



COVID-19 SUPPORTS AND PROGRAMS

This Help Sheet is funded by the Law Foundation of BC.

Disability Alliance BC (DABC) has prepared this Help Sheet to provide an overview of the additional supports and measures that may assist you during the COVID-19 health emergency. Please note that this Help Sheet is not a comprehensive guide, nor does space permit a full discussion of eligibility criteria for each benefit; rather, it is intended to help direct you to available resources.

Due to the evolving situation concerning COVID-19, many of these benefits are under development and/or changing daily, so it is important to check the news and government websites for the most current information.

Financial Supports

Canadian Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)

CERB is a temporary federal income support for eligible workers who have lost income because of COVID-19. It is a taxable benefit of \$2,000 every four weeks for up to 28 weeks.

To receive the benefit:

- You must have had employment or self-employment income of at least \$5000 in 2019 or in the 12 months prior to the date of the application.
- You must have lost employment or self-employment income due to COVID-19.
- Your current income from employment and self-employment must be less than \$1000 per month.
- You must be 15 years old or older.



Disability Alliance BC

Information in this Help Sheet is based on the legislation that was current at the time of writing.

The legislation and policy may be subject to change. Please check the date on this Help Sheet.



Seasonal workers and people receiving EI may also qualify to receive CERB.

For more information:

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

There have been news reports saying that everyone who applies for CERB will receive it, even if they are not eligible. We have not been able to verify these reports, but note that the government will likely review eligibility later. If you receive CERB even though you do not qualify for it, you will have to pay it back to the government, so it is important to review the eligibility criteria before applying.

As CERB is a taxable benefit, we encourage those eligible for CERB to also contact DABC about eligibility for the Disability Tax Credit.

CERB Transitioning to Modified Employment Insurance (EI) & Recovery Benefits

According to the federal government's website, CERB is only available until October 3. You can apply no later than December 2, 2020 for payments retroactive to within that period: <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/cerb-application/questions.html>.

The government has indicated that new EI and recovery benefits will be available after CERB ends.

CPP-Disability & CERB

The federal government has said that receipt of CERB will not affect CPP-Disability Benefits. Our understanding is that if you are eligible for both CERB and CPP-D, you can receive both with no clawback.

For more information:

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

One-time Federal COVID-19 Payment for Persons with Disabilities

The federal government has recently announced that it will issue a one-time payment of up to \$600 for people with disabilities in recognition of additional expenses due to the pandemic. You do not have to apply for the one-time payment, it will be automatically issued to:

- holders of a valid Disability Tax Credit (DTC) certificate, and
- beneficiaries as of July 1, 2020 of:
 - Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPP-D); or



- one of the disability supports provided by Veterans Affairs Canada.

If you are eligible but never applied for the DTC, or your certificate expired in 2019, you must apply by September 25, 2020.

We expect the one-time payment will be issued beginning this fall, but do not have any specific information on the timing of the payment yet.

Income Assistance & Persons with Disabilities (PWD) Benefits

COVID-19 Emergency Measures

The BC government has announced the following new COVID-19 emergency measures:

- People who receive Income Assistance, PWD benefits, or the Seniors Supplement, but do not qualify for EI or the CERB will receive a supplement of \$300 per month until the December 16, 2020 cheque issue (for January 2021).
- You do not need to apply for the \$300 supplement. If you already receive PWD or Income Assistance, the supplement will automatically be added to your cheque.
- EI and the CERB are temporarily exempt for Income Assistance and PWD recipients. This means that if you receive EI or the CERB, it will not affect your PWD or Income Assistance benefits (but you will not receive the \$300 supplement). You are still required to report EI and CERB income to the Ministry, even though it is exempt. The Ministry has stated that the CERB will be exempt for the duration of that benefit. It is unclear how long the Ministry will exempt EI.

For more information: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/family-social-supports/income-assistance/on-assistance/covid>.

Emergency / Disaster Supplement

The Emergency / Disaster Supplement is also temporarily available for income assistance and PWD recipients. You must apply (and be approved for) this supplement in order to receive it (i.e. it is not an automatic entitlement).

To be eligible:

- You must be receiving income assistance, PWD, Medical Services Only (MSO) or hardship assistance;
- You require the supplement to pay for an unexpected expense or obtain an item unexpectedly needed due to COVID-19;



- You are unable to pay for the expense or item because of COVID-19, and
- Failure to pay the expense or obtain the item will result in imminent financial loss or danger to the physical health to you or someone in your family unit.

The application process for the Emergency / Disaster Crisis Supplement is the same as for regular crisis supplements. You can contact the Ministry by phone (1-866-866-0800), My Self Serve, or in person to apply.

For more information: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/policies-for-government/bcea-policy-and-procedure-manual/general-supplements-and-programs/crisis-supplement>.

BC Emergency Benefit for Workers

The BC Emergency Benefit for Workers will provide a one-time, tax-free, \$1,000 payment for BC residents whose ability to work has been affected by COVID-19. Unfortunately, people who receive income assistance or PWD are not eligible for this Benefit.

For more information: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/covid-19-financial-supports/emergency-benefit-workers>.

Housing

Evictions

The ban on issuing evictions for non-payment of rent is over as of August 18, 2020. This means that tenants must pay rent in full on the day it is due or they can be evicted.

A landlord can take steps to evict a tenant for unpaid rent or utilities if the tenant failed to pay rent that was due before March 18, 2020, or fails to pay full rent due after August 17, 2020 (for most renters that would be September 1, 2020).

A landlord cannot evict a tenant for unpaid rent or utilities that came due during the specified period of March 18, 2020 to August 17, 2020 unless the landlord has given the tenant a repayment plan for the unpaid amount and the tenant has defaulted on the repayment plan. The rules about repayment plans are complicated. For more information: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/housing-tenancy/residential-tenancies/covid-19>.



Rent Increases

A landlord can give a notice for a rent increase, but it will not come into effect until December 1, 2020.

For more information:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/housing-tenancy/residential-tenancies/covid-19>.



**This Help Sheet was prepared by Advocacy Access, a program of Disability Alliance BC.
Thank you to the Law Foundation of British Columbia for funding this BC Disability Benefits Help Sheet.**

1450-605 Robson St., Vancouver, BC V6B 5J3 • tel: 604-872-1278 • fax 604-875-9227
toll free 1-800-663-1278 • www.disabilityalliancebc.org

The full Help Sheet series and all DABC publications are available free at:
www.disabilityalliancebc.org/publications.



we are all
connected

