



Frequently Asked Questions on Pandemic Pay

On May 19, the B.C. Finance Minister Carole James announced that the province would provide 16 weeks of temporary pandemic pay for workers in health care, community social services and in corrections.

HEU had written health employers in early April, urging government to provide members with a “pandemic allowance” that recognized the added stress and costs that come with working on the front lines of health care and community social services during a pandemic.

And in the weeks leading up to the announcement, HEU members wrote more than 12,000 emails to back this call for Pandemic Pay.

The union called for the broadest possible application of this program to recognize the essential role that all HEU members have in providing quality care to British Columbians during this extraordinary public health crisis.

The government has provided [information](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support/temporary-pandemic-pay) on its website about what “roles” and “workplaces” are eligible for coverage, though there are gaps in this information. <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support/temporary-pandemic-pay>

The union continues to seek clarification on who is covered by the temporary Pandemic Pay program.

How much is the Pandemic Pay and how is it calculated?

The Pandemic Pay is a lump-sum payment that will be calculated at about \$4 an hour for all straight-time hours worked during a 16-week period, beginning March 15, 2020.

Do I need to apply for Pandemic Pay?

No. Your employer will provide it automatically as a lump-sum payment.

When will I receive my Pandemic Pay?

Depending on your employer, you may receive it as a single lump-sum payment after the end of the 16-week period (July 4, 2020). Or your employer may provide it as more than one payment. Some health authorities have said it will be paid out in August 2020. The timing of the payment will vary by employer. Please direct any of your questions about timing to your employer.

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Do I qualify for Pandemic Pay?

We have worked very hard to ensure the broadest possible application of Pandemic Pay to workers in health care and community social services. As a result, the vast majority of HEU members will qualify for Pandemic Pay.

But I don't see myself on the list of work sites or occupations on the government website?

The list on the government website is not inclusive of all work locations or occupations that are included in the Pandemic Pay.

- All HEU members covered by the Facilities Subsector Collective Agreement (FBA) will qualify for Pandemic Pay, with the possible exception of Canadian Blood Services for which the union is seeking clarification (see below).
- All HEU members who work at long-term care and assisted living facilities that receive funding from the provincial government will qualify for Pandemic Pay.
- Most community health and community social services workers (CBA and CSSBA) will qualify for Pandemic Pay.

Which workers in community health and community social services will not receive Pandemic Pay?

There may be a limited number of workers in these sectors, who provide services that are not primarily funded by the provincial government. We continue to seek clarification about possible exemptions.

I work at Canadian Blood Services. Will I receive the Pandemic Pay?

We are working to clarify how federally funded health services may be covered.

I work in a First Nations health service/centre that receives federal funding. Will I receive the Pandemic Pay?

We understand that the federal government is working to implement a comparable program for certain federally funded health services. We are seeking clarification.

Does the Pandemic Pay cover workers in independent living?

Independent living is not eligible under the program.

Does the Pandemic Pay cover workers in assisted living or long-term care sites that do not receive government funding?

Government has advised that assisted living and long-term care facilities must receive government funding to be eligible for Pandemic Pay. We continue to advocate that workers in this part of the seniors' care sector be deemed eligible for Pandemic Pay.

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****Please note that workers at licensed, but unfunded, long-term care and assisted living facilities will have their wages levelled up under the *Single-Site Order* even if they are not eligible for Pandemic Pay.**

Will taxes be deducted from this lump-sum payment?

Yes. This is a taxable benefit and you can expect that your employer will deduct taxes from this payment, and that it will be reflected on your T4 income tax slip.

How about union dues?

HEU has instructed employers not to deduct union dues from the Pandemic Pay lump-sum payment.

Will pension and other deductions be applied to Pandemic Pay?

No. As a lump-sum payment, Pandemic Pay does not impact your pension, or benefits paid by your employer. It does not impact your base salary.

Will casual and part-time workers also receive Pandemic Pay?

Yes, calculated on all straight-time hours worked during the 16-week period beginning March 15, 2020.

What if I was on vacation or on sick leave?

You will only receive Pandemic Pay for all straight-time hours worked in the 16-week period beginning March 15, 2020. You won't receive it for time when you were on vacation or on sick leave.

What about Maternity or Parental Leave?

You will only receive Pandemic Pay for all straight-time hours worked. So, you might receive Pandemic Pay for hours worked before or after your leave, if that occurred during the 16-week period beginning March 15, 2020.

I'm on a Graduated-Return-to-Work (GRTW). Will I receive the Pandemic Pay?

Yes, for those hours worked at straight time.

I'm an EDMP Steward. Will I receive Pandemic Pay?

Yes.

Will shop stewards on employer-paid leave receive Pandemic Pay?

Yes.

My employer has arranged for me to work at home or from another remote location. Do I qualify?

Yes, for straight-time hours worked.

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I resigned my position after March 15, 2020. Will I qualify?

Yes, for those straight-time hours you worked during the 16-week period.

I recently retired. Will I be eligible for Pandemic Pay?

Yes, for those straight-time hours you worked during the 16-week period.

I was put on a general paid leave by my employer because I was out of the country, or because of potential exposure to COVID-19. Do I qualify?

No. Pandemic Pay is based on straight-time hours worked. You will not receive it for periods of paid leave.

I am supposed to have my wages levelled up because of the *Single-Site Order* in long-term care, assisted living and provincial mental health facilities. Will I still receive Pandemic Pay?

Wage-levelling under the *Single-Site Order* is a completely separate program from Pandemic Pay. Wage-levelling is an adjustment to your hourly wage for the duration of the *Single-Site Order*. Pandemic Pay is a lump sum. If you qualify for both, you will receive both.

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