
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2020FIN0031-000907
May 19, 2020

Ministry of Finance

Pandemic pay supports front-line health, social service workers

French, Chinese, Punjabi translations available

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.

For a French translation: https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/2020.05.19_NR_Pandemic_Pay_Support-FR.pdf

For a Chinese translation: https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/2020.05.19_NR_Pandemic_Pay_Support-CN.pdf

For a Punjabi translation: https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/2020.05.19_NR_Pandemic_Pay_Support-Punjabi.pdf

A backgrounder follows.

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BACKGROUND

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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.

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