

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COVID-19 pandemic

Low-income workers in essential sectors will receive \$100 per week

Québec City, April 3, 2020 – The government is announcing the establishment of the incentive program to retain essential workers, which will offer a \$100 weekly benefit for low-income earners working full or part time in the essential services.

The compensation seeks to ensure that full-time workers in sectors that are deemed essential receive a wage that exceeds what the Canada Emergency Response Benefit would provide.

The new benefit will be paid retroactive to March 15 for a maximum of 16 weeks. Through this compensation, workers will obtain, in addition to their wages, a taxable monthly lump sum of \$400, or \$1 600 for a period of 16 weeks. To be entitled to the benefit, applicants must:

- work in a sector declared essential during the period covered;
- earn a gross salary of \$550 a week or less;
- have annual employment earnings of at least \$5 000 and total annual income of \$28 600 or less, calculated before the benefit.

It should be emphasized that applicants can apply for this temporary benefit, which could cover roughly 600 000 wage earners, by means of an online Revenu Québec form that will be available starting May 19 and will be paid by direct deposit starting on May 27. The program will cost an estimated \$890 million.

Reminders

This new measure rounds out those already implemented since the outset of the pandemic:

- the Aide d'urgence aux petites et moyennes entreprises program (\$150 million);
- a temporary hourly increase of \$4 in the wages of orderlies in the private sector;
- the Programme d'aide temporaire aux travailleurs (PATT);
- the Programme d'action concertée pour les entreprises (PACTE);
- the relaxation of rules governing the production of income tax returns and the payment of tax balances payable and tax instalments;
- accelerated payment to businesses of tax credits;
- the suspension for six months of all student loans repayments;
- a 25% reduction in 2020 in the amount of mandatory withdrawals from a registered retirement income fund (RRIF);
- the postponement until June 30 for businesses of QST payments, without interest or penalties.

“Since the crisis began, we have adopted significant measures to support the Québec economy and ensure that Quebecers receive essential services. Through this program, we are supporting low-income workers who are providing essential services during the pandemic.”

Eric Girard, Minister of Finance

“The health and safety of essential workers is our priority during this period of general mobilization. We want them to be able to perform their duties with complete peace of mind and to receive the appropriate remuneration. I would like to express to them my gratitude. More than ever, your work is essential in this time of crisis. Let us pursue our efforts since, together, we will get through it.”

Jean Boulet, Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Solidarity

Related links:

List of priority sectors of activity:

http://www.finances.gouv.qc.ca/documents/Autres/en/AUTEN_tableau_professions_services_essentiels.pdf

For information on COVID-19 and all the assistance programs offered, please visit quebec.ca/coronavirus

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