The Chamber of Commerce is a member-driven, volunteer-led organization, proudly representing the interests of businesses in our region, and working diligently to stimulate a strong and vibrant economy through our connections, support and information. For more than 115 years, the Chamber has been the most influential, unified, and influential business network in Canada and works together to shape policy and programs that will make a difference to businesses in our region.

New plan will guide exiting of health measures

Easing of provincialwide health measures is closely linked to data regarding COVID-19 hospitalization benchmarks. These benchmarks will provide a transparent approach to releasing restrictions for businesses and individuals while protecting the healthcare system. Each step has an associated benchmark of breakthrough COVID-19 patients, including intensive care patients. Changes to restrictions will occur only after a benchmark is reached. The hospitalization benchmarks are:

1. Step 1 – 60 and declining
2. Step 2 – 40 and declining
3. Step 3 – 300 and declining
4. Step 4 – 150 and declining

Indoor masking and distancing requirements will remain in place throughout the entire stepped approach and restrictions will still apply to all activities within each step. The goal, and second priority of each step is based on relative risk for COVID-19 transmission. Actions with the lowest relative risk will be released first.

Businesses are encouraged to use the Chamber’s Covid-19 website page for measuring their operating capacity. They are aware of funding and to update their plans in business operations and limit risk that may result from lockdown closures or a return to enhanced restrictions due to increased case counts.

Here are the supports available to your business or organization:

1. Small and Medium Enterprise Grant (SMERG): This grant provides up to $20,000 to small businesses, not-for-profit organizations, and non-profit organizations that were ordered to close or reduce operations, and that experienced a revenue reduction of at least 30% due to public health orders. Alberta’s government considered the need to ensure new businesses have the support they need. New-Alberta businesses impacted by public health orders are excluded from applying, to a maximum of $15,000 in funding and non-business related expenses.
2. Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS): Depending on your revenue, you may be eligible for a subsidy of up to 75% of employee wages retroactive from March 15, 2020 to June 2021.
3. Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB): Businesses, non-profit organizations, charities, and a tenant or property owner with lost revenue due to the COVID-19 pandemic may be eligible for a direct subsidy to up to 65% of their current or property expenses from September 27, 2020 until June 2021. Applicants eligible for the CERB subsidy may also be eligible for an additional 25% in lockdown subsidy support of up to 90% of expenses if your business is forced to close as a result of Alberta’s new public health orders.
4. Canada Emergency Bank Account (CEBA): Through financial institutions, this program provides interest-free loans of up to $60,000, of which is forgivable, to small businesses and non-profit organizations to cover their operating costs.
5. Employment Insurance, Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB): Weekly benefits would be available for up to 26 weeks for those who are not eligible for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit. CRB would provide up to $500 per week.
6. Canada Recovery Account (CRAW): Through financial institutions, this program provides interest-free loans of up to $10,000, of which is forgivable, to small businesses and non-profit organizations to cover their operating costs.
7. Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit: These supports will continue as long as they are impacted directly by COVID-19.

The Chamber also developed a one stop shop of tools and resources as they are being updated with this information on the Chamber’s COVID-19 Information & Resources website page since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. As the Chamber has been posting weekly updates and e-newsletter communications. Businesses that have questions on supports and funding can reach out to the Chamber on email or the website and subscribe to the e-newsletter.

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