



Okanagan Indian Band

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MEMBER BULLETIN

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OKIB food hamper program to commence monthly distribution *It's part of OKIB's Food Security Initiative*

OKIB Health Department today announced that the band will begin distributing food hampers to members on or around the 15th of every month until the pandemic conditions change.

“One of Chief and Council’s priority areas during the pandemic is food security,” said Chief Byron Louis. “We are launching the monthly food hamper program to ensure that any households that need food, get food. And for the longer term we have planted pop-up gardens to grow fresh produce for our food programs.”

The concept behind the food hampers is to help households supplement their food caches in order to move toward food security and the peace of mind of knowing that your family has access to good food.

Food hampers will be distributed by household. To sign up for a food hamper for your household, please call or send us an email. We monitor the phones from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. If we are on the other line please leave a message and we will add you to the list.

The distribution will be moved to Head of the Lake Hall, which has better vehicles access and can accommodate more traffic. HOL Hall also allows for better physical distancing and has a larger work area for the crews.

The service will be **pick up only** as we do not have resources to deliver to off-reserve homes. We will deliver to those members with comprised health or other special needs, and Elders, and will include members who require transportation supports for IR#7 (Duck Lake).

The first distribution gets underway May 14 & 15, 2020 at Head of the Lake Hall. We have implemented designated pick-up times to reduce traffic congestion and improve the safety of our workers and volunteers. Households can expect a telephone call 1-2 days prior to distribution for pickup timeframes.

If you want to designate someone else in your family to pick up on your behalf please send us an email 24 hours prior to the distribution date.

Pre- and post-natal clients

For our pre- and post-natal clients, the distribution of supplies and baby products including formula, diapers, wipes, etc. will now be arranged through the OKIB Community Health Nurse. Expectant and new mothers please call the OKIB Nurse Hotline, Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at 250-241-7595.

Food Security Initiative

The food hamper program is part of the Food Security Initiative (FSI), which also features a pop-up garden to ensure longer term food security. The pop up garden will be in full operational at Komasket Park within two weeks with 60 boxes. This location offers watering access and a fully fenced-in green space with functioning service gates. There's a ton of work involved in setting up the garden but as our band members master growers have been telling us "once you properly set up, the rest take cares of itself." The soil is in, seedlings are sprouting. Seeds and plants were chosen under the guidance of our master gardener/horticulturist.

There is plenty of growing season left, and we will have bountiful and plentiful produce harvest, but it's very important and well worth the extra time to get the soils and set-up correct. And finally, we're not proceeding, at least in the short term, with hothouses or greenhouses.

Educational awareness and training for agriculture and agri-foods is another area we are investigating. The education would include the short and long term effects of the pandemic. In the short term we will not be proceeding with hot or green house and this will be on the back burner for the interim.

Community Resource Mapping

We will conduct community resource mapping to determine which members can offer skills including but not limited to these categories:

- hunters
- fishers
- fruit and vegetable gardeners
- farmers (livestock, livestock bearing milk, live poultry to include those bearing eggs, etc.)
- traditional food harvesters
- knowledge keepers of Food Preservation to include: canning, drying, freezing etc.
- knowledge keepers of traditional root cellars for cold season storage.