

## **Additional financial support for Albertans and employers March 23, 2020 Media inquiries**

More relief is on the way for Albertans and Alberta employers.

The government has made three significant decisions that will give Albertans and Alberta employers additional supports as they deal with the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis.

“Our priority is to keep our province strong while we get through these difficult times together. We’re doing everything we can to support Albertans and Alberta employers through this crisis. That’s why we’re focused on creating tangible savings for households and freeing up necessary cash for businesses to help them through these unprecedented times.”

Jason Kenney, Premier  
Education property tax freeze

During a pandemic, Alberta households should not need to worry about paying additional property taxes.

- \* The government will immediately cancel the decision made in Budget 2020 and will freeze education property taxes at last year’s level.
- \* Reversing the 3.4 per cent population and inflation adjustment will save Alberta households and businesses about \$87 million in 2020-21, which means \$55 million for households and \$32 million for employers.
- \* The government expects that Albertans and Alberta businesses will fully realize these savings and that municipal property tax levels will not be increased as a result of the lower provincial education property tax levels.

Education property tax deferral for business

When Alberta businesses are operating, they employ Albertans who can support themselves, their families and help keep the economy running. Effective immediately, the government will defer education property tax for businesses for six months.

- \* In the next six months, \$458 million in cash will remain with employers to help them pay employees and continue operations.
- \* The government expects municipalities to set education property tax rates as they normally would, but defer collection. Deferred amounts will be repaid in future tax years.
- \* The government encourages commercial landlords to pass on these savings to their tenants through reduced or deferred payments. This will help employers continue to manage their debts, pay their employees and stay in business.
- \* Businesses capable of paying their taxes in full are strongly encouraged to do so. This will assist the province in being able to support Albertans through this pandemic.

“Eliminating the scheduled adjustment of education property taxes and deferring collection of non-residential property taxes will result in savings to Albertans and improved business cash flow. This measure will help Alberta households and businesses during this time – we want to keep Albertans working while we get through these difficult times together.”

Travis Toews, President of Treasury Board and Minister of Finance  
WCB premiums deferral for private sector businesses and support for small and medium businesses

Private sector employers can save money on their WCB premium payments at a time when they need it most. These actions ensure the sustainability of the workers' compensation system and that injured workers continue to receive the benefits and supports they need to return to work.

- \* Private sector employers will have immediate financial relief by deferring WCB premiums until early 2021, effectively for one year.
- \* Employers who have already paid their WCB premium payment for 2020 are eligible for a rebate or credit.
- \* For small and medium businesses, the government will cover 50 per cent of the premium when it is due.
- \* Large employers will also receive a break by having their 2020 WCB premium payments deferred until 2021, at which time their premiums will be due.
- \* Paying 50 per cent of small and medium private sector WCB premiums for 2020 will cost government approximately \$350 million.

Additional measures to help families, students and employers

Previously announced measure taken by the province to protect Albertans and assist businesses include:

- \* The collection of corporate income tax balances and instalment payments is deferred until Aug. 31, 2020. This gives Alberta businesses access to about \$1.5 billion in funds to help them cope with the COVID-19 crisis.
- \* \$50 million to support emergency isolation for working adult Albertans who must self-isolate, including persons who are the sole caregiver for a dependent who must self-isolate, and who will not have another source of pay or compensation while they are self-isolated. It is distributed in one payment instalment to bridge the gap until the federal emergency payments begin in April.
- \* Utility payment deferral for residential, farm, and small commercial customers to defer bill payments for the next 90 days and ensure no one is cut off from electricity and natural gas services during this time of crisis.
- \* A six-month, interest-free moratorium on Alberta student loan payments for all individuals who are in the process of repaying these loans.

## Related information

\* COVID-19 information for Albertans<<https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx>>