

**EMAIL SENT MARCH 25, 2020**

**SUBJECT:** IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUIRED: Indigenous homeless in Montreal



RÉSEAU  
de la communauté  
autochtone à Montréal

Montreal  
Indigenous  
Community  
NETWORK

Dear Prime Minister and Ministers,

We recognize that public authorities are working incredibly hard and around the clock to get shelters/centres the resources they need; and **we thank everyone for their commitment and dedication** to improving the situation for the Indigenous community in Montreal. The speedy delivery of harm reduction measures was crucial two weeks ago, when the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a controllable pandemic and after both the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada and Premier Legault asked citizens to start practicing self-isolation and/or social distancing.

**However, as of today, March 25, the Indigenous-serving homeless centres/shelters have yet to actually receive A SINGLE resource from ANY level of government** (no supplies, no workers, no actual dollars in bank): Resilience Montreal, Projets Autochtones du Québec, Open Door, Native Women's Shelter of Montreal, Chez Doris, and the Indigenous Support Workers Project (via Exeko).

#### UPDATES:

- A. Tomorrow marks the first day that a Montreal Indigenous-serving homeless centre or shelter must close their doors: **Resilience Montreal will no longer be operating as a day centre for the 140-170 people they help each day. Instead, they will be setting up outdoor services in Cabot Square** to serve food and coffee, offer support work, and distribute blankets and coats. They are calling upon the public, private, and civil sectors to help **set up tents and outdoor heaters tomorrow, March 26th**.
- B. Many of the other shelters are on the brink of following Resilience Montreal and closing their doors, as these under-supported indoor spaces have possibly become uncontrollable incubators for the virus and points of transmission.
- C. So far, the aforementioned centres and shelters have been entirely dependent upon the support from volunteers, private donations, Moisson Montréal, Makivik Corporation, and very limited support from the Montreal Indigenous Community NETWORK (coordinating volunteers; delivering minimal food and cleaning supplies).
- D. **IMPORTANT REMINDER** from our [March 22 message](#): **ISOLATED SHELTER still does not exist** for those without homes; still today, **those living in homelessness do not have the option to practice social distancing or voluntary isolation**. We have also not received any information indicating that this is being planned.
- E. In the meantime, we have received reports of cases involving police ticketing people without homes for sleeping or loitering outdoors.
- F. On March 23rd, the Indigenous Support Workers Project ceased offering support services on the streets of Montreal due to a potentially infected staff member who is self-isolating while awaiting test results for COVID-19.

**IMMEDIATE CALL TO ACTION:** It has become increasingly clear that existing systems do not have the capacity to protect First Nations, Inuit, and Métis living in homelessness in Montreal. **We are therefore urging the Government of Canada immediately set up emergency shelter for the homeless in Montreal, specifically for the Indigenous population in Cabot Square.**



RESEAU  
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This is an unprecedented time and calls for unprecedented measures. Please help us protect the most vulnerable members of the Indigenous community in Montreal.

In urgency,

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