

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor & Members of City Council
Chambers of Commerce
Media

Date: August 28, 2020

Subject: COVID-19 – Update

SUMMARY

In the last two weeks, we've made progress on our mission to safely restart the economy. We've provided additional funding for schools, extended CERB and provided a transition plan to EI, invested in more mental health supports for indigenous communities, updated policies on international students and temporary workers. We've also announced investments in the Entrepreneurial Leadership and Learning Alliance, a partnership with the Province of Ontario and 3M for a Made-in-Canada project, and announced the housing supply challenge.

UPDATES

Safe Restart for Schools:

We know the past few months have been especially hard on students who have been physically separated from their friends and classmates, and on parents who have had to juggle work and childcare. Returning to school is an important step to restart our economy and get parents back to work, and we want to ensure they can do so without worrying about the health of their children.

That's why the Safe Return to Class Fund is providing up to \$2 billion in support for provinces and territories as they work to ensure the safety of students and staff members throughout the school year. We are also investing an additional \$112 million in funding for First Nations to support community measures to ensure a safe return to school on reserves.

A few examples of how this funding might be used include for adapting learning spaces, better air ventilation in classrooms, or for supplying PPE and cleaning supplies. Provinces and territories have all been working hard to get students, teachers, and staff safely back to school, and we will continue to support them in that work to keep Canadian children and their families safe.

Please see the following news release for more details, including a breakdown of funds allotted per province:

<https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2020/08/26/prime-minister-announces-support-safe-return-school>



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HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Extending CERB and Transitioning to EI:

When Canadians needed the support the most, the Canada Emergency Response Benefit was there to help support over 8.5 million people pay their bills and be there for their families.

That's why we are announcing that the CERB will be available for an additional four weeks, for a total of 28 weeks. For the millions of Canadians families who rely on the CERB, this means that they will be supported as they plan the Fall and back-to-school.

We are also announcing new measures that represent the next steps in our Government's plan to support Canadians looking for work through this next phase of our economic recovery.

Our plan includes:

- ✓ Flexibilities to the Employment Insurance (EI) program that will allow more Canadians to qualify and receive a minimum of \$400 per week for at least 26 weeks;
- ✓ EI Premium rate freeze for the next two years, which will benefit employees and employers as it prevents the rise of EI premiums during a period of economic recovery;
- ✓ The Canada Recovery Benefit for self-employed workers and workers not eligible for EI;
- ✓ The Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit for workers who are unable to work because they are sick or must self-isolate for reasons related to COVID-19; and
- ✓ The Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit for eligible Canadians who have been unable to work because they need to provide care or support for a child, family member or dependent.

Many Canadians continue to face challenges during this difficult time and we will continue to be there to support them. The health of Canadians remains our top priority.

For more information on these changes, please consult the news release

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/news/2020/08/government-of-canada-announces-plan-to-help-support-canadians-through-the-next-phase-of-the-recovery.html>

And backgrounder from ESDC.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/news/2020/08/supporting-canadians-through-the-next-phase-of-the-economy-re-opening-increased-access-to-ei-and-recovery-benefits.html>

International Students:

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada announced temporary policy changes intended to support international students affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes changes to eligibility for the Post-Graduation Work Permit Program, a new 2-stage study permit processing for students who can't submit a full application, and a policy allowing students to work on-or off campus if their study permit allows it.

For further details on these measures, please see the following news release:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2020/08/facilitative-measures-to-support-international-students-affected-by-the-covid-19-pandemic.html>

More Funding for Mental Health Supports:

Minister Miller announced that our government is pledging \$82.5 million in mental health and wellness supports to help Indigenous communities adapt and expand mental wellness services, improving access and addressing growing demand, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. This investment will help partners and communities expand access to culturally appropriate services, introduce virtual counselling, and support the development of new ways to address substance use and related treatment. As the COVID-19 situation evolves, our government will continue to work towards advancing reconciliation with Indigenous communities while taking the appropriate measures to respond to their unique, evolving needs during this unprecedented time.

For more details on this announcement, please see the news release:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/indigenous-services-canada/news/2020/08/government-of-canada-is-responding-to-immediate-indigenous-mental-wellness-demands-during-the-covid-19-pandemic.html>

Investing in the Entrepreneurial Leadership and Learning Alliance:

Minister Ng also announced an investment through the Regional Development Agency for southern Ontario (FedDev) for the Entrepreneurial Leadership and Learning Alliance (ELLA), as part of the Government's recent top-up of \$15 million to Canada's first-ever Women Entrepreneurship Strategy's Ecosystem Fund. Supporting Canadian women-led businesses builds on our government's long-standing commitment to advance women's economic empowerment.

For more details on this announcement, please see the following news release:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/innovation-science-economic-development/news/2020/08/minister-ng-announces-more-support-for-women-entrepreneurs-in-southern-ontario.html>

New Temporary Work Permit Policy:

Canada is a global leader in immigration, and our government has worked hard to grow our immigration levels to keep our country competitive, reunite families, and reduce backlogs.

However, as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impose restrictions both in Canada and abroad, it has also significantly impacted our ability to accept newcomers. As the pandemic unfolded, many temporary workers have had to change their status to visitor because their work permit was expiring, and they couldn't find a job to be able to apply for a new work permit. Similarly, visitors to Canada have had difficulties finding flights home due to international travel restrictions, the reduction in flights available, or the health situation in their home country.

Recognizing these challenges, Minister Mendicino has announced that starting August 24, 2020, visitors who are currently in Canada and have a valid job offer will be able to apply for an employer-specific work permit and, if approved, receive it without having to leave the country.

As well, applicants who had a valid work permit in the past 12 months will be allowed to begin working for their new employer before their work permit application has been fully approved.

As we slowly rebuild our economy, these temporary measures will benefit both temporary workers and employers facing labour and skills shortages, including those who provide important goods and services that Canadians rely on.

For more information, please see IRCC's news release:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/news/2020/08/new-temporary-public-policy-will-allow-visitors-to-apply-for-a-work-permit-without-having-to-leave-canada.html>

Made-in-Canada Project:

Medical professionals at the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic work tirelessly to keep Canadians and their families healthy, while also delivering services to the most vulnerable. As these real-life heroes continue to work hard to fight COVID-19 and provide essential care to all Canadians, our government is taking important steps to secure essential lifesaving equipment our front-line healthcare workers need.

Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, and the Premier of Ontario, Doug Ford, announced an agreement between the Government of Canada, the Government of Ontario and 3M Canada on a joint investment to expand a manufacturing facility for N95 respirators in Brockville, Ontario. Together, our governments are supporting 3M's capital investment by contributing \$23.33 million each.

This partnership is part of our 'Made-in-Canada Project' to find innovative solutions to fight the pandemic right here at home. Once up and running, the facility will produce 25 million N95 respirators for the Government of Canada and 25 million for the Government of Ontario per year over five years to help health care workers, first responders and other essential workers with the equipment they need to continue their crucial work.

As we gradually and safely restart the economy, we will continue to work closely with Canadian industry and make strategic investments to support our health care workers and make our country more resilient to possible future waves of the virus. We are all in this together.

For more information, please see the Prime Minister's press release:

<https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2020/08/21/new-investment-secure-made-canada-supply-n95-respirators-protect>

Housing Supply Challenge:

Minister Hussen announced the launch of the first round of the Housing Supply Challenge in October. The challenge invites citizens, stakeholders, and experts from across Canada to propose innovative solutions to the barriers that limit the creation of new housing. The first round, Data Driven, seeks solutions to address gaps in housing data which is often outdated, inconsistent and not openly available. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), in collaboration with the Impact and Innovation Unit in the Privy Council Office and Infrastructure Canada, will be running several rounds over the course of the five-year program, each targeting a different barrier to housing supply.

For more details, please see the following news release:

<https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/media-newsroom/news-releases/2020/launch-first-round-housing-supply-challenge>

May I, once again, express my sincere appreciation to all residents, our front-line workers, essential service providers, government partners at all levels, businesses and students, for your ongoing efforts to help throughout these challenging times. We are in this together! Your daily efforts are ensuring that we will get through this together. Let's ensure that we continue our discipline to crush the curve. We do not need to experience a second wave! If you require any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

Enjoy your weekend.

Stay safe