

COVID-19 Economic Relief For Individuals

Various COVID-19 economic measures have been announced by both the Provincial and Federal Governments. This document is a summary of the support only for individuals who were employees or were self-employed, and who are facing unemployment, or people who are sick, quarantined, or in directed self-isolation, or people who are unable to work.

If you are a small business owner, there are also numerous measures that have been announced. [More information can be found in this link.](#)

NOTE: This information is believed to be accurate as of May 20, 2020, however may be subject to change, in accordance with Government directives.

Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)

The Federal Government will provide a taxable benefit of \$2,000 a month to eligible workers who have lost their income due to COVID-19.

Who is eligible:

The benefit will be available to workers:

- Residing in Canada, who are at least 15 years old
- Who have stopped working because of COVID-19 and have not voluntarily quit their job or are eligible for EI 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
- Who are or expect to be without employment or self-employment income for at least 14 consecutive days in the initial four-week period. For subsequent benefit periods, they expect to have no employment or self-employment income.
- People can earn up to \$1,000 per month while collecting the CERB.
- Seasonal workers who have exhausted their EI regular benefits and are unable to undertake their regular seasonal work because of COVID-19.
- People who have recently exhausted their EI regular benefits and are unable to find a job because of COVID-19.

There are **two ways to apply:**

1. [Online](#)
2. Over the phone with an automated phone service:
1-800-959-2019 or 1-800-959-2041

Both of these services are available 21 hours a day, 7 days a week. Both services are closed from 3:00 a.m. to 6:00 a.m. (Eastern time) for maintenance.

Temporary salary top-up for low-income essential workers

The Federal Government will work with provinces and territories through a new transfer to cost-share a temporary top up to the salaries of low-income workers (those who earn less than \$2,500 per month on a full time basis), that the provinces and territories have deemed essential in the fight against COVID-19.

This will provide a much needed boost to those on the front-line in hospitals, those caring for seniors in long-term care facilities, those working so hard to make sure that there that is food on our shelves and tables, and others.

[Click here for more information.](#)

Canada Emergency Student Benefit (CESB)

The Federal Government will provide taxable financial support to students and new grads for this summer, to help them continue their studies in the fall, and to help many get the experience they need to start their careers. This benefit will provide \$1,250 per month for eligible students or \$1,750 per month for eligible students with dependents or disabilities from May to August 2020

Who is eligible:

The benefit will be for post-secondary students and recent graduates

- Who are not eligible for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit
- Who are currently in school, are planning to start school in September 2020, or who graduated from school in December 2019 are eligible for the CESB if they have lost work or cannot find work due to the pandemic.
- Working students that are earning less than \$1,000 per month are also able to apply for the benefit if their hours have been cut due to COVID-19.

NOTE: the federal government still needs to pass legislation in order to activate the CESB program. They are currently working on quickly bringing a bill forward to make the funds available as soon as possible. [Click here for more information as it is made available.](#)

Employment Insurance

If you have stopped working because of COVID-19, you should apply for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, whether or not are eligible for Employment Insurance. The Benefit is available for the period from March 15, 2020 to October 3, 2020.

If you applied for EI regular or sickness benefits on March 15, 2020 or later, your claim will be automatically processed through the Canada Emergency Response Benefit.

There is a [single portal to assist you with the application process](#).

Employees may consider applying for [federal Employment Insurance benefits](#).

- Allows up to 15 weeks of assistance if a person cannot work due to medical reasons such as self-isolation or self-quarantine.
- The one-week waiting period for Employment Insurance benefits has been waived by the federal government.

Increasing the Canada Child Benefit

The Federal Government is providing up to an extra \$300 per child through the Canada Child Benefit (CCB) for 2019-20. This will mean approximately \$550 more for the average family.

This benefit will be delivered as part of the scheduled CCB payment in May.

NOTE: Those who already receive the CCB do not need to re-apply.

Special Goods and Services Tax Credit Payment

The Federal Government is providing a one-time special payment starting April 9 through the [Goods and Services Tax credit](#) for low- and modest-income families.

The average additional benefit will be close to \$400 for single individuals and close to \$600 for couples.

NOTE: There is no need to apply for this payment. If you are eligible, you will get it automatically.

Extra time to file income tax returns

The filing due date for 2019 income tax returns for individuals has been deferred until June 1, 2020. Any new income tax balances due, or instalments, are also being deferred until after August 31, 2020 without incurring interest or penalties.

[Consult all tax and payment dates](#)

NOTE: If you expect to receive benefits under the Goods and Services Tax credit or the Canada Child Benefit, you are encouraged not to delay filing your 2019 income tax return to ensure that your entitlements are properly determined.

Mortgage support

Canadian banks have committed to work with their customers on a case-by-case basis to find solutions to help them manage hardships caused by COVID-19. This includes permitting lenders to defer up to six monthly mortgage payments (interest and principal) for impacted borrowers. Canadians who are impacted by COVID-19 and experiencing financial hardship as a result should contact their financial institution regarding flexibility for a mortgage deferral. This gives flexibility to be available – when needed – to those who need it the most. You are encouraged to visit your bank’s website for the latest information, rather than calling or visiting a branch.

[Consult your bank's dedicated COVID-19 page](#)

Contact your financial institution for further mortgage assistance.

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and other mortgage insurers offer [tools to lenders](#) that can assist homeowners who may be experiencing financial difficulty. These include payment deferral, loan re-amortization, capitalization of outstanding interest arrears and other eligible expenses, and special payment arrangements.

Canada’s mortgage insurers are committed to providing homeowners with solutions to mitigate temporary financial hardship related to COVID-19. This includes permitting lenders to defer up to six monthly mortgage payments (interest and principal) for impacted borrowers. Deferred payments are added to the outstanding principal balance and subsequently repaid throughout the life of the mortgage.

Alberta credit unions

Credit union members will have access to a variety of programs and solutions designed to ease difficulties with loan payments and short-term cash flow.

Contact your credit union to work out a plan for your personal situation.

Utility payment deferral

- Residential, farm and small commercial customers can defer electricity and natural gas bill payments for the next 90 days to ensure no one will be cut off, regardless of the service provider.
- This program is available to Albertans who are experiencing financial hardship as a direct result of COVID-19. For example, those who have lost their employment or had to leave work to take care of an ill family member.
- Call your utility provider directly to arrange for a 90-day deferral on all payments.

Learn more about the [90-day utility payment deferral](#)

ATB Financial customers

Personal banking customers can apply for a deferral on their ATB loans, lines of credit and mortgages for up to 6 months.

Job-protected leave

Changes to the Alberta Employment Standards Code allow full and part-time employees to take 14 days of job-protected leave if they are:

- required to self-isolate
- caring for a child or dependent adult who is required to self-isolate

To be eligible, employees:

- are not required to have a medical note
- do not need to have worked for an employer for 90 days

This leave covers the 14-day self-isolation period recommended by Alberta's chief medical officer. This leave may be extended if the advice of the chief medical officer changes.

The leave does not apply to self-employed individuals or contractors.

Student loans repayment deferrals

We are implementing a 6 month, interest free moratorium on Alberta student loan payments for all Albertans in the process of repaying these loans.

- Alberta Student Loan repayments will be paused for 6 months, beginning March 30, 2020.
- Interest will not accrue during this period. This mirrors the approach of the [Canada Student Loans Program](#).
- Students do not need to apply for the repayment pause.
- Borrowers may continue making payments during this period if they choose and this will not affect their eligibility to receive the benefit.

Vacation pay, leave or banked overtime

Employers and employees may consider using other available leaves should an employee be required to self-isolate.

- Employees can request using their vacation pay or banked overtime, but employers are not required to grant the request. Provincial employment rules only require employers to provide vacation pay, vacation leave or pay banked overtime within a year of it being earned.
- Employers can request employees voluntarily take vacation leave and/or use their vacation pay or banked overtime, but cannot force them to do so under provincial employment rules.