

Government of Canada Report

For inclusion in the Regional Report on Actions and Policies for
the Afro-descendant Population:

- International Decade for People of African Descent
- COVID-19 and Populations of African Descent

II Inter-American Meeting of High-Level Authorities on Policies for the Afro-descendant Populations

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I. Introduction

This report outlines key measures adopted by the Government of Canada to enhance the implementation of the International Decade for People of African Descent and outlines responses for Afro-descendant populations in the context of COVID-19.

Black populations in Canada have diverse backgrounds and experiences. Some trace their roots in Canada back several centuries, while others have immigrated in recent decades.

The first recorded Black person to arrive in the territory that is now Canada was Mathieu Da Costa, an interpreter for European traders and explorers. He arrived in the early 1600s and is commemorated as a significant historical figure.

While we can point with pride to the role Canada played as a safe haven for those fleeing captivity via the Underground Railroad in the mid-1800s, we must also acknowledge our own history of slavery. From 1628 until the early 1800s, Black slavery existed in Canada.

On March 25, 1807, the slave trade was abolished throughout the British Empire – of which British North America was a part – making it illegal to buy or sell human beings and ending much of the transatlantic trade. This did not abolish slavery itself, but prohibited the traffic in slaves. Slavery was abolished everywhere in the British Empire in 1834.

While Canada's Black population continued to grow slowly over the years, it was Canada's new immigration rules in the 1960s that would open the door for international immigration of people from African descent. This led to an increase in Canada's Black population from 32,100 in 1961 to 504,300 in 1991.

In Canada's 2016 census, close to 1.2 million people in Canada reported being Black, double the population that was reported in the 1996 census. The Black population now accounts for 3.5% of Canada's total population and if population projections hold true, could represent between 5.0% and 5.6% of Canada's population by 2036. Both immigration and natural increases have contributed to the growth in population.

Canada's 2016 census data also shows that the Black population is younger than the total population in Canada, with the median age being 29.6 years, versus 40.7 years for the total population. Children under 15 years old represented 26.6% of the Black population while they represented 16.9% of the total population.

Canada's Black population is also increasingly diverse, with Black newcomers coming from roughly 125 different countries. Overall, more than 200 ethnic or cultural origins were reported by the Black population in Canada. Ethnic origin refers to the ethnic or cultural origins of the respondent's ancestors.

Most Black Canadians, 94.3%, live in larger urban centres, with Toronto, Ontario, having the largest Black population in the country, with 442,015 people, or 36.9% of Canada's Black

population. Ontario is home to slightly more than half (52.4%) of the total Black population in Canada.

II. International Decade for People of African Descent

On January 30, 2018, the Government of Canada officially recognized the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024). The Decade is seen by Canada as an opportunity to highlight and celebrate the important contributions people of African descent have made and continue to make to Canadian society. The Government of Canada also acknowledged the continuing need to understand and eliminate barriers preventing Black Canadians from experiencing full and equal participation across society.

The Government of Canada's official support of the Decade acknowledges it as a framework for recognition, justice, and development to fight racism, discrimination, and the ongoing inequalities that Canadians of African descent face. This is done in line with the theme of the Decade "People of African Descent: Recognition, Justice and Development."

To help coordinate Government of Canada action in this area, the new Federal Anti-Racism Secretariat and the Department of Employment and Social Development Canada have established an interdepartmental Working Group on the International Decade for People of African Descent.

The following outlines current Government of Canada initiatives, as well as data and evidence initiatives that will inform decision making.

Current Government of Canada Initiatives

Recognition

Black History Month

Since February 1996, the Government of Canada has officially celebrated Black History Month through annual campaigns that encourage Canadians to participate in festivities and events that honour the legacy and contributions of past and present Black Canadians to the settlement, growth, and development of the country.

In 2020, the theme for Black History Month (February) was *Canadians of African Descent: Going Forward, Guided by the Past*, inspired by the International Decade for People of African Descent. Funding for community based events to celebrate Black History Month are available through the Community Support, Multiculturalism, and Anti-Racism Initiatives Program of the Department of Canadian Heritage. In 2020, the Program provided over \$1.2 million in funding that supported 57 community events celebrating Black History Month across Canada.

First Woman on Canadian Bank Note

Viola Desmond was selected, in late 2018, to be featured on Canada's regularly circulating \$10 bank note. Desmond, a successful Nova Scotia businesswoman, is known for defiantly refusing to leave a whites-only area of a movie theatre in 1946. She was subsequently jailed, convicted and fined. Her court case was the first known legal challenge against racial segregation brought

forth by a Black woman in Canada. This also marks the first time that a portrait of a Canadian woman will be featured on a regularly circulating Bank of Canada note.

Black History Commemorations Gain National Significance Designation

On July 31, 2020, the federal government announced four new designations of national historic significance commemorating Black History in Canada. They include:

- The Enslavement of African people in Canada (c. 1629–1834) - More than 4,000 people of African descent were enslaved in the British and French colonies (later Quebec, Ontario, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and New Brunswick).
- The West Indian Domestic Scheme (1955-1967) - This targeted immigration program permitted some 3,000 women from the Caribbean to come to Canada to work as domestic servants as a path to citizenship, at a time when discriminatory government policies restricted non-white immigrants from settling in Canada.
- Richard Pierpoint (c. 1744–1838) - Born in Africa, Pierpoint was captured, forcibly transported to the Americas and then sold into slavery as a teenager. He regained his freedom by fighting for the British during the American Revolution.
- Larry Gains (1900-1983) - One of the most talented boxers in the first half of the 20th century who won as Canadian Heavyweight Champion, World Coloured Heavyweight Champion and British Empire Heavyweight Champion.

The new designations illustrate some of the collective and personal experiences of Black Canadians who fought for freedom, justice and equality. They also acknowledge the struggles that have led to the Canada of today and help Canadians reflect on ways to build a more inclusive society. In so doing, the designations reflect Canada's commitment to the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent (2015-2024). New designations are proposed by Canadians via the [National Program of Historical Commemoration](#), which includes some 2,150 designations to date.

Justice

Support for Black Canadians

The Government of Canada invested \$10 million over five years through the Public Health Agency of Canada to develop research in support of more culturally responsive mental health programs in Black Canadian communities, to address the significant and unique challenges faced by Black Canadians.

The Public Health Agency of Canada established the *Promoting Health Equity: Mental Health of Black Canadians Fund* (MHBC). The MHBC initiative partners with community-based organizations, researchers and others in Black communities to generate new evidence on culturally focused programs and interventions that address mental health and its determinants for Black Canadians.

The MHBC fund includes two funding streams: the Incubator Stream, which provides short-term funding to support capacity building activities that will help organizations design, develop,

implement and evaluate projects that promote mental health for Black Canadians; and, the Implementation Stream which provides funding to recipients for community-led projects that implement and evaluate culturally focused programs that promote mental health and address its causes for Black Canadians. This Implementation Stream also includes an open solicitation focused on understanding the unique needs for Black LGBTQI+ populations in Canada, regarding mental health and its determinants. This will contribute to raising awareness and building greater capacity to respond to their needs and address barriers that they experience. Eight projects under each of the funding streams are currently being funded for a total of \$5,277,945 (\$600,000 under the Incubation Stream, and \$4,677,945 under the Implementation Stream). Remaining funds are being reserved to support incubator projects to move forward into the implementation phase.

Building a Foundation for Change: Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy 2019-2022

In 2019, the Government of Canada announced \$45 million in funding for *Building a Foundation for Change: Canada's Anti-Racism Strategy, 2019-2022*. The Strategy aims to counter racism in its various forms, with a strong focus on community-based projects. It is designed as a first step that lays a foundation for longer-term federal actions against racism and discrimination in Canada and supports the following three principles:

- **Demonstrating Federal Leadership:** The Government of Canada must take a leading role in addressing systemic racism and discrimination, and has established a new Anti-Racism Secretariat for this purpose. The Secretariat leads a whole-of-government approach to working with federal organizations to identify systemic barriers and gaps, develop new initiatives, and consider the impacts of new and existing policies, services and programs on racialized, Indigenous and religious minority communities.
- **Empowering Communities:** The Government of Canada must support organizations on the ground that have expertise in addressing various forms of racism and discrimination.
- **Building Awareness and Changing Attitudes:** Public education and awareness are essential to the elimination of racial discrimination and inequality. The Strategy will support a National Public Education and Awareness Campaign to increase awareness and understanding, and will fund data and evidence activities to enhance the identification of gaps and measure the effectiveness of government programming.

As part of the Strategy, the Department of Canadian Heritage has launched a new Anti-Racism Action Program (ARAP) that is designed to address barriers to employment, justice, and social participation among racialized communities, including Black communities. The first call for proposals for the ARAP closed in January 2020, and in October 2020, funding of \$15 million for 85 projects was announced.

Development

Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative

The Government of Canada has also recognized the International Decade for People of African Descent, by committing funding in the amount of \$25 million over five years (starting 2019-20)

for Employment and Social Development Canada to administer projects and capital assistance to celebrate, share knowledge, and build capacity in Black Canadian communities, leading to the creation of the **Supporting Black Canadian Communities Initiative**. Employment and Social Development Canada will fund selected high capacity organizations who would hold an open and transparent funding process to which grassroots organizations across Canada could apply for funding for capacity building projects in their communities.

Part of the funding has already been allocated to help stakeholders create the first national institute for Black Canadians, the **Canadian Institute for Persons of African Descent**. Thus far, Employment and Social Development Canada has invested \$348,000 on Caribbean African Canadian Social Services for a feasibility study and concept paper. Once established, the Canadian Institute for Persons of African Descent will work to advance initiatives that impact Black Canadians at a systemic level.

The Government of Canada will also work with Tropicana Community Services, the Black Business Initiative, and Le Groupe 3737 to disburse investments as intermediaries. These organizations will launch their own funding calls seeking proposals from grassroots organizations from across Canada for organizational capacity building projects before the end of 2020.

The Government of Canada has also announced investments of nearly \$221 million, of which \$93 million will come from the federal government, to launch Canada's first-ever **Black Entrepreneurship Program**. It will help thousands of Black business owners recover from the COVID-19 crisis and grow their business.

Support for Black Canadian Youth

The Government of Canada has also invested \$9 million over three years through the Department of Canadian Heritage to enhance local and community support for Black Canadian youth. Of that amount, approximately \$2 million was invested in education and awareness, and outreach and engagement.

A national call for proposals was held in 2019 to select the lead for a National Anti-Black Racism Education and Awareness Campaign. Urban Rez Solutions Social Enterprise was selected through this process to lead this campaign. Their project *Say it Loud* received \$430,000 in Government of Canada funding.

The remainder of the approximately \$2 million, has been invested in supporting outreach and engagement activities, research projects and performance measurement activities. For example, in 2018-2019, the Government of Canada provided financial support for the Design the Future Black Youth Initiative, led by the Michaëlle Jean Foundation in partnership with the Somali Centre for Family Services and 15 other community organizations. The initiative resulted in a series of 11 in-person consultations with Black Canadian youth and youth-serving organizations. Over 600 youth participated, resulting in a better understanding of the barriers faced by Black youth and youth-serving organizations and how best the Government of Canada could address these barriers.

Within the \$9 million allocated to the Department of Canadian Heritage, just over \$7 million was used to create a new community fund called the *Community Support for Black Canadian Youth*

Initiative (CSBCY). The CSBCY provides funding for projects that address the unique challenges faced by Black Canadian youth by: combating discrimination through awareness raising and/or digital literacy; providing opportunities for Black Canadian youth, and empowering them through the promotion of Black history, culture and identity; and developing leadership skills and civic engagement.

Following a public call for proposals, 56 community based projects were funded over 2 years under the CSBCY, totaling an investment by the Government of Canada of approximately \$7.7 million.

DATA and EVIDENCE

Better, more precise, and more consistent tracking, collection and measurement of data is necessary for any effective anti-racism effort. This is why the Government of Canada has made investments to improve data and research.

The Department of Canadian Heritage and Statistics Canada have commissioned three research reports on issues affecting Black Canadian youth: a needs assessment, a jurisdictional scan and a report on best practices found in culturally-specific programs within all three levels of government.

In addition, new performance indicators are being developed to assess overall performance of the Black Canadian Youth Approach administered by the Department of Canadian Heritage.

Through the **Qualitative Look at Serious Legal Problems** initiative, the Department of Justice Canada is carrying out a series of research studies, two of which are qualitative studies on Black Canadian communities. These are:

- A study on legal issues faced by Black Canadian youth in the Greater Toronto Area, which will provide them with legal aid, information and assistance, taking place from March 2020 to January 2021.
- A study on serious legal problems faced by urban African Canadians in Montreal in collaboration with community organizations and civil rights organizations, taking place from March 2020 to January 2021.

This series of research studies complements the upcoming **Canadian Legal Problems Survey** which will help to address the data gap on access to civil justice in Canada. The survey will measure the prevalence of serious legal problems in Canadians' lives over the previous three years, how they resolved these problems, or not, and the impact of these problems on their well-being.

By demonstrating federal leadership, empowering communities, building awareness and changing attitudes, the Government of Canada is taking action in building a foundation for change to address racism and discrimination in Canada, including as experienced by Black Canadians.

The Government of Canada will continue to build on these efforts, and create a country where more Canadians have a real and equitable chance at success.

III. COVID-19 and Populations of African Descent

COVID-19 has had particular impacts on racialized communities, religious minorities and Indigenous peoples. The disruption created by the COVID-19 pandemic impacts social cohesion, diversity and inclusion, and exacerbates existing barriers and inequality caused by systemic racism and discrimination.

A [study](#) carried out by Innovative Research Group and the Edmonton-based African Canadian Civic Engagement Council indicates that Black Canadians are more likely to get sick and be hospitalized for COVID-19 than other ethnic groups. Black Canadians are also more likely (56% to 43%) to report layoffs or reduced working hours in their household and are more worried, over the next few months, about paying rent (45% to 36%). They are also more likely than the Canadian average to say their household finances have been negatively impacted by COVID-19.

As part of the Government of Canada's ongoing commitment to understanding the impact of COVID-19 on diverse groups of Canadians, Statistics Canada added a new question to the Labour Force Survey asking respondents aged 15 to 69 to report the population groups to which they belong. This new information will be used on an ongoing basis to shed light on the evolving labour market conditions of population groups designated as visible minorities, including the extent to which these are shaped by regional and sectoral conditions.

Data from the Labour Force Survey shows that the national unemployment rate in August (11.1% among the population aged 15 to 69, not seasonally adjusted) masks significant differences across population groups. For example, Arab (17.9%), Black (17.6%) and Southeast Asian (16.6%) Canadians continued to have significantly higher unemployment rates than Canadians who were not a member of a population group designated as a visible minority and who did not identify as Indigenous (9.4%, not seasonally adjusted).

In August, among Canadians aged 15 to 69, those who were members of population groups designated as visible minorities were more likely to be in a household which experienced financial difficulties such as the ability to pay rent or buy groceries. This may reflect differences in the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 economic shutdown and longer-standing differences in financial security across groups.

Over one-third of Filipino (35.2%) and Latin American (33.7%) Canadians reported living in a household experiencing financial difficulties, while 28.2% of Black Canadians and just over one-fifth of Chinese Canadians (22.7%) did so. By way of comparison, 15.9% of Canadians aged 15 to 69 who were not a visible minority and did not identify as Indigenous, lived in a household which experienced financial difficulties.

The Government of Canada acknowledges that better data is required in order to improve understanding and address the impact of COVID-19 on equity-seeking communities. Further research will enable the Government of Canada to identify priority areas for action and protect those who are most vulnerable.

Through the Federal Anti-Racism Secretariat and the Department of Women and Gender Equality Canada, the Government of Canada has also established an interdepartmental taskforce to address the distinct and disproportionate ways COVID-19 is affecting equity-seeking

communities, including Black communities. As such, the 25-federal organization-strong committee has given considerable focus on the relationship between anti-Black racism and health, economic and social outcomes for communities of African descent in Canada.

The Government of Canada recognized the unique needs of Black business owners and entrepreneurs and invested nearly \$93 million in the **Black Entrepreneurship Program**. Under this initiative, investments of up to \$53 million are being made to develop and implement the **National Ecosystem Fund** to support Black-led business organizations across the country. This will help Black business owners and entrepreneurs access funding and capital, mentorship, financial planning services, and business training. Also under the **Black Entrepreneurship Program**, Black business owners and entrepreneurs will be supported through the **Black Entrepreneurship Loan Fund** that will provide loans of between \$25,000 and \$250,000.

The Government of Canada has also established a pathway to permanent residency for asylum claimants working in the health-care sector during the COVID-19 pandemic, many of whom are of African Descent and have entered Canada irregularly. Under this measure, asylum claimants across the country who are working on the front lines providing direct care to patients in health-care institutions are able to apply for permanent residency if they meet the criteria.

The Government of Canada has introduced measures beyond these that support Canadians and business in coping with the health, social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Government of Canada support for individuals includes sick benefits for workers who are unable to work because they have contracted COVID-19, caregiving benefits for those unable to work because they need to care for children due to school closures or family members who have contracted COVID-19, as well as specific initiatives to support students, seniors, and Indigenous peoples. The Government of Canada established the **Canada Emergency Response Benefit** which provides a taxable benefit of \$2,000 every 4 weeks for up to 24 weeks to eligible workers who have stopped working or whose work hours have been reduced due to COVID-19.

The Government of Canada has introduced a range of supports for Canadian businesses, from help with payroll through the **Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy** to assistance with expenses through interest-free loans. These supports are helping to avoid layoffs, enabling rehiring of employees and creating new jobs. For example:

- The **Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy** (CEWS) provides a wage subsidy of 75 per cent for qualifying employers, up to \$847 per week per employee. The CEWS has supported about three million employees by helping them stay in the workforce or return to work.
- The Government of Canada is also working to support businesses through the **Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance** program. It provides relief for small businesses experiencing financial hardship due to COVID-19.
- Recognizing that businesses are multidimensional, the Government of Canada is also providing targeted measures for women entrepreneurs and young entrepreneurs, for self-employed individuals, for Indigenous businesses, and for sectors that have been

particularly impacted by COVID-19, such as tourism; air transportation; culture, heritage and sport; and Agriculture and agri-food.

The Government of Canada is also helping to provide support for organizations that are helping Canadians. This includes, for example, an investment of \$350 million made to support vulnerable Canadians through charities and non-profit organizations that deliver essential services to those in need. As well, the Government of Canada is introducing the **Rapid Housing Initiative** to help address urgent housing needs of vulnerable Canadians by rapidly creating new affordable housing. This \$1 billion initiative will cover the construction of modular housing, as well as the acquisition of land, and the conversion of existing buildings to affordable housing. It is expected to enable the rapid creation of up to 3,000 new affordable housing units across the country and will also help stimulate the economy.

The Government of Canada is also working closely with provinces and territories to ensure that all necessary and appropriate supports are available to ensure a comprehensive coordinated response to COVID-19. The Government of Canada is providing support to provinces and territories in the areas of:

- Health – by supporting critical health care system needs and mitigation efforts;
- Economy – by helping provinces and territories safely restart their economies;
- Education – ensuring a safe return to school; and
- People who need it most – through the temporary wage top-up for low-income essential workers.

The COVID-19 crisis is the challenge of our generation. The Government of Canada has responded with rapid and broad-based emergency support measures to protect the health and economic well-being of Canadians.

The Government of Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan is ensuring Canadians have the support they need to put food on the table and keep a roof over their head. Further information on the Government of Canada's [COVID-19 Economic Response Plan](#) can be found in Annex A.

The following outlines actions taken by the Government of Canada to support Canadians and businesses facing hardship because of the COVID-19 outbreak. All Canadians, including persons of African descent benefit from these actions. Further information on these initiatives can be found here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/departement-finance/economic-response-plan.html>.

Support for individuals

Individuals and families

Temporary changes were made to the **Employment Insurance** program to better support Canadians looking for work.

Through the **Canada Emergency Response Benefit**, the Government of Canada provided a taxable benefit of \$2,000 every 4 weeks for up to 28 weeks to eligible workers who stopped working or whose work hours were reduced due to COVID-19.

The Government of Canada also extended the payment due date to pay current year income tax balances.

Further, homeowners facing financial hardship may be eligible for a **mortgage payment deferral** of up to six months. Banks in Canada affirmed their commitment to working with customers to provide flexible solutions, on a case-by-case basis, for managing through hardships caused by COVID 19. This may include situations such as pay disruption, childcare disruption, or illness. Canada's large banks have confirmed that this support includes up to a 6-month payment deferral for mortgages, and the opportunity for relief on other credit products.

The Government of Canada is also moving legislation through Parliament that would see the following initiatives implemented:

- **Canada Recovery Benefit:** workers who are self-employed or are not eligible for Employment Insurance and who still require income support, would be eligible for \$500 per week for up to 26 weeks.
- **Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit:** workers who cannot work because they are sick or must self-isolate for reasons related to COVID-19 would be eligible for \$500 per week for up to two weeks.
- **Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit:** eligible workers who cannot work because they must provide care to children or family members due to the closure of schools, day cares or care facilities would be eligible for \$500 per week, for up to 26 weeks per household.

Persons with disabilities

A special, one-time, tax-free, non-reportable payment of \$600 was made available to help Canadians with disabilities, who were already recipients of specific disability programs or benefits.

Post-secondary students and recent graduates

The Government of Canada provided, from May to August 2020, a taxable benefit of \$1,250 every 4 weeks to eligible students or \$2,000 to eligible students with dependents or with disability who are not eligible for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit or Employment Insurance or unable to work due to COVID-19.

Changes were made to the **Canada Student Loans Program** to allow more students to qualify for support and be eligible for greater amounts. Additional support was also provided to student researchers and post-doctoral fellows through the federal granting councils. This funding will support a one-semester extension for eligible students whose research scholarships or fellowships end between March and August 2020 and who intend to continue their studies. It will also provide a 3-month extension in funding for holders of federal research grants to support eligible trainees and staff paid out of these awards.

Seniors

To ensure that the most vulnerable seniors continue to receive their benefits when they need them the most, the Government of Canada temporarily extended the **Guaranteed Income Supplement and Allowance** payments if seniors' 2019 income information has not been assessed. In addition, the required minimum withdrawals from Registered Retirement Income Funds was reduced by 25 % for 2020.

Indigenous peoples

The Government of Canada is supporting its Indigenous peoples through a number of targeted initiatives these include providing:

- \$685 million for a new distinctions-based **Indigenous Community Support Fund** to address immediate needs in First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Nation communities;
- \$100 million to support a range of federal health measures, including support for preparedness in First Nation and Inuit communities;
- An additional \$25 million to **Nutrition North Canada** to increase subsidies so families can afford much-needed personal hygiene products and nutritious food;
- \$75.2 million to offer additional distinctions-based support to First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nation post-secondary students;
- \$285.1 million to fund community-led responses to the pandemic and provide targeted increases in primary health care resources for First Nations communities;
- \$270 million to supplement the **On-Reserve Income Assistance Program** to address increased demand on the program, which will help individuals and families meet their essential living expenses. It will also help hire additional staff to better serve First Nations communities and connect individuals to other government programs;
- \$112 million in funding for First Nations to support community measures to ensure a safe return to school on reserves;
- \$44.8 million over five years to build 12 new shelters, which will help protect and support Indigenous women and girls experiencing and fleeing violence. In addition, \$40.8 million will be provided to support operational costs for these new shelters over the first five years, and \$10.2 million annually ongoing. As well, \$1 million a year ongoing,

starting this year, will support engagement with Métis leaders and service providers on shelter provision and community-led violence prevention projects for Métis women, girls, and LGBTQ and two-spirit people.

Support for businesses

Avoiding layoffs, rehiring employees and creating new jobs

The Government of Canada, through the **Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy**, is covering a portion of an employee's wages for eligible employers. The Subsidy will allow businesses to re-hire employees and avoid layoffs as the economy continues to safely reopen.

The **Temporary 10% Wage Subsidy**, is a three month measure that will allow eligible employers to reduce the amount of payroll deductions required to be remitted to the Canada Revenue agency.

Work-Sharing is a program that helps employers and employees avoid layoffs when there is a temporary decrease in business activity beyond the control of the employer. The Government of Canada has extended the maximum duration of the **Work-Sharing** program from 38 weeks to 76 weeks for employers affected by COVID-19. This measure will provide income support to employees eligible for Employment Insurance who agree to reduce their normal working hours because of developments beyond the control of their employers.

The Government of Canada is also creating new jobs and opportunities for youth by creating up to 116,000 jobs, placements, and other training opportunities to help students find employment and develop valuable skills this summer and over the coming months.

Temporary changes have also been made to the **Canada Summer Jobs** program to allow employers to:

- receive an increased wage subsidy, so that private and public sector employers can also receive up to 100 % of the provincial or territorial minimum hourly wage for each employee;
- extend the end date for employment to February 28, 2021;
- adapt their projects and job activities; and
- hire staff on a part-time basis.

The Government of Canada has also extended time periods for temporary layoffs by up to six months in the *Canada Labour Standards Regulations* to allow employers more time to recall laid-off employees. The temporary changes will help protect the jobs of federally regulated private-sector employees and support employers facing economic hardship as a result of the pandemic.

Taxes and tariffs

The Government of Canada is allowing all businesses to defer, until after August 31, 2020, the payment of any income tax amounts that become owing on or after March 18 and before September 2020. This relief would apply to tax balances due, as well as instalments, under Part I

of the *Income Tax Act*. No interest or penalties will accumulate on these amounts during this period.

The Government of Canada is also waiving tariffs on certain medical goods, including PPE such as masks and gloves.

This will reduce the cost of imported PPE for Canadians, help protect workers, and ensure our supply chains can keep functioning well.

Financial support, loans and access to credit

The **Canada Emergency Business Account** provides interest-free loans of up to \$40,000 to small businesses and not-for-profits, to help cover their operating costs during a period where their revenues have been temporarily reduced. This program has been implemented by banks and credit unions in collaboration with Export Development Canada.

Through the **Business Credit Availability Program**, Export Development Canada is working with financial institutions to guarantee 80% of new operating credit and cash flow term loans of up to \$6.25 million to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Through the **Business Credit Availability Program**, Business Development Canada is working with financial institutions to co-lend term loans of up to \$6.25 million to SMEs for their operational cash flow requirements.

The Government of Canada is providing nearly \$962 million through the **Regional Relief and Recovery Fund** to help more businesses and organizations in sectors such as manufacturing, technology, tourism and others that are key to the regions and to local economies. This fund is specifically targeted to those that may require additional help to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, but have been unable to access other support measures.

The **Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance** provides relief for small businesses experiencing financial hardship due to COVID-19.

Through the **Business Credit Availability Program**, the Business Development Canada's **Mid-Market Financing Program** will provide commercial loans ranging between \$12.5 million and \$60 million to medium-sized businesses whose credit needs exceed what is already available through the **Business Credit Availability Program** and other measures.

Through the **Business Credit Availability Program**, Export Development Canada's **Mid-Market Guarantee and Financing Program** will bring liquidity to companies who tend to have revenues of between \$50 million to \$300 million, to sustain operations during this uncertain period. Export Development Canada will continue to work with Canadian financial institutions to guarantee 75 % of new operating credit and cash-flow loans – ranging in size from \$16.75 million to a maximum of \$80 million.

The Government of Canada is making available \$15 million in non-repayable support for businesses in the territories to help address the impacts of COVID-19. This support will assist businesses with operating costs not already covered by other Government of Canada measures.

To support Black business owners and entrepreneurs, the Government of Canada is investing up to nearly \$93 million in the **Black Entrepreneurship Program**. Under this initiative, investments of up to \$53 million are being made to develop and implement the **National Ecosystem Fund** to support Black-led business organizations across the country. This will help Black business owners and entrepreneurs access funding and capital, mentorship, financial planning services, and business training. Also under the **Black Entrepreneurship Program**, Black business owners and entrepreneurs will be supported through the **Black Entrepreneurship Loan Fund** that will provide loans of between \$25,000 and \$250,000.

The Large Employer Emergency Financing Facility provides bridge financing to Canada's largest employers, whose needs during the pandemic are not being met through conventional financing, in order to keep their operations going.

The Government of Canada has also investments to support specific sectors of the economy, including agriculture and agri-food; aquaculture and fisheries; culture, heritage and sport; air transportation; tourism; energy; academic and research; infrastructure; and mining.

Support for organizations helping Canadians

Services to those in need

The Government of Canada has invested \$350 million to support vulnerable Canadians through charities and non-profit organizations that deliver essential services to those in need, including Black communities. \$100 million is available to national, regional, and local organizations across Canada to: purchase, transport and distribute food and other basic necessities; hire temporary help to fill volunteer shortages; and implement safety measures, such as the purchase of personal protective equipment, to reduce the spread of COVID-19 among volunteers and clients.

Seniors

The Government of Canada is contributing \$9 million through United Way Canada for local organizations to support practical services to Canadian seniors. These services could include the delivery of groceries, medications, or other needed items, or personal outreach to assess individuals' needs and connect them to community supports.

The **New Horizons for Seniors Program** is being expanded, with an additional investment of \$20 million to support organizations that offer community-based projects that reduce isolation, improve the quality of life of seniors, and help them maintain a social support network.

For all organizations who received funding under the 2019-2020 **New Horizons for Seniors Program** community-based stream, funding can be used to provide immediate and essential services to seniors impacted by COVID-19.

People who need it most

The Government of Canada is continuing to support people experiencing homelessness during the COVID-19 outbreak by providing \$157.5 million to the Reaching Home initiative. The funding can be used by recipients for a range of needs such as purchasing beds and physical barriers for social distancing and securing accommodation to reduce overcrowding in shelters.

The Government of Canada has provided support to women's shelters and sexual assault centres, including facilities in Indigenous communities, to help manage and prevent a COVID-19 outbreak in their facilities.

Through Government of Canada funding over 500 organizations across Canada received support to protect some of Canada's most vulnerable.

Funding of \$7.5 million has been made available to Kids Help Phone to provide young people with the mental health support they need during this difficult time. As well, \$100 million will be provided to the Canadian Red Cross to enhance their response capacity and to support public health efforts.

People with disabilities

The Government of Canada is making new investment of \$15 million in 2020-21 that will provide community organizations with resources to improve workplace accessibility and access to jobs in response to COVID-19, including by helping employers set up accessible and effective work-from-home arrangements. This support will also cover expanding accessible online training opportunities and helping connect Canadians with disabilities working from home with employers.

Investments of \$1.18 million are also being made in five new projects across the country through the **Accessible Technology Program**. With this funding, organizations will develop dynamic and affordable technology, such as accessible payment terminals for retailers and tools to make communication easier for Canadians with disabilities in the digital economy.

Support for provinces and territories

The Government of Canada is working closely with provinces and territories to ensure that all necessary and appropriate supports are available to ensure a comprehensive coordinated response to COVID-19. The Government of Canada is providing support to provinces and territories in the areas of:

- Health – by supporting critical health care system needs and mitigation efforts;
- Economy – by helping provinces and territories safely restart their economies;
- Education – ensuring a safe return to school; and
- People who need it most – through the temporary wage top-up for low-income essential workers.