

Edmonton Global- Covid-19 Update

Wednesday April 8, 2020

Edmonton Global maintains a [Covid-19 Business Resources page](https://edmontonglobal.ca/covid-19-resources/) containing updated information for the Edmonton metro region's business community. <https://edmontonglobal.ca/covid-19-resources/>.

The contents of this update are not intended to replace the official communications of the Government of Canada, the Province of Alberta, or any official communications of our municipal or other partners.

Every Wednesday morning, Edmonton Global and Taproot Edmonton curate a [Regional Roundup highlighting the community, business, and economic news of the region](https://mailchi.mp/taprootedmonton/regional-roundup-april-08-2020?e=c4860a247a). This week's issue contains several important items on Covid-19 and its local economic impacts <https://mailchi.mp/taprootedmonton/regional-roundup-april-08-2020?e=c4860a247a>.

Government

Federal

- The Government of Canada's launch of the Canada Emergency Response Benefit continues, with nearly 1 million applications in a single day (April 6).
- Following conflict with the United States earlier this week, Canada has acquired necessary PPE from many other international suppliers, and in particular China, whose production structures are returning to normal.
- Minister of Innovation Navdeep Bains notes that Canadian manufacturers are coordinating efforts to produce needed PPE and other supplies domestically (<https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/coronavirus-live-updates-covid19-canada-covid>):
 - Materials used in car airbags are medical grade; car manufacturers are creating raw materials for medical gowns, and then transferring those materials to clothing manufacturers to complete the gowns.
 - Before the outbreak, there were no domestically produced medical gowns in Canada.
 - 30,000 ventilators have been made in Canada to help meet demand.

Provincial

- Alberta's projections of total likely deaths from COVID-19, and broad projections of the epidemiological "curve" from the disease in the province, were released by Premier Jason Kenney. [Click here](#)
 - Under current estimations, "by the end of summer, the province could see as many as 800,000 infections, and between 400 and 3,100 deaths." Another less likely, but possible scenario, would include 1 million infections, and between 500 and 6,600 deaths.
 - The peak of infections in Alberta is estimated to occur in "mid-May."

- As of April 8, there are 1,373 confirmed cases in Alberta and a total of 26 deaths.
 - The government's statistics website has also added a new data cluster for “severe outcomes” (hospitalization, ICU, and death.) Currently the hospitalization rate is 6.6% and the fatality rate is 1.9%.
 - Other data, including regional variation, is available at <https://covid19stats.alberta.ca/>
- Premier Kenney says 25% unemployment in Alberta during the COVID-19 crisis is a distinct possibility: [Click here](#)
- To coordinate production and acquisition of needed products, services, and supplies, the Government of Alberta has launched the “Bits and Pieces” program. The link is a submission form to the Alberta Emergency Management Agency, AEMA, allowing Alberta companies and organizations to dedicate available resources to needed areas:
 - [Click here](#) for survey
 - Areas sought include communications equipment; generators, forklifts, and other heavy goods equipment; food and water; human volunteers; lodging and facilities; consumable goods; services; and transport.
 - Any organization that is willing and able to pivot production to contribute needed supplies or can contribute in one of the above listed areas, is encouraged to complete the form.
- The Government of Alberta is making changes to the Employment Standards Code. The changes are not permanent, but “take effect immediately and will be in place as long as government determines it is needed and the public health emergency order remains.” [Click here](#)
 - For employees: employees caring for children affected by school and daycare closures and/or ill or self-isolated family members due to COVID-19 will have access to unpaid job-protected leave.
 - The 90-day employment requirement is waived. Leave length is flexible.
 - This means that employees with any length of service to their employer will be eligible for job-protected leave indefinitely, so they cannot be fired for non-attendance at this time.
 - The maximum time for a temporary layoff has increased from 60 days to 120 days to ensure temporarily laid off employees stay attached to a job longer.
 - This change is retroactive for any temporary layoffs related to COVID-19 that occurred on or after March 17.
 - Employers also experienced changes:
 - The 24-hour written notice requirement for shift changes has been removed. The two weeks’ notice for changes to work schedules for those under an averaging agreement has also been removed. Employees can be called back to work on much shorter notice to accommodate rapidly changing conditions of employment.
 - Employers no longer need to provide group termination notice to employees and unions when 50 or more employees are terminated.
 - Process for approvals has been streamlined, so employers and workers can respond quicker to changing conditions at the workplace as the situation evolves.

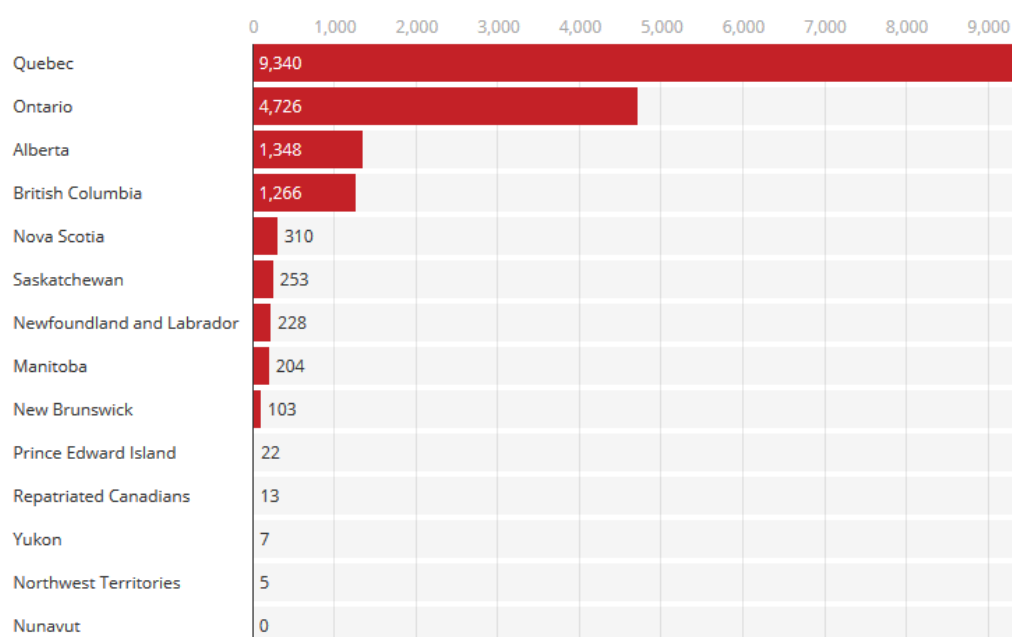
- The province has made substantial changes to the *Emergency Management Act* in consultation with Edmonton, Calgary, and Red Deer. For more details, see the Municipalities section below.
- The chief medical officer of health has ordered a provincewide ban on visitors to long-term care centres, licensed group homes and other facilities. No visitors will be allowed “unless a resident is dying, or the visitor is essential for delivering care that cannot be delivered by staff.”

Elsewhere in Canada

- Continuing the trend of the last 10 days, **Quebec** continues to lead the country in cases, followed by **Ontario**. Alberta is a distant third, comparable to **British Columbia**:

Reported COVID-19 cases by province

As of April 7 at 1:15 p.m. ET



Municipalities

- The *Emergency Management Act* has been changed in consultation with Edmonton, Calgary, and Red Deer. The changes apply to all municipalities in Alberta.
- Relevant changes for municipalities include:
 - Prior to the amendment, a provincial state of emergency nullified a local state of emergency, taking some powers away from local officials. Now, a provincial and local state of emergency can occur simultaneously.
- States of local emergency now have the option to be declared for up to 90 days.
- Language has been clarified:
 - Confirming that it is offence to be non-compliant with orders made under states of local or provincial emergency.

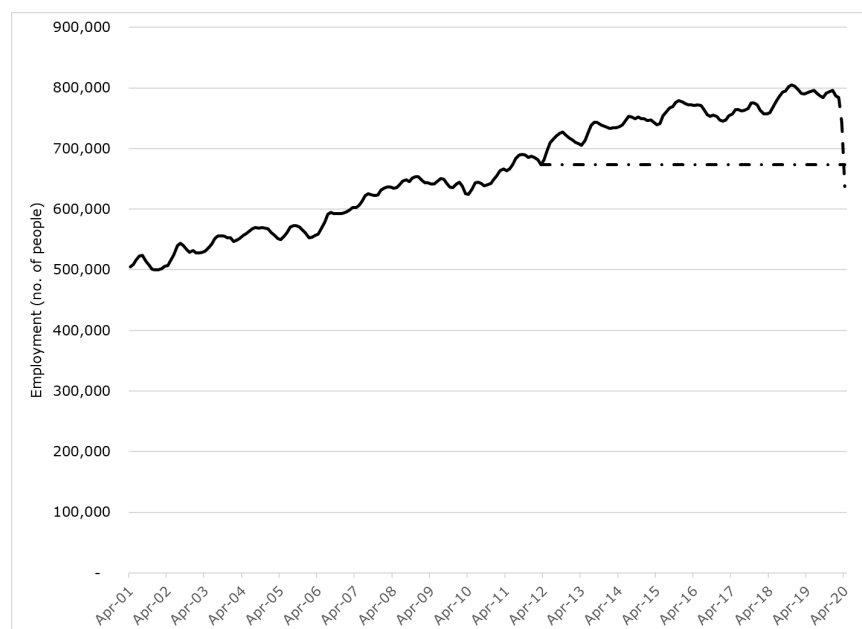
- The minister has the power to modify a state of emergency without terminating it.
- A provincially declared state of emergency can be for a pandemic in general, and not just for pandemic influenza.

Economic

Regional economy impacts of a 25% unemployment rate

- Yesterday, Premier Jason Kenney was quoted by both [CBC News](#) and [Bloomberg](#) expressing worries that the unemployment level in the province may increase from 7% to 25% due to the oil price war and C-19 pandemic.
- What does the regional economy look like with an unemployment rate of 25% by April 2020 look like?
- The figure below plots employment levels in the Edmonton Census Metropolitan Region for the period April 2001 to February 2020.
- The March 2020 and April 2020 levels are estimates, assuming an unemployment rate of 12.5% and 25%, respectively. Moreover, population, labour force, and labour force participation rate held at their February 2020 levels.

Figure 1. Employment levels in the Edmonton Census Metropolitan Area. Historical data for April 2001 to February 2020. Anticipated levels March to April 2020 with a regional 25% unemployment rate.



Notes: Source [Statistics Canada Table no. 14-10-0095-01](#) (for April 2001 to February 2020). Anticipated employment levels for March and April 2020 assuming a 12.5% and 25% unemployment rate, respectively. Note that the monthly figures are not adjusted for seasonality. The horizontal dashed line refers to employment as of March 2012.

- According to the monthly Labour Force Survey, in February 2020, there were over 637,000 jobs in the Edmonton Metropolitan Region.
- By April 2020, with a 25% unemployment rate (assuming no increase in the population, labour force or labour force participation rates), the region would lose over 146,000 jobs.
- This loss is equal to over 2,400 lost jobs per day for two months. From a historical perspective, the Edmonton Metropolitan Region gained over 1,200 jobs per month from March 2001 to February 2020.
- The size of the labour market in April 2020 (again with a 25% unemployment rate) would be comparable to the spring labour market eight years ago, in 2012.

Stakeholder / Community

A Conversation with Minister Joly

Join the Edmonton and Calgary Chambers of Commerce on April 8th from 4:45-5:15pm as they discuss with the Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages the latest support available from the federal government for businesses during the COVID-19 outbreak. [Click here](#) to register.

Government Critical Infrastructure Strategic Impact Survey

The Government of Alberta has launched the Critical Infrastructure Strategic Impact Survey, questions are intended to assist provincial planners and decision makers in identifying strategic issues to be considered during the COVID-19 pandemic response. Responses are anonymous and consolidated results will be kept confidential. [Click here](#) to access the survey.

Local Manufacturing Advisory Group looking to make face shields

A local Manufacturing Advisory Group has started an ATB BoostR campaign to raise funds to 3D print shields and looking to connect with folks at home on self isolation or those that are laid off. They are raising money to purchase additional filament and 3D printers. They are going to be supporting 2 GoFundMe campaigns, 1 in Edmonton and 1 in Calgary, to donate the shields and any other supplies. [Karma Cares - Please help us make face shields for those that need them most. Click this link.](#)

Discovery Lab continues to host webinars every Wednesday to connect innovators working on COVID-19 solutions to potential investors. Sessions begin at 9 am and run until 3 pm. This initiative is bringing together companies, researchers, and investors from around the world. Further information and registry is available on the Discovery Lab website. <http://www.discoverylab.ca/>

An open letter to Canadians from oil and gas workers

Several CEOs of companies involved in Canada's oil and gas industry made a plea for financial help from the federal government through [a letter published in the Financial Post](#). "Specifically, the Canadian drilling and service rig sector needs the federal government to introduce a payroll relief plan. We're also asking the federal government to purchase our accounts receivable — at a discount. Doing this would give our companies instant cash flow and the federal government could collect these debts at a profit as oil prices recover."

CME's Guidelines for Healthy and Safe Operations During Covid-19

Canadian Manufacturers and Exports (CME) released a comprehensive, 33-page document called "[Guidelines-for-Healthy-and-Safe-Operations-During-COVID-19-Pandemic](#)", aiming to answer manufacturers' most pressing operational questions. This document covers approaches to protect the health and safety of workers, while maintaining business continuity.

Alberta Machine Intelligence Institute (Amii)

On behalf of Amii:

[Executive Brief](#)

The Amii team remains focused on inspiring world-changing machine intelligence for good and for all – through excellent research, advisement, and education - as we navigate the many challenges facing us collectively as we adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic. Amii is contributing to the global fight against COVID-19, lending our scientific expertise, amplifying and augmenting high-impact initiatives, and acting as a catalyst for change.

We have committed our expert AI/ML mentorship time to the following initiatives. Learn more about Amii's COVID-19 response at amii.ca/covid-19.

Roche Data Science Coalition

Led by [Hoffmann-La Roche Limited](#) (Roche Canada), this [working group](#) brings together public and private organizations – including NVIDIA, DOC.ai, Self Care Catalysts, Health Storylines, Vector Institute, ThinkData Works, and RGAX – to develop translational solutions in three key areas: Patient Support, Insights into Capacity Issues, Research Enhancement.

The Coalition will also leverage [Kaggle.com](#), the world's largest online community of data scientists and machine learning practitioners, through the [UNCOVER Challenge](#) (United Network for COVID Data Exploration and Research), exploring the same questions.

Learn more about Amii's involvement at amii.ca/roche-data-science-coalition/

CODEVID-19 Hackathon

More than 1,500 developers and domain experts from 10 countries have joined [CODEVID-19](#), an Edmonton-based, grassroots hackathon building rapid solutions to problems facing all citizens during the pandemic. Produced by the [Dev Edmonton Society](#), the hackathon runs until the end of April, with weekly prizes awarded for app submissions.

Learn more about Amii's involvement at amii.ca/codevid-19

CIFAR - A Coordinated National Approach

[CIFAR](#) has activated the anchor institutes of the Pan-Canadian AI Strategy through several initiatives, task forces, and funding opportunities.

Cam Linke, Amii CEO, is participating in ongoing International Roundtables on AI and COVID-19 with a focus on data access and sharing. Reports from the roundtable can be found at cifar.ca/action-on-covid19#reports-outcomes.

Amii Fellows are actively applying for targeted CIFAR funding for AI and COVID-19 interdisciplinary research collaborations to support innovating, high-risk/high-reward ideas and projects.

Also, AI Against COVID-19 Canada is a special task force aiming to map and coordinate AI projects in Canada that can contribute to solving the COVID-19 outbreak and limit its impact on society. The task force is led by a community of researchers from CIFAR, Mila, the Vector Institute, and Amii. The associated website is an information-sharing platform, and its goal is to stimulate new collaborations and data sharing among the institutes and external collaborators. Learn more about our involvement at ai-against-covid.ca.

Alberta Fights COVID Action Group

On behalf of Health City and the Alberta Fights COVID Action Group, they are looking for companies and researchers across Alberta looking at new solutions to diagnose, treat and prevent the spread of the virus. To ensure these companies' and researchers' work can have the greatest impact, a coordinated response from the innovation community is needed.

"Our ask of you is simple. Using the email address solutions@albertafightscovid.com we are asking that Alberta researchers and companies of all sizes:

- Submit a non-confidential one-page summary of the COVID-19 related problem they are working to solve
- Clarify what additional support they require to accelerate their work (financial support, mentorship, connections, procurement assistance etc.)
- Identify whether their solution is a short, medium or long-term solution

Once these projects have been compiled, a coordinated funding package will be submitted to the provincial government for consideration. We are asking that all project summaries are submitted by **Tuesday, April 14, 2020.** "