



Strategically asserting the voice of BC First Nations in Social Development

FNSDS Resource Centre - Field Communique April 2010

2010—2011 FNSDS Involvement

A new year is upon us and with it comes new initiatives, opportunities and challenges. The FNSDS continues its involvement in Accountability, Active Measures and Sustainability working groups, program development, research and BSDW training delivery.

In this communiqué - Updates on Accountability, Active Measures, BSDW Trainings, INAC Policy and IA Policy Q's and A's

Accountability

As some of you may or may not know, INAC is continuing to progress through their list of BC First Nations that are requiring Program Reviews as part of their CFA or CFNFA agreements. Program Reviews are audits that discern whether a Nation is meeting the financial, administrative and reporting requirements as defined by their financial agreements with INAC. Over a dozen BC First Nations Program Reviews were done in 2009 and many more will be done in 2010. Those on the list are contacted and given ample time to prepare.



As part of the 4 stage Accountability/Program Review process, the FNSDS is involved in Stage 2 training sessions to support those First Nations that have had their Stage 1 INAC assessment done. To this end Gwen John, our Training Coordinator, was busily travelling to various locations in BC to provide on-site training and guidance throughout 2009.

For 2010, the FNSDS is working toward building greater capacity to provide more Stage 2 training sessions. The contracting of more on-site trainers is in the works and should be in full swing in the new fiscal year. By April we hope too have added Lyndale George, Frances Woodcock, Anita Moon and possibly Nene Kraneveldt to our roster of trainers once our funding is approved.



A list of BC First Nations, (prioritized by Stage 1 completion), is being maintained as well as a wish list of BC First Nations desiring a pre-emptive Stage 2 training process ahead of their Stage 1s. Gwen John can be contacted by any First Nation desiring to be on that list. Stage 2s remain dependent on available INAC funding. Gwen can be contacted by email at gwen@fnsds.org or toll free 1-800-991-7099.

Active Measures

Active Measures is the term used to describe employment related programming, funding and local and federal initiatives to enhance employability of IA clients on and off reserve.

2010 FNSDS Conference - Another very successful Active Measures centered FNSDS Conference was held in early January 2010 and was attended by over 230 BSDWs, administrators and government representatives. Some of the presentations can be found on our website www.fnsds.org 2010 conference. We wish to thank all those who attended and helped make it a success!

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Active Measures Continued

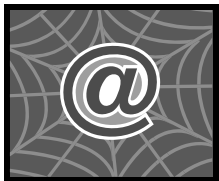
Active Measures Pilot Projects—In mid 2009 BC First Nations were asked by INAC to send in their Active Measures proposals requesting a limited amount of funding that was available for pilot projects regarding implementing employment enhancement initiatives on-reserve. 10 First Nations were selected out of more than 150 First Nations that applied, these included urban, rural and remote communities throughout BC.



In the fall of 2009 Nene Kraneveldt was contracted by the FNSDS to coordinate the pilots projects and support the participating BC First Nations in identifying challenges and opportunities inherent in their initiatives and guide the projects to successful conclusions. As the projects draw to a close in April 2010, Ms Kraneveldt will be completing her final report which will identify best practices, opportunities and challenges. The report will be made available for download on the FNSDS website in the Spring.

It is hoped that the report will provide the foundation for INAC BC Region to secure additional funding in the 2010—2011 fiscal year to support other BC First Nations Active Measures initiatives. If funding is secured, INAC will inform the BC First Nations of the Active Measures opportunities available in 2010.

FNSDS Website - The FNSDS website continues to provide links to Active Measures related topics, news, reports and best practices. BSDWs and administrators are invited to check our website for ongoing updates.



The Active Measures Working Group (comprised of reps from Service Canada, MHSD, INAC, the BC AHRDA's, FNSDS, FNTC, CORCAN, PGNEATA, etc) continue to provide links to AM related good news stories, resources and opportunities.

If you or your band have enacted successful AM projects or if you know of any best practices in your local area, please send any links, reports or news to the FNSDS Program Manager at rene@fnsds.org and we will add the information to our website.

Band Social Development Worker Trainings— Level 1a, Level 1b, Level 2

With the 2009 fiscal year ending, the FNSDS is wrapping up the delivery of 12 training sessions of Level 1a, 1b and Level 2. BSDW Trainings will continue to be offered for the next fiscal year 2010-2011 beginning with a Level 1a training in June 2010. Subsequent trainings dates and details are posted on the FNSDS website www.fnsds.org. All BSDWs that have yet to attend our trainings are welcomed to register when we send province wide notices. The training and materials remains free, however travel, meal and accommodation costs remain the responsibility of the participating Nation.

New for 2010— recently the FNSDS met with the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology with the intent of partnering with NVIT to make the FNSDS BSDW training accredited at the college level. The partnership will involve NVIT guiding the re-development of the Level 1a, 1b and Level 2 trainings to enable them to be worth college level credits. In this endeavour, the FNSDS hopes to have the BSDW trainings be the first step for BSDWs wishing to go onto further NVIT studies in Social Work and to have the BSDW job position be officially recognized. The FNSDS Program Manager and Training Coordinator will be working diligently over the next 8 months to develop the new sessions. Progressively as pieces are completed, they will be added to the existing trainings. More to come in 2010!

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FNSDS Resource Centre

FNSDS Resource Centre Services—All BSDWs, FSOs and band administrators are reminded to contact our FNSDS Resource Centre support services when you are unsure of specific SD policies and procedures when making SD related decisions. This is what our services are for and we remain available by phone 1-800-991-7099 or email—gwen@fnsds.org and rene@fnsds.org.



Additionally, the FNSDS website remains a rich source of Social Development support with downloadable materials, SD Forms, Online SA Manual and training information. If have not checked us out yet, go to www.fnsds.org for all your SD policy needs.

Tax Reminder!

It's Income Tax time again and many SA clients may be asking what forms they need in order to file their 2009 Income Tax Return. Please be aware of the following:



Status Individuals Who Received SA ON-RESERVE

DO NOT require a T5007 Statement of Benefits in order to complete their 2009 Income Tax Return. "Status" recipients of Social Assistance On-Reserve are 100% exempt from income tax and do not need to report SA payments on the 2009 Income Tax Return.

Non—Status Individuals Who Received SA ON-RESERVE

DO require a T5007 Statement of Benefits in order to complete their 2009 Income Tax Return.

Where do BSDWs get the T5007 Statement of Benefits form?

Contact Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) for blank T5007 forms

Phone	1-800-959-2221 from Monday to Friday 8:15 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
On-Line	http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/cgi-bin/puborder.cgi?lang=en
Download	http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/menu/AFAF_T_T5-e.html#ti

What is the importance of filing an income tax return?

In order to receive any tax credits, such as the GST/HST Credit, Canada Child Tax Benefit or BC Sales Tax Credit, an income tax return for the appropriate base year must be filed with CRA.

SD Policy Q's and A's - COPH -

Q- What is the Children Out of the Parental Home (COPH) Program?

A- In January 2010, INAC introduced the Children Out of the Parental Home (COPH) assistance program, replacing the Guardian Financial Assistance (GFA) program, to provide income assistance to children who are placed with a relative living on-reserve.

Q- I understand that the GFA program has changed to COPH but have the rates changed too?

A- **No.** COPH assistance rates remain the same as prior GFA rates according to the child's age.

Q- I understand that relatives and other adults in the home will have to undergo "screening". What kind of screening will be conducted?

A- The MCFD screening checks consist of: -a Prior Contact Check, which is a review of any records of previous involvement that MCFD may have had with the individual; and-a CORNET Check, which is a check of any criminal charges and convictions (including convictions that have been pardoned), probation, stay of proceedings, alternative measures and unsealed Young Offender offences from BC's correctional system.

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SD Policy Q's and A's - COPH Continued -

- Q- When will the requirement to undergo screening checks apply to the COPH program?**
A- Effective January 1, 2010, all relatives and adults of new COPH on-reserve applicants of the COPH program – and all the adults living in their household – will be required to undergo screening.
- Q- When will the requirement to undergo screening checks apply to all former Guardian Financial Assistance (GFA) cases?**
A- All adults living in the home of a child receiving GFA assistance, or who have been approved to receive GFA assistance, prior to January 1, 2010, will be required to undergo screening checks starting **April 1, 2010**. The screening check is required in order to establish the children's ongoing eligibility for COPH assistance.
- Q- Can COPH assistance be granted if the parent(s) of the child(ren) reside in the same home as the relative?**
A- **No.** One of the eligibility criteria for COPH assistance is that the child's parent does not reside with the relative.
- Q- What about COPH assisted children who are eligible for Canada Pension Plan (CPP) Orphan's Benefits and/or Child of a Disabled Contributor Benefits?**
A- Both CPP paid to orphans and benefits for a Child of a Disabled Contributor are not considered parental contributions and therefore do not affect the COPH assistance payments.
- Q- This all seems to be a lengthy process, how long do I wait and who do I contact to follow up on the status of the screening?**
A- If the BSDW has not received correspondence from the MCFD After Hours Office within seventeen (17) working days, the BSDW may contact the office at the following numbers: 604-660-4927 (Lower Mainland) or Toll Free: 1-800-663-9122.
- Q- Can clients be provided with COPH assistance for while they are waiting for MCFD screening checks result?**
A- **No.** After they complete the COPH applications, clients may not be provided with COPH assistance until the BSDW has received a response from MCFD After Hours Office indicating that there is "No evidence of Risk" in the caregiver's household.
- Q - Can existing COPH former clients who have to complete a annual review be provided with COPH assistance for the time while they are waiting for MCFD screening checks result?**
A- **Yes.** Unlike new applications, COPH assistance may continue to be provided to existing COPH recipients (who may also be former GFA children) while the MCFD After Hours Office conduct screening checks on adults living in their household as part of the review process. However, all COPH assistance must discontinue immediately if the BSDW receives a MCFD screening result indicating there "Is evidence of risk" in the caregiver's household.

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SD Policy Q's and A's Cont'd - COPH Continued -

Q- **Parental Consent** - Can COPH assistance be provided in situations where the parent/s refuse to give consent to have the child placed with a relative under COPH, and there are indications that the child cannot continue to live with the parents due to health and safety concerns ?

A- **No.** Under the current policy, there is no authority to provide COPH assistance in situations where parent(s) refuse to sign the application form and will not provide a letter/written statement authorizing the placement of the child in the home. One of the eligibility criterion of the Children Out of the Parental Home assistance program is that the parent(s) of the child are placing and consenting to the child residing in the relative's home.

The BSDW may suggest to the relative and the child to contact a social worker at their First Nation Child and Family Service (FNCFS) agency or the local MCFD office for support and services. Please remember, a BSDW who has reason to believe that a child has been, or is likely to be, abused or neglected has a legal duty to report the matter to MCFD, or to the appropriate FNCFS agency.

Q- **Proof of Parental Consent** – What documents are considered evidence that the parent(s) are placing and consenting to the child residing with the relative and applying for COPH assistance on the child's behalf?

A- The BSDW may do the following:

- a) have the parent(s) sign section 2 of the Children Out of the Parental Home Application (COPH 01) form, or
- b) in cases where it is not possible to obtain the parental signature on application form, the BSDW may consider a written statement authorizing the placement of the child in the relative's home, signed by the parent (for example in situation where the worker of the administering authority is satisfied that the parental signature is genuine - e.g. a copy of government ID with the parent's name and signature, or a letter certified as true copy by a government agent from another jurisdiction/province) adequate proof,
- c) or have legal guardians appointed or legal custody granted by a court sign the application form and place a copy of the legal guardianship and custody agreement on file.

Q- **If the screening result indicates that there is “No Evidence of Risk,” can clients be provided with retroactive COPH assistance for the time they waited for MCFD screening result?**

A- **Yes.** Once MCFD After Hours Office indicates that there is “No evidence of Risk,” clients will be eligible for COPH assistance effective the date on which the band social development worker received the complete COPH application.

Q- **Can the same consent form be used for all the COPH children in the home?**

A- **No.** The COPH Screening Consent form states that the consent is valid for a one-time screening regarding the specific child named in the COPH application. This means that all adults in the household have to sign a separate consent for each COPH assistance child-applicant.

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SD Policy Q's and A's Cont'd - COPH Continued -

Q- Can COPH assistance be provided if a social worker from a First Nations Child and Family Services Agency or the local MCFD office indicate that they have reviewed the family situation and that there is no evidence of risk?

A- No. COPH is an income assistance program. The current policy is that COPH assistance may only be provided if the BSDW receives written confirmation from the MCFD After Hours Office indicating that the screening check has been conducted or have reviewed a previous finding and as a result determine that there is no evidence of risk.

In some cases where the MCFD after Hours Office found that there is evidence of risk, a social worker from First Nations Child and Family Services Agency or the local MCFD office may meet with relatives to discuss the situation and found that the risk has been mitigated. In these situations, the local social worker will send a note to the After Hours Office recommending that the original screening check finding of evidence of risk be revised. The After Hours Office will review the information and may send a revised finding result to the BSDW.

Q- Who should the client contact to seek clarification of the MCFD screening result if it is indicating there is evidence of risk?

A- The relative may call the MCFD After Hours Office at (604) 660-4927 in the Lower Mainland, or Toll Free at 1 800 663-9122 for clarification on screening results.

Relatives may also wish to contact their First Nations Child and Family Services Agency or the local MCFD office to discuss alternative support services to assist them in caring for their children.

Q- What if a parent, relative or an adult in the household disagrees with the evidence of risk screening result after seeking clarification with the MCFD After Hours worker.

A- After seeking clarification from the After Hours worker, if a parent, relative or any adult living in the COPH applicant household still disagrees with the screening checks result, the person may contact the After Hours Program Manager at (604) 660-8180 Toll Free 1-866-230-8180 Address: 237 East Columbia Street New Westminster, V3L 3W4.

The After Hours Manager will speak with the person, explain the complaint process and review relevant information with the person, giving the person an opportunity to provide his or her information. Within seven days, or longer with the agreement of the person who files the complaint, the After Hours Manager will advise the person verbally and in writing of the final decision, giving the reasons for the decision and advising the person of the process for requesting an external review by the Office of the Ombudsman.

- BURIALS -

Q- The local funeral director is requesting a higher amount for final expenses than what is indicated in the policy and procedures manual, has there been a change?

A- Yes. Effective July 1, 2009 the rate for the funeral provider's service fee increased to a maximum of \$1285. Additionally, additional services when requested by family are included up to a maximum of \$815. Refer to Policy Directive Letter No #1 2009/2010 for complete details.

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SD Policy Q's and A's Cont'd - BURIALS Continued -

- Q- Are burial costs for deceased individuals authorized for those that were in receipt of on-reserve income assistance only?**
A- No. Funeral services costs may be paid for persons who die while resident on-reserve if no other immediate sources of funds or assets are available. There is no requirement that the deceased person or the person's family to be in receipt of on-reserve income assistance.

- CPP-

- Q- Some of my clients are approaching 60 years of age; are there other financial resources that they could be applying for?**
A- Yes. When an income assistance recipient is between the age of 60 – 64 years and has contributed to CPP they may qualify for Early CPP Retirement Pension. An IA recipient that is age 60 – 64 years who is married or in a common-law relationship with an OAS/GIS pensioner may qualify for an allowance. A surviving spouse or common-law partner age 60 – 64 who is receiving income assistance may qualify for an allowance for the survivor. Contact Service Canada for information and application 1-800-277-9914 or www.servicecanada.gc.ca

- Q- I have clients that have a working history, but are now unable to work due to a disability, are there other financial resources that they may be eligible for?**
A- Yes. If an individual is under 65, has worked and contributed to CPP recently and is no longer able to work at any job due to the onset of a disability, the individual may be eligible to receive a CPP disability benefits. The contributor must have made a valid contribution in at least 4 of the 6 years prior to the onset of the disability and must be unable to work at any job on a regular basis due to medical illness or incapacity that is both severe and prolonged. Contact Service Canada for information and application 1-800-277-9914 or www.servicecanada.gc.ca

- TESI, NCBR & FV Prevention PROPOSALS -

- Q- I missed the January 2010 deadline for proposals for Family Violence Prevention, TESI and NCBR. Is it too late to apply and receive funds for 2010/11?**
A- No. INAC will accept completed proposals for TESI, Family Violence Prevention and NCBR up to August 3, 2010. Proposal templates are available on-line at www.fnsds.org or contact your Funding Services Officer at 604-666-5171.

- NCBR PIN# -

- Q- How do I get a Personal Identification Number (PIN) for Canada Revenue Agency in order to confirm information with regard to Canada Child Tax Benefits and National Child Benefits?**
A- Fax your request to Denise Johnson at INAC 604-775-7147 indicating what Nation you work for and contact information.

- FNSDS SERVICES and TRAININGS-

- Q- I missed some of the training sessions that FNSDS offers; is there a schedule or calendar available?**
A- Yes, training dates and calendar of events can be found on the FNSDS website at www.fnsds.org
- Q- Who do I contact when I want Social Development Policy clarification before I make an IA decision?**
A- Contact Gwen John - FNSDS Policy Advisor at 1-800-991-7099 or gwen@fnsds.org Or Rene Beauchamp - FNSDS Program Manager - 778-887-4153 - rene@fnsds.org