

Hello,

We would like to send you a few updates regarding COVID-19 and ask you to share this information in your networks. Please continue to consult the [AAFC website](#) regularly for updates.

**1. Government of Canada announces Essential Services Contingency Reserve (ESCR)**

The Government of Canada [announced](#) on July 21<sup>st</sup> the establishment of an [Essential Services Contingency Reserve](#) for all critical infrastructure sectors, including the food sector. Beginning August 3<sup>rd</sup>, the ESCR will be accepting applications and will assist essential services providers outside the health sector that urgently require personal protective equipment (PPE) to obtain supplies and continue operations. Industry associations are encouraged to apply on behalf of their respective sectors. The PPE will be made available to successful applicants on a cost recovery basis; a wide range of PPE including N95 and KN95 respirators, surgical masks, and gloves will be available.

**2. British Columbia (BC) Food Processors Association (BCFPA) - Protecting Our People program**

The [Protecting Our People program](#), offered to British Columbia's agriculture, seafood and processing sectors as well as independent retailers and other workers in the food supply chain to provide affordable access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is being expanded to include stakeholders outside of BC. While details are being finalized, the national launch of the program is aimed for end of July, early August 2020.

**3. COVID-19 update: New public policy on biometrics collection exemption for temporary residence applicants from within Canada in effect until further notice**

Recognizing the impact this ongoing service disruption has on applicants in Canada, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has put in place until further notice a [public policy to exempt temporary residence applicants applying from within Canada](#) from having to give their biometrics. This means we will be able to fully process and make decisions on applications.

With the public policy in place, IRCC is now able to help many temporary residence applicants in Canada to move forward with their plans, for example, to study, work or extend their stay as a visitor in the country.

For the latest information on biometrics, please keep checking the [COVID-19 biometrics Web page](#) and [Canada.ca/biometrics](#)

**4. Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS)**

On Friday, July 17, Finance Minister Morneau announced proposed changes to the CEWS that would broaden the reach of the program and provide better targeted support so that more workers can return to their jobs quickly as the economy restarts.

The proposed changes included in the Government's draft legislative proposals would:

- Allow the extension of the CEWS until December 19, 2020, including redesigned program details until November 21, 2020.
- Make the subsidy accessible to a broader range of employers by including employers with a revenue decline of less than 30 per cent and providing a gradually decreasing base subsidy to all qualifying employers. This would help many struggling employers with less than a 30-per-cent revenue loss get support to keep and bring back workers, while also ensuring those who have previously benefited could still qualify, even if their revenues recover and no longer meet the 30 per cent revenue decline threshold.

- Introduce a top-up subsidy of up to an additional 25 per cent for employers that have been most adversely affected by the pandemic. This would be particularly helpful to employers in industries that are recovering more slowly.
- Provide certainty to employers that have already made business decisions for July and August by ensuring they would not receive a subsidy rate lower than they would have had under the previous rules.
- Address certain technical issues identified by stakeholders.

These proposed changes follow consultations with business and labour representatives on potential adjustments to the CEWS program aimed at ensuring that it continues to protect jobs and promote growth.

Thank you,

**Industry Engagement Division**  
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada  
Government of Canada