

UPDATE FROM ISC BC REGION

UPDATE #87 / September 14, 2021

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

Good Afternoon,

Welcome to September, a month that brings cooler temperatures and the hope of new beginnings. Our thoughts are with you as your communities continue to respond to this year's wildfire season. Based on advice from emergency management and wildfire officials, British Columbia's provincial state of emergency, enacted to support provincial wildfire response, will expire today. The final All Chiefs' meeting of the wildfire season with Emergency Management BC and the First Nations Leadership Council is planned for Friday, September 17. Then on October 21 and 22, the First Nations Leadership Council is hosting an Emergency Management Forum to discuss national and regional emergency management strategies with emergency management professionals and with experts in the field. You can register for the virtual event through the First Nations Public Service Secretariat [website](#).

Finally, with COVID-19 cases on the rise again we encourage you to remind members to follow health recommendations. This is especially important for those First Nations making decisions about the operation of their schools in the best interests of their students, schools, and communities. You'll find information from the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and First Nations Schools Association (FNSA) later in this update. Thank you and stay safe.

Those wishing to make a financial donation to support wildfire recovery 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.

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.

PROOF OF VACCINATION AND THE BC VACCINE CARD

You now need proof of vaccination to access some events, services and businesses. The easiest way to show proof is using the BC Vaccine Card. [Get your card here](#).

The requirement applies to all people born in 2009 or earlier (12+) and includes:

- Indoor ticketed sporting events with more than 50 people
- Restaurants and cafes
- Movie theatres
- Gyms
- Indoor organized events with 50 or more people. For example: wedding and funeral receptions (outside of a funeral home), organized parties, conferences, trade fairs and workshops

Note: Proof of vaccination is not required to vote in-person in the September 20 federal election or at advance polling places.



COVID-19 IN BC



UPDATES

Frequently Asked Questions from the All Chiefs Town Hall on Wildfires

Here are some of the frequently asked questions we have received from First Nations leadership at our Wildfire Townhall series and during previous Fire seasons.

How do I get information about the status of fires in my area?

- For current information on fire danger ratings, regional fire prohibitions and wildfire activity call 1-888-336-7378 (3FOREST)
- For emergency response support due to an emergency event, contact EMBC's 24/7 Emergency Coordination Centre at 1-800-663-3456
- Follow [@EmergencyInfoBC](#) on Twitter or visit their [website](#) for information on evacuation alerts/orders and status updates regarding emergency events
- Report wildfire sightings or the presence of smoke to BC's Wildfire Management Branch at 1-800-663-5555 or *5555 on most cellular phones.
- Keep up-to-date on the provincial wildfire situation by visiting [BC Wildfire's website](#) or viewing the [BC Wildfire Dashboard](#).
- You can add a layer to the map that shows the location of all First Nations by clicking on the layers icon and selecting *British Columbia Indian Reserves and Band Names*.
- You can find contact information for each of the six EMBC regions on their [website](#).

What flexibilities in regards to communication and reporting deadlines is ISC offering for First Nations facing or under threat from wildfires?

In response to the unprecedented pressures and challenges First Nations are facing at this time due to wildfires, ISC BC Region has alleviated any pressure First Nations may be feeling to meet reporting requirement deadlines set out in funding agreements. The safety and well-being of you and your community is ISC's first priority. If you have questions, please contact your Funding Services Officer.

In regards to communications sent regarding reporting, ISC has informed regional staff which communities are facing or are under evacuation orders to reduce non-urgent requests made to those communities unless the communities are reaching out for assistance.

FNESS has established an Emergency Management web portal to support communications with First Nations throughout BC which can be [accessed here](#) that includes information regarding current evacuation alerts and orders for First Nations communities in BC and other helpful resources.

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](#).

● **Will the federal government help pay for damaged or destroyed homes in First Nations communities to be rebuilt?**

Yes. The Government of Canada has programs in place that will provide assistance to First Nations who have been affected by emergency events.

After the immediate danger and response is over, ISC will work with First Nations and the Province to support the development of recovery plans. Resources are available to undertake the recovery work including any necessary capacity to develop the recovery plan.

All the impacts to the community should be detailed in the recovery plan; including everything that needs rebuilding or remediation. Recovery plans should also identify areas of insurance coverage.

● **Who is responsible for putting together the recovery plans and claims?**

The affected First Nation is responsible for developing their recovery plans and associated claims. ISC and EMBC will work with the First Nation and provide support and guidance.

A First Nation community may be eligible to establish a **Community Recovery position** to support rebuilding efforts including developing a recovery plan. If a recovery plan is not required, ISC and EMBC will work with First Nations to support recovery needs. For additional information, ISC can be contacted at bcaandc.do@canada.ca and EMBC at 1-800-663-3456.

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 Allocations

In June 2021, \$26.3 million for the Indigenous Community Support Fund (ICSF) was provided in direct allocations to First Nations in British Columbia. An additional \$26.3 million will be provided in October.

ICSF funds may be utilized to meet the needs of both on and off-reserve members. First Nations can apply for additional funding, if community need exceeds the allocation provided. The intake for needs-based applications is ongoing and requests will continue to be accepted as long as resources are available.

It is recommended that First Nations submit a single consolidated application with the needs of all departments. First Nation Administrators can help to confirm the request for funding is based on need with no other funding sources available.

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 proposals to aadnc.isbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca. If you have any questions, please contact your Funding Services Officer.

Cultural Spaces in Indigenous Communities Program

The **Cultural Spaces in Indigenous Communities Program** is a contribution program that supports Indigenous communities in creating, re-establishing and revitalizing cultural spaces. The program offers opportunities for Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals to access their cultures, languages and strengthen their identities.

Eligible projects and initiatives include the construction or revitalization of spaces that support cultural activities within their communities. Establishing new cultural spaces includes any costs related to acquiring permits, construction plans, feasibility studies and acquisition of raw materials and personnel. The revitalization of existing cultural spaces includes renovations or retrofits of existing cultural spaces to enhance its quality and accessibility.

Applicants must demonstrate how the proposed project creates or promotes opportunities for girls, women or 2SLGBTQQIA+ people to access their culture and language.

Possible projects include, but are not limited to:

- long houses
- women's lodges
- powwow grounds
- heritage parks
- cultural centers
- healing spaces
- facilities to support cultural ceremonies, teachings and contact with Elders

WHO CAN APPLY

- First Nations, Métis and Inuit section 35 rights-bearing groups
- Indigenous groups with a signed self-government agreement or modern treaty
- any corporation, foundation, association or other type of organization identified by an eligible recipient, to act as their agent or representative

HOW AND WHEN TO APPLY

Details on the application process will be available in fall 2021.

If you have any questions about the program, please feel free to contact the Cultural Spaces in Indigenous Communities Program team at aadnc.csicp-pecca.aandc@canada.ca.

Canada releases *Adapting to the Impacts of Climate Change in Canada: an update on the National Adaptation Strategy*

The extreme heatwave and wildfires this summer underscore the urgency of adapting to climate change. Environment and Climate Change Canada recently released a report entitled *Adapting to the Impacts of Climate Change in Canada: an update on the National Adaptation Strategy*.

The report builds on a first round of conversations with provinces and territories, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, Indigenous representatives, and youth organizations to identify the strategy's objectives and principles.

PARTNER INFORMATION

Health and Safety Considerations for Return to School

The First Nations Education Steering Committee and the First Nations Schools Association have shared the recently released public health guidance from the Ministry of Education and the BC Centre for Disease Control and based on those resources are developing two process documents for First Nations schools that will be released soon:

- **COVID-19 Protocols for First Nations School Administrators: Management of Illness and Exposures at School**, developed in consultation with the First Nations Health Authority and BC Centre for Disease Control based on materials created by the BC Ministry of Education.
- **A First Nations Schools Reopening Considerations and Template** resource including health and safety considerations adapted from current public health guidance for the context of First Nations schools.

Extra supports for student, staff mental wellness

The Province of BC **has announced** it is investing in expanded mental health programs and services as the new school year begins.

Schools and districts can use the one-time, pandemic-related mental health funding for a variety of programs and supports to help build resilience and emotional, physical and mental well-being. For example, funds may be used to support compassionate-systems leadership and trauma-informed practice training for educators, additional mental health resources and increased access to experts.

Students can experience increased opportunities to connect with Elders and Knowledge Keepers to provide additional social, cultural and emotional support, peer-to-peer supports and initiatives using outdoor, natural spaces for lessons.

More mental health resources are available for students, staff and families through Erase (expect respect and a safe education), a program focused on building safe and caring school communities. The [Erase site](#) offers tools to empower students, educators and families dealing with complex issues like mental health, racism, substance use and bullying. The site also includes connections to mental health services and resources.

Train to be a teacher assistant with Indigenous competencies

The Province is providing more than \$400,000 to the Aware Society in New Westminster to deliver [skills training and certification courses](#), in two intakes, of its Teacher's Assistant Certificate – Inclusion of Indigenous Cultural Competencies program.

Participants will receive 19 weeks of employability, essential and life skills training, three weeks of work experience with local employers and two weeks follow-up support to assist in their job search. They will also receive teacher assistant certification training, as well as Occupational First Aid Level 1, Foodsafe and violence prevention certificates.

Financial support, emergency feed available for BC farmers, ranchers

The governments of BC and Canada are [providing financial support](#) for BC farmers and ranchers who have suffered losses through wildfires, record heat and prolonged drought in 2021.

The support is being delivered through several programs to help sustain farmers' and ranchers' livelihoods, family farms and contributions to the province's food security.

A federal-provincial [AgriRecovery response is being created](#) to help producers who are experiencing extraordinary recovery expenses due to fire and drought.

The Province has also taken steps to provide farmers and ranchers with additional and immediate support by [implementing "late participation" in the federal-provincial AgriStability program for 2021](#). The program provides funding to farmers who have experienced income declines due to crop or livestock losses or market conditions. Late participation means BC farmers not enrolled for the 2021 program year can apply to enroll until Dec. 31, 2022.

Farmers enrolled in the AgriStability 2021 program year will be eligible to receive a much higher interim payment within a few weeks of completing the application forms. Increasing the maximum interim payment from 50% to 75% of the estimated final payment will improve cashflow for farmers and help them continue operations this year.

BC ranchers and farmers who have suffered a decrease to their available feed supply and require emergency support as a result of this summer's wildfires may also be eligible to receive hay through the Emergency Feed Program established by the Province, ensuring continued care for their animals.

The 2021 [Wildfire Emergency Feed Program](#) will provide emergency feed support for up to 14 days for commercial livestock businesses unable to access their normal feed supply, or if their current forage has been burned or is unsafe. The program will also support businesses forced to use forage or feed resources normally required to feed livestock through the rest of their yearly production cycle.

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.

USEFUL LINKS

COVID-19

- **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.

Wildfire Preparedness

- **FireSmart toolkit**
- **Get Prepared for a Wildfire in British Columbia**
- **B.C. Wildfire Dashboard**
- **Your Emergency Preparedness Guide** – this guide explains the steps Canadians should take to become better prepared for emergencies. Included are a Family Emergency Plan template and list of emergency kit items.

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
- **Acting Director, Child and Family Services**
William McArthur / 604-317-3548
- **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.