



## **NLTA Update for Substitute Teachers: Canada Emergency Response Benefit**

March 26, 2020

On Wednesday March 25<sup>th</sup>, the federal government introduced the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB). All Canadians who have ceased working due to COVID-19 response measures, whether they qualify for Employment Insurance (EI) or not, will be able to receive the CERB, if they meet eligibility criteria. It should be noted that this one program replaces the Emergency Care Benefit and the Emergency Support Benefit plans previously announced.

This memo is intended to provide assistance to teachers. Federal legislation will govern the specific rights of teachers and the benefits available to them.

### **Who is eligible for the CERB?**

Teachers who:

- have lost their job/income or must stop working as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and do not have access to paid leave or other income support
- are unable to work because they are sick or quarantined and do not have access to paid leave or other income support
- are unable to work because they are taking care of someone who is sick with COVID-19 and do not have access to paid leave or other income support

### **What is the amount of funding available?**

A taxable benefit of \$2000 per month will be available for up to four months. Payments are estimated to be received within 10 days for approved applicants, and then paid every four weeks for the period from March 15, 2020 until October 3, 2020. If things do not return to normal before the next school year, benefits would continue during the summer months for those substitute teachers who normally rely on EI during that time.

### **What do I need to do now?**

***If you are already receiving EI regular or EI sickness benefits (as of March 25, 2020):***

Do nothing right now. You will continue to receive your EI benefits. You should not apply for and are not eligible for the CERB at this time. If you terminate your existing EI claim and begin a

new claim, the remaining weeks in your current claim will be lost and that decision is final. You should contact Service Canada at 1-800-206-7218 to discuss your specific circumstances.

Teachers on an existing EI claim right now, but who have insufficient insurable hours to qualify for a new claim at this time, should only apply for the CERB after their EI benefits end and only if those benefits end before October 3, 2020, and they are still unable to return to work due to COVID-19.

***If you have already applied for EI regular or sickness benefits (as of March 25, 2020) and your application has not yet been processed:***

Do not reapply. No application for CERB is required from you. If you are eligible for EI regular or sickness benefits, you may also be eligible to access the CERB benefits for the 16-week period covered from March 15 – October 3, 2020. Then, you would still be able to access your normal EI benefits, if still unemployed after that time.

***If you are not EI eligible:***

Wait to apply for the CERB. A secure web portal will be available in early April where you will be able to access the CERB application. An automated telephone line or toll-free number will also be available.

Substitute teachers who have insufficient insurable hours to qualify for regular EI benefits right now should apply for the CERB when the web portal becomes available in early April. If approved, your benefits may last as late as October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020.

***If you are eligible for EI regular or sickness benefits because you have lost your job or have reduced hours:***

You should apply for EI benefits in the usual manner.

***If you are applying for other special EI benefits (maternity, parental or caregiving benefits):***

You should apply for EI benefits in the usual manner, when eligible.

**Issues that Require Further Clarification**

More detailed information is expected to be released in addition to what is available right now. NLTA has concerns about what this means for members who are unable to accumulate the additional insurable hours they need to eventually access EI maternity/parental and other special benefits. We are also unsure of whether part-time teachers who may otherwise be disentitled to EI benefits will be eligible for the CERB to replace other lost income. As well, there have been no income thresholds identified to date. NLTA is still waiting on clarification of these details.

## **Where to Find More Information**

Teachers can find information on existing EI programs here: <http://www.nlta.nl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Infosheet-5.pdf>

New Programs or changes, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, can be found at:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan.html>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/corporate/notices/coronavirus.html>

Read the full news release here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/news/2020/03/introduces-canada-emergency-response-benefit-to-help-workers-and-businesses.html>

Substitute teachers with specific questions regarding their individual circumstances should contact an NLTA Administrative Officer at [mail@nlta.nl.ca](mailto:mail@nlta.nl.ca).