

COVID-19: The Canada Emergency Response Benefit and the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy

Over the past week, the federal government has shared additional details about programs that provide financial help to individuals and businesses because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you intend to apply for the CERB, you can get started this weekend by familiarizing yourself with the [application process](#) and registering for your [Canada Revenue Agency \(CRA\) My Account](#) ahead of applications opening on Monday, April 6, 2020.

To proceed with applications in an orderly fashion, please ensure you apply during the appropriate window, as designated by the CRA:

If you were born in the month of	Apply for the CERB on	Your best day to apply
January, February or March	Mondays	April 6
April, May, or June	Tuesdays	April 7
July, August, or September	Wednesdays	April 8
October, November, or December	Thursdays	April 9
Any month	Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays	

The government has moved quickly to roll out these significant support measures. Their goal is to include as many Canadians as possible and make the application process relatively frictionless.

“If you are able to say ‘Yes, I’m not working. Yes, I had an income and I’m someone who is not working because of this (coronavirus) outbreak, directly or indirectly,’ you’re going to qualify for this new benefit,” said Sean Fraser, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance. “We’re not going to be requiring evidence or notes from employers or doctors that are only going to

overburden an already overburdened system.”

While it appears that initially applying for the CERB won't be needlessly complicated, APPLICANTS should expect to be asked for supporting documentation later in the in process. You will also be able to apply by calling the automated toll-free line at 1-800-959-2019.

Eligible employers are expected to be able to apply for the CEWS through the CRA's My Business Account portal, as well as a web-based application, in three to six weeks.

In addition to providing support for Canadians through the CERB and the CEWS, the government has taken steps to stabilize the real estate sector through several other measures:

- **The Bank of Canada lowered its target** for the overnight rate to 0.25.
- **The Bank of Canada** will be purchasing about \$500 million in mortgage bonds per week.
- **The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation** will acquire up to \$50 billion of insured mortgage pools.
- **A deferral of GST and HST remittances and customs duty payments** for businesses, including self-employed individuals, to June 30, 2020.
- Launch of the **Canada Emergency Business Account**, which will provide interest-free loans of up to \$40,000 to small businesses and not-for-profits, to help cover their operating costs. The program will be implemented by eligible financial institutions in cooperation with Export Development Canada (EDC). Repaying the balance of the loan on or before December 31, 2022 will result in loan forgiveness of 25% (up to \$10,000).
- **Export Development Canada will guarantee new operating credit and cash flow term loans** that financial institutions can extend to Canadian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), up to \$6.25 million.
- **A co-lending program for SMEs** where the Business Development Bank of Canada works with financial institutions to co-lend term loans to SMEs for their operational cash flow requirements.

The government is constantly assessing the evolving situation and is likely to introduce additional measures as it deems necessary.