



# COVID-19: Update to First Nations Leadership: March 20

These reports are prepared by Indigenous Services Canada and sent out to all First Nations leadership. They provide the latest information for First Nations leadership on COVID-19, and how to access support to prevent and manage the virus.

## Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan

On March 18, the Government of Canada announced funding through its [COVID-19 Economic Response Plan](#). The plan contained two proposed measures specific to Indigenous leadership:

\$305 million for a new distinctions-based Indigenous Community Support Fund. Communities will be able to use this funding to take action to manage and prevent COVID-19 in their communities. Examples for what the fund may be used for include:

- ▶ providing food delivery services to the elderly in preventative isolation
- ▶ funding increased transportation costs for community members who can no longer use public transportation
- ▶ off-setting increased costs related to COVID-19 (such as increased transportation costs for food)

\$10 million for emergency family violence prevention shelters on-reserve and in Yukon to support women and children fleeing violence

Monies will be available in April. More information on how these funds will be made available to communities is forthcoming.



## Accessing benefits and credits

First Nations individuals and businesses are also encouraged to review measures which have been made available to all Canadians through the Government of Canada's [COVID-19 Economic Response Plan](#), through which they may receive further support.

Measures include, but are not limited to:

- ▶ Waiving the one-week waiting period for those individuals in imposed quarantine that claim Employment Insurance (EI) sickness benefits. This temporary measure is in effect as of March 15, 2020.
- ▶ Waiving the requirement to provide a medical certificate to access EI sickness benefits
- ▶ A new Emergency Care Benefit
- ▶ An enhanced Goods and Services Tax Credit
- ▶ An enhanced Canada Child Benefit
- ▶ A new Emergency Support Benefit
- ▶ Implementing the EI Work Sharing Program
- ▶ Support for businesses

The Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) encourages all Canadians to file their T1 Income Tax and Benefit Return to ensure they receive the benefits and credits to which they are entitled. ISC has communicated with CRA to determine how all Indigenous families with children will be able to access the additional Canada Child Benefit support of \$300 per child. Currently, CRA is automatically processing Canada Child Benefit payments to those identified as current recipients.

ISC is currently identifying alternative methods to help get funds to families that may not already be identified by the CRA as recipients, such as transferring funds through existing social programs. More information will be forthcoming.

## Funding agreements

We know that communities have begun to implement social distancing and self-isolation measures to respond to the threat of COVID-19. For some communities, this has impacted the ability to physically sign funding agreements and amendments, created challenges with the application of the financial authority to approve expenses (section 34), and impacted the ability to respond to reporting obligations.

In these instances, measures have been put in place to offer flexibility to communities. For more information, please communicate with your regional funding agreement contact.

### For more information

Visit [canada.ca/coronavirus-info-indigenous](https://canada.ca/coronavirus-info-indigenous) for information updated daily.

