

COVID – 19 UPDATE: March 27, 2020

1. *MANAGING ANXIETY DURING THIS STRESSFUL TIME:*

<https://www.calltimentalhealth.com/blog/2020/3/26/winning-at-mental-health-tips-on-managing-anxiety-during-covid-19>

2. *CANADA EMERGENCY RESPONSE BENEFIT (CERB) REPLACES THE EMERGENCY CARE BENEFIT AND THE EMERGENCY SUPPORT BENEFIT.*

All of the following information is more clearly particularized on the FEDERAL government webpage here:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/news/2020/03/introduces-canada-emergency-response-benefit-to-help-workers-and-businesses.html>

What is this new benefit?

The Emergency Care Benefit and the Emergency Support Benefit have been merged into the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB). The application form will be available through a Government of Canada portal on April 6. The CERB has also been better integrated with Employment Insurance to allow workers to apply for benefits through a single window.

Who is covered by the Canada Emergency Response Benefit?

This new benefit will cover people who have lost their job, people who are sick or quarantined, and parents who must stay home without pay to care for children, the same as the two previously announced benefits. The new CERB also includes workers who have no income due to the COVID-19 slowdown, but who haven't yet been officially laid off. It will cover employees, contract workers, and self-employed workers. To qualify, applicants must have had \$5,000 in employment income, self-employment income, or maternity or parental leave benefits for 2019 or in the 12-month period preceding the day they make the application.

How much will I get?

The CERB will pay out \$2,000 per month for the next 4 months, backdated to March 15th.

Where can I apply?

The application form will be available on April 6. If you have already applied for EI, you do not need to also apply for this new benefit, your claim will be automatically moved over to the CERB and you will receive the 16-week benefit. If needed, you can use your hours to apply for EI benefits after you have exhausted CERB benefits.

You can apply in one of these three ways:

- by accessing it on your CRA MyAccount secure portal;
- by accessing it from your secure My Service Canada Account; or
- by calling a toll free number equipped with an automated application process.

What if I've already been laid off and applied for EI?

If you've already applied for EI you do not need to reapply for the CERB. Your claim will be automatically moved over to the CERB, and benefits paid from this program first. If needed, you can use your hours to apply for EI benefits after you have exhausted CERB benefits.

What if I don't qualify for EI?

You can qualify for the CERB if you had \$5,000 in employment income, self-employment income, or maternity or parental leave benefits for 2019 or in the 12-month period preceding the day you make the application.

When will I get benefits?

The application is expected to be available April 6. Benefits should be delivered 10 days after you submit your application form. The earliest you could receive benefits through direct deposit is April 16th (or slightly later if by mail).

What if I'm already receiving EI Benefits?

You will continue to receive your EI benefits. If your EI benefits end before October 3rd, 2020, and you are still unable to return to work, you can apply to the CERB once your EI benefits run out.

What if I continue to be sick or unemployed after October 3, 2020?

If you have enough EI insurable hours, you will still be able to access your normal EI benefits after the 16-week period covered by the CERB.

3. THE PROVINCIAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN:

All of the following information is more clearly particularized on the BC government webpage here:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support>

Housing:

Temporary rental supplement
Halting Evictions
Freezing Rents
Hydro: payment deferral or access grants

Finances:

One time Emergency Benefit for Workers

Deferral, Delay or Reduction of some taxes

Transportation:

ICBC insurance renewals can now be done by phone or email

ICBC customers payment deferral for up to 90 days

BC Transit fares and passes are not required.

TransLink fares and passes are not required

Drive BC travel restrictions for highways, rest areas, and borders

Please see the link noted above to view the entire provincial plan.

Please continue to check back regularly for updates as more information becomes available.