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HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor & Members of City Council
Chambers of Commerce
Media
Date: April 24, 2020
Subject: COVID-19 – Update

SUMMARY

May I first express our sincere sympathies to the families, friends, communities and all those affected by the tragedy in Nova Scotia. Our nation stands together and grieves with each, and every one of them.

We all stood together this week to honour our many volunteers that give of their time and effort to ensure the quality of life we all enjoy throughout our communities. To all of our volunteers – thank you!

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, our government has listened carefully to the concerns of Canadians and has adapted to meet their needs. That is why we announced new actions to protect Canadian jobs and provide more support to businesses and organizations dealing with the economic impacts of COVID-19.

UPDATES

Regional Relief and Recovery Fund (RRRF):

Nearly \$1B in support to affected businesses and communities

We understand that economic needs vary in different regions of the country, and that is why we are moving forward with a targeted measure, investing \$962 million to support SMEs and communities that may require additional help to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The targeted measure includes:

- \$675 million to support regional economies: businesses and organizations, as well as communities in regions all across Canada;
- \$287 million to support the national network of Community Futures Development Corporations, which can provide support specifically targeting critical businesses and organizations in small and rural communities across the country.

With this special initiative, our government will be there for more SME's and communities across the country to offer additional targeted support for those who can't access existing support and play a key role in their local economy. We will have more details about the specifics of this program shortly. This measure is part of the Government of Canada's comprehensive economic plan to help Canadians and businesses through this period of uncertainty.

As this is fluid, we will continue to monitor this evolving situation closely, and take additional actions as needed to protect our health and safety, and stabilize the economy.

RDAs have also adjusted certain criteria for their regular programs in response to the exceptional circumstances that businesses are facing.

- For example, since April 1, businesses have been able to defer their loan repayments for current contribution agreements with their regional development agency for three months. Additionally, existing clients with active projects have been provided flexibilities on a case-by-case basis recognition the impact COVID-19 is having on their ability to executive active projects.

Emergency Community Support Fund:

On April 21st, the Prime Minister gave an update on Canada's response to COVID-19 and announced an investment of \$350 million to create the new Emergency Community Support Fund that will support community organizations like United Way, and Community Foundations Canada, and the Red Cross, as well as smaller, more independent frontline organizations. This fund will help support these organizations and the critical work they do to serve the most vulnerable Canadians across the country.

Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy:

To help employers keep and re-hire workers amidst the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, our Government is implementing the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) and applications will be accepted by the CRA as of April 27. The CRA launched an online CEWS Calculator to guide employers through a step-by-step calculation of the CEWS and enables employers to determine the subsidy amount they can expect to claim based on the information that they enter into the calculator. Our government recognizes and appreciates the role that stakeholders are playing in clarifying and communicating how this new program will operate. Which is why, the CRA has been consulting with stakeholders to solicit their important insights.

The calculator can be found at the link below:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/subsidy/emergency-wage-subsidy/cews-calculate-subsidy-amount.html>

Support for Students:

As Canadians take action in the fight against COVID-19, we recognize that many young Canadians are facing an unprecedented challenge. Whether you've recently graduated and were looking forward to starting your career, or you're still in school and counting on summer employment to pay tuition, or pursuing a national service opportunity – our Government has your back. We are ensuring that Canadian students have the help they need to continue their studies, and that young Canadians can get the experience they need to start their careers. With the new Canada Emergency Student Benefit, we're getting help to students and recent graduates not covered by CERB. With the new Canada Student Service Grant, we're helping students gain valuable work experience and serve their communities through national service. And by supporting the financial needs of students we're ensuring they can confidently pay for tuition in the fall. These significant new supports will help young Canadians get through this crisis and play a central role in ensuring Canada emerges from these challenges stronger than ever.

Canada Emergency Student Benefit (CESB)

Our Government recognizes that many young Canadians were counting on summer jobs or new careers in order to make ends meet. Through the new Canada Student Emergency Benefit (CESB), our Government will ensure that students have the support they need in the face of COVID-19 – even if they are not covered by the CERB. This benefit would provide \$1,250 per month from May through August for eligible students, and \$1,750 for students with dependents or permanent disabilities. Together with other supports for young Canadians, our Government is doing whatever it takes to help Canadians through these challenging times.

Canada Student Service Grant (CSSG)

Young Canadians will play a central role in ensuring that Canada emerges from COVID-19 stronger than ever. Our Government will help young people gain valuable work experience – even in the face of COVID-19 – by introducing the new Canada Student Service Grant (CSSG). This grant will provide up to \$5,000 for a student's education in the fall, for students who work in national service positions through organizations within their community. Through the CSSG, our Government will help students develop their skills and give back to their communities during these challenging times.

Canada Service Corps

Canada's youth have concerns about financial security, work experience and employment prospects, and personal and community well-being. The Canada Service Corps connects youth with opportunities to serve their communities. We are expanding the number of micro-grants available from 1,800 to 15,000 for people aged 15 to 30. These micro-grants provide youth the opportunity to design and lead service projects that respond to unique needs in their communities in the context of COVID-19.

Tuition Support

No young Canadian should have to choose between taking action against COVID-19 and their education. In order to ensure that post-secondary students are confidently able to continue their studies in the fall, our Government is proposing significant measures to support their financial needs, including:

- Doubling the Canada Students Grants Program
- Broadening the eligibility for Student Financial Assistance
- Enhancing the Canada Student Loans Program
- Increasing support for Indigenous Post-Secondary Education
- And extending expiring federal graduate research scholarships and postdoctoral fellowships as well as federal research grants

Together with the Canada Emergency Student Benefit (CESB) and the Canada Student Service Grant (CSSG), our Government will ensure that young Canadians have the support they need to get through this crisis and help Canada come out stronger than ever before.

National Medical and Research Strategy:

The Prime Minister provided an update on Canada's response to COVID-19 and announced that we are investing \$1.1 billion in a national medical and research strategy to address COVID-19, that includes vaccine development, the production of treatments, and the tracking and testing of the virus. The Prime Minister also announced that we are establishing a COVID-19 Immunity Task Force that will work to provide reliable estimates of potential immunity and vulnerabilities in Canadian communities.

Medical Research to Fight COVID-19

- Researchers and scientists in Canada and around the world are working hard to better understand the virus, and its impacts on people and communities. We need long-term solutions to the virus.
- That's why we are investing more than \$1 billion in support of a national medical and research strategy to address COVID-19, that includes vaccine development, the production of treatments, and the tracking and testing of the virus.
- This new funding builds on the previously announced \$275 million for coronavirus research and medical countermeasures.
- The strategy includes the establishment of the COVID-19 Immunity Task Force that will oversee the coordination of a series of country-wide blood test surveys, to tell us how widely the virus has spread in Canada, and provide reliable estimates of potential immunity and vulnerabilities in Canadian populations.
- By supporting COVID-19 research, we will be able to better protect the health and safety of Canadians and vulnerable populations around the world.

Task Force

- To understand how widespread the COVID-19 infection is in a population, it requires that we test large numbers of people of various ages in many parts of the country.
- That's why we've created the COVID-19 Immunity Task Force to oversee a series of country-wide blood test surveys, that will tell us how widely the virus has spread in Canada.
- It will also provide reliable estimates of potential immunity and vulnerabilities in Canadian populations.
- The Task Force will operate under the direction of a leadership group, including Dr. David Naylor, Dr. Catherine Hankins, Dr. Tim Evans, Dr. Theresa Tam, and Dr. Mona Nemer.
- The Task Force will provide data to decision-makers, including disaggregated data that will help us understand the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable populations, while also leveraging new and existing lab capacity for research.
- The better we understand the virus, its spread, and its unique impact on different groups, the better we can fight it, and eventually defeat it.

Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA):

As Canadians take action in the fight against COVID-19, we know that many small businesses are worried about being able to pay rent. In recognition of the challenges facing Canadian businesses and property owners, our Government has reached an agreement with all provinces and territories to implement the Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA) for small business. Delivered by CMHC in partnership with all provinces and territories, this program will provide forgivable loans to commercial property owners who in turn lower the rent of their tenants by 75%. These loans will cover up to 50% of tenants' monthly rent and will be forgiven at the end of the program. We expect that CECRA will be operational by mid-May, but funding will be provided for the months of April and May, retroactively, as well as for June. Eligible small businesses will be defined as those with less than \$50,000 per month in rent and who have temporarily ceased operations or have experienced at least a 70 per cent drop in pre-COVID-19 revenues. This support will also be available to non-profit and charitable organizations. Further details will be shared by CMHC in the near future.

Once again, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all residents, our front-line workers, essential service providers, government partners at all levels, businesses and students, for your ongoing efforts to help in this time of crisis. We are in this together! Your daily efforts are ensuring that we will get through this together. If you require any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact our office.