

Support for Businesses

Governments and the private sector are supporting businesses in British Columbia affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

- As part of B.C.'s [COVID-19 Action Plan](#), the provincial government launched income supports, tax relief and funding for people, businesses and services.
- Employer guidelines, best practices and other resources are available from [WorkSafeBC](#) to help businesses safely operate and reduce transmission.
- Through [StrongerBC](#), B.C.'s Economic Recovery Plan, the provincial government is making health care stronger, getting people back to work, supporting businesses and helping communities.

B.C. Business COVID-19 Support Service:

A one-stop resource operated by Small Business BC (SBBC) for businesses with questions about the supports available from governments and organizations. SBBC advisors are available Monday to Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. by phone, email and live chat. Support is available in several languages.

Phone: 1-833-254-4357 (HELP)

Email: covid@smallbusinessbc.ca

Live Chat: <https://covid.smallbusinessbc.ca>

More supports for business:

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Loans and Grants

<p><i>Government of British Columbia</i> Small and Medium-Sized Business Recovery Grant</p>	<p>The criteria have been expanded and the program has been extended until August 31, 2021.</p> <p>Provides grants of \$10,000 to \$30,000 to support eligible B.C. businesses that employ up to 149 B.C. residents, and have experienced declines in revenue of at least 30% since March 2020 to the point of application when compared to the same one-month period in 2019.</p> <p>An additional \$5,000 to \$15,000 grant is available to eligible tourism-related businesses.</p> <p>LEARN MORE ></p>
<p><i>Government of British Columbia & Alacrity Canada</i> Launch Online Grant</p>	<p>The program has been enhanced and extended until September 30, 2021 or when the funds have been fully subscribed. Service-based businesses and online booking system features are now also eligible. An additional \$30 million in funding is now available.</p> <p>Provides grants of up to \$7,500 to eligible B.C. businesses to create an online shop and/or improve their e-commerce experience to attract new local customers and expand to new markets. The grant will pay for up to 75% of eligible expenses.</p> <p>Up to 30% of the \$42 million grant will be reserved for rural, Indigenous, Black and people of colour owned businesses. The funds must be used to hire B.C.-based companies to do the online store development.</p> <p>LEARN MORE ></p>
<p><i>Government of Canada & Financial Institutions</i> Updated: Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA)</p>	<p>Applications have been extended to June 30, 2021.</p> <p>The CEBA provides interest-free loans up to \$60,000 to eligible small businesses. Repaying the loan on or before December 31, 2022 results in a loan forgiveness amount of up to \$20,000. Applicants who have received the previous \$40,000 CEBA loan may apply for an additional \$20,000 in financing.</p> <p>If you applied for CEBA and have questions, please check your application status online or contact the CEBA Call Centre at 1-888-324-4201.</p> <p>LEARN MORE ></p>

<p><i>Government of Canada</i> Updated: Regional Relief and Recovery Fund (RRRF) – Community Futures Stream</p>	<p>Contact your local Community Futures office for program availability.</p> <p>Provides interest-free loans up to \$60,000, with up to \$20,000 forgivable if repaid before December 31, 2022, to small and medium size businesses in rural communities. Sole proprietorships, partnerships, corporations, social enterprises and similar organizations can qualify. Interested businesses not eligible for other federal support programs can contact their local Community Futures office to apply. Rural businesses requesting more than \$60,000 should apply through Western Economic Diversification Canada.</p> <p>LEARN MORE ></p>
<p><i>Government of Canada</i> Updated: Regional Relief and Recovery Fund (RRRF) – Women’s Enterprise Initiative Stream</p>	<p>Applications continue to be accepted.</p> <p>Provides interest-free loans up to \$60,000, with up to \$20,000 forgivable if repaid before December 31, 2022, to women-owned or women-led businesses. Applicants who previously received RRRF funding must apply separately for the \$20,000 expansion. Sole proprietorships, partnerships and corporations are eligible. Interested businesses not eligible for other federal support programs can contact the Women’s Enterprise Centre to apply.</p> <p>LEARN MORE ></p>
<p><i>Government of Canada</i> Updated: Regional Relief and Recovery Fund (RRRF) – Small and Medium Sized Businesses Stream</p>	<p>Applications have been extended to June 30, 2021.</p> <p>Businesses outside of the Community Futures network, not women-owned or women-led, that are ineligible for CEBA may qualify for interest-free loans of up to \$60,000, with up to \$20,000 forgivable if repaid before December 31, 2022. Applicants who previously received RRRF funding must apply separately for the \$20,000 expansion. Sole proprietorships and not-for-profits are not eligible. Interested businesses can apply through Western Economic Diversification Canada.</p> <p>LEARN MORE ></p>
<p><i>Government of Canada</i> Updated: Regional Relief and Recovery Fund (RRRF) – Requests Over \$40,000</p>	<p>Applications are open until funding has been fully distributed.</p> <p>Businesses requesting more than \$40,000 could qualify for interest-free loans of up to \$1 million, with no scheduled monthly repayments required until after December 31, 2022. Interested businesses can apply through Western Economic Diversification Canada.</p> <p>LEARN MORE ></p>

<p><i>Government of Canada</i></p> <p>Highly Affected Sectors Credit Availability Program (HASCAP)</p>	<p>HASCAP is available at participating financial institutions from February 1 – June 30, 2021.</p> <p>Supports the hardest hit businesses, including those in sectors like tourism and hospitality, hotels, arts and entertainment, with 100% government-guaranteed loans ranging from \$25,000 to \$1 million.</p> <p>Loans are low-interest and include repayment terms of up to 10 years, with up to a 12-month postponement on principal repayments at the start of the loan.</p> <p>Qualifying businesses must have been financially stable and viable pre-COVID-19 and have received payments either from the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy program or the Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy program by having demonstrated a minimum 50% revenue decline for at least three months within the eight-month period prior to the date of a HASCAP Guarantee application.</p> <p>LEARN MORE ></p>
<p><i>Government of Canada & Financial Institutions</i></p> <p>Business Credit Availability Program (BCAP)</p>	<p>BCAP is available until June 2021.</p> <p>Provides financing to businesses in all sectors and regions affected by COVID-19. Various programs with loans of up to \$60 million are available through financial institutions.</p> <p>LEARN MORE ></p>
<p><i>Government of Canada, Vancity & the Women’s Enterprise Centre</i></p> <p>Support for Women Entrepreneurs</p>	<p>Vancity Unity Women Entrepreneurs Program:</p> <p>Offers loans of up to \$100,000 to women entrepreneurs who have been in business for more than one year. Businesses operating more than six months may qualify for a line of credit up to \$20,000. The program also provides support services through the Women’s Enterprise Centre (WEC), including resources on financial management, and preferred entry into WEC’s Mentoring Program.</p> <p>LEARN MORE ></p> <p>Regional Relief and Recovery Fund:</p> <p>Women-run businesses that are ineligible for other government COVID-19 funding could qualify for interest-free loans of up to \$60,000, with up to \$20,000 forgivable if repaid before December 31, 2022. Sole proprietorships, partnerships and corporations are eligible. Applications continue to be accepted.</p> <p>LEARN MORE ></p>

<p><i>Government of Canada</i></p> <p>Updated: Support for Indigenous Businesses</p>	<p>BC Indigenous Tourism Recovery Fund: Applications will be accepted until April 23, 2021.</p> <p>Provides non-repayable grants of up to \$45,000 to Indigenous tourism businesses that have experienced revenue losses of at least 50% in 2020. Businesses which experienced losses of less than 50% may be considered on a per applicant basis.</p> <p>LEARN MORE ></p> <p>Emergency Loan Program: Small and medium-sized Indigenous businesses may qualify for funding up to \$60,000 including interest-free loans up to \$40,000 and non-repayable contributions up to \$20,000.</p> <p>LEARN MORE ></p> <p>Support for Indigenous Community-Owned Businesses: First Nation, Inuit and Metis communities and collectives can apply on behalf of businesses for non-repayable contributions to cover specific business costs.</p> <p>LEARN MORE ></p>
<p><i>Government of Canada</i></p> <p>Large Employer Emergency Financing Facility (LEEFF)</p>	<p>Apply through the Canada Enterprise Emergency Funding Corporation.</p> <p>Provides bridge financing to Canada’s largest employers, whose needs during the pandemic are not being met through conventional financing, in order to keep their operations going during the pandemic.</p> <p>LEARN MORE ></p>
<p><i>Government of British Columbia</i></p> <p>Updated: Accelerating Manufacturing Scale-Up Grant</p>	<p>Applications will be accepted April 15 – May 31, 2021.</p> <p>Provides 75% of project costs up to a maximum of \$250,000 for individual business projects, or up to \$500,000 for projects by a group of businesses. Projects will support prototyping, piloting, or demonstrating new technologies, commercializing new technologies and/or products, improving market access, and identifying and implementing operational improvements.</p> <p>LEARN MORE ></p>

Rent Relief

<p><i>Government of Canada</i> Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy (CERS) & Lockdown Support</p>	<p>The current maximum subsidy rates of CERS and the Lockdown Support have been further extended until June 5, 2021.</p> <p>Provides a rent subsidy directly to qualifying organizations that have experienced a decline in revenue until June 2021. A rent subsidy of up to a maximum of 65% of eligible expenses is available from September 27, 2020 to June 5, 2021.</p> <p>Organizations temporarily shut down by a mandatory public health order, or have activities significantly restricted for a week or longer due to a related public health order, may be eligible for the Lockdown Support, which provides a top-up rent subsidy of 25%, in addition to the 65% subsidy.</p> <p>LEARN MORE ></p>
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Wage Support

<p><i>Government of Canada</i> Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS)</p>	<p>The current maximum subsidy rate of CEWS has been further extended until June 5, 2021.</p> <p>Until June 2021, a base subsidy of employee wages is available to all eligible employers that are experiencing a decline in revenue, with the subsidy amount varying depending on the scale of revenue decline. A maximum subsidy rate of up to 75% of employee wages is available.</p> <p>LEARN MORE ></p>
<p><i>Government of British Columbia</i> Updated: B.C. Increased Employment Incentive</p>	<p>Remuneration increases over the last quarter of 2020 (October to December) are eligible for a tax credit.</p> <p>Offers a refundable tax credit for all private sector B.C. employers to encourage the creation of new jobs for B.C. workers or increases in payroll for existing low or medium-income employees. The tax credit is calculated at 15% of the amount that the employer's qualifying B.C. remuneration exceeds the employer's base B.C. remuneration for the quarter ending December 31, 2020. Applications are now open.</p> <p>LEARN MORE ></p>

<p><i>Government of British Columbia</i> BC Employer Training Grant - C19 Impacted Worker Training Stream</p>	<p>Applications for 2020/21 Intake 3 and 2021/22 Intake 1 are open.</p> <p>Offers employers 100% of eligible training costs, up to a maximum of \$10,000 per participant per fiscal year, to support British Columbians that are employed or have been employed in sectors impacted by COVID-19.</p> <p>LEARN MORE ></p>
<p><i>Government of Canada</i> Employment Insurance (EI) Work Sharing Program</p>	<p>Provides EI benefits to workers who agree to reduce their normal working hours as a result of developments beyond the control of their employers. The eligibility of such agreements has been extended to 76 weeks, eligibility requirements have been eased, and the application process has been streamlined.</p> <p>LEARN MORE ></p>

Changes to Taxes

<p><i>Government of British Columbia</i> Updated: Provincial Business Taxes</p>	<p><u>B.C. PST Rebate on Select Machinery and Equipment:</u></p> <p>Corporations can apply to receive an amount equal to the PST they paid between September 17, 2020 and September 30, 2021 on qualifying machinery and equipment. Applications are now open.</p> <p>LEARN MORE ></p>
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Pivoting Your Business Operations

<p><i>Small Business BC</i> BC Marketplace</p>	<p>The BC Marketplace helps British Columbians support local small businesses. Businesses can reach new audiences by creating their own business profile for free.</p> <p>LEARN MORE ></p>
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<p><i>Government of British Columbia & Alacrity Canada</i></p> <p>Alacrity Canada Digital Marketing Bootcamp</p>	<p>Registration is open.</p> <p>With funding from the B.C. Government, the Alacrity Canada Digital Marketing Bootcamp provides digital marketing knowledge, tools and resources to help businesses grow.</p> <p>If you own, run, or are employed by a small to medium-sized business based in and registered in BC that employs less than 149 B.C. residents and has been directly impacted by COVID-19, you may be eligible to have your tuition covered.</p> <p>LEARN MORE ></p>
<p><i>Government of Canada</i></p> <p>CanExport SMEs Program</p>	<p>The CanExport SMEs program is pivoting to now help small businesses develop and expand their e-commerce presence, attend virtual trade shows and other business-to-business events, and navigate new COVID-19-related trade barriers. Small businesses are encouraged to apply for up to \$75,000 in funding to break into new international markets.</p> <p>LEARN MORE ></p>

Other Supports and Resources for Businesses

<p><i>Regional Organizations</i></p> <p>Support for Self-Employed Individuals</p>	<p>Self-employed individuals not eligible for EI may be eligible for the following new benefits:</p> <p>Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB):</p> <p>Applications are open. Provides \$500 per week for up to 26 weeks for workers who have stopped working or had their income reduced by at least 50% due to COVID-19, and who are not eligible for EI.</p> <p>Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit (CRSB):</p> <p>Applications are open. Provides \$500 per week for up to a maximum of two weeks for workers who are unable to work for at least 50% of the week because they contracted COVID-19, are sick or are self-isolating for reasons related to COVID-19.</p> <p>Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit (CRCB):</p> <p>Applications are open. Provides \$500 per week for up to 26 weeks per household for workers unable to work for at least 50% of the week because they must care for a child or family member for reasons related to COVID-19.</p> <p>LEARN MORE ></p>
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<p><i>Regional Organizations</i></p> <p>Support for Regional Businesses</p>	<p>Community Futures: Businesses in rural communities can check with their local Community Futures office for emergency loans and supports to assist with COVID-19-related business interruption, including payment and interest breaks.</p> <p>Island Coastal Economic Trust: Supports businesses on Vancouver Island, on the Sunshine Coast and the Gulf Islands with the Small Capital Restart Fund and the Tourism Resiliency Program.</p> <p>Columbia Basin Trust: Provides low-interest loans up to \$40,000 through the Small Business Working Capital Loan program Columbia Basin businesses. The Trust has revised or increased support to existing programs.</p> <p>Spring Activator: Offers free online courses, support calls and other business resiliency resources to entrepreneurs in select communities across B.C.</p>
<p><i>Government of Canada</i></p> <p>Agriculture & Agri-Food Supports</p>	<p>Farm Credit Canada (FCC):</p> <p>FCC is offering loan payment deferrals and other financing products.</p>
<p><i>Government of Canada</i></p> <p>Support for Innovative Businesses</p>	<p>The federal government will provide \$250 million in funding over 5 years, beginning in 2021-22, to the Strategic Innovation Fund. The fund spurs innovation by providing funding for large projects (over \$10 million in requested contribution) through five streams.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Innovation and Growth (Streams 1-3): Funding helps support R&D and commercialization, the growth and expansion of firms and the attraction and retention of large scale investments in Canada. • Collaboration and Networks (Streams 4-5): Funding helps support industrial research, development, and technology demonstration through collaboration between academia, non-profit organizations, and the private sector. <p style="text-align: center;">LEARN MORE ></p>
<p><i>Utilities & Insurance Providers</i></p> <p>Bill Relief</p>	<p>Utilities and insurance providers including BC Hydro, FortisBC and ICBC are offering bill deferrals to customers affected by COVID-19.</p>