

# ISSUE IN FOCUS



*Celebrating 100 Years*

SASKATCHEWAN  
CHAMBER of COMMERCE

## Eligibility of Indigenous-owned Businesses for Federal COVID-19 Supports

### Background:

The Ministry of Finance's has made significant efforts around the development and implementation of a suite of very significant income and cashflow supports programs over such a short period of time with the aim to keep the economy afloat. In addition, the federal government recently announced \$306.7 million worth of funding support for Indigenous-owned businesses and Indigenous financial institutions.

### Issue:

There is specific element of the current broad suite of program criteria as it relates to Indigenous-owned businesses. In some cases, the eligibility criteria for certain COVID-19 supports excludes government-owned entities, such as businesses that are owned and operated by Indigenous communities (e.g. First Nations band-owned businesses).

In the recent past, the SCC had bylaws in place that prohibited representatives of government-owned businesses from serving on its Board of Directors. With many Indigenous owned and operated companies under community ownership, the SCC chose to amend its bylaws to accommodate these unique entities and have since treated them on every level like a for-profit company.

### Recommendations:

1. That the Ministry of Finance develop and enact the necessary policy measures to ensure that Indigenous-owned companies are not deemed ineligible for any of the programs your government is offering around COVID-19 because of their tax status or ownership structure.

# History:

Letter to Federal Minister of Finance 2020