

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 **individuals and families**. 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 individuals/families:

- [Low Income Tax Exemption](#): RQM provides property tax exemption to low income residents of Queens County. For information on the current program, please contact our tax clerk by [email](#) or by phone, 902-354-3453
- **Tax and billing changes are coming soon and will be updated on our website and social media pages.**

Provincial Government Supports

There is a list of supports [here](#), which includes:

- Every individual and family member on income assistance will receive an additional \$50 starting Friday, March 20, 2020. People do not need to apply.
- \$1 million has been provided to Feed Nova Scotia to help purchase food and hire more staff.
- Student loan payments are suspended and will not accrue interest until September 30, 2020. This suspension is automatic.

- Apply to the [Heating Assistance Rebate Program](#) for help with the cost of home heating. If you qualify, you can receive up to \$200.
DEADLINE TO APPLY: MARCH 31, 2020
 - Increased support for seniors:
Government is investing \$230,000 in Community Links and Seniors' Safety Programs to expand their capacity to provide more supports and services like:
 - Volunteers for delivering groceries;
 - technological options for keeping people connected by phone;
 - responding to other social issues as they emerge
- NOTE: If you're an older Nova Scotian (or if you're concerned about one) and you need non-emergency, non-medical help, call 211 or visit ns.211.ca.**

Federal Government Initiatives

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

- Increasing the [Canada Child Benefit](#) by an extra \$300 per child
- Increased [Goods and Services Tax credit](#) this year for people with low and modest incomes
- Extra time to file [Income Tax Returns](#), individuals have until June 1, 2020
- [Canada Economic Response Benefit \(CERB\)](#) Canada Economic Response Benefit (CERB) provides financial support to employed and self-employed Canadians who are directly affected by COVID-19. It provides a payment of \$2,000 for a 4-week period (the same as \$500 a week) for up to 16 weeks. After you apply, you should get your payment in 3 business days if you signed up for direct deposit. If you haven't, you should get it in about 10 business days.

CERB is now open for applications. Applications will be staggered by birthday month, so as to not overwhelm the system. If your birthday is in:

- January, February or March, apply on Mondays;
- April, May and June, apply on Tuesdays;
- July, August or September, apply on Wednesdays;
- October, November and December should apply on Thursdays.

All affected Canadians are encouraged to apply on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays.

People can apply online [here](#) or phone toll-free at 1-800-959-2019.

- Improved access to [Employment Insurance](#) sickness benefits. Dedicated EI phone line: 1-833-381-2725
- A new [Indigenous Community Support Fund](#)
- There is a six-month moratorium on the repayment of [Canada Student Loans](#)
- Minimum withdrawals for [Registered Retirement Income Funds](#) have been reduced by 25% for 2020

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