

BRIEFING NOTE PREPARED FOR POST-SECONDARY COORDINATORS

DATE: Wednesday, April 22, 2020

ISSUE: COVID19 PSE Student Support Announcement

PREPARED BY: FSIN Education & Training Secretariat

BACKGROUND

On March 12, 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 Virus outbreak a global pandemic. On March 16, 2020 Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced strategic COVID-19 restrictive and preventive measures across and within Canada. All Post-Secondary Institutions across Saskatchewan have gone to online learning effective March 20, 2020 to the end of the Winter 2020 term and will remain as online learning until it is deemed safe to resume in person classes.

Issues identified by the Saskatchewan First Nation Postsecondary Coordinators include:

- PSE Students are having issues with staying connected with their classes due to connectivity, access to technology and bandwidth issues While this action protects our students from possibly being exposed to COVID-19, it also presents pressures for students:
- Students may not have adequate access to online learning,
- struggling with assignments due to no child care availability,
- access to other resources needed to complete their studies.
- with the overall laying off of many workers and business shutting down, many students will also be dealing with shortage of summer work options, causing the additional pressures of paying their rent and bills over the summer.

A Letter was drafted by the FSIN Education and Training Secretariat and sent from Vice Chief Pratt to Minister Marc Miller on March 30 regarding the issues with First Nations PSE Students.

CURRENT STATUS

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced today (April 22, 2020) the Canada Student Emergency Benefit that is aimed at providing supports for PSE students across Canada that are affected by COVID19 pandemic.

- \$9 billion in financial aid for post-secondary students
- Students will be eligible for \$1,250 a month from May through August beginning May 1, 2020
- That sum can go up to \$1,750 if the student is taking care of someone or has a disability.
- The benefit is available also to students who have jobs but are making less than \$1,000 a month.
- Payments will be made through the Canada Revenue Agency.
- Students who volunteer for the fight against COVID-19 over the summer will be paid between \$1,000 and \$5,000, depending on the hours they work.
- Doubling student grants for eligible students — up to \$6,000 for full-time students and up to \$3,600 for part-time students.

Other measures announced for students today include:

- Raising the maximum weekly amount that can be provided through the Canada student loans program in 2020-2021 to \$350 from \$210.
- **More than \$75 million in additional supports for Indigenous post-secondary students.**
- Another \$291 million for federal granting councils to extend expiring federal graduate research scholarships and post-doctoral fellowships and supplement existing federal research grants.

NOTE: The Canada emergency response benefit (CERB) is available to students and anyone else who made at least \$1,000 in the last year, but only if they had been working and lost their source of income when COVID-19 struck.

We have been told by the AFN that the 75 million in additional supports for Indigenous Post-Secondary Students that the First Nation's allocation is \$65M and will go to out via the existing Post-Secondary Student Support Program and will be rolled out through the existing contribution agreements. Regional allocations have not yet been determined and will be forthcoming. Important to note this is a 1-year investment due to COVID19. This has to be confirmed with ISC and we will keep the PSE Coordinators updated on this.

RECOMMENDATIONS/NEXT STEPS

- The FSIN Education & Training Secretariat will follow up with determining how our students can access the Canada Student Emergency Benefit
- The FSIN Education & Training Secretariat will follow up with determining the Saskatchewan allocation and roll out of the 65M of the additional supports for PSE Students
- The next Post-Secondary Coordinators Meeting is April 29, 2020 via Conference Call at 1 pm – 4 pm