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The Government of Canada has announced the government is merging two previously introduced employment insurance benefits for Canadians who are now unemployed, or off work because of COVID-19.

To support workers and help businesses keep their employees, the government has proposed legislation to establish the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB). This taxable benefit would provide \$2,000 a month for up to four months for workers who lose their income as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The CERB would be a simpler and more accessible combination of the previously announced Emergency Care Benefit and Emergency Support Benefit.

The CERB would cover Canadians who have lost their job, are sick, quarantined, or taking care of someone who is sick with COVID-19, as well as working parents who must stay home without pay to care for children who are sick or at home because of school and daycare closures. **The CERB would apply to wage earners, as well as contract workers and self-employed individuals who would not otherwise be eligible for Employment Insurance (EI).**

Additionally, workers who are still employed, but are not receiving income because of disruptions to their work situation due to COVID-19, would also qualify for the CERB. This would help businesses keep their employees as they navigate these difficult times, while ensuring they preserve the ability to quickly resume operations as soon as it becomes possible.

The EI system was not designed to process the unprecedented high volume of applications received in the past week. Given this situation, all Canadians who have ceased working due to COVID-19, whether they are EI-eligible or not, would be able to receive the CERB to ensure they have timely access to the income support they need.

Canadians who are already receiving EI regular and sickness benefits as of today would continue to receive their benefits and should not apply to the CERB. If their EI benefits end before October 3, 2020, they could apply for the CERB once their EI benefits cease, if they are unable to return to work due to COVID-19.

Canadians who have already applied for EI and whose application has not yet been processed would not need to reapply. Canadians who are eligible for EI regular and sickness benefits would still be able to access their normal EI benefits, if still unemployed, after the 16-week period covered by the CERB. The government is working to get money into the pockets of Canadians as quickly as possible. **The portal for accessing the CERB would be available in early April** EI eligible Canadians who have lost their job can continue to apply for EI [here](#), as can Canadians applying for other EI benefits.

Canadians would begin to receive their CERB payments within 10 days of application. **The CERB would be paid every four weeks and be available from March 15, 2020 until October 3, 2020.**

This benefit would be one part of the government’s COVID-19 Economic

Response Plan, to support Canadian workers and businesses and help stabilize the economy by helping Canadians pay for essentials like housing and groceries, and helping businesses pay their employees and bills during this unprecedented time of global uncertainty.

Sincerely,

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