

Hello everyone,

An email went out today from the CEO on Library closure and staffing. I cannot remember a time at CPL of staff layoffs and we will all need to work our way through this. You are receiving a lot of information and probably searching out information as that is what library workers do.

Your union is affiliated with a group called the Calgary Alliance. They have sent this list of where help is available.

Along with contacting your managers, supervisors and Human Resources with questions, please know that your executive is also here. Even if you just want to chat give me a call. 403.999.1369

Stay safe and hope to see you all again very soon.

Elsa Gee

Calgary Alliance is also creating a resource page which can be found at:

https://www.calgarycommongood.org/resources_to_help_during_covid_19

Canadian Government

The federal government has a variety of programs described <https://www.canada.ca/en/departement-finance/news/2020/03/canadas-covid-19-economic-response-plan-support-for-canadians-and-businesses.html>, which includes:

Canada Child Benefit

There will be a temporary increase to Canada Child Benefit payments by approximately \$300 in May 2020 for each child. This payment will happen automatically and no application is required if you are already receiving this child benefit.

Goods and Services Tax Credit

There will be a one-time payment by early May 2020 of the Goods and Services Tax credit (GSTC), which will double the maximum annual GSTC payment amounts for the 2019-20 benefit year, for amount of \$400 to \$600 for single person and couple respectively. This payment will happen automatically if you are already receiving this GST tax credit.

Employment Insurance Benefits

Employment Insurance benefits for COVID 19 related leave, where the one week waiting period is waived. This is the weblink <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/ei-sickness/apply.html>, where you apply, with the following conditions:

- The one-week waiting period for [EI sickness benefits](#) will be waived for new claimants who are quarantined so they can be paid for the first week of their claim
- People claiming EI sickness benefits due to quarantine will not have to provide a medical certificate
- People who cannot complete their claim for EI sickness benefits due to quarantine may apply later and have their EI claim backdated to cover the period of delay.
- After you have completed the application, you need to call the following toll free numbers to have the one week waiting period waived: 1 833 381 2725.

Emergency Care Benefit

The Emergency Care Benefit will provide up to \$900 bi-weekly, for up to 15 weeks. This flat-payment Benefit would provide income support to:

- Workers, including the self-employed, who are quarantined or sick with COVID-19 but do not qualify for EI sickness benefits.
- Workers, including the self-employed, who are taking care of a family member who is sick with COVID-19, such as an elderly parent, but do not qualify for EI sickness benefits.
- Parents with children who require care or supervision due to school closures, and are unable to earn employment income, irrespective of whether they qualify for EI or not.

Application for the benefit will be available in April 2020 at <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/campaigns/covid-19-update.html>, and require Canadians to attest that they meet the eligibility requirements. They will need to re-attest every two weeks to reconfirm their eligibility. Canadians will be able to select one of three ways to apply for the Benefit:

1. by accessing it on their CRA [My Account](#) secure portal;
2. by accessing it from their secure My Service Canada Account; or
3. by calling a toll free number equipped with an automated application process

For Canadian who lose their jobs or have reduced hours there is the Emergency Support Benefit of up to \$900 biweekly, up to 15 weeks, which provide income support to workers who don't qualify for paid sick leave or employment insurance. This benefit will be provided by the Canadian Revenue Agency, but there is no application process yet. Information will be provided when available at <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/campaigns/covid-19-update.html>.

A six-month, interest-free reprieve on Canada student loan payments. Students will be automatically enrolled into the six-month loan holiday program.

Alberta Government

Alberta government offers various benefits and service which are described here: <https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-supports-for-albertans.aspx>.

There is a one-time emergency isolation payment with one-time payment of \$573. The Alberta government expects the program to be accessible by a simple online application next week through the provincial webpage: www.alberta.ca. You are eligible if you are self-isolating, and not already receiving employment insurance benefits.

The Alberta government will implement a six-month, interest-free moratorium on Alberta student loan payments. Students will be automatically enrolled in the six-month loan holiday program.

Alberta Banks and Credit Unions

Alberta Treasury Bank, First Calgary Financial, and Alberta credit unions may also assist you if you have bank accounts or loans, but you need to contact them directly. Contact ATB at 1 800 332 8383. Connect First Union is offering the option to skip up to 3 monthly payments on line of credits, loans and car payments.

See <https://www.connectfirstcu.com/COVID-19>, and check out the specific links for First Calgary Financial, Mountain View Financial, Chinook Financial, and Legacy Financial.

Utilities

City of Calgary- The City of Calgary is providing deferrals for the next three months with water, wastewater, sewer, waste, and recycling bills. There will be no penalties and no interest, and the City will prorate amounts into the last six bills of the year.

ENMAX has implemented a **COVID-19 Relief Program to assist those affected**. Their program includes offering customers affected by COVID-19 access to **increased payment flexibility** including installment plans, extending payment dates and/or suspension of collection-related activities on their ENMAX and City of Calgary municipal services. In addition, they have suspended any **disconnection of electricity service** for non-payment until further notice. Call ENMAX at 310-2010 for more information.

Residential customers can defer electricity and natural gas bill payments for the next 90 days to ensure no one will be cut off, **regardless of the service provider**. This covers only electricity and natural gas, regardless of the service provider.

Other programs

Calgary Co-op Care Package

Free delivery of a Calgary Co-op Care Package to those quarantined, as directed by a public health agency: <https://www.calgarycoop.com/covid19/>. The Calgary Co-op Care Package containing food essentials, **free of charge**, to anyone required to be quarantined as directed by a public health agency. These Calgary Co-op Care Packages will contain non-perishable food items such as canned meat, pasta sauce, and juice, and will be delivered to those affected in the Calgary-area. These care packages will be available until April 15th. To request a care package, please contact memberengagement@calgarycoop.com with your name, address, phone number, the start and end date of your quarantine, as instructed by a public health agency, as well as your closest Calgary Co-op store. This offer will extend as long as inventory permits. Contact by email or at 403-219-6064 if you have any questions.

Calgary Food Bank

The Hamper Request Line (403-253-2055) and emergency hamper distribution will officially start on Thursday, March 19. To practice social distancing protocols and to ensure the safety of our community, we are switching to a drive-thru model of hamper distribution. You **MUST** call the Hamper Request Line (403-253-2055) first so that we can organize your emergency food hamper and assign your pick-up time.

Resources to Help with Mental Health Challenges

We know from the work that we have done around mental health and social isolation that this will be a challenging time for many. Remember that while you may be physically alone, you are not alone. The institutions you are a part of are there to help you during this time. Some other key resources are:

Calgary Counselling Centre: www.calgarycounselling.com or (403)691-5991

They charge on a sliding scale and when we talked with them this week they said they have the capacity to see people right now and have spots open for counselling.

Distress Centre and Mobile Response Team: (403)266-4357

The distress centre can connect you with a variety of services in our city. If you have lost your job, don't know how you will pay rent, are struggling with your kids – give them a call and they can connect you with resources.

One of the key resources they can connect you with is the Mobile Response Team. If you or your loved ones are in a mental health crisis AHS will send out this team to help. Call the distress Centre (403)266-4357 and ask to have the Mobile Response Team sent.