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## Quebec government ends the newly introduced COVID-19 related Temporary Assistance Workers Program, in light of the new federal Canada Emergency Response Benefit

On March 16, 2020, the Quebec government launched the Temporary Aid for Workers Program (PATT) to support workers who cannot earn their income due to COVID-19 related isolation, and are not eligible for any other form of financial assistance.

On April 6, 2020 the federal government launched the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) – a program covering the same needs and available for the majority of individuals eligible for PATT benefits.

To prevent duplicate programs, as of April 10, 2020 4 p.m., affected workers may no longer register for PATT benefits.

Those workers having registered prior to the end of the program must submit their completed financial assistance application before 4:30 p.m. on April 20, 2020, for normal application processing.

### Background

PATT applies to employees and independent contractors who had to isolate themselves because of one or more of the following circumstances:

- Have contracted COVID-19;
- Returned from international travel on or after March 12, 2020;
- Have flu or cold symptoms;
- Have been in contact with a person who has COVID-19.

Individuals falling into any of these categories with no other sources of revenue, and meeting the registration and application deadlines are entitled to a weekly benefit of \$573 for a maximum fourteen days.

CERB applications opened on April 6 for benefits covering the period between March 15, 2020 and April 11, 2020 with applications open for the four-week period from April 12, 2020 to May 9, 2020, starting April 13, 2020.

As temporary income support, the CERB provides eligible workers who have lost their employment income due to the COVID-19 pandemic with a taxable benefit of \$2,000 per a four week period, and for a total duration of up to sixteen weeks.

The CERB is available to workers who meet all of the following conditions:

- Live in Canada and are at least fifteen years of age;
- Have stopped working because of COVID-19
- Have not voluntarily quit their job;
- Do not receive Employment Insurance (EI) regular or sickness benefits;
- Do not receive, in respect of the consecutive days on which they have ceased working allowances, money or other benefits paid under a provincial plan because of pregnancy or for one or more of their new-born children or children placed with them for the purpose of adoption;
- Had income of at least \$5,000 in 2019 or in the twelve months prior to their application date.

On April 15, 2020 the government changed the CERB eligibility criteria to:

- Allowing individuals to earn up to \$1,000 per month while also collecting the CERB.
- Extending the CERB to seasonal workers who have exhausted their EI regular benefits and are unable to undertake their regular seasonal work because of COVID-19.
- Extending the CERB to individuals who have recently exhausted their EI regular benefits and are unable to find a job because of COVID-19.

Prior to this change in eligibility criteria, the CERB eligibility criteria also required that the applicant expected to be without earnings for at least fourteen consecutive days in an initial four-week period, and have no earnings subsequently. Applicants no longer need to meet this criteria as of April 15, 2020.

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