



# COVID-19 UPDATE



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

## HEATHER McPHERSON Member of Parliament Edmonton Strathcona

[f Heather McPherson MP](#) [HMcPhersonMP](#) [Heathermacnow](#) [www.heathermcpherson.ndp.ca](http://www.heathermcpherson.ndp.ca)

April 23, 2020

Dear Friends,

It's been a very hard spring.

It's been an especially painful spring for so many of us who are grieving loved ones without the comfort of our friends and family, without the traditions that sustain us.

I hope you are doing well, managing through these uncertain and deeply challenging times. I am here for you regardless of your need or issue. If you need help, please reach out.

COVID-19 has turned our world upside down. Who would have thought a few months ago that the most important thing we could do to help others is to simply stay home? But that is still the best advice we have — wash your hands, stay home as much as possible, and engage in physical distancing when you do need to go out. These simple things will save lives.

This pandemic is taking a toll on our front-line workers and by doing our part, we're protecting them as well as ourselves. I know you share my gratitude for the service of all the frontline workers — nurses, doctors, and other healthcare professionals and the people who support them, social service professionals taking care of seniors, families, and vulnerable populations, and the ones now revealed as essential to our survival — our grocery and pharmacy workers,



**March 13, 2020 — Member of Parliament Heather McPherson addressing the press on the government's response to COVID-19.**

truck and transit drivers, and postal workers, among so many others.

I'm also grateful for our incredible community. I've heard from so many of you these past few weeks. You've shared your struggles and fears but also your ideas and solutions. Many of you have written of your concern for others and I've appreciated learning the depth of support for improving our social support systems, especially when we have so many people just getting by.

It's humbling to see this pandemic through the eyes of those most impacted — our seniors and vulnerable populations, those

who must self-isolate, those who are forced to choose between their health and paying the bills, those caring for their children or others, those who have lost their jobs, and those who have lost hope.

For many Albertans the COVID-19 crisis was one more blow to bear. As you know, even before COVID-19 struck, Alberta was reeling from economic collapse, massive job loss, and unprecedented unemployment, with plummeting energy prices, and deep provincial cuts to healthcare, institutions, and services.

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Pour lire ce rapport en français, visitez le  
<https://heathermcpherson.ndp.ca/news/mise-jour-de-la-deputee-sur-la-covid-19>

## Support for Individuals

### Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)

The Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) provides \$2,000/4-week period, for up to 16 weeks total. It is available from March 15 to September 26.

The CERB supports workers impacted by the pandemic. It is limited to workers who have stopped working or have income less than \$1,000 (over a 4-week benefit period) because of COVID-19, or unemployed workers whose EI benefits have run out since the beginning of this year.

#### Eligibility requirements include:

- Did not quit job voluntarily
- Earned at least \$5,000 in 2019 or in the last twelve months from employment, self-employment, or provincial or federal benefits related to maternity or paternity leave
- Reside in Canada and have a valid SIN

#### You must apply to receive this benefit.

#### Apply online:

[www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/cerb-application](http://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/cerb-application)

**Apply by phone:** 1-800-959-2019 or 1-800-959-2041

**Automated helpline:** 1-833-966-2099

Note: You must file reports if you are receiving CERB via an EI application. CERB is taxable income but the taxes are not deducted.

[www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/cerb-application/questions](http://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/cerb-application/questions)

### Student Loans

Repayment of Canada Student Loans and Canada Apprentice Loans has been suspended from March 30 to September 30, 2020, with no accrual of interest.

[www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/education/student-aid/notice-covid-19.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/education/student-aid/notice-covid-19.html)

### Mortgage Deferrals

Canadians can contact their financial institution to request mortgage deferrals for up to 6 months if their income is harmed or stopped due to COVID-19.

Note: Deferrals move payments back to a later date, but interest still accrues over the deferral period. With some banks, mortgage deferrals may affect recipients' credit rating.

[www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/finance-and-investing/mortgage-loan-insurance/the-resource/covid19-understanding-mortgage-payment-deferral](http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/finance-and-investing/mortgage-loan-insurance/the-resource/covid19-understanding-mortgage-payment-deferral)

### Tax Filing Due Date

Tax filing due date has been moved to June 1.

Note: Canadians receiving the Canada Child Benefit or GST Credit are encouraged to file as soon as possible to ensure that benefits are calculated properly.

[www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/campaigns/covid-19-update/covid-19-filing-payment-dates.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/campaigns/covid-19-update/covid-19-filing-payment-dates.html)

### Registered Retirement Income Funds

The required minimum withdrawals from RRIFs has been decreased by 25 per cent for 2020.

[www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/registered-plans-administrators/registered-retirement-savings-plans-registered-retirement-income-funds-rrsps-rrifs/economic-statement-measure-annuitants-rrsp-rrif.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/registered-plans-administrators/registered-retirement-savings-plans-registered-retirement-income-funds-rrsps-rrifs/economic-statement-measure-annuitants-rrsp-rrif.html)

### Canada Child Benefit (CCB)

Eligible Canadians will receive an additional \$300 per child from CCB for the 2019-20 year starting in May.

[www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/campaigns/covid-19-update/covid-19-ccb-payment-increase.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/campaigns/covid-19-update/covid-19-ccb-payment-increase.html)

### GST Special Payment

Eligible Canadians received a special payment through the GST credit on April 9. The payment was equal to the total expected payments in 2019-20 and was in addition to regular rebates.

[www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/child-family-benefits/covid-19-gsthstc-increase/covid-19-frequently-asked-questions-gsthstc-increase.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/child-family-benefits/covid-19-gsthstc-increase/covid-19-frequently-asked-questions-gsthstc-increase.html)

**You can find links to all programs on my website.**

## Support for Businesses & Not-for-profits

### Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA)

The Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA) provides interest-free loans of up to \$40,000 to small businesses and not-for-profits affected by COVID-19 to help cover operating costs. Recipients can have 25% (up to \$10,000) of the loan forgiven if paid back before December 31, 2022.

To be eligible, businesses and charities will need to have paid between \$20,000 to \$1.5 million in total payroll in 2019.

Small businesses and not-for-profit organizations apply by contacting their financial institution.

[www.ceba-cuec.ca](http://www.ceba-cuec.ca)

### Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy — 75% (CEWS)

The Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) supports employers of all sizes and across all sectors that have suffered a drop in gross revenues of at least 15% in March, and 30% in April and May. The wage subsidy covers 75% of an employee's wages, up to a maximum \$847/week per employee. The program is retroactive to March 15 and scheduled through June 6, 2020.

Employers who are eligible for the CEWS are entitled to receive a 100% refund for certain employer contributions to EI and the CPP paid in respect of employees who are on leave with pay.

Applications open April 27 through the CRA's My Business Account portal: [www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/e-services/e-services-businesses/business-account.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/e-services/e-services-businesses/business-account.html)

[www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/subsidy/emergency-wage-subsidy](http://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/subsidy/emergency-wage-subsidy)

### Temporary 10% Wage Subsidy

The Temporary 10% Wage Subsidy is a three-month measure that allows eligible employers to reduce the amount of payroll deduction required to be remitted to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). The subsidy is equal to 10% of the remuneration paid from March 18, 2020 to June 19, 2020, up to \$1,375 for each eligible employee to a maximum of \$25,000 total per employer.

Employers do not need to apply for the subsidy. They calculate the subsidy themselves, then reduce payroll remittances accordingly. The subsidy is taxable and must be reported as income in the year in which the subsidy is received.

Note: The Wage Subsidy programs are not cumulative. Benefits received for one program will be deducted from the other.

[www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/campaigns/covid-19-update/frequently-asked-questions-wage-subsidy-small-businesses](http://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/campaigns/covid-19-update/frequently-asked-questions-wage-subsidy-small-businesses)

### Taxes

GST remittances and Customs Duty payments can be deferred until June 30. Income tax newly owed by businesses between now and September can be deferred until after August 31.

[www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/news/2020/03/additional-support-for-canadian-businesses-from-the-economic-impact-of-covid-19](http://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/news/2020/03/additional-support-for-canadian-businesses-from-the-economic-impact-of-covid-19)

**You can find links to all programs on my website.**

## Additional Announcements

(No details available as of April 23. Check at [heathermcperson.ndp.ca](http://heathermcperson.ndp.ca) for ongoing updates.)

### Essential Workers: Wage Top Up

A temporary top-up to the salaries of workers deemed essential in the fight against COVID-19, who make less than \$2,500 a month — announced April 15.

### Students: Canada Emergency Student Benefit

The Canada Emergency Student Benefit (CESB) — announced April 22 — will provide \$1,250 per month, May to August, for current students or students who graduated since December 2019 and cannot find work because of COVID-19

### Businesses: Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance

The Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance program (CECRA) — announced April 16 — will provide loans, including forgivable loans, to commercial property owners who in turn will lower or forgo the rent of small businesses for the months of April, May, and June.

### Cultural, Heritage, and Sports Organizations: COVID-19 Emergency Support Fund for Cultural, Heritage and Sport Organizations

The fund will help address the financial needs of affected organizations within these sectors so they can continue to support artists and athletes.

**Questions or Issues?** Please contact my office by emailing [heather.mcperson@parl.gc.ca](mailto:heather.mcperson@parl.gc.ca) or phoning **780-495-8404**.

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I believe the federal government must play a significant role in helping Alberta through these difficult times. Since October, I have called repeatedly for deep investment in Alberta to create jobs and opportunities, to diversify our economy, and to build the physical, intellectual, and technological infrastructure necessary to ensure that Albertans have a sustainable economic future. I will continue to advocate for solutions that work for everyday Albertans and not corporate CEOs and shareholders.

We will get through this and we will be stronger for it. But it is going to take time and things will not and should not go back to how they were before. This is our chance to make sure that we build a society that works for everyone.

We have an opportunity to hit the reset button and build a new future with good jobs for all Albertans in a diverse economy. We can have an economy not reliant on one resource sector, but based on Albertan ingenuity, creativity, and enterprise. We can build more of our economy around our leadership in industry, energy, innovation, new technology, agriculture, and culture.

We have an opportunity to respond to the climate crisis with a coherent plan based around job creation and energy infrastructure.

I'm optimistic.

I see the strength and dignity with which people are facing these challenges. I see the creativity, the ingenuity, and most of all, I see the kindness — the kindness of thousands of people caring for one another in every conceivable way while waiting for the day they can come together again.

Please remember that we are here for you. My staff and I have helped hundreds of people already with issues related to COVID-19 and federal supports. I've added staff to help with the workload this crisis has created and while we are not physically in the office now, we are monitoring email and phone seven days a week.

We will do everything we can to help you and our community get through this crisis.

All my best. I look forward to hearing from you and, one day soon, seeing you again.



## HOW I CAN HELP

**My staff and I are here to support constituents with COVID-19 concerns and programs and all other federal matters.**

**Email us at [heather.mcpherson@parl.gc.ca](mailto:heather.mcpherson@parl.gc.ca).**

### **My Edmonton constituency office can help with:**

- COVID-19 Programs
- Employment Insurance (EI)
- Citizenship and Immigration
- Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)
- Canada Pension Plan (CPP), Old Age Security (OAS), and Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS)
- Student loans
- Other federal programs and services

### **My Ottawa office can help with:**

- Accessing information on bills, laws, policies, and statements in the House of Commons
- Submitting a petition to the House
- Visiting the House of Commons and attending Question Period

### **Greetings and Congratulatory Messages**

I will send or request special greetings for birthdays, wedding anniversaries, and other special occasions.

#### **Heather McPherson MP**

Any birthday, anniversary, graduation, citizenship ceremony, or other occasion.

#### **Prime Minister**

**Birthdays:** 65th and up, at five-year intervals

**Anniversaries:** 25th and up, at five-year intervals

(Minimum 6 weeks' notice required)

#### **Governor General**

**Birthdays:** 90th and up, at five-year intervals

**Anniversaries:** 50th and up, at five-year intervals

(Minimum 8 weeks' notice required)

#### **Her Majesty the Queen**

**Birthdays:** 100th and up, at five-year intervals

**Anniversaries:** 60th and up, at five-year intervals

(Minimum 8 weeks' notice required)

### **Government Programs and Services**

Information about Government of Canada programs and services can be obtained by calling 1-800-O-CANADA (1-800-622-6232), TTY 1-800-926-9105, or going online to [www.canada.ca](http://www.canada.ca).

#### **Filing your taxes**

To order tax forms, call the Canada Revenue Agency at 1-800-959-8281. You can also visit [www.canada.ca/tax](http://www.canada.ca/tax) to order or print forms.

#### **Seniors benefits**

For information on CPP, OAS, GIS, and other seniors benefits visit [www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/publicpensions.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/publicpensions.html)

#### **Finding a job**

For career planning supports, job searching assistance, and employment opportunities visit the Canada Job Bank at [www.jobbank.gc.ca](http://www.jobbank.gc.ca)

#### **Student loans**

For information on applying for student loans or getting repayment assistance visit [www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/education/student-aid.html](http://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/education/student-aid.html)

### **How to contact Heather McPherson MP**

**Email:** [heather.mcpherson@parl.gc.ca](mailto:heather.mcpherson@parl.gc.ca)

#### **In Edmonton**

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Phone: 780-495-8404

Fax: 780-495-8403

#### **In Ottawa**

House of Commons

915 Confederation Building

Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Phone: 613-995-5342

#### **Edmonton Office Hours**

The office is closed to the public.

We are still providing service seven days per week.

**Website:** [heathermcpherson.ndp.ca](http://heathermcpherson.ndp.ca)