

# **Useful Information regarding provincial and federal benefits**

## **\$300 extra per month on PWD during COVID-19 Crisis**

### **What This Means: You will get an extra \$300/month on your PWD Cheque**

British Columbia will provide an automatic \$300-monthly COVID-19 crisis supplement for the next three months for everyone on income assistance or disability assistance who is not eligible for the emergency federal support programs (including the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, CERB ).

This extra \$300 will be added directly to your provincial support cheque starting with the April 22, 2020 payment. (It is automatic so you don't need to apply!) The supplement will be provided for April, May, and June.

This extra income benefit will not affect your PWD cheque.

## **PWD Exemption for Employment Insurance**

### **What This Means: If you lose your job and get Employment Insurance (EI), you will still get the same PWD payments**

For people in B.C. currently receiving income assistance or disability assistance, the Province will temporarily exempt federal employment insurance benefits, including the new \$2,000 Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB). These payments will be fully exempted for the next three months, so people receiving income assistance and disability assistance in B.C. will benefit from these new emergency federal support programs, without any reductions to their monthly assistance payments.

## **\$52 Transportation Supplement**

### **What This Means: The money from your Bus Pass -- \$52/month -- will be added to your monthly PWD Cheque**

With the current province-wide suspension of BC Transit and Translink bus fares, the Province will also provide the \$52 Transportation Supplement to all BC Bus Pass Program users receiving income assistance and disability assistance for the duration of the fare suspension.

This will be included in the April cheque and for each subsequent month while the fare suspension remains in place.

## **What is the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, CERB and how much money do you get?**

**What This Means:** If you lost your job or are suddenly underemployed because of COVID-19, as of April 6, people can start applying for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB).

The Canada Emergency Response Benefit is temporary income support for people who have stopped working because of COVID-19.

If you qualify, you are eligible for \$500 a week for up to 16 weeks. Payments are made in blocks of four weeks, for a total of \$2,000 a month.

The benefit is taxable but the government won't take the tax off before sending it to you. You will get \$2,000 a month that you need to report as income when you get around to filing your taxes for this year and that's when the appropriate amount of tax will be calculated. This means that you might need to pay some of it back at tax time next spring.

[CERB will be available from March 15 to October 3.](#)

If you apply today, and you've been out of work since March 15, your benefits will be applied retroactively to the start date of the CERB—March 15. You can't apply for the benefit after December 02.

### **Who qualifies for the CERB?**

To be able to get the CERB you need to live in Canada and be at least 15 years old, have a valid Social Insurance Number (SIN), and have had no employment for at least 14 days in a row, or expect to have no income for two weeks during the first month of CERB. For the following months, you expect to have no employment income. If you quit your job, you're not eligible.

The CERB is for people who were laid off from their job or had their hours reduced to zero, or anyone quarantined, sick, or taking care of someone ill because of COVID-19. You don't need any kind of doctor's note or medical certificate. You just need to apply.

The CERB is also for parents who are away from work to take care of children or other dependents because of a school or daycare closure.

[You also need to have made at least \\$5,000 from employment, self-employment, government benefits, or a combination of these, in the past 12 months before your application date.](#)

### **Should I apply for Employment Insurance (EI) if I qualify for it?**

If you're eligible for EI and you haven't yet applied for it, you should apply for the CERB instead because EI regular benefits and sickness benefits are now being merged with the CERB system. This migration was announced by federal finance minister Bill Morneau on March 25. **As of April 6, you won't have a choice between the CERB and EI.**

### **I get support from the provincial government. Will this cancel out or eat into the CERB?**

No, the CERB allows you to continue to receive provincial or territorial aid at the same time as the federal emergency relief benefits.

### **How do I apply?**

Starting Monday, you can apply online or by phone. If you want your money faster, you should sign up for direct deposit through the CRA by phone or online. You can also sign up for this service through your bank. (Please refer to links below)

<https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/cerb-application.html>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/about-canada-revenue-agency-cra/direct-deposit.html>

**Phone no: 18002067218**

### **When should I apply for the CERB?**

Because there will be millions of people trying to apply at the same time, there are guidelines on when you should apply based on your birth month.

If you were born in January, February, or March, you can apply on Mondays;

Tuesdays are for people born in April, May, or June;

Wednesdays are for July, August, or September birthdays;

Thursdays are earmarked for people born in October, November, or December.

And Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays are a free-for-all.