

COVID-19 – Wage top-up for workers in essential services - Updated

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is the wage top-up for workers in essential services?

A. Many New Brunswickers working in essential services are putting their health on the line and going to work everyday. They deserve our support. The federal government is providing funding through the new Federal Wage Support Program. This will help top up the wages of frontline workers in several essential services who earn approximately \$18 an hour or less.

Q. Who is eligible to receive the wage top-up?

A. In May, government announced that workers in the following essential services are eligible:

- Early childhood educators in early learning and childcare facilities
- home support workers providing direct in-person care to seniors, adults and children
- Direct in-person care in group homes, community residences, special care homes, homeless shelters and transition houses
- domestic violence intervention workers
- food bank workers

In July, government added two new categories of workers to the list:

- enhanced support workers in early learning and childcare facilities
- private care home and family support workers who provide direct personal care to social development clients living at home.

Q. How will the money get distributed to workers?

A. Funding for the first list of workers outlined above began receiving payments in May or June, depending on the worker.

Private sector home care and family support workers will receive monthly payments over 16 weeks of up to \$500 for hours at or above 30 hours a per week; \$250 for hours of at least 20 but less than 30 per week; and \$100 for hours of at least 10 but less than 20 per week. The top-up will be distributed to the Social Development Client who when will allocate funds to private home or family support worker. Payment will cover the period worked between March 19, 2020 to July 9, 2020.

Early learning and childcare childhood enhanced support workers will receive monthly payments of approximately \$500 over 16 weeks and the first and last payments will be split to align with existing payment schedules. They will receive their top-up retroactive to May 19 and it will continue for 16 weeks. This is in recognition of their return to work as the child care sector reopened.

Employers will be reimbursed by the departments of Education and Early Childhood Development or Social Development.

Q. How did the province choose which workers would receive the top-up?

A. GNB's wage top-up is focused on occupations that involve caring for vulnerable populations. We applaud retail workers at pharmacies, grocery stores, convenience stores for stepping up, and trucking and delivery workers for keeping the supply chain going. The current phase is funded by the federal government. Additional supports have been available for those off work due to COVID-19 through the CERB and EI.

Q. As a potentially eligible worker, who do I contact for more information?

A. Employees of early learning and childcare facilities should follow up with their employers for more information.

Workers providing private home support and family support workers should contact the client for whom they provide support.

Q. As an employer, who do I contact for more information?

A. Operators of early learning and childcare facilities should follow up with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

Clients of Social Development who have private home or family support workers should follow up with the Department of Social Development.