

COVID-19: Government Expands Support to Businesses and Individuals

Please note: the federal government is constantly updating their website as new information is announced. Remember to check [Canada's official coronavirus webpage](#) and [CREA's COVID-19 online hub](#) to stay up to date.

As public health officials continue advising Canadians to practice physical distancing, the federal government has endeavoured to mitigate economic consequences by expanding existing initiatives and launching new ones for businesses and individuals. Here are this week's updates.

Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)

On Wednesday, the [government announced changes to the CERB](#) that will accommodate those receiving a modest income and enable more Canadians to benefit. The following modifications have been made:

- allow people to earn up to \$1,000 per month while collecting the CERB;
 - When submitting your first claim, you cannot have earned more than \$1,000 in employment and/or self-employment income for 14 or more consecutive days within the four-week benefit period of your claim.
 - When submitting subsequent claims, you cannot have earned more than \$1,000 in employment and/or self-employment income for the entire four-week benefit period of your new claim.
- extend the CERB to seasonal workers who have exhausted their employment insurance (EI) regular benefits and are unable to undertake their regular seasonal work as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak; and
- extend the CERB to workers who have recently exhausted their EI regular benefits and are unable to find a job or return to work because of COVID-19.

These changes will be retroactive to March 15, 2020.

If you believe you're eligible for the CERB based on this information, we encourage you to apply for the CERB. As you proceed with the application, you'll learn whether you qualify or not. Those who are still unsure can ask the Government of Canada about their personal circumstances by calling the toll-free telephone line at 1-800-959-8281.

Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA)



Another barrier brokers told us they're facing is the narrow scope of the CEBA, [a program intended to help cover non-deferrable operating costs](#) by providing interest-free loans of up to \$40,000. Regarding the program, CREA's advocacy position was the lower and upper thresholds ruled out far too many small businesses that require assistance during this challenging time.

The Prime Minister announced this week an expansion of the CEBA to businesses that paid between \$20,000 and \$1.5 million in total payroll in 2019.

Small business owners can apply for support from the CEBA through their banks and credit unions. If the loan is repaid by December 31, 2022, 25% of it will be forgiven, up to \$10,000.

Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA)

The Prime Minister also announced the launch of the CECRA, a program that will seek to provide loans, including forgivable loans, to commercial property owners who lower or forgo the rent of small businesses for the months of April, May, and June. This program will be delivered in collaboration with provincial and territorial governments, which are responsible for property owner-tenant relationships.

The measures announced this week are part of the [Government of Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan](#). The government is constantly assessing the evolving situation and is likely to introduce additional measures as it deems necessary. We are monitoring the implementation of existing measures and continue to advocate on behalf of REALTORS® as new initiatives are developed.



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