

Backgrounder (2)

The First Nations Environmental Health Innovation Network

The First Nations Environmental Health Innovation Network (FNEHIN) is a 'virtual' network that aims to bring together environmental health researchers and experts with First Nations communities to help build research capacity and work towards improved health outcomes for First Nations.

FNEHIN has three main functions:

1. Access Point: Providing a place for communities to access information, research findings, and research tools. Assist with bridging First Nations communities and researchers to engage in research partnerships.
2. Synthesis of Knowledge: Determining the state of knowledge, research gaps, and community research needs.
3. Mobilization of Knowledge: Using research to inform decision making in First Nations and government policy.

FNEHIN is housed at the National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health (www.nccah.ca), at the University of Northern BC. FNEHIN is a partnership-based initiative consisting of nine founding partners:

- Health Canada's First Nations and Inuit Health Branch Environmental Research Division
- The National Collaborating Centre for Aboriginal Health
- The National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health
- The BC Leadership Chair for Aboriginal Environmental Health
- The Assembly of First Nations
- The National Aboriginal Health Organization
- The Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources
- The Canadian Water Network
- The Public Health Agency of Canada, Foodborne, Waterborne, and Zoonotic Infections Division

The FNEHIN website (www.fnehin.ca) serves as the virtual network's hub, and includes tools and resources for First Nations communities to use in building their environmental health research capacity, such as:

- *Researcher and Project Database*: Profiles of potential research partners with various types of expertise in food, water and housing/indoor air quality.
- *Build-a-Research-Partnership*: Online forms and posting for both First Nations and researchers who are seeking partners for environmental health research projects.
- *Funding Resources*: A listing of potential sources of funding for environmental health research in First Nations communities.
- *Environmental Health News*: News items from across Canada highlighting the current environmental health issues First Nations are dealing with.

In addition to the website, FNEHIN has a toll-free number (1-866-960-5223) for First Nations communities and researchers to call for assistance with environmental health issues and issues pertaining to research that aims to investigate environmental health issues of interest to First Nations people.