



Grand Council Treaty #3

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Provincial and Federal Governments Announce COVID-19 Response Packages

Ontario's Action Plan: Responding to COVID-19

Wednesday the Ontario Government unveiled its Ontario's Action Plan: Responding to COVID-19. The \$17 billion package includes \$7 billion in new spending and \$10 billion in tax breaks and deferrals designed to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic.

The package includes the following:

In Health care:

- \$935 million in additional funding for hospitals and health facilities. This includes \$341 million for creating 1000 acute care and 500 critical care beds
- \$243 million for surge capacity in the long-term care sector
- \$160 million for public health initiatives – including COVID-19 screening and testing
- \$75 million for personal protective equipment and other medical supplies for frontline workers

In Addressing Family Costs:

- \$337 million in one-time payments of \$200 per child under 12 years old (\$250 for children with special needs) to offset childcare costs
- Doubling payments to low income seniors through the Guaranteed Annual Income System from \$166 to \$332
- Suspending student loan payments (OSAP), including accrued interest, for six months
- \$9 million for the Low-income Energy Assistance Program to subsidize energy bills
- Moving to 24-hour a day, off-peak electricity rates

In Community Supports and Contingency Funding:

- \$26 million for indigenous communities to acquire health care supplies and services
- \$148 million to charitable and non-profit organizations support to Consolidated Municipal Service Managers and District Social Services Administration Boards
- \$1 billion in a COVID-19 contingency fund
- \$1.3 billion in a general contingency fund
- \$2.5 billion in a reserve fund

In Business Supports:

- \$6 billion to allow businesses will get five months of interest and penalty relief to file and make payments for provincially administered taxes
- \$1.9 billion for employers will be allowed to defer Workplace Safety and Insurance Board payments for six months
- \$1.8 billion will be used to defer municipal remittance of education property tax to school boards for three months, allowing municipalities to provide property tax deferrals to residents and businesses

Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan

The Government of Canada also announced Wednesday the streamlining of previously announced initiatives. The most significant of these is the creation of the **Canada Emergency Response Benefit program (CERB)**. This new program merges the previously announced Emergency Care Benefit and Emergency Support Benefit and offers income support for up to 16 weeks to those who lose pay because of the pandemic.

The CERB consists of a taxable benefit of \$2,000 a month for up to 4 months to:

- Workers who must stop working due to COVID19 and do not have access to paid leave or other income support

- Workers who are sick, quarantined, or taking care of someone who is sick with COVID-19
- Working parents who must stay home without pay to care for children that are sick or need additional care because of school and daycare closures
- Workers who remain employed but are not being paid because there is currently not sufficient work and their employer has asked them not to come to work
- Wage earners and self-employed individuals, including contract workers, who would not otherwise be eligible for Employment Insurance

Wage earners, contract workers and the self-employed over the age of 16 who have earned more than \$5,000 in the past year who do not qualify for Employment Insurance (EI) can apply **when the online portal becomes available in early April**. The first payments can be expected within 10 days. CERB payments will be issued every four weeks, and will be available from March 15, 2020 to October 3, 2020.

Additionally, with Bill C-13, the Federal government announced:

- \$2 billion to boost to the Canada Child Benefit delivering an extra \$300 per child as part of the Canada Child Benefit Payment delivered in May
- Waiving the requirement for a medical certificate to access EI sickness benefits for those who become sick or are ordered to self-isolate or quarantine
- A six-month, interest-free halt on student loan payments
- Reducing the required minimum withdrawals from Registered Retirement Income Funds (RRIFs) by 25% for 2020
- A doubling of funding to the homeless care program for purchasing beds and physical barriers to provide for social distancing and reducing overcrowding in shelters
- Extending tax deadlines to June 1, or to August 31 those tax payments due after today but before September
- A one-time special payment in early May through the Goods and Services Tax Credit to low and modest-income families that averages up to \$400 for single people and \$600 for couples
- \$305 million for a new Indigenous Community Support Fund to address immediate needs in First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nation communities.
- \$50 million for women's shelters and sexual assault centres for capacity and pandemic planning

In this unprecedented time Grand Council Treaty 3 has been coordinating efforts with regional service providers and both levels of government to combat the spread of COVID-19.

“Grand Council Treaty 3 will continue to work with both levels of government to ensure that the funding announced in these packages reaches our communities where it is needed most,” said Ogichidaa Francis Kavanaugh. “First Nations communities in Treaty 3 and throughout Canada are some of the most vulnerable during this crisis. But with proper support from both levels of government, the response efforts we have already seen by citizens in our communities and by service providers throughout the region will be able to continue and we can all help keep our communities safe.”

Communities and organizations are encouraged to maintain contact with both levels of government to ensure that their unique needs are met by these plans and to share solutions. Citizens are also encouraged to seek the benefits afforded within these plans and to reach out to the offices of their representatives for assistance.

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For more information on the Ontario's Action Plan and how to access benefits visit:

<https://news.ontario.ca/mof/en/2020/03/ontarios-action-plan-responding-to-covid-19>

or contact your local constituency office:

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For more information on Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan and how to access benefits visit: <https://www.canada.ca/en/departement-finance/economic-response-plan>

or contact your local constituency office:

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