

# Advance Payment Forms & Updates On Residential Schools

by Georgianna Barlow

APC

As stated in the Final Settlement Agreement on Indian Residential Schools, the Conservative Federal Government have expressed their support for the Final Settlement Agreement. Former Residential School students in Canada alive after May 30th, 2005 could be compensated in the amount of \$10,000 for the first year attended in the schools and \$3000 for every year attended after that. The Final Settlement Agreement still needs the approval of the courts which could take place between August to October of this year. After October, if approved by the courts, then it's up to the former students in Canada to decide if they want to accept the Final Settlement Agreement. If the Final Settlement Agreement is fully accepted, then the Common Experience Payment forms will be made available.

An advance payment form of the Common Experience Payment for survivors who are 65 years of age and older on May 30th, 2005 in the amount of \$8000 also came out this month. The advanced payment forms are now available for survivors aged 65 and over to fill out which can be found on our website at [www.apcfn.ca](http://www.apcfn.ca), Assembly of First Nations website at [www.afn.ca](http://www.afn.ca), and the Indian Residential Schools Resolutions Canada website at [www.irsr-rqpi.gc.ca](http://www.irsr-rqpi.gc.ca).

Elderly survivors aged 65 years and older have between now and December 31st to fill out their forms and it's not known at this time when and how this money will be disbursed but we will keep survivors posted once we hear more. Elders must also provide proof of age by submitting 2 photocopied documents of either a birth certificate, drivers license, medicare card or a passport and send it along with their completed forms to the following address which is also listed on the form:

**Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada**

**P.O. Box 1503, STN.B**

**Ottawa, ON K1P 0A3**

The Atlantic Policy Congress is also working with Health Canada to have trained form fillers help elders fill out their advance payment forms in case they run into difficulties. The Final Settlement Agreement also recognizes changes to the Alternative Dispute Resolution process, truth telling and reconciliation for survivors to tell their stories and commemoration for survivors to have their own events. Below is an update on meetings that the Atlantic Policy Congress has attended:

The APC has attended a meeting held by the Aboriginal Healing Foundation (AHF) on May 10th at the Westin Hotel in Halifax. Those in attendance were updated on the activities of the AHF and provided copies of their yearly reports. They stated that due to a lack of funding for the AHF, they will no longer be able to fund any new programs by First Nations people and can only continue the existing programs that are taking place right now. If the Final Settlement Agreement is approved, then the AHF could receive \$125 million but the uncertainty is if and when this will happen. They also gave updates on the Final Settlement Agreement. Viola Robinson, former commissioner of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) stated that there is a crucial need for healing for First Nations survivors and communities in Canada and that needs to continue. A lot more needs to be done.

The Atlantic Policy Congress has also held their first Residential School session of the year in Membertou First Nation on May 26th. APC discussed the Final Settlement Agreement with the Membertou survivors who also had the opportunity to ask APC any questions that they had.

The APC also attended a meeting in Debert, N.S, which was organized by Norah Bernard of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School Association where approximately 55 survivors from various communities came to hear updates from John McKiggan, lawyer for the Baxter class action lawsuit in which many Shubenacadie former students are involved. Mr. McKiggan explained the advance payment, the Common Experience Payment and the Independent Assessment Process which could replace the existing ADR process if approved by the courts and former students. Ken Young of the Assembly of First Nations was also on hand to discuss the Final Settlement Agreement and answer any questions that survivors had.

The Atlantic Policy Congress will continue to update Residential School survivors by making visits to each of the Mi'kmaq, Maliseet communities to discuss the Final Settlement Agreement. Lawyer Mike Taylor is available to answer any questions on the Final Settlement Agreement at (902)492-0550 or at [mstaylor@criminaldefence.com](mailto:mstaylor@criminaldefence.com). If survivors would like to obtain any copies of the Final Settlement Agreement, the advanced payment forms or to be included on our information database system to receive any updates on Residential Schools, please contact Georgianna Barlow toll free at (877)667-4007. ☎