



## REPORT FOR ACTION

# Status of Requests to Ontario for Enhanced Income Supports and Related Measures to Address COVID-19

**Date:** December 10, 2020

**To:** City Council

**From:** City Manager

**Wards:** All

## SUMMARY

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This report provides a status update on Council's requests to the Government of Ontario to implement enhanced income supports, reinstate a moratorium on evictions of residential tenants, and provide paid sick days as additional measures to reduce the prevalence and impact of COVID-19, particularly in communities with many residents who lack adequate financial or employment security.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

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The City Manager recommends that City Council receive this report for information.

## FINANCIAL IMPACT

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There are no financial impacts resulting from the adoption of the recommendation in this report.

## DECISION HISTORY

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On November 25, 2020 -- as part of its consideration of HL23.1 Response to COVID-19: Persevering Through Resurgence -- Council requested the City Manager report to the December 16 and 17, 2020 meeting of Council on the response to Toronto's requests to the Government of Ontario to implement enhanced income supports, a moratorium on evictions of residential tenants, and paid sick days.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.HL23.1>

This report responds to this directive.

[Status of Requests to Ontario for Measures to Address COVID-19]

On November 25, 2020 -- as part of its consideration of HL23.1 Response to COVID-19: Persevering Through Resurgence -- City Council adopted the following motions:

Rec.#2: City Council urge the Federal and Provincial Governments to immediately accelerate the distribution, expand the reach, and make completely accessible and transparent all financial supports directed toward people, including populations that have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 such as women, racialized individuals, low-income individuals and those living with disabilities.

Rec. #6: City Council call on the Provincial Government to provide adequate paid sick days and income supports for those who need to isolate but cannot afford to do [so] and for workers and businesses affected by public health restrictions;

Rec. #7: City Council request the Provincial Government to reinstate the moratorium on residential and commercial evictions applicable at a minimum for the lockdown period initiated on November 23, 2020 and lasting until the lockdown is lifted; and

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.HL23.1>

On October 27, 2020 City Council adopted a recommendation from the Medical Officer of Health urging the Federal and Provincial Governments to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on groups that have been disproportionately affected by COVID-19 by funding and accelerating the implementation of existing strategies related to the social determinants of health, including affordable housing, eliminating homelessness, poverty reduction, food security, overdose prevention, anti-Black racism, and Indigenous health and well-being, as recommended in Attachment 1 to the report HL22.1 Response to COVID-19: Update On Resurgence

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.HL22.1>

Specifically, Attachment 1 -- COVID-19 and the Social Determinants of Health: Community Consultation Report -- recommends, among other short term actions to address COVID-19 and the social determinants of health, advocacy for:

- (a) income supports for uninsured and undocumented residents
- (b) paid sick leave for all Ontario workers
- (c) a stay on residential evictions

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2020/hl/bgrd/backgroundfile-157257.pdf>

On September 30, 2020 -- as part of its consideration of PH16.8 Addressing Housing and Homeless Issues in Toronto through Intergovernmental Partnerships -- City Council adopted the following motion:

Rec. #4: City Council urge the Province of Ontario to immediately re-instate the moratorium on eviction of tenants.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.PH16.8>

## **COMMENTS**

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Toronto is facing an unprecedented public health crisis which requires extraordinary measures -- and intergovernmental cooperation -- to safeguard lives and livelihoods across our city and province.

The City of Toronto appreciates the measures which the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services took during the first wave of COVID-19 to ensure continued access to Ontario Works financial assistance for eligible residents, including streamlined application processes, the temporary introduction of a COVID-19 supplemental discretionary benefit, and an extension of Ontario Works emergency assistance support for eligible residents.

The City likewise supported the Landlord and Tenant Board's suspension of eviction orders and all hearings related to eviction applications, between March and July, 2020, and is supportive of the provincially declared Infectious Disease regulation currently in place until January 2, 2021 that ensures an employee's right to take an unpaid, job-protected leave.

These actions helped thousands of low-income residents in Toronto remain safe, housed, clothed, fed and able to comply with public health directives last spring and summer.

We are now in the midst of a COVID-19 resurgence. Data clearly demonstrates COVID-19 in Toronto is once again disproportionately impacting Toronto residents who are Indigenous, Black or racialized; who are precariously employed or live on a low income; who may encounter challenges taking time off from work when ill; and/or who may be living in housing situations where it is difficult to isolate from others.

During this resurgence, it is essential that all working age adults have the financial ability and employment security needed to make the personal decision -- which is best for their own health, their family's health, and the health and well-being of other residents, workplaces and businesses across Toronto -- to get tested for COVID-19 where warranted and, if needed or as directed, to self-isolate.

New or enhanced national income support measures provided through Employment Insurance and, now, the three Canada Recovery benefits -- i.e. the Canada Recovery Benefit; the Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit; and the Canada Recovery Caregiving Benefit -- have been made available to and are adequate for many, but by no means all, working age adults, depending on their circumstances.

This autumn, in response to advice from residents, the Medical Officer of Health and other officials, City Council repeatedly identified three outstanding gaps in the "architecture" of social, income and employment protections available to (certain) city residents, which -- if they remain unaddressed -- will continue to undermine efforts by Toronto and Ontario to flatten the curve and mitigate the impact of COVID-19.

Specifically, City Council requested -- most recently at its meeting on November 25, 2020 -- that the Government of Ontario implement enhanced income supports, (reinstate) a temporary moratorium on evictions of residential tenants, and provide paid sick days to employees.

Additional (and in certain cases more specific) recommendations from the Deputy City Manager, Community and Social Services concerning these same issues are included

in HL24.1 TO Supports: COVID-19 Action Plan to be considered by the Board of Health at its meeting on December 14, 2020.

Appropriate provincial officials are apprised of City Council's requests. The City awaits a response.

## **CONTACT**

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Giuliana Carbone, Deputy City Manager, Community and Social Services,  
[Giuliana.Carbone@toronto.ca](mailto:Giuliana.Carbone@toronto.ca)

## **SIGNATURE**

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Chris Murray  
City Manager

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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None