
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2020FIN0064-002019
Dec. 8, 2020

Ministry of Finance

Applications for \$1,000 B.C. Recovery Benefit will begin soon

Updated for clarification Dec. 8, 2020

VICTORIA – A majority of British Columbians will get a lift with the launch of the B.C. Recovery Benefit, enabling many families and individuals to receive the benefit by the end of the year.

“As 2020 draws to a close, we look back on a year like no other. British Columbians came together to face the challenge of COVID-19 with resilience and strength, but the road to recovery is still ahead of us,” said Premier John Horgan. “We have worked hard to get the B.C. Recovery Benefit to people as soon as possible. We are united with the millions of people and families who are wrapping up a difficult year and look forward to a new year with hope and the promise of a continued recovery.”

On Tuesday, Dec. 8, 2020, the B.C. government introduced legislation to secure funding for approximately 3.7 million British Columbians to receive the tax-free B.C. Recovery Benefit. Passage of the bill will ensure British Columbians can apply for the benefit starting Dec. 18:

- \$1,000 for families with incomes under \$125,000. Families earning up to \$175,000 will qualify for a reduced benefit amount. Single-parent families also qualify for these benefit amounts.
- \$500 for single people earning less than \$62,500. Single people earning up to \$87,500 will qualify for a reduced benefit amount.

“We know that making ends meet during the holiday season is a concern for many families, even without the added stress of a pandemic. These additional supports will mean B.C. families will have extra dollars to spend when they need it most,” said Selina Robinson, Minister of Finance. “These benefits will also help stimulate our local economy and support small businesses that are working hard and providing good jobs for people. This is an important part of how we recover.”

British Columbians receiving income assistance and disability assistance will be eligible for the B.C. Recovery Benefit. As well, people on income assistance, disability assistance and low-income seniors receiving the senior’s supplement will receive an additional recovery benefit at \$150 per month from January 2021 to March 2021.

“This pandemic has had significant impacts on vulnerable populations so that’s why, unlike with the previous workers’ benefit, people on income or disability assistance will be eligible for the recovery benefit, and they will receive a recovery supplement of \$150/month,” said Nicholas Simons, Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction. “Coupled together, the recovery benefit and recovery supplement will provide vulnerable families with up to \$1,900 during this difficult winter season.”

The B.C. Recovery Benefit and the additional temporary recovery supplement continue government's support for people and families during the COVID-19 pandemic and into B.C.'s recovery. Other previous supports include the \$300-per-month COVID-19 crisis supplement (April to December 2020), \$1,000 B.C. Emergency Benefit for Workers, extension of a rent freeze through to July 10, 2021, and the one-time enhancement to the climate action tax credit in July 2020, which put up to \$174.50 for adults and \$51.25 for children into people's pockets when they needed it most.

B.C.'s COVID-19 supports for people build on government's previous affordability investments, including:

- the BC Child Opportunity Benefit, which provides approximately 300,000 B.C. families with a tax-free benefit for each child up to 18 years.
- investing in child care by lowering fees for licensed child care through the Child Care Fee Reduction Initiative, adding more licensed child-care spaces and launching the Affordable Child Care Benefit.
- building affordable housing through a \$7-billion, 10-year investment that will, in part, help create 114,000 affordable market rental, non-profit, supported social housing and owner-purchase housing through partnerships. It will also expand eligibility and increase the average benefits under the Rental Assistance Program and Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters.
- eliminating Medical Services Plan premiums – one of the biggest middle-class tax cuts in B.C.'s history.

Learn More:

For more information on the B.C. Recovery Benefit, visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/economic-recovery/recovery-benefit>

A backgrounder follows.

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Connect with the Province of B.C. at: news.gov.bc.ca/connect

BACKGROUND

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B.C. Recovery Benefit and B.C. Recovery Supplement

B.C. Recovery Benefit

Starting Dec. 18, 2020, up to 90% of adults in B.C. will be able to apply for the B.C. Recovery Benefit online. Those needing assistance over the phone can complete their application with an agent starting Dec. 21, 2020.

To apply and be eligible for the one-time, tax-free benefit, people must:

- be a resident of B.C. on Dec. 18, 2020;
- be at least 19 years old on Dec. 18, 2020;
- have filed a 2019 income tax return;
- have their 2019 income tax notice of assessment, and if applicable, their spouse's 2019 income tax notice of assessment;
- have their social insurance number;
- have their direct deposit information; and
- have their B.C. driver's licence.

Applying online is the fastest way to receive the benefit.

British Columbians can apply through one of the following:

- starting Dec. 18, visiting: gov.bc.ca/recoverybenefit
- starting Dec. 21, agents will be available by phone to assist people who need help applying, including those who do not have internet access.
- starting Dec. 21, phone-based support will be available at 1 833 882-0020 toll-free within North America, Monday to Friday, from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Pacific time).

Early next year, the Province will introduce a modified application process. This will ensure those on disability and income assistance who do not have banking services or who have barriers to filing income taxes can apply and receive their benefit quickly at a time of year when people need help the most.

Everyone is encouraged to file their income taxes. By filing, people can receive benefits and credits they might not know they are eligible for.

It is anticipated that a majority of eligible applicants will receive payment within five business days.

For applications that require manual review to determine eligibility, it will take longer for payments to be made, depending on the volumes of applications that require manual review.

The Service BC Provincial Contact Centre has hired 150 new staff to answer questions from the public about the benefit and help people complete applications. However, telephone call volumes may be high and wait times may be longer than normal during the first few weeks. People are encouraged to apply online to avoid any potential wait times.

People have until June 30, 2021, to apply for the B.C. Recovery Benefit.

\$150-monthly B.C. Recovery Supplement

- The supplement will be provided to people who receive income assistance, disability assistance and to low-income seniors receiving the B.C. Senior's Supplement and income assistance and disability recipients residing in special-care facilities.
- The supplement will be automatically added to cheques issued in January, February and March 2021.
- This supplement supports more than 200,000 people, including more than 23,000 families with children, as well as 60,000 low-income seniors.

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