject to Post-Secondary Education Terms and Conditions.
- Reporting for this funding must be included in the Annual Register of Post-Secondary Education Students due August 31, 2022.
- The annual PSE allocation, the Budget 2019 Enhancement, and the Emergency Post-Secondary Education funding can all be included in the same report.

### **First Nations BLOCK Funding Agreements**

- Funding will automatically be provided, outside of block funding. Reporting for this funding must be included in the Annual Register of Post-Secondary Education Students due August 31, 2022.
- The annual PSE allocation, the Budget 2019 Enhancement, and the Emergency Post-Secondary Education funding can all be included in the same report.

### **First Nations with Treaties or Self-government Arrangements**

- The funding will be going out as FIXED contribution.
- You are required to report to Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada (CIRNAC) on the total number of students supported by the emergency funding

## Government extends COVID-19 benefits and business supports to support stronger economic recovery

Canada has **extended crucial COVID-19 support measures** in recognition that uneven economic reopening across regions and sectors means workers and businesses continue to need support. These extensions include:

- Extending the eligibility period for the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy, the Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy and Lockdown Support until October 23, 2021, and increasing the rate of support employers and organizations can receive during the period between August 29 and September 25, 2021.
- Extending the Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB), the Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit, and the Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit until October 23, 2021.
- Increasing the maximum number of weeks available for the CRB, by an additional four weeks, to a total of 54 weeks, at a rate of \$300 per week, and ensuring it is available to those who have exhausted their employment insurance benefits.

## Canada supports Indigenous jobs in forestry sector

The Government of Canada is providing **\$959,000 in funding to the BC First Nations Forestry Council** to support an Indigenous Forestry Skills Development and Job Recruitment Program.

This funding will launch the Indigenous Forestry Virtual Platform for sharing information through online advisory services, training sessions, virtual job forums, and regional focus groups. The virtual platform will have recruitment and promotional tools to connect Indigenous participants and industry partners to current and future workforce opportunities. This funding is expected to result in training for 500 Indigenous participants and to create at least 175 jobs by March 2023.

## HOW VACCINES ARE TESTED AND MONITORED

The Government of Canada has produced a short video to explain how vaccines are tested and monitored when first developed, during clinical trials, and after they have been approved for use.

The video uses illustrations, written text, and oral narration to explain how the federal, provincial and territorial governments work together once the vaccines have been distributed to monitor their safety and possible adverse effects.

The vaccine testing information is kept in a database which is maintained and monitored by the Public Health Agency of Canada.

How do we know vaccines are safe?



## PARTNER INFORMATION

### Additional financial support for wildfire evacuees

The BC government is teaming up with the Red Cross to provide households impacted by the wildfire with **additional support**. Each household impacted by the wildfire in the Lytton area, including the Village of Lytton and Lytton First Nation, will receive \$2,000. In addition, all other households in BC under mandatory evacuation order for longer than 10 consecutive days during the 2021 wildfire season will be eligible to receive a one-time payment of \$1,200.

Evacuees can access the support by registering with the Red Cross by calling 1-800-863-6582, between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. (Pacific time) seven days a week. The payments will be sent by e-transfer. The program will be open

## FIRESMART BC TOOLKIT

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

until August 31, 2021, for those impacted by the Lytton fire. For those under evacuation orders for more than 10 consecutive days, applications will be accepted until 30 days after the evacuation order is lifted.

### **Inclusive Toolkit Provides Mental Health and Wellness Supports for COVID-19**

In response to COVID-19, the FNHA has developed the **Mental Health and Wellness Toolkit** for COVID-19, which includes fact sheets designed to help support the mental health and wellness of Indigenous people during this time.

The resources also provide specific suggestions for dealing with the mental health and wellness issues raised by the pandemic. The complete list of resources can be found [here](#) and you can navigate to specific topics.

### **Blade Runners prepares youth at-risk for work**

Young at-risk and unemployed British Columbians who are looking for help starting a career will receive a boost, thanks to a **multi-year government investment in the Blade Runners program**. Services and ongoing supports, such as job coaching, work experience, on-the-job training and life-skills training, are offered to more than 4,000 unemployed, at-risk youth by community organizations, Indigenous-led organizations and First Nations throughout BC.

### **Province recognizes Indigenous leaders**

Congratulations to Chief Joe Alphonse of Tsilhqot'in Nation and Brenda Baptiste, Chair of Indigenous Tourism BC! They are two of the **16 people being appointed to the Order of British Columbia**, the Province's highest form of recognition. The ceremony is tentatively scheduled to be held at Government House in Victoria in December 2021.

### **COVID-19 RELIEF FUNDING FOR FIRST NATIONS AND FIRST NATION BUSINESSES**

The Aboriginal Financial Officers Association (AFOA) is hosting a webinar to present information regarding ISC's COVID-19 relief programs in BC Region. We will be going over eligibility, application process, funding levels, and further program details.

**August 10, 2021  
from 11:00am-12:00pm**

Join us for 30 minutes of presentations followed by a Q&A period.

You can register [here](#).



AFOA

Aboriginal Financial Officers Association

www.afoa.ca

1-877-337-3373

info@afaa.ca

1-877-337-3373

www.afoa.ca

1-877-337-3373

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## **COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS**

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

- **Splatsin** launched its mass emergency notification service. "During a critical event, such as a wildfire, every minute counts," said Splatsin Kukpi7 (Chief) and Secwepemc Tribal Chief Wayne Christian. "This new system is one more step in the right direction to help keep our people safe and healthy during emergencies."

[www.facebook.com/splatsinfn/posts/4390471687698557](https://www.facebook.com/splatsinfn/posts/4390471687698557)





## REGIONAL CONTACTS

We would also like to take this opportunity to share the contact information for our Executive Leadership Team should you or your team need to reach out regarding specific programs or services within their respective areas:

- **Regional Director General**  
Allyson Rowe / 604-355-3018
- **Associate Regional Director General**  
Bill Guerin / 604-803-9476
- **Residential Schools Information and Inquiries**  
David Russell / 604-817-2644 /  
Twitter: @davidsrussell
- **Director, Community Infrastructure**  
Paula Santos / 604-790-8451
- **Director, Programs and Partnerships**  
Wendy Rogers / 604-363-8117
- **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

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](mailto:covid19needs@fnha.ca)
- For FNHA and community health care providers (CHNs, HD, etc.) or CDE planning questions: [CDMgmt@fnha.ca](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:bcaandc.do@canada.ca).

## USEFUL LINKS

- **COVID-19 vaccines and Indigenous peoples**  
» [COVID-19 vaccines: get the facts](#)
- **COVID-19 Awareness Resources and Videos**
- **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**
- **New financial support** – Developed by ISC, this page provides financial support information for Indigenous individuals, students, businesses, organizations and communities.