



May 27, 2020

Caring for a Living

The Community Social Services
Bargaining Association of Unions
collectively represents more than
15,000 community-based social
service workers in British Columbia.

Via Email: FIN.Minister@gov.bc.ca

The Honourable Carole James
Minister of Finance
Province of British Columbia
PO Box 9041 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W 9E1

BC Government and Service
Employees' Union (BCGEU)

Canadian Union of
Public Employees' (CUPE)

Hospital Employees' Union (HEU)

Health Sciences Association
of BC (HSABC)

Construction and
Specialized Workers'
Union Local 1611 (CSWU)

United Food and
Commercial Workers'
Union Local 1518 (UFCW)

United Steelworkers
of America (USW)

Service Employee's
International Union (SEIU)

BC Nurses' Union (BCNU)

Christian Labour
Association of Canada (CLAC)

Dear Minister:

RE: COVID-19 Temporary Provincial Pandemic Pay in the Community Social Service Sector

I am writing this letter to you in my capacity as the spokesperson for the Community Social Services Bargaining Association (CSSBA). As you know, the CSSBA is an association of independent unions that collectively represent approximately 16,000 workers in the community social services sector in the province and includes the BC Government and Service Employees' Union, the Canadian Union of Public Employees, the Hospital Employees' Union, the Health Sciences Association, the Construction and Specialized Workers' Union, the Christian Labour Association of Canada, the United Steelworkers, the United Food and Commercial Workers' Union, and the BC Nurses' Union.

Every day in communities and neighbourhoods across B.C. our members provide vital services to some of our province's most vulnerable citizens including children, people with developmental disabilities, immigrants and refugees, women and children experiencing violence, adults and youth in conflict with the law, and Indigenous individuals and families on and off reserve. Often this work involves providing services to clients that do not and cannot understand the necessity of social or physical distancing and may also involve direct care to clients such as toileting, feeding, bathing, administering medication, and other personal care. Work such as this, where physical distancing is impossible and where personal care often necessitates intimate contact with the people these workers support, is very similar in nature to much of the work performed in the health sector in acute care, long term care, or community health settings.

We appreciate your government's recent announcement that most workers in the community social services sector will receive BC COVID-19 Temporary Pandemic Pay (Pandemic Pay) of an additional \$4 per hour, backdated to March 15, for all hours worked. Your government's acknowledgment of the increased demands and stresses arising from the performance of their duties in the challenging conditions under COVID-19 is valued by workers across this sector.



Unlike workers in healthcare who it appears will universally receive Pandemic Pay, not all community social services workers have been identified as recipients. Childcare has been expressly excluded from Pandemic Pay. Early childhood educators and childcare providers are frontline workers unable to physically distance from the children they care for. They are the critical backbone that allows parents to return to work and essential service workers to continue to perform their duties, allowing for the restart of our economy. And yet they are not included as recipients of Pandemic Pay.

Other workers within the community social services sector are also not included in the list of eligible recipients of Pandemic Pay provided on the provincial government website. Workers performing this work that do not receive provincial funding have been excluded from Pandemic Pay, despite meeting all of the criteria – a bitter pill for them to swallow when they are performing identical duties to other recipients. It also appears that workers who are not literally on the frontline providing in-person services are not included as recipients, unlike similar workers in healthcare. Working remotely or delivering services virtually has proven to have its own unique challenges and costs during this pandemic and is deserving of the same recognition as others in the sector are receiving by way of Pandemic Pay.

We encourage you to provide Pandemic Pay to all community social service workers equally, regardless of their particular job classification or whether they are providing in-person service support or delivery.

Yours truly,

Andrea L. Davis
Spokesperson, CSSBA

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cc: *The Honourable Shane Simpson, Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction*
The Honourable Katrine Conroy, Minister of Children and Family Development
The Honourable Mike Farnworth, Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General
The Honourable Scott Fraser, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
The Honourable Robert Fleming, Minister of Education
The Honourable Melanie Mark, Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training
The Honourable Michelle Mungall, Minister of Jobs, Trade, and Technology
The Honourable Adrian Dix, Minister of Health
CSSBA Constituent Unions