

Coronavirus Stimulus Analysis

Today the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance announced a stimulus package to combat the effects of COVID-19 on Canada's economy.

Two Excellent Summaries can be found at the links below from the Prime Minister's Office and the Department of Finance

<https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2020/03/18/prime-minister-announces-more-support-workers-and-businesses-through>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan.html#business>

For **Business** we have four primary measures:

- **Custom Incentive Packages for Exporters** - Finance Minister via the Canada Account with Export Development Canada will consider custom packages (loans, guarantees or insurance policies;) for exporters when deemed to be in the National Interest.
- **Flexibility for Tax Filing** - The Canada Revenue Agency will allow all businesses to defer, until after August 31, 2020, the payment of any income tax amounts that become owing on or after today and before September 2020. This relief would apply to tax balances due, as well as instalments, under Part I of the *Income Tax Act*. No interest or penalties will accumulate on these amounts during this period.
- **"Small Business" wage subsidy** - To support businesses that are facing revenue losses and to help prevent lay-offs, the government is proposing to provide eligible small employers a temporary wage subsidy for a period of three months. The subsidy will be equal to 10% of remuneration paid during that period, up to a maximum subsidy of \$1,375 per employee and \$25,000 per employer. Businesses will be able to benefit immediately from this support by reducing their remittances of income tax withheld on their employees' remuneration. Employers benefiting from this measure will include corporations eligible for the small business deduction, as well as non-profit organizations and charities.
- **Business Credit Availability Program (BCAP)** - will allow the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC) and Export Development Canada (EDC) to provide more than \$10 billion of additional support, largely targeted to small and medium-sized businesses.

There are several other measures, largely in cooperation with key financial institutions, that have supported financial market liquidity and operation. This includes the lowering of the Bank of Canada's prime rate by 100 basis points, lowering the domestic stability buffer for banks and the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation being authorized to purchase up to \$50 billion of insured mortgages. All of these measures are designed to promote lending and to keep liquidity flowing through the economy.

There are four primary measures for Individuals:

Temporary Income Support for Workers and Parents

For Canadians without paid sick leave (or similar workplace accommodation) who are sick, quarantined or forced to stay home to care for children, the Government is:

- Waiving the one-week waiting period for those individuals in imposed quarantine that claim Employment Insurance (EI) sickness benefits. This temporary measure will be in effect as of March 15, 2020.
- Waiving the requirement to provide a medical certificate to access EI sickness benefits.
- Introducing the Emergency Care Benefit providing up to \$900 bi-weekly, for up to 15 weeks. This flat-payment Benefit would be administered through the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and provide income support to:
 - Workers, including the self-employed, who are quarantined or sick with COVID-19 but do not qualify for EI sickness benefits.
 - Workers, including the self-employed, who are taking care of a family member who is sick with COVID-19, such as an elderly parent, but do not qualify for EI sickness benefits.
 - Parents with children who require care or supervision due to school closures, and are unable to earn employment income, irrespective of whether they qualify for EI or not.

Application for the Benefit will be available in April 2020, and require Canadians to attest that they meet the eligibility requirements. They will need to re-attest every two weeks to reconfirm their eligibility. Canadians will select one of three channels to apply for the Benefit:

1. by accessing it on their CRA MyAccount secure portal;
2. by accessing it from their secure My Service Canada Account; or
3. by calling a toll free number equipped with an automated application process.

Longer-Term Income Support for Workers

For Canadians who lose their jobs or face reduced hours as a result of COVID's impact, the Government is:

- Introducing an Emergency Support Benefit delivered through the CRA to provide up to \$5.0 billion in support to workers who are not eligible for EI and who are facing unemployment.
- Implementing the EI Work Sharing Program, which provides EI benefits to workers who agree to reduce their normal working hour as a result of developments beyond the control of their employers, by extending the eligibility of such agreements to 76 weeks, easing eligibility requirements, and streamlining the application process. This was announced by the Prime Minister on March 11, 2020.

Income Support for Individuals Who Need It Most

For over 12 million low- and modest-income families, who may require additional help with their finances, the Government is proposing to provide a one-time special payment by early May 2020 through the Goods and Services Tax credit (GSTC). This will double the maximum annual GSTC payment amounts for the 2019-20 benefit year. The average boost to income for those benefitting from this measure will be close to \$400 for single individuals and close to \$600 for couples. This measure will inject \$5.5 billion into the economy.

For over 3.5 million families with children, who may also require additional support, the Government is proposing to increase the maximum annual Canada Child Benefit (CCB) payment amounts, only for the 2019-20 benefit year, by \$300 per child. The overall increase for families receiving CCB will be approximately \$550 on average; these families will receive an extra \$300 per child as part of their May payment. In total, this measure will deliver almost \$2 billion in extra support.

Together, the proposed enhancements of the GSTC and CCB will give a single parent with two children and low to modest income nearly \$1,500 in additional short-term support.

Flexibility for Taxpayers

In order to provide greater flexibility to Canadians who may be experiencing hardships during the COVID-19 outbreak, the Canada Revenue Agency will defer the filing due date for the 2019 tax returns of individuals, including certain trusts.

- For individuals (other than trusts), the return filing due date will be deferred until June 1, 2020. However, the Agency encourages individuals who expect to receive benefits under the GSTC or the Canada Child Benefit not to delay the filing of their return to ensure their entitlements for the 2020-21 benefit year are properly determined.
- For trusts having a taxation year ending on December 31, 2019, the return filing due date will be deferred until May 1, 2020.

The Canada Revenue Agency will allow all taxpayers to defer, until after August 31, 2020, the payment of any income tax amounts that become owing on or after today and before September 2020. This relief would apply to tax balances due, as well as instalments, under Part I of the *Income Tax Act*. No interest or penalties will accumulate on these amounts during this period.

In order to reduce the necessity for taxpayers and tax preparers to meet in person during this difficult time, and to reduce administrative burden, effective immediately the Canada Revenue Agency will recognize electronic signatures as having met the signature requirements of the *Income Tax Act*, as a temporary administrative measure