NunatuKavut
our ancient land

Update for Members

May 2020

NCC COVID-19 Response – Volume II

The NunatuKavut Community Council (NCC) is pleased to provide a second update on the series of programs and initiatives that we are implementing to directly address the urgent needs of NunatuKavut Inuit and communities during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

NCC has expended nearly $900,000 on COVID-19 initiatives over the past two months (see chart below).

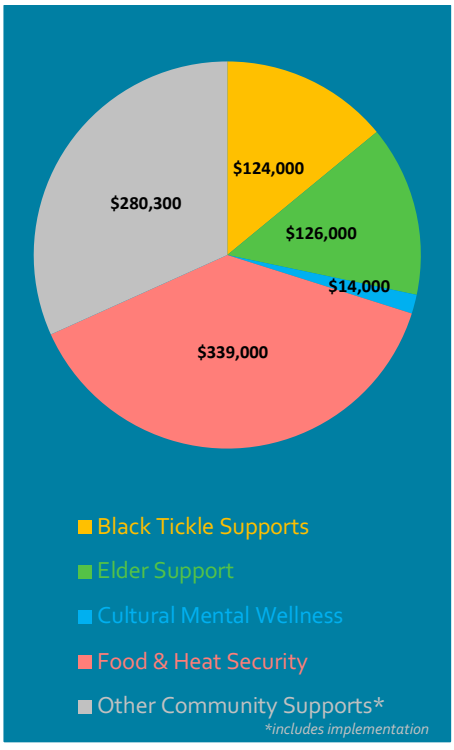

FIGURE 1: COVID-19 EXPENDITURES TO DATE

Our expenditures have exceeded initial funding of $582,000 provided by the Government of Canada to assist with our COVID-19 community response. We continue to work on securing additional fair and equitable federal funding to help our people adequately prepare and deal with the impacts of this health emergency.

An update on our initiatives is outlined below. For more information on NCC's overall COVID-19 response, please visit our website at www.nunatukavut.ca and click on the COVID-19 tab at the top of our page.

FOOD AND HEAT SECURITY VOUCHERS

The food and heat security voucher program was made available in April to assist NunatuKavut members who are experiencing food and heat security challenges and have these urgent needs due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In just under two weeks, the funding for the program was expended and, as a result, was put on hold. During this time, NCC staff assisted nearly 700 NunatuKavut members in obtaining vouchers. If additional funding is secured, a similar program will be implemented to ensure that these vouchers are going to those in our communities who need it most.

COMMUNITY FREEZER ENHANCEMENT

We have also started the distribution of food baskets to seniors and vulnerable persons in NunatuKavut. Distribution centres have been set up in Happy Valley-Goose Bay and Charlottetown.

FIGURE 2: PRESIDENT RUSSELL ASSISTING WITH FOOD BASKET PREPARATIONS

NCC staff and volunteers are working hard to stock each basket with a significant number of essential food items like meats, sugar, flour and canned goods.

FIGURE 3: OUR NCC TEEAM DELIVERING FOOD BASKETS IN CHARLOTTETOWN

The Country Food Harvester Support Grant Program provides a one-time grant of $100 to hunters to cover costs associated with the harvesting of country foods, i.e. ammunition and fuel. To date, over 150 applications have been processed.

We will also be putting out a call to harvesters who are willing to sell country foods and berries to help stock our community freezer. Please contact Samantha Rumbolt at 709-896-7882 if you have items available.

ELDER SUPPORT PROGRAM

NCC understands that elders and seniors may be particularly vulnerable during this pandemic. In early May, a cheque for $100 was mailed to NunatuKavut seniors over 65 within Labrador and across Canada to help with extra expenses like groceries, cleaning supplies or other bills.

FIGURE 4: FINANCE MANAGER PAULINE ELSON HELPING WITH THE CHEQUE MAILOUT TO SENIORS

NCC will be providing one cord of firewood to seniors and vulnerable persons in NunatuKavut who did not receive assistance through the heat security voucher program for electricity or heating fuel. It is specifically available for members living in communities from Cartwright to Lodge Bay and the Straits, with the exception of Black Tickle where separate arrangements are being made.

Eligible applicants include NunatuKavut members who:

- Are age 65 or older;
- Have a disability; or
- Receive Income Support (Social Assistance)

Applications for this program will be available on Monday, June 1. There are limited cords of firewood available and it will be distributed on a first come-first serve basis.

For further information or to get assistance with the application process, please contact Shawn at 709-938-7882 or email him at covid19@nunatukavut.ca.

MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELLING SERVICES

NCC has partnered with Cortez Hancock at Priority Health Counselling to offer private and confidential virtual mental health counselling services at NO COST to NunatuKavut members, ages 8+, for those who might need some support during COVID-19. Appointments can be booked directly online at www.priorityhealthcounselling.com or arranged by calling Cortez at 709.699.3692 or emailing him at priorityhealthcounselling@gmail.com

Cortez is a registered Canadian Certified Counsellor (CCC), as well as a registered Naturopath (N.D.). He exercises a kind, friendly and relatable style of counselling.

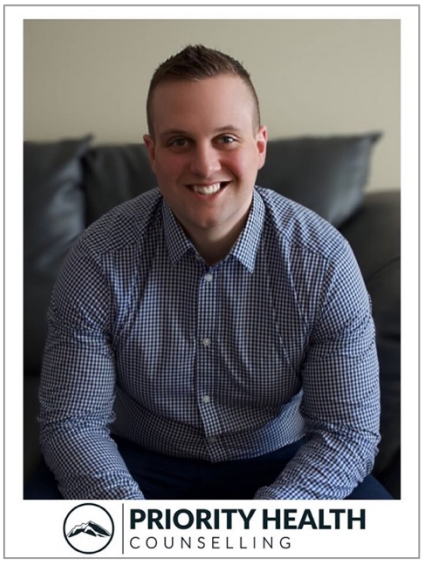

FIGURE 5: CORTEZ HANCOCK

GRANT PROGRAMS

NCC launched two grant programs in April. The Cultural Mental Wellness Community Fund was put in place to assist groups in NunatuKavut communities to carry out projects or initiatives that celebrate Inuit culture while improving mental well-being. To date, five projects have been approved totaling $14,200. The next two application deadlines are May 29 and June 12.

The Social and Wellness Grant for Seniors and Vulnerable Persons was developed to encourage the organization of social and wellness programs or initiatives to benefit seniors and vulnerable persons. Four projects have so far been approved, totaling $12,000. The next application deadline is June 5.

A full listing of the approved projects is available on our website.

OTHER UPDATES

NCC continues to provide critical supports for Black Tickle, one of the most vulnerable communities in NunatuKavut but is demonstrating great resilience. Four part-time staff have been hired to assist with on-the-ground efforts.

Over 2,200 masks have delivered as part of NCC's One Mask been at a Time Project. This is thanks to our busy sewers and crafters who have been working hard over the past few weeks to make masks. We also appreciate our generous partners like the Iron Ore Company of Canada (IOC), Cloth Masks 4 Labrador and the Labrador Friendship Centre.

FIGURE 6: SHERRY PENNEY WITH NCC'S LAB WEST INDIGENOUS SERVICE CENTRE DELIVERS MASKS TO IOC REP CHRISTA KERFONT

Sanitation supplies have been provided to communities in NunatuKavut who have Potable Water Dispensing Units (PWDU). This will help ensure that these units can be kept clean and sterile after use.

COVID-19 RESOURCES

Newfoundland and Labrador is currently at Alert Level 4 of the provincial COVID-19 Alert Level System. Preparations are currently underway to potentially move to Alert Level 3 on June 8, 2020. Credible and emerging Information about what public health measures will be in place at that time is available at online at www.gov.nl.ca/COVID-19.

For information on the Government of Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan, please visit https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan.html

Here is a list of additional mental wellness supports available in Newfoundland and Labrador:

• If you are finding it difficult to cope or feel anxious, Bridge the Gapp offers many services to support you and your wellbeing. Please visit www.bridgethegapp.ca

• If you are feeling isolated and alone during COVID-19, call the Provincial CHANNAL Warm Line at 1-855-753-2560 9:00am to 12:00am daily.

• If you are experiencing a mental health crisis, please call the Mental Health Crisis Line at 1-888-737-4668 available 24 hours a day

NCC is the representative governing body for approximately 6,000 Inuit who reside primarily in south and central Labrador. NunatuKavut means "Our Ancient Land" in Inuttitut and is the traditional territory of the Inuit who belong to this territory.

In July 2018, NCC entered into talks with the Government of Canada on the Recognition of its Indigenous Rights and Self-Determination (RIRSD). In September 2019, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed.

Have a question or concern?
Please contact us!
T. 1 (877) 896-0592 (toll free) or 1(709) 896-0592 OR communications@nunatukavut.ca

Learn more at www.nunatukavut.ca