

Ontario Protecting the Most Vulnerable During COVID-19 Crisis

New Funding Will Support Municipalities, Food Banks, Homeless Shelters and Individuals

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TORONTO — The Ontario government is providing \$200 million in social services relief funding to help protect the health and safety of the province's most vulnerable people in response to the outbreak of COVID-19.

The province will be providing municipalities and organizations that administer social services with funding to support them in their response to COVID-19. The funding will help municipalities and social service providers such as shelters, food banks, emergency services, charities and non-profits continue to deliver their critical services, hire additional staff, and find ways to promote social distancing and self-isolation to keep clients safe and healthy. Ontario's municipal service managers will determine local needs and distribute the funding, ensuring clients are receiving the support they need.

"Our government will spare no expense to protect the health and safety of all Ontarians," said Premier Doug Ford. "We are doing our part to show the Ontario spirit and we will make sure no one gets left behind. Organizations across the province are doing critical work right now to help vulnerable Ontarians and these funds will allow them to directly help those who need it most."

The funding will also help individuals who do not qualify for emergency financial supports under federal programs. The government is putting in place an expanded Emergency Assistance program administered through Ontario Works (OW) to cover these individuals' needs such as food, rent, informal childcare, and services. There will also be discretionary benefits available to those who already receive social assistance.

This new funding will help individuals and families in financial crisis who are not able to access federal assistance to cover needs such as food, rent, medicine, transportation and other services during this public health crisis. Funding will also be made available to organizations delivering social services to vulnerable First Nations individuals and families. Individuals can apply online at [Ontario.ca/community](https://ontario.ca/community).

"Protecting our most vulnerable is an absolute priority, as the COVID-19 crisis continues to develop," said Todd Smith, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. "We're expanding access to temporary emergency assistance so that individuals who have no other means of financial support can stay safe and healthy."

This fund will also help local communities support their shelter systems during this health crisis. The province's 47 municipal service managers will deliver this funding, ensuring clients are receiving the support they need, and will make local decisions on community funding.

"We are acting quickly to support those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless during this unprecedented time," said Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

"This funding will go straight to communities, who know best what the immediate needs are on the ground in their local shelters."

"This new funding will provide much needed support to our province's most vulnerable as we continue to take decisive action to contain the spread of COVID-19," said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. "If Ontario is going to successfully flatten the curve, it's vital that we ensure that all Ontarians have the resources they need to protect their health and well-being."

QUICK FACTS

- Last week, Ontario announced a \$304 million investment in COVID-19 response, including \$20 million for residential facilities in developmental services, gender-based services and protective care for children and youth.
- To further bolster safety measures for social-assistance clients and caseworkers, the government has also temporarily removed the requirement for clients to provide written documentation at this time. Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) payments will be made as usual and will continue based on previous levels of income support. Individuals will not have to visit their local office to provide written documentation during this time. If individuals need to connect with their caseworker, they are encouraged to connect over the phone instead of visiting in person.

LEARN MORE

- [Visit Ontario's website to take the online COVID-19 assessment or to learn more about how the province continues to protect Ontarians from COVID-19.](#)
- Call [your local office](#) if you need to apply for social assistance or [apply online](#).
- [To find a local office, use the office locator.](#)
- [Find your local service manager.](#)
- [Sign up to MyBenefits to report changes or get information about your Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program case.](#)

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