

Daily Update – 4 March 2021

CFA Win: CEWS and CERS extension and reference periods clarified

Yesterday the Government of Canada announced that the CEWS and CERS programs will continue at the current support rates until June. This will provide much-needed certainty for businesses who continue to grapple with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We have been urging the government to publish the details on what support rates will look like past March 13 and yesterday's announcement from the Prime Minister answered those calls. Businesses can now plan with certainty this spring, knowing what level of support they will receive from these critical support programs through June of this year.

Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland announced that the government intends to extend the current rate structures for these subsidies from March 14 to June 5, 2021. Specifically:

- the maximum Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) rate for active employees will remain at 75 per cent;
- the maximum Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy (CERS) rate would remain at 65 per cent; and
- Lockdown Support would remain at 25 per cent and continue to be provided in addition to the rent subsidy, providing eligible hard-hit businesses with rent support of up to 90 per cent.

Revenue-decline Reference Periods – Compare 2019 to 2021 to determine subsidy

Since CEWS and CERS were launched the revenue decline reference period required businesses to compare revenues based on the same period from the year before (or an average of January and February 2020). For example, in Period 2 (April 2020) a business would compare revenues from April 2020 with revenues from April 2019 (or an average of January and February 2020).

Given that we are approaching a full year of the COVID-19 pandemic, the revenue decline reference period has changed so that businesses compare the organization's decline in revenues relative to a pre-pandemic month. For example, in Period 15 (April 11 to May 8) a business will compare revenues from April 2021 to revenues from April 2019 (or an average of January and February 2020 compared to April 2021).

[Finance Canada: Background](#)

[More Details courtesy of MNP](#)

The CFA had been actively lobbying for these changes and we are happy the government moved to implement the business communities' recommendations.

Statistics Canada needs help with the Labour Force Survey

The Labour Force Survey is a monthly survey which measures the current state of the Canadian labour market and is used, among other things, to calculate the national, provincial, territorial and regional employment and unemployment rates. The survey results are used to make important decisions regarding job creation, education and training, retirement pensions and income support.

At this time, as Canadians continue to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, it is more important than ever to have an accurate picture of the job situation, the cost of living, and the economy. Data will be used to guide government decisions and assist Canadians through these challenging times.

Your information may also be used by Statistics Canada for other statistical and research purposes.

[StatsCan Electronic Questionnaire Portal](#)

Alberta: Legislation to streamline oversight of continuing care coming this fall

Legislation is coming this fall to streamline the laws governing Alberta's continuing care system, Premier Jason Kenney said Wednesday. The changes are part of a [broader, ongoing review](#) of the province's network of long-term care homes, designated supportive living facilities and home care, which collectively serve about 175,000 people. Charged with leading the review is Calgary-Fish Creek MLA Richard Gotfried.

Premier Kenney, who spoke at the same press conference, said the government is also looking to redesign the home-care system to increase accessibility and offer clients more choices and control.

They hope to introduce a new continuing care act in the legislature this fall that would replace three pieces of legislation dating back to the 1980s. The government also wants to consolidate regulations to make the rules clearer for people running care homes and home care services.

Ontario hires over 100 new inspectors to ensure businesses comply with public health rules

The Ontario government plans to ramp up enforcement to make sure businesses across the province are following COVID-19 safety requirements as restrictions continue to ease. Labour Minister Monte McNaughton told reporters on Wednesday that the province has hired more than 100 new occupational health and safety inspectors to ensure employees, businesses and the public are protected. That brings Ontario's number of inspectors to more than 500.

The new inspectors have begun a condensed training program and will begin making field visits with a mentor within five weeks of their start date. They are scheduled to be fully trained and deployed by July 1. Workplace inspections are continuing to focus on educating small businesses across the province to help them reopen from lockdowns safely.

Nova Scotia NDP continues push for sick pay policy

NDP Leader Gary Burrill says he's "very hopeful" the provincial government might finally be willing to consider a sick pay policy to cover all workers in Nova Scotia. Burrill told reporters on Thursday that he recently discussed the matter during a meeting with Premier Iain Rankin.

[The NDP has long advocated for a policy that would bring sick pay to everyone](#), including workers who are not part of a union. Last year, [the party tabled legislation that would have allowed](#) everyone to earn a half day of paid sick leave for every month of work, to a maximum of six days a year. That bill was not supported and died on the order paper.

With renewed calls from Dr. Robert Strang, the province's chief medical officer of health, for people to stay home when they're sick to help keep a handle on the spread of COVID-19, Burrill believes the time is right for everyone to have access to paid sick days.

Nova Scotia Premier Iain Rankin said he's looking at how other provinces treat the issue, and trying to determine if it makes the most sense for the government to take the lead or leave it to employers to settle with their employees.