



April 8, 2020
For Immediate Release

Helping Labrador Inuit cope with impacts of COVID-19

The Nunatsiavut Government today announced details of a number of initiatives announced March 26 aimed at assisting Beneficiaries of the Labrador Inuit Land Claims Agreement deal with impacts associated with the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic.

Funding for the initiatives is being provided by the Government of Canada through its \$305 million Indigenous Community Support Fund to address immediate needs related to COVID-19. The fund is divided between Indigenous governments and organizations across the country. The Nunatsiavut Government's share of that fund is \$5.3 million.

"It's important that supports be put in place to help Beneficiaries during these difficult and uncertain times," says Nunatsiavut President Johannes Lampe. "The initiatives we are rolling out today will assist individuals and families, and those who are the most vulnerable, by providing basic needs such as food, wood and fuel. It is our intent to provide help to as many Beneficiaries as we can no matter where they live."

Emergency Food Supplement Support Program

The purpose of this initiative is to ensure individuals and families impacted by COVID-19 and those most vulnerable to the virus have sufficient nutritious food to support their health and wellness. Adequate nutrition is crucial for maintaining good health and having the ability to fight off infection.

"The levels of food insecurity in Nain and Hopedale, for example, were over 80 per cent before the onset of COVID-19," notes President Lampe. "We suspect the need is even greater now in these communities, and we expect things to worsen for those who are especially vulnerable, such as seniors, persons living with disabilities, single parents and those living in poverty. Those who are isolated, who have lost wages and who are unable to access food programs will also find it hard to make ends meet for the foreseeable future."

Priority will be given to seniors (60 years and older) on fixed incomes, persons with disabilities, single parents, low income families (receiving income support, living on fixed pension incomes or employment insurance), and individuals and families who have had their employment hours cut or have been laid off because of the pandemic.

More than \$1.1 million has been set aside for this program.

Emergency Heat Subsidy

This program is designed to assist Labrador Inuit with heating their homes during the pandemic. It will subsidize the cost of acquiring and accessing wood, furnace and stove oil, and electricity. Provisions are being made to pay harvesters to provide wood to Inuit communities, as well as to financially assist those who are able to access their own wood.

“Many Labrador Inuit struggle to adequately heat their homes, especially our elders, low-income families and individuals, single parents, and persons with disabilities,” notes President Lampe. “This program is aimed at helping those who are most in need.”

To ensure there is an adequate supply of wood, the Nunatsiavut Government is encouraging harvesters to begin stockpiling as much wood as possible in order to meet the needs of their communities.

Those who qualify for the program and who do not use wood to heat their homes will receive allotments of stove and furnace oil or funds to subsidize electricity costs.

Priority will be given to seniors (60 years and older) on fixed incomes, persons with disabilities, single parents, low income families (receiving income support, living on fixed pension incomes or employment insurance), and individuals and families who have had their employment hours cut or have been laid off because of the pandemic. Support will also be provided to those who are physically unable to access wood, either because of chronic illnesses, broken snowmobiles, etc.

A total of \$1 million has been set aside for this initiative.

Harvesters Support Program

The goal of this program is to ensure community freezers are adequately stocked with country food for distribution to those most vulnerable to COVID-19, particularly elders. Funding will be provided to harvesters to cover costs associated with accessing country food. As well, provisions are being made to allow Labrador Inuit and harvesters to trade/barter country food they current have for gasoline, snowmobile oil and ammunition. Those who are able to harvest country food, but unable to do so because of financial constraints, will be able to apply for a gasoline allowance.

“Country foods are a necessity for many of our people in our communities, especially our seniors,” says President Lampe. “This program will ensure there is an adequate supply to meet community needs for the foreseeable future.”

To expedite the program, funds will flow directly to the five Labrador Inuit Community Governments or committees that operate community freezers. Priority will be given to seniors (60 years and older) on fixed incomes, persons with disabilities, low income families (receiving income support, living on fixed incomes or employment insurance.)

A total of \$500,000 has been set aside for this initiative.

Other Initiatives

Last week the Nunatsiavut Government announced an initiative to provide a variety of household cleaning supplies to families and individuals within the Labrador Inuit Settlement area where acquiring

such products are extremely expensive or not readily available. That program is currently being delivered, with supplies arriving in the communities this week.

As well, packages of coloring books and crayons, and a variety of games, etc. have been provided to Inuit children and families to support mental and social wellness. This includes supports to keep busy with other healthy activities, as well as implementing modified counseling supports. Similar packages are also being provided to individuals who are self-isolating and requiring mental health supports.

Earlier this week, the Nunatsiavut Government announced funding of \$54,500 to support efforts of food banks and community freezer programs.

How to apply

Beneficiaries and wood and country-food harvesters wishing to apply for any of these programs are asked to contact the following in their respective communities:

Community	Contact person	Contact number
Nain	Rutie Dicker	709-922-2942
Nain	Mary-Adelaide	709-922-2942
Nain	Brenda Dicker	709-922-2968
Hopedale	Vanessa Gauntlett	709-933-3695
Hopedale	Dawn-Rose Winters	709-933-3777
Postville	Ruth Jacque	709-479-9867
Makkovik	Carol Gear	709-923-2365
Makkovik	Michelle Dyson	709-923-2365
Rigolet	Paula Sheppard-McLean	709-947-3383
Rigolet	Lisa Bennett	709-947-3328

Community contacts will begin accepting applications on Tuesday, April 14.

A food supplement program is being developed for Labrador Inuit residing in Upper Lake Melville as well as in the Constituency of Canada. Details on the program and how to access it will be announced next week.

“The Nunatsiavut Government is working hard to assist Labrador Inuit cope with the impacts of COVID-19,” says President Lampe. “We ask people to be patient as we roll out these programs in the days ahead. In the meantime, I urge all Beneficiaries to follow proper public-health protocols to protect you and your families from this terrible disease.”

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