

COVID-19 Support & Financial Relief

There are a number of new measures and initiatives being taken by all levels of government and various organizations to offset the financial impact COVID-19 is having on residents, businesses and non-profit organizations. On this page, you will find current assistance information for **businesses and non-profit organizations**. We will do our best to keep this page updated as new information becomes available.

Municipal Initiatives

To stay current on updates from Region of Queens Municipality (RQM) during this time, please visit our [COVID-19 Information page](#) or call 902-354-3453.

What RQM is doing to help community organizations:

- [Community Investment Fund](#) (CIF) provides financial assistance to eligible applicants to support capital projects; operational expenses associated with new programs, service delivery or enhancements to current offerings; events and tournaments; and investing in leadership training opportunities for new or existing community leaders. For more information on this program, please [email](#) or phone 902-354-5741. Note, this fund is part of our regular grant program, not specific to the current health emergency.

What RQM is doing to help small business:

- The [2020 Business Façade Program](#) is now open for applications. Due to current circumstances, we have an extended application deadline this year. For more information on this program, please contact [Richard Lane](#).

For provincial and federal support for entrepreneurs and business, please see below.

Provincial Government Supports

There is a list of business supports [here](#) with more comprehensive information than the summary below:

- Government will defer payments until June 30 for all government loans
- Government will defer payments until June 30 for small business renewal fees
- Changes to the Small Business Loan Guarantee Program which include deferring principal and interest payments until June 30, enhancing the program to make it easier for businesses to access credit up to \$500,000, and for those who might not qualify for a loan, government will guarantee the first \$100,000
- Small businesses which do business with the government will be paid within five days instead of the standard 30 days
- \$15 million has been provided as an to providers to speed up projects under the Internet for Nova Scotia Initiative and complete them as soon as possible

Federal Government Initiatives

Canada's Economic Response to COVID-19 is [here](#). We have provided a summary below:

- Enhancements to the [Work-Sharing Program](#)
The Work-Sharing (WS) Program is an adjustment program designed to help employers and employees avoid layoffs when there is a temporary reduction in the normal level of business activity that is beyond the control of the employer. The measure provides income support to employees eligible for Employment Insurance benefits who work a temporarily reduced work week while their employer recovers.

Work-Sharing is a three-party agreement involving employers, employees and Service Canada. Employees on a Work-Sharing agreement must agree to a reduced schedule of work and to share the available work over a specified period of time. Please note, this program is also available to not-for-profits.

The enhancements introduced in response to COVID-19 are as follows:

- The maximum duration of Work-Sharing agreements have been extended from 38 weeks to 76 weeks across Canada for those businesses affected by the downturn in business due to COVID-19
- Establishment of a [Business Credit Availability Program](#) which will provide more than \$10 billion of additional support, largely targeted to small- and medium-sized businesses, through the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC) and Export Development Canada (EDC).
- [Increased credit](#) is available to support farmers and the agri-food sector.
- A [Temporary Wage Subsidy Program](#) has been introduced to support eligible small- and medium-size businesses for a period of three months.
- Extra time to pay [Income Taxes](#) - all businesses are being allowed to defer, until after August 31, the payment of any income tax amounts that become owing on or after March 18 and before September 2020.
- An [Insured Mortgage Program](#) to support financial stability has been launched, in which the federal government will purchase up to \$50 billion of insured mortgage pools through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

Other Organizations

During this challenging time of self-isolation, social distancing and closures, it may be difficult for individuals and businesses to pay bills in a timely manner. If you are concerned about this, please contact your banks and other service providers. Most banks and service providers are publishing regular COVID-19 updates and relief measures. We have included phone numbers and links for common banks and service providers:

- [Nova Scotia Power](#) Phone: 1-800-428-6230
- [Heritage Gas](#) Phone: 902-466-2003
- [BMO](#) Phone: 1-877-788-1923
- [CIBC](#) Phone: 1-877-454-9030
- [HSBC](#) Phone: 1-888-310-4722
- [National Bank of Canada](#) Phone: 1-888-835-6281
- [PC Financial](#) Phone: 1-866-246-7262

- [RBC](#) Phone: 1-800-769-2511
- [Scotiabank](#) Phone: 1-800-472-6842
- [TD Bank](#) Phone: 1-888-720-0075
- [Bell Aliant](#) Phone: 1-888-214-7896
- [Eastlink](#) Phone: 1-888-345-1111
- [Telus](#) Phone: 1-866-558-2273

Information and support is also being provided through these organizations:

- The [Business Development Bank of Canada](#) (BDC) have special measures and initiatives in place in response to COVID-19. Please see [here](#) for their response and updates.
- The BDC has provided a free [webinar](#) on how to cope with the impacts of COVID-19 on your business.
- The [Atlantic Association of CBDCs](#) (which includes the [South Shore Opportunities](#)) has announced financial reliefs for existing loan clients. They are:
 - Eliminating interest and deferring the principal payment of existing loans for three months beginning April 1, 2020. During this time, no interest will accrue and no payment will be withdrawn on existing outstanding balances/loans between April 1, 2020 and June 30, 2020.
- [South Shore Opportunities](#) Business Officers are available, as usual, to listen to concerns and make suggestions with regards to resources and tools to navigate this challenging time. For all clients, loan and non-loan, South Shore Opportunities staff are available by telephone at **902-354-2616**. Online video meetings are also available.
- Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia (TIANS) has launched a new digital hub, [Tourism Strong](#), to provide resources, support and information to tourism businesses
- [Centre for Women in Business](#) is providing support and regular COVID-19 updates for women in business