

FAMILY TIPSHEET: Emergency funding sources and access to basic necessities

Please note: The information provided in this tipsheet is for reference only. It is not intended as a recommendation or endorsement of organizations, agencies or private businesses, or as a comprehensive resource list.

Based on when you are viewing this tipsheet, the information may not be the most up to date. Please refer to the date this tipsheet was last updated, at the end of the document. You can also access this tipsheet online at hollandbloorview.ca/covid-19-tipsheets

This tipsheet provides a list of governmental and non-governmental emergency funds and supports for families, in situations where they may need help urgently to pay for or find basic necessities.

Government funding

- [Canadian Emergency Response Benefit \(CERB\)](#): If you have stopped working because of COVID-19, the CERB may provide you with temporary income support. This benefit provides \$500 a week for up to 16 weeks. [Apply online](#) or by phone at 1-800-959-2019 or 1-800-959-2041.
- [Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services - Social Assistance and COVID-19 Emergency Assistance](#): The government has announced expanded availability for Emergency Assistance for low-income families and individuals who are not already receiving Ontario Works (OW) or Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). This new funding will help individuals and families in financial crises who are not able to access federal assistance to cover needs such as food, rent, medicine, transportation and other services.
- [City of Toronto's Property Tax Appeal](#): This application is for people who are unable to pay for their property taxes because of extreme poverty or sickness.

Changes to funding for special needs children, youth and adults

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services is temporarily expanding the list of eligible expenses to support people and their families while community-based activities and settings are closed. These changes allow you to use your funding for goods and services that may make it easier for you to stay at home during this time and practise physical distancing.

[Special Services at Home \(SSAH\)](#)
[Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities \(ACSD\)](#)
[Passport](#)



[Ontario Autism Program](#) (OAP) Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the OAP is extending the amount of time you have to spend your childhood budget funding and submit your expense form by up to six months, if necessary.

- You now have up to 18 months to spend your childhood budget and submit your expense form.
- For example, if your original 12 months to spend your funding ends on June 10, 2020, you now have until December 10, 2020 to spend your funding and submit your expense form.
- **You do not need to contact the ministry to be eligible or to accept this extension.**

Other

[Ontario government COVID-19](#): Learn what provincial, financial, mental health and other supports are available including social services, shelters, filing taxes, paying rent, food banks.

Funds that support the disability community

- [Holland Bloorview Family Support Fund](#) has increased their funding to support Holland Bloorview families in financial distress caused by the COVID-19 period. The funding will now cover areas such as food security, shelter and clothing.
- [Jennifer Ashleigh Children's Charity](#): has increased their Emergency Household program maximum (from \$1,500 to \$2,500) until August 31. This specific program includes assistance towards rent, groceries, overdue utilities and emergency vehicle repairs.
- [Ontario Federation for Cerebral Palsy's Life Emergency Action Fund](#): OFCP is expanding their traditional LEAF funding to include equipment or items families may need to manage at this time. Examples include food/food supplements, increased transportation cost, personal protective equipment, and personal hygiene items.
- [Fund for Community Reparations for Autistic People of Color's Interdependence, Survival, and Empowerment](#): For direct support, mutual aid, and reparations by/for autistic people of color, along with an option for emergency requests.
- [Muscular Dystrophy Canada emergency funding](#): If you or someone you care for has Muscular Dystrophy and needs emergency funding, please call 1-800-567-2873 or e-mail info@muscle.ca.
- [Unison Benevolent Fund](#): emergency financial support to Canadian music-makers recovering from an illness, injury or other circumstances that result in an inability to work, or facing severe economic or personal hardship. Also offers counselling & health solutions.

Funds that support students

- [Toronto Foundation for Student Success' Emergency Fund](#): Any principal, teacher, or professional support services staff member can apply for emergency funds up to a one-time only maximum of \$500 per student.
- [Angel Foundation for Learning's Emergency Fund and Family Support Fund for Extreme Needs](#): Offers funding to Toronto Catholic District School Board students

who need warm clothing, food, hearing aids, eyeglasses, epi-pens, and other necessities for life and for their education. Application for these funds must be initiated by the school principal or the school social worker.

- [Childcare for Essential Workers](#): The City of Toronto is providing emergency child care for children of essential and critical service workers. The service is provided at no costs to families, for children from birth to age 12.
- [Support for families](#): While schools and child care centres are closed, parents can apply for direct funding to offset the cost of buying materials to support their children's learning, while they practice self-isolation and physical distancing.

Funds that support electricity and gas bills for your home

- [Ontario Energy Board Low-income Energy Assistance Program](#): Low-income customers can get up to \$500 in emergency assistance for their electricity bills (\$600 if your home is heated electrically) and \$500 for their natural gas bills. The assistance is only available if you are behind on your bill – or in arrears – and may face having your service disconnected.
- [Toronto Hydro Low-income Energy Assistance Program](#): LEAP is a grant program that helps those who are struggling to pay past due bills or have already received a disconnection notice. It offers a maximum grant of \$500 per household per year (\$600 for electrically heated homes).

Funds that support artists, musicians or tip-based workers

- [Theatre Direct's Support for Artist Parents & Caregivers](#): Offers \$250 grocery gift cards to artists caring for their families at home during this crisis.
- [AFC's Emergency Fund](#): Short-term emergency financial assistance for entertainment industry professionals working in TV and film, music, theatre, and dance for essential household bills and costs that cannot otherwise be paid.
- [Canadian Writer's Emergency Relief Fund](#): For professional authors affected financially by the COVID-19 health crisis.
- [Micro Artist Grants for Groceries](#): Artists of any discipline can request a one time, no questions asked, micro grant of \$75 for groceries, food and other essentials.
- [Glad Day's Emergency Survival Fund for LGBTQ2S artists, performers & tip-based workers](#): For LGBTQ2S people who cannot pay for food, medicine, rent and necessities because most of their income doesn't come from an employer.
- [National Arts Centre #CanadaPerforms Grant](#): For professional Canadian performing artists who would like to post an online performance. Selected artists will receive a financial grant, and their performances will be shared on the NAC's Facebook page which will be discoverable by searching #CanadaPerforms.
- [Kingston Restaurant Worker Relief Fund](#): This is an effort to assist restaurant workers and their immediate families obtain essential needs.
- [TOArtist COVID Response Fund](#): This fund will allocate up to \$1000 for vulnerable artists in the Toronto arts and culture sector, specifically, artists who are self-employed and are NOT eligible for Employee Insurance (EI). **Please note: fund is suspended, but the link to apply is still active.*

- [Aboriginal Curatorial Collective's Curating Care Project](#): For Independent Indigenous Curators and Artists who have been financially affected by COVID-19 by offering \$250 honorariums to eligible participants. **Please note: deadline has passed, but the link to apply is still active.*

Financial planning tips for emergencies

- [Financial Consumer Agency of Canada](#): tips for managing finances during this time.
- [Woodgreen](#): Now offering financial counselling by phone. Counsellors are available to speak with clients on a variety of low-income financial issues. Phone translation is available in many languages. Contact 416-645-6000 ext. 1330 or fe@woodgreen.org to book an appointment.

Community volunteer groups

- [Good Neighbour Project](#): Volunteers are willing to assist with delivering supplies and groceries to those with disabilities, compromised immune systems, accessibility barriers, and the elderly, across the GTA.
- [Caremongering Toronto](#): A Facebook group where people can request or offer assistance for others who are in difficult situations.
- [Chalmers](#): An online chatbot that can help you find food, shelter, or clothing that you can access in Toronto.
- [Ontario Community Support Association](#) is partnering with SPARK Ontario and the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility has to provide expanded access to Meals-on-Wheels and the services they provide, which now include delivery of medication and other essential needs.

Food services

- [Operation Ramzieh: Crisis Relief Team](#) Delivery of free food kits in the Ottawa and Toronto area (M postal code area) to seniors, individuals with physical disabilities and those most vulnerable. If unable to access by computer, telephone assistance available 9-5, Monday to Friday, 1-800-321-5973.
- [Hand Up Toronto](#): grocery delivery service providing \$25 worth of food per child in the home. **Please note: there is a waitlist for this service*
- [Feed It Forward's Pay What You Can Grocery Store](#): Located at 3324 Dundas Street West, Toronto. Open Tuesday to Saturday from 10:00am to 6:00pm.
- [Open Food Banks in Toronto](#)
- [The 519's Free Takeaway Meals](#)
- [The Stop's Free Takeaway Meals](#)
- [Toronto Council Fire Native Cultural Centre](#): meal pick-up schedule [here](#)
- [Loblaw's](#): reduced fees for delivery and home delivered items, no pick-up fees.
- [Uber Eats](#): charging no delivery fee.
- [Walmart Canada](#) Eligible seniors, people with disabilities and people with vulnerable health conditions can now order their groceries by phone and schedule a time for pickup or delivery with a Customer Service Representative (1-800-328-0402). The new program exists in communities where they offer pickup or delivery. Check if the service is available for you [here](#)

We encourage you to visit our [website](#) to access all of our COVID-19 or Coronavirus specific family tip sheets. This tipsheet belongs to a set of specialized resources for the COVID-19 and Coronavirus outbreak period. If you are looking for other family resources that have to do with childhood disability, please visit www.hollandbloorview.ca/resourcecentre.

Created by the Family Support Specialists (Melissa Ngo, Lorraine Thomas and Meghan Toswell) at Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital on April 6, 2020. Updated May 5, 2020. If you have a question or a resource to share, please feel free to reach out to us at resourcecentre@hollandbloorview.ca