

Prime Minister's remarks updating Canadians on COVID-19 and funding through the Regional Development Agencies

May 13, 2020
Ottawa, Ontario

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY (/en/videos/2020/05/13/remarks-updating-canadians-covid-19-and-funding-through-regional-development)

Hello everyone.

Today, I want to start by highlighting some good news.

Last night, Health Canada announced that it has authorized the first serological test for COVID-19 antibodies.

This is a critical step for the work of the COVID-19 Immunity Task Force, which now has a safe and approved test that can detect antibodies specific to COVID-19 in an individual's blood.

These tests will help us better understand immunity against the virus and how it spreads, so we can keep Canadians safe and healthy.

I now want to turn to what we're doing to help employers keep their employees.

Over the past few weeks, our government has unveiled a number of measures to help businesses stay afloat during the crisis.

We want to make sure that as many Canadians as possible can keep getting their paycheck now and have a job to come back to once the pandemic is behind us.

Because that day will come. And when it does, Canada needs to be ready.

Our government has been laying the groundwork for our economic recovery. And we know that key to our collective success is maintaining the connection between employer and employee.

So, to help businesses of all sizes keep people on the payroll, we launched the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy.

We also introduced the Canada Emergency Business Account to support those struggling with cash flow.

These measures are making a real difference in people's lives.

So far, more than half a million small businesses have received a loan through the CEBA.

And, over 120,000 employers have been approved to receive the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy for almost two million workers.

We also announced more targeted support for regional businesses, including those operating in the tourism sector and seasonal industries. We created a nearly \$1 billion Regional Relief and Recovery Fund to ensure that they're also getting the support they need during this time.

The funding will flow through the six Regional Development Agencies, with a portion dedicated to the Community Futures Network to assist businesses in rural and remote regions.

Today, we're releasing more details on how that money will be split between the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, FedDev Ontario, FedNor, Western Economic Diversification Canada, and CanNor.

And here's the bottom line.

These organizations understand the economic realities and specific challenges facing both your region and your business.

They can help you with your most pressing needs – whether it's covering costs or keeping your employees.

So, if you're struggling but did not qualify for other programs like the wage subsidy or the emergency business account, give them a call. They're there for you.

From the outset, our government has been focused on getting people the help they need as quickly as possible.

We announced support not just for businesses and their employees, but for different groups of people who've been hit especially hard by the pandemic.

A few weeks ago, we launched the Canada Emergency Student Benefit as part of our \$9 billion plan to help young people get through the next few months.

This morning I also have some news for students and recent graduates.

I can confirm that students and recent graduates will be able to apply for this benefit starting Friday.

To prepare for that, if you haven't already signed up for the MyAccount on the CRA

website, it's worth doing this now to make the next steps go even quicker.

Because of COVID-19, there are fewer summer jobs for students. And you need to work during the summer months to pay your tuition or cover your day-to-day expenses in the coming year.

The Canada Emergency Student Benefit will be there to help you.

I would like to close this morning by reminding everyone to continue following the recommendations of public health experts.

We have heard a lot recently about gradually restarting the economy. I know everyone is looking forward to it, but we must remain vigilant.

So continue to stay home as much as possible and remember to keep your distance when you go out.

We will get through this together.

Thank you.