

PICTOU COUNTY REGIONAL ENTERPRISE NETWORK

March 27, 2020 COVID-19 Update for Business

Please rely on Government Websites for accurate information as the situation is changing daily. If there are any discrepancies between this summary and government websites, the government websites should be taken as the most accurate and as the most up to date.

For up-to-date government links and local business information, visit: www.pictoucounty.com

A. Summary of New Provincial Initiatives to Support Small Businesses as of March 27, 2020

1. Nova Scotia Business Inc.'s Support Programs for Small Businesses

a. Small Business Development Program

NSBI has updated the Small Business Development Program to serve Nova Scotia businesses better. The program helps businesses work with a private consultant to overcome a pain point or barrier, or a business expert to help identify and develop the leadership skills needed to scale your company. www.nsb.ca/bdp

b. Virtual Training

NSBI is providing more online digital content to support SME's access programming at times that work for them – all the more important during the current climate. The virtual workshops and training courses provide companies with vital strategies and hands-on tips on how to deal with the current crisis. The first of many workshops include:

i. <https://www.novascotiabusiness.com/events/how-mitigate-financial-risk-during-crisis>

ii. <https://www.novascotiabusiness.com/events/virtual-workshop-planning-now>

2. Here is the link to the **Order made by Dr. Robert Strang**, Chief Medical Officer of Health for the Province of Nova Scotia, **As of March 25, 2020**. It provides some clarity to the requirements for businesses that are operating as well as direction for residents. <https://novascotia.ca/CoronaVirus/COVID-19-Global-Order-2020-03-25.PDF>

3. The province has developed a **template for a Rent Deferral Agreement** that businesses and their landlords can use if there is mutual agreement to defer commercial rents. At this time, there is no requirement for landlords to do so, and some landlords will not be financially able to defer rent as they also need revenue to operate their business.

B. Update on Government of Canada initiatives to support small businesses

1. Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)

The **Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB)** will be replacing the previously announced **Emergency Care and Emergency Support Benefits** and will provide temporary income support to workers who are without employment or self-employment income for reasons related to COVID-19.

The **CERB will be available to workers residing in Canada, who are at least 15 years old**, and who:

- Have **earned at least \$5,000 in 2019** or in the year prior to their application from any of a combination of the following sources: employment, self employment, Employment Insurance maternity and parental benefits, and/or similar benefits paid in Quebec under the Quebec Parental Insurance Plan (QPIP); and
- Are **without employment or self-employment income for at least 14 consecutive days in a four-week period, for reasons related to COVID-19**, including if they have temporarily stopped working, lost their job, are sick or in quarantine, or need to care for a child or a family member.

Both **EI and non-EI eligible individuals will be able to access this new Benefit**. The new Benefit will provide a flat amount of **\$2,000 a month, paid in four-week instalments for up to 16 weeks**. This Benefit is available until October 3, 2020 and retroactive to March 15th, 2020.

Workers will be able to apply online for the CERB starting in April of 2020. As more details are available on the roll out of the CERB we will be sure to keep you up to date.

2. Employment Insurance (EI)

Commissioners have been briefed/consulted on how the government proposes to modify the EI system to cope with the already over a million claims in the EI system, in order to dovetail with the CERB.

The idea around the modifications is that individuals—EI eligible-- who have filed EI benefits applications should not have to abandon their claims in order to take up the CERB, which will be administered through CRA.

For EI purposes (not CERB), it remains important that EI Records of Employment (ROEs) for employees are correctly filled for the circumstances (e.g. quarantine/sickness, shortage of work).

The bulletins (FR, EN) on this which the Canadian Payroll Association kindly prepared and allowed our Commissioner (Employers) office to share previously, remain openly available to everyone on their website:

- <https://payroll.ca/PDF/Resources/Payroll-and-Covid19-Infoline.aspx>
- <https://paie.ca/FRPDF/Ressources/Paie-et-COVID19-LigneInfo.aspx>

3. Business Wage Subsidy increased

- **Increased to 75%** for small and medium sized businesses that are eligible
- Backdated to March 15th, 2020
- Encouraging companies to rehire employees and use this program
- More details to follow

4. Canada Emergency Business Account

- Government guaranteed loans of \$40,000 through banks
- Interest free for 1 year
- \$10,000 forgivable under certain circumstances
- More details to follow

5. HST/GST

- Remittances postponed until end of June
- Equal to \$13 Billion in loans to businesses

6. Farm Credit Canada

- a. FCC is Canada's leading lender to the farming and food processing industry. Its capacity to lend is being increased by \$5 billion which is a 11% increase in its loans portfolio. The government's objective is to increase cash flow and liquidity to farms, agri-businesses and food processors.

<https://www.fcc-fac.ca/en.html>

7. **Export Development Canada/Business Development Bank of Canada**

- a. Funding levels to EDC/BDC increasing from \$10 Billion to \$22.5 Billion to lend to businesses

8. **Export Development Canada**

- a. Discover how EDC is helping exporters during COVID-19
https://www.edc.ca/en/campaign/coronavirus-covid-19.html?utm_source=ti&utm_medium=edc-email&utm_campaign=content_tradeinsights&utm_content=prospect_newsletter_march-20_e
- b. Global Economic Outlook - for an examination on how COVID-19, trade disputes and stock market corrections are impacting country outlooks, interest and exchange rates, and commodity prices.
https://www.edc.ca/en/guide/global-economic-outlook.html?utm_source=ti&utm_medium=edc-email&utm_campaign=content_tradeinsights&utm_content=prospect_newsletter_march-20_e
- c. For more COVID-19 resources that can help right now go to www.edc.ca

C. Federal Government Opportunities for Manufacturers and Suppliers

1. **Federal programming is available for companies who can supply or manufacture breathing equipment and personal protective equipment**, in particular, the N95 masks. Public Works and Government Services Canada has established a web portal and intake form for suppliers that are able to provide specific products (i.e. N95 masks, gowns, gloves and other personal protective equipment) or services, such as nursing, food and security. Information can be found at <https://buyandsell.gc.ca/calling-all-suppliers-help-canada-combat-covid-19>

If you are a Canadian manufacturer or business that can help Canada meet the growing demand for medical supplies, the federal Plan to Mobilize Industry to Fight COVID-19 program directly supports businesses to rapidly scale up production or re-tool their manufacturing lines to develop products made in Canada to help in the fight against COVID-19. More information on this initiative can be found at <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/business/maintaingrowimprovebusiness/manufacturers-needed.html>

2. The National Research Council of Canada has issued a COVID-19 Challenge Procurement Program to help bring together a national network of researchers and scientific facilities to address the pressing needs for supplies, medical counter measures, and disease-tracking technology. The program will post challenges looking for near-to-market solutions from small and medium-sized businesses that need financial support from the National Research Council of Canada Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC IRAP) to refine and sell their product or solution to meet a COVID-19 related need.

Information can be found <https://nrc.canada.ca/en/research-development/research-collaboration/nrc-covid-19-response>