



# www.fnsds.org - Field Communique #2 - March 2011

## FNSDS Update on Resource Centre services, trainings & initiatives

As of the February 2011 the FNSDS has been in operation for 10 years!

In 2001 the FNSDS first came into existence with the creation of the First Nations Social Development Resource Centre and the hiring of one staff person, the SDRC Coordinator. The FNSDS now has a complement of six staff, an office in West Vancouver and a broad mandate to support and empower BC First Nations and BSDWs in developing the tools and resources to: build capacity in the area of client services, meet the INAC accountability requirements and to implement the initiatives and programs that help create the employment opportunities to reduce BC First Nations dependency on Income Assistance.

### Present Services

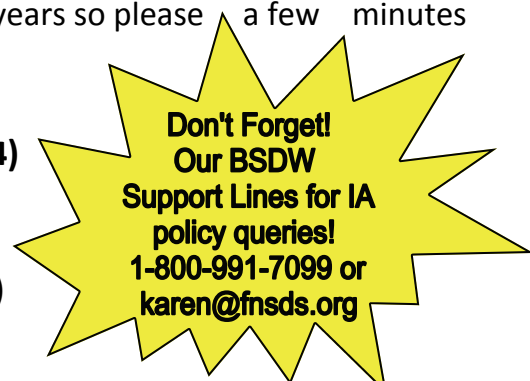
We continue to research, develop, facilitate and provided vital services, support and First Nations consultation in three primary areas essential to BC First Nations: Accountability, Active Measures and Sustainability.

This mandate has had the FNSDS be involved in many activities that include the delivery of INAC essential programs such Persons With Disabilities, the SA Online Manual, SD Policy consultation, on-site Accountability training, BSDW trainings in three distinct SA policy areas , the delivery of Active Measures (employment related) initiatives, research and programs.

There many new changes happening at FNSDS over the next few years so please a few minutes and read on.

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## FNSDS Accomplishments for 2010-11 Fiscal

### Accountability

**1. SD Shelter.** The policy has become an extensive issue province wide as INAC ramps up their Program Reviews. A firmer federal stand on Shelter has been taken as it relates to mortgage free band owned homes. This issue is significantly impacting BC First Nations. A Shelter issues paper was developed by the FNSDS addressing these issues and was submitted to the Assembly of First Nations for consideration at the federal level.

The FNSDS also worked closely with INAC to develop a briefing note for the federal government that includes a series of recommendations on Shelter policy changes. It is hoped that this will move the issue forward to greater resolution.



**2. Policy Interpretation Issue.** Consistent alignment on policy interpretation, procedures and practice has been ongoing problem for Administering Authorities, INAC and FNSDS staff. Late in the 2010-2011 fiscal, the FNSDS attended an important meeting with INAC Funding Services managers to address the issues. As a result INAC committed itself to address the issue internally and to work with the FNSDS over the next year to methodically resolve the issue with greater communications between INAC and the FNSDS.

**3. BSDW Survey.** The FNSDS is always looking to improve on its services and to that end the FNSDS developed a BSDW survey to test out how its services were being utilized, valued and frequented. 43 BSDWs responded and all information indicated that the Resource Centre services and training are valued and frequently utilized. A comprehensive report was developed and can be found on our website.

**4. FNSDS Trainings.** The FNSDS delivered 6 x Level 1a training province wide, 1 x Level 1b training in Vancouver and 3 x Level 2 BSDW Training with a total of approximately 120 participants with over 60 BC First Nations being represented

**5. Support lines** T1-800 Support Line Calls - 60/month Average, Support Emails - 90/month Average = 1800 for period

The 4 most predominant policy areas that the queries we received pertained to:



- COPH – as it pertains to criminal record checks, parental signatures and other options in situations where COPH is not approved
- Shelter – as it pertains to rent allowable, mortgages with and without, which to cover first rent or utilities etc
- Burials – as it pertains to allowable amounts and responsibilities
- Eligibility – as it pertains to all areas for IA

**6. FNSDS Website visits** = Website -10,000 hits / month average, 6000 visits Increase in hits from approx 4000 / visits / month average same time last year - indicating increasing use of our website services from BC, Canada and other countries. The most visited pages were the SA Online Manual, SA Forms and BSDW Trainings

**7. On-reserve Stage 2 trainings** = The FNSDS field trainers performed 14 on-reserve Stage 2 trainings. Responses to the trainings were very positive and BSDWs indicated an increase in skills & ability which helped with their compliance.

NOTE there is some significant change to this service for 2011-12. Please see New Trainings for 2011-12

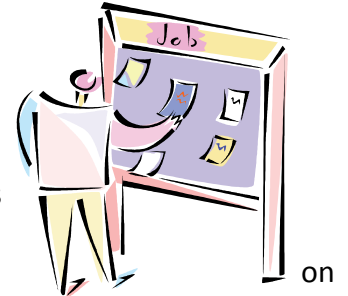
**8. PWD Program** - Our PWD department adjudicated over 380 PWD Applications with average turnaround time of 2 weeks. This is increasing as the population ages and elders access PWD services.

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## Active Measures

**1- Federal Active Measures Initiative** – Over the last two years the FNSDS has been meeting with Active Measures share holders (see website for details on Active Measures) with the prime intention of developing a strategy for the implementation of Active Measures in BC. Subsequent meetings held in Ottawa enabled BC Region and the FNSDS to promote Active Measures at the national level. As a consequence of the successful BC AM initiatives in 2009-2010, the federal government has invested in Active Measures initiatives Canada wide.

**2. BC Active Measures Initiatives** – As a consequence of our successful Active Measures activities in 2009-2010, INAC BC Region invested in Active Measures for 2010-2011 with over 15 BC First Nations committees securing Active Measures funding. Many BC First Nations implemented nation specific employment and training opportunities in their communities with a priority focused on First Nations youth. Many First Nations are working to create innovative and collaborative approaches to reducing their youth's and Income Assistance clients dependency Income Assistance by implementing initiatives in Community Leadership, Adult Literacy and Essential Skills, Financial Literacy, the use of technology, employment training and job search programs.



A comprehensive report on the results was submitted to INAC in mid March by Nene Kraneveldt the Active Measures Coordinator

**3. Data Set Research Initiatives** – One of the key challenges that INAC BC Region faces in its efforts to provide new employment initiatives is the lack of specific demographic and client related data. Existing reporting mechanisms provide only basic demographic data such as basic numerical data on client type, funding, shelter type and population. In comparison the Ministry of Social Development has been gathering data via their province wide SD computer systems utilized by EAWs for over 25 years enabling for very precise targeting of funding and employment initiatives. In order for INAC and BC First Nations to develop comprehensive employment strategies similar data must be collected from bands.



Resulting from the FNSDS involvement in the Tripartite Forum (INAC/MSD and the FNSDS) the FNSDS was able to partner with MSD Data Management Department to explore and develop Data Sets that would need to be collected to procure similar opportunities on-reserve. It is anticipated that by mid 2011 these data sets will be defined. This research coupled with the potential purchase of a First Nations specific database that will gather, store and work with data in Social Development, Education and Housing will enable INAC to develop First Nation specific employment strategies, tracking and funding options. The First Nations Technology Council is spearheading the procurement and funding of Unification database as a viable option for this task.

The FNSDS and MSD piloted this research in two communities in 2010 using Unification and the resulting report will be available in mid 2011.

**4. FNSDS Conference 2011** – The FNSDs delivered its yearly conference to over 150 participants with the primary focus on Celebrating our Successes. Many BC First Nations have been able to actively promote changes and success initiatives in their communities utilizing Active Measures funding, WOP, TESI and ASARET, NCBR and Family Violence funding as well as funding from other sources. This year's conference was designed to highlight and acknowledge these successes. Please our website for a report on the conference

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## Sustainability

1. **Sustainability as a Federal Initiative** - Given the state of the economy and its potential long term impact on government funding, the FNSDS actively researches opportunities to support First Nations long term sustainability and reduction of dependency on Income Assistance. Sustainability is becoming the key word for many First Nations organizations such as the AFN, the UBCIC and others. In 2010-2011 the FNSDS CEO attended several meetings in Ottawa designated to review INAC and First Nations options for the coming authorities for the next 5 years.



2. **Multiyear Funding Agreements** - In this context, INAC has promoted the development of multiyear agreements with several BC First Nations organizations in order for those organizations to develop the capacity and momentum necessary for continued First Nations support. The FNSDS has been deemed a low risk candidate based on its track record for delivering its services within budget and on time and is therefore in the process securing a multiyear agreement with INAC. This will enable the FNSDS sustain its support services for BC First Nations and BSDWs for at least the next three.

3. **Aggregation of Resources** - One of the options and opportunities for BC First Nations to help survive this economically challenging period is to consider the options for partnerships, collaborations and aggregation of resources and services. The FNSDS continues to research and explore the factors that allow some First Nations to successfully create such opportunities. Future FNSDs reports will be forthcoming outlining such factors.

## **New BSDW trainings modules and online BSDW training tutorials and BSDW training videos for 2011—2013**

### 1. **Discontinued! Accountability INAC Stage 2 On-site Training**

Please note that the FNSDS will no longer be providing Stage 2 on-site training due funding and compliance process changes at INAC. As a result more up front training options will be made available



### 2. **New! Training Redesign -**

In the next two years the BSDW Training Level 1a, 1b and 2 will discontinued and will be replaced by BSDW training modules. Each module will contain examinations prior and after the trainings with a follow up 3 months later.



- Module 1— Accountability Essentials— Will cover caseload management, reporting and documentation
- Module 2—IA policy Essentials— All you wanted to know about IA policy
- Module 3—Active Measures essentials - Pre-employment assessment and referral, WOP, TESI ASARET, proposal writing

The modules will be slowly introduced while the older training is phased out over time.

### 3. **New! Online tutorials, videos and webinars**

Over the next few years the FNSDS training staff will be creating online PowerPoint Presentations on such topics as the Application Process, the Budget and Decision and SDSFR Forms, COPH and other IA process and forms . Videos and webinars will be created covering other topics such as WOP, TESI , proposal writing PWD and more. As well as further website enhancements to our website.

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## BSDW Survey



In Dec of 2010 the FNSDS conducted a BSDW survey with a prize of two note book draw. Congratulations to Tina Alexandre of Westbank FN and Zabrina Svanvik of Namgis FN, our two winners !

Below is a brief review and a few quick results regarding the make up of our customers, education, frequency of use of our various BSDW services, retention and usefulness.

***Go to our website for the Complete BSDW Survey Report [www.fnsds.org](http://www.fnsds.org)***

### Some quick stats:

- At least 30% of BSDW had been in their position for over 10 years while almost 50% are relatively new.
- Over 53% had post secondary education such as college and university.
- The FNSDS services are utilized by 97% of respondents with 54% were aware of the board of directors.
- 82% had taken Level 1a and 48% have taken Level 1a within the last 2 years which greatly concurs with the level of new BSDWs.
- 46% (20) of respondents had taken Level 1b 32% in the last 2 years. and 58% (25) had taken the Level 2 with 25% (11) in the last 2 years.
- 74% (32) of respondents had utilized PWD adjudication services.
- 27% (12) had utilized Accountability Stage 2s and 58% had attended an FNSDS conference.
- Of those that have taken Level 1a, 60% found it useful 27% occasionally useful. 65% use the data.
- The 6 most valued pieces of the Level 1a was Documentation, the Application Process, Reporting, NCBS and Policy Review.
- Of those that took the Level 1b, 11% found the data frequently useful with 25% occasionally useful and 58% use the data. The most valued data is the Adult Institutional Care, Accountability and Homemaker Services, Proposal Writing.
- Of those that took the Level 2, 40% found the data frequently useful and 26% occasionally. 60% use the data. The most valued data is the WOP, TESI and ASARET, Accountability, MSD presentation and Guiding Circles.
- The FNSDS website had been utilized by 97% of respondents with 80% frequently utilizing it. 80% utilize the 1-800 support lines and 86% email support indicating that email is the preferential mode of contact to phone by 6%.
- The most utilized components of the website are: the SA Online Manual, Resource Centre Downloads, the SA Forms, PWD Info and Training Info.
- 100 % of respondents had some Mitigating Factors affecting their ability to do their jobs. Of the 22 factors listed, the highest rated were Workload, Multitasking other office practices, Salary rate of pay, Lack of office support services, Band management issues and Policies not meeting needs of clients.
- The 3 least impacting, lowest rated Mitigating Factors were lack of FNSDS support, no internet and no computer.
- The complete survey report will be utilized to plan and enhance our services for 2011-2013 and to help INAC to discern priorities for future BSDW training and support services for 2011-2013.



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## FNSDS Resource Centre Update

### New Staff

The FNSDS board and staff are very pleased to formally welcome and introduce two new FNSDS staff; Robert Williams our new FNSDS Admin and Karen Lewis our new Training Coordinator.



**Robert Williams**—Some of you may have met this young and energetic young man at our conference . Robert is of Kwakwakawak ancestry and is very culturally and family orientated. He has strong passion for personal growth for himself and others. His intention is to utilize his employment with the FNSDS as an opportunity to learn, gain experience and empower and uplift others. Robert is very interested in youth initiatives and will, among his many tasks, be involved in FNSDS youth related activities.

**Karen Lewis**— Karen replaces Gwen John as the FNSDS Training Coordinator. Karen is from the Squamish First Nations where she was a band social development worker for four years and the team leader of five income assistance employees the remaining four years. Her past employment has offered her the opportunity to train and mentor BSDWs and admin as well as garner a wealth of experience and knowledge from both the BSDW and management perspective. Karen begins her position with the FNSDS on March 28th and will be the voice you will now hear on the FNSDS 1-800-line and the narrator on the email support line. Karen will also be very involved in BSDW staff training development over the next year.

**FNSDS Resource Centre Services**—All BSDWs, FSOs and band administrators are reminded to contact our FNSDS Resource Centre support services when you are unsure of specific SD policies and procedures when making SD related decisions. This is what our services are for and we remain available by phone **1-800-991-7099** or email—**karen@fnsds.org** and **rene@fnsds.org**.



Additionally, the FNSDS website remains a rich source of Social Development support with downloadable materials, SD Forms, Online SA Manual and training information. If have not checked us out yet, go to **www.fnsds.org** for all your SD policy needs.

## Tax Reminder!



It's Income Tax time again and many SA clients may be asking what forms they need in order to file their 2010 Income Tax Return.

Please be aware of the following:

### **Status Individuals Who Received SA ON-RESERVE in 2010**

**DO NOT** require a T5007 Statement of Benefits in order to complete their 2010 Income Tax Return. "Status" recipients of Social Assistance On-Reserve are 100% exempt from income tax and do not need to report SA payments on the 2010 Income Tax Return.

### **Non—Status Individuals Who Received SA ON-RESERVE in 2010**

**DO** require a T5007 Statement of Benefits in order to complete their 2010 Income Tax Return.

*Where do BSDWs get the T5007 Statement of Benefits form?*

Contact Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) for blank T5007 forms

<b>Phone</b>	1-800-8281 from Monday to Friday 8:15 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
<b>On-Line</b>	<a href="http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/menu-eng.html">http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/menu-eng.html</a>
<b>Download</b>	<a href="http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/menu/AFAF_T_T5-e.html#ti">http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/menu/AFAF_T_T5-e.html#ti</a>

### **What is the importance of filing an income tax return?**

In order to receive any tax credits, such as the GST/HST Credit, Canada Child Tax Benefit or BC Sales Tax Credit, an income tax return for the appropriate base year must be filed with CRA.

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## SD Policy Q's and A's

All the Q's and A's covered here are sourced from SD related queries received by the FNSDS support lines from BSDWs over the last 6 months.

### - TESI, NCBR & FV Prevention PROPOSALS -

**Q- I missed the January 2011 deadline for proposals for Family Violence Prevention, TESI and NCBR. Is it too late to apply and receive funds for 2011/12?**

**A- No but you better hurry.** INAC will accept completed proposals for TESI, Family Violence Prevention and NCBR up to April 8th, for the 2011 proposal. Proposal templates are available on-line at [www.fnsds.org](http://www.fnsds.org) or contact your Funding Services Officer at 604-666-5171. Beth Nelson is the INAC contact for proposals 604-666-9623

### - BURIALS SD Manual—Section 11.7 - 11.8

**Q- Can someone who is status or non-status (was living off reserve, passes away and is being buried off-reserve) be covered for burial cost by the band they originated from?**

**A- No.** Funeral services costs may only be paid for persons who die while resident on-reserve or die off-reserve and are being buried on-reserve. Funeral costs are covered only if no other immediate sources of funds or assets are available. There is no requirement that the deceased person or the person's family to be in receipt of on-reserve income assistance.

**Q- When an individual passes away off-reserve and is to be buried on-reserve, who covers the cost?**

**A- Section 11.7 of SD Manual** MSD Indigent Burials would cover 60% of the cost by preparing the body and delivering it to the airport or other location for transport to the community. The community would then cover 40% of the cost by burying or cremating the body. The reverse is true if the person dies on-reserve and is to be buried either in another community or off-reserve.

**Q- When an individual passes away off-reserve and is to be buried on-reserve, is the partial cost covered by the individual's band / community of origin or the band / community he is being buried at?**

**A- The band/community he is being buried at.**

NOTE! In June 2009 an INAC SD directive was sent to BSDWs stating changes in Burial Allowances and other costs. We are still getting calls from BSDWs who are not aware of these changes. Please go to the policy directive page under the SA Manual link on our website to download this directive or via this direct link <http://fnsds.org/node/100>. INAC will also be updating the Burial policy in April 2011, watch for this and other Manual Amendments coming out shortly.

### - FILE MANAGEMENT—Annual reviews -

**Q- When do I (the BSDW) do my annual reviews and am I required to create new files every time I do them?**

**A- Annual reviews should be performed on each file at the application anniversary date. New files are not required, by SD policy, to be created after each annual review.**

**Q- How long should dormant IA files be kept?**

**A- Dormant files should be kept at least 3 years and if possible 5 years to assure that all information required for program reviews is available as far back as 3-5 years, if requested.**

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## - SHELTER SD Manual—Chapter 5

As INAC is performing their Program Reviews many bands are being affected by their interpretation and sometimes erroneous of the Shelter policy and practices. This is more specifically related to homes whose mortgages have been paid off. This has had unfortunate and often serious financial consequences for the bands as INAC attempts to recapture what it interprets as erroneous expenditures in this regard. The INAC Shelter policy is currently under review by INAC and the FNSDS has made a series of recommendations via a briefing note for changes in the Shelter policy to address these issues.

**Q- Can we pay rent for IA clients living in band owned housing with a mortgage still outstanding on it?**  
**A- Yes.**

**Q- Can we pay rent for IA clients living in band owned housing without a mortgage?**  
**A No.** INAC considers a band owned home as having been paid off when the mortgage is complete and will not support further issuance of rent for IA clients living in such houses. Utilities can still be covered however.

**Q- Can we pay rent for IA clients living in privately owned housing without a mortgage?**  
**A Yes,** provided that:

- 1- The home owner (landlord) is not living in the home.
- 2- There exists on the client file a Certificate of Possession, Cardex holdings or a Custom holdings that are duly recognised in writing by council verifying the landlord's ownership of the home .

**Q- Can a band recapture outstanding rents on a band owned homes without a mortgage by charging IA client living in it, rent?**

**A- No.** However, there is a possibility if the band has created a legal entity or company that then borrows the money from another source (such a First Nations bank) to pay off the rents (or to do renovations) and that legal entity or the bank may then in turn legally apply a mortgage on those homes. This would now mean that the house has a 3rd party mortgage which is allowable.  
**Caution. This type of approach would have to be very clearly legally developed and defined, documented and submitted to INAC for approval before being implemented.**

**Q- Can a home that has been privately built without government funds, is privately owned, has no mortgage, the owner is not living in the home, have IA client's rent be paid.**

**A- Maybe.** Policy would indicate that rent could be paid, however, it would be very prudent and essential for the BSDW to get confirmation from their FSO/INAC before allowing such rents as this has been problematic in some situations.

**PLEASE SEE NEXT PAGE FOR MORE INFO ON SHELTER.**



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## - SHELTER Continued SD Manual—Chapter 5 -

**Q- Can a monthly maintenance amount be charged on homes that have no mortgages?**

**A- No.** There are no provisions in the INAC Shelter policy for ongoing monthly maintenance costs or fees, other than utility fees.

Home maintenance policy and repairs refers only to essential items of protection, replacement, and repair that are part of the physical structure of the recipient's home, and will not include replacement of, or repairs to appliances or decorative items.

Home maintenance and repair costs are only applicable to a home privately owned and lived in by the recipient.

Home maintenance and repairs are not considered as eligible shelter costs for social housing units or other types of homes that are rented. In these cases the landlord is responsible for the maintenance and repair.

**INAC has a Minimum Expectation Document they use during their program reviews that lists when and when not to pay IA rents.**

*The full version of the document may be downloaded from our website under the SA Forms link.*

Below is a copy of the table they use to clarify rents and no rents

**Total Utilities + Rent/Mortgage/Maintenance Costs must not exceed the Maximum Shelter Allowance as per Family Unit Size.**

Eligible shelter costs are determined by the type & ownership of the house:

- (i) Public (CMHC or Band Owned/non-CMHC ) Band Council Housing and
- (ii) Private (Owner-occupied, or not occupied by owner) Individual Housing.

	Public – Band Council Housing (almost all AA# are under NORHA)			Private – Individual Housing	
	Social Housing	Non-Social Housing	Other (NORHA) Housing	Owner-occupied	Not Owner occupied
Shelter allowance	CMHC s. 95	Non-CMHC s.10	Band Owned	Owner-occupied	Not Owner occupied
Mortgage/Loan	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	N/A
Rent	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Maintenance	No	No	No	Yes	No
House Insurance (building only) (content)	No Part of Rent Tenant	No Band Tenant	No Band Tenant	Yes	No
Other than in Hot Rent (which includes utilities) situations, cost of utilities may be charged to the Income Assistance Program if supported by Utility Bills/Invoices					
Oil/Propane/Gas/Wood (heat and hot water)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Electricity (Hydro)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Telephone	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
User Fees (max\$18.80) (garbage/H2O/sewage)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

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## **NEW INAC CHANGES COMING SOON**

**Coming in the next few months:**

**1— The Monthly Nutritional Supplement (MNS)**

MSD has had the MNS program for almost two years now and it will also be implemented on-reserve by INAC. The FNSDS will be the holder of the MNS program. This will be available to all PWD clients that apply and qualify. Applications will be adjudicated by our PWD / MNS adjudicators. We are waiting for the final step from INAC and it is hoped that this program will begin in April or May.

**2- Manual Amendments**

In late 2010 our then Training Coordinator Gwen John provided INAC with a list of INAC policies that were out of date and erroneous. INAC staffer Evans Jones has worked diligently over the last few months to update these policies. As a result a series of IA policy amendments will be coming out in April 2011 that will have these update sand corrections.

**3- CPH—Extended Family Program**

MSD recently changed its Child in a Home of a Relative program to the Extended Family Program which is now managed by MCFD. At our FNSDS conference in February, INAC announced that INAC will be following suit with changes to the CPH program. In this new initiative, existing CPH files will be grandfathered, new applicants will have to utilize the provincial Extended Family Program.

A substantial Manual Amendment will be out soon regarding this change and will be sent to all First Nations and posted on our website . The CPH program remains unchanged until that time.

Also included soon will be a fourth SD manual to the existing 3 now utilized.

Keep your eyes on our website for updates to the SD manual. [www.fnsds.org](http://www.fnsds.org)

**Confused? Having difficulty making a certain IA decision  
within your caseload?**



**We are always available to  
provide IA policy clarification  
Contact us today!**

**1-800-991-7099 -[www.fnsds.org](http://www.fnsds.org)  
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