



# Okanagan Indian Band

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## MEMBER BULLETIN

Date: April 1, 2020

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### Indigenous Community Support Funding Allocation

OKIB has received a letter from Indigenous Services Canada providing information about the \$215 million announced for First Nations communities as part of the Government of Canada's \$305 million *Indigenous Community Support Fund*. These funds are intended to provide Indigenous leaders with flexibility to address the immediate needs of their communities as they prepare for and respond to the spread of COVID-19.

ISC indicated that the allocation of funds is intended to be equitable taking into account such factors and population, remoteness and community wellness.

The allocation for OKIB community will be \$1,827,177.45 for fiscal year 2020-2021. This funding will be added to our existing contribution agreements in the coming days. These funds apply to all members of the community and could be used for measures including, but not limited to:

- support for Elders,
- food insecurity,
- educational and other support for children,
- mental health assistance and emergency response health services.

OKIB will be using these funds towards community-level priorities. These priorities include:

- (1) Primary Care (\$100,000.00): As acuity of compromised patients increase in tandem with virus related sickness, a Nurse Practitioner will be recruited (contracted) to provide treatment level supports within the community. This minimizes risk, and fills a serious gap in response capacity, especially for vulnerable and health compromised clients and families.
- (2) Food Security (\$100,000.00): two stream of services and supports:
  - a. Food Production: OKIB "Pop-up" Community Garden - Food Security Pandemic Response initiative. OKIB HSD is working to implement a pop up garden to be located in the ball diamond utilizing a raised bed / growing box, model. This is part of our overall Pandemic Response addressing food security for vulnerable populations.

- b. Food Distribution: There are four tiers of support: (1) meal preparation and delivery, currently 2x per week; (2) food provision and delivery; (3) food provisions for pick-up; (4) wellness check (phone call).
- (3) Home and Community Care and Mental Wellness (\$150,000.00). With growing caseloads, staff becoming ill (and or burn out because of stressful and demanding workloads) and **anticipating the need for after hours and weekend coverage**, two (2) additional Licensed Practical Nurses and Four (4) additional home care aids will be recruited and contracted for six months. Additionally, the Mental Wellness team will be supported by an on-call, contracted mental wellness professional to assist in meeting advanced care and mental wellness care requirements.

Because the length and severity of the crisis is unknown at the moment but expected to drag on for many months and with a vaccine possibly a year away, OKIB has taken the prudent position to begin with these supports and constantly reassess community needs. More support for community members will be announced in the near future.

In the meantime, income supports to individuals are being dealt with by the Federal and Provincial Governments and members who are out of work are entitled to monthly supplements of \$2000 and one-time supports of \$1000 on top of Child Benefit and GST top-ups. OKIB will help any member who is out of work access these funds. Please call the Social Development office for more details (250) 542-5094 or take a look at our website posts outlining ways for Members to sign up for supports online.

Thank-you for your patience as we work through this difficult situation and please reach out to any member of the staff if you need assistance of any kind – we are here to help!