



Community Futures Pan West Network

Covid-19 Information Guide

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British Columbia #C230-7871 Stave Lake St. Mission, BC V2V 0C5 T: 604 – 289-4222 ext 225 communityfutures.ca	Alberta Box 753 Cochrane, AB T4C 1A9 T: 403–851-9995 albertacf.com
Saskatchewan 559 – 167 Lombard Ave. Winnipeg, MB R3B 0V3 T: 204–943-2905 cfsask.ca	Manitoba 559 – 167 Lombard Ave. Winnipeg, MB R3B 0V3 T: 204–943-2905 cfmanitoba.ca

Executive Summary

The Government of Canada is focused on helping Canadians and businesses through this tough economic time. The Government will continue to protect the health and safety of Canadians, while supporting families and businesses and keeping our economy strong in the face of uncertainty.

In March, the Government of Canada began announcing comprehensive plans involving various financial supports to help stabilize the economy due to the impact of the COVID-19 coronavirus.

The purpose of this document is to help Community Futures understand the variety of programs available from the Government of Canada and to provide resource links to share in their communities.

This summary identifies the various support programs for employers, individuals, and businesses.

Since the federal government may release information more frequently, readers can access the most up-to-date information directly from the Government of Canada websites.

Link : [Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan](#)

Support of Individuals

For Individuals and Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increasing the Canada Child Benefit• Special Goods and Services Tax credit payment• Extra Time to file income tax returns• Mortgage support
For people facing unemployment, unable to work, or in directed self-isolation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)• Employment Insurance benefits• Employment Insurance Sickness benefits
Support for targeted populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A new Indigenous community support fund• Enhancing the Reaching Home Initiative• Support for women's shelters and sexual assault
For Seniors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduced minimum withdrawals for registered retirement income funds• Practical services – delivery of items and personal outreach through United Way Canada
For Students and recent Graduates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A 6 month interest-free moratorium on the repayment of Canada Student loans
For Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mental Health Support - \$7.5 million in funding to Kids Help Phone to provide young people with the mental health support they need during this difficult time.

Support to Business

Avoiding Layoffs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extending the Work Sharing program • Providing small business with wage subsidies
Access to Credit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing a Business Credit Availability Program • Increasing Credit to Farmers
Supporting financial stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launching an insured Mortgage Purchase Program • Bank of Canada actions • Lowering the Domestic Stability Buffer • More time to pay income taxes • Deferral of Sales Tax Remittance and Customs Duty Payments

Government of Canada's Economic Response Plan

Federal Program	Description	Municipal Government	Private Sector	Not-for-Profit	Employee/ individual	Self-Employed
Wage subsidy	<p>The new Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy would cover 75 per cent of salaries for qualifying businesses, for up to 3 months, retroactive to March 15, 2020. Employers of all sizes and across all sectors of the economy would be eligible with the exception of public sector entities. This program is designed to help employers hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic to keep and retain workers.</p> <p>The subsidy amount for a given employee on eligible remuneration paid between March 15 and June 6, 2020 would be the greater of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75 per cent of the amount of remuneration paid, up to a maximum benefit of \$847 per week; and the amount of remuneration paid, up to a maximum benefit of \$847 per week or 75 per cent of the employee's pre-crisis weekly remuneration, whichever is less. <p>Organizations that do not qualify for the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy may qualify for the previously announced wage subsidy of 10 per cent of remuneration paid from March 18 to before June 20, 2020.</p> <p>Details still to be released.</p>	n/a	✓	✓	n/a	n/a

Federal Program	Description	Municipal Government	Private Sector	Not-for-Profit	Employee/ individual	Self-Employed
Work Sharing Program	<p>This program helps employers and employees avoid layoffs when there is a temporary reduction in the normal level of business activity that is beyond the control of the employer. It provides employment insurance (EI) benefits to workers who agree to reduce their normal working hours in agreement with the employer.</p> <p>Changes for COVID-19:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The maximum duration of Work-Sharing agreements is extended from 38 weeks to 76 weeks for businesses affected by the economic downturn of COVID-19. • Easing of eligibility requirements. 	n/a	✓	✓	n/a	n/a
Flexibility on loans and access to credit	Canada's six largest banks have committed to work with customers to provide flexible solutions, on a case-by-case basis, for managing through current economic hardships. This support will include up to a six-month payment deferral for mortgages, and the opportunity for relief on other credit products. While payments may be deferred, interest on any outstanding balance may still be charged. Contact your bank directly for eligibility and application details.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	A new Business Credit Availability Program (BCAP) will allow the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC) and Export Development Canada (EDC) to provide more than \$10 billion of additional financing support, largely targeted to small and medium-sized businesses.	n/a	✓	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Farm Credit Canada is offering loan payment deferral plans as well as increasing near term credit to farmers and agri-food sector.	n/a	✓	n/a	n/a	n/a
	The federal government will automatically place a six (6) month interest-free moratorium on the repayment of the federal portion of all Canada Student Loans. Borrowers have the option to continue making their payments.	n/a	n/a	n/a	✓	✓

Federal Program	Description	Municipal Government	Private Sector	Not-for-Profit	Employee/ individual	Self-Employed
Supplementary unemployment benefit plan	Canada's supplementary unemployment benefit plan (SUBP) is an existing program available to employers to top up employees' employment insurance (EI) benefits during a period of unemployment due to a temporary or indefinite layoff. No changes are being proposed for SUBP, but CFPWN is sharing the program for awareness as a potential tool for employers. Eligibility and application details are available at Service Canada.	✓	✓	✓	n/a	n/a
Employment Insurance (EI) sickness benefits	Provides up to 15 weeks of partial income replacement for individuals who cannot work for medical reasons. Individuals can apply for this benefit or the below described Canada Emergency Response Benefit, but not both. Changes for COVID-19: • The one-week waiting period for benefits is waived for new claimants who are quarantined. • Applicants do not require a medical certificate if they are quarantined.	n/a	n/a	n/a	✓	restrictions
Employment Insurance (EI) regular benefits	No changes are announced to the EI regular benefits program but workers who lose their jobs through no fault of their own should consider applying for this EI benefits program or the below described Canada Emergency Response Benefit, but individuals cannot receive both benefits.	n/a	n/a	n/a	✓	restrictions

Federal Program	Description	Municipal Government	Private Sector	Not-for-Profit	Employee/ individual	Self-Employed
Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)	<p>A new program that provides a taxable benefit of \$2,000 per month for up to 4 months to support. This benefit will apply to any Canadian out of work due to reasons related to COVID-19, including for sickness, quarantine, caregiving, staying home to take care of children or loss of jobs. In addition to those that are unemployed, furloughed workers, those who are still technically employed but not receiving income, would also qualify for the benefit. The benefit will cover workers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residing in Canada, who are at least 15 years old; • Who have stopped working because of COVID-19 or are eligible for Employment Insurance regular or sickness benefits; • Who had income of at least \$5,000 in 2019 or in the 12 months prior to the date of their application; and • Who are or expect to be without employment or self-employment income for at least 14 consecutive days in the initial four-week period. <p>For subsequent benefit periods, they expect to have no employment income.</p> <p>All Canadians who have ceased working and earning income, whether they are eligible for employment insurance or not, would be able to receive the benefit.</p> <p>Canadians who have yet to apply for federal income support will be able to decide whether to apply for CERB or EI based on which may offer more financial support.</p> <p>One analyst has determined that anyone making less than \$23 per hour and working full time should apply to the CERB as it will pay more than EI.</p> <p>Canadians currently receiving EI regular and sickness benefits would continue to receive their EI benefits and should not apply for CERB. Also, individuals who have already applied for EI after March 15, 2020 and whose application has not yet been processed would not need to apply for CERB.</p> <p>Eligibility requirements and application will be available starting April 6 2020 via an online portal and phone.</p>	n/a	n/a	n/a	✓	✓

Federal Program	Description	Municipal Government	Private Sector	Not-for-Profit	Employee/ individual	Self-Employed
Special top-up payment of the GST credit	<p>The Goods and Services Tax (GST) credit is a tax-free quarterly payment that helps low and modest income individuals and families to offset GST/HST that they pay.</p> <p>Changes for COVID-19:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 12 million individuals and families will receive a one-time top-up of the credit. The average increase will be a \$400 payment for individuals and \$600 for couples with payment proposed for May 2020. <p>Eligibility is limited to persons that received the GST credit in the 2019-20 year. No application is needed.</p>	n/a	n/a	n/a	✓	✓
One-time increase to the Canada Child Benefit	<p>The Canada Child Benefit (CCB) is a tax-free monthly payment to eligible families to help with the cost of raising children under 18 years of age.</p> <p>Changes for COVID-19:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families that received the Canada Child Benefit (CCB) in 2019-20 will receive an extra \$300 per child as part of their May 2020 CCB payment. <p>No application required unless you are eligible for CCB and have not previously applied</p>	n/a	n/a	n/a	✓	✓
Reduced RRIF withdrawal	<p>Seniors with investments in Registered Retirement Income Funds (RRIFs) will have the option to withdraw less from their RRIF in 2020 to avoid liquidating their retirement investments during the current market downturn. The mandatory minimum withdrawals from RRIFs will be reduced by 25 per cent.</p> <p>Eligibility and application details (if applicable) are yet to be released.</p>	n/a	n/a	n/a	✓	n/a
Extension for filing and payment of income tax	<p>The deadline for individuals to file their 2019 income tax return has been extended from April 30, 2020 to June 1, 2020.</p> <p>The deadline to pay any balance due for the 2019 income tax return for individuals and self-employed individuals has been extended from April 30, 2020 to September 1, 2020. No penalties or interest will be assessed if balances are paid by September 1, 2020.</p> <p>For trusts having a taxation year ending on December 31, 2019, the return filing due date will be deferred until May 1, 2020.</p> <p>All trusts that have an upcoming income tax balance or instalment due after March 18 and before September 1, 2020, will have their due date extended to September 1, 2020.</p>	n/a	n/a	n/a	✓	✓

Federal Program	Description	Municipal Government	Private Sector	Not-for-Profit	Employee/ individual	Self-Employed
Extension for filing and payment of income tax	For businesses, the deadline to pay any income tax amounts or instalments that become owing or due after March 18, 2020 and before September 1, 2020 has been extended to September 1, 2020. No penalties or interest will be assessed if balances are paid by September 1, 2020.	n/a	✓	n/a	n/a	✓

Other notable announcements by the Government of Canada

Support for individuals and organizations

- A new Indigenous Community Support Fund will provide \$305 million to address immediate needs in First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Nation communities. Details are not yet available.
- Canada's Reaching Home initiative will receive \$157.5 million to invest in beds and physical barriers to support social distancing and securement of accommodation to reduce overcrowding in homeless shelters.
- Women's shelters and sexual assault centres will receive \$50 million to help with their capacity to manage or prevent an outbreak in their facilities.
- Electronic signatures will be temporarily recognized for tax forms T183 or T183CORP, which are forms that are signed in person by millions of Canadians every year to authorize tax preparers to file taxes.

Support for businesses

- The CRA will not contact any small or medium (SME) businesses to initiate any post assessment GST/HST or Income Tax audits for four weeks, beginning March 18, 2020.
- The federal government is changing the Canada Account to allow the government to provide additional support to Canadian export companies through loans, guarantees or insurance policies during these challenging times.
- The Bank of Canada will broaden the scope of the current Government of Canada bond buyback program. This is intended to add market liquidity and support price discovery.
- The Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions (OSFI) announced that it has lowered the Domestic Stability Buffer by 1.25 per cent of risk weighted assets which will allow Canada's large banks to inject \$300 billion of additional lending into the economy.
- The Government of Canada has launched an Insured Mortgage Purchase Program (IMPP), which will purchase up to \$50 billion of insured mortgage pools through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). This action will provide long-term stable funding to banks and mortgage lenders and add liquidity to Canada's mortgage market.

Canada Business Network

The national Canada Business Network provides a single, seamless gateway to information for businesses to help them grow and prosper, through a coordinated effort of Innovation Canada, the federal Regional Development Agencies, and provincial and territorial governments. In Western Canada, these centres are part of Western Economic Diversification Canada's business service network, and have offices in Vancouver, Edmonton, Saskatoon and Winnipeg.

All four provinces have COVID 19 specific topics and resources on their perspective websites.

British Columbia Website: Small Business BC Telephone: 604-775-5525 Toll Free: 1-800-667-2272 Fax 604-775-5520 Mailing address Business BC 601 West Cordova Street Vancouver, British Columbia V6B 1G1	Alberta Website: Business Link Telephone: 780-422-7722 Toll Free: 1-800-272-9675 Fax 780-422-0055 Email: askus@businesslink.ca Mailing address #500-10150-100 Street NW Edmonton, Alberta T5J 0P6
Saskatchewan Website: Square One: Saskatchewan's Business Resource Centre Telephone: 1-888-576-4444 Fax: 1-888-417-0442 Email: info@squareonesask.ca Mailing address 250 3 rd Avenue South Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 1L9	Manitoba Website: Business InfoCentre at the World Trade Centre Winnipeg Telephone: 204-984-2272 Toll Free: 1-800-665-2019 Email: cbn@wtcwinnipeg.com Mailing address 219 Provencher Boulevard, 3 rd Floor Winnipeg, Manitoba R2H 0G4

Covid-19 Health updates and Mental Health Resources

CMHA has put together some resources and suggestions to help support mental health at this time of uncertainty.



**Canadian Mental
Health Association**
Mental health for all

www.cmha.ca

Public Health Authorities

British Columbia www.bccdc.ca/covid19	Alberta www.myhealth.alberta.ca
Saskatchewan www.saskhealthauthority.ca	Manitoba www.manitoba.ca/covid19

Contingency Planning

It is also vital for Canadian businesses to have contingency plans in place to manage potential financial risk. The Canadian Chamber of Commerce has developed a comprehensive [preparedness guide](#) for businesses in the face of COVID-19.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business is also [providing information](#) to help businesses through these difficult times.