

Hello from the City of Toronto's Music Office.

Most importantly, we really hope you, your families, and friends are safe and healthy in these very challenging times. City staff have been in constant contact with many artists, venues, festivals, promoters, DIY organizations, and other businesses over the last 10 days; and please know that we, as well as Mayor Tory and City Council, are hearing clearly about the devastating effect that COVID-19 is having on the music community. For now, we've shifted our Music Office focus to the sector's urgent short-term issues and longer-term recovery plans.

Today, we'd like to pass along information about COVID-related government and community resources & opportunities, financial and otherwise. [Sorry for the long email to follow!](#)...and apologies if you've seen some of this before. We figured it's better to get this info too often than not at all. Please forward any / all of this to others, and **please practise physical distancing right now as directed by our health officials**. That's the surest way to limit the spread of disease and the duration of our current situation. Thanks.

**First:** if you're a musician, please complete this important [survey](#) (closes this Fri March 27) to help assess the impact of lost gigs, studio sessions, etc and the present / future financial & career effects of COVID. We know there have been quite a few surveys circulating lately, but this one was created by & for artists and is being administered by Music Canada and Connect Music Licensing; they have the ear of government and the data will be used to help influence further measures to assist musicians. If you yourself aren't an artist, please pass it along to any you know.

**Next:** Unison Benevolent just announced a [\\$500,000 emergency music industry relief program](#), co-funded by the Slight Foundation. You can apply for up to \$1000 in emergency funding to cover groceries, housing costs, and medical expenses.

#### **Government Assistance:**

**The City of Toronto's Property tax / utility bill grace period:** A 60-day grace period is in effect for City of Toronto property tax, water and solid waste utility bill payments for all residents

and businesses, for bills dated as of March 16. As well, late payment penalties for residential and business properties will be waived for 60 days, starting the same day

**The [Government of Canada's economic response plan](#):** New measures for people and businesses to address the financial impacts of COVID-19. The package includes \$27 billion in direct support to Canadians and businesses and a further \$55 billion to meet liquidity needs for businesses and households through tax deferrals.

### **Key elements:**

Support for Self-Employed, Small Business & Non-Profits:

1. Emergency Care Benefit of up to \$900 bi-weekly for up to 15 weeks to provide income support to workers who must stay home and do not have access to paid sick leave. This includes:

- Workers, including the self-employed who are sick, quarantined, or who have been directed to self-isolate but do not qualify for Employment Insurance (EI) sickness benefits.
- Workers, including the self-employed who are taking care of a family member who is sick with COVID-19, such as an elderly parent or other dependents who are sick, but do not qualify for EI sickness benefits
- EI-eligible and non-EI-eligible working parents who must stay home without pay because of children who are sick or who need additional care because of school closures.

2. Emergency Support Benefit to provide support to workers who are not eligible for EI and who are facing unemployment. Accessible through [Canada Revenue Agency's website](#). Note that registering via this portal is MUCH easier to access if you have either filed tax returns in the past or use online banking.

**NOTE: on March 25, 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 and 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).**

3. A 10% wage subsidy to eligible small businesses for the next 90 days, up to a maximum of \$1,375 per employee and \$25,000 per employer. Includes organizations eligible for the small business deduction as well as not-for-profit organizations and charities.

4. Increased credit available to small, medium, and large Canadian businesses, providing \$10 billion of support through the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC) and Export Development Canada. This program currently excludes any business deriving revenue from alcohol sales ("entities running a bar"). The BDC has been asked to change this exclusion.

5. Allowing all businesses to defer, until after August 31, 2020, the payment of any income tax owed after March 18 and before September 2020. This relief would apply to tax balances due, as well as instalments. No interest or penalties will accumulate on these amounts during this period.

Additionally, the federal government is providing a one-time special GST credit payment in early May 2020, with close to \$400 for eligible single individuals and \$600 for couples, and has moved the tax deadline for 2019 to June 1, 2020.

### **Live streaming:**

In other news, as artists have pivoted quickly to livestreaming shows, here are a few of the most popular series and platforms we've seen:

- [#CanadaPerforms](#): Opportunity for performing artists from any discipline to apply for \$1000 grants for livestreamed performances, through the NAC and Facebook Canada.
- [The Social Distancing Festival](#): A place to celebrate the work of artists who have had events cancelled due to social distancing measures
- [URGNT.ca](#): Series of 19 concerts to be livestreamed from empty Toronto venues. Profits from associated GoFundMe will be divided among artists, technicians, and administrators involved to bring support to all levels of the industry. Note that potential review of public health guidelines around gathering may force re-calibration of URGNT.ca.

Watch this space for upcoming further news from us on livestreaming opportunities.

### **Tracking lost income:**

Please forward either of these lost-income tracking tools to artists in your networks:

- [ILostMyGig.ca](#): To help track the financial impacts of lost gigs in the short-term, advocate for government intervention in the mid-term, and offer resources and support in the long-term.
- [CAPACOA \(Canadian Arts Presenting Assn\) tracking sheet](#): A communal google spreadsheet for artists and industry to log cancelled events & performances.

### **Petition:**

Here's the [SaveLiveArts.ca petition](#), created by Canadian Actors' Equity Assn and Canadian Federation of Musicians along with local affiliate Toronto Musicians' Association. The petition calls on all levels of government to assist the arts sector (including for-profit and not-for-profit music communities) through a series of quick, targeted actions. Please check it out.

### **Call for help:**

Via Canadian Live Music Association, here's a [link](#) to pass along to any organizations able to help with the federal government's call for support with supply or production of products and services needed to combat COVID-19.

**More information:**

Finally, here are some of the most comprehensive sources we've found for COVID-19 info and resources. Please let me know if you think there's anything essential we're missing here or in any of the above.

- [Music Ontario](#): general info, resources, and links
- [Canadian Live Music Association](#): a good sense of national advocacy and conversations taking place
- [Music Managers Forum](#) (MMF): general info, resources, and links
- [Long Winter info & resource list](#): geared to artists, workers, and members of DIY arts communities
- [CBC.ca](#): resources and links for all artists, arts workers, and freelancers
- The City of Toronto's [COVID-19 general resource page](#), including a separate page on [economic support and recovery](#)

Stay safe, everyone. Please contact [music@toronto.ca](mailto:music@toronto.ca) at any time with questions or comments.