

New Canada Emergency Response Benefit

The new Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), the “Act”, was passed on March 25th 2020, to provide a streamlined income support program to assist Canadians who have suffered financially as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This program is designed to make it easier for workers who have stopped working due to COVID-19 to receive income support benefits whether eligible for EI payments or not.

The Act amends the Canada Labour Code to create a new job-protected leave of absence of up to sixteen weeks (16) for employees in federally related workplaces unable or unavailable to work for reasons related to COVID-19.

ELIGIBILITY

- Workers that lose their job due to COVID-19
- Workers who are sick, quarantined or taking care of someone sick with COVID-19
- Working parents that must stay home without pay to care for children that are sick or need care due to school or daycare closures
- Wage earners or self-employed individuals, including contract workers that would not otherwise be eligible for Employment Insurance (EI)
- Workers that are still employed but are not being paid because of disruptions to their workplace due to COVID-19
- A resident of Canada in the above noted circumstances, fifteen (15) years of age or older-not receiving any income from employment or self-employment and for 2019 or in the previous 12 months period preceding the day they make application, has total income of at least \$5,000 from their employment, will be eligible to apply for CERB.

BENEFIT

- CERB will provide \$2,000 per month for up to sixteen (16) weeks
- The New CERB benefit will be accessible through a secure web portal, via an automated telephone line or via a toll-free number starting in early April
- Eligible applicants can expect payments within ten (10) days of the date of the application
- Payments will be issued every 4 weeks and will be available from March 15th, 2020, up to October 3rd 2020 with a maximum payment period of sixteen (16) weeks within this time

IMPORTANT TO NOTE

- Eligible workers may receive CERB or EI but not both at the same time
- Eligible workers receiving EI on March 25th 2020 will continue to receive EI and should not apply for CERB. If EI runs out before October 3rd 2020 and unable to return to work due to COVID-19, eligible workers may then apply for CERB
- Workers that have applied for EI and are in process do not need to apply for CERB
- Workers that are eligible for EI benefits and apply for CERB first, would still be able to apply for EI if unemployed or unable to work due to illness after the sixteen (16) week period covered by CERB.