

COVID-19 MESSAGE FROM ISC BC REGION

UPDATE #82 / June 11, 2021

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



Good Afternoon,

We send you this edition acknowledging the trauma to your communities from last month's discovery of the unmarked graves at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School. Many of our staff in BC Region are also your members, or come from Indigenous communities across Canada and share your sorrow on a personal level. Regardless of heritage, staff in BC Region work here because of our commitment to listening to, and collaborating with Indigenous partners in a meaningful and respectful manner on the path to healing and reconciliation. There are no words to describe the collective grief we share with you.

Six years after the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission report*, there is a stark reality and a new understanding of Canada's role in supporting the Indian Residential School system. Last week, legislation was passed to enact a National Day for Truth and Reconciliation. The new national day will honour survivors, their families and communities. It will also ensure that public commemoration of the tragic and painful history and legacy of residential schools remains a vital component of the reconciliation process. The commemoration date also coincides with Orange Shirt Day, September 30.

While this continues to be a difficult time, especially with the pandemic still part of our daily lives, there is hopeful **news** from the provincial government. With an increase in vaccinations and a decline in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations, summer plans are looking brighter. On June 15, we expect the Province of BC to launch Phase 2 of the **BC Restart Plan**, which will lift travel restrictions and expand gatherings among some of the guidelines.

Also, we are pleased to share that over 79 per cent of adults in First Nations and Inuit communities have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine (as of June 2). According to the First Nations Health Authority's **Community Situation Report**, as of June 3, 2021, more than 94,800 First Nations people (and some non-First Nations people living in or near First Nations) have received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. More than 30,000 First Nations people have received a second dose.

This is terrific progress, but we encourage everyone to continue following the advice of public health officials: wash your hands, practice physical distancing and wear a mask in public spaces or if you cannot keep your distance from others.

We appreciate all your efforts to support the health, safety and wellbeing of your community members. Thank you!

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

As shared in [Update 81](#), the Government of Canada announced the next allotment of the **Indigenous Community Support Fund (ICSF)**, which helps Indigenous communities and organizations prevent, prepare and respond to COVID-19. Approximately \$26.3 million is being provided directly to BC First Nations this month through amendments to your funding agreement. No application is required. You have likely received the amendment this week and we ask that you return it signed at your earliest convenience so that the funds can be deposited to your account.

Nationally, a further \$360 million in needs-based COVID-19 support for Indigenous communities and organizations is available, including \$150 million to support Indigenous peoples living in urban centres and First Nations living off reserve, which will be allocated through a **request process**. The request process for needs-based support recently reopened and Indigenous communities and organizations can request funding now. There is no deadline to apply. Communities who need funding are encouraged to send their requests for additional resources when needs arise. Requests will be assessed for eligibility and prioritized on a case-by-case needs-basis and will continue to be accepted and evaluated until identified funds are exhausted.

If you have any questions please direct them to aadnc.isbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca.

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

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 Government of Canada has created the Own-Source Revenue in Indigenous Communities Initiative (OSRICI). The **call for applications is now open** and communities can apply to access funding.

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

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.

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](#).

Residential Schools Missing Children – Community Support Funding

As part of its response to the six-year anniversary of the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report, the Government of Canada has announced it is ready to distribute \$27 million in pre-announced funding dedicated to:

- locating, documenting, maintaining and commemorating burial sites associated with former residential schools
- responding to family wishes to commemorate or memorialize their losses and the children's final resting places

This funding will also support Indigenous partners and communities in developing community plans, conducting research and gathering local knowledge, accessing professional archaeological investigation services to identify and delineate burial sites, and to memorialize, commemorate and return their loved ones' remains home, as requested.

For more information, please visit the [Residential Schools Missing Children – Community Support Funding website](#).

STAFFING UPDATE

David Russell, Director for Lands and Economic Development, has accepted an assignment with ISC's new national Residential School response coordination team and will serve as BC Region's lead on topics related to burial sites and the ongoing legacy of residential schools. David may be contacted by email at david.russell@canada.ca or by phone at 604-817-2644 for information and inquiries.

While David is on assignment, Angela McCarthy will act as Director. Many of you will remember Angela from her role as Acting Director Funding Services from 2018-2020. We're pleased to welcome Angela back to the team. You can reach her at angela.mccarthy@canada.ca or 604-209-1251.

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.



Northern Native Broadcasting named as a finalist in the Vaccine Community Innovation Challenge

As we shared in [Update 77](#), the Government of Canada invited individuals and/or groups across Canada to help promote vaccine confidence in their communities through the [Vaccine Community Innovation Challenge](#).

[Northern Native Broadcasting](#) is one of the **20 finalists** announced by the Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Health on [June 7](#).

Their project – Protecting Each Other Now for a Better Tomorrow – will feature people of different genders, ages and Nations from communities in Central and Northern BC, including Tsimshian, Nisga'a, Haida, Gitksan, Wet'suwet'en, Haisla, Carrier Sekani, Heiltsuk, Nuxalk and Dene Thah Nations. Using testimonials from trusted voices in First Nations, the project will stress that through vaccination people will be able to safely see their friends and family again. The campaign will feature Elders from different Nations sharing the benefits of the vaccine via radio, video and social media in Indigenous and English languages. Youth Indigenous Vaccine Ambassadors will also reach their communities via popular social media.

The 20 finalists who have been selected will each receive \$25,000 to create and implement their campaign. At the end of the campaign, one winner will receive a grand prize of \$100,000.

Interchangeability of authorized COVID-19 vaccines

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) has [updated its recommendations on COVID-19 vaccination administration](#). In their updated NACI rapid response: Interchangeability of COVID-19 vaccines guidelines, the NACI recommends that:

- Individuals who have received the AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD vaccine as a first dose, can be offered the AstraZeneca/COVISHIELD vaccine or an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine as a second dose unless contraindicated;
- Individuals who have received an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine as a first dose should only be offered an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine as a second dose. Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna are both mRNA COVID-19 vaccines.

The recommendations are based on current international studies on the safety and immune response to mixing vaccines. Canada's Chief Medical Officer of Health fully supports these recommendations.

New Canada Recovery Hiring Program and Extension of Business Support Programs

The Government of Canada recently announced that the **new Canada Recovery Hiring Program would be available retroactively to June 6, 2021**. This proposed program would provide a subsidy of up to 50 per cent of eligible salary or wages. It would be available to eligible employers who have experienced qualifying revenue declines so they can hire more workers, increase workers' hours, or increase wages. Like with the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy and Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy, businesses would be able to access the program through the Canada Revenue Agency.

Canada also detailed the proposed extension of business support programs that have served as a lifeline to Canadian businesses through the pandemic. This includes the proposed extension of the Wage Subsidy, Rent Subsidy, and Lockdown Support until September 25, 2021. These programs are currently set to expire this month.

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](#).

COVID-19 PREVENTION AND RISKS: LIFE AFTER THE VACCINATION

As more people get vaccinated and COVID-19 case numbers go down, it will become increasingly **safer to lift restrictive public health measures**. Lifting restrictions this summer will be a decision made at the provincial 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.

#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**.



PARTNER INFORMATION

Additional funding for business recovery grants

The Province is adding **millions in additional funding** to keep the **Small and Medium Sized Business Recovery Grant** operating until the expected start of Step 3 of BC's Restart plan on July 1, 2021.

To date, the program has committed \$290 million to support businesses impacted by the pandemic. After applications close on July 2, 2021, the total investment of the Small and Medium Sized Business Recovery Grant program is expected to reach \$430 million. As of June 3, 2021, more than 10,000 grants have been awarded to BC businesses and over 41% of these grants have been awarded to tourism-related businesses.

Joint Report on First Nations Health and Wellness

First Nations Population Health and Wellness Agenda (PHWA), a joint report from the Office of the Provincial Health Officer and the Office of the Chief Medical Officer is now available. It is the fruit of a unique and multi-year partnership between the province and the First Nations Health Authority, providing an eagle-eye view of the health and wellness of First Nations people living throughout BC.

"The PHWA is much more than just a health status report," explains Acting Chief Medical Officer Dr. Shannon McDonald. "It is an act of self-determination. First Nations are controlling our own data and telling our own story in a way that reflects our strengths and resilience."

Indigenous Tourism BC offers free virtual workshops to celebrate National Indigenous History Month

In celebration of National Indigenous History Month, **Indigenous Tourism BC** is hosting **three free online workshops**. The workshops are intended to promote support for local businesses, raise awareness of the province's exceptional Indigenous travel experiences, and highlight the many ways tourism supports revitalization of Indigenous cultures.

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.

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](#) 

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

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

- For students across the Province, June means graduation. Kukpi7 (Chief) Wayne Christian of Splitsin delivers a graduation message to Indigenous students in School District #83. [Kukpi7's message to '21 grads of SD83 - YouTube](#)

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](#)
- [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.iscbccovid19.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

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.