



## **BRIEFING NOTE**

**TO:** UBCIC Chiefs Council  
**FROM:** First Nations Public Service Secretariat  
**DATE:** May 19, 2021  
**RE:** Update on FNPSS Recent Activities and Future Plans

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### **PURPOSE**

Update on recent activities undertaken by the First Nations Public Service Secretariat (FNPSS) and future plans to support BC First Nations.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

To request renewed support from the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs as FNPSS seeks to obtain adequate and sustainable funding from the Governments of Canada and British Columbia for future years and to continue planned activities.

### **BACKGROUND**

Since its re-establishment in 2018, FNPSS has been supported by a variety of Government of Canada, BC, and other funding. Its only source of dependable year-to-year funding has been through the commitment by the First Nations Summit (FNS) in providing its full share of the Indigenous Representative Organizations (IRO) project funding which has been split equally amongst the three FNLC organizations in BC in past years. In December 2020, all IROs across Canada were notified that the funding was to be sunsetted; however, the 2021 federal budget indicated it would be re-established.

Despite the IRO fund being continued, the FNPSS recognizes that the significant contribution by FNS alone cannot be maintained or relied on as its sole support. FNPSS is re-engaging with BC First Nations, and renewing its strategic vision and plan, with the aim of securing sustainable and long-term investments for its ongoing work.

In May, FNPSS began province-wide engagement sessions with BC First Nations to hear their views on how best to strengthen the BC First Nation Public Service and to seek input on the priorities for FNPSS for the next 3-5 years. Initial discussions with First Nations have confirmed much of what is currently known regarding the existing challenges to build capacity in First Nation administrations. These include (but are not



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limited to): isolation, the need for relevant and accessible training, recruitment challenges and turn-over. Feedback on specific activities that FNPSS could undertake to support First Nations in overcoming these challenges is also being sought.

Engagement sessions in May and June are primarily geared towards Band Administrators and Administration staff, although participation from interested leadership is also welcome. In August, FNPSS will hold session to report to Leadership on what was heard in the spring sessions, seek additional input and feedback from Chief and Councils. A report from all sessions will be completed and shared with all FNLC members organizations and BC First Nation leadership and will inform a renewed vision and strategic plan for FNPSS. Engagement sessions are ongoing and registration information is available at [www.fnps.ca](http://www.fnps.ca)

Recently, FNPSS completed research to determine how many First Nations and people have been reached by FNPSS over the last three years (since its re-establishment in 2018). In summary, during 2018, 2019 and 2020<sup>1</sup>:

- FNPSS held 63 learning and training events for BC First Nations;
- 5,252 individuals participated in an FNPSS learning or training session;
- Representatives from 184 BC First Nations have participated in FNPSS training, mentorship, conferences or virtual sessions;

Over the coming months, FNPSS will be reaching out to the remaining 20 First Nations in BC that have not engaged in any meaningful way with FNPSS to-date.

FNPSS is well positioned to provide on-going learning and capacity support and information to First Nations through a variety of methods, including webinars, workshops, mentorship, toolkits, guides and templates, and townhall meetings with government officials, or through its virtual meeting service. For more information, email [info@fnps.ca](mailto:info@fnps.ca).

### **CURRENT STATUS**

FNPSS Spring 2021 activities include:

#### Records and Information Management (RIM) Assessment Tool Workshop & Kit

In response to ongoing requests for assistance with Records and Information Management, FNPSS has undertaken several activities to try and fill this need. A RIM self-assessment tool and workshop has been developed by FNPSS to assist First

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<sup>1</sup> Does not include March 2020; those statistics are currently being added and when complete a fulsome report will be published for the three years.



Nations in determining their RIM needs and providing practical suggestions for implementation. The self-assessment tool workshop is currently being delivered as a pilot (April 28, May 19, and June 3). The first workshop brought together six First Nations and six RIM experts as mentors, and over a period of several weeks participants will complete the RIM self-assessment process. The self-assessment tool and supporting RIM resources will be developed into a web-based platform and toolkit in the future, to make it more widely available. In addition, the existing First Nations Information Management toolkit will also undergo major updates in the coming year to reflect the current landscape of RIM implementation in First Nations. The toolkit will also be made available in both paper format and an interactive online version.

#### Wellness Forum for Band Administrators

On May 26 and 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021, FNPSS is hosting a two half-day dialogue session for Band Administrators entitled "Putting Wellness First: A Band Administrators' Dialogue on Managing Stress". This wellness forum will provide a virtual space for Band Administrators to gather, hear about other Band Administrators' health and wellness experiences, gain tips and tricks on health and wellness from guest speakers, and leave with knowledge of tools and resources available for personal well-being. This event is being held to respond to overwhelming and specific requests from Band Administrators dealing with increased stress in particular during the past year through the pandemic.

#### Communications Webinar Series

This spring, FNPSS partnered with the First Nations Technology Council (FNTC) for a series of communications focused webinars as part of FNTC's *Stream-In* series. Each webinar covered a range of digital skills to support Indigenous peoples in this COVID reality. Last year, FNPSS worked jointly with FNTC on a webinar on best practices using virtual tools (such as Zoom) for engagement. In May 2021, FNPSS and FNTC partnered on two additional Stream-In webinars. The first was, "Website Best Practices for Effective Communication", which provided easy-to-implement techniques for First Nations to increase the effectiveness of their website as a part of their overall community engagement strategy. The second webinar "Community Engagement: Best Practices in a COVID-19 World", introduced participants to virtual and in-person best practices and tools as a means to enhance community engagement in a more meaningful way.

#### Leadership Training Series

Part Two of the First Nation Leadership Series, "Leading Others", was delivered in April 2021 to approximately 35 participants<sup>2</sup>. Over 65 people registered for the training and approximately half that number participated in all six of the half-day sessions. The

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<sup>2</sup> Precise number of attendees varied over the six half-day sessions.



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session covered topics including: community engagement, leading teams, financial systems, project management, organizational development and First Nations governing systems. Feedback has been very positive. Part 3 in the series is on “Leading Nation Rebuilding” and is scheduled for delivery in June 2021.

### Implementation of the Strengthening Public Service Initiative

FNPSS has been working with the Government of Canada to implement a joint workplan under the Strengthening Public Service Initiative. This initiative was formalized with the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding among FNPSS, the First Nations Summit and the BC Federal Council (BCFC) in 2019. The initiative is based on the principle of ‘reciprocal learning’ and joint activities currently underway include: a collaborative learning event on June 29 and 30 focused on human resources; a series of ‘reverse town halls’ intended to increase awareness of First Nations, their administrations, their challenges, and best practices for engagement amongst federal public servants; and, a navigation tool for First Nation administrations to support easy and quick access to government information on programs, funding, and tools.

### Youth Engagement

FNPSS is currently developing a First Nations Youth Network to formally increase youth participation in FNPSS and increase enthusiasm amongst youth to pursue education and careers in governance and administration. This work is the result of the FNPSS Final Report on its virtual 2020 Indigenous Youth Roundtable. This report identified a number of ways to increase youth participation in FNPSS activities and support youth interested in career development, including the tailoring of existing programs as well as creating new programs to better engage youth in a meaningful way. Youth participants recommended the establishment of a Youth Advisory Body that reflects the diversity of Indigenous groups in British Columbia, as well as a mentorship network to support young professionals in the public service. The Report also identified the following priority areas to support youth engagement and empowerment:

- Succession management
- Education & training
- Opportunities for innovation
- Mental health & addiction services
- Climate change & food insecurity
- Digital infrastructure, and
- Geographic considerations

To read the full Report, see Annex A.



### First Nation Well Being Fund

In March, on behalf of the FNLC, the FNPSS launched the intake of the First Nations Well Being Fund. The First Nations Well Being Fund was established through a grant from the BC Government resulting from advocacy from the First Nations Leadership Council. The Fund offers two streams of funding, “Community Projects” and “Wellness Planning” and is designed to help First Nations where their need is greatest. To help increase uptake of funding applications under Stream 2, “Wellness Planning”, a series of three webinars took place in the areas of community engagement, wellness indicators and comprehensive community planning. Staff from the FNPSS have been working with First Nations to provide feedback on draft applications and the deadline for funding applications is May 30.

For more information on any FNPSS initiatives, including the Well Being Fund, visit [www.fnps.ca](http://www.fnps.ca). To register for any FNPSS training or events, visit [www.fnps.ca/events](http://www.fnps.ca/events)

### **DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS**

Initial engagements with BC First Nations have confirmed that the need for FNPSS services, training and advocacy efforts are critical to supporting First Nations as they build their administration capacity. As First Nations move forward with self-government in all forms and First Nations take on greater responsibilities, the requirement for institutional or structural supports for the BC First Nation Public Service continues to increase.

FNPSS is continuing to see high demand for training in the core public administration areas, as well as leadership and other areas related to governance. In addition, webinars and other knowledge sharing sessions such as coaching circles, are fostering connections across First Nations administrations, allowing for greater networking across the First Nation public service, and providing additional ongoing support to First Nations (beyond a ‘one-time’ training event). FNPSS is currently exploring models that will further support these types of engagement through mentorship drop-in sessions and online networking opportunities.

FNPSS continues to operate without core funding and is actively seeking sources of revenue. FNPSS is actively seeking commitments to multi-year funding from government agencies and will be requesting letters of support from FNLC and partner organizations as it looks to support a renewed five year strategy.



## **NEXT STEPS**

The FNPSS will continue undertaking activities that support the First Nations Public Service in BC and will be conducting analysis on the results of the province-wide engagement sessions in order to inform its renewed strategy. FNPSS will be bringing forward a full report on the province-wide engagement sessions to BC First Nation Chiefs and the First Nation Leadership Council this year.

## **APPENDICES**

Annex A – Youth Roundtable Report