

Indigenous Services Canada BC Region Frequently Asked Questions – COVID-19 in First Nations Communities (As of March 25, 2020)

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INTRODUCTION TO ALL USING THIS Q&A DOCUMENT

This is an evergreen document to assist you in providing timely responses. Should you be unable to answer a particular question (that's okay), please take the question, the First Nation and the name of the caller down.

Thank you for your question. I don't have that information available at this time. I will note your question, take down your name and get back to you as soon as possible.

Please also familiarize yourself with Directorates and what their respective responsibilities are so you can triage questions accordingly.

Here is a link to directorates and respective Directors: <http://intranet-rcaanc-cirnac/GetGCDocsDocument/15995734/overview>.

We are working to provide answers as quickly as possible. We recognize the unique challenges faced by many First Nations in British Columbia and we're striving to remain nimble so that we can address those challenges as they arise.

Should you or your team need to reach out regarding specific programs or services within their respective areas, please contact the Executive Leadership Team:

- Catherine Lappe, Regional Director General: 604-340-7703
- Bill Guerin, Associate Regional Director General: 604-803-9476
- Paula Santos, Director Community Infrastructure: 604-790-8451
- Wendy Rogers, Director Programs and Partnerships: 604-363-8117
- David Russell, Director Lands and Economic Development: 604-817-2644
- Angela McCarthy, A/Director Funding Services: 604-209-1251
- Chiara Taylor, Director Child and Family Services: 778-668-9067
- James Moxon, Director Community Development: 604-367-8241
- Viola Gressel, Director Corporate Services: 604-367-8136
- Harold Powell, A/Director Corporate Services: 604-219-1737

For any COVID-19 health-related questions, please contact the First Nations Health Authority as follows:

- For general inquiries - COVID19@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, call 811 or your primary care provider.

General Overview and Responsibilities

Q1. Who is Indigenous Services Canada working with to protect Indigenous communities in response to COVID-19?

The Public Health Agency of Canada along with public health authorities at all levels of government across the country have been working together with provinces, territories and international partners including the World Health Organization to actively monitor the situation.

Global efforts are focused on containment of the outbreak and the prevention of further spread. The federal, provincial, territorial public health response plan for biological events has been activated to ensure a coordinated response across Canada.

Q2. Under what jurisdiction are health services provided to Indigenous people?

The provision of health services to Indigenous peoples in Canada is an area of shared jurisdiction. Under the Canada Health Act, provincial and territorial governments provide insured health services to all of their residents including First Nations and Inuit.

The Government of Canada is generally responsible for the provision of services for First Nations on reserves across provinces in Canada and provide primary care services in remote and isolated First Nations communities where there are no provincial services available.

There is a distinction in British Columbia where in 2013, the British Columbia First Nations Health Authority took over responsibilities that were previously held by the federal government for primary care and public health services across all First Nations communities in B.C.

PROTECTING COMMUNITY HEALTH

Q3. Is it safe for communities under a boil-water advisory to wash their hands with tap water? (from FNHIB Q&As)

Water remains safe to use for hand washing purposes during boil water advisories and do not consume advisories. However, if a community is under a do not use advisory, the water is not safe for any use. Instead, ISC advises the use of bottled water with soap or hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol to wash your hands.

General BC Health Information (FNHA material)

Q4. Where can I get more information to help prepare my community against COVID-19?

The First Nation Health Authority (FNHA) works with communities to prepare response plans to pandemics. Their website has information about the preparation of plans and support from the FNHA. Please visit www.fnha.ca/about/news-and-events/news/information-on-novel-coronavirus or canada.ca/coronavirus-info-indigenous. For any COVID-19 health-related questions, please contact the First Nations Health Authority through the following links:

- For general inquiries - COVID19@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, call 811 or your primary care provider.

You can also call 1-888-COVID19 to access the BC provincial line for non-medical information about COVID-19. As well as the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) at 1-833-784-4397.

Q5. How do I request supplies such as hand sanitizer?

To request supplies such as hand sanitizer, please email FNHA at CDMgmt@fnha.ca. For any other COVID-19 health-related questions, please refer to the following links:

- For general inquiries - COVID19@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, call 811 or your primary care provider.

Q6. How are issues with accessing support lines (811, 1-888-COVID19) being remedied? Can a First Nations-specific phone line and/or information app be created?

The Province of British Columbia has said is working to address 811 response times. Health Link BC has also created a self-assessment tool for people who may be

experiencing symptoms at <https://covid19.thrive.health/> BC COVID-19 Symptom Self-Assessment Tool

First Nations-specific health information is available through the First Nations Health Authority in British Columbia through the following links:

- For general inquiries - COVID19@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, call 811 or your primary care provider.

You can also call 1-888-COVID19 to access the BC provincial line for non-medical information about COVID-19. As well as the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) at 1-833-784-4397.

Q7. Who do I notify if there is a probable case of COVID-19 infection in my community?

The First Nation Health should be notified at CDMgmt@fnha.ca. You should also send notice to ISC BC Region by email to aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca. Our ISC email account is monitored closely. This will allow us to coordinate support with FNHA and other partners and reach out to your community to discuss what supports are needed.

Q8. How do I access non-insured health benefits?

The First Nations Health Authority provides non-insured health benefits for registered individuals in BC. They can be contacted at 604-693-6500 or (toll-free) 1-866-913-0033 or info@fnha.ca. Children under the age of 19 who are eligible for registration can submit requests for health benefits through Jordan's Principle by contacting 1-855-JP-Child (1-855-572-4453).

Support on Mental Wellness

Q9. I have concerns about the mental health of my community members. Who can help them?

Community members can call the First Nations Health Authority's 24/7 culturally safe KUU-US Crisis Response Services at 1-800-588-8717 (or 250-723-2040 for child and youth / 250-723-4050 for adult and Elder). Another option is the Hope for Wellness Help Line (1-855-242-3310). Online chat is available at www.hopeforwellness.ca. For any other COVID-19 health-related questions, or for further information, the First Nations Health Authority would like you to use the following:

- For general inquiries - COVID19@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, call 811 or your primary care provider.

Medical Equipment

Q10. Our community urgently needs medical equipment (five each of hand held thermometers and five hazmat suits) where do we go for help?

In BC, the First Nations Health Authority is leading on health and clinical aspects of Coronavirus response. FNHA issued the following communique, which includes an email address for Personal Protective Equipment and other health related requests: COVID19needs@fnha.ca. Here is the link to the communique which speaks to the FNHA's processes and eligible items:

<https://www.fnha.ca/about/news-and-events/news/covid-19-bc-first-nations-community-guide-for-additional-supports-needed>

Indigenous Services Canada is advancing funds to all First Nations under the Emergency Management and Income Assistance programs for non-health emergency needs. The Department has also set up the following telephone line and email address for any coronavirus-related questions or needs: 604-209-9709
aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca

Q11. What supports are in place for remote communities that may be short-staffed or don't have access to equipment (i.e., respirators)?

In BC, the First Nations Health Authority is working with regional, provincial and federal partners in the health and health emergency management sectors to ensure that communities have access to appropriate care. If communities have specific concerns about access to care relating to COVID-19, they can connect with their FNHA Regional Team or covid19@fnha.ca.

Q12. What additional supports have been provided to enhance public health measures in community?

On March 11, 2020, the Government of Canada announced more than \$1 billion dollars for enhanced public health measures to ensure the health and safety of Canadians.

To support the immediate response to the outbreak, this funding includes \$100 million to support federal public health measures such as enhanced surveillance, increased testing at the National Microbiology Laboratory, and ongoing support for preparedness in First Nations and Inuit communities.

As such the FNHA will be supporting communities to identify their associated COVID-19 costs. The mechanism for funding is still being determined. FNHA will support First Nations to access resources as needed including through the following methods:

- Coordinate service delivery and supports on behalf of communities
- Purchasing activity to procure items needed for COVID-19 response as collectively we have purchasing power with medical equipment suppliers through the provincial process.

Q13. **How can First Nations in BC identify and access additional supports?**

It is important for all communities to be prepared by updating their pandemic plans. Communities will be able access additional resources in order to:

- Respond to critical requirements to activate their pandemic plans including items such as:
 - E-health and connectivity requirements
 - Incremental funding required for continuity of service delivery funded through contribution agreements
 - Reimbursement of costs incurred related to COVID-19 response
 - Other requests for COVID-19 related funding
- Support an effective allocation of the scarce public health and primary health care capacity to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Align with scientific evidence as determined by a medical officer of health.
- Be deployed in the short-term to address immediate needs.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for COVID-related primary health care activities, and possible transfer of individuals with respiratory symptoms can be requested from FNHA if they are not accessible through regular procurement channels, or provincial channels.

Please see the FNHA website for the PPE request form and process:

<https://www.fnha.ca/Documents/FNHA-COVID-19-BC-First-Nations-Community-Guide-for-Additional-Supports-Needed.pdf>.

Note that other additional non-health related expenses may be covered through the Emergency Management and Preparedness Fund administered by Indigenous Services Canada. The Emergency Management and Preparedness coordinator can be contacted at: 604-209-9709, or email at aadnc.bcemu.aandc@canada.ca.

Emergency Response

Q14. **What's the difference between State of emergency and an emergency Operations Centre.**

First Nations may choose to declare a state of local emergency but it is not a requirement to access support. While the Emergency Program Act does not directly apply on-reserve, a declaration by a First Nation indicates the intent to exercise the emergency powers listed in the Emergency Program Act. See

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/local-emergency-programs/guidelines>

An Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) is essentially a way of organizing response efforts. EOCs are normally activated at the request of the Incident Commander or senior First Nations officials to provide overall jurisdictional direction and control, coordination and resource support. An EOC normally turns to the EMBC PREOC for support when all of their resources are exhausted or they require coordination that is outside of their jurisdiction. See <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/public-safety-and-emergency->

[services/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/local-government/eoc_operational_guidelines.pdf](https://www.fnha.ca/AboutSite/NewsAndEventsSite/NewsSite/Documents/FNHA-services/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/local-government/eoc_operational_guidelines.pdf)

Q15. How should I track COVID19 related expenditures?

For health-related expenditures, the First Nations Health Authority has provided a template for all First Nations in BC to track pandemic-related costs. Please see

<https://www.fnha.ca/AboutSite/NewsAndEventsSite/NewsSite/Documents/FNHA-Template-To-Identify-Needs-for-COVID-19.pdf>

For non health-related COVID questions, please email aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca and we will ask your Funding Services Officer to work with you. If you know who your Funding Services Officer is, you can contact him/her directly.

Q16. Will the [orders the Province of BC announced on March 26](#) include measures to restrict travel to First Nation communities?

The Province of BC acknowledges that it is a challenge to add a provincial order over something that is not provincial jurisdiction. The Province recognizes the jurisdiction of First Nations as outlined in federal legislation, and that these provincial orders do not override that jurisdiction.

The Province supports the desires of First Nations to minimize the risk of entry of COVID-19 into their communities, and is prepared to consider additional steps to support their measures to control entry.

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE

Child and Family Services

Q17. Does ISC consider Child and Family Services (CFS) essential?

The delivery of CFS services is considered essential, and includes ensuring the safety of children and families, as well as providing maintenance payments.

If a Delegated Aboriginal Agency is unsure what services are essential from a child protection perspective, we encourage them to reach out to Ministry of Child and Family Development in order to confirm and ensure that children and families remain safe and receive essential services during this unprecedented time.

Prevention and protection services are considered essential services and Agencies are expected to respond to urgent calls, or to emergent calls in relation to children in care or at risk of being taken into care.

Q18. How is BC Region staff communicating with the Delegated Aboriginal Agencies?

Regular updates from the National and Regional offices are being sent to all Delegated Aboriginal Agencies (DAAs) through the Directors Forum Secretariat. Child and Family Services (CFS) Program Advisors have reached out to all DAA Executive Directors to confirm their emergency operational plans have been developed and/or implemented. CFS staff will participate on Partnership Secretariat weekly calls to respond to questions on service provision and other program related issues identified by participants.

Q19. What if Delegated Aboriginal Agencies have unforeseen expenses related to COVID-19 that were not included in their needs-based business plans? Will they be covered?

Additional expenses related to COVID-19 incurred by the agencies will be discussed and reviewed with agencies on a case by case basis. Some additional costs may include:

- placements of children (particularly where Elders are the caregivers or in homes with large numbers of people staying there);
- work from home supports for staff (computers, phones, meeting software);
- additional human resources as some staff members will not be able to respond to calls due to personal situations arising from the shutdown of daycares etc.;
- safety and wellness supplies and supports for workers; and, supports for prevention and cultural workers to modify their services to support families to avert crisis.

Jordan's Principle

Q20. Can I still access Jordan's Principle at this time?

Jordan's Principle is an essential service and First Nation families and children can continue to submit social, education and health requests to us by contacting the following:

- **ISC National Call Centre** (open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week).
- 1-855-JP-Child (1-855-572-4453, aadnc.infopubs.aandc@canada.ca)
- **ISC BC Region:** 778-951-0716, sac.principedejordancb-bcjordansprinciple.isc@canada.ca
- For all payment inquiries: sac.pailementsprincipedejordancb-bcjordansprinciplepayments.isc@canada.ca
- **First Nations Health Authority Child and Youth Systems Navigators:** 1-866-913-0033, jordans.principle@fnha.ca

Q21. What if I am unable to access my approved services, products and supports at this time due to COVID-19 delays and cancellations?

We understand that service providers and/or retailers may be closed during the COVID-19 pandemic and this could cause a delay in accessing the required product or service. Please be assured that this approval notification can be used once your service provider or retailer is back in operation. However, please note the approval is not transferrable to any product or service other than what has been approved.

Schools and Childcare

Q22. Who makes the decision to close schools on reserve? What about childcare facilities?

(Italicized info below is from FNEHC email)

Decisions regarding closures are made by your community's leadership. Those decisions and actions are based on their assessment of your community's needs, recommendations from the First Nations Health Authority and the Provincial Ministry of Health, in consultation with the First Nations Steering Committee.

Schools

Decisions regarding the operation of First Nations schools are made by individual First Nations through their established governance structures. At this time, the First Nations Education Steering Committee and the First Nations Schools Association are recommending local decisions be made in keeping with direction provided by the BC Minister of Education based on the current advice of public health officials.

Based on the direction of the Public Health Officer, on March 17, 2020 the BC Ministry of Education announced the suspension of classes in BC public schools and independent schools until further notice. This decision was based on the growing number of COVID-19 cases throughout British Columbia and world-wide and ensuring the safety of students,

staff, and communities. The announcement follows similar decisions in all other provinces and territories and by First Nations for First Nations schools in a number of provinces.

For links to the most current details and updates from FNEESC and FNSA, please visit www.fnesc.ca/covid19

Childcare facilities

Decisions to close childcare programs are also to be reached by community leadership based on the current advice of public health officials. As of March 20, 2020, BC's Public Health Officer advised that childcare centres remain open as an essential support to health-care workers fighting the pandemic on the front lines.

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) issued guidance on February 28, 2020 for the management of COVID-19 in childcare settings. It noted that factors that may influence a decision to close childcare programs include but are not limited to the priority of minimizing social disruption and child safety; and, the epidemiology and transmissibility of the disease. More information is available online: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/guidance-schools-childcare-programs.html>

ENSURING BASIC NECESSITIES

Income Assistance

Q23. Low income families in my community need additional help as we try to prepare for against COVID-19. Can ISC provide the help they need?

All First Nations in British Columbia can access the emergency/disaster supplement funding available to support communities under the Income Assistance program. Our intention is to provide the same level of funding as that of the Province of BC who have recently expanded eligibility to assist during this period. Additional information will follow in the coming days. In the meantime, should Band Social Development Workers have questions concerning Income Assistance, they can call the BSDW Policy Support Line at 1-888-440-4080, or contact ISC by e-mail: aadnc.tsdbsooutien-bsdwsupport-bc.aandc@canada.ca. The BSDW Policy Support Line is available Monday to Friday, 9:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m.

Q24. I'm concerned my band social developments staff may not be able to handle the increased demand for Income Assistance especially if one were to get sick. What supports are available from the department should we need help providing this essential service?

Supports are available through Indigenous Services Canada to help First Nations in the delivery of essential services.

For example the Department would support any additional resourcing needs through the emergency/disaster supplements we provide. We could also consider any additional costs for service delivery on a case by case basis.

For more information please contact the BSDW Policy Support Line, by phone (toll-free): 1-888-440-4080, or by email: aadnc.tsdbsooutien-bsdwsupport-bc.aandc@canada.ca.

Q25. Members on social assistance just get the basics. Will we be giving extra funding so the social assistance for essential food and materials during this pandemic?

A Covid-19 amendment detailing the allocation methodology was sent to each First Nation on March 21, 2020 to advance funds for the Emergency Management and Income Assistance programs. Given that we have received your response to that email you should expect a direct deposit by April 1, 2020. ISC BC Region is transferring funds to ensure First Nations in BC are able to respond to emerging needs and incremental costs such as Emergency Operation Centre costs (e.g. overtime), shipping of food or other necessities, costs for continuation of essential services (e.g. that preserve life, health and basic societal functioning), social and cultural supports, and costs to meet the needs of vulnerable persons in isolation who are unable to access usual support networks. This initial amount is not a total allocation per community but just an advance to assist communities to get started.

For Income Assistance, ISC BC Region is advancing emergency/disaster supplement funding under Special Needs to provide additional funds for items such as food and supplies. The emergency/disaster supplement mirrors the Province of BC policy and will be provided to a family unit that is eligible for income assistance, disability assistance, medical services only or hardship assistance and for children in home of a relative. For communities with a surplus in your Special Needs budget, you may use this budget to enhance the emergency/disaster supplement. If there is an identified need that is not covered by the emergency/disaster supplement funding or would like to know more information, please contact the BSDW Policy Support Line, by phone (toll-free): 1-888-440-4080, or by email: aadnc.tsdbsoutien-bsdwsupport-bc.aandc@canada.ca.

As well, ISC BC Region is transferring Emergency Management funds to ensure First Nations in BC are able to respond to emerging needs and incremental costs such as Emergency Operation Centre costs (e.g. overtime), shipping of food or other necessities, costs for continuation of essential services (e.g. that preserve life, health and basic societal functioning), social and cultural supports, and costs to meet the needs of vulnerable persons in isolation who are unable to access usual support networks. This initial amount is not a total allocation per community but just an advance to assist communities to get started. This support is available to all community members, not just those on social assistance.

ISC has released a COVID-19: First Nations Community Guide on Accessing Additional Supports outlining eligibility and process to support further requests for funding.

Q26. How are those who are not eligible (those on pensions) to be supported?

Communities will have flexibility to address additional Income Assistance needs through the emergency/disaster supplements. The supplement can be used for clients eligible for income assistance, disability assistance, children in home of a relative or hardship assistance.

Social Assistance

Q27. What is the current mechanism for receiving Social Assistance? Are there ways to eliminate the necessity of in-person visits to offices, and distribute cheques automatically?

To ensure the safety of staff and community members, ISC has waived the immediate need of signing of Budget and Decision forms. Recipients are asked to document their communication approach to clients and to log calls for back-up.

Q28. Can communities have flexibility to increase Social Assistance amounts to allow for families and single people to purchase necessities for extended periods of isolation and distancing?

The communities will have flexibility to address additional Income Assistance needs through the emergency/disaster supplements. The supplement can be used for clients eligible for income assistance, disability assistance, children in home of a relative or hardship assistance.

Q29. How can I acquire equipment to support Band employees to work remotely and continue to provide essential services to my community?

First Nations should obtain a task number from Emergency Management BC for “expenditure authorizations” and “resource requests” such as rental of eligible supplies while social distancing is being recommended. As of March 18, 2020, task numbers are being issued for COVID-19. Please contact EMBC at 1-800-663-3456 and your Funding Services Officer at aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca for more information.

Food Security

Q30. Can ISC communicate with the nation once the food security team has been set up? Communities are concerned about food security.

A food security team at ISC BC offices is being established and they will contact you as soon as it is established. Examples of what is currently eligible, includes:

- the emergency supplement through IA;
- incremental costs to ship and/or deliver food under EMAP;
- food under social and cultural supports (e.g., central food prep and delivery for Elders and medically compromised people, food to replace access to hot breakfast and lunch programs for children) under EMAP.

The department is working closely with a number of agencies including the First Nation Health Agency and Emergency Management BC to ensure information and processes are streamlined as much as possible and to respond to issues of availability of foods and critical supplies. Funds will be released to the community under existing funding codes for immediate release.

First Nations’ concerns regarding food availability are being taken very seriously. As an immediate step emergency/disaster supplement funding under the Income Assistance program is available to First Nations persons in BC affected by COVID-19. An advance is already being forwarded to allow First Nations to enact these provisions immediately. It is our intention to mirror the provisions as that the Province of BC who have recently expanded eligibility to assist during this period. Funding Service Officers of ISC are currently reaching out to all First Nations in BC so that funding is immediately provided to communities. These funds are being transferred to ensure First Nations in BC are able to respond to emerging needs and incremental costs such as Emergency Operation Centre costs (e.g. overtime), shipping of food or other necessities, costs for continuation of essential services (e.g. that preserve life, health and basic societal functioning), social and cultural supports, and costs to meet the needs of vulnerable persons in isolation who are unable to access usual support networks. This initial amount is not a total allocation per community but just an advance to assist communities to get started.

In addition, the Government of Canada recently announced its commitment to support Canadians and minimize health, economic and social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of this, we are moving forward to provide new funding to all First Nations in the province to further cover extraordinary costs related to the COVID-19 pandemic. This is in addition to the emergency/disaster supplement funding under the Income Assistance

program that is immediately being dispersed to all BC First Nations. If you have any immediate questions about next steps please contact your Funding Services Officer.

If you have immediate needs for health-related supplies please contact the First Nation Health Authority at CDMgmt@fnha.ca.

If you have immediate needs for other supplies please email ISC aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca and provide us details of the non-medical supplies your community needs.

We will work and coordinate with our partners to respond.

Support for vulnerable Indigenous people living off-reserve

Q31. What about Indigenous people living off-reserve? How can they get income or disability assistance?

Current clients who are on income or disability assistance can emergency assistance services in a few ways:

- Online with [My Self Serve](#);
- [Toll-free](#) with 1-866-866-0800; or
- In-person at an [office location](#).

People who are non-clients can apply for assistance. The best and fastest way to apply is online at <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/income-assistance/apply-for-assistance>.

For federal COVID-19 benefits (e.g. for people who have lost their job due to COVID-19 or are self-isolating) they can apply at <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/notices/coronavirus.html>.

The Province has created 1-888-COVID-19 to connect British Columbians needing non-medical information about COVID-19. This includes the latest information on travel recommendations and social distancing, as well as access to support and resources from the provincial and federal governments.

Q32. What work is being done to support vulnerable populations right now? Specifically, what outreach and resources are going to the Downtown Eastside and residents of Oppenheimer Park?

The city of Vancouver has partnered with Vancouver Coastal Health and BC Housing on a multi-agency public partner task force to identify and implement measures to help protect people who are experiencing homelessness, living in SROs, and in the Downtown Eastside (DTES). The task force is working to:

- Improve communications with DTES residents and service providers.
- Secure additional locations where people who need to self-isolate but are experiencing homelessness can go.

- Consider other basic needs issues such as food security and access to medication and safe supply.

The task force is connecting with community networks and organizations to support in the response design and delivery. For more information, please contact the city of Vancouver directly at 604-873-7000 or go to <https://vancouver.ca/home-property-development/covid-19-coronavirus-within-vancouver.aspx>

Safe Drinking Water

Q33. I am having difficulty accessing supplies to keep critical infrastructure, such as our community water system, running. Who do I talk to and how will this be resolved?

For issues related to the operation or maintenance of critical infrastructure, please contact Paula Santos, paula.santos@canada.ca, Director Community Infrastructure at 604-790-8451 to discuss your specific situation so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Q34. My water operator is now in self-isolation or diagnosed with COVID-19 and we can't find a qualified person to operate our systems. What can we do to make sure our water remains safe to drink?

For issues related to the operation or maintenance of critical infrastructure, please contact Paula Santos, paula.santos@canada.ca, Director Community Infrastructure, at 604-790-8451 to discuss your specific situation so that appropriate solutions and arrangements can be explored.

**Q35. I am having difficulty accessing supplies to keep critical infrastructure running – i.e., water system – who do I talk to and how will this be resolved? - or -
My water operator (other essential infrastructure services provider) is now in self-isolation/diagnosed with COVID-19 and we can't find a qualified person to operate our systems. Please help?**

For issues related to the operation or maintenance of critical infrastructure, please contact Paula Santos, paula.santos@canada.ca, Director Community Infrastructure at 604-790-8451 to discuss your specific situation so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Q36. How can First Nations provide relief measures such as rent deferral for their members (tenants) who are experiencing hardship as a result of COVID-19?

First Nation landlords are encouraged to work with tenants from low income or moderate income households facing financial hardship as a result of the COVID-19 crisis to find a solution, including a series of tools and relief measures for housing and or shelter including deferral of rent, and or special payment arrangements.

Those tenants who are able to continue to pay rent are encouraged to do so. Those tenants who are on income assistance will continue to receive shelter allowances which are used to pay their rent. For those tenants who have experienced a loss of income, and as relief measure such as a deferral of rent. The tenant is only deferring paying rent. First Nations may need to negotiate a repayment plan for the deferred rent.

On March 25, 2020, the Province of BC announced a number of measures to keep people housed and protect their health. Immediate measures include:

- The new temporary rent supplement will provide up to \$500 per month, paid directly to landlords.
- Halting evictions by ensuring a landlord may not issue a new notice to end tenancy for any reason. However, in exceptional cases where it may be needed to protect health and safety or to prevent undue damage to the property, landlords will be able to apply to the Residential Tenancy Branch for a hearing.
- Halting the enforcement of existing eviction notices issued by the Residential Tenancy Branch, except in extreme cases where there are safety concerns. The smaller number of court ordered evictions are up to the courts, which operate independently of government.
- Freezing new annual rent increases during the state of emergency.

- Preventing landlords from accessing rental units without the consent of the tenant (for example, for showings or routine maintenance), except in exceptional cases where it is needed to protect health and safety or to prevent undue damage to the unit.
- Restricting methods that renters and landlords can use to serve notices to reduce the potential transmission of COVID-19 (no personal service and allowing email).
- Allowing landlords to restrict the use of common areas by tenants or guests to protect against the transmission of COVID-19.

More information is available at <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020MAH0048-000561>.

CONDUCTING DAILY COMMUNITY BUSINESS AND OPERATIONS

Administration

Q35. How can I request ISC to postpone or cancel all face-to-face meetings with my community during this period?

Indigenous Services Canada, BC Region, has already directed its staff to cancel **all non-essential travel** to First Nations and to conduct meetings virtually. We are hoping that by reducing all non-essential travel, we can be proactive in our efforts to limit potential transmission. If you wish you can also email aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca and let us know that you do not wish to meet with staff face-to-face until further notice.

However, for any essential travel, such as that related to the operation or maintenance of critical infrastructure, please contact Paula Santos, paula.santos@canada.ca, Director Community Infrastructure at 604-790-8451 to discuss your specific situation so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Q36. I have not been contacted by any ISC official. How can I have my concerns heard?

ISC employees have been reaching out to the First Nations Chiefs via phone or email to let them know we are here to help. We were not able to get a hold of some of them. If you have not heard from us or if you have any concerns, please email aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca and let us know how we can help. The email account is monitored closely.

Should you or your team need to reach out regarding specific programs or services within their respective areas, please contact the Executive Leadership Team:

- Catherine Lappe, Regional Director General: 604-340-7703
- Bill Guerin, Associate Regional Director General: 604-803-9476
- Paula Santos, Director Community Infrastructure: 604-790-8451
- Wendy Rogers, Director Programs and Partnerships: 604-363-8117
- David Russell, Director Lands and Economic Development: 604-817-2644
- Angela McCarthy, A/Director Funding Services: 604-209-1251
- Chiara Taylor, Director Child and Family Services: 778-668-9067
- James Moxon, Director Community Development: 604-367-8241
- Viola Gressel, Director Corporate Services: 604-367-8136
- Harold Powell, A/Director Corporate Services: 604-219-1737

For any COVID-19 health-related questions, please contact the First Nations Health Authority as follows:

- For general inquiries - COVID19@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, call 811 or your primary care provider.

Q37. How can I be added to the updates that are sent by ISC BC Region to First Nations in BC?

To have your name added to the distribution list, please email aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca.

School funding and operations

Q38. Will our First Nation Education funding be reduced if we opt to suspend classes given the current health crisis?

ISC understands that the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) and First Nations Schools Association (FNSA) have sent communication to each First Nation and First Nations school acknowledging that while decisions to close schools rests within First Nations governance structures, they recommend First Nations suspend classes in keeping with the direction of the Ministry of Education.

ISC plans to maintain K-12 Education funding for First Nations schools even if a First Nation has decided to suspend classes.

Q39. Post-Sec education students are not at school Is it okay to keep funding these students even though they aren't going to school?

ISC recognizes that First Nations have decision making authority on funding provided to them under various programs, including the Post-Secondary Student Supports Program (PSSSP). Generally, ISC does not see an issue with living expenses continuing to be paid under PSSSP for most students not currently attending classes due to the this health crisis, in so far as they have not officially withdrawn from the post-secondary institution they are attending. Below are some considerations for you as you make decisions.

- If the student is currently living outside your First Nation community in order to attend school and continues to live outside the First Nation community in anticipation of a potential return to classes or is participating in online classes, it makes sense to continue paying a living allowance to support them until more is known.
- If the student has returned to your First Nation community as the post-secondary institution has decided to suspend in-person classes indefinitely in favour of online classes, it makes sense to continue paying a living allowance to support them until more is known.
- If the student has returned to your First Nation community as the post-secondary institution suspended in-person classes indefinitely with no online classes, it may be appropriate to suspend PSSSP living allowances. In this situation, this student may be eligible for Income Assistance and should explore with a BSDW.

Again, these are only considerations, and the decision to provide living allowances to students during the suspension of face-to-face to delivery of classes rests with your community.

Q40. My community has decided to close down our Band operated school. Who should I notify?

Please email Indigenous Services Canada at aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca to let us know that your school has closed.

Funding available to First Nations in BC

Q41. What further funding is being made available to First Nations communities, and how can they directly access it for COVID-19 related costs?

On March 18, the Prime Minister proposed increased resources for First Nations for preparedness and response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The announcement proposes additional resources to support resiliency and preparedness of communities and we are working closely with the First Nation Health Authority (FNHA) and Emergency Management BC (EMBC) to ensure seamless service and leverage each organization's capabilities.

While we await full details, ISC BC Region is proposing to advance some initial funds to assist with incremental costs such as Emergency Operation Centre costs (e.g. overtime), shipping of food or other necessities, costs for continuation of essential services (e.g. that preserve life, health and basic societal functioning), social and cultural supports, and costs to meet the needs of vulnerable persons in isolation who are unable to access usual support networks. This initial amount is not a total allocation per community but just an advance to assist communities to get started.

For Emergency Management funding, we are immediately releasing an initial advance of \$7 million funding to provide resources to each and every community in BC so that Leadership can take action immediately (a minimum of \$5,000 up to a maximum of \$119,000 based on the size and location of the community, methodology is based on remoteness & population, with a \$5,000 base). Initial information has been shared out to all communities, and we welcome questions at any time.

ISC has released a COVID-19: First Nations Community Guide on Accessing Additional Supports outlining eligibility and process to support further requests for funding.

In order to make Emergency management requests as seamless as possible, communities CAN send their immediate needs to ANY of these three partners – Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), or Emergency Management BC (EMBC).

If you enter through the EMBC system, they will assign you a task number, however, all requests will be triaged in the same way: the first agency to receive the request will review it, and then they will work with the other partners to provide an answer back to communities. The partners aim to provide an answer back within 48 hours.

Emergency/Disaster Supplement Funding and the parameters the funding can be used within has been communicated to all First Nations by way of email and phone.

Funding Agreements

Q42. Some funding to my community had been halted prior to the emergency situation. In light of the COVID-19 situation, will the funding be released to help us through this difficult period?

Effective immediately: no late reporting requirements will automatically halts any funding in either ISC or CIRNA.

Effective immediately, all existing funding halts will be released and payments will be issued to FN communities in the coming days.

Q43. How will the flow of funding be impacted during this difficult period?

Indigenous Services Canada will continue to deliver critical services and support you in the delivery of such services in your communities. The flow of expected funding for 2020-21 will continue without interruption. You can expect grants, contributions, transfers, and other payments to continue as scheduled, for the duration of this crisis.

We recognize that First Nations, Inuit, and Metis governments and organizations are taking action to protect their communities and the most vulnerable, and to ensure that support and assistance is available to those who need it during this difficult time. Indigenous Services Canada is ready to support you in your efforts.

We understand that the sudden emergence of this situation may have affected planned spending of funds that were allocated for February and March. ISC is taking action to ensure that funding for planned activities that do not occur by March 31, due to the unforeseen crisis, can be carried forward to next fiscal year. Situations will be analyzed on a case-by-case basis, in full recognition of the extraordinary circumstances we now find ourselves in.

ISC will not be clawing back funding on existing programs and services in 2020/21 based on delays in undertaking activities due to the COVID-19 emergency. You are also not expected to lay off staff who currently are unable to move forward on program implementation.

Q44. How do First Nations in BC obtain signatures in light of COVID-19?

Some First Nations have identified difficulties in obtaining physical signatures on funding agreements and amendments to funding agreements due to social distancing and self-isolation measures in effect. In response, the Department has adopted a temporary solution which permits the acceptance of recipient approval for funding agreements and amendments by e-mail from an authorized official such as the Chief (or equivalent authorized official in the organization) with all Councillors (or other authorized signatories) copied on the e-mail approval.

Should First Nations have a funding agreement they are unable to sign and return, they need to contact ISC (aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca) or their respective Funding Service Officer immediately.

If First Nations are unsure who their ISC Funding Services Officer is, please email aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca with details of your request.

In addition, in recognition that the current circumstances have impacted First Nations' ability to respond to the reporting obligations under current funding agreements, the Department is temporarily suspending any automatic halts in funding due to arrears on recipient reporting. These actions do not remove the reporting requirements entirely but provides additional flexibilities for the due dates of these reports.

ISC- BC Region has also received multiple questions related to activities and events funded through Set funding that have had to be postponed past March 31 due to pandemic response planning or implementation. Please be assured that we are willing to issue a change the funding approach to Fixed or Flexible where possible.

Q45. Should I be worried about ongoing funding to my community now that government staff has been instructed to stay home?

(From response to FNLC) In recognition that the current circumstances have impacted First Nations' ability to respond to the reporting obligations under their funding agreements, the Department will continue to flow funds, as well as temporarily suspend any automatic halts in funding due to arrears on recipient reporting. Please note that these actions do not remove the reporting requirements entirely but provide additional flexibilities for the due dates of these reports.

The information is also being conveyed to First Nations communities through their respective Funding Services Officers.

Funding agreements for these funds were sent out (by email) March 21-22, 2020.

If First Nations emailed their funding amendment approvals to their respective Funding Services Officer by March 23, 2020, they should expect a direct deposit by April 1, 2020.

If First Nations email their funding amendment approvals to their respective Funding Services Officer between March 24 and March 31, they should expect a payment by April 6, 2020.

Reporting

Q46. Will reporting deadlines for First Nations communities be delayed in order to mitigate pressures caused by COVID-19, and how will communities be notified?

In recognition that the current circumstances have impacted First Nations' ability to respond to the reporting obligations under their funding agreements, the Department will continue to flow funds, as well as temporarily suspend any automatic halts in funding due to arrears on recipient reporting. Please note that these actions do not remove the

reporting requirements entirely but provide additional flexibilities for the due dates of these reports.

This information will be conveyed to First Nations communities through their respective Funding Services Officers.

Governance and Capacity - Elections

Q47. Our First Nation has an election planned and we are considering postponing it. Do you have advice about what to do?

~~Please contact us should your community be having an election in the near future. Your Governance Officer can provide you with a template and further information.~~

~~The decision whether or not to hold upcoming scheduled elections in the current context of the spread of COVID-19 remains with the leaders of affected communities.~~

~~For First Nations holding their elections under the Indian Act or the First Nations Elections Act, the Minister of Indigenous Services does not have statutory powers to extend the mandate of an elected council, or postpone an election. In the case of communities with custom codes, the Department's role is further limited to the recording the elections results transmitted by the First Nation.~~

~~The Department is in the process of contacting communities holding elections in the next 100 days to ensure appropriate measures are in place to provide for the continuity and delivery of essential programs and service.~~

The decision to hold or to postpone an IA or FNEA election remains under the purview of First Nations. However, the Department is now contemplating options to allow current Chiefs and Councils to continue to assume leadership after the expiry of the current term. At this time, an initial six-month extension period has been proposed to allow not only continuity in the delivery of essential services and programs, but complete leadership in recognition of the autonomy required, specifically in these difficult times.

First Nations choosing to postpone elections will be required to inform ISC regional offices through a BCR to ensure proper recording of information in the Band Governance Management System (BGMS). Accurate information will also ensure maintenance of stable communication and solid work relationships in the coming months.

A formal correspondence addressed to affected First Nations is currently in progress and will be issued to you shortly for direct transmission to said First Nations to ensure uniform delivery of this approach.

Should your community being having an election in the near future, we invite you to contact us. Please email aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca; or contact James Moxon, Director, Community Development at james.moxon@canada.ca or 604-367-8241 for assistance.

~~As the situation with COVID-19 is changing beyond our control, and the election may end up being postponed for unforeseen circumstances, we recommend that Council appoint an Interim Administrator via a BCR who can conduct regular day-to-day business and have~~

~~signing authority in case the Council term expires. The BCR can be open ended, saying that the individual(s) appointed will have these authorities taking effect the day after the council term expires and will last until the next election is held. The Interim Administrator would only have authority to act if no council is elected as planned.~~

[Please note that First Nations holding elections under their own custom code in the coming months will also be included for their information in a separate correspondence.]

Community Closures

Q48. We want to restrict non-members travelling to our community- does the Indian Act give us any tools to do that?

Under section 81(1)(a) of the Indian Act, a band council may make by-laws “to provide for the health of residents on the reserve and to prevent the spreading of contagious and infectious diseases.” Given the current situation, limiting access to the reserve may be seen as a precaution against the spread of a contagious and infectious disease. In addition to section 81(1)(a), there are other additional bylaw authorities dealing with a wide range of matters that could assist the First Nation in managing the current pandemic, such as removal of trespassers and traffic as a few examples. If a by-law is passed, the by-law may be implemented by the police force having jurisdiction over the community. Enforcement considerations of a by-law passed by a First Nation would need to be discussed between the First Nation and the local police force. If a First Nation has any questions or requires assistance about the passing of a by-law please contact Jacques Boutin, Manager and Senior Advisor Governance, at 819-635-3943 or jacques.boutin@canada.ca, for further assistance.

Estates

Q49. I am, or know someone whose funds are managed by the ISC. Will those payments still be made?

Yes, payments on behalf of dependent adults are considered an essential service. Indigenous Services is doing its utmost to make payments on behalf of dependent adult clients, and to ensure their well-being during this difficult time.

Q50. Will I be able to collect my treaty annuity payment?

We will work with the 8 BC First Nations that run payment events to organize payment activities when it is safe to do so.

Status Cards

Q51. How are status cards getting issued? Could we pass on the process?

The service counter at ISC BC’s office in Vancouver that can accept applications for status cards is currently closed in order to reduce the spread of COVID-19. We are monitoring the situation and will reopen when it is safe for staff and clients. Applications are accepted by mail and forms are available at <http://canada.ca/indian-status>. The mailing address is

listed on the forms and/or instructions. The department is preparing work arrangements so that applications can continue to be processed. Please be advised that you may experience delays due to the measures put in place to protect staff and clients.

Housing and Infrastructure

Q52. What is going to happen to the ongoing funding for our community's housing and/or capital project?

Funding for all capital and housing projects for fiscal 2019-2020 was processed by March 13. If they have signed the funding amendment already, they should see the funding on April 1. For details about capital projects, speak to their Capital Management Officer.

For details about your housing projects, please contact your housing officer. If you are unable to reach them by phone or email, please contact:
aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca.

Q53. I have a construction project underway and I am wondering if I should have the work stopped?"

The B.C. government and Dr. Bonnie Henry, the provincial health officer, are taking unprecedented measures to slow the transmission of COVID-19. On March 22, 2020 they issued guidance to construction sites operating during the COVID-19 response: :
https://archive.news.gov.bc.ca/releases/news_releases_2017-2021/2020EMBC0002-000542.htm

Q54. My capital/housing project is likely to be delayed due to new requirements for social distancing for contractors and vendors.

We want to support all communities to complete their projects as best they can, and we recognize there may be delays to ongoing projects that are under construction. Please advise your CMO and ISC engineer so that we can amend reporting requirements and identify delays and impacts as best as possible.

Q55. In regards to housing, what flexibilities related to COVID-19 are there for First Nations in BC through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)?

First Nations in BC are being asked to contact their housing solutions Specialists to discuss their specific needs. The CHMC says it is committed to finding solutions and flexibilities that will alleviate some of the financial impacts of the COVID-19 outbreak.

If you have any questions, or would like to discuss your specific needs or concerns, please contact your Indigenous and Northern Housing Solutions Specialist or visit their website at cmhc.ca.

Q56. Are there ministerial guarantees for housing? Is the 6 month break on mortgage payments going to apply to FNs in this situation? The 6 month deferral isn't going to be owed in total at the end of the 6 months, correct?

Monitor the CMHC website for updates and contact your CMHC Housing Specialists to discuss their specific needs.

Economic Impacts

Q57. We depend on the tax/rent we receive from businesses on lease land, who are going to be affected. The band depends on this revenue stream to run the band and pay off loans. They are in the midst of having to lay off some of their 200 staff. Will banks allow for delayed loan repayments?

On March 17, 2020, Bank of Montreal, CIBC, National Bank of Canada, RBC Royal Bank, Scotiabank and TD Bank all committed to work with personal and small business banking customers on a case-by-case basis to provide flexible solutions to help them manage through challenges such as pay disruption due to COVID-19; childcare disruption due to school closures; or those facing illness from COVID-19.

The supports announced by Canada's six largest banks include up to a six-month payment deferral for mortgages, and the opportunity for relief on other credit products. Other financial institutions have made similar commitments. Individual Canadians or business owners facing hardship are encouraged to contact their bank directly to discuss options that could be available to them.

For more information, please contact your financial institution directly.

Source: <https://newsroom.bmo.com/2020-03-17-Canadas-Six-Biggest-Banks-Take-Decisive-Action-To-Help-Customers-Impacted-by-COVID-19>

Environmental Assessment

Q58. Our community is setting up a facility or building something in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, do we need to complete an Impact Assessment?

No, the federal Impact Assessment Act does not apply to projects on reserve land that are being carried out in response to an emergency, with the exception of designated projects (which are only extremely large projects).

Contaminated Sites

Q59. Is Indigenous Services Canada responding to environmental contamination issues during the COVID-19 situation?

Yes, the health and safety of First Nation communities is ISC's highest priority. Environmental contamination, waste management and/or any incidents involving dangerous goods will continue to be addressed on an urgent basis. Please contact BC Region's Environment and Natural Resources team at aadnc.enrpermits.aandc@canada.ca to report any issues.

Individual Land Holders (Certificate of Possession Holders, CPs, Locatees)

Q60. Will I continue to receive lease revenue from my individual landholding on reserve?

Yes. Some payments may be delayed, but only by a few days. To protect the health and safety of ISC staff, the Department will be processing deposits and issuing cheques once per week instead of daily while the COVID-19 situation continues. Rent reviews and appraisals will continue to be conducted.

Designations, Leases, S.28(2) Permits

Q61. Our community has been working with staff at ISC to designate reserve land for leasing. Will the COVID-19 situation impact our designation project?

During the COVID-19 situation, health authorities have recommended social distancing be practiced and that no large gatherings be held. Designation projects require community information meetings as well as conducting a poll, both of which bring a large number of people together. BC Region will therefore not schedule any new information meetings or polls on reserve until the current situation improves. However, BC Region staff will continue working with First Nations on the significant preparatory work that is required for all designation projects. Please contact aadnc.bclands.aandc@canada.ca to reach a Land Management and Leasing Officer.

Q62. Will leases and permits continue to be issued during the COVID-19 situation?

Yes. Please contact aadnc.bclands.aandc@canada.ca to reach a Land Management and Leasing Officer for leases, permits (access, utilities and construction), lease modifications and assignments, and mortgages. For timber, sand and gravel permits, please contact aadnc.enrpermits.aandc@canada.ca.

Indian Lands Registry

Q63. Will ISC continue to register transactions in the Indian Land Registry System during the COVID-19 situation?

Yes. Allotments and transfers of land, and registration of leases, permits etc. will continue. Please contact aadnc.bclandregistry.aandc@canada.ca for assistance.

Additions to Reserve

Q64. Our community has been working on an Addition to Reserve project with staff at ISC. Will the COVID-19 situation impact our project?

BC Region staff will continue working with First Nations on the significant preparatory work that is required for all addition to reserve and reserve creation projects. Please contact aadnc.bcatr.aandc@canada.ca to reach the Additions to Reserve team.

First Nations Land Management Act; Reserve Land & Environmental Management Program

Q65. Will our First Nation still receive our First Nation Land Management (FNLM) or Reserve Land and Environment Management Program (RLEMP) funding for 2020-21 on time?

Yes, there will be no delay in rolling out operational funding to First Nations.

Q66. Will I still be able to attend the Professional Land Management Certification Program (PLMCP) through the National Aboriginal Lands Managers Association (NALMA) scheduled for 2020-2021?

NALMA is suspending its current year training at this time. NALMA Level 1 training is scheduled to start August, 2020. If you have a candidate who is already registered for the training at either Vancouver Island University, the University of Saskatchewan or Algonquin University please contact the Institution directly for an update regarding changes to training dates. If you have not yet registered for the training you will receive information on any changes to the training dates when you contact the University. Any First Nations who will be receiving funding to attend PLMCP 2020-2021 will have the funding sent directly to NALMA for reimbursement to First Nations.

Q67. Where can I get addition information on FNLM or RLEMP?

If you have FNLM or RLEMP questions please contact your Indigenous Services Canada, BC Region, contact directly. Please email the Lands Modernization Unit at aadnc.landmodernization.aandc@canada.ca.

Economic Development and Funding

Q68. Will there be a halt of funding due to an outstanding report?

No, all halts have been removed and there will be flexibility in submitting your report.

Q69. Will I receive my economic development payment on time?

Yes, payments will still remain in tact, will be paid on schedule.

Q70. I was given a deadline to submit information for CORP by March 27, is this still the case?

No, deadlines have been extended to April 15, if you need more time please contact your Economic Development Officer.

CONTACTS

General Information on FSO Contacts

For quick reference, the [Regional Recipient Assignment List](#) includes the current FSO assignments (and back-up) to recipients as well as the relevant manager, Anthony Hadfield or Nora Gibson.

Once you have selected the First Nation, please see the “Contact” tab for FSO name, phone number, and email address.

First Nations Health Authority

For any COVID-19 health-related questions, please contact the First Nations Health Authority as follows:

- For general inquiries - COVID19@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, call 811 or your primary care provider.

Province of British Columbia

Call 1-888-COVID19 to access the BC provincial line for non-medical information about COVID-19.

Indigenous Services Canada

Please email aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca and let us know how we can help. The email account is monitored closely.

Should you or your team need to reach out regarding specific programs or services within their respective areas, please contact the Executive Leadership Team:

- Catherine Lappe, Regional Director General: 604-340-7703
- Bill Guerin, Associate Regional Director General: 604-803-9476
- Paula Santos, Director Community Infrastructure: 604-790-8451
- Wendy Rogers, Director Programs and Partnerships: 604-363-8117
- David Russell, Director Lands and Economic Development: 604-817-2644
- Angela McCarthy, A/Director Funding Services: 604-209-1251
- Chiara Taylor, Director Child and Family Services: 778-668-9067
- James Moxon, Director Community Development: 604-367-8241
- Viola Gressel, Director Corporate Services: 604-367-8136
- Harold Powell, A/Director Corporate Services: 604-219-1737

Public Health Agency of Canada

Call 1-833-784-4397.

First Nations Leadership Council Question Tracker

| QUESTION | ANSWER |
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| March 19, 2020: | |
| <p>Question #1:</p> <p>What funding is available vulnerable populations?</p> | <p>The COVID-19 Economic Response Plan was passed on March 25, 2020, providing \$305 million through the Indigenous Community Support Fund, including \$215 million to First Nations. This fund will be allocated on a distinctions-basis and will provide First Nations leadership with flexibility to adapt responses to address local needs.</p> <p>Each First Nation will get a base amount adjusted for population, remoteness and community well-being. The formulas are now being determined and we will provide more information as soon as we're able.</p> <p>To support members living off reserve, \$15 million of the Fund will go to supporting regional, urban and Indigenous organizations supporting those who live away from their communities.</p> <p>These allocations are only part of what is available to all Canadians on and off-reserve. There are other supports to individuals such as Income Assistance and the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, a taxable benefit announced on March 25, 2020 that would provide \$2,000 a month for up to four months for workers who lose their income as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> |
| <p>Question #2:</p> <p>We need assurances regarding the continuity of child and family services. Will incremental costs incurred by Delegated Aboriginal Agencies (DAA)/ Ministry of Child and Family Development (MCFD) be supported?</p> | <p>We appreciate the concern for the impact that this pandemic has on vulnerable populations, including children in care or those on cusp of aging out. Incremental costs to DAA's as well as any increased costs to MCFD can be supported to augment existing operational and service delivery structures to ensure continuity of services during this time. DAAs are encouraged also to contact their regional staff to discuss any additional funding needs.</p> |
| <p>Question #3:</p> <p>There is a concern that resources aren't getting to communities fast enough. What is ISC doing about getting</p> | <p>ISC-BC Region is currently releasing \$7 million in Emergency Management advances to all First Nations so that immediate community needs can be met. Advances range from a minimum of \$5,000 up to a maximum of \$119,000 based on the size and location of the community.</p> |

| QUESTION | ANSWER |
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| funding to communities? | <p>ISC is also advancing \$2.7 million in Income Assistance to provide for emergency/crisis funding for individuals receiving income assistance.</p> <p>Recognizing the pressing need for resources, ISC is making process simplifications to avoid delays, and expanding interpretations by making adjustments to our regular processes.</p> <p>Beyond the advances, communities are encouraged to tell us what they need so that we can provide the necessary resources through reimbursements or advances.</p> <p>We anticipate a smoother way forward as we work to respond to the needs of First Nations. ISC will work with EMBC and FNHA to respond to requests, wherever they come in, as we appreciate that disruptions to the supply chain are being felt in many communities.</p> |
| <p>Question #4:</p> <p>What is the process for the funding requests? Who is the contact to receive and approve (for all three organizations)? How soon will that money get to the communities?</p> | <p>ISC has established a surge team to respond to First Nations questions and requests that are received through a dedicated phone line and email. We will also have some people dedicate to working with First Nations, FNHA, EMBC and others on food security and supplies.</p> <p>We are working in a single window approach with our partners to respond to requests, and are committed to responding within 48 hours, including weekends as we are staffing the phone and email inbox from 7am-7pm every day of the week.</p> <p>Phone: 604-209-9709</p> <p>Email: aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca</p> |
| <p>Question #5:</p> <p>Who in ISC are First Nations contacting with regards to office closures?</p> | <p>We're taking a non-prescriptive approach about notifications of office closures. Funding Services Officers have been reaching out to First Nations. First Nations can also e-mail aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca to advise of COVID-related closures. If FNLC knows of communities who are closing their offices, please let us know directly so we can assist with essential services.</p> |
| <p>Question #6:</p> <p>Will reporting deadlines for First Nations communities be delayed in order to mitigate pressures caused by COVID-19, and how</p> | <p>Yes. In recognition that the current circumstances have impacted First Nations' ability to respond to the reporting obligations under their funding agreements, ISC will continue to flow funds, as well as temporarily suspend any automatic halts in funding due to arrears on recipient reporting. Please note that these actions do not remove the reporting requirements entirely but provide</p> |

| QUESTION | ANSWER |
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| <p>will communities be notified?</p> | <p>additional flexibilities for the due dates of these reports.</p> <p>The information is also being conveyed to First Nations communities through their respective Funding Services Officers.</p> |
| <p>Question #7:</p> <p>What further funding is being made available to First Nations communities, and how can they directly access it for COVID-19 related costs? How is this being communicated?</p> | <p>Indigenous Community Support Fund</p> <p>The COVID-19 Economic Response Plan was passed on March 25, 2020, providing \$305 million through the Indigenous Community Support Fund, including \$215 million to First Nations. This fund will be allocated on a distinctions-basis and will provide First Nations leadership with flexibility to adapt responses to address local needs.</p> <p>The Indigenous Community Support Fund also contains \$15 million for regional, urban and Indigenous organizations supporting individuals who live away from their communities.</p> <p>Emergency Management Funding</p> <p>Described in Question #3 above, ISC is immediately releasing an initial advance of \$7 million in emergency management funds to provide resources to each community in BC so that leadership can take action immediately. Initial information has been shared out to all communities.</p> <p>Along with emergency management funds, ISC is transferring funds to ensure First Nations in BC are able to respond to emerging needs and incremental costs such as Emergency Operation Centre costs, shipping of food or other necessities, costs for continuation of essential services, social and cultural supports, and costs to meet the needs of vulnerable persons in isolation who are unable to access usual support networks. This initial amount is not a total allocation per community but just an advance to assist communities to get started.</p> <p>In order to make emergency management requests as seamless as possible, communities CAN send their immediate needs to ANY of these three partners – Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), the First Nations Health Authority (FNHA), or Emergency Management BC (EMBC). The partners aim to provide an answer back within 48 hours.</p> <p>Income Assistance Funding</p> <p>ISC-BC Region is immediately mirroring the provincial emergency/disaster supplement funding available under the</p> |

| QUESTION | ANSWER |
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| | <p>Income Assistance program. It is our intention to provide the same level of funding as that of the Province of BC who have recently expanded eligibility to assist during this period. (Please refer to Question #3.)</p> <p>Communicating with First Nations</p> <p>Amendment letters have gone out to all First Nations describing the resources they will be receiving under emergency management and income assistance, and the further information on the fund announced yesterday will be shared as soon as we have more information.</p> <p>Should communities become unable to provide any essential services to their members or if there are immediate supply issues, ISC, BC Region should be contacted as soon as possible by email at aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca. ISC will work with you on solutions to ensure the community does not experience an interruption in the delivery of essential services or supplies.</p> <p>Should First Nations communities experience a sharp increase in community members returning home and requiring income assistance, they should contact their Funding Services Officer by email at aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca so we can work together on the impacts.</p> |
| <p>Question #8:</p> <p>Will Jordan's Principle be implemented in order to allow First Nations to cover costs now with the assurance of funding or reimbursement later?</p> | <p>ISC, FNHA and EMBC are working collectively to ensure community needs are known and addressed quickly, and items are procured efficiently. Communities can send their immediate needs to any of these three partners – ISC, FNHA or EMBC. The partners aim to provide an answer back within 48 hours.</p> |
| <p>Question #9:</p> <p>What work is being done to support vulnerable populations right now? Specifically, what outreach and resources are going to the Downtown Eastside and residents of Oppenheimer Park?</p> | <p><i>This question is referred to the City of Vancouver, Vancouver Coastal Health, and BC Housing.</i></p> |
| <p>Question #10:</p> <p>How are issues with accessing</p> | <p><i>This question is referred to the First Nations Health Authority.</i></p> |

| QUESTION | ANSWER |
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| <p>support lines (811, 1-888-COVID19) being remedied? Can a First Nations-specific phone line and/or information app be created?</p> | |
| <p>Question #11:</p> <p>What is the current mechanism for receiving Social Assistance? Are there ways to eliminate the necessity of in-person visits to offices, and distribute cheques automatically?</p> | <p>To ensure the safety of staff and community members, ISC has waived the immediate need of signing of Budget and Decision forms. Band offices and their staff are asked to document their communication approach to clients and to log calls for back-up.</p> |
| <p>Question #12:</p> <p>Communities have flexibility to increase Social Assistance amounts to allow for families and single people to purchase necessities for extended periods of isolation and distancing?</p> | <p>The communities have flexibility to address additional Income Assistance needs through the emergency/ disaster supplement. The supplement can be used for clients eligible for income assistance, disability assistance, children in home of a relative or hardship assistance.</p> <p>Should Band Social Development Workers have questions concerning Income Assistance, they are encouraged to call the BSDW Policy Support Line at 1-888-440-4080, or by e-mail: aadnc.tsdbcsoutien-bsdwsupport-bc.aandc@canada.ca.</p> |
| <p>Question #13:</p> <p>Our First Nation communities are having a really hard time right now. Many of our people are low income, and do not drive or own a vehicle. It is very scary for our most vulnerable and elderly members who have been self-isolating in order to protect their health. Weeks have gone by and their food supplies are getting low now. Is there a plan in the very near future to get supplies to our communities?</p> | <p>Indigenous Service Canada BC Region is working closely with a number of agencies including the First Nation Health Agency (FNHA) and Emergency Management BC (EMBC) to ensure information and processes are streamlined as much as possible and to respond to issues of availability of foods and critical supplies.</p> <p>Funds are available under our Emergency Management and Social Development authorities and will be released to the community under existing funding codes for immediate release.</p> <p>If you have immediate needs for health-related supplies please contact the First Nation Health Authority at CDMgmt@fnha.ca.</p> <p>If you have immediate needs for other supplies please email ISC aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca and provide us details of the non-medical supplies your community needs. We will work and coordinate with our partners to respond.</p> |

| QUESTION | ANSWER |
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| March 20, 2020: | |
| Question #14: FNLC is requesting a flowchart from ISC showing newly announced funds application and approval process. | <p>To be prepared as soon as details of the new Indigenous Community Support Fund become available.</p> |
| Question #15: Given that First Nations are more vulnerable -- health-wise, how can additional COVID-19 test kits be made available to the communities? | <p><i>This question is referred to the Province of British Columbia and the First Nations Health Authority.</i></p> |
| Question #16: Can you confirm that new fiscal year funding won't be impacted by the 3-month extension of reporting requirements? | <p>We recognize that communities are currently focused on responding to their citizens' essential needs. The three-month extension of reporting requirements will <u>not</u> impact the release of funding in the new fiscal year.</p> <p>ISC-BC Region has adopted five measures to help finalize funding agreements and improve cash flow to communities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • expanding the use of electronic signatures to finalize funding agreements and authorize payments • introducing a streamlined approach to process Amendments and to add funding to agreements (i.e., an Amendment Notice) • the extension of deadlines • increased flexibility to allow unspent funding to be carried forward to next fiscal year, and • temporarily suspending the automatic recovery of funding owing from First Nations to ISC to maximize available cash flow. <p>These approaches have been approved until such time as we return to normal operations. Additional measures will be communicated as soon as they are finalized.</p> |
| Question #17: What resources are available to support communities in meeting the housing and shelter needs of people who test positive for the | <p><i>This question is referred to the First Nations Health Authority.</i></p> |

| QUESTION | ANSWER |
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| COVID-19 virus? | |
| <p>Question #18:</p> <p>First Nations are concerned about food security and access to food. What supports is ISC making available to First Nations?</p> | <p>A number of First Nations have expressed concerns with regards to food shortage and food security, especially for the most vulnerable and elderly members who are self-isolating in order to protect their health. The Department is working closely with a number of agencies including the First Nations Health Agency and Emergency Management BC to ensure information and processes are streamlined as much as possible and to respond to issues of availability of foods and critical supplies.</p> <p>Funds are available under our Emergency Management and Social Development authorities and will be released to the community. Examples of what is currently eligible includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the emergency supplement through Income Assistance; • incremental costs to ship and/or deliver food under EMAP; • food under social and cultural supports (e.g., central food preparation and delivery for Elders and medically compromised people, food to replace access to hot breakfast and lunch programs for children) under EMAP. <p>Additionally, ISC has a food security team whose responsibility it is to support communities in ensuring food security needs are met. For more information contact: aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca.</p> |
| <p>Question #19:</p> <p>What specific resources is ISC is making available to ensure that the supply of other essential items such as sanitation supplies and soap is not compromised?</p> | <p>ISC is engaging with FNHA on the bulk purchasing of essential items and is moving very aggressively to secure medical equipment. If there are immediate needs for health-related supplies First Nations can contact the First Nation Health Authority at CDMgmt@fnha.ca.</p> <p>First Nations are also encouraged to take a collaborative and coordinated approach to procuring essential supplies wherever possible with neighboring communities, local public health authorities or through Tribal Councils or First Nations Regional Health Authorities.</p> |
| <p>Question #20:</p> <p>What is the strategy to minimize the risk of COVID-19 to vulnerable populations in prisons?</p> | <p><i>This question is referred to Correctional Services Canada and BC Corrections.</i></p> <p><i>We don't a full answer at this time. We need to determine what protocols are in place with the provinces to make sure health standards are addressed in prisons.</i></p> |

| QUESTION | ANSWER |
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| <p>Question #21:</p> <p>Are you creating a clear process to get funding to communities using a needs based Jordan's Principle process?</p> | <p>Please refer answer provided to Question #8.</p> |
| <p>Question #22:</p> <p>What measures are in place to support safe infrastructure including safe drinking water and safe houses for First Nations?</p> | <p>Circuit Riders are on stand-by 24/7 for on-call telephone emergency services and are available to provide on-site support to address operational emergencies related to drinking water or wastewater operations. First Nations can also access their Senior Engineer or Capital Management Officer for assistance related to any critical infrastructure required to support the health and safety of community members.</p> <p>With respect to safe housing, ISC will work with First Nations individually to find the best solution to ensure safe houses or relief measures for housing for their communities. Should First Nations have questions, or would like to discuss your specific needs or concerns, they can contact their Regional Housing Officer.</p> <p>We know more may be needed and want to assure everyone that we are working with our federal and provincial counterparts to explore other measures to assist communities and families. ISC is continuing to monitor the situation and will communicate any further changes as they occur.</p> |
| <p>Question #23:</p> <p>How can First Nations leaders gain access to information in order to deliver timely data to community members? Can changes be made to give front line leaders in communities more information?</p> | <p>Information privacy is especially important in the medical profession. Small towns and communities have their own social challenge when everyone knows what everyone is doing. Stigmatization is a concern and we must make sure everyone is pulling in the right direction. This matter will need to be addressed with the First Nations Health Authority and the provincial Ministry of Health.</p> |
| <p>Question #24:</p> <p>There have been some concerns related to First Nations going through elections. Should that continue?</p> | <p>The decision to hold or to postpone an upcoming Indian Act or First Nations Elections Act election remains under the purview of the First Nation. However, ISC is now considering options to allow current Chiefs and Councils to continue to assume leadership after the expiry of the current term. At this time, an initial 6-month extension period has been proposed to allow not only continuity in the delivery of essential services and programs, but complete leadership in recognition of the autonomy required, specifically in</p> |

| QUESTION | ANSWER |
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| | <p>these difficult times.</p> <p>First Nations choosing to postpone elections will be required to inform ISC regional offices through a BCR to ensure proper recording of information in the Band Governance Management System. Accurate information will also ensure maintenance of stable communication and solid work relationships in the coming months.</p> <p>A formal correspondence addressed to affected First Nations is currently in progress and will be issued shortly, so that affected First Nations can be notified of this approach to ensure uniform delivery of this approach. Please note that First Nations holding elections under their own custom code in the coming months will also be included for their information in a separate correspondence.</p> <p>For more information, please contact Carina Chow, Manager of Governance and Capacity Development at: 778-239-7124 or carina.chow@canada.ca.</p> |

March 23, 2020:

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| <p>Question #25:</p> <p>Concerns that some First Nations are not getting any information.</p> | <p>Information is conveyed through regular email updates by the RDG -ISC BC Region to Chief and Council.</p> <p>From March 16 to 25, Funding Services Officers recorded more than 370 outreach conversations with First Nations. From March 21 to 22, funding agreement amendments for COVID-19 Emergency Management advances and Income Assistance funding were emailed to First Nations, and as of March 25, 77% had been approved by electronic signature and returned to ISC.</p> <p>ISC employees have been reaching out to the First Nations Chiefs via phone or email to let them know we are here to help. We were not able to get a hold of some of them. If First Nations have not heard from us, or if there are any concerns, First Nations can email aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca to let us know how we can help. The email account is monitored closely.</p> |
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March 24, 2020: New additional questions and concerns raised by the FNLC

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| <p>Question #26:</p> <p>What steps have been taken to increase access to telephone</p> | <p><i>This question is referred to the First Nations Health Authority and the Province of British Columbia.</i></p> |
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| QUESTION | ANSWER |
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| support lines and medical consultation? | |
| <p>Question #27:</p> <p>What further steps have been taken to eliminate the necessity of in-person visits to offices for Social Assistance?</p> | <p><i>This question is referred to the Province of British Columbia (Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction).</i></p> |
| <p>Question #28:</p> <p>Minister Miller indicated last week he would follow up about a question regarding preparedness in prisons – can you provide any further information? (For reference: What is the strategy to minimize the risk posed by COVID-19 to incarcerated populations and will vulnerable people be released for their safety? Where cases arise in prisons, how will they be addressed, and are isolation standards going to put more prisoners in solitary confinement?)</p> | <p><i>This question is referred to Correctional Service of Canada and BC Corrections.</i></p> |
| <p>Question #29:</p> <p>Given funding requirements may differ with First Nations and non-First Nations, who will determine the eligibility criteria? When will that criteria be shared?</p> | <p>We will continue to provide information, program and funding details as they become available.</p> <p>ISC has released a COVID-19: First Nations Community Guide on Accessing Additional Supports outlining eligibility and process to support further requests for funding. (See https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1584819394157/1584819418553.)</p> |
| <p>Question #30:</p> <p>Who will be the main contact for funding requests and who will receive proposals? If it's ISC, is it Catherine Lappe? If it's going to be FNHA, who specifically</p> | <p>Please refer to answer provided to Questions #8.</p> |

| QUESTION | ANSWER |
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| receives/processes? | |
| <p>Question #31:</p> <p>In the Interior Region, where there are confirmed positive cases, where are people able to access testing? Is drive thru testing being used, and are there other assessment sites in Kelowna?</p> | <p><i>This question is referred to the First Nations Health Authority.</i></p> |
| <p>Question #32:</p> <p>What are the strategies for groups with no primary care providers, substance addictions, or who are currently homeless across BC?</p> | <p><i>This question is referred to the First Nations Health Authority.</i></p> <p><i>Also, please refer to answer provided to Question #1. ISC is expecting more information on the allocation of resources now that the Bill C-13, the COVID-19 Emergency Response Act has received Royal Assent.</i></p> |
| <p>Question #33:</p> <p>Where RCMP small detachments may have shortages of officers due to COVID-19, how will the shortage be addressed?</p> | <p><i>This question is referred to the RCMP.</i></p> |
| <p>Question #34:</p> <p>ISC has extended year-end reporting deadlines – will FNHA do the same?</p> | <p><i>This question is referred to the First Nations Health Authority.</i></p> |
| <p>Question #35:</p> <p>Communities are receiving inconsistent information on elections – how is ISC addressing the issue, and are elections being required despite current circumstances?</p> | <p>Please refer to answer provided to Question #24.</p> |
| <p>Question #36:</p> <p>Where First Nations governments have scaled down</p> | <p>ISC's top priority at this time is to ensure that First Nations are able to deliver essential services to their members. Our staff has been working diligently, reaching out to communities to confirm that essential services are being provided. If communities become</p> |

| QUESTION | ANSWER |
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| <p>to the provision of essential services, it is unfeasible for there to be continued referrals to offices that do not have staff in place to respond. Will this procedure be adjusted to account for closed/reduced local service provision?</p> | <p>unable to provide any essential services to their members or if there are immediate supply issues, ISC, BC Region should be contacted as soon as possible by email at aadnc.iscbccovid19.aandc@canada.ca for assistance in resolving the issue, and to minimize the impact of interruptions in the delivery of essential services or supplies.</p> <p>We are tracking on a daily basis as best as possible where First Nation's offices are closed. Based on our regular communication efforts with First Nations, in particular through regular contact from Funding Services Officers, our general COVID-19 ISC BC Region email box, and other regional officials at ISC, we are constantly updating our contact information to ensure that we are communicating with people when working outside of the First Nations' offices.</p> |
| <p>Question #37:</p> <p>How does the EMBC declaration of a state of emergency work?</p> | <p><i>This question is referred to Emergency Management BC.</i></p> |