



COVID-19 FACTSHEETS: Income Benefits and Supports

Last Updated on March 21, 2020

There are new financial support programs and initiatives to help families and businesses deal with the financial impact of COVID-19. Below is an overview of some of the programs and initiatives available in Manitoba.

PLEASE NOTE: New information is being updated daily, so we can only confirm accuracy of this document to the last updated. It is important for readers to confirm accuracy of this information.

Income Benefits, Credits and Assistance

1. Employment Insurance

Employment Insurance (EI) provides income replacement for eligible individuals who:

- have been laid off due to no fault of their own, including if your workplace closed or laid you off due to COVID-19,
- if you have to self-isolate or go into quarantine, or
- if you have take care of a someone that goes into quarantine.

Eligibility: Below are the eligibility requirements for the different EI categories:

- If you lost your job (Regular EI), click here:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/ei-regular-benefit/eligibility.html>
- If you are in self-isolation or quarantine (sickness EI), click here:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/ei-sickness/qualify.html>
- If you are taking care of a loved one (caregiver EI), click here:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/caregiving/eligibility.html>

How to apply: You should apply as soon as possible to find out if they qualify; waiting more than four weeks after your last day of work means you could lose access to those benefits. Below are links on how to apply to each EI categories:

- If you lost your job (Regular EI), click here:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/ei-regular-benefit/apply.html>
 - Note: Call 1-800-206-7218 if you have questions, however they recommend you apply online first.
- If you are in self-isolation or quarantine (EI sickness), click here:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/ei-sickness/apply.html>
 - NOTE: Call 1-833-381-2725 if you have questions, however they recommend you apply online first.

- NOTE: applicants who are quarantined do not have to provide the government with a medical certificate
- NOTE: the one-week waiting period for sickness benefits will be removed for those who have been told to self-isolate or quarantine, meaning applicants can be paid for the first week of their claim.
- NOTE: If you can not apply because you are quarantined, you can also file for EI sickness benefits later and have the claim backdated.
- If you are taking care of a loved one (EI caregiver), click here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/caregiving/apply.html>

Amount: The benefit payment is 55 per cent of your average weekly earnings up to a maximum amount of \$573 per week.

2. Emergency Care Benefit and Emergency Support Benefit

If you are not eligible for Employment Insurance, the Government of Canada is developing two new programs that will be available in April.

Emergency Care Benefit: This benefit will be for workers, including those who are self-employed, not eligible for Employment Insurance, and who have to stay home because they are sick, in quarantine, isolation or are caring for someone who is sick. This will also be for parents of children who require supervision because of school closures and are unable to earn an income.

- The program will provide benefits of up to \$900 bi-weekly for 15 weeks.
- Application information is not yet available, but information will be made available here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/notices/coronavirus.html>

Emergency Support Benefit: This benefit will be for individuals who lose their job and are not eligible for employment insurance, including people who are self-employed.

- This benefit will be provided for up to 14 weeks and will be comparable to what is provided through EI, which is 55 per cent of average weekly earnings up to a maximum amount that this year is \$573 per week.
- Additional information is not yet available, but information will be made available here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/notices/coronavirus.html>

NOTE: People will have to declare that they meet eligibility requirements every two weeks.

3. Child Tax Benefit

Canada Child Benefit payment amounts will be increasing automatically by \$300 per child in their May payment (only for the 2019-20 benefit year). Families need to make sure they are signed up for Canada Child Benefit when filing their tax return.

For more information about the Canada Child Benefit go to: <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/child-family-benefits/canada-child-benefit-overview.html>

NOTE: The Canada Revenue Agency encourages anyone who is eligible for the GST tax credit not to delay filing their taxes for too long.

4. GST Credit

A one-time special payment will be provided to low-income families who receive GST credits. The payment will be automatically added to their GST credit cheque and will average about \$400 for singles and \$600 for couples. Benefits are tied to income through an individual's or family's annual tax return. For more information about the GST credit go to:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/forms-publications/publications/rc4210/gst-hst-credit.html#Hdygtc>

NOTE: The Canada Revenue Agency encourages anyone who is eligible for the GST tax credit not to delay filing their taxes for too long.

5. Changes in Tax Filing

The deadline for filing your individual taxes is postponed until June 1. For trusts with a taxation year ending on Dec. 31, 2019, the filing due date is now May 1, 2020. And if you owe taxes as an individual or business, you can defer payments until August 31st 2020. As well, the CRA will recognize electronic signatures to reduce administrative burden and lessen the need for taxpayers and preparers to meet in person.

NOTE: If you need to apply for the Canadian Child Benefit or the GST Credit you should file your taxes as soon as possible to start receiving those benefits.

6. Employment Income Assistance

There are no new changes related to COVID-19 to the Provincial Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) program. However, clients are asked to contact staff through the call centre whenever possible. Phone lines are open Monday to Friday from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. at 204-948-2888 (inside Winnipeg) or 1-855-944-8111 (toll-free, outside Winnipeg). Clients can also email the department at eia@gov.mb.ca. All EIA offices are still open during normal business hours

(Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) but it is recommended clients use phone or email options and avoid in-person visits.

For general information about the EIA program and to apply online click here:

<https://www.gov.mb.ca/fs/eia/apply.html>

Other Financial Support Initiatives

7. Manitoba Hydro

Manitoba Hydro will not disconnect your hydro services if you have overdue payments until further notice. If you are unable to make payments on your Manitoba Hydro account by the due date, contact Hydro to make a payment arrangement:

- Online through MyBill: <https://www.hydro.mb.ca/mybill/>
- Email credit@hydro.mb.ca
- Call 1-204-480-5900 (toll free at 1-888-624-9376)

For more information Manitoba Hydro's service changes due COVID-19 click here:

<https://www.hydro.mb.ca/covid19/>

8. Mortgages

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and other mortgage insurers offer tools to lenders (such as banks and credit unions) that can assist homeowners who may be experiencing financial difficulty. So if you are struggling to make your mortgage payments due to the impact of COVID-19 speak to your financial institution about your payment options, such as deferring payments or skipping monthly payments for a maximum of six months.

NOTE: It is not clear if this will be interest free, so you should confirm with your financial institution.

NOTE: When speaking to your financial institution, you must say that the reason you need assistance is due to coronavirus.

9. Student Loans

Starting March 30th, 2020 the Government of Canada will implement an interest free suspension on the repayment of Canada Student Loans and Canada Apprentice Loans until September 30, 2020 for individuals who are currently in the process of repaying student loans. There will be no interest on loans during this time. Students will not need to apply for the repayment pause.