**Supports Available for Marginalized Populations in BC during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

*Updated July 27th, 2021.*

**Did you lose your job? Do you have to stay home and take care of a family member? Do you have children at home that require supervision?**

Most people will be transferred over to the **Employment Insurance (EI)** system after CERB, from which you will receive **a minimum taxable benefit at a rate of $500/week, or $300/week for extended parental benefits**. There are two branches: regular and special benefits. The major difference between CERB and EI is that claimants will need to self-report on their employment status and apply every 2 weeks to keep receiving their benefits. **EI now has new, more inclusive eligibility criteria as of September 26th, 2020**:

1. Were employed for at least 120 insurable hours in the past 52 weeks.
2. Received the CERB, the 52-week period to accumulate insured hours will be extended
3. Have not quit your job voluntarily, and are ready, willing and capable of working each day (regular)
4. Are temporarily unable to work while you care for someone else (maternity, parental, sickness, compassionate care, and family caregiver benefits)

\*If you received CERB through Service Canada you most likely do not need to apply for EI. If you received CERB through the Canada Revenue Agency, you can apply after the end of your last CERB eligibility period. Find out more about the transition [here](https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/cerb-application/transition.html).

For CERB recipients who don’t qualify for the new EI benefits, they may be eligible for [4 new temporary programs](https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan.html):

1. **The Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB):** For workers who are self-employed or who are not eligible for EI but still require support and would provide $500/week for up to 38 weeks. Apply [here](https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/benefits/recovery-benefit/crb-how-apply.html).
2. **The Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit (CRSB):** For people who are sick or who must self-isolate due to COVID-19 and would provide $500/week for up to two weeks. Apply [here](https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/benefits/recovery-sickness-benefit/crsb-how-apply.html).
3. **The Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit (CRCB):** For people who can’t work because they need to care for a child under the age of 12 or family member if schools and daycares are closed, and for those caring for a child or family member who is sick and/or required to quarantine. It would provide $500/week for up to 6 weeks. Apply [here](https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/benefits/recovery-caregiving-benefit/crcb-how-apply.html).
4. **Canada Workers Benefit:** Provides a refundable tax credit to help people who are working and earning a low income (meaning up to $32,244/year as single Canadian without children; $42,197/year as single-earner family; $56,197 as double-earner family). Find out more [here](https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/child-family-benefits/canada-workers-benefit.html).

If you are on disability, you are eligible for a **one-time, tax-free non-reportable payment of $600,** which will be automatically issued. Find out more [here.](https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/covid19-emergency-benefits/one-time-payment-persons-disabilities.html)

The **BC Child Opportunity Benefit** is starting October 20th, 2020, which is a refundable personal income tax credit that provides an enhanced monthly payment to parents of children until 18. You can calculate the other child and family benefits you are eligible for [here.](https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/child-family-benefits/child-family-benefits-calculator.html) If you are entitled to the Canada Child Benefit for a child under the age of six in January, April, July, or October 2021, you may be eligible for the **CCB young child supplement.** Find out more [here](https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/child-family-benefits/ccb-young-child-supplement.html).

Workers are entitled to up to **42 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave** if they are unable or unavailable to work due to COVID-19. Find out more [here](https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/portfolio/labour/notice-covid-19.html). If you are looking for a job, check out **Canada’s online job bank** [here](https://www.jobbank.gc.ca/findajob/resources/cerb).

**Are you having trouble paying your rent?**

**Rent Banks** exist in some communities which lend money to help with rent. [See if there is one near you.](https://bcrentbank.ca/locations/)

You can also find out if you are eligible for **BC Housing Support** through [this online calculator](https://www.bchousing.org/housing-assistance/rental-assistance/rap-safer-calculator). You can find out about their two Rental Assistance Programs available [here](https://www.bchousing.org/housing-assistance/rental-assistance). It is also important to note that landlords are not allowed to increase rent prices until July 10th, 2021 and you cannot be evicted for any rent unpaid between March 8, 2020 and August 17, 2020 unless you miss a payment on your repayment plan. Find out more [here](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/housing-tenancy/residential-tenancies/covid-19).

If you need help with paying your Hydro bill, BC Hydro offers: **Bill deferral, call 1 800 BCHYDRO (1 800 224 9376).** Fortis BC is also offering **flexible payment options** and **waiving late payment fees.**

You can find a **foodbank** near you [here.](https://www.foodbanksbc.com/find-a-food-bank/)

**Think you have been exposed to COVID-19 at work?**

You can file a **Workers Compensation Claim** with WorkSafeBC by phoning 1 888 WORKERS (1 888 967 5377).

**Need to take time off work due to Covid-19, but worried for your job?**

Workers are entitled to **3 days of unpaid Covid-19 leave** for a given set of circumstances listed [here](https://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/covid-19/employee-illness-leave.html).

**Need childcare?**

Find out more information about funding and referrals for childcare in BC [here](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/caring-for-young-children/how-to-access-child-care).

**Looking for some free mental health support?**

The federal government created **Wellness Together**, a hub for resources and support for those experiencing mental distress amid the pandemic. Check it out [here](https://ca.portal.gs/). You can see a list of other online free supports available in BC [here](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/managing-your-health/mental-health-substance-use/virtual-supports-covid-19).

The **Mobile Response Team** is also available 24/7 to support the mental well-being and psychological safety of frontline healthcare workers who are experiencing distress and mental health concerns in response to COVID-19. Call: [1-888-686-3022](about:blank) or Email: [MRT@phsa.ca](mailto:MRT@phsa.ca)

**If you are having thoughts of harming yourself or others, seek help immediately by calling 1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433) or calling 911.**

**Do you need help but you’re not sure what kind?**

The Canadian government has created an online ‘quiz’ that asks you a few simple questions about your situation and directs you to the appropriate form of governmental support. It can be found [here](https://covid-benefits.alpha.canada.ca/en/start).