

ONTARIO REGION UPDATE



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For newsletter questions or to request a French copy, please email / Pour questions concernant la newsletter ou pour demander une copie en français, s'il vous plaît envoyez un e-mail : ontario-communications@sac-isc.gc.ca





2025 Joint Gathering

Indigenous Services Canada–Ontario Region is pleased to invite First Nations leadership from across Ontario to the seventh annual Joint Gathering. The event will take place on November 25 and 26, 2025 at the Sheraton Toronto Airport Hotel and Conference Centre.

The Joint Gathering brings leadership from First Nations, Canada, and Ontario together to strengthen relationships and work towards joint priorities. ISC will sponsor travel for First Nation Chiefs, Grand Chiefs, Deputy Grand Chiefs, and Executive Directors of Tribal Councils and Health Authorities. Sponsorship is also extended to select delegates by invitation.

Please register online here: [2025 Ontario Joint Gathering Registration Form](#)

Although our pre-event survey has closed, we continue to welcome suggestions for speakers, conference elements, and exhibitors. If you have any ideas to share, please contact us at ISCONRegionUpdates@sac-isc.gc.ca.

We look forward to meeting with you in November!



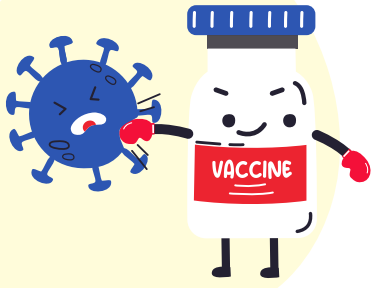
Educational Resources: Substance Use

With the fall school season a few months away, teachers and other educators may be planning ahead. Health Canada has free, age-appropriate resources for educators about substance use. Resources range in format and cover key subjects: alcohol, cannabis, tobacco, vaping, opioids, and stigma. For a full list of available programming, visit the [Health Canada Experiences website](#). A few key resources are outlined below for your reference. Some are available in Ojibway and Cree dialects (example pictured to the right).



- Virtual experience: Cannabis education for grades 7 to 12 – [Website](#)
- Virtual experience: Know More Opioids program – [Website](#)
- Activity: How does cannabis affect the brain – [Website](#)
- Online game: Healthy heroes (effects of substances on the brain) – [Website](#)

Routine Immunizations



Children and teens are eligible for immunization against many vaccine preventable diseases like measles, meningitis, and whooping cough. The best way to protect them– and the community– from such diseases is to stay up to date with immunizations, and to get caught up if any doses were missed.

Please consider sharing the following resources with your community to boost awareness before kids head back to school (or daycare) in the fall.

Communication resources

ISC & Government of Ontario

- Graphics & Social Media: Promoting routine vaccinations – [Word doc](#)
- Text: Tips for parents for a positive immunization experience – [Website](#)

[Solutions for Kids in Pain](#)

- Booklet: All about me for children getting vaccinated – [PDF](#)
- Booklet: All about me for adults getting vaccinated – [PDF](#)

[Sick Kids](#)

- Guide: Improving the vaccination experience (words and actions to use) – [PDF](#)
- Activity: Find the CARD characters – [PDF](#)

Help is Here Whenever You Need It

Support is available 24/7 for all First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples. Please find a list of mental health helplines below that are able to provide culturally relevant support. To find more services and resources, [visit the national Indigenous mental health page](#).



Hope for Wellness Helpline

Phone: 1-855-242-3310

Online chat: www.hopeforwellness.ca

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Support Line

Phone: 1-844-413-6649

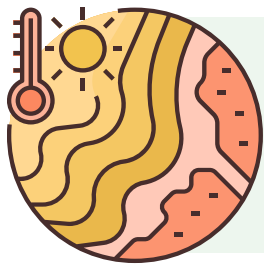
Indian Residential Schools Crisis Line

Phone: 1-866-925-4419

Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Services

Phone: 9-8-8 (call or text)





Staying Healthy in the Heat

Climate change is causing more frequent and intense heat waves. Extreme heat can be dangerous for everyone, but some people are at a higher risk. This includes:

- Older adults
- Infants and young children
- People with chronic health conditions and/or physical disabilities
- Employees exposed to heat at work
- Individuals facing social disadvantages, such as low-income, homelessness, and/or isolation

Some people may not realize the risk heat poses, or think of themselves as especially vulnerable to heat-related illnesses. With [hot weather expected to continue](#) across Canada this summer, they may need help staying safe. Community awareness and support are key. The communication tools below can help people stay informed about heat risks.

Communication resources

Health Canada

- Brochure: It's much too hot! Protect yourself from extreme heat – [PDF](#)
- Brochure: Keep children cool! Protect your child from extreme heat – [PDF](#)
- Brochure: You're active in the heat. You're at risk! Protect yourself from extreme heat – [PDF](#)
- Infographic: Three ways to protect you & your loved ones during an extreme heat event – [PDF](#)
- Infographic: Staying healthy in the heat – [PDF](#)
- Fact Sheet: Staying healthy in the heat – [PDF](#)
- Video: Staying healthy in the heat – [YouTube](#) (transcript can be found [here](#))

BCCDC* Indigenous Knowledge Translation Working Group

- Infographic: Extreme heat is most dangerous indoors (Part 1) – [PDF](#)
- Infographic: Take care of each other when it's hot out (Part 2) – [PDF](#)
- Infographic: What are the signs of heat stroke? (Part 3) – [PDF](#)
- Infographic: How do I cool down my body? (Part 4) – [PDF](#)

**Resources provided by the British Columbia Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC). Please note that any caller can use the 811 non-emergency health line promoted in these resources. The number is the same in all Canadian provinces, including [Ontario](#). Callers are connected to the provincial line that matches their location.*





First Nations Environmental Contaminants Program

Indigenous Services Canada provides funding through the [First Nations Environmental Contaminants Program](#) (FNECP) to support First Nations communities identifying and investigating the impacts of environmental hazard exposure. Activities include community-based research, monitoring, risk assessment, risk communication and knowledge integration.

The deadline to submit a proposal is September 22, 2025, 9:59 pm ET. To request the application document, please contact the FNECP by email: fnecp-plcepn@sac-isc.gc.ca.

[Eligible applicants](#) must outline how they meet the [special requirements](#) in their proposal. Any environmental contaminants can be included in a proposal, as long as they are of concern to First Nations communities. Proposals must clearly outline and explain the human health risks that could be caused by the selected contaminants.

For more information, please visit [First Nations Environmental Contaminants Program](#) and the [First Nations' Portal on Environmental Contaminants and Health](#).



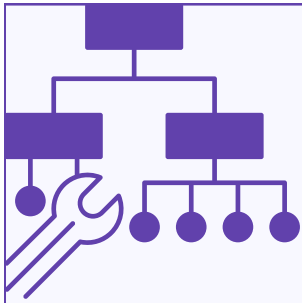
Get Support: Registration and Status Card Application

There are now more locations offering support to apply for registration under the Indian Act (also known as “Indian status”) and a secure status card. [Trusted sources](#) are reliable partners designated by Indigenous Services Canada to assist applicants. Trusted sources can help with:

- Completing and submitting registration or secure status card applications
- Copying and certifying required documents
- Taking photos for the secure status card applications
- Sharing information about legislative changes to the registration provisions of the Indian Act

There are [over 50 trusted source locations](#) and more than 30 partners across the country. Individuals can visit the [trusted source webpage](#) to locate one near them.





Recap: ISC Internal Restructuring

Earlier this month, Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) announced it would be undergoing internal changes to the organization in an effort to increase efficiency and improve service delivery. For anyone who may have missed this communication, here is a recap of the changes in Ontario.

In the coming months, the First Nations and Inuit Health Branch (FNIHB) and Regional Operations (RO) sectors will be combined under the new Regional Delivery Sector. The new sector combines management at the community level, realigning smaller sectors into coordinated, functional groupings. The goal of restructuring is to increase efficiency and improve service delivery. ISC is working to achieve this by prioritizing a one-ISC approach to service delivery; creating an enhanced digital approach for individual clients; and offering more cohesive service delivery and clear accountabilities through the functional groupings.

These changes will not directly impact you, or the programs and services that you receive from ISC. We will continue to work together to ensure that you and your communities/organizations continue to receive the high standard of service that you are used to. If anything, this change will ensure that both sides of our Department will act and respond in unity, to ensure a comprehensive response is provided.

We wanted to share this information with you directly. Should any further restructuring be announced, we will keep you informed. As always, we are available if you would like to discuss the changes further. Please reach out to [Michael O'Byrne](#) and [Lisa Westaway](#) with any questions.

2025 Price McIntosh Bursary

Financial aid is available through Library and Archives Canada (LAC) to students studying fields related to libraries and archives. The Price McIntosh Bursary is open to Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, and/or members of visible minorities enrolled in a related field. It allots \$5,000 for full-time students and \$2,500 for part-time students.

For the 2025-2026 academic year, eligible students are encouraged to submit their application by September 24, 2024, at 8:59 pm ET. Applicants must be enrolled in an eligible Canadian college or university program. To submit an application, please email all required documents to: bourse-bursary@bac-lac.gc.ca.

Please reach out to LAC with any questions about the bursary.

