

Government of Canada announces interest relief for First Nations through the First Nations Finance Authority

From: [Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada](#)

News release

June 2, 2020 — Ottawa, Ontario — Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada

The Honourable Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, announced today that First Nations with existing loans under the First Nations Finance Authority (FNFA) will receive interest payment relief as a result of a \$17.1 million support from the Government of Canada.

The COVID-19 pandemic is having a significant impact on First Nation families, communities and businesses. The measures in place to protect the health of all people in Canada are also affecting the revenue sources which are used to pay interest and principal on loans which have been taken out to support community development, such as initiatives to build infrastructure projects on reserve.

In response to the impact of on these First Nations, the Government of Canada is working collaboratively with the First Nations Finance Authority to provide financial relief so that the First Nations can focus on the health and safety needs of their communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This funding will directly help First Nations to maintain financial stability and lessen the economic impacts of COVID-19, as well as allocate financial resources to other critical needs during this crisis. Furthermore these investments will support the stability of the *First Nations Fiscal Management Act* regime and the First Nations Finance Authority's credit rating which was recently increased.

The First Nations Finance Authority is a non-profit, Indigenous-run institution that provides First Nation governments with access to long-term loans with preferable interest rates for essential infrastructure and economic development. It is anticipated that this investment will provide financial relief to 58 First Nations borrowers.

The First Nations Finance Authority plays a significant role in supporting First Nations in exercising fiscal jurisdiction by accessing capital for the benefit of their communities. For more information about the interest relief, First Nations can contact the First Nations Finance Authority directly.

Quotes

“We know that First Nations communities are facing unique challenges in addressing COVID-19 . We recognize that we can support First Nations by providing greater financial flexibility during these difficult times. Many First Nations are in need of financial relief so they can continue to provide critical supports to their people. By working with the First Nations Finance Authority, we have been able to develop specific initiatives such as community interest relief, as well as adapt broad based federal financial supports to better support Indigenous peoples in Canada and Indigenous businesses in meeting their needs.”

The Honourable Carolyn Bennett, M.D., P.C., M.P.
Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations

“By working in partnership with Indigenous lead institutions, including the First Nations Finance Authority (FNFA), we are making sure that federal initiatives deliver the support Indigenous communities need. This investment will allow the FNFA to provide interest relief for First Nations communities so they can focus on keeping their members safe during COVID-19.”

Gary Anandasangaree, M.P.

Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations

“Canada’s support is a positive step forward for those First Nation Governments under the First Nations Fiscal Management Act with revenue streams specifically impacted by COVID-19 and social distancing measures. We remain optimistic that Canada will continue to work with the First Nations Finance Authority [and the other First Nations fiscal institutions] on developing economic recovery options as Canada transitions out of the pandemic crisis. To date, the FNFA members have used their loan proceeds to undertake projects that created over 9,000 jobs for the Canadian economy, and these monies will allow them to continue to ensure their communities are safe and healthy and be ready to participate in the economic rebound.”

Ernie Daniels, CPA, CGA, CAFM

President/CEO of the First Nations Finance Authority

Quick facts

- The *First Nations Fiscal Management Act* is enabling legislation under which First Nations can advance their self-determination and generate new sources of revenues by taking on fiscal jurisdiction at their own pace.
- The First Nations Finance Authority has enabled First Nations to access over \$833 million in long term affordable financing for essential infrastructure and economic development. It recently received an upgrade to its credit rating (Aa3) which will translate into greater savings for First Nations borrowers in the future.
- Today’s announcement is in addition to the \$380 million Indigenous Community Support Fund to help Indigenous communities prevent, prepare and respond to COVID-19.

Associated links

- [First Nations Finance Authority](#)
- [First Nations Fiscal Management](#)
- [Canada’s COVID-19 Economic Response Plan](#)
- [Indigenous Community Support Fund](#)

Contacts

For more information, media may contact:

Emily Williams

Press Secretary

Office of the Honourable Carolyn Bennett,

Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations
819-997-0002

Media Relations
Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada
819-934-2302
RCAANC.media.CIRNAC@canada.ca