

Office of the  
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Cabinet du  
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# Backgrounder

## **Priorities to safely restart Canada's economy**

The Government of Canada is working to ensure that Canada has the resources it needs to safely restart the economy, while protecting the health of Canadians. In partnership with the provinces and territories, federal efforts will focus on seven priorities to address Canadians' immediate needs within the next six to eight months.

### **Testing, contact tracing, and data management**

In order to best help Canadians if a further outbreak of the virus occurs, we need to invest in testing, contact tracing, and public health data management. The Government of Canada will provide \$4.28 billion to support provinces and territories with the costs of increasing their capacity to conduct testing, perform contact tracing, and share public health data that will help fight the pandemic. The goal is to ensure provinces and territories have the capacity to test up to 200,000 people per day, nation-wide. Funding and support will also be provided to improve and modernize data management across Canada, to help all orders of government coordinate their efforts to contain the virus.

### **Health care system capacity**

Canadians rely on our health care services and mental health supports everyday. COVID-19 has placed significant demands on our care systems, and placed additional strain on our mental health. The Government of Canada will provide \$700 million to support health care system capacity to respond to a potential future wave of COVID-19. We will also provide \$500 million to address immediate needs and gaps in the support and protection of people experiencing challenges related to mental health, substance use, or homelessness. We want to keep Canadians safe and healthy, and to provide the health care supports they need during these difficult times.

### **Vulnerable populations**

Canadians receiving long-term care, home care, and palliative care are at an increased risk of more severe cases of COVID-19. As the economy restarts, it is important to have continued protections and supports in place for seniors, and provide health and social supports to other vulnerable populations. The Government of Canada will provide \$740

million to support one-time costs over the next six to eight months for measures to control and prevent infections. This could include addressing staffing issues, in long-term care, home care, and palliative care facilities and services. Funding can also be used to support other vulnerable populations.

### **Municipalities**

Municipalities are on the front lines of a safe restart of the economy, and will need to put in place appropriate precautions to minimize the spread of COVID-19 and manage public spaces and critical services, like public transit. The Government of Canada will contribute up to \$2 billion to support municipalities with COVID-19 operating costs for the next six to eight months. Provincial and territorial governments will continue to support municipalities, and will cost-match federal supports with investments made this fiscal year. In addition, the Government of Canada will also cost-match approximately \$1.8 billion to support any additional provincial/territorial contributions to for public transit.

### **Personal protective equipment for health and non-health workers**

We need to keep our health care workers safe and healthy, and COVID-19 has added significant pressure to ensure that there is enough supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) for these and other essential workers. The Government of Canada and provinces and territories have made significant investments in this area. To support the restart of the economy, the Government of Canada will commit \$4.5 billion to purchase PPE for national use and commit \$3 billion to provinces and territories for PPE investments. To facilitate future procurement, provinces and territories will share PPE-related data with the Government of Canada on a regular basis.

### **Child care for returning workers**

So parents can know that their children are safe as they gradually return to the workplace, the Government of Canada is working with provinces and territories to ensure sufficient child care is available during this challenging time. The Government of Canada will provide \$625 million to address the reduced availability of child care spaces and the unique needs stemming from the pandemic.

### **Pan-Canadian sick leave**

To safely restart the economy, Canada must ensure that workers do not return to work if they have COVID-19 or are showing symptoms. To encourage workers to remain at home and seek public health advice if they are showing symptoms, the Government of Canada will fund a new temporary income support program, at an estimated cost of \$1.1 billion. The new program will support workers who do not already have access to other paid sick leave. Where not already available, provinces and territories will establish job-protected sick leave, through regulation or legislation, that allows workers to take up to 10 days leave related to COVID-19.