



**Employment and
Social Development Canada**

Access to Information and
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Your file - Votre référence

MAY - 5 2017

Our file - Notre référence
A-2016-01511 / JL

Mr. David McKie
CBC News
181 Queen Street, 3rd Floor
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 1K9

Dear Mr. McKie:

This is in response to your request submitted under the *Access to Information Act*, received at Employment and Social Development Canada on November 25, 2016, and which reads as follows:

"Please provide a copy of the briefing note 2016 MSBU 010761 "Maximizing take-up rates of the Canada Child benefit among first nations families on-reserve and indigenous families in the north"."

We apologize for the delay in responding to your request. You will find enclosed a copy of the information you have requested, and which was released as part of a similar formal request (A-2016-01491) pursuant to the *Access to Information Act*.

You are entitled to complain to the Information Commissioner concerning the processing of your request within 60 days of the receipt of this notice. In the event you decide to avail yourself of this right, your notice of complaint should be sent to the following address: Office of the Information Commissioner of Canada, 30 Victoria Street, 7th Floor, Gatineau, Quebec K1A 1H3.

Should you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact Josée Lapensee at 819-654-6984, or by email at josee.lapensee@hrsd-rhdsc.gc.ca.

Sincerely,

Alain Beaudry
A/Manager
Access to Information and Privacy Operations

Encl.



Employment and
Social Development Canada
Deputy Minister

Emploi et
Développement social Canada
Sous-ministre

AUG 08 2016

2016 MSBU 010761

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**MEMORANDUM TO THE MINISTER OF FAMILIES, CHILDREN AND SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT**

**MAXIMIZING TAKE-UP RATES OF THE CANADA CHILD BENEFIT
AMONG FIRST NATIONS FAMILIES ON-RESERVE AND
INDIGENOUS FAMILIES IN THE NORTH**

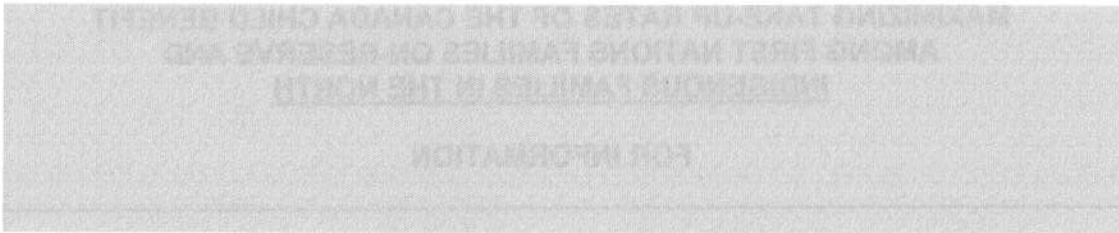
FOR INFORMATION

SUMMARY

- The purpose of this note is to provide you with an update on work underway to maximize uptake of the Canada Child Benefit (CCB) amongst First Nations families on-reserve and Indigenous families in the North. You approved a plan to maximize uptake of the CCB on May 3, 2016.
- Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) is coordinating a multi-departmental plan in close collaboration with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) and Statistics Canada. Other departments are also being involved as required.
- This plan includes engagement with key Indigenous stakeholders, the development and dissemination of information and training products targeted to First Nations families on-reserve and Indigenous families in the North, and the design of baseline data and metrics to track progress in terms of CCB uptake.
- Activities underway include engagement with National Indigenous Organizations to discuss the CCB and outreach opportunities; development of a variety of products to increase awareness and uptake of the CCB, such as posters, print, social media, television and radio broadcasts in Indigenous languages as well as training modules to assist financial officers in Indigenous communities and others to help clients access benefits; broad dissemination of targeted materials through existing federal networks; and development of a simplified tax form for low-income people to assist in accessing benefits.

BACKGROUND

- As announced in Budget 2016, the CCB is a simple, tax-free, income-tested benefit that is more generous than the current suite of federal child benefits, and is targeted to families who need it most.
- For people living in poverty, tax-related benefits can have a significant positive impact on their level of income. In order to access such benefits, families must file an income tax return each year.



- Further to this, Privy Council Office convened a meeting with senior officials from ESDC, CRA, Finance, and INAC to discuss how best to ensure the CCB has maximum reach and uptake among vulnerable populations and children in poverty.
- The CCB started on July 20, 2016. Families who were not eligible on that date can apply as reach back for the benefit for a period of time provided they meet the necessary requirement of filing a tax claim.

CURRENT STATUS

- A multi-department plan of engagement and communications products development and dissemination to maximize take-up of the CCB to eligible families living on-reserve and in the North has been developed and is on track.

Engagement:

- ESDC officials have met with National Indigenous Organizations (Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami and Native Women's Association of Canada) to discuss the CCB and outreach opportunities and considerations for reaching families living on-reserve and in the North. These national organizations recognized the positive impact access to the CCB could have on families in poverty and there will be an on-going dialogue in order for ESDC to draw upon their expertise to facilitate product development (e.g. communications materials, training modules) as well as assist with dissemination to reach as wide an audience as possible.

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Information products development and dissemination:

- Work on a variety of products targeted to increasing awareness and uptake of the CCB on-reserve and among Indigenous families in the North is underway including:
 - First Nations and Inuit-specific posters and information on the CCB to support uptake;
 - Working with Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami to translate materials into Inuktitut dialects including print, social media and spots for broadcast through Northern radio.
- An advertising campaign is also being developed to raise awareness of the CCB. The campaign will be launched to support the community outreach activities. Communications materials may include infographics, a poster, television spots (e.g. Aboriginal Peoples Television Network), social media, local newspapers, radio and bus/other transit shelter advertisements. All products will be developed using creative graphics that resonate with a variety of Indigenous communities. Communications materials created in-house will also be used for communications activities prior to and during the outreach activities (e.g. infographic circulated via social media)
- Broad information dissemination of targeted materials will also take place through existing federal networks, including Service Canada, Health Canada, and INAC points in communities (e.g. band offices, health centres and nursing stations, child care centres, schools, Aboriginal Skills and Employment Strategy Agreement holders).

Baseline data/metrics:

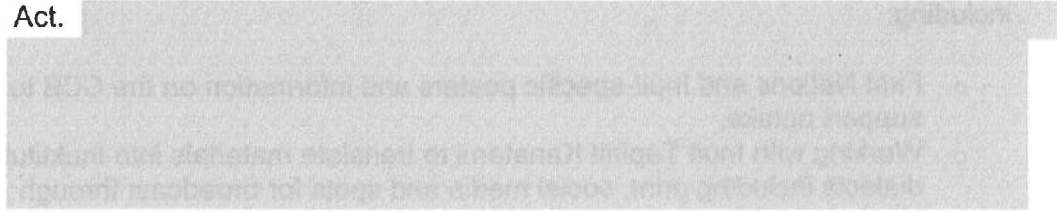
- ESDC is working with Statistics Canada and CRA to refine measurement of current benefits take-up rates on-reserve and establish an approach to track the take-up rate of the CCB on-reserve and where possible, in Indigenous communities in the North. This work will help to better evaluate and understand current uptake and to target future outreach strategies.

Addressing barriers to CCB uptake:

- While the research will help to identify communities where benefit uptake is low, efforts are also underway to better understand and address barriers to participation. For example, there is some concern that tax filing may act as an impediment to uptake, particularly amongst the on-reserve population.

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- At an inter-departmental Associate Deputy Ministers meeting on July 22, 2016, with representation from CRA, Statistics Canada, INAC, Finance and PCO, CRA agreed that any reserve that requests the use of the simplified T1S-D form can access it in paper form. This is a simplified credit and benefit return for those who qualify for the Section 87 tax exemption under the Indian Act.



- Possession of a SIN is required to file taxes or to use the simplified return form described above. Service Canada delivers the SIN through in-person services, available at 580 points of service, which includes Service Canada Centres and scheduled outreach activities. It is also available through SIN@Birth, where parents apply for a SIN while registering the child's birth with the provincial vital statistics agencies. It is available for remote applicants by way of the mail channel. The SIN program also has an escalation process to resolve cases such as those where standard identification (e.g., a birth certificate) may present an issue.
- Additionally, information modules and peer-based training support is being developed for Indigenous communities, in collaboration with Indigenous organizations, to assist key community intermediaries (e.g., financial officers, band managers, other staff, etc.) in understanding and promoting the CCB and other federal services, including Social Insurance Number (SIN) registration and tax filing. The modules will include a phone number for Indigenous community intermediaries to contact departmental SIN officials designated to provide direct support and respond to questions from Indigenous organizations.
- Service Canada's Citizen Services Branch, in addition to the work done in local offices and through scheduled outreach, will identify existing outreach to Indigenous communities and will include CCB and SIN promotion and facilitation. It will also identify a regional strategy to link to communities; renew tools and training on CCB and SIN for Service Canada; develop outreach tools to support dialogue with key community intermediaries; and develop a tracking and reporting mechanism for outreach activity. This strategy is specifically designed for Indigenous communities in the North and on-reserves. The SIN issuance process will be as simple as possible while maintaining integrity. It will include processes to address Indigenous communities-specific issues, including lack of identity documents such as a birth certificate.

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- The role of programs such as the CRA's Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP) is also being considered as a means to further facilitate access to the CCB. The CVITP is a collaboration between CRA and community organizations that provides hands-on assistance to low-income individuals in filing their taxes.

NEXT STEPS

- ESDC will continue to lead coordination of work and play a secretariat role in close collaboration with CRA and INAC, as well as Finance, PCO, and Statistics Canada.
- ESDC is also exploring what other benefits accessed by tax-filing (e.g. GIS, OAS, GST credit) could be included within this process to increase take-up of the CCB as outlined above.
- We will continue to update you on progress to increase the take-up rates of benefits among Indigenous families on-reserve and in the North.



Deputy Minister

Executive Head: Paul Thompson
819-654-2795

- I would like an oral briefing
- I would like _____ of my staff to be briefed
- No briefing required

