



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

About Cowichan Tribes' Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Version: May 11, 2020

This document contains up-to-date Questions & Answers for Cowichan Tribes members. It will be updated regularly as new questions arise and more information about the COVID-19 pandemic response becomes available.



Cases of COVID-19 in the Cowichan Valley are not increasing rapidly at present, likely due to social distancing. Members are urged to continue physical distancing and to get tested and self-isolate if experiencing any illness symptoms, however mild. Call your family doctor or 8-1-1.

About Cowichan Tribes' COVID-19 Pandemic Response

Who is leading the response?

Chief and Council are meeting weekly to monitor the situation and make key decisions. The General Manager is working with Ts'ewulhtun Health Centre and all Departments to respond effectively to the pandemic. While offices remain closed until further notice, Cowichan Tribes employees are still working to offer essential services and ensure the safety of all members.

Does Cowichan Tribes have a pandemic response plan?

Yes, Ts'ewulhtun Health Centre has a communicable disease (pandemic) plan, which we have been actively implementing since March 11. The pandemic response team is closely monitoring the health of the community, providing key updates to Chief and Council, and adapting our response based on the latest information. A Working Group was also established. Our response continues to be guided by provincial directives and instructions provided by the Island Health Authority, as well as our Quw'utsun teachings and protocols.

How do I keep my family and me safe?

The best way to keep you and your family safe is to follow the guidelines of health authorities and medical professionals. These include practicing physical distancing (staying 6 feet or 2 meters apart from others), wearing a mask, washing your hands frequently, avoiding touching your face, covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue (throw in trash) or inside elbow, disinfecting surfaces and objects that are often touched, limiting trips outside the house (e.g. shopping) and wearing a mask, and avoiding social or cultural gatherings. If you are sick or have symptoms, you are expected to get tested, stay home, self-isolate and call Health Link BC at 811.



If you or your relations are experiencing mental health challenges including suicide ideation, please reach out for help. There are supports. Call:

- Cowichan Tribes Kwun'atsustul (mental health and wellness clinic): 250-746-6184
- Embracing Life Suicide Prevention program: Coordinator - Michelle Louie, 250-732-2168
- KUU-US crisis line: 250-723-4050 (adults); 250-723-2040 (child/youth).

How has Cowichan Tribes responded to the COVID-19 pandemic?

- On March 11, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a Global Pandemic. On that day the Cowichan Tribes Pandemic Response team and plan was activated.
- On March 17, on the advice of the Pandemic Team, Cowichan Tribes closed its offices with a re-open date of March 31. All Departments switched to essential services and implemented strict social distancing recommendations for all staff and community.
- On March 24, Chief and Council mandated an indefinite office closure and essential services only, which was confirmed on April 1 by a Chief and Council Resolution.
- Following office closures, Cowichan Tribes staff immediately began to support Elders and families in need with regular check-in calls and food deliveries.
- Regular updates have been provided to members about COVID-19 including up-to-date provincial and national information and resources through the Cowichan Tribes [website including videos](#) and the official [Facebook page](#) (please like and follow us).
- The [April](#) and [May](#) newsletters were *Special Editions* dedicated to informing members about our COVID-19 response, including how essential services are being delivered.
- We have been working with local, provincial and federal partners to align ourselves with COVID-19 response guidelines and identify resources and supports available.
- We have developed a comprehensive economic response that includes food security for Elders and members in need, a cash distribution, technology supports for students and employees, as well as Personal Protective Equipment and cultural supports for members.
- Cowichan Tribes has matched the \$1.1 million contribution from the federal government with its own revenue for a total of \$2.2. million. For an overview of this economic response, please see the Cowichan Tribes COVID-19 [Economic Response Infographic](#).
- A COVID-19 Response Line (250-715-3339) and email (covid19@cowichantribes.com) were launched on May 11 with Community Navigators to assist members in accessing programs and services available to them.
- Throughout this time, Ts'ewulhtun Health communicable disease nurses have monitored the pandemic and provided the latest information to inform Chief and Council and all Departments and to ensure that precautions are being taken to keep members and employees safe.



How long will social distancing and essential services go on?

Social distancing measures (keeping 6 ft/2 meters distance and refraining from gatherings and visiting vulnerable relations) will likely persist for the next 18-24 months or until there is a vaccine or effective treatment for COVID-19 illness. Precautions of physical distancing and hand hygiene are most critical for Elders and those with ongoing health conditions (high blood pressure, diabetes, lung disease, etc.).

It is difficult to predict when a return to full services will occur. The BC government announced its [Restart Plan](#), a phased-in approach to re-opening of services across the province beginning in mid-May. Chief and Council and Administration will make decisions based on the advice of the Cowichan Tribes Pandemic Health team and provide updates and timelines as soon as they become available.

How are Elders being supported?

The Elders kitchen is providing meals on wheels from Monday to Friday for our most vulnerable Elders and a Food Box for approximately 50 Elders a week (those who have been attending the lunch program). The Elders Nurse program is also doing a daily phone call check-in. Most Elders are fortunate to have dedicated family members who are providing ongoing supports. Cowichan Tribes will continue to monitor the situation closely and find ways to best support Elders. It is especially important to practice physical distancing with Elders as they are more vulnerable to the impacts of COVID-19.

Are Cowichan Tribes employees still working?

Yes, employees are still employed. They are providing essential services and/or working remotely. Those providing essential services who come to work or interact with members are following procedures to limit the possibility of exposure, such as rotating shifts and regularly disinfecting surfaces. Some employees who cannot perform their usual duties are being asked to perform other duties to support our overall response to the COVID-19 emergency. Departmental reviews are being carried out with each department through the support of communicable disease nurses to ensure the health and safety of all employees and the members we serve.

Can we still host cultural ceremonies in public with other people?

The answer during this pandemic is – no. We all know that our culture is an important aspect of our way of life for all Quw'utsun people and families. Our culture and ceremonies are especially important during difficult times and to honour important shifts and events such as grief and loss, the transition from winter to spring, or to simply support those in need. At this critical time, it is important for all members to consider postponing all cultural or ceremonial gatherings to the end of 2020. Due to the impacts of colonization, our community is extra vulnerable to being negatively impacted, and we must take every precaution possible for the health of our community.



As of May 16th, the province has stated that people will be able to slowly expand their social circles to gatherings of **two to six people**, but this must be done with extreme caution and continued mindfulness of spreading germs to Elders and those with underlying health conditions. Restrictions on gatherings will continue to be implemented.

We ask that you tie the teachings of caring for one another to good physical distancing at this time; this includes avoiding all gatherings and limiting trips outside of the house. It's normal to feel challenged in these times, but we must all do our part to limit and prevent spreading the virus. Our community is resilient and has faced epidemics before and we will get through this by being kind, helpful and caring for one another.



Frequently Asked Questions:

Cowichan Tribes COVID-19 Economic Response Supports

Has Cowichan Tribes received funding to respond to COVID-19?

Yes. Cowichan Tribes has received \$1.1M in funding through Indigenous Services Canada (ISC). This amount is based on a colonial formula that does not fully meet the needs of our large membership. As a result, Cowichan Tribes is providing \$1.1M of its own revenue to support all members, on and off-reserve, during the pandemic.

For an overview of these supports and how the \$2.2million in funds will be allocated, please see the Cowichan Tribes [COVID-19 Economic Response Infographic](#).

Is other funding available for members?

Cowichan Tribes members may be eligible for funding supports offered by the Provincial and Federal Governments. If you have been laid-off or asked to go on leave, or need to stay home to care for children, you may be eligible for supports such as the Canada Emergency Response Benefit ([CERB](#)) and other benefits. Members are encouraged to pursue these options. Filing your taxes may help you access these and other benefits (child benefit, GST credit, etc.). Please note the \$2,000 CERB is taxable income, and recipients should put aside funds for income taxes. Business owners are also eligible for some relief. We will continue to explore all available funding for Cowichan Tribes members, both on and off-reserve, and will share this information as it becomes available.



COVID-19 Food Security & Food Fish Program

Who is eligible for the COVID-19 Food Security Program?

The Food Security Program is for Cowichan Tribes members who reside on and off-reserve in the Cowichan Valley and surrounding area who need food support during the COVID-19 pandemic. Eligibility will be assessed by 'household need' and may include full or partial food support. Members receiving Food Fish from Cowichan Tribes Lands or food support from other sources may still be eligible. Individuals who are self-isolating because they have tested positive for COVID-19 or on the advice of their doctor or Ts'ewulhtun Health nurses may also qualify for food delivery and other supports.

What does the COVID-19 Food Security Program provide?

Eligible members will receive a food hamper delivery every two weeks. Food supplies are provided from a range of options dependant on household need. A Community Navigator will support identification of each household's needs which could include fresh foods, frozen foods and dairy.

How do members apply for the COVID-19 Food Security Program?

Members can apply by calling the COVID-19 Support Line **250-715-3339** or by email at covid19@cowichantribes.com. A Community Navigator will contact applicants and ask a series of questions to determine eligibility and the level of support needed. On the first week, members will fill out an application. On the second week, they will receive a confirmation call and food hamper delivery. On the third week, they will be asked to complete a reassessment. On the fourth week, they will again receive a confirmation call & food hamper delivery. This cycle will be repeated until the end of the program or until members are no longer in need. Please note that after filling out the application there will not be a guarantee you will receive it the following week, it could take up two weeks before you receive the food hamper, due to ordering and delivery.

How long will the COVID-19 Food Security Program last?

The Food Security Program will be available during the COVID-19 pandemic operational closure of Cowichan Tribes Departments. The length of the program will also depend on demand (the number of participating families) and available budgets. We anticipate at least 3 months of food support for families who require them. We ask that only members who require food support utilize this program to ensure those who need it most receive it. But if you are struggling, please do not hesitate to utilize it. The program has already been operating for several weeks for Elders and families who were previously receiving supports through Cowichan Tribes Departments including Lalum'utul' Smun'eem CFS, the Elders Program and Education.



How is food being delivered or distributed safely to eligible members?

The COVID-19 Food Security Program delivery teams work closely with the Ts'ewulhtun Public Health nursing team to provide, safe, sanitized delivery of food items to community members' homes.

Can I choose what kind of food I want?

Food supplies are provided in accordance with the Canada Nutrition Guide. Applicants should discuss any special dietary needs or restrictions with the Community Navigators upon application.

How can I access the COVID-19 Food Security Program if I live off-reserve?

Application for members living off-reserve is also done by calling the Cowichan Tribes COVID-19 Support Line 250-715-3339. Members who live outside the delivery area may still be able access food hampers by pick-up in the Cowichan valley.

Who will know that I am receiving support?

You will be asked for your consent to share information about your participation with Cowichan Tribes Departments. This information will remain confidential and not be shared with anyone except Cowichan Tribes staff for service delivery purposes to ensure you are receiving adequate supports.

Is Lulumexun Lands and Governance Department increasing Food Fish and traditional harvesting to help members with food security?

Yes. The Lands Department has implemented an additional distribution of Food Fish (including salmon, cod and elk) to all members on and off-reserve in the week of May 4-7. The dates were announced on the website, Facebook (Cowichan Tribes and Lulumexun) and in the May Newsletter. Additional dates may be explored for members who may have missed these dates **based on remaining stocks**. The intention of Cowichan Tribes is to still provide Food Fish in the fall as well, as this was an additional distribution to provide relief as part of the COVID-19 response.

Can Food Fish be available for young persons who are members and in care?

Yes, Food Fish can be provided to children in care. They will require proof of status and identification of living off-reserve. The distribution amount will be based on an individual versus a household.



COVID-19 \$100 per member Distribution

Who is eligible for the COVID-19 \$100 per member distribution?

All persons on Cowichan Tribes' Membership list, including children on 'A' list (adopted) will be eligible to receive \$100 (e.g. \$400 for a household of four members).

How do members receive the COVID-19 \$100 per member distribution?

Members will receive the distribution via electronic deposit based on the distribution list of 2019 Tobacco Tax. Members who need to update their personal information must send this information to membership@cowichantribes.com. A fillable [Electronic Funds Transfer form](#) is available on the Cowichan Tribes' website for members who are not set-up for electronic transfer. Distribution for members who are minors will be made to a parent or guardian.

What if my child is not currently in my custody or has just returned to my custody, can I apply on their behalf?

The COVID-19 \$100 per member distribution will mirror the Tobacco Tax process in this regard. Parents/Guardians will need to confirm custody of children in their care with an updated court order. This can be sent to membership@cowichantribes.com. Children with continuing care orders will have their \$100 distribution go into a trust account with the Public Guardian and Trustees.

When will the COVID-19 \$100 per member distribution be available?

The COVID-19 \$100 per member distribution is a one-time payment. We are processing 2,800 + applications and working diligently to have the payment ready for our members as quickly as possible. Updates will be provided on the Cowichan Tribes website and Facebook page about when the payment will be made available to members.

How will the per member distribution be distributed safely to eligible members?

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its high transmission rate, all payments must be made electronically. If you have extenuating circumstances and need to be paid by cheque, please contact membership@cowichantribes.com.



Technology Learning Supports for Students (Chromebooks)

Who is eligible for the student technology support program?

All students K-12 who are registered Cowichan Tribes members on or off-reserve who require technology learning supports are eligible.

What does the student technology support program provide?

The program is supplying one Chromebook per house/family unit to support the student's on-line learning needs during the COVID-19 pandemic closure.

How do members apply for the student technology support program?

Our K-12 student advisors have been contacting all families on our nominal roll while our Educational Advisor is reaching out to off-reserve families to complete a technology survey. Once the survey is complete, the family is added to our list. Members who have not yet completed a technology survey are asked to call our Chromebook help line **(250-748-3892)**. If our advisors are on another line please leave a detailed message and they will contact you. Because many phone numbers are not in service, we are also attempting to reach families through Facebook messenger.

How long will the student technology support program last?

The program is a one-time offering during this pandemic. The work to complete the surveys with all our families who would like to participate and need support will continue until we have reached everyone in need or until supplies last.

Can I purchase another technology product for the same value?

At the moment, only Chromebooks are available. The cost of Chromebooks was discounted due to our large purchase of the devices throughout the IT Department, so the cost may differ for individual or smaller orders.

Will post-secondary students be able to access technology or other supports?

We are looking for ways to support members who are post-secondary students. If you are in need of support, please call the main Quw'utsun Syuw'entst Lelum—Education phone line 250.715.1022 and leave a message to the attention of Holly Charlie. Supports are also available to post-secondary students through the federal government [Canada Emergency Student Benefit \(CESB\) as well as other programs.](#)



Funding to Support Cultural Activities

Who can participate in the cultural activities?

The Youth Engagement Program (YEP) invites all youth and their families to participate in learning from Cowichan Tribes knowledge keepers and to continue the cultural sharing during this time. Join us for drumming challenges, food fish challenges, medicine finding challenges and language challenges! It is being coordinated through Lalum'utul' Smun'eem' and will be available to all youth in or out of care and on and off-reserve.

What cultural activities will be supported?

The Youth Engagement Program will provide weekly challenges to engage and participate in cultural learning through Vimeo. You can access the program by sending an email to YEP@Cowichantribes.com starting on May 11, 2020. A weekly link will be provided to the email address along with access to the Vimeo group to post your challenge videos and responses!

Sample videos include: Introduction Protocol (Hul'qumi'num lesson); Prayer (Hul'qumi'num lesson); Song; Drawing lesson; Traditional Medicine; Grounding Breathwork; Paddling fitness; Fry Bread; Seasonal Story; Knitting lesson; Song/ Story/ Hul'q'umi'num lesson. The Youth Engagement Program challenges that require special materials can be provided on request by emailing YEP@cowichantribes.com



Pandemic Health Supports

Who is eligible for the pandemic health temporary accommodations supports and deliveries?

Individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19 or who are self-isolating as per the advice of their doctor or Ts'ewulhtun communicable disease nurses may qualify for pandemic supports. Nurses and Community Navigators will work with members to determine if they are eligible.

What will the pandemic health supports provide to members?

Supports may include temporary accommodations if self-isolation is not possible in their home, particularly due to overcrowding or the presence of elderly members in the household or individuals with pre-existing health conditions. Delivery of food, medicines and other basic home supplies may also be organized for members who do not have anyone who can deliver these goods to them. Members may also qualify for the Food Security Program bi-weekly food hamper delivery.



How can members access the pandemic health temporary accommodation supports?

By calling the Cowichan Tribes COVID-19 response line at 250-715-3339. They will then be transferred to a communicable disease nurse who will assess their needs and eligibility. Please note that all calls are confidential and members who are in need are encouraged to reach out. It is very important to limit the spread of COVID-19 and Cowichan Tribes nurses are trained and available to help you do this should you get sick.

How long will pandemic health supports last?

Pandemic health supports, including temporary accommodations, will be available throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Nurses will help determine the need and length of self-isolation periods. Resources will be provided to support members in need as long as medically necessary. These supports will also be available throughout 2020 and possibly beyond should a second or third wave of COVID-19 impact BC and Vancouver Island.

Frequently Asked Questions:

Cowichan Tribes Departments



Health Department

How do I see a Doctor? Where do we get tested for COVID-19?

Call your family doctor or call 8-1-1 for a phone assessment. We encourage using the COVID-19 BC Support app on your mobile device to see if you need testing. Find the self-assessment tool at <https://bc.thrive.health/>. All testing takes place at Cowichan District Hospital. The Community Health nurses at Ts'ewulhtun are available 8:30 am – 4:00 pm from Monday to Friday at (250) 746-6184 or by text at (250) 732-4205.

Can babies get weighed and immunized at Ts'ewulhtun at this time?

Yes, Ts'ewulhtun Health Centre is providing immunizations by appointment. Call or text nurse Hillary at 250-732-3487. Our Maternal Child health team is available Mon-Fri 8:30 am - 4:30 pm - call or text nurse Liz Spry 250-732-2617. We are following all pre and postnatal families by phone and virtual visits. Pre and post natal mothers and babies can also be seen by midwives at the [Cowichan Maternity Clinic](#) at the new 271 Ingram St location.



Are mental health services available?

Yes, Kwun'atsustul has an On-Call Counsellor available 8:30 am - 4:30 pm from Monday to Friday. Counsellors are also providing regular phone check-ins with members. Please reach out to Kwun'atsustul if you are feeling anxious and need support **250-746-6184**.

Is medical transportation available?

Unfortunately, medical transportation is not available through Ts'ewulhtun during this office closure. Out of town medical transportation through FNHA is still available. Call the health centre for more information 250-746-6184.



Education and youth

How will students be supported with their learning needs at home?

Teachers prepare monthly packages for the families of students who attend the school to support their education from a distance. Teachers, K-12 Advisors, and the Education Counselor are reaching out to all families to better understand their learning needs and ability to work from home, including the ability to utilize technology and the internet. We ask for your continued patience as we learn to adapt to this new way of learning and acknowledge all parents who are working hard to support their children's learning.

Will Cowichan Tribes help adult students with employment since there will be no summer opportunities?

Post secondary students who were employed but lost their jobs due to the pandemic qualify for the COVID-19 EI benefits. The federal government is also providing a number of [supports for post secondary students](#) as part of the COVID-19 Economic Response, including the Canada Emergency Student Benefit (CESB) and the Canada Student Service Grant (CSSG).

Will Cowichan Tribes assist families whose children depend on the school lunch program?

Chief and Council have approved a COVID-19 Food Security Program to help members in need, including families of children previously participating in the school lunch program. Anyone facing hardships and food insecurity as a result of the pandemic should contact the Cowichan Tribes Community Navigators at 250-715-3339 to determine if they are eligible for the COVID-19 Food Security Program.

Are Cowichan youth programs still being offered?

The youth centre is currently closed, and program activities have been suspended. However, youth workers continue to reach out to youth by phone to check in. The Youth Engagement Program is also helping to connect youth to Elders and culture during the pandemic. See the "Economic Response section" for more information on the Youth Engagement Program.



Finance and Income Assistance

Are there any changes to the schedule for my regular payments (Post-Secondary living allowance, Social Assistance payment, lease distribution, caregiver payment)?

No, there are no changes to the scheduled payments.

Can I receive my monthly lease distribution without going to the band office or bank?

Yes, you can sign up for the Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) on our website www.cowichantribes.com/eft. If you have questions, please send an email to directdeposit@cowichantribes.com

Will there be an early distribution of the Tobacco Tax normally paid every December?

Unfortunately, there will not be an early distribution because the Tobacco Tax payments are based on the sales of Tobacco on reserve and we only receive these funds from the Province of BC at the end of each year.

I have not applied for the annual 2019 Tobacco Tax. Can I still apply?

Yes, you can still apply for the 2019 Tobacco Tax if you didn't receive it at the December or January distribution dates. The next **deadline is July 10, 2020** and distribution will be July 17, 2020. If you have not yet applied for direct deposit, please complete a [direct deposit form](#). Applications are available on the website and can be sent to Membership@cowichantribes.com. For eligibility requirements, please see the Tobacco Tax Policy on the Cowichan Tribes website.

Will I see a reduction or increase in the Tobacco Tax distribution in December?

Tobacco Tax distribution is based on tobacco tax sales on reserve and the registered number of Cowichan Tribes members. Therefore, we cannot predict/estimate how much each member will receive for Tobacco Tax in December 2020 until all of these figures are known in late November/early December.

How do I apply for Income Assistance?

Please call Social Development at (778) 422-2255 and leave a detailed message OR E-mail: socialdev@cowichantribes.com.

Do I need to bring in my stub for income assistance (Monthly Renewal Declaration aka MRD)?

No, stubs will be accepted electronically by emailing them to your BSDW (BSDW emails below).



Do I need to bring in my stub for income assistance (Monthly Renewal Declaration aka MRD)?

No, stubs will be accepted electronically by emailing them to your Band Social Development Worker.

BSDW Emails:

Diane.Page@cowichantribes.com | Carleen.August@cowichantribes.com
Raquel.Crocker@cowichantribes.com | Natasha.Alphonse@cowichantribes.com
Lynsey.Johnny@cowichantribes.com | Johnny.Crocker@cowichantribes.com
Jennie.Thomas@cowichantribes.com

Can MRD's be done over the phone?

If you do not have access to email, Monthly Renewal Declarations can also be accepted over the phone at (778) 422-2255. When you call in please leave a detailed message on the receptionist voicemail as it will be monitored. **Please include: First & Last Name, Worker's Name, Telephone/Contact Number, and Reason for your phone call. Social Development has a staff member answering the phone.**

Where do I bring my Hydro Bill? How do I know it is getting paid?

BC Hydro Bills can be sent by email. Please follow-up with your Band Social Development Worker or Social Development Intake Worker.

Are Social Development clients getting an extra \$300 for the COVID-19 Pandemic Fund?

Yes. As per recent government announcements, community members on-reserve that are receiving income assistance will receive the extra \$300 for May, June & July 2020.

If I leave a voice mail, how long will it take for someone to call me back?

We have limited staff each day, so response times will vary. Social Development has staff answering the phone and forwarding calls to the appropriate Band Social Development Worker.



Housing

Can I pay my rent without going to the band office?

Yes. You can send the money via e-transfer to directdeposit@cowichantribes.com. Auto-deposit is set up, so you won't need to set up a password. Please specify your name, address and the month the rent is payable for (i.e. your name, 5760 Allenby Road, May 2020 rent). Cowichan Tribes is not currently accepting cash or cheques at this time to reduce the spread of COVID-19.



I was laid off and waiting for EI and don't have enough money for my rent, what do I do?

Please call our office at (250)715-3302 during regular business hours or email shd.maintenance@cowichantribes.com a copy of your utility bill and income verification. Each situation is different. Therefore we will work with you on a case-by-case basis to find a suitable solution.

Are you still doing maintenance on homes?

Yes. We are responding to emergency items. Non-emergency items inside the home are being entered into our service request list and will be prioritized in accordance with Cowichan Tribes returning to regular services. Non-emergency maintenance outside the home will continue based on priority and staff availability. Please contact our office to make sure that maintenance items are entered into our system. You can call the office (250) 715-3302 (Mon-Fri. 8:30 am -12:00 pm and 1:00 pm - 4:30 pm). Our office is closed on weekends and holidays. Email: shd.maintenance@cowichantribes.com or go to www.cowichantribes.com/housing and fill out the Contact Us Form.

Are you still doing pest control?

Yes. We are continuing with the fumigation of homes that were already working with us for pest removal. If you have recently found pests in your home, please contact us to discuss possible next steps. The housing department assists with the fumigation or pest removal costs, however, for the pests to be removed entirely, residents need to continue to do their part within the home to ensure the overall safety of the home.



Human Resources (Jobs)

Is the Human Resources department open?

In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the Human Resources office is closed, and staff are offering essential services only. Essential services do not include recruitments.

What is happening to recruitments for jobs at Cowichan Tribes?

All recruitments at Cowichan Tribes, including previously posted jobs, are postponed until further notice. Recruitments will remain postponed until it is safe to re-open our offices. Please check the [Human Resources webpage](#) regularly for updates about recruitments.



Membership

Are status registration applications still being accepted?

All Indigenous Service Canada (ISC) offices are closed. No new registration applications are being accepted. All newborn babies are covered for medical and dental for the first 18 months.

If a child who is 19 years and under is eligible for status registration and requires health benefits, then the parent/guardian can submit a request for coverage through Jordan's Principle. The contact number is 1-855-JP-Child ([1-855-572-4453](tel:1-855-572-4453)).

Are SCIS (Secured Certificate of Indian Status) applications still available? Can I still apply?

The Indigenous Service Canada SCIS processing centre is currently closed. If you don't have your Certificate of Indian Status (status card) or Secure Certificate of Indian Status (secure status card), then you can call and request a [Temporary Confirmation of Registration Document](#). Call [1-800-567-9604](tel:1-800-567-9604) (TTY: [1-800-553-0554](tel:1-800-553-0554)). The caller will be asked a series of questions to validate their identity, and once confirmed, a letter will be sent within 5 to 7 days. Or email InfoPubs@aadnc-aandc.gc.ca and add LOST or STOLEN in the subject line and they can help you get a replacement card or proof of Indian status.

While the ISC Regional office is closed to reduce the spread of COVID-19, applications are being accepted by mail. Forms are available online and the mailing address is listed on the forms and/or instructions. The forms can be accessed through the following link:

<https://www.sac-isc.gc.ca/eng/1462806841047/1572461062751#sec2>

A [memo](#) was sent to local on-reserve businesses requesting them to accept status cards, whether they are expired or not, if the cardholder has an expired card and a second piece of identification that would assist in the tax exemption of their purchase. Any questions can go to Membership@cowichantribes.com

If Cowichan Tribes members require an emergency confirmation of their Cowichan Tribes membership, please send the request to Membership@cowichantribes.com. A pdf Identification Letter will be emailed to the member requesting the confirmation.



Lalum'utul Smun'eem' Child and Family Services

How will I be able to see my children (who are in the care of Lalum'utul' Smun'eem or Ministry of Children and Family Development) during the pandemic?

Although face-to-face visits have been temporarily suspended to practice physical distancing, we are doing everything we can to encourage and continue contact between children and their families through phone calls, facetime and other technological tools. Families should check with their social workers for details.

Lalum'utul' Smun'eem supports our family when we are struggling. Will this continue during the pandemic?

Lalum'utul' Smun'eem is operating as an essential service; social workers are on duty every day as well as available after hours and will respond to emergencies. A new COVID-19 Food Security Program is active and members in need can assess supports by calling Community Navigators at 250-715-3339 or by emailing covid19@cowichantribes.com

We are foster parents who work during the day. We do not have adequate supports for our children and foster children who are out of school during the pandemic. Can Lalum'utul' Smun'eem help us?

Please contact our office as we have social workers on duty each day that can provide assistance.

If the pandemic and physical distancing lasts for several more weeks/months, will Lalum'utul' Smun'eem consider offering programs and services (drumming group) / parenting programs) online?

Yes, Lalum'utul' Smun'eem is beginning to offer cultural connection activities through the Youth Engagement Program. These will include videos and other activities, including video calls. Families who are supported by Lalum'utul' Smun'eem will receive updates about new and current online programs from their social workers and program coordinators. See info about supports for *Cultural Activities* in the *COVID-19 Economic Response* section for more information.

I have a child protection concern about a community member and the care of their children. Who should I call during the Covid-19 Pandemic?

Please call Lalum'utul' Smun'eem [250-746-1002](tel:250-746-1002) during the week between 8:30-4:30 and 310-1234 during evenings and weekends. There are social workers available to take your call.



Lands and self-government

Can security and bylaw officers still be called?

Yes, they are still available and responding to emergencies as part of essential services. Please respect physical distancing (6 feet or 2 meters) if interacting with them and inform them in advance if you are symptomatic as additional protective measures will be needed (e.g. wearing masks).

Will Cowichan Tribes business be offered lease payment deferrals?

Cowichan Tribes is currently reviewing what can be done for businesses affected by the economic slowdown as a result of COVID-19.

Will Chief and Council enact laws to protect our community under our Tumuhw Land Code?

Many First Nations across Canada are taking measures to ensure the protection of their community including limiting access to their lands. Chief and Council is currently reviewing legislation under our Tumuhw and section 81 of the Indian Act that would help protect members, especially in the event of an increase of cases in the valley. Information about any new legislation will be communicated promptly to the community.



Capital projects and maintenance

Are capital projects and critical maintenance jobs on hold?

No, advancing capital projects and maintaining our essential infrastructure continues. This includes long term projects as well as other remedial efforts, such as flood recovery.