



City of Victoria COVID-19 Update

Date: Tuesday, April 21, 2020

For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC — Victoria City Council continues to monitor the COVID-19 pandemic and look at ways to support the community.

Today, the Prime Minister announced the new Emergency Community Support Fund, which will see \$350 million allocated to community non-profit organizations who are working with vulnerable populations. The money will be dispersed to communities through the United Way, Community Foundations Canada and the Red Cross.

The federal government also shared more details about the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy, which enables a Canadian employer whose business has been affected by COVID-19 to apply for a subsidy of 75 per cent of an employee's wages. Businesses are invited to update or open a business profile on the Canada Revenue Agency website in preparation to apply for funding on April 27. An online wage calculator is available to help businesses determine their eligibility and subsidy amounts to help keep their staff employed. For more information, visit: canada.ca/en/revenue-agency.html.

"I would like to recognize the federal government for its tireless work in developing and administering new funding opportunities to support communities and businesses facing financial hardship due to the pandemic," said Mayor Lisa Helps. "To all our small business owners out there, we know you're struggling to manage the impacts of COVID-19. City Council and staff are working hard to share any information and resources available from other levels of government and the local community with you on our website."

To help navigate the financial challenges of the pandemic, Community Micro Lending, with the Downtown Victoria Business Association, is holding two, free online *Small Business Ask an Expert Sessions – Navigating COVID-19* to access helpful advice with lawyers, accountants and human resource professionals. The sessions will be held on April 27 from 9 a.m. – 10:30 a.m. and April 29 from 4 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. For more information, visit victoria.ca/bizresources.

On Saturday, Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry announced there will be no large gatherings this summer. For this reason, the City's annual Canada Day celebrations will not be held. However, now more than ever, it is important that we come together in new and creative ways.

"The federal government has said they are going to hold a national virtual Canada Day celebration this year. We are in contact with the Minister of Canadian Heritage to see what is planned and how we can participate and support this event," added Mayor Helps.

Tomorrow is the 50th anniversary of Earth Day. To mark this important event while practicing physical distancing, Creatively United for the Planet is offering *EarthFest Live - Creative Solutions for a New World*, a free online webinar series, daily until April 25 from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. For more information, visit: creativelyunited.org.

For information on the City's response to COVID-19, the public is invited to tune into the Mayor's Facebook Live weekday updates at 2:30 p.m. on the City of Victoria Facebook page. Please note that the Wednesday, April 22 update will take place at 3:30 p.m. Learn more at victoria.ca/covid19response.

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