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Economic Supports Available to Families in Ontario

Lefebvre, R., Carradine, J., Fallon, B.

This is a list of current resources available to families and children in Ontario. It will be updated as new supports are added.

Summary of announcements in Ontario's Action Plan: Responding to COVID-19

<https://news.ontario.ca/mof/en/2020/3/ontarios-action-plan-responding-to-covid-19.html>

Direct Support to Families

- A one-time payment of **\$200 per child** up to 12 years of age, and **\$250** for those with **special needs** to help families pay for the extra costs associated with school and daycare closures during COVID-19.
 - Families with children who attend private school are included.
 - “The province will open an online application portal by April 6, and payments to parents will begin shortly thereafter, a government official said at a background briefing.”¹

Direct Support for Energy Bills

- The eligibility for the Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) has been expanded to ensure that families’ electricity and natural gas services are not disconnected for nonpayment during COVID-19.
 - Low-income customers can get up to **\$500 in emergency assistance** for their electricity bills (**\$600 if their home is heated electrically**) and **\$500 for their natural gas bills**.
 - This assistance is only available if the family is in arrears on their bill and may face having their service disconnected.
 - In order to qualify, household income has to fall below a certain limit. Please see the [LEAP Emergency Financial Assistance income eligibility criteria](#). If a family qualifies for this program, they must access it through one of the [listed intake agencies in Ontario](#).
- Hydro rates will also be set at the **off-peak rate** of 10.1 cents per kilowatt-hour **24 hours a day for 45 days** to support ratepayers in their increased daytime electricity usage as they respond to the COVID-19 outbreak, addressing concerns about time-of-use metering.
 - The new rates will be applied to bills immediately.

Emergency Assistance for Families

- Ontario is expanding access to existing Emergency Assistance under the current provisions of Ontario Works. This is available to people with **limited income, assets or credit who are in a crisis or an emergency situation** to help cover individuals' needs such as food, rent, informal childcare, and services.

¹ https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/entry/ontario-financial-assistance-seniors_ca_5e7be6dbc5b6cb9dc199d45e



- Those who are already on Ontario Works (OW) or Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), tourists and visitors are **not eligible**. Individuals can apply for this assistance [online](#) or through local Ontario Works offices.
- Ontario is suspending the rule that limits emergency assistance provision to only once in a six-month period for individuals and families affected by COVID-19 and allowing people to receive emergency assistance for longer (48 days) without submitting a full Ontario Works application.

Support for Current Social Assistance Clients

- Additional resources have been made available to enable Ontario Works administrators to provide **discretionary benefits** to those who currently receive social assistance.
 - The funding can be used to meet a broad range of needs, including cleaning supplies, transportation, food or clothing, that families may be experiencing due to COVID-19.
 - Individuals can access benefits through their Ontario Works caseworker or [online](#).
 - ODSP recipients are also eligible to receive these benefits and can contact their ODSP caseworker for additional information.
 - Online resources for social assistance: [Online Application for Social Assistance](#) and [Ontario Works Offices to contact for more information](#).

Child Care Support for Parents Working on the Front Lines

- Providing emergency childcare options to support parents working on the front lines, such as health care workers, police officers, firefighters and correctional officers.
 - The centres will not have more than 50 people in a space, and pre-screening will be done for workers.
 - Once the emergency childcare centres open, a list of locations will be available [online](#).

Support for Indigenous Families

- Ontario is providing additional supports of **\$26 million** to Indigenous peoples and communities, including emergency assistance for urban Indigenous people in financial need.
 - Further information not yet available online.