



On Wednesday, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced a \$27 billion package aimed at supporting Canadians whose ability to work was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Here's an explanation of what those services will look like, and how you can apply for them.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announces the government's \$82 billion emergency response package at a news conference outside Rideau Cottage in Ottawa on Wednesday.

Workers and businesses hurt by the COVID-19 pandemic may be eligible for part of the \$82 billion aid package announced Wednesday by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, which includes \$27 billion in direct support for those struggling to find work or care for family members.

The package, now before Parliament, stands to adjust the rules on who qualifies for employment insurance (EI), and includes two emergency benefits for those who don't. The emergency benefits aren't yet available, but the government has released guidelines on who can apply, and how much relief Canadians can expect. Here's how they'll work.

Who qualifies for EI?

Whether you qualify for EI will still depend on your specific situation, such as regional rate of employment, and the number of hours worked in the last 52 weeks. The government recommends people apply as soon as possible to find out if they qualify; waiting more than four weeks after your last day of work means you could lose access to those benefits.

To receive regular EI, you must have lost your job through no fault of your own, including lay-offs. EI sickness benefits include being unable to work because of illness or quarantine. Under Wednesday's changes, the one-week waiting period for sickness benefits will be removed for those who have been told to self-isolate or quarantine, meaning applicants can be paid for the first week of their claim.

If approved, the maximum amount paid out for EI is \$573 a week.

How do I apply?

Applicants usually need a medical certificate along with records of employment, though the new rules allow quarantined workers to apply without the former. If you can't apply because you are quarantined, you can also file for EI sickness benefits later and have the claim backdated.

To apply for EI benefits, you can visit the website. Afterwards, you can apply to have the one-week waiting period waived by calling the government's toll-free number at 1-833-381-2725, or teletypewriter at 1-800-529-3742.



What if I don't qualify for EI?

The federal aid package also includes the Emergency Care Benefit and the Emergency Support Benefit.

The Emergency Care Benefit provides up to \$900 every two weeks for up to 15 weeks, to those affected by COVID-19. It's intended for those who don't qualify for EI, can't go to work and don't have paid sick leave.

Workers — including the self-employed — who are quarantined or sick with COVID-19 can apply, as can those staying home to take care of a family member with COVID-19 who doesn't qualify. Parents staying home to care for children because of school closures are also covered, and can apply whether or not they qualify for EI.

The Emergency Support Benefit will give up to \$5 billion to workers ineligible for EI who face unemployment. It is intended to be a long-term income support, but the government hasn't yet said how much it will provide, or how long funds will be given out.

Applications for both benefits will open in April, at a date to be determined. When that happens, Canadians will be able to apply for them through [CRA MyAccount](#) or [My Service Canada Account](#) or by calling a toll-free number that has not yet been made public.

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