



# ANISHINABEK NATION

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## COVID-19 Update - March 25, 2020

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### Indigenous

- During the First Nations Health Managers Association Virtual Town Hall, the National Chief urged government to expand healthcare into First Nations territories. He stated that essential workers should be the only people crossing borders into indigenous territories, and asked that everyone continue to stay home.
- Dr. Gideon – Senior Assistant Deputy Minister for the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch of Indigenous Services Canada – spoke on how ISC is handling COVID-19 to date:
  - Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) is working with many regional chiefs to draft adaptations to public health recommendations that are being released.
  - National Inuit Committee on Health will be meeting to ensure Inuit communities have access to health care and necessary resources.
  - Indigenous Services has issued a community guide for indigenous communities. This gives you information for how to access resources and necessary additional supports.
  - There will be more information coming out publicly with details on the distribution of funds allocated to helping the indigenous community through this crisis.
  - There will be a specific fund to ensure that remote communities will continue to be able to access healthcare and the necessary resources.
  - Indigenous Services Canada has suspended non-essential services within communities.
  - They are working with many communities to find solutions to claims for additional space for clinical or testing purposes. If required, we will be able to provide temporary infrastructure.
  - The First Nations specific envelope of funding for this crisis is currently \$215 million, and this funding will be allocated as close to April 1<sup>st</sup> as possible. Nobody should think of this as a cap – it should be used broadly and to help households that need it in each community. If communities need additional supports, they should continue to send in requests to their regional offices.
  - Providing resources for Indigenous groups to go back to living on the land must be part of this response.
  - Modifying transportation arrangements to off-reserve medical appointments away from group transportation methods is absolutely necessary, and ISC will pay for additional costs associated with that.
- Minister of Indigenous Services Marc Miller says that the allocation of funds to Indigenous communities in the COVID-19 crisis reflects discussions ISC has had with First Nations, Inuit and Metis partners in each province and territory about their specific priorities during the pandemic. The funds will go directly to Indigenous communities with maximum flexibilities to help adapt responses to address local needs. This will be done with the sense of urgency the situation necessitates. This is only one of the measures that are being considered for First Nations, Inuit and Metis.



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- The First Nations portion of this funding is \$215 million. Each First Nation will get a base amount adjusted for population, remoteness, and community wellbeing.
  - The Inuit portion is \$45 million. It will flow to each of the four Inuit land claim organizations through an allocation determined by ITK and regional leadership.
  - For Metis, there will be a total of \$30 million, which will flow through each governing member.
  - The remaining percentage, accounting for \$15 million, will go to supporting regional, urban, and Indigenous organizations supporting those who live away from their communities.
  - “This is only the beginning; we know that more support will be needed, and we will be there to make sure no Indigenous community is left behind.”
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- Canadian Heritage has extended the deadline for funding to commemorate the legacy of residential schools from March 27<sup>th</sup> amid COVID-19 pandemic. This will specifically apply to projects requesting \$5 000 or less, with the deadline for projects requesting up to \$50 000 set for April 9<sup>th</sup>. - [https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/canadain-heritage-funding-history-residential-schools-1.5507294?\\_vfz=medium%3Dsharebar](https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/canadain-heritage-funding-history-residential-schools-1.5507294?_vfz=medium%3Dsharebar)

## Provincial

- Queen’s Park met for an emergency sitting today to debate Ontario’s mini-budget before the fiscal update announcement.
- *Ontario’s Action Plan: Responding to COVID-19 (March 2020 Economic and Fiscal Update)*
  - Ontario announces new spending in the spring economic statement that sees a deficit of \$20 billion. This funding will be split between the health care system and a variety of support measures for families and businesses. This plan includes one-time direct payments to families of \$200 per child up to the age of 12 and \$250 for those with special needs.
  - Includes \$7 billion additional resources for the health care system and direct support for people and jobs. The plan will also make available \$10 billion in support for people and businesses through tax and other deferrals to improve cash flow, protecting jobs and household budgets.
  - This is a critical first step, including a dedicated \$1 billion COVID-19 contingency fund, as part of additional health care investments, as well as a \$2.5 billion reserve and an increased contingency fund of \$1.3 billion to respond to changing circumstances.
  - The plan included \$3.3 billion in additional health care resources.
    - \$594 million will go towards accelerating progress on addressing capacity issues
    - \$341 million will work to provide an additional 1,000 acute care and 500 critical care beds and additional assessment centres.
    - \$160 million is allocated to increase public health funding to support COVID-19 monitoring, surveillance, and laboratory and home testing, while also investing in virtual care and Telehealth Ontario.



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- A \$243 million investment is included for surge capacity in the long-term care sector, as well as funding for 24/7 screening, more staffing to support infection control, and supplies and equipment to help tackle the COVID-19 outbreak.
- \$75 million is dedicated to supplying personal protective equipment and critical medical supplies to front-line staff to tackle COVID-19.
- As part of the action plan, Ontario announced \$3.7 billion to directly and urgently support people and protect jobs.
- The plan proposes to double the Guaranteed Annual Income System payment for low-income seniors for six months. It also provides approximately \$5.6 billion in electricity cost relief programs.
- The plan will cut taxes by \$355 million for approximately 57,000 employers through a temporary increase to the Employer Health Tax exemption.
- \$9 million in direct support to families will be provided for their energy bills by expanding eligibility for the Low-income Energy Assistance Program.
- Ontario will expand access to the emergency assistance program through Ontario Works to provide financial support to struggling families.
- The plan includes a funding enhancement of \$148 million to charitable and non-profit social services organizations such as food banks, homeless shelters, churches and emergency services.
- The Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) will provide six months of loan and interest accrual relief for students.
- A new Corporate Income Tax Credit will be introduced to support a lack of employment growth.
- The aforementioned \$10 billion in support through tax and other deferrals will be administered as follows:
  - \$6 billion through five months of interest and penalty relief for businesses to file and pay provincial taxes.
  - \$1.8 billion through deferring the June 30<sup>th</sup> quarterly municipal remittance of education property tax.
  - \$1.9 billion through allowing employers to defer payments for up to six months to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board.
- Plan will provide supports for Indigenous peoples and communities, including emergency assistance for urban Indigenous people in financial need, transportation costs for health care professionals and critical supplies to remote First Nations, and funding to address emergency planning and self-isolation needs for people in First Nation communities.



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Table 2.8  
Total Expense<sup>1,2</sup> (Continued)

(\$ Millions)

Ministry Expense	Actual	Actual	Interim <sup>3</sup>	Plan
	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
Indigenous Affairs (Base)	86	75	78	82.2
One-Time Investments including Settlements <sup>8</sup>	1,122	215	14	–
<b>Indigenous Affairs (Total)</b>	<b>1,208</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>82.2</b>
Infrastructure (Base)	227	161	203	221.8
Federal-Provincial Infrastructure Programs	248	352	122	310.5
Waterfront Toronto Revitalization (Port Lands Flood Protection)	–	–	118	128.4
Municipal Infrastructure Program Investments <sup>4</sup>	–	–	–	202.0

- Ontario will reopen some child-care agencies, to be available only to certain essential workers, including police, firefighters, nurses, provincial lab workers, and youth services employees. This list does not currently include federal public servants.
- Ontario's Deputy Minister of Health will hold a media briefing tomorrow afternoon with a number of medical officials to share information on the province's extensive efforts to expand its lab testing capacity and slow the spread of the virus.

## Federal

- The federal government reached an agreement with the opposition parties overnight to approve billions in emergency aid to deal with the economic fallout of the new coronavirus pandemic. The approved bill differs from the original proposal by removing taxation power and limiting spending on emergency health care without parliamentary approval to expire on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020.
- Prime Minister Trudeau announced the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), to replace the two benefits announced last week – Emergency Care and Emergency Support Benefit. Ottawa is adjusting efforts as the situation evolves.
- This legislation will include \$500 million for provincial and territorial governments to use to purchase sorely needed medical equipment.
- The government will make up to \$300 billion in credit available to businesses via the Export Development Bank and Business Development Bank to meet payrolls.
- The CERB will include \$2000/month for the next 4 months to workers who are not getting paid due to COVID-19. This includes any full-time, contract, or self-employed workers who are now out of work, as well as anyone sick, in quarantine, taking care of someone who is sick or taking care of children. If you still have a job but aren't receiving a salary, this benefit will also apply to you. This will be considered taxable income.
- The online portal for applications will be available April 6<sup>th</sup>, and people will start receiving money within 10 days of applying. The public service is working around the clock, and Ottawa will be deploying workers from different departments to speed things up. The team working through applications has been boosted by 13,000 people and has processed 143,000 claims to date.



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- The government also has the power to make any regulations that it considers necessary to prevent drug shortages and protect human health.
- Canada is currently administering 10,000 COVID-19 tests each day.
- Tomorrow, Prime Minister Trudeau will be speaking with G20 leaders about global coordination to Canada's response.
- Minister Guilbeault to release new measures to support media playing a critical role in keeping Canadians informed.
- After today, it will be legally required that all returning Canadian travellers must go into self-isolation, with the exemption of some essential workers. This will be enforced through measures in the Quarantine Act, with penalties including criminal sanctions or fines. Alternative arrangements for people needing to use public transit or who have no place to stay that doesn't endanger others will be made by the Public Health Agency of Canada.
- 1 million Canadians returned to the country last week, with more repatriation flights being arranged from Morocco, Peru, Panama, Tunisia, Ukraine and Spain.

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