

Employment and Social Development Canada

Indigenous Skills and Employment Training Program

Operational Guidelines

The purpose of this document is to provide information on the flexibility that will be exercised by Service Canada (SC), Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) and recipients to manage the Indigenous Skills and Employment Training (ISET) Program in the current context of COVID-19.

Service Canada / ESDC is working with their Indigenous partners to support recipients that wish to modify their activities to deal with the challenges posed by COVID-19. Service Canada / ESDC will exercise flexibility to reduce potential impacts on recipients and clients wherever possible. These flexibilities extend to project duration and the types of activities that can be funded.

The purpose and objectives of the program have not been altered by current events. ISET remains focused on improving employment outcomes for Indigenous people, and meeting the needs of clients. This work is vital to the well-being of individuals, families, and communities. Service Canada (SC) and ESDC will support recipients to continue this work while also supporting and abiding by the guidelines provided by Health Canada to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Operational Continuity and Additional Flexibility

- Ongoing communication and collaboration between recipients and Service Canada / ESDC is essential to operational continuity.
- Recipients have the flexibility to action operational changes and adjust organizational priorities in order to continue to support clients.
- This approach is supported by the ***Exceptional Circumstances*** clause in ISET agreements.
- The changes and actions taken by Recipient's need to:
 1. Align with the Terms and Conditions of the ISET Program;
 2. Be clearly documented (a record of the unique measures taken by recipients is required for transparency and accountability purposes); and
 3. Be communicated to Service Canada / ESDC, when reasonably possible, so the change can be noted on file. This communication is not for approval purposes.
- This operational flexibility extends to all elements of the ISET program, including, but not limited to, internal operations, activities, program delivery, capital asset purchases (to support online learning, connectivity, etc.), reporting, deadlines, data uploads and results sharing.

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Funding

- The initial advances for the 2020-21 fiscal year will be released to recipients in early April 2020 once an Annual Operational Plan (AOP) for 2020-21 has been submitted to Service Canada / ESDC (see AOP section below).
- All ISET funding is to be used in accordance with the Terms and Conditions of the ISET program to meet program objectives.

Annual Operational Plans

- An Annual Operational Plan (AOP) is required to release funding for the 2020-21 fiscal year.
- This requirement can be met by submitting an outline of the plan if it is not yet completed. (NEW)
- A recipient's AOP can be updated at a later date as the fiscal year progresses. (NEW)

Monitoring and Reporting Requirements

- While every effort should be made to complete the requirements outlined within ISET contribution agreements in accordance with the timelines specified, it is understood that there may be delays. Service Canada / ESDC will accommodate delays and support recipients to complete any outstanding requirements as soon as possible. This approach also applies to data uploads. (NEW)
- At this time, all on-site monitors are suspended. These uncompleted monitors will be revisited when appropriate, and upon agreement by Service Canada / ESDC and recipients. (NEW)

EI Implications

- The Government of Canada has announced the Canada Emergency Response Benefit temporary income support measure. This measure targets workers in Canada whose income from employment or self-employment has been impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak.
- We are working urgently to develop and implement this new measure. The portal for accessing the Canada Emergency Response Benefit will be available in early April.

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Information will be posted on our website as it becomes available: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/notices/coronavirus.html>

New Recipients - First Nation Distinction

- Potential new recipients are encouraged to continue to collaborate with Service Canada / ESDC on their request, however delays may occur as the primary focus is responding and adapting service delivery to the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you have any questions, please contact your Service Canada regional representative.