

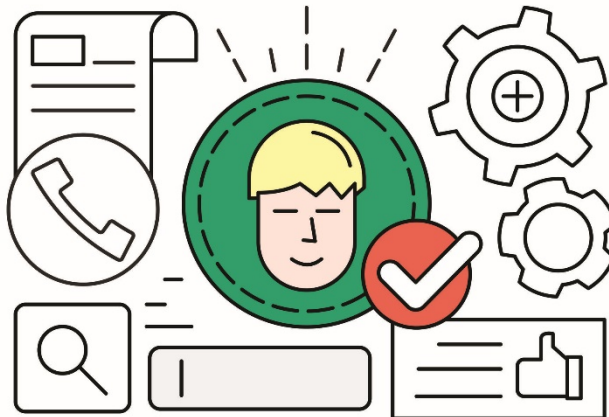
April 8, 2020

Notice: The BCEDA COVID19 Bulletin will now be emailed on Monday, Wednesdays & Fridays.

#COVID19 Bulletin



Resources for Businesses



Live Resources for BC Businesses Document

Just Updated:

- [All BC Parks Closing](#)
- [bdc: 7 steps to sustain your business through the disruption](#)
- [Indigenous Community Support Fund](#)
- [Vancity temporarily cuts credit card interest rates to zero for those in need](#)

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FortisBC introduces new financial support for customers

COVID-19 Customer Recovery Fund provides immediate relief to residential and small business customers facing hardship and a flexible framework for recovery

Surrey, B.C. – April 7, 2020: Today, FortisBC received interim approval from the BC Utilities Commission to implement its COVID-19 Customer Recovery Fund, a program that provides new support measures for residential and small business customers who are facing financial challenges as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency. The Fund will be available to natural gas, propane and electric customers.

“Since this crisis started, our customers’ safety and well-being has been our top priority. These new measures are the result of ongoing evaluation of the situation and listening to the concerns of the many customers who have reached out to us,” said Dawn Mehrer, vice president of customer service and information systems, “These conversations have been invaluable in developing an approach that provides the immediate relief customers need today and a flexible path forward that directs further support to the customers that need it most.”

For residential customers, those who sign up for the fund will automatically have their bill payments deferred from April 1 to June 30. A repayment schedule, free of interest or any additional fees, will be set up and payments can be spread over a full year after June 30, lessening the monthly impact.

For small businesses that have been forced to close, bill credits will be issued to offset any charges to their account while they’ve been unable to continue operating their business as usual. Businesses still open, but facing a slowdown in revenue, will not receive bill credits but can also receive bill deferral for the same 90 day period as residential customers.

These measures are in addition to the previously announced suspension of late fees and stopping service disconnections for any financial reason.

Over the deferment period, FortisBC will be closely monitoring the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 to its customers and, as that period draws to a close, extend additional one-on-one support to customers who may need more assistance with repayment. This additional support could include extending interest-free payment arrangements, providing bill credits or even payment forgiveness.

“Our Customer Recovery Fund will help our customers in the short term and will provide the flexibility for customers when they start on the road to recovery. Taking this approach will allow us to provide effective support to those who need it most and minimize the rate impacts on all of our customers,” said Roger Dall’Antonia, president and CEO of FortisBC.

While the initial deferral period of the program is set to run from April to June, FortisBC customers can apply at any time. As there is still a great deal of uncertainty surrounding COVID-19, FortisBC may extend either the deferral or recovery period as required.

“The actions taken by FortisBC will help support people who are struggling to pay their energy bills and make ends meet during this challenging time,” said Hon. Bruce Ralston, minister of energy,

mines and petroleum resources. “These measures will also provide urgently-needed relief to small businesses, such as restaurants and retail shops that have been forced to close during COVID-19.”

Residential applicants will need to confirm that they have lost their job or livelihood or have been forced to take a voluntary leave due to the COVID-19 public health emergency and agree to enter into a payment arrangement for their deferred balance. Small businesses applying for bill credits will need to confirm that they were forced to close and provide the date of closure. Applicants can enrol by visiting fortisbc.com/recoveryfund, calling FortisBC’s Customer Contact Centre or emailing COVID19Recovery@fortisbc.com.

[Read More](#)

Canada

Funding Opportunities from Innovative Solutions Canada

Innovative Solutions Canada has dedicated funding to help combat current and future outbreaks of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and other similar threats.

Our program will help support the Government of Canada's fight against COVID-19 by funding R&D and testing prototypes in real-life settings that can help protect Canadians.

Sign-up to our newsfeed to get a notification when new funding opportunities launch.

Innovative Solutions Canada has launched 3 new challenges to help combat COVID19:

- Filtration Materials for National Research Council of Canada
- Low-Cost Sensor System for National Research Council of Canada
- Diagnostic Kit for Public Health Agency of Canada

[Read More & Apply](#)

Resources for Economic Developers & Local Leaders



What BC Communities Are Doing

Abbotsford adds new GIS map layer feature of open businesses

[More info](#)

Terrace business support agencies work together in response to COVID-19

[More info](#)

Victoria Scales up Growing in the City Urban Agriculture Initiative

[More info](#)

Houston is Open for Business

[More info](#)

New #NOKTogether group launches website

[More info](#)

Tumbler Ridge Launches COVID-19 Support Toolkit

[More info](#)



COVID-19: A Ten-Point Action Plan for Economic Developers

You need a plan. Several weeks into the worst public health crisis in generations, with several weeks likely remaining, the global economy is reeling. What is to come will be a complex series of response and recovery stages, and decisions you make now will have a lasting impact. Richard Florida and Steven Pedigo will discuss their ten-point action plan for economic developers to help you and your community mobilize. Our third free webinar in the COVID-19 series will outline a path forward that could help your economy come back stronger, more inclusive and more resilient.

[View Recording](#)

[Download Slides](#)



MDB Insight Blog: Rural Economic Development Strategies to Support Strong Communities

A large portion of Canada's population lives in small towns and rural communities. These rural communities, while currently dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic like the rest of the country, are nonetheless vibrant places, rich with culture, history, and resilient citizens. Many have struggled in recent years to retain businesses, workforce, and residents. This challenge will be compounded by the reality of a post-pandemic economy but these rural communities can pursue a number of initiatives to emerge stronger and more resilient despite changing economic circumstances around the globe.

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