Financial Supports for Local Unions that Rent Offices, Own Buildings, or Pay a Mortgage

RENT RELIEF AND DEFERRAL

Although measures are being taken across Canada to support residential rent relief and deferrals, as well as protection from eviction, there are few programs specifically aimed at commercial tenants. In general, many commercial tenants affected by the COVID-19 pandemic have been negotiating directly with their landlords for relief from or deferral of payments.

As of writing, Nova Scotia has implemented a commercial rent deferral program, New Brunswick has implemented measures to protect commercial tenants from eviction, and Yukon has implemented a program to fund commercial rent.

The federal government announced plans on April 16, 2020, to create a Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA) program aimed at providing support to landlords who in turn provide relief to tenants. The program will require coordination with provincial and territorial governments, and details are yet to emerge. This may be of assistance to local unions negotiating with their landlords, or to local unions that rent part of their buildings to other local unions or other organizations.

Below are some links to the specific provincial programs, the new federal program, insights on how to negotiate with landlords, and a summary of real estate–related measures across the country.

- Provincial and territorial commercial lease measures
  - New Brunswick: click here
  - Nova Scotia: click here
  - Yukon: click here

- Federal Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance (CECRA) program
  - CECRA: click here
MORTGAGE AND LOAN DEFERRALS

Most financial institutions have offered to defer mortgage and loan payments, as well as payments on commercial credit cards and credit lines. Canada’s six largest banks committed to providing up to six months of payment deferral for mortgages on a case-by-case basis.

Each bank or credit union has developed its own program and approach. Local unions are encouraged to review programs and options with their financial institution.

Links to business support measures from Canada’s six largest banks

- RBC: click here
- CIBC: click here
- BMO: click here
- TD: click here
- Scotia Bank: click here
- National Bank: click here

PROPERTY TAX RELIEF AND DEFERRAL

In response to COVID-19, municipalities across Canada have begun instituting property tax relief measures. In some provinces, relief measures have been implemented by individual municipalities, while in others, province-wide measures are in place. Various measures provide for a reduction in property tax, deferrals of payment, relief from education-related taxes, and relief on municipal service fees such as water and waste removal.

Local unions that own buildings and pay property taxes are encouraged to check with their municipality on available relief measures.

Overview of property tax relied across Canada from a major law firm: click here (see “Realty Tax Relief” section)
UTILITY PAYMENT DEFERRALS AND REDUCTIONS

Several provincial and territorial governments have introduced measures to allow utility payment deferrals, and some have lowered certain rates. As of writing, British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec had announced measures to defer payments, waive interest on late payments, or lower utility rates.

Local unions that own buildings, or pay utilities in rental offices, are encouraged to consult with their utility providers on relief options that may be available.

OVERVIEW OF PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL COVID-19 BUSINESS SUPPORTS

Support measures that may be available to local unions are emerging rapidly, with details and procedures being adjusted and refined on a regular basis. Local unions are encouraged to check details and updates on support measures that may be of assistance.

- British Columbia: [click here](unifor.org/COVID19)
- Alberta: [click here](unifor.org/COVID19)
- Saskatchewan: [click here](unifor.org/COVID19)
- Manitoba: [click here](unifor.org/COVID19)
- Ontario: [click here](unifor.org/COVID19)
- Quebec: [click here](unifor.org/COVID19)
- New Brunswick: [click here](unifor.org/COVID19)
- Nova Scotia: [click here](unifor.org/COVID19)
- Prince Edward Island: [click here](unifor.org/COVID19)
- Newfoundland and Labrador: [click here](unifor.org/COVID19)
- Nunavut: [click here](unifor.org/COVID19)
- Yukon: [click here](unifor.org/COVID19)
- Northwest Territories: [click here](unifor.org/COVID19)