



BRIEFING NOTE

TO: BC Assembly of First Nations
FROM: BC Aboriginal Child Care Society
DATE: November 10, 2020
RE: Emergency COVID-19 Funding for Indigenous Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC)

PURPOSE

To request leadership approval for the BC Aboriginal Child Care Society (BCACCS) to receive \$8,729,797 in federal emergency COVID-19 funding for Indigenous ELCC on behalf of BC First Nations.

BACKGROUND

Canada announced emergency funding of \$120 million in 2020-21 to support the evolving needs of Indigenous ELCC in response to the current COVID-19 pandemic. Of the \$71.01 million available to First Nations, \$8,729,797 will be available to BC region.

This one-time emergency funding is intended to preserve the continued availability of Indigenous ELCC programs and services that many children and families rely on during these unprecedented times, and to ensure that new public health measures can be implemented to keep children and families safe. For example, funding could be used for:

- special training to support ELCC workers to adapt to their new work environments and cope with social distancing measures;
- the provision of mental health supports to address the impacts of isolation on children and families; or
- the provision of educational toys, home-based learning kits, and food hampers to replace breakfast or lunch programs.

CURRENT STATUS

For this emergency funding to reach communities as soon as possible, Canada is proposing that:

1. funding to regions is allocated based on the current Indigenous ELCC allocation methodology endorsed by the Assembly of First Nations in December 2018; and
2. in addition, for BC, in accordance with the decision by Regional Leadership, funding flows through BCACCS using a separate emergency funding agreement with Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC).

Given the emergency, Canada is requesting that Regional Leadership confirm acceptance of the above proposals by November 4, 2020 at the latest.

ANALYSIS

In response to the emerging needs of children, families, and communities during the pandemic, BCACCS has been providing COVID-19 funding support to First Nations and Indigenous ELCC programs since June 1, 2020. To date, BCACCS has invested over \$875,000 in COVID-19-related activities taking place through September 30, 2020, supporting 90 First Nations, 6 service organizations, 1 Tribal Council, and 13 urban programs to:

- continue operating child care;
- support educators and staff who have been financially impacted;
- provide activity kits to families;
- provide food, water, and physical and mental health support;
- implement technology supports;
- purchase health and safety supplies;
- conduct professional cleaning;
- offer respite care; and
- develop COVID-19 plans/policies.

Additional emergency funding from Canada will enable BCACCS to support these Nations and programs to continue their COVID-19-related activities to the end of the fiscal year.

Additionally, Nations and programs that have had to shut down their operations due to the pandemic can be supported to re-open, including rehiring qualified early childhood educators (ECEs). This may be necessary because although ECEs continue to work on the frontlines or in other ways to support children and families, unlike other social service workers, they are not provided with pandemic pay.

With this funding, BCACCS will also be able to target Nations currently without ELCC services, by working with their social service staff to provide direct support to families, with a particular focus on food security, mental health supports and/or children's learning.

RECOMMENDATION

BCAFN leadership confirms acceptance that the emergency COVID-19 funds will be made available on an immediate basis to BCACCS through a separate emergency funding agreement with ESDC.