

New pandemic fund recognizes critical role of frontline workers: CUPE BC

BURNABY – Today's announcement of temporary COVID-19 pandemic pay for health and social services workers sends a strong statement from the BC NDP government about the critical role these workers play in delivering in-person, frontline care to some of B.C.'s most vulnerable people, says CUPE BC President Paul Faoro.

The new pandemic fund, announced by Minister of Finance Carole James, will provide a financial boost for more than 250,000 eligible frontline workers as part of a cost-shared program with the federal government. Temporary pandemic pay will support people working on the frontlines in B.C.'s health care system, social services, and corrections. This includes workers delivering a range of health and social services to people most vulnerable to COVID-19.

In B.C., CUPE represents more than 4,400 ambulance paramedics and emergency dispatchers, 2,300 community social services workers and 1,410 community health workers.

"Our frontline workers have been tireless in their efforts to keep all of us healthy and safe during this challenging time, and I'm very pleased to see this being recognized by the Horgan government," said Faoro. "Our members in these sectors have shown extraordinary dedication and commitment to the people and communities they serve."

"Temporary pandemic pay acknowledges that commitment, but it's also a special recognition of the dedicated services these workers provide for some of the most vulnerable people in our communities. It recognizes that these workers keep our communities healthy and strong."

Temporary pandemic pay is part of the BC NDP government's \$5-billion COVID-19 Action Plan to provide relief to people, communities and businesses in British Columbia. For eligible workers, it amounts to a lump-sum payment of about \$4 per hour for a 16-week period, starting on March 15th. Eligible workers will receive the payment directly through their employer and do not need to apply.

Learn More:

To learn more about today's announcement of COVID-19 pandemic pay,
visit: <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020FIN0031-000907>
(<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020FIN0031-000907>)

To learn more about the supports and services available for people, businesses and
communities through the pandemic, visit: www.gov.bc.ca/COVIDgovernmentbenefits
(<http://www.gov.bc.ca/COVIDgovernmentbenefits>)

For the latest medical updates, including case counts, prevention, risks and testing,
visit: <http://www.bccdc.ca> (<http://www.bccdc.ca/>)

Or follow @CDCofBC on Twitter.

For the Provincial Health Officer's orders, notices and guidance,
visit: www.gov.bc.ca/phoguidance (<http://www.gov.bc.ca/phoguidance>).

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B.C. COVID-19 Temporary Pandemic Pay

Temporary pandemic pay supports health, social services and corrections employees delivering in-person, front-line care during the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes employees delivering a range of health and social services to people most vulnerable to COVID-19, where maintaining physical distancing is difficult or impossible.

Last updated: **May 19, 2020**

On this page:

- [Determine your eligibility](#)
- [Eligible sectors, workplaces and roles](#)
- [How to get paid](#)

Determine Your Eligibility

To receive temporary pandemic pay, an employee must:

- Have been working straight-time hours at any point during the 16-week period starting on March 15, 2020, at the height of the Province's response to the pandemic
- Casual and on-call workers who have worked straight-time hours during this period are also eligible
- Work in an [eligible sector, workplace and role](#) delivering in-person, front-line care in health, social services and corrections
- Provide additional support and relief to front-line workers by working in ways that directly serve vulnerable populations

Temporary pandemic pay is not dependent on whether there is a COVID-19 outbreak in the workplace location.

- Excluded management staff, fee-for-service providers or employees on leave **are not eligible**

Eligible Sectors, Workplaces and Roles

Health Services

Expand All | Collapse All

Eligible workplaces

Eligible roles

Social Services

Expand All | Collapse All

Eligible workplaces

Eligible roles

Corrections

Expand All | Collapse All

Eligible workplaces

Eligible roles

How to Get Paid

No application is required. Government provides the funds to employers, who are then responsible for distributing the funds to eligible employees in the coming weeks as lump-sum payments.

- It is not a wage increase
- Pandemic pay will be distributed as lump-sum payments, so people should not expect to see the funds on every paycheque
- The timing and frequency of the lump-sum payments may vary between employers
- The payment does not impact eligibility for Employment Insurance (EI) or the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)

Eligible front-line workers can expect to receive a lump-sum payment equivalent to about \$4 per hour for straight-time hours worked anytime over a 16-week period, starting on March 15, 2020.

For example:

\$140 per week = \$4 x 35 hours or \$2,240 for 16 weeks.

Base Salary, Benefits and Pension

The lump-sum temporary pandemic pay is taxable.

- It does not affect your pension (because it is a lump-sum)
 - If you are not a member of the Municipal Pension Plan you should confirm with your employer
- It is not part of your base salary
- It has no impact on benefits paid by your employer

Vacation and Leaves

Eligible employees will only receive pandemic pay for straight-time hours worked starting on March 15, 2020 and continuing over a 16-week period. It does not apply to time where employees were not in the workplace due to

- Vacation
- Any authorized paid leave, including sick leave

Union Dues

- Some eligible employees are represented by a union. For some employees, union dues are a percentage of earnings or a fixed rate
- Consult with your employer to confirm whether dues will apply to this specific lump-sum payment

B.C.'s Response to COVID-19



Learn about how government is supporting essential services for things like:

- Housing & monthly bills
- Child care
- Transportation

COVID-19 Provincial Support

Contact Information

For program questions:

Public Sector Employers' Council Secretariat

PSEC@gov.bc.ca

✖ B.C. has declared a state of emergency. Learn about [COVID-19 health issues](#). | [B.C.'s Response to COVID-19](#).
British Columbia News

Pandemic pay supports front-line health, social service workers

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/22235>

Tuesday, May 19, 2020 1:00 PM

Victoria - Health and social service workers delivering in-person, front-line care to some of B.C.'s most vulnerable people will receive a financial boost through temporary COVID-19 pandemic pay.

"From care aids to domestic violence workers, to people working in corrections and others delivering essential addictions and mental health supports, our front-line workers are providing vital support to people who are most vulnerable during the COVID-19 pandemic," said Carole James, Minister of Finance. "Temporary pandemic pay recognizes all that our health and social service workers do to help keep people healthy, our communities running and deliver important care and services to the most vulnerable during this challenging time."

As part of a cost-shared program with the federal government, temporary pandemic pay will support people working on the front lines in B.C.'s health-care system, social services and corrections. This includes workers delivering a range of health and social services to people most vulnerable to COVID-19.

More than 250,000 eligible front-line workers will receive temporary pandemic pay, a lump-sum payment of about \$4 per hour for a 16-week period, starting on March 15, 2020. Eligible workers will receive the payment directly through their employer and do not need to apply.

"People at the front lines of the pandemic are working tirelessly to keep us and our loved ones healthy, while also delivering services to the most vulnerable in our community," James said. "This cost-shared program with the federal government will benefit thousands of British Columbia's front-line health and social service workers."

Temporary pandemic pay is part of government's \$5-billion COVID-19 Action Plan to provide relief to people, communities and businesses in British Columbia. It builds off the planned minimum wage increase set for June 1, 2020, and existing supports for people during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the B.C. Emergency Benefit for Workers and the enhanced B.C. Climate Action Tax Credit boost in July 2020, which doubles the annual benefit for low- and middle-income people.

Learn More:

To learn more about temporary COVID-19 pandemic pay, visit: www.gov.bc.ca/pandemicpay

To learn more about the supports and services available for people, businesses and communities through the pandemic, visit: www.gov.bc.ca/COVIDgovernmentbenefits

For the latest medical updates, including case counts, prevention, risks and testing, visit: <http://www.bccdc.ca>
Or follow @CDCofBC on Twitter.

For the provincial health officer's orders, notices and guidance, visit: www.gov.bc.ca/phoguidance

For non-health related information, including financial, child care and education supports, travel, transportation and essential service information, visit: www.gov.bc.ca/Covid-9
Or call 1 888 COVID19 (1 888 268-4319) between 7:30 a.m. and 8 p.m. (Pacific time), seven days a week.

A backgrounder follows.

Media Contacts

Ministry of Finance
Media Relations
250 213-7724

Backgrounders

Front-line health, social services workers eligible for pandemic payments

More than 250,000 of B.C.'s front-line workers will be eligible to receive temporary pandemic pay.

This lump-sum payment supports workers in health, social services and corrections who provide a range of in-person, clinical and supportive services to vulnerable populations where physical distancing is difficult or impossible.

To be eligible, employees must have worked straight-time hours anytime during the 16-week period starting March 15, 2020. It does not apply to excluded management staff, fee-for-service providers or employees on leave.

The following list includes examples of eligible workplaces, with more information available here: www.gov.bc.ca/pandemicpay

Health services

Eligible workplaces include:

- hospitals;
- long-term care and assisted-living facilities;
- provincial mental health facilities;
- provincially funded home and community care services;
- public health units;
- primary care clinics;
- diagnostic facilities;
- community clinics; and

- diagnostic and treatment centres.

Social services

Eligible workplaces include:

- community living: residential services and intervenor residential sites;
- Indigenous services: delegated Aboriginal agencies, friendship centres providing critical services, and healing and wellness facilities and shelters;
- harm reduction: shelters for survivors of gender-based violence and human trafficking, directly operated residential facilities, adult-justice residential facilities, safe injection sites, emergency outreach harm reduction workers, emergency shelters, supportive housing facilities, respite and drop-in centres, temporary shelter facilities, and hotels and motels used for self-isolation or shelter overflow;
- youth services: high-risk youth services, youth justice residential facilities, licensed children's residential sites; and
- immigrant services: high-risk support services for immigrants and refugees, high-risk immigrant youth services and settlement services.

Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (SDPR) - eligible workplaces include:

- SDPR income assistance and disability assistance offices;
- SDPR/Service BC integrated offices; and
- SDPR contact centre offices.

Ministry of Child and Family Development – eligible workplace includes:

- Service Delivery Division

Service BC – eligible workplaces include:

- Service BC offices

BC Housing – eligible workplaces include:

- BC Housing main location and other offices

Community Living BC – eligible workplaces include:

- head office and other local offices; and
- Provincial Assessment Centre.

Corrections

Eligible workplaces include:

- adult correctional facilities and youth justice facilities;
- community corrections offices; and
- Sheriff Services Division.

