



COVID-19: AVAILABLE RESOURCES

We're here for you!

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A WORD FROM YOUR M.P.

As summer days are coming to an end, the return to class is already here for our youth. This return to school will surely be different from what we are used to, but I have full confidence in our teachers and staff members that everything will be fine. Moreover, the Prime Minister announced today additional support in the amount of \$ 2 billion to help the provinces put in place the appropriate protection and learning measures. I wish you all a good return to school!

During the pandemic, we all had to juggle challenges, some big and some small, and deal with a lot of uncertainty. The Canada Emergency Response Benefit made it possible for many families to make ends meet at the end of the month. Yet, despite this support, the demand at food banks increased significantly.

That is why the federal government launched the Surplus Food Rescue Program. We had three objectives in mind: 1) to feed those in need, 2) to buy surplus food at wholesale prices from our food producers and processors and 3) to avoid wasting food. Eight partnerships, including more than 100 organizations, will share \$ 50 million, which will allow them to distribute more than 12 million kilograms of food to those who need it most.

As every week, through this newsletter I wish to share with you the latest information available on programs to support people and businesses affected by COVID-19. Please share it throughout your network. I also invite you to visit the CANADA.CA website for all the reliable information you need.

Please feel free to contact my team and me if you have any questions or comments.

Take care of yourself and your loved ones!

Marie-Claude Bibeau

SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS

SAFE RETURN TO CLASS FUND

Returning to school is an important step to restart our economy and get parents back to work, and the federal government wants to help ensure they can do so without worrying about the health of their children.

That's why the **Safe Return to Class Fund** is providing up to \$2 billion in support to provinces and territories as they work to ensure the safety of students and staff members throughout the school year. Of this amount, \$432.15 million will go directly to the province of Quebec.

An additional \$112 million will help First Nations communities ensure a safe return to school on reserves.

A few examples of how this funding might be used include adapting learning spaces, better air ventilation in classrooms, and supplying PPE and cleaning supplies.

The Safe Return to Class Fund is in addition to the more than \$19 billion previously announced for the Safe Restart Agreement to help provinces and territories safely restart their economies.

For more information: <https://bit.ly/3gyGMgj>.

SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS

RE-OPENING OF THE SERVICE CANADA BRANCH OFFICE IN SHERBROOKE

Service Canada centres are gradually re-opening their doors for essential services involving Employment Insurance, the Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security, as well as issues concerning social insurance numbers and passports for mandatory travel.

The **Service Canada office in Sherbrooke is now open on an appointment basis only**. Please make an appointment by filling out a request form at the following site: <https://eservices.canada.ca/en/service/>. A Service Canada agent will be in contact with you within two business days.

Once you arrive at the Service Canada office, you will be greeted by an agent and asked to respect social distancing guidelines. Masks are highly encouraged, and disinfecting hand sanitizer will be available. Clients are not permitted to use Service Canada computers or photocopiers for the time being.

Service Canada's offices in Coaticook and Magog will re-open shortly.

For more information: <https://bit.ly/3hAs4GP>.

PROROGATION OF PARLIAMENT

To continue to serve Canada in the best possible capacity, the Prime Minister has asked the Governor General, her Excellency the Right Honourable Julie Payette, to prorogue Parliament until September 23, 2020. This will make it possible to present the Government of Canada's priorities in a Speech from the Throne.

Programs put in place by the Government of Canada to support Canadians during the pandemic will not be affected by this decision.

For more information: <https://bit.ly/2EkB2tB>.

SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS

CANADA EMERGENCY RESPONSE BENEFIT

The **Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)** was created in response to unprecedented job losses as public health measures were imposed, businesses shuttered and schools closed due to the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Since March 15, the CERB has paid \$69.37 billion in benefits to 8.61 million unique applicants. To date, 4.1 million applicants have since returned to the labour market.

As our economy continues to safely re-open, our programs must also transition to best support Canadians whose employment has been affected by the pandemic. Accordingly, **we are extending the CERB by an additional four weeks to a maximum of 28 weeks.** As a result, Canadians who expected to have used up their CERB payments by the end of August will now have access to an additional month of support.

For more information: <https://bit.ly/3b16YPs>.

SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS

TRANSITION FROM CERB TO EI

The Government will be **transitioning to a simplified Employment Insurance (EI) program on September 27, 2020**. To simplify this transition, Service Canada will proceed as follows:

- The majority of Canadians who received CERB through Service Canada, and who have continued to report a need for financial assistance, will be automatically transitioned to EI regular benefits once their 28 weeks of CERB has been paid.
- In a few instances, some Canadians who received CERB through Service Canada will need to apply for EI benefits.
- Canadians who are “EI eligible” and who received CERB through the CRA who continue to require financial assistance once the 28 weeks of CERB has been exhausted will need to apply for EI benefits from Service Canada.
- Applicants will apply through the usual EI online application.
- Applicants will need to submit bi-weekly reports to show eligibility and to continue getting paid.
- EI benefits are taxable and federal, provincial or territorial taxes will be deducted from payments.

For more information: <https://bit.ly/2FVEOK5>.

SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Our economy has begun to re-open, however in spite of this important step there are still many Canadians who find themselves in a tough spot while looking for work.

To offer the necessary support, our government has introduced changes to our system of Employment Insurance (EI). In putting in place three temporary measures for the next year, EI will be accessible to a larger number of Canadians, including those who have not received EI payments in the past.

1. A minimum unemployment rate of 13.1% is being used for all EI economic regions: This measure is effective starting August 9, 2020. The effect of this change will set a uniform eligibility requirement for EI regular benefits at 420 hours of insurable employment (before any credit of hours is applied), provide a minimum entitlement of 26 weeks of EI regular benefits, and set 14 as the number of best weeks of earnings in the calculation of the weekly benefit rate.

People living in EI regions with higher unemployment rates will have their benefits calculated using the actual rate.

2. Hours credits to enhance access to EI benefits: To ensure that individuals are able to qualify for EI with as little as 120 hours of work (approximately 3.5 weeks of work full-time), EI claimants will receive a one-time credit of 300 insurable hours for claims for regular or work-sharing benefits (job loss) and 480 insurable hours for claims for special benefits (sickness, maternity, parental, compassionate care or family caregiver).

Hours credits will be available for one year and retroactive to March 15, 2020 for claimants who were looking to transition early from CERB to EI maternity, parental, compassionate care, family caregiver or work-sharing benefits but could not establish their EI claim due to insufficient hours.

SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS

EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

3. **Minimum EI Benefit Rate:** In addition to the measures above to facilitate access to the EI program, as of September 27, 2020 new EI claimants will receive a minimum benefit rate of \$400 per week (or \$240 per week for extended parental benefits) if this amount is higher than their benefits would otherwise be.

For more information: <https://bit.ly/2FVEOK5>.

SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS

NEW SUPPORT MEASURES

To help Canadians who do not qualify for EI in these difficult times, our Government has proposed three new temporary benefits.

Canada Recovery Benefit

The **Canada Recovery Benefit** would provide \$400 per week for a maximum of \$26 weeks to self-employed workers or those who are not eligible for Employment Insurance (EI) and still need income support and are looking for work.

To qualify, workers must:

- Have stopped working due to COVID-19 or had their income reduced relative to their pre-COVID-19 income,
- Be available to work or be in search of new employment.

Workers can earn income from employment and/or self-employment while receiving the benefit, as long as they continue to meet the other requirements.

However, workers will need to repay \$0.50 of every dollar earned above an annual net income of \$38,000 through their income tax return, up to the total of the Canada Recovery Benefit they received in a calendar year.

SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS

NEW SUPPORT MEASURES

Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit

The **Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit** offers 10 days of paid sick leave in order to safely restore economic activity, while protecting the health of Canadians.

This benefit offers income support for workers if they are sick or must self-isolate for reasons related to COVID-19 by providing \$500 per week, for up to two weeks.

It is not possible for a person to receive this new sickness benefit and other paid sick leave at same time.

More information on eligibility criteria will be announced soon.

Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit

The **Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit** provides \$500 per week for up to 26 weeks to workers who must miss work to care for:

- A child under the age of 12 because their school or daycare is closed due to COVID-19;
- A family member with a disability or a dependent because their day care program is suspended or their care facility is closed due to COVID-19;
- A child, a disabled family member or a dependent who does not attend school, daycare or other care facilities on the advice of a healthcare professional because of a high risk of COVID-19.

The benefit may be shared; however, only one member of a household at any time can receive the benefit.

Workers who prefer to keep dependents at home when facilities are open are not entitled to the benefit.

More information on eligibility criteria will be announced soon.

SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS

NEW SUPPORT MEASURES

These three new support measures will be administered by the Canada Revenue Agency and will be available as of September 27, 2020.

For more information: <https://bit.ly/2FVEOK5>.

SUPPORT FOR BUSINESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS

FREEZING OF EI PREMIUM RATE

In times of economic recovery, supporting Canadian employers and their employees is essential. For this reason, the Government of Canada will freeze Employment Insurance (EI) premium rates for two years.

This will keep workers and businesses across the country from immediately facing increased costs and withholding taxes due to the additional expenses stemming from the pandemic.

For more information: <https://bit.ly/2FVEOK5>.

INFORMATION ON OTHER FEDERAL PROGRAMS THAT ARE CURRENTLY OPEN

Canada Emergency Business Account (<https://ceba-cuec.ca/>): Open

Local Food Infrastructure Fund (<https://bit.ly/2W0ltg1>) : Open until funds are exhausted

Young Canada Works in Both Official Languages (<https://bit.ly/2ZaY7GI>) : Open until funds are exhausted

Investments in Forest Industry Transformation - Study projects (<https://bit.ly/2W1uV2V>) : Open until funds are exhausted

Mandatory Isolation Support for Temporary Foreign Workers Program (<https://bit.ly/2VimgbO>): Open until August 31, 2020

Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (<https://bit.ly/3dFe8c1>): Open until September 14, 2020

Canada Emergency Student Benefit (<https://bit.ly/2NqLvEJ>): Open until September 30, 2020

Canada Emergency Response Benefit (<https://bit.ly/2YvHLYI>): Open until October 3rd, 2020

Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (<https://bit.ly/2Vk7JfN>): Open until November 21, 2020

BEST SANITARY PRACTICES

To have up-to-date information concerning the coronavirus, we invite you to contact:

- The Canadian Government Website : <https://bit.ly/2QFBAwY>
- Phone **1-833-347-4397** (toll free).

If ever you are experiencing symptoms (fever, cough or difficulty breathing), contact **1-877-644-4545** (toll free).

For more information on ways to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the **workplace**, consult the following link: <https://bit.ly/3adWvz3>.



Public health experts recommend that we:

- Limit our contact with other people by practicing social distancing;
- Frequently wash our hands for a minimum of 20 seconds;
- Use an alcohol-based sanitizer if we don't have access to water and soap;
- Cough and sneeze in a tissue or in the crux of our arm
- Avoid touching our eyes, nose or mouth if we haven't previously washed our hands;
- Use approved sanitizers to clean hard surfaces;
- Clean surfaces that are frequently touched (telephones, door handles, etc...)

To learn more on risk prevention, consult the following link: <https://bit.ly/2Uv9d5M> or send an email to phac.inof.aspc@canada.ca.