

April 1, 2020

Dear Community Partner,

The government is providing social services relief funding to help protect the health and safety of the province's most vulnerable people. This includes:

1. Expanding access to **Emergency Assistance** for people who are not currently receiving social assistance facing a crisis or emergency situation who have no access to other supports, including those who are waiting for benefits from the federal government- i.e. Employment Insurance (EI) and Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB).
2. Increasing access to **Discretionary Benefits** for people who are already receiving social assistance who are in crisis or facing an unexpected emergency due to COVID-19.

How to Apply for Ontario Works / Emergency Assistance:

Ontario Works / Emergency Assistance:

1. Complete the initial assessment through the online application or by telephone:

[Online application](#)

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

Or

Telephone - Intake Line

905-641-9230

1-866-627-1110 (West Niagara)

Basic information will be collected and can take up to 30 minutes.

2. A staff member will contact the applicant within 4 business days to complete an eligibility assessment over the telephone.

The Social Assistance & Employment Opportunities (Ontario Works) office has experienced a significant increase in requests for assistance. Every effort is being made to maintain the service levels.

Discretionary Benefits Emergency One-Time COVID-19 Benefit:

Criteria: For people who are already receiving social assistance and require assistance with items such as cleaning supplies, personal protective equipment or access to food which are necessary to maintain the safety or well-being of a person in the household related to COVID-19. The benefit will be provided based on specified needs identified by the client and is a one time issuance of up to \$100 for single benefit unit and up to \$200 per couple/family benefit unit.

How to Apply:

Ontario Works Clients - Contact the Ontario Works Discretionary Team to apply for the emergency one-time benefit at 905-641-9960 ext. 6072 or by email at discretionary@niagararegion.ca. Clients need to provide their name, phone number and reason for their request. Every effort will be made to return calls and emails within 3-5 business days.

Ontario Disability Support Clients - Contact their Ontario Disability Support Program casemanager to request the emergency benefits related to COVID-19.

Telephone: 905-688-3022 or for information online:

<https://www.mcss.gov.on.ca/en/mcss/programs/social/odsp/>

Further information can be found at:

Niagara Region website: www.niagararegion.ca

Please note **ALL** questions related to Employment Insurance and the new Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) should be directed to Service Canada. Phone number 1- 800-622-6232, website: <https://www1.canada.ca/en/esdc/service-canada.html>

Sincerely,



Lori Watson
Director, Social Assistance & Employment Opportunities

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