



Nishnawbe Aski Nation

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MEMORANDUM

TO: NAN Chiefs & Tribal Councils
DATE: April 6, 2020
RE: **COVID-19 Specific Funding to Support First Nations**
FROM: Travis Boissoneau, Chief Administrative Officer
CC: NAN Executive
ATTACHMENTS: none

This memo serves to summarize and provide an update on the various funding announcements made in response to COVID-19. We understand that there is a great deal of conflicting information that has been released in the past few days, and we hope that this will assist in navigating the processes.

FEDERAL: PERSONAL PROTECTION EQUIPMENT (PPE) ORDERING PROCESS

- Facilities are to continue ordering through their routine processes .
- When a supplier is unable to fill an order, or items are unable to be delivered within sufficient time, facilities are to complete the FNIHB-OR CD Unit: PPE National Supply Request Form and submit it to the Ontario Region COVID-19 Response Team by email, **sac.covid-19fnihbontario.isc@canada.ca**, or by fax, **1-807-343-5348**
- To help ensure quicker processing, please include all information requested
 - Home & Community Care Programs are to include the number of clients within their program
- Orders will be reviewed by the Ontario Region COVID-19 Response Team and submitted to the National Office for review and processing. Delivery time frame will be 2-7 days

FEDERAL: \$100M FUND TO SUPPORT INDIGENOUS RESPONSE TO COVID-19

In order to support First Nations in preparing for and responding to COVID-19, \$100 million was allocated for areas of federal responsibility, including for First Nations, Inuit and Métis community public health needs. These funds were intended to:

- respond to identified needs to update and/or activate pandemic plans
- support an effective allocation of the limited public health and primary health care capacity to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak
- align response efforts with scientific evidence as determined by a medical officer of health
- address immediate needs in the short term

It was announced recently that this funding was no longer available as of April 1st, 2020. It is noted and has been raised with senior leadership that there was no formal communication from ISC to notify communities there was a deadline to access these funds. We are, however, **strongly**

encouraging communities to continue to develop proposals to prepare your communities to respond to a potential COVID-19 outbreak. It will be important that ISC has your requests and knowledge of the gaps at the community level so that if/when further resources become available, you can access them on a priority basis. Further this work will assist in advocacy efforts to signal that the initial commitment of funding is not sufficient. Please continue to identify your needs, and work on addressing the gaps in your community.

Examples of eligible COVID-19 expenses:

- Community or service provider level infection prevention and control supplies (soap, sanitizers, disinfectants, personal clinical supplies, community training, etc.);
- Medical Transportation under the Non-Insured Health Benefits program: Travel (air, ground and water) / Meals and accommodations (note high-risk individuals eligible for private ground transportation, such as taxi, and private accommodations, such as hotel);
- Emergency Transportation & additional escorts under the Non-Insured Health Benefits program: Travel (air, ground and water) meals and accommodations (note high-risk individuals eligible for private ground transportation, such as taxi, and private accommodations, such as hotel);
- Health human resources surge capacity: primary care nurses and public health nurses, or other health providers such as paramedics and community workers;
- Mental health services to support communities, particularly when they are facing affected individuals;
- Adaptation of community space for surge capacity access to medical care or for self-isolation or other related purposes and additional operation and maintenance cost incurred by surge capacity requirements;
- Storage costs of supplies;
- On-the-land initiatives to support social isolation or food security; and,
- Other types of expenses considered on a case-by-case basis.

How to Submit a Request?

Please, consult your ISC regional office when submitting your request. ISC has provided an [example](#) of a template to submit requests for funding for items or services you purchase or plan to purchase as part of your response to COVID-19.

FEDERAL: INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY SUPPORT FUND

On March 18, 2020, the Government of Canada announced the COVID-19 Economic Response Plan. This plan included \$305 million for a new, distinctions-based Indigenous Community Support Fund to address immediate needs in First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities. \$215 million is specifically for First Nations.

The funding was provided for, but not limited to:

- Support for Elders and vulnerable community members
- Measures to address food insecurity
- Educational and other support for children
- Mental health assistance and emergency response services
- Preparedness measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19

How is the funding delivered?

First Nation communities received funding directly from ISC. There was no application for this funding. These funds were allocated to each First Nation based on population, remoteness and community well-being. Funding was transferred to communities and band councils from ISC regional offices and will be added to existing contribution agreements for fiscal year 2020 – 2021. We encourage you to use these funds to address your communities' COVID-19 needs.

FEDERAL: Emergency Management Assistance Program (EMAP)

In addition to public health related emergency supports, First Nation communities on reserve may need emergency assistance services that can be provided through the Emergency Management Assistance Program (EMAP). **The types of expenses covered under EMAP when communities are under imminent threat include:**

- incremental wage costs, including temporary hires and overtime
- rental of special equipment
- set-up costs for one-time preventative measures
- insurance and fuel costs of response vehicles
- care, feeding and accommodation of human resources separate from health care professionals, if required (contractors and temporary hires)
- communications (satellite phones, cell phone usage above and beyond normal use)
- water and household supplies (i.e., providing food and water if there is a concern that a shortage may occur)

At this time, Emergency Management Assistance Program assistance is dedicated to ensuring the immediate health and safety response of First Nations related to COVID-19. **Funding will not be used to support capacity building activities, nor to supplement other programs such as Band Support Funding.** Eligible expenses will still be funded in cases of fire, flood or other natural disasters that pose an imminent threat to communities that would typically be supported by the Emergency Management Assistance Program.

How to submit a request?

Please, consult your ISC regional office when submitting your request. ISC has provided an example of a template to submit requests for funding for items or services you purchase or plan to purchase as part of your response to COVID-19.

PROVINCIAL: ONTARIO'S ACTION PLAN

On March 25th the Province announced, as part of Ontario's Action Plan: Responding to COVID-19, additional support of \$26M to Indigenous peoples and communities for supports that include but are not limited to: emergency assistance for urban Indigenous people in financial need, costs for health care professionals and critical supplies to reach remote First Nations, as well as funding to address emergency planning and self-isolation needs for people in First Nation communities.

Funding of up to \$16M through the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs will support priority needs to respond to the COVID-19 emergency, which include:

- Transportation of people and goods as remote communities experience the impact of the pandemic.
- COVID-19 awareness and prevention
- Urban Indigenous communities funding to support vulnerable populations
- Pandemic planning in Indigenous communities
- Effective self-isolation in remote and northern First Nations communities to mitigate the need for transportation to regional hubs or urban centres.

Currently, the guidelines and final details of the funding are being finalized by our provincial counterparts. We are working to find out the details and will provide them to you as soon as they are released.