



March 19, 2020

This letter provides a general summary of news reports issued yesterday (March 18th) regarding new Federal Government supports being made available to businesses and people who are being economically impacted by COVID-19. For the most up-to-date and accurate information on programs and supports, please visit the:

Federal Economic Response Plan website:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan.html>

Provincial COVID-19 website:

<https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/>

On March 18th, the Federal Government announced several new forms of support that are being made available to businesses and people who are economically impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the most significant changes announced is **that income supports will be available to people who typically do not qualify for Employment Income benefits, including those who are self-employed**, consultant/contract workers, some part-time employees, or gig economy workers (musicians, photographers, etc.). **These new supports for people who previously were unable to access EI will require legislative changes and so will not be in place until April. Parliament must meet to pass these changes. Therefore, there is no application form available to be filled out at this time.**

Here are brief descriptions of several newly announced supports:

- **Emergency care benefit** – these benefits will be made available for people who do not otherwise qualify for EI benefits and are home due to illness, quarantine, or caring for someone who has been infected. Payments will be processed every two weeks at an amount comparable to EI for up to 15 weeks.
- **Emergency support benefit** – these benefits will be made available to people who do not otherwise qualify for EI benefits, who have lost their jobs, had their hours of work reduced or are not working because of the COVID-19 pandemic, including self-employed, contractors, etc.
- **Temporary Wage Subsidy** – this incentive is available for some small business employers. Qualifying employers will receive a subsidy of up to 10% of an employee's salary for a period of three months, to encourage employers to keep the worker on payroll.

The Federal Government has also announced additional benefits for some parents and lower income families.

Some families/individuals will qualify for:

- Temporary increase in the Canada Child Benefit;
- Supplemented GST credit;
- Interest free period of 6 months on Canada Student Loan payments.

The Federal media release yesterday also made references to boosting supports through Farm Credit Canada, and the fact that the Federal government is encouraging banks and lending institutions to work flexibly with

Canadians who are facing difficult financial times. While no specific assurances were provided, Canadians were encouraged to contact their banks directly to find out whether supports might be available to permit skipping or deferring mortgage, loan, credit card or other payments. **We have not yet seen any details about how or when individuals/businesses will be able to apply for these new benefits.**

Additional supports announced previously:

- Supports for entrepreneurs and exporters through Business Development Canada and Export Development Canada:
<https://www.bdc.ca/en/pages/special-support.aspx?special-initiative=covid19>
<https://www.edc.ca/en/campaign/coronavirus-covid-19.html>
- Changes to Work-Sharing Benefits designed to help employers and employees avoid layoffs when there is a temporary reduction in work:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/work-sharing.html>
- Waiver of one-week EI waiting period for new claimants who are quarantined:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/notices/coronavirus.html>

Please note that this list is not exhaustive. You are encouraged to visit the websites above for a full listing of supports and programs. The Province of Nova Scotia and the Federal Government are expected to add other supporting programs in the coming days, and provide more clarity on these recently announced programs.

For those of you who may have private insurance coverage, you may also want to consider connecting with your insurance broker or provider to determine whether your Policy includes any coverage applicable to the current situation.

We recognize that this is a time of great uncertainty for many in our community, particularly within our small business sector. We are in the process revising our website www.cumberlandbusinessconnector.ca to share information that is relevant to the business community in this time of crisis. We have information currently available on our website and will be adding to this as we receive additional information.

If you require general business assistance, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business has a list of resources on their website <https://www.cfib-fcei.ca/en/small-business-resources-dealing-covid-19> and also has a help line for businesses to call. This help line is now open to both members and non-members of the CFIB.

If your business needs help dealing with matters of provincial concerns, including if your business is allowed to be open or not, please contact the Province of Nova Scotia's Business Navigators at 1-844-628-7347 from Monday to Friday, 8 am to 5 pm.

The Cumberland Business Connector is working with our municipal partners, Chambers of Commerce, CBDC Cumberland and other local partners to assist the business community as much as possible. If you would like to talk to one of us, please send us an email to: research@cumberlandbusinessconnector.ca

Please include your name, phone number and one of us will get back to you as quickly as possible. Please be patient as we do not have many employees.

Yours Truly,

Jonathan McClelland, CEO
Cumberland Business Connector