



Federal government COVID-19 rapid surge response capacity Information for the provinces and territories

To help manage the consequences of COVID-19 outbreaks, the Government of Canada has established a rapid surge response capacity. This is another investment on its part, in addition to the Safe Restart Agreement, to reduce the impacts of COVID-19 on Canadians.

The purpose of this COVID surge capacity is to strengthen existing services in areas where the need is most critical, including outbreak management, testing, and contact tracing. The provinces and territories can call on this surge capacity as a last resort, when their needs exceed their capacity. The initiative builds on federal resources and an existing contribution agreement between Public Safety Canada and the Canadian Red Cross (CRC). Consideration of a request for help begins as soon as it is formally submitted by the province or territory (PT) concerned.

Since the COVID surge capacity is limited in terms of both human resources and funding, it is up to the provinces and territories to prioritize requests emanating from local governments. The Government of Canada will do the same with respect to the requests it receives, based on needs and available capacity when requests are received. Surge capacity activation protocols are being developed and will be communicated to stakeholders.

The COVID surge capacity initiative is provided for potential deployment of resources across Canada, including in rural and remote regions and in Indigenous communities. The program can be accessed immediately and **it will remain accessible until March 31, 2021.**

In accordance with the three key areas of outbreak management, testing, and contact tracing, the Government of Canada has identified seven areas of intervention:

- the public health rapid response team;
- outbreak management;
- testing assistance;
- supplying required testing materials;
- laboratory services;
- contact tracing;
- safe voluntary isolation sites.

The annex attached to this document contains additional information on each area and a description of existing capacity.

Requests for assistance and support related to the COVID surge capacity can be sent to the Public Health Agency Canada (PHAC), PHAC.COVID.Support.ASPC@Canada.ca. Each request must be submitted by a province or territory and include the following items:

- a brief description of the situation and the degree of urgency; and
- evidence that the applicant has assessed the situation to confirm that existing resources are not sufficient to meet the needs.