

COVID-19 Community Resource Guide

County of Huron
Ontario Works

Table of Contents

- 4..... CAO’s Message
- 5..... Contact Information
- 6..... Background
- 7..... Ontario Works COVID-19 Impacts and Response
- 11..... Ontario Works FAQ
- 12..... What can you do to help?



COVID-19

Community Resource

Guide

Ontario Works

This Community Resource Guide is a brief consolidation of practices, procedures, and subsequent information related to the Corporation of the County of Huron and its response to COVID-19, which may be subject to future revisions.

The compilation is for convenient administrative purposes. The most current version or any legal interpretation of the documents herein should be verified with the respective departments.

CAO's Message

As we work through the uncertainty that COVID-19 has delivered, please be assured that we are committed to being both responsive and responsible, and navigating through these times with the safety and wellbeing of County of Huron staff and Huron County residents as our top priority.

We, at the County, are committed to maintaining our core service delivery throughout this period. We will continue to provide social supports to our residents and resources to local businesses who are impacted by the pandemic outbreak.

The following Community Resource Guide has been designed to guide you through the adjustments made to some of our regular County operations and services in response to COVID-19.

We recognize, and are grateful for, the important actions and sacrifices that all Huron County residents are making during these unprecedented times.

We are all in this together, we will get through this together.

Sincerely,



Meighan Wark,
CAO

OUR VISION
A Community for Generations

OUR MISSION
We cultivate a healthy environment
for prosperous living

OUR VALUES
Integrity / Teamwork / Excellence



Contact Information

For general inquiries:

jmbreception@huroncounty.ca

519-482-8505, press 0 for reception

Toll-Free: 1-888-371-5718

To inquire about financial supports:

owteam501@huroncounty.ca

519-482-8505 ext. 4501

Toll-Free: 1-888-371-5718

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic is affecting many local communities and business operations. The County of Huron is continuing to provide essential supports to our residents and resources to local businesses throughout this event and will continue to do so as we transition into recovery. The safety and continued wellbeing of all County of Huron staff and Huron County residents will remain our first priority

While all County of Huron offices are closed to public access until further notice, core service delivery continues. As a result of the outbreak, the County's services and operations have adjusted according to recommendations from health authorities and other advisors. This Resource Guide will clarify what services this department is providing and how they are being provided, in light of the COVID-19 situation. Please do not hesitate to contact the department for further clarification on their services or for additional information not contained in this document.

Self-Monitoring, Self-Isolation and Physical Distancing

Physical distancing, including self-monitoring and self-isolation, are public health measures that can delay and decrease the number of cases of COVID-19 over time so to not overwhelm our healthcare system. Huron County urges all residents to practice physical distancing and proper hygiene protocols.

For current and additional information on Self-Monitoring, Self-Isolation and Physical Distancing, please visit Huron Perth Public Health at www.hpph.ca.

Huron Perth Public Health

For the most up-to-date information related to COVID-19 in Huron and Perth, visit www.hpph.ca/coronavirus

Follow Huron Perth Public Health at
Facebook: www.facebook.com/HuronPerthPublicHealth
and Twitter: www.twitter.com/HPPublicHealth

Resources

Ministry of Health:

www.ontario.ca/page/2019-novel-coronavirus

Public Health Agency of Canada - Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19): Outbreak Update

www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html

Public Health Agency of Canada - Travel Health Notices

www.travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/travel-health-notice

County of Huron

www.huroncounty.ca

Huron County Ontario Works COVID-19 Impacts and Response.

Office Closure

The Huron County Social and Property Service office is closed to the public until further notice. While our office may be closed, Huron County Ontario Works staff are available to help with your questions or concerns.

Call 519-482-8505 or 1-888-371-5718 press 0 for reception, or email jmbreception@huroncounty.ca for general inquiries.

Financial Support Available through Huron County Social Services

The unfortunate reality of today is that COVID-19 is resulting in many people dealing with financial hardship.

If you are a resident of Huron County (not a visitor or tourist), and require financial supports you might qualify for benefits.

Benefits and services available through Huron County Social Services include:

1. Emergency Assistance
2. Ontario Works Financial Assistance
3. COVID-19 Emergency Benefit
4. Pathways to Self-Sufficiency
5. Discretionary Benefits
6. United Way Perth-Huron COVID-19 Urgent Needs Fund
7. Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) – EARTH Power Customers

Please reach out to us to see how we might be able to help at 519-482-8505 or 1-888-371-5718 ext. 4501 or email owteam501@huroncounty.ca.

Emergency Assistance

If you need help paying for food and housing and are not already on Ontario Works or ODSP, you can apply for COVID-19 emergency assistance.

You may qualify if you live in Ontario (not a visitor or tourist), are in a crisis or emergency situation, and do not have enough money for things like food and housing. For example, a crisis or emergency

includes situations where you:

- have been affected by COVID-19
- are being evicted from your home
- are in or are leaving an abusive relationship
- are worried about your safety

If you are eligible for emergency assistance, the amount you get will depend on your specific situation. For example, you may get:

- approximately \$733 for a month if you are a single person and need help paying for food and shelter
- more if you have children
- up to 48 days of support depending on your specific situation

To learn more or apply for Emergency Assistance go to https://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/social/apply_online.aspx or contact Huron County Social Services at 519-482-8505 or 1-888-371-5718 ext. 4501.

Ontario Works Financial Assistance

Ontario Works provides money for food, shelter and other costs to people in financial need who meet the eligibility criteria.

Financial Assistance may include money for food, shelter, clothing and other household costs, the cost of prescription medications, and other help with health costs.

The monthly amount of assistance someone can receive from Ontario Works depends on family size, housing costs and income.

To qualify for Ontario Works assistance in Huron County you must be:

- living in Huron County (not a tourist or visitor)
- aged 18 or over (16/17 if special circumstances exist, such as abuse or if there is no home/ financial support available)
- in financial need (your household doesn't have enough money to meet basic living expenses)

The requirement to be willing to make reasonable efforts to find, get ready for or keep a job (unless you have medical or special circumstances that stop you from being able to do so) has been temporarily waived due to COVID-19.

During the COVID-19 pandemic applications for financial assistance can be completed over the phone and verified through third party checks, original documents and wet signatures are not required at this time. Documents will need to be provided at a later date.

To learn more or apply for Ontario Works financial assistance, go to http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/social/apply_online.aspx or contact Huron County Social Services at 519-482-8505 or 1-888-371-5718 ext. 4501.

Clients are still expected to report all income as usual. If the time period overlaps, for Federal Assistance and Ontario Works Assistance overpayments, a recovery will result.

Reapplying for Ontario Works Financial Assistance

If you were receiving Ontario Works benefits in Huron County and your file was closed within the past 12 months contact Huron County Social Services at 519-482-8505 or 1-888-371-5718 ext. 4501.

You will be asked to provide information about your current situation. Information will be verified by third party checks. Original documents and wet signatures are not required at this time but will need to be provided at a later date.

Clients are still expected to report all income as usual. If the time period overlaps, for Federal Assistance and Ontario Works Assistance overpayments, a recovery will result.

COVID-19 Emergency Benefit for Current Social Assistance Clients

Assistance is available for those currently receiving social assistance who are facing additional costs related to the COVID-19 outbreak. This funding can be used to meet a broad range of needs, for example: cleaning supplies, transportation, food or clothing that individuals and families may require due to COVID-19.

To access the Emergency Benefit:

Ontario Works recipients - 519-482-8505 or 1-888-371-5718 ext. 4501

ODSP recipients - 1-800-565-5762

Emergency benefits for COVID-19 related expenses are the same for both programs: up to \$100 for single individuals and up to \$200 for families.

Pathways to Self-Sufficiency

Pathways to Self-Sufficiency is an emergency program that helps low-income families and individuals in Huron County when they are most in need. The aim of the program is to reduce child poverty, promote attachment to the workforce, and prevent homelessness. All items require pre-approval by Huron County Ontario Works staff.

Financial assistance may also be subject to funding and frequency limits and may be based on the number of people in your family unit.

Pathways to Self-Sufficiency is not available for those currently receiving social assistance.

Call 519-482-8505 or 1-888-371-5718 ext. 4501 for more details.

Discretionary Benefits

If you are in receipt of social assistance in Huron County you might be eligible for Discretionary Benefits. The Discretionary Benefits Program provides financial assistance to purchase essential health related and emergency assistance items when all other resources are exhausted. All items

require pre-approval by Huron County Ontario Works staff.

Typical items covered under Discretionary Benefits include:

- One-time health related items such as eyeglasses, emergency dental treatment, prosthetics and health related supplies.
- Non-health related items such as costs associated with maintaining or obtaining housing.
- Costs associated with funerals, burials and cremations.

Financial assistance may also be subject to funding and frequency limits and may be based on the number of people in your family unit.

Call 519-482-8505 or 1-888-371-5718 ext. 4501 for more details.

United Way Perth-Huron COVID-19 Urgent Needs Fund

COVID-19 is putting our community's most vulnerable people in an extremely challenging situation. Many do not have the support if they need to self-isolate. Those who already face significant barriers, including poverty, homelessness and social isolation, need even more of our help during this time.

The County of Huron is working with the United Way Perth Huron to disperse funds through the COVID-19 Urgent Needs Fund to the low-income residents of Huron County.

For more information on this fund, visit perthhuron.unitedway.ca or call 519-482-8505 or 1-888-371-5718 ext. 4501.

Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP) – EARTH Power Customers

This program provides a one-time grant towards your electricity or natural gas bill if you are behind on your bill and may face having your service shut off, it is for emergency situations.

For more details contact 519-482-8505 or 1-888-371-5718 ext. 4501.

Additional help with utility costs may be available. If you are a customer of another electricity provider or need help with natural gas bills see FAQ: 4 for other supports.

Ontario Works FAQ

Where can I find information about my Ontario Works case?

Find out about your payment status and details, view your letters, and report income and address changes online through www.ontario.ca/MyBenefits. It's secure, easy to use and available 24/7 from your smart phone, tablet or computer.

How will I receive payment?

Clients who have bank accounts are strongly encouraged to sign up for direct deposit. To find out how, call 519-482-8505 or 1-888-371-5718 ext. 4501. Cheques may be available under limited circumstances.

Are Ontario Works Financial Assistance and Emergency Assistance taxable benefits?

Yes these benefits are taxable. A T5007 will be issued.

Are there any supports to help me pay my electric and natural gas bills?

There are two programs to help lower-income customers with their bills:

1. Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP)

This program provides ongoing help to low-income customers with a monthly on-bill credit to reduce their electricity bill.

2. Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP)

This program provides a one-time grant towards your electricity or natural gas bill if you are behind on your bill and may face having your service shut off, it is for emergency situations.

There are also special customer service rules available for low-income households. See if you qualify here: www.oeb.ca/rates-and-your-bill/help-low-income-consumers

Where can I find information on other supports?

Government of Canada

Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan.

www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan

Province of Ontario

COVID-19 information and financial support.

covid-19.ontario.ca

CBC News

A hub of benefits the federal government, provinces and territories are offering to people financially affected by the coronavirus.

newsinteractives.cbc.ca/coronavirusbenefits

211 Ontario programs and services

Find programs and services in your community.

211ontario.ca or call 2-1-1

Huron Perth Public Health

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) updates and information including services and resources related to mental health and coping.

www/hpph.ca/en/news/coronavirus-covid19-update.aspx

What can you do to help?

We want you to participate! Here are a few tips and suggestions on things Huron County residents can do to help get through this together.

Practice physical distancing

The number one, most important thing you can do to help slow the spread of COVID-19 and protect our most vulnerable citizens and front line workers is practice physical distancing and stay at home.

Check in on others

As we become more physically isolated, it will become more important than ever that we reach out to one another to stay connected. Call, text or email with those who may be alone.

Wash your hands

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 30 seconds.