



March 19, 2020

To our business community,

In these uncertain and unprecedented times, we know that our business owners and operators are worried. The truth is, at this point, all of us have more questions than answers. The City is committed to provide you with reliable and timely information. We have created [COVID19 Resources for Businesses](#) at fortsask.ca and will update it as information becomes available.

On March 18, the Federal and Provincial Governments announced support for businesses and Canadians impacted by Covid-19. [The available details of the federal programs can be found on the Canadian government website.](#)

For small businesses, the federal government is offering an immediate Temporary Wage Subsidy for a period of 3 months to help prevent layoffs. The subsidy will be equivalent to 10% of remuneration paid during this period to a maximum of \$1,375 per employee and \$25,000 per employer.

For employees, the federal government has waived the 1-week waiting period for Employment Insurance (EI) sickness benefits and the requirement to provide medical documentation.

For employees who do not qualify for EI benefits, including self-employed, the federal government has announced two programs:

- Emergency Care Benefit, which provides up to \$900 biweekly for a period of 15 weeks for workers (including self-employed) who are sick or quarantined with Covid-19, are caring for family members who are sick with Covid-19, or for parents who are impacted by school and daycare closures. This program will be available in early April and applications are available through the CRA 'MyAccount' secure portal, 'My Service Canada Account', or by calling a toll free number which will have an automated application process (toll free number to be published soon).
- Emergency Support Benefit which will provide similar benefits as EI for workers, including self-employed, who have lost their jobs as a result of Covid-19 impacts. These benefits will be available in early April and will be delivered through Canada Revenue Agency (CRA).

[The available details of the provincial support programs can be found on the Government of Alberta's website.](#) Provincial measures include:

- Deferral of corporate tax and instalment payments to August 31, 2020.
- Deferral of natural gas and electricity bill payments for a period of 90 days.

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- Student loan repayments will be paused for a period of 6 months without accruing interest or penalties.

The province also announced \$50 million in Emergency Isolation Support for Albertans who must self-isolate. This is available as a one-time payment to bridge the gap between now and when federal assistance begins in early April.

Facebook also announced they will be offering [\\$100 million in cash grants and ad credits](#) to help small businesses.

We know these are trying times. We are committed to the sustainability and resiliency of our business community. As Mayor Katchur stated on March 18<sup>th</sup> “...As the situation progresses the City will look at support options including utility and property tax relief once we have had a chance to coordinate with the province and better understand our ability to offer such assistance.”

We know that situations like these can have significant impact on the mental health and wellbeing of employers and employees alike. If you or one of your employees are struggling with a mental health issue or feeling overwhelmed, [please make use of the services offered by Alberta Health Services to help cope with the stress and anxiety.](#)

We have no way of predicting what the future will bring, but we will get through this together.

Sincerely,

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