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## Wednesday April 8 COVID-19 Update

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Tonight at sundown marks the beginning of Passover. Passover is a holiday rooted in community, however, it will be markedly different this year. To everyone celebrating, I want to wish you a Pesach Sameach.

For all those marking Passover beginning tonight, Easter this weekend, and later in April, Ramadan, I know it will feel especially difficult to stay at home and keep your distance. Thank you for all you are doing to help us all move safely

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If you require urgent assistance from my office, please contact my team at 416-535-7206 or email us at [jbelle-co@ndp.on.ca](mailto:jbelle-co@ndp.on.ca)

We're in this together.

Sincerely,

*Jessica Bell*

## Information on the Canada Emergency Response Benefit

People out of work due to COVID-19 can finally [apply for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit](#) (CERB), with staggered application days depending on your birthday.

- People born in **January, February, or March** - your dedicated login days are **Mondays**
- People born in **April, May, or June** - your dedicated login days are **Tuesdays**
- People born in **July, August, or September** - your dedicated login days are **Wednesdays**
- People born in **October, November, or December** - your dedicated login days are **Thursdays**
- People born in any month may apply on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays

The CERB is a Federal income-assistance benefit that will issue payments of \$2,000 per month per applicant for the next four months backdated to March 15th.

Answers to frequently asked questions about the CERB are [available here](#).

**I have heard directly from many University-Rosedale residents who are ineligible for CERB** because of the nature of their work, because they are a student, or because they continued to earn some income. It's a particular concern for gig and contract workers, artists and musicians. I share your frustration that this benefit has not been made available to everyone who needs it, and I have raised those concerns with our MP and federal counterparts. I was pleased to see the Prime Minister announce the program will be adjusted in the coming days.

- **Individuals can apply on the phone if you don't have online CRA access, and you can apply if you haven't filed taxes.**
- If you do not have a CRA account, but have filed taxes in Canada for calendar years prior to 2018, please call 1-800-959-2019 or 1-800-959-2041 to apply.
- **You do not need to have ever filed taxes to apply.** If you have never filed taxes call 1-800-959-8281 to apply.
- **You do not need to be unemployed,** you need to be without employment income. This way, workers do not need to be laid off, lose their job or get an ROE to apply for the fund
- You will need to report the CERB as income in the future, so you may need to eventually pay income tax on those funds.

## On support for workers who are not Canadian citizens or permanent residents:

To be eligible for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, you must reside in Canada and have a valid Social Insurance Number. Workers who are not Canadian citizens or permanent residents – including temporary foreign workers and international students – may be eligible to receive the Benefit if they meet the other eligibility requirements.

Information on support for migrants is [available here](#). No One is Illegal Toronto has also developed a guide for people without status or with precarious status during this period, [available here](#).

### Unsure if you qualify for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit?

**Worried about unsafe work?** The Workers' Action Centre is hosting free online workshops weekly on Thursdays at 7pm. Sign up [here](#) to get the webinar link for tomorrow, Thursday April 9th.

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## Our plan to support businesses

Every day my team and I connect with business owners in University-Rosedale who are struggling in this incredibly difficult time. While many commercial landlords have made arrangements regarding rent with their commercial tenants, I am hearing from a number of businesses whose commercial landlords are not willing to sit down and figure out a way forward. This is very upsetting. We want those businesses to reopen as soon as possible when we are over the crisis to provide work and restore normal life. We need the province to step up with an eviction moratorium coupled with direct support for businesses and we need those landlords to think twice and then negotiate.

While the federal government has initiated [some important supports for businesses](#), the reality is many businesses in University-Rosedale do not qualify or are not in a position to take on more debt.

At the provincial level, the government announced measures to support small businesses in their [fiscal update](#), including tax deferrals and exemptions, a deferral of WSIB premiums, and deferred penalties and interest on provincial tax payments.

The City of Toronto has also put forward [initiatives](#) for small and medium-sized businesses including extending grace periods for property taxes and utility bills.

**I am hearing every day from businesses in University-Rosedale that these supports are nowhere near enough.**

That's why we have launched the [Save Main Street proposal](#), a plan to keep small and medium-sized businesses afloat, with greater supports for companies, charities and community-based nonprofits.

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- Provide support for small businesses, non-profits and charities struggling with **rent payments**
- Immediately order the **banning of lock-outs or eviction threats** by commercial landlords.
- Offer a stand-alone **emergency 75% commercial rent subsidy** up to \$10,000 for 3 months to ensure that SMEs can continue to exist and employees stay on payroll.
- Institute a **utility payment freeze** for small and medium-sized businesses.
- Create a **remote-work set up fund** for small-businesses — which could help them with things like setting up an online retail operation, or buying laptops and software for their workforce.
- Work with the insurance industry and the Financial Services Regulatory Authority to institute an **auto-insurance grace period** for taxis and car-sharing drivers.
- Create designated **emergency funds for small businesses and entrepreneurs who have faced historic barriers** to accessing traditional capital sources to provide grants and low interest loans through associations, as proposed by the Canadian Black Chamber of Commerce.

[Sign our petition](#) to join me in demanding that Ontario act immediately to help the small businesses at the heart of our communities get through this crisis.

Do you own a business in University-Rosedale? Don't hesitate to reach out to my office to let us know what you are experiencing. We will be happy to share the resource list we are compiling daily with potential supports for businesses.

## The latest news for families with children

### Online learning has begun

Online learning began this week for some two-million Ontario students. What that means will vary from class to class, school to school, and school board to school board. Every family has different circumstances, and some families face bigger challenges than others. And that goes for the families of education workers too.

Parents, students, and educators need assurances from the government that

child and youth workers as well as guidance and educational assistants.

I stand with my colleague, education critic Marit Stiles, in demanding that the province provide the clarity all families, students, and educators deserve. The minister must issue clear directions, including the government's position on a number of [key issues listed here](#).

**I want to hear from you** about the government's plan for students, and if it will meet the needs of your family. If you're an education worker, I want to know what you think about the proposals and what it means for your work and support for students. Please share your thoughts with me anytime at [jbelleco@ndp.on.ca](mailto:jbelleco@ndp.on.ca)

## Provincial child benefit is now available

The province is providing a one-time financial assistance payment during school and child care closures. The applications are now open.

**The new Support for Families initiative offers a one-time payment of \$200 per child** 0 to 12 years of age, and \$250 for those 0 to 21 years of age with special needs.

Families can complete a very quick [online application](#) to access this financial support.

## Emergency childcare update

The City of Toronto is providing emergency child care for children of essential and critical service workers. Registration is open. There are four locations. [Information on who is eligible and a link to apply is here](#).

The service is provided at no costs to families, funded by the Province of Ontario, for children from birth to age 12. Services will operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Centres are located across Toronto in existing City-run licensed child care facilities and staffed by City of Toronto child care workers.

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# Changes to the list of essential businesses

Over the weekend, Ontario updated the list of essential businesses that can remain open. As of Sunday April 4, businesses that are not identified on [this](#)

and services either online, by telephone, or by mail/delivery. Additionally, teleworking and online commerce are permitted at all times for all businesses.

**We have heard from many constituents about the harmful impacts of ongoing construction in the building where they live during this period of quarantine.** The updated essential businesses list has limited the construction that is allowed to continue, but unfortunately it still allows for a majority of ongoing construction in Toronto to continue. Construction within the following categories may proceed:

- Construction projects and services associated with the healthcare sector, including new facilities, expansions, renovations and conversion of spaces that could be repurposed for health care space.
- Construction projects and services required to ensure safe and reliable operations of, or to provide new capacity in, critical provincial infrastructure, including transit, transportation, energy and justice sectors beyond the day-to-day maintenance.
- Critical industrial construction activities required for,
  - the maintenance and operations of petrochemical plants and refineries,
  - significant industrial petrochemical projects where preliminary work has already commenced,
  - industrial construction and modifications to existing industrial structures limited solely to work necessary for the production, maintenance, and/or enhancement of Personal Protective Equipment, medical devices (such as ventilators), and other identified products directly related to combatting the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Residential construction projects where,
  - a footing permit has been granted for single family, semi-detached and townhomes
  - an above grade structural permit has been granted for condominiums, mixed use and other buildings, or
  - the project involves renovations to residential properties and construction work was started before April 4, 2020.
- Construction and maintenance activities necessary to temporarily close construction sites that have paused or are not active and to ensure ongoing public safety.



in their homes during this crisis. Don't hesitate to reach out to me for support.

## New guidelines to stay safe

I am hearing from some constituents that they are having trouble maintaining a safe distance from others on sidewalks. For that reason, I remind everyone to please avoid walking down the centre of the sidewalk, and if there are other pedestrians walking toward you, be sure to move to the side. If you are walking with a partner and there are other pedestrians walking towards you, please get into single file.

### Wearing a mask

On Monday, Canada's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Theresa Tam [said](#) that Canadians should consider wearing non-medical, or homemade masks if they are in situations where they cannot avoid close contact with people, such as when you are out buying groceries.

*It is important to note that wearing masks does NOT replace physical distancing, frequent hand-washing, and staying home unless absolutely necessary, which are still the most effective ways to prevent the spread of COVID-19.*

Right now, masks are not easy to find as many stores that sell them have run out or donated them to health care workers where they are desperately needed.

For those who want to make masks at home, a tutorial (both sew and non-sew instructions) and guidelines on how to wear them properly can be found [here](#).

Need a mask but can't find one? Willing to help neighbours by making masks? We would suggest reaching out to [the neighborhood pod or community support network closest to you](#) to request help or offer support.

### Mandatory physical distancing in public



distancing in City of Toronto parks and public squares. Any two people who don't live together, who fail to keep two metres of distance between them in a park or public square, can be fined up to \$5,000 upon conviction. These [emergency orders](#) are in effect for at least the next 30 days.

A COVID-19 Enforcement Team will also enforce provincial orders banning organized social gatherings of more than five people, bans on using closed playgrounds and other parks amenities, and the closure orders on non-essential businesses that remain open.

## New requirement to identify oneself if charged with breaching an emergency order

People who are being charged with an offence under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act will be required to identify themselves if asked by a provincial offences officer. Failing to comply with any of these emergency orders is considered an offence under the EMCPA and so is the failure to identify oneself accurately.

This new power [introduced via government regulations](#) is deeply concerning to me. **Legalized carding is a giant step backward and must end. This regulation should never have been introduced.** Black, Indigenous, and other racialized communities are terrified that they will be unfairly targeted. University-Rosedale residents - if this happens to you, please record details and get in touch with me. I join my NDP colleagues in calling on the government to explain how it intends to guard against abuse of these additional powers, and what recourse Black, Indigenous and racialized Ontarians will have if they are unfairly and disproportionately targeted. You can read the [full statement here](#).

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## How to help out

Note: [this newsletter lays out a multitude of ways](#) that neighbours are giving and receiving help during this crisis -- on our blocks, across neighborhoods, and throughout Toronto (including lots of ways to jump in!).

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## #COVIDkindness in University-Rosedale:

- **Call for Health Care Workers** -- Ontario has launched a new online tool that will help match skilled frontline health care providers with employers. You can access the [Health Workforce Matching Portal here](#).
- **The University Health Network is collecting donations of PPE and other needed supplies.** Contact them at [covidsupport@uhn.ca](mailto:covidsupport@uhn.ca) or call 416 340 3935 to speak to one of their staff to discuss current needs and guidelines.
- **Diabetes Canada is urging the public to hold off on using their bin donations** during this crisis. The pick-up of all textile donations from homes and donation bins across Canada has been stopped since March 23. The donation bins are overflowing, and some are becoming garbage dumps. Please heed their request and let others know.
- A collection of resources is now available via this **new community-sourced** [COVID\\_19 Toronto app](#).
- **Today's #COVIDkindness feature:** Three weeks ago Christopher and Meghan started a [Neighbour Network for folks on Euclid Ave](#) between Bloor and Queen. "We fliered the entire street offering assistance and are willing to help in any way we are able. We also have an extensive database of neighbours willing to help should we need resources. It's been very exciting to see the support from our community members."

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Thanks to the The Globe and Mail for this heartwarming video of Meghan and Christopher and their Neighborhood Network!

**Note that this email and all previous COVID-19 updates are available at: [www.jessicabellmpp.ca/coronavirus](http://www.jessicabellmpp.ca/coronavirus)**

As always, if you require urgent assistance from my office, please contact my team at 416-535-7206 or email us at [jbelle-co@ndp.on.ca](mailto:jbelle-co@ndp.on.ca)

We're all in this together.

Sincerely,

*Jessica Bell*

Jessica Bell (MPP for University-Rosedale)



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