

RESOURCES FOR NON/PRECARIOUS STATUS PEOPLE DURING THE COVID CRISIS

Attached are:

- A Document about Medical resources;
- A Document about food banks in areas just outside Toronto;
- A statement regarding jails;
- Information on the Canada Emergency Response Benefit;
- Information About the Ontario Emergency Assistance; and
- A sheet about the new ID laws in Ontario.

In this sheet:

- Update re Immigration Offices
- Medical access
- Food availability
- Rent
- Shelters
- Jails
- Benefits and how to obtain them

One general note, it is really important to keep all documentation, even though it may not be the most official. If you are laid off, even if you don't have a SIN or status allowing you to work, get some sort of documentation (a letter from the employer or even co-workers); if you have problems with your landlord, document it; ask your immigration lawyer or consultant for proof of your status; keep your medical documents, etc.

Update re Immigration Offices:

Immigration Refugee Board (the immigration tribunal [kind of a court] for refugee claims, admissibility decisions, and appeals)

- Frontline offices are closed, all documents must be submitted by fax or email
- Extensions are being given to put in your Basis of Claim form and Appeals if you are doing a refugee claim or appeal
- Hearing are not being held (except for detention reviews) until May 4th or possible longer
- Detention reviews are still being held, but by phone. Covid is being accepted as a ground for release (sometimes).

Immigration Refugees Citizenship Canada (they process applications)

- Frontline offices are closed for all appointments including completion of Permanent Residency

(PR) and Citizenship Ceremonies. Measures are being developed to do appointments by remote. New Refugee claims are not being accepted until April 13th or later. The officers are still working, so if you have a deadline it either needs to be met or you need to ask for an extension, however, extensions are being given freely.

Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA - immigration enforcement)

They are not doing active investigations, i.e. If they have a warrant for you or otherwise are looking for you normally, they are not doing so

They are still cooperating with police. I.e. If police pick you up and find out you don't have status or have broken the terms of your visa/work permit/study permit, or have a warrant from immigration, they will still turn you over to CBSA see

<http://toronto.nooneisillegal.org/knowyourrights> to find out about your rights in this situation

Police have increased powers to ask for identification, see the attached sheet on this issue. Be careful when going out to have a good reason to do so, and to keep social distance.

Medical Access

the attached sheet on health resources from Health Network for Uninsured Patients contains important information

Food Resources

many food banks are closed but plans are underway to open food distribution centres see

<https://www.dailybread.ca/covid19/>

Be aware that you likely will not be allowed to enter the food bank but will have to line up outside to obtain a food bag

Rent

All Housing tribunals are closed, and landlords are not allowed to evict at this time see

https://www.torontotenants.org/eviction_ban_now_2020

This doesn't mean that landlords will not try to evict tenants once the emergency has passed.

However, Covid19 may be a possible defense in this situation.

Contact the Federation of Metro Tenants Associations if you have questions

<https://www.torontotenants.org/>

Shelters

Many are closing due to the difficulties in maintaining social distance in the shelters

The city is opening hotels to take people in during the crisis, but they are not opening enough.

Contact the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (ocap.ca) or the Shelter Justice Housing Network (shjn.ca) for more information or to fight for justice

Jails

Releases are happening but very slowly. Many jurisdictions in the US have released most people awaiting trial but Ontario has not been.

Duty Counsel is available for Bail Hearings and other criminal matters but is appearing at Bail Hearings by phone.

There has already been covid cases in jails including 2 detained people at the Toronto South and a Guard.

We need to push to have more people released and proper social distancing to happen in jails see attached statement from Contain COVID-19 Not People.

Benefits

Thanks to the Ontario Coalition of Agencies Serving Immigrants for their information at a recent webnair

this section is divided into five subsections: Employment Insurance (EI), the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), Welfare/Disability (OW/ODSP), Emergency Assistance (EA), and Child Tax Benefit (CTB)

EI:

There is a waiver of the one week waiting period if you are unable to work due to being in quarantine

You can apply late and backdate if you can't apply due to being sick with Covid

This is largely not available to non status people. You must have working with a valid Social Insurance Number (SIN) and paying into the program to collect the insurance.

Service Canada centres (where you apply for EI) are closed, you apply online, see

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/notices/coronavirus.html#web-notice>

CERB

This program was created by the Federal Government out of two other programs on March 25th It gives out \$2000 a month for up to 16 bweeks, and you can only get 4 4 week periods of benefit in total.

It covers the period from March 15 to October 3rd,

It covers people who are:

- Residing in Canada, who are at least 15 years old;

Who have stopped working because of COVID-19 or are eligible for Employment Insurance regular or sickness benefits:

Who had income of at least \$5,000 in 2019 or in the 12 months prior to the date of their application; and

Who are or expect to be without employment or self-employment income for at least 14 consecutive days in the initial four-week period. For subsequent benefit periods, they expect to have no employment income.

You don't have to be eligible for EI

not everyone is covered based on your immigration status:

- To be eligible for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, you must reside in Canada and have a valid Social Insurance Number.
- Workers who are not Canadian citizens or permanent residents – including temporary foreign workers and international students – may be eligible to receive the Benefit if they meet the other eligibility requirements.

You will need a Canada Revenue Agency Account to get the benefit, it is a good idea to do this as soon as possible, you can do this at

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/e-services/cra-login-services.html>

Applications will start to be accepted April 6th, but they are based on your month of birth

For more information see <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/cerb-application.html>

Welfare/Disability

both are also being done online

https://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/mcsc/programs/social/apply_online.aspx

you can also do it by phone through your local welfare office which you can find at

<http://www.officelocator.mcsc.gov.on.ca/Index.aspx?lang=en>

You need to be unable to work due to circumstances beyond your control, i.e. Due to Covid, due to lack of jobs (or due to a health problem or disability)

is limited to certain forms of immigration status. This includes people who have made a permanent residency application that has been approved in principle (humanitarian application), refugee claimants, failed refugee claimants, refugees, PRs or citizens

It also includes tourists and others who cannot leave Canada due to circumstances beyond their control (i.e. The cutting of travel due to covid)

Disability (Ontario Disability Support Program) is based on being unable to work due to a health problem and/or a disability. Usually it is started by getting a letter from your Doctor or health practitioner.

Having the assistance of a social worker or community worker can be really helpful in applying for either of these.

Emergency Assistance

It is an additional benefit through Ontario Works

Allows for 48 days of benefits

It used to be you could only apply every 6 months, but now you can apply more often

It is paid every 16 days.

Amount is up to the director or their people they assign to decide

You cannot be a visitor or tourist and likely cannot be non status with the exceptions noted in the section above

It includes basic needs (like food and transportation) and shelter costs

They expect you to try to get other benefits, especially federal ones, first

it's also online at the same place

https://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/mcsc/programs/social/apply_online.aspx

Canada Child Tax Benefit

Maximum benefit of \$300

you have to have a certain status (you not your child or children):

You or your spouse or common-law partner must be **any of the following**:

- a Canadian citizen

- a permanent resident

- a protected person (i.e. Won your refugee claim)

- a temporary resident who has lived in Canada for the previous 18 months, and who has a valid permit in the 19th month

- an Indigenous person who meets the definition of "Indian" under the Indian Act

you need a CRA account (see CERB section above) to apply online, but you can also apply by mail see

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/child-family-benefits/canada-child-benefit-overview/canada-child-benefit-apply.html#How>

OVERVIEW

These benefits definitely do not meet the needs of non/precarious status people, or even just people without access to the internet and a computer. Many groups are working to change this. Nationally check out migrantrights.ca, in toronto check out toronto.nooneisillegal.org, Vivimos Juntxs Comemos Juntxs comemosjuntxs@gmail.com, Migrant Workers Alliance for Change migrantworkersalliance.org, or Butterfly (for migrant/Asian sex workers) <https://www.butterflysw.org/>.