

April 1, 2020

## COVID-19 Relief Fund

BC Hydro recognizes the financial impacts the COVID-19 pandemic is having on its customers. In order to support our customers during this time, BC Hydro has created the COVID-19 Relief Fund.

The COVID-19 Relief Fund program provides targeted bill relief for eligible residential and small business customers:

- Residential customers that have lost their income as a result of COVID-19 will be able to apply for a bill credit of three times their average monthly bill.
- Small business customers that are currently closed as a result of COVID-19 measures can apply to have their electricity use charges waived for up to three months.

In addition, eligible large industrial customers can apply to defer payment of 50% of their electricity use charges for three months.

### When does the program start, and how do customers apply?

- Eligible residential customers will be able to apply for the COVID-19 Relief Fund starting April 10 and small business customers will be able to apply online starting the week of April 14.
- Customers have until June 30, 2020 to apply for bill relief.
- For further details on the COVID-19 Relief Fund and to access the online application form, please visit [bchydro.com/covid19relief](https://bchydro.com/covid19relief).

### Residential customers

#### Who is eligible?

- Applicants must be a BC Hydro account holder prior to March 15, 2020.
- For residential customers, the account holder or partner/spouse must provide proof of loss of income, or they are unable to work due to COVID-19.
- This includes:
  - workers, including the self-employed, who are taking care of a family member who is sick with COVID-19; and,
  - parents with children who require care or supervision due to school or daycare closures, and are unable to earn employment income (EI), irrespective of whether they qualify for EI or not.

#### How much will the average residential customer receive?

- The amount received will be based on the individual customer's average monthly bill amount over the past 12-months (or the amount of time they have been at their premise if less than 12 months).
  - For the average apartment dweller, this is around \$135.
  - For the average single-family home, this is around \$335.

## **How is this program different from the Customer Crisis Fund?**

- This program focuses on helping customers experiencing loss of income as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Customer Crisis Fund is offered year-round and was created for residential customers that are facing a significant financial hardship and possible disconnection of their service due to a life crisis such as job loss, injury, illness or loss of a family member.
- Some customers that are eligible for the relief under the COVID-19 Relief Fund may also be eligible to access grants of up to \$600 through our Customer Crisis Fund to help cover arrears incurred prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## **How is this program different from the COVID-19 Customer Assistance Program?**

- On March 13, BC Hydro introduced the COVID-19 Customer Assistance Program to provide all residential and commercial customers the option to defer payments, or arrange a flexible payment plan to help pay their BC Hydro bills.
- All residential and commercial customers are eligible and can make individual payment arrangements with our customer team.
- Customers can call 1-800-BCHYDRO (1-800-224-9376) to discuss their options.

## **Small businesses**

### **What businesses are eligible?**

- Business customers must be a business account holder under the Small General Service Rate prior to March 15, 2020.
- Customers must show they are currently closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, either ordered by government or due to reduced transactions/revenues or employee safety protection, but continue to have an active BC Hydro account and consume electricity.

### **How much will the average small business customer receive?**

- Small business customers that have closed their business as a result of COVID-19 will be able to apply to have their electricity costs waived for up to three months.
- Savings will depend on the size and type of the business as well as how it is heated.