



COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

Please note: every effort was made to create this FAQ using the most current information; however, for the most updated information for PSAC members please visit: <http://psacunion.ca/covid-19> as well as the Ontario Government site: <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/>.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I HAVE SYMPTOMS AND THINK I HAVE COVID-19?

The Government of Ontario recommends that you take their online self-assessment tool prior to contacting Telehealth Ontario or your doctor.

[Take the self-assessment](#)

WHAT GOVERNMENT BENEFITS DO I QUALIFY FOR?

Infectious Disease Emergencies Leave

The Ontario Government passed the *Employment Standards Amendment Act (Infectious Disease Emergencies), 2020* to provide job-protected leave to employees in isolation or quarantine due to COVID-19, or those who need to be away from work to care for children because of school or day care closures or to care for other relatives. This protection lasts for as long as the declared state of emergency and is retroactive to January 25th, 2020. It does not apply to people in sectors that fall under federal jurisdiction. [More information](#)

Salary Top Up (Temporary Pandemic Pay)

Temporary pandemic pay is a targeted program designed to support employees who work in congregate care settings or primarily with vulnerable populations, where maintaining physical distancing is difficult or not possible.

If you are eligible, you will receive \$4 per hour worked on top of your existing hourly wages, regardless of how much you already make.

All eligible workers will receive this amount automatically. In addition, if you work at least 100 hours in a designated 4-week period, you will also be eligible to receive an additional lump sum payment of \$250 for that period.

The designated 4-week periods are:

- April 24, 2020 to May 21, 2020
- May 22, 2020 to June 18, 2020
- June 19, 2020 to July 16, 2020
- July 17, 2020 to August 13, 2020

This means you may receive up to a total of \$1,000 in lump sum payments over these 16 weeks. Eligible staff will also be paid retroactively for hours worked during this period. To receive pandemic pay, you must work in both an eligible:

- role (i.e. be an eligible worker)
- workplace

[Click here for more information and the full list of eligible workers and workplaces.](#)

Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)

If you have stopped working because of COVID-19, the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) may provide you with temporary income support. The CERB provides \$500 a week for up to 16 weeks.

CERB Cont.

The Benefit is available to workers:

- Residing in Canada, who are at least 15 years old;
- Who have stopped working because of reasons related to COVID-19 **or** are eligible for Employment Insurance regular or sickness benefits **or** have exhausted their Employment Insurance regular benefits or Employment Insurance fishing benefits between December 29, 2019 and October 3, 2020;
- Who had employment and/or self-employment income of at least \$5,000 in 2019 or in the 12 months prior to the date of their application; and,
- Who have not quit their job voluntarily.

[Click here to apply and for additional eligibility requirements.](#)

Canada Emergency Student Benefit (CESB)

The Canada Emergency Student Benefit (CESB) would provide support to students and new graduates who are not eligible for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit or Employment Insurance or unable to work due to COVID-19.

This benefit would provide \$1,250 per month for eligible students or \$2,000 per month for eligible students with dependents or disabilities.

This benefit would be available from May to August 2020. To be eligible you must have been enrolled in a post-secondary program between December 1, 2019, and August 31, 2020, or you must have graduated from high school in 2020 and have applied for a post-secondary program set to begin before February 1, 2021.

You must be unable to work or unable to find work because of COVID-19 for the 4-week period you apply for the CESB.

International students cannot get the CESB. It's only for Canadian students studying in Canada or outside the country.

As of May 7th, applications for this benefit have not been made available. Keep updated on additional details as they become available here: [Government of Canada](#)

Support for Indigenous Peoples

The Government of Canada is providing \$305 million for a new distinctions-based Indigenous Community Support Fund to address immediate needs in First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Nation communities.

These funds could be used for measures including, but not limited to:

- support for Elders and vulnerable community members,
- measures to address food insecurity,
- educational and other support for children,
- mental health assistance and emergency response services,
- preparedness measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

[Click here to learn more about the Indigenous Community Support Fund](#)

Emergency Child care

Some health care and frontline workers can send their children to emergency child care while they are at work. The full list of people eligible for emergency child care [can be found here](#) and include:

- Federally employed staff including Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) officers and Canada Post employees
- First Nations constables
- additional workers supporting public safety and correctional services

Eligible workers can [click here to find child care centres in their area.](#)

WHAT IS MY UNION DOING?

PSAC recognizes that this is a difficult time for many of our members and we are available to support you during this pandemic. Throughout the month of April, the Ontario Region hosted several webinars to assist the membership on various topics related to COVID-19. The webinars are available online here: [Health and Safety Webinars](#)

Themes presented in the webinars include:

- Your Right to refuse unsafe work
- Who to contact in the Union with your questions and concerns around the safety in your workplace
- Highlighting the xenophobia faced by the Asian communities in Canada
- Work from home tips
- Available mental health and supports

Upcoming webinars:

How to Return to Work Safely
(Date to be determined)

As the government prepares their road map to ease COVID – 19 restrictions, PSAC will continue to provide relevant information and ongoing assistance to the membership.

There is a dedicated page with COVID-19 resources including information for equity seeking members and stories documenting the important work that PSAC members continue to perform (<http://psacunion.ca/covid-19>).

[Click here to stay updated on PSAC Ontario information, upcoming webinars and virtual committee meetings.](#)

Who can I contact for Union help?

PSAC Ontario Regional offices are currently closed to adhere to social distancing directives, however regional

office staff are available by email and phone to answer inquiries and assist members. Please follow this link: [Contact us](#) for the contact information for the office in your region.

HOW ELSE CAN I GET INVOLVED?

Even with social distancing protocols still in place there are ways you can get involved and show support for individuals and communities during the pandemic.

[Support PSAC's current campaigns](#)

PSAC Member Stories

In the fight against COVID-19, PSAC members across Canada have gone above and beyond to ensure the public continues to receive the services they depend on. You can see highlights of some of the work our members do, as well as submit your own stories here: psacunion.ca/covid-19-member-stories

Actions and Resources to Support Workers

Unions across Canada are pushing for greater income supports, safety protections and strong public services to help families during this difficult time. Please take a minute to learn more about these initiatives, which include credit card relief and paid sick leave for all, and how you can get involved: canadianlabour.ca/home/covid-19-response/



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