



# SHUSWAP EMERGENCY PROGRAM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

**TO:** Chair and Committee Members

**SUBJECT:** Emergency Support Services and Neighbourhood Emergency Program

**DESCRIPTION:** Report from Cathy Semchuk, Emergency Program Coordinator/ESS Director, dated March 25, 2025.

**RECOMMENDATION:** THAT: this report be received for information only.

## **BACKGROUND:**

With the addition of the BC Services Card App, evacuees now have the option of receiving supports via Interac e-transfer. The manual paperwork process required evacuees to access the supports from the same supplier for numerous days and often resulted in hardship for the supplier during longer evacuations. Receiving funds directly into their bank account, empowers evacuees to make their own decision on what best meets their needs. This also alleviates the pressure on suppliers and opens up additional accommodation options such as bed and breakfasts and private rentals. The direct payment option is intended to supplement and provide additional pathways for supporting evacuees allowing ESS volunteers more time to assist those evacuees who prefer or require in-person support.

The Shuswap ESS (SESS) team is taking advantage of these new pathways and incorporating them into how ESS is provided in the Shuswap. A function within the Reception Centre's organizational chart has been created with roles and responsibilities focused on providing virtual supports. SESS volunteers are developing operating procedures which will include a "step by step" guide on how to provide virtual supports and how to implement the new intake system.

In consultation with our First Nations neighbours, the SESS team have created an Evacuation Information pamphlet. This pamphlet provides a concise outline of Emergency Support Services, how to access supports and what can be done now to make an evacuation easier. Pamphlets are presently being printed and will be distributed prior and during an event.

An application has been submitted to obtain grant funding through UBCM's 2025 Community Emergency Preparedness Fund ESS Equipment and Training funding stream. SEP has applied for funding to assist with the following purchases and activities:

- Registration fees for 15 volunteers to attend the Network of Emergency Support Services Team (NESST). This annual conference provides ESS volunteers the opportunity to train, exercise and network with ESS teams throughout the Province.
- Purchase of equipment required for the newly developed Virtual Support function.
- Awareness supplies such as volunteer vests and directional signage.
- Regionwide Exercise to include Shuswap, Revelstoke and Golden ESS Teams. Exercising together helps to standardize our Programs and builds capacity throughout the entire CSRD and member municipalities.

## **Neighbourhood Emergency Programs**

SEP continues to support over 50 Neighbourhood Emergency Programs in our coverage area. Interest

in the NEP Program has increased in the North Shuswap area since the Bush Creek wildfire and the United Way, who is conducting recovery efforts, is connecting interested residents with our SEP team.

SEP is presently working with four Coordinators who are creating a new NEP for McArthur Heights.

**NEXT STEPS:**

SEP will continue to support the Shuswap ESS and the NEP Teams.

**Report Approval Details**

Document Title:	2025_04_08_SEP_CPS_Emergency_Support_Services_and_Neighbourhood_Emergency_Program.docx
Attachments:	- ESS Brochure.pdf
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This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

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