

Emma: [inaudible 00:00:00], got to click to let people in. My name is Emma, for those of you that don't know me, and I am a contractor on the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council Project. I'm talking to you today from Secwepemc Territory near Kamloops, BC. I'm going to run through some information about the project, a little bit about the background, what we've been up to, what we're doing next, then we're going to hand over to Blaine Wiggins, who's the AFAC executive director for a question-and-answer session. But before that... Sorry, just let you know, if you do have questions, you can just use the chat in the Zoom and send me a message directly, then I'll ask Blaine those questions at the end. As we're going, if you do have questions that you think of please do type them in there, then there'll also be time at the end to do that. Before we get going, I am going to hand over to Allan Peters as our Elder to open the meeting and let me just unmute you there Allan. Okay. You are good to go.

Allan: [inaudible 00:01:41] Creator for getting us together and also thanking the Creator that we are able to give all the information straight across Canada without having anybody exposed to any sickness, like the COVID that's going on now. We thank the Creator everything that's going on with the program and dealing with the people. [inaudible 00:02:29].

Emma: Beautiful. Thank you very much, Allan.

To get started, I think it's important that we cover off who is the Aboriginal Firefighters Association and how they fit in with the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council Project. AFAC, the Aboriginal Firefighters Association of Canada was established in 1991 by a group of Indigenous firefighters. It's a united body of regional Indigenous emergency and fire service organizations from across Canada. AFAC is committed to raising awareness to the fire and life safety challenges in Indigenous communities and improving the outcomes. They work with national, regional, and local organizations, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, and with individual communities to bring about change. The National Indigenous Fire Safety Council Project, or the NIFSC, is really the combination of many, many years of hard work by AFAC to get meaningful backing from the government so that they can create an organization that then allows communities to determine their own fire and life safety outcomes. You can see that some of AFAC's key priorities.

You will see that we have the term *for us, by us* frequently throughout materials. That's because it really underpins everything that we do here at the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council Project. The project is all about creating an Indigenous organization for Indigenous communities. Everything that we do is absolutely grounded in information that's from Indigenous communities, telling us what it is that you want, what it is that you need. Also, about what's been successful in the past and of course, what hasn't worked so well. Some of the specific ways that the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council Project is supporting communities is by helping communities to understand how having fire and life safety standards is beneficial, then providing training to actually achieve, monitor, and maintain those standards. Also, providing or supporting access to adequate funding, to provide sustainable services and helping communities to make

sure that their capital infrastructure is of quality. The NIFSC Project is about creating the NIFSC and then the NIFSC will then go on to continue delivering the programs that the project develops.

When we talk about Indigenous communities, we're talking about all Indigenous Peoples in Canada, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, regardless of where they reside. AFAC Board of Directors is committed to the inclusion of all Indigenous Peoples, both in AFAC's current inception and in the development of the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council. The AFAC Board is actually undergoing governance changes at this very moment. That includes extending invitations to Inuit and Métis to serve on the AFAC Board and to participate in the strategic direction and development off the NIFSC. The governance goal of the NIFSC is to reflect all Indigenous Peoples. Now, because of the limitations of federal policy, we're currently only able to deliver programs and services on reserve, and we're working with the government to remove these barriers. However, all of the programs that we are developing and that we will develop are all intended for use by any Indigenous communities in Canada. They are deliberately designed so anyone can pick them up and use them. If you're interested in how that works, you can just reach out to us and we can help support you in accessing that information.

Just letting someone else in, welcome. Nope, no, because I've clicked off that. There we go. Too much technology happening.

As I said, the project always has been and always will be driven by community needs. It's designed by Indigenous communities for Indigenous communities. Back in from October 2018 to November 2019, we ran engagement sessions. From that we provided information on the project and we received information and we gathered input about what communities need and want. We listened to communities so that we could better understand the challenges and the gaps across the country. You can see here, this diagram shows how the flow of work could always be driven by community needs at the top that will inform the design. Then we will test, we'll take feedback and we'll improve. As we develop our programs, we're out there actually testing them in communities and then incorporating that feedback back into improving the programs and continuing to deliver. That's intended to be the case throughout the life of all of our programs. Communities are going to evolve, the situation is going to evolve and we will always incorporate feedback and be responsive to needs. One of the things that we heard loudly throughout all of the engagement sessions was that action is needed and that we needed to really address the multitude of fire and life safety issues in Indigenous communities. Excuse me.

One of the key ways of doing that is through fire prevention and public education programs, which we're currently rolling out.

How will the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council make a difference to you and your community? As an ongoing organization that has sustainable funding, it means that the NIFSC will always be around and the communities can be confident that you can come to us with your questions and that you're going to receive sound advice and quality programs and services. We're always going to be here. We're a reliable source of

information. The National Incident Reporting System is going to make an enormous difference. At the moment, there's no data being captured at all. When we design say for our prevention programs, we're basically just doing that based on our best guess as to what the causes of fires are. Whereas if we actually have data, we can design targeted programs that are specifically addressing the underlying causes of fires.

National Indigenous Fire Safety Council is going to be an independent national organization that will decide what programs it's going to offer based on the reality on the ground and the actual needs of Indigenous communities. We have used the data that we capture in the Incident Reporting System to develop a plan to address fire and life safety issues according to fact-based priorities. Currently, firefighter training really isn't accessible to most Indigenous Peoples, especially not without having to leave their home community to go to training or to work. We're going to develop and deliver training programs that allow people to remain in their community and get accredited firefighter training. We're also going to be creating flexible working arrangements that meet the needs of the incredibly diverse Indigenous communities across the country, finding ways to allow people to have meaningful careers and stay in their community, serving that community. Obviously, there are currently fire and life safety programs, but they're really designed for urban populations. We're creating programs and services that are appropriate for Indigenous communities, both from a geographic and from a cultural perspective. These are programs that when you look at the examples, you'll be able to see yourself rather than thinking well, that doesn't apply to me. That's not how I live. That's not where I live. Those aren't the services I have. Instead, you'll be able to clearly see yourself and your situation and how it relates to you.

Again, it's really important to us that the programs are inclusive, and they're being developed to be used by all Indigenous communities across the country. Even if our funding parameters currently limit the delivery to our reserve communities.

It's a fact that Indigenous communities across Canada are experiencing an unacceptable number of fire-related injuries and deaths. There's a 2008 report by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, CMHC. It found that Indigenous Peoples in Canada are 10 times more likely to die in a fire and 2.5 times more likely to be affected by property loss per capita. Now if you've had anything to do with this project, you've heard us using the same statistic over and over. If you're wondering why? It's because that is the only statistic that there is, because there's no data collection, there is no other information, and it's unacceptable and shocking that we don't even have a baseline and information on what is actually happening out there.

There is no national fire protection act that mandates fire safety standards or enforcement. There's no mandated enforcement of occupational health and safety. There's no national coordination of Indigenous fire service standards of programs, or even of minimal level of service standards. Each Indigenous Services Canada (ISC) region can provide the programs or fund regional services at their discretion. Support in each region will vary depending on how that region wants to provide funding. There's no fire incident reporting and data collection that was taking place was based in capital asset funding rather than fire loss reporting. It was from a perspective of the capital assets,

not gathering information on the fire losses. Fire service funding and fire protection is based solely on a suppression approach. It uses formula funding, which is flexible funding, meaning that communities aren't required to utilize fire protection funding for fire protection. Housing and capital infrastructure isn't subject to national building inspection process. The liability for the build is actually placed on the community not the builder, whereas offers of the liability is on the builder. Capital projects are required to be built to national code, but it's based on policy and there's no established inspection process.

By taking a national-level approach to fire and life safety, the NIFSC, as a response to this gap in the fire protection standards, by addressing these issues collectively and collaboratively on a national scale, we can start to coordinate fire service standards, programs, and services in Indigenous communities and bring about meaningful change. Just to dive a little bit deeper into examples of some of the gaps that we're talking about. Indigenous fire services assume responsibility for fire departments and for community safety, but they're doing that with limited training and experience and have no national standards. Because of inadequate funding, there's a lack of expertise and a lack of training, which hinders the adoption of any fire service equipment standards.

With the exception of on-reserve communities, all other jurisdictions, that's provinces, territories, and federal jurisdictions like airports and military bases, seaports, they all have established building and fire codes. The building codes make sure that the infrastructure is built properly and the fire codes ensure that the infrastructure is maintained properly to meet the established standards. That is not the case on reserve. There's actually no national standards for the delivery of fire prevention or public education.

How is the NIFSC going to bring about change? We are going to work collaboratively. We're going to share our expertise and share our resources. We're not going to duplicate existing programs and services. We're going to share our research. Our goal is to help communities make communities safer. The National Indigenous Fire Safety Council is all about supporting internal capacity building.

Governance and corporate development is the activities and steps that will build the organization and make sure that the project is supported by Indigenous Peoples and organizations. This work will establish the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council as an independent Indigenous-run organization that's mandated to improve fire and life safety for Indigenous Peoples and communities across the country.

We have a solid research program that allows for program development and delivery that's based on evidence. The research program makes sure that we have academic rigour throughout and looks for opportunities to really enhance mission of the organization and to invite in advanced fire and life safety initiatives. The Indigenous Fire Marshal Service is the program delivery arm. We're going to take a closer look at that on the next slide. The National Incident Reporting System allows for data capture identification of trends, sharing of fire prevention information, sharing of training,

sharing of standards and resources. Through that, it allows us to develop the programs that have the most impact.

Where did the name Indigenous Fire Marshal Service come from? Well, the role of a fire marshal is well understood, and it relates to what's being delivered by this arm of the project. We work with communities to identify and meet individual needs, to develop and test culturally appropriate programs. That includes things like fire prevention, education, home safety, train the trainer programs, also governance training, fire department administration, and also leadership training. The Indigenous Fire Marshal Service will deliver programs in both English and French and in three different formats, although the requirements of each program delivery or each program may dictate the delivery formats available. Not all programs will necessarily be suitable for all three delivery methods. Our program development is guided by the National Advisory Committee and by the Technical Advisory Committee.

The project is working with Indigenous communities and is focused on developing and testing programs related to fire prevention and public education, because those are the ones that have the greatest impact on public safety. When you see the list of program areas, you'll always see them listed in this order. That's very deliberate because that is the order in which they have the greatest impact on saving lives. Community safety education programs have the most impact. They focused on specific fire safety issues, and they're designed to increase awareness. These are programs that address specific areas like cooking and heating and are programs that are designed for everyone in the community. For youth, for Elders and everyone in between. Examples of some of these kinds of programs are things like the Youth Fire Setting Intervention, Getting To Know Fire, Learn Not To Burn, those kinds of things.

Next, we have the Fire Service Governance Programs. These are designed to support community decision-makers and leaders to develop policies, bylaws, communication plans, fire emergency plans, the sort of things as well to help community leaders to identify fire and life safety issues and find ways to reduce and mitigate those risks. Some of the programs that we have in that area are Community Fire Safety Assessment, Community Risk Reduction Plan. We also have risk mitigation analysis services.

Community infrastructure and engineering support programs help communities to design and plan fire-related infrastructure. That includes things like water systems and hydrants. They identify what individual communities need and then put appropriate people and resources in place to design and build the appropriate and necessary infrastructure. Examples of some of those programs are the Fire Protection Research Services, Plans Examination Services, and also plans Examination Training. Our Fire Department Management Programs provide support for fire chiefs and fire officers at the administrative level. Helping them to create policies, guidelines, planning training, planning the acquisition of apparatus and equipment. Some of those programs that we have at the fire department, assessment, fire officer training and policy and operational guidelines support. The fire inspection services look at fire-related risks in communities and assist community leaders with minimizing these risks. They can also help with

building and equipment inspections. Those are the things like fire code inspection services, fire extinguisher inspection, and also fire extinguisher maintenance services.

Investigations programs provide communities with support for fire investigations and data collection. These programs include training non-investigators as well as accredited training. That's things like fire investigation services to examine cause and origin. Then that also supports them to collection of fire reporting data, fire investigator training and fire scene preservation training. Finally, fire department operations looks at the training, equipment repairs, maintenance, education, basically everything around supporting firefighters and responders actually at the incident response level. Some of those programs are things like accredited firefighter training using NFPA standards and fire prevention program training.

Here you've got a screenshot from our website of a dashboard where you can go and you can view the current status of various project components. We've performed extensive research and analysis in the areas of governance and looking at the mandate and accountability structure to identify what are the most appropriate options for the NIFSC governance and organizational structure. Our research team has created an evaluation instrument that we can use to measure program delivery and outcomes. They've also conducted the study to help in collaborating with local communities to develop evidence-based fire risk reduction strategies.

We've developed 14 programs. We currently have hundreds of deliveries in progress and the National Incident Reporting System, and we have an interim system that's being implemented. Currently, data from over 2000 fire incidents in Indigenous communities is being added to that database. Underpinning all of this, we have the National Advisory Committee, the NAC, who helped us to maintain an inclusive approach that makes sure we meet the need of all Indigenous communities by providing advice on the project as it evolves. Then we also have our Technical Advisory Committee or the TAC, they give technical advice on the development and delivery of the fire and life safety programs. Part of this process is that they review programs for both regional and national levels. They also bring together a really wide range of education, experience and expertise, they share best practices and solve common issues. This committee really allows for Indigenous fire safety experts to guide the programs. There's an open invitation to all the regional technical organizations to participate in the TAC.

What's next? Well, the office of the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council is going to open its doors on April 1, 2022. Obviously there's going to be a lot of work to get there. We're just going to take a quick peek at some of the activities. Now, the NIFSC will consist of a head office and there will be a presence in each of the seven regions. BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic. The main component of the NIFSC is going to be the Indigenous Fire Marshal Service, the IFMS, that's the boots on the ground who are responsible for being responsive to delivering regional and community programs.

Part of the work to get there is we're finalizing funding to make sure it's adequate and that it doesn't compete for funding with other Indigenous communities and

organizations. We're determining the footprint of the organization, literally how many people and where will they be located. Working on getting policy and infrastructure and assets in place, getting actual office space, computers, vehicles, that kind of stuff. Our research team is busy developing collaboration memorandums of understanding, MOUs, so that we can work with other research organizations and share relevant information. They're examining mortality and morbidity in Indigenous communities so that we can establish baseline data, fire-related casualties, and we can measure our performance against that. They're also looking at insurance grading and costs to develop a business case for residential sprinklers.

Obviously, we're going to continue to develop and deliver programs in the seven IFMS program areas. Community safety education, fire service governance, the community infrastructure and engineering support, fire department management, inspections, investigations, and fire department operations. The National Incident Reporting System team is going to continue developing and implementing the permanent and evolving system. For those of you that would like to have more details, I invite you to visit our website and there you can look at our Contribution Funding Agreement, which has all of the detail about what we're doing. If you go to Indigenousfiresafety.ca and then project, and you can go into the document library and then search for, if you just type in CFA stands for Contribution Funding Agreement, and you will be able to peruse that at your leisure.

Now I really cannot overemphasize how important it is that we work with communities and organizations. Please connect and then our team can collaborate with you to make a difference. There's our contact information there. Obviously you know we have a Facebook page as well, which is a great place to follow for information. You can sign up for our newsletter to receive that either by email or in the actual mail.

Now it is time to do a Q&A with Blaine. I'll just go over a couple of the logistics of that before I hand over to Blaine, have him introduce his self. If you haven't used Zoom before, if you move your mouse around, then you'll get the menu will pop back up. That's probably been hidden and you'll see a little option for chat and just type your question in there and it will come to me and I'll read it out to Blaine. I can see actually we've already got a couple, which is awesome. Let me just unmute you Blaine, then you'll be able to introduce yourself. Seems to have a little delay going on here with [inaudible 00:29:56] where are you. There we go. I was like, Oh no, what am I going to do? I'm going to have to answer all the questions.

Blaine: Good afternoon and good evening for those on the Atlantic. My name is Blaine Wiggins. I'm the executive director of the Aboriginal Firefighters Association of Canada. Speaking to you from a [inaudible 00:30:26] Territory near Williams Lake, BC. I'm happy to have you here, happy to have questions. The purpose of these conversations was not only to give you an update, but give the opportunity for ongoing engagement and discussion around what we're doing and ensure that we are truly collaborating in the real moment, which is now. This is the first of hopefully regular sessions. The ones moving forward obviously is because our first time we're giving a comprehensive overview. The ones moving forward will be more succinct. This is what we've done since we've spoken last,

and this is where we're at in the project. But anyway, I'm happy to get into the questions and focus on what you want to talk about.

Emma: All right. I'll just go in the order that I've received them. The first question asks, is there a plan to include wildfires as well as structural firefighting?

Blaine: Yes. Actually, before I answer that question, just a small clarification, the CFA was noted as a Contribution Funding Agreement, its actually a Comprehensive Funding Agreement. I know our friends at ISC, I liked it detailed and so did they, we'd like to get on the same page. I guess that's a good question. It came up in our session yesterday from Alberta. Immediately, our plan is not to get into wildfire, but we do have wildfire as a future topic to address. Just for clarification, I know many of you are practitioners, but for those that are not practitioners we have structural firefighting red trucks, buildings, industrial sites, et cetera. We have interface fires where wildfires are approaching into settled areas, populated areas, and [inaudible 00:32:24]. We have a kind of a circle that overlaps. Right now, we are working as part of our normal, which is part of any fire service training standards on interface firefighting, but we do recognize there's a gap and there has been a gap for many years.

We saw that here in BC, especially here in Williams Lake, specifically with the gap of wildland First Nations firefighting teams being basically invited to the party. It is certainly on our list. There is certainly an overlap there with emerging management, and we want to be cognitive of not straying too far from our focus, which is fire service and also not straying too far from structural fire service. But one of the things that we will be looking at down the road is training and the ability to work with the national bodies, CIFFC, who coordinates national firefighting so we can ensure that First Nations wildfire teams are registered. One of the big advantage I think that we will have is, especially if we can do the national coordination is moving firefighting teams.

If we got one part of the country that is wet and soaked and another part of the country that's burning up. If we've got First Nations firefighting teams that can aid another First Nations in another part of the country. The other thing that's really emerging is structural protection units, basically sprinkler units. I think it would be great for us to be working collaboratively with regional community fire services develop that the SPU type teams that can also then be moved around the country as and where needed and be trained to the same standards as the CIFFC standards, be certified, and be available. I know it was frustrating for me personally, my experience in 2017 to see firefighters from Mexico, South Africa, Australia being brought into Canada and our own wildland First Nations firefighters basically left unemployed and not participating. I think there is a huge opportunity for us nationally to step up in the wildland fire fighting area, but I like said, well, we know we're getting our feet under us and as we started to grow and we started to build capacity, I think there's plenty of opportunity to reach out and do that collaborative work. Thank you. Hopefully that answers the question.

Emma: Great. Thank you. The next question is looking forward to the National Indigenous Fire Safety Council Governance. They're asking, is the AFAC Board going to be the NIFSC Board, or is the NIFSC NAC going to be the NIFSC Board or something else?

Blaine: Something else. The AFAC is basically the organization that is building on behalf of all Indigenous Peoples, the new National Indigenous Fire Safety Council. As part of that build of a new organization there's the build having new governance structure that will be reflective of the new organization and reflective of all Indigenous Peoples being First Nations, Métis, or Inuit. Also, off reserve. I mean, there's definitely an non [inaudible 00:35:51]. There's a broad range of reflection that needs to happen. It's about developing a governance structure that will basically reflect the population that this organization is intended to serve. We're going through the process right now of developing and working. We're just actually about to go through last days with our National Advisory Committee, which is made of representations from different NIOs, different organizations, women organizations, youth organizations, and trying to get that cross pan view of what we're doing and get that input from a lot of different lenses.

The next step will then be to take the proposed structure back to the national Indigenous organizations and have their input and collaboration on it. Again, it will be a new Board, once they turn the lights on the existing AFAC Board, it's one of those kinds of egg and chicken things is we can't turn our lights off. The AFAC Board can't make its final determination on what it is doing, but the AFAC Board is committed to the process. They're basically not, and I've seen nothing from the AFAC Board that tells me this is going to happen, that they're proposing that they become the new Board. They are truly following the process and building a new governance structure that once it's determined how that will be implemented, i.e., how those initial Board memberships will be filled, that will be through a public and very collaborative-type process.

It is underway. I guess from a simplest perspective, it's a governance structure that's reflective of the communities that they're serving, which I think is a very appropriate structure. Just one last clarification. The National Advisory Committee, one of the strong recommendations that what they are there is just to give advice. I often refer to them as our version of the Senate. They're there for sober second thought and the Board and myself concur that if they give us advice, we really, really have to have a strong reason why we shouldn't follow it. One of the biggest things we've been talking about recently and as I articulate is we have limitations on our funding. The National Advisory Committee recognizes that. Again, our goal is to work and remove those barriers to limitations, i.e., providing services to Métis communities. But say it's about that dialogue and conversation with the federal government to ensure that the current policies and the limitations that are there, it's about working around those and ensuring that we do it and do it in a right way and a collaborative way. Lots of work to do in that area. But the point I wanted to make is the NAC, we certainly recognized the need to have this sober second thought. There's recommendations that NAC become a permanent standing committee that'll be there to advise the Board. Recognizing that governance of an organization is there to set a strategic direction, but there's an opportunity for more in-depth dialogue. As the NAC said it, give us a place where we can hash out the politics, then the Board can then do its proper governance and let the governance and the strategic work of the Board be done there. It really does make sense to actually have a standing National Advisory Committee and give us different input that it can be more collaborative. Thank you.

Emma: Great. Thank you. Next question asks about what is the process going to be for the physical locations? This person is saying that their community might be a good fit for hosting a regional office. How do they get in touch to move that forward?

Blaine: That's actually, it's an amazing question. Thanks, whoever asked that. We did an open RFP and basically all the acquisition, including our contractors and our hiring goes through an open process. We did an open process for an expression of interest for a head office last year. What we're doing right now is now that we've got a location and a community that is willing to work with us and be flexible with us, the next step is then actually design what we need. Again, going back to the collaboration process, we're not just collaborating with communities, we're talking to our regional partners, we're talking to regional ISC, we're talking to ISC headquarters, the NIOs, we need to do analysis around FTE placement, we need to do risk analysis. It's not just a matter of, or we're just going to say, oh, there's seven regions we're going to plunk seven offices. We need to make some decisions around, do we want to group offices, we will want to have an East, West, central office, or do we need a regional office? We're going through that process right now. What we want to do is make informed decisions and be able to ensure that here's the objective we've set out for putting an office in a region and make sure that we actually reach those objectives versus just plunking offices in. What we will do is when we get to a point and I'll just use the Atlantic as a really good example. I think from a very practical perspective we will most likely for a number of reasons, geography, limited ability to travel, needing to have resources and expertise in the area.

We have a province in the Atlantic that is bilingual also. The Atlantic fits the needs to have a regional office. When we get to that process, what we will do is do an open RFP and encourage all the communities in the Atlantic to basically let us know that they are interested and then go from there to the next step, which is the best fit for the business kind of needs that we we've identified. Not only just geography, but space, costing, the ability to have ancillary services. That was one of the considerations for the head office is could the community question provide us business services that we didn't necessarily then have to build ourselves? Could they do payroll processing as an example? Can they do facilities management?

We weren't spending money managing a facility when somebody else we could contract those services out. Certainly there'll be some considerations there but the transparency is the most important part. Obviously, there's a recognition that when we set up an office in a location that creates employment opportunities and also creates economic opportunities. That's one of the things that we will want to do is ensure that we're working with First Nations communities so that they can maximize the benefit of the services and the economic benefits too.

Emma: Great. Thank you. This next question asks about the regional organizations. We referred to regional organizations and they'd like to know who are the regional organizations and how do you work with them?

Blaine: There's two types of regional organizations that we have. There's representative organizations and our delivery service organizations. Just to put it, a representative

organization, I'll just use the Atlantic Fire Chiefs Association. They're not doing deliveries on a regular basis. They're not providing services, but they're there to actually represent. That's the relationship that AFAC has with a representative organization. We have the same thing in Quebec where they do some limited work with deliveries for ISC, but it's not an ongoing funding agreement relationship. Those organizations actually sit on our board. Then we have an example in BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario have what we call technical services groups. They're organizations that do fire services, deliveries, technical deliveries, infrastructure support deliveries. That's [inaudible 00:44:11], Alberta Technical Services Advisory group, Prince Albert Grand Council in Saskatchewan, which does work for the entire province in certain deliveries, fire deliveries. The Ontario First Nations Technical Corporation, Ontario. Ontario is really a unique scenario where we have the Ontario Native Firefighter Society. They sit on our Board, but OFNTSC, we worked directly with them. We also have the Technical Advisory Committee.

All of the regional organizations that do deliveries are invited to participate and sit on that committee to help us design our programs. The other thing that the TAC does, Technical Advisory Committee, is any research we're doing, we take to that group and we explain the research so that if there's a nuance that is local to a region, they want us to adjust. Let's say we're doing an insurance-based research, the Atlantic wants us to add a question to the research because it's only relevant to the Atlantic then we can ensure that we do that so we don't miss an opportunity or address a regional nuance. As an example, can you register your fishing boats along with your housing? Is there an opportunity to do that and over simplifying it, but just using that as an example. The other thing it's really important for us is to share the work we're doing around deliveries to ensure that we don't purposely duplicate work. Also we recognize this limited funding and the need is more than any organization can do. If we're duplicating a service, then that just means another service is not going to get funded.

We're hoping as we continue to work forward with the regional organizations that we have a much more streamlined process. That's why we're also talking with the ISC regions to ensure that we're sharing what we're doing. Because they are the ones that are funding the regional organizations, they can really get into depth to make sure that a) we're addressing priorities that are seen from a funder's perspective, from the regional organization's perspective, from the political-regional perspective. It's a lot of work around planning. It's a lot of work around collaboration and the more information sharing we can do the better we are. It amazes me that it wasn't until this project came along, that the regional organizations never actually sat down on a call together to even work together, to share information, to share programs, to share services, to share research.

We're already having collateral impacts, positive impacts around getting our expertise out there across the country. Anyway, that was just the tip of the iceberg on some of the collaborative work we're doing, but I just wanted to kind of explain that. The last thing I'm really wanting to emphasize is that this organization is not meant to be an empire-building organization. If there's a way for us to work collaboratively, to put FTEs in the hands of a regional organization, instead of us setting up shop across the street,

that is an open discussion and an ongoing discussion with our regional partners. Again, we are not dictating, we don't direct the regional organizations. This is really about pooling our resources, pooling our expertise in serving our communities and not working in isolation, which we have done for decades. Thank you.

Emma: Great. I have one more question in the queue here. That's just a little heads up to anyone out there that's thinking that you have a question to ask, please do type it in, because otherwise we will wrap up after this question. This question looks at employment opportunities. How can you get to work on this project?

Blaine: Yeah, we were able to share on our website as we were discussing yesterday. As I said, all of our RFPs, all our employment opportunities are posted. The one thing that we're really excited about is, as we move forward, we will be going to be needing to cultivate talent, i.e, that we know that all the talent we're looking for is going to be trained, hireable, and ready to go. But what we will want to do is start bringing young, middle-age, and late-career people that have been volunteer firefighters into our organization and actively training them, mentoring them so that they will have the skills to be able to successfully become fire service experts. Again, this is more in the area of fire prevention, inspections, investigations, pre-plans examinations, building codes. We're not afraid to train, we're not afraid to hire and give opportunities to the First Nations.

One of the things that we envision, we know we cannot compete with big city fire departments. They have a very lucrative unionized contracts. We think we're going to have a good problem, which is that we're going to start losing some of our highly trained fire service experts to these big municipalities. But all that means is it creates another training opportunity to bring somebody in who wants to start a career in the fire service. To us, that's not a bad thing. When I'm talking to fire chiefs from the big cities, they go, isn't that not a smart way to do business? The reality is, I explain to them is, in our communities, once you finish your career, let's say you don't go play golf for the rest of your life, you actually come back and you help your communities.

Having fire service experts that have spent an entire career in the fire service, then once they're done that working part, they will take that expertise back to the communities? Absolutely not. Now we're creating generations and generations, those people will go back to the communities and they'll mentor those local young volunteer firefighters that are serving right now without pay, you're doing it for the love of protecting a community. It turns into a cyclical thing. We're in this and for the long-term investment. Again, our human resources are going to be a big part of this. Right now, we're constantly recruiting as this project continues to grow. Delivery people, developers, we encourage anybody if you're interested in doing development, you don't need to be an expert at developing curriculum or developing programs. You just have to have the passion and the experience. We bring experts in that can actually do the technical, make a spreadsheet look good, all that stuff, but it's just having people that have the knowledge, know the communities, know what the challenges are. That's what we're seeking right now. If you are interested or if you know anybody that's interested, absolutely please have them look at our website. Again, people are the organization. The more we can recruit the better off we're going to be.

- Emma: Wonderful. Thank you. We didn't get any more questions. Thank you to everyone who did ask a question. For those of you who took the time to join us, I hope that you found this useful. You will be receiving an email inviting you to answer a short survey. I ask that you please take the time. Genuinely, we will actually be reading all of the feedback and just like how when we started developing this whole project, we continue to take feedback and information from communities and organizations and build on that to build the programs and services that we're offering. Please take the time to let us know your thoughts and share any ideas, that will really help us to continue helping others. I am now going to... Sorry. A question just came up asking about, do you have to have a status card to apply for the positions? Sorry. I double clicked. [crosstalk 00:52:54].
- Blaine: What we're looking for is people who are passionate about this. Again, having the knowledge and awareness of First Nations communities is really important. But again, we are open and want a wide range of expertise.
- Emma: Great. Thank you. Okay. Now let's see if I can successfully unmute Allan. I did it this time. I'll hand back over to Allan to close the meeting for us.
- Allan: [inaudible 00:53:32]. We thank creator for the information that we just passed on to the people. We thank for the questions that came in and also how well we are prepared in answering the questions. [inaudible 00:54:12].
- Emma: Beautiful. Thank you very much, Allan. Sorry, I just remembered, I forgot to say that this meeting was recorded and we will be publishing it on our YouTube channels. Watch out for that and you can watch it again and also watch the other sessions and see if different information came up. Once again, thank you everyone for your time and please stay safe.