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## HASCAP (HIGHLY AFFECTED SECTORS CREDIT AVAILABILITY PROGRAM GUARANTEE)

The HASCAP program was released in January this year and since then the program and eligibility criteria was adjusted. The HASCAP program provides for 100% guaranteed loans of \$25,000 to \$1 million to cover operational cash flow in response to COVID-19, and available through your financial institution until June 30, 2021. The program is to ensure a degree of continuity for your business through the pandemic. The Government mandated BDC to provide this guarantee to your financial institution increasing your company's ability to access new credit. To apply, contact your financial institution directly.

Paul Murphy, one of our members, today provided his insight on HASCAP advising that the website is easy to navigate, helping to determine whether you qualify for the program. Should you need any further insight from Paul, please contact our office and we will provide Paul's contact details.

For information on HASCAP, please refer to website [\(LINK\)](#)

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## RAPID TESTING TO HELP KEEP WORKERS SAFE IN SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESSES

Today, the Ontario government, in partnership with the federal government and the Ontario Chamber of Commerce, has launched the COVID-19 Rapid Screening Initiative for small and medium-sized businesses across the province.

- The COVID-19 Rapid Screening Initiative will provide free rapid antigen tests for employees of small and medium-sized businesses through participating local chambers of commerce and other organizations.
- The program will screen for asymptomatic cases of COVID-19 in the workplace that might otherwise be missed, helping to keep workers and their families safe and businesses open.

Chambers of Commerce are quickly getting on board with this initiative. At present, more than 760,000 rapid test kits have already shipped to 28 chambers and more than 50 others have expressed interest in participating.

- The rollout of the COVID-19 Rapid Screening Initiative through local chambers of commerce will make rapid tests accessible for more employees of small and medium-sized businesses
- This initiative is providing Ontario's hardworking business owners with more tools to prevent outbreaks and will ensure their employees can stay on the job with the best protection possible."

Ontario has already begun delivering rapid testing kits through the [Provincial Antigen Screening Program](#) to workplaces for asymptomatic staff in key sectors such as manufacturing, warehousing, the supply chain, mining, construction and food processing. As of April 30, about 7.6 million rapid antigen tests had been sent through the program to nearly 1,500 workplaces. This includes nearly 200 essential industry sites, most of them in hot spot areas.

### QUICK FACTS:

- To contact participating local chambers of commerce and boards of trade about the COVID-19 Rapid Screening Initiative, visit the [Ontario Chamber of Commerce](#).
- Non-chamber members with 150 employees or less are welcome to participate in the initiative.
- The COVID-19 Rapid Screening Initiative applies to businesses allowed to be open under current orders.
- The StaySafe COVID-19 Rapid Screening Pilot program in Waterloo Region is a collaboration among the Government of Ontario, Health Canada, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce and participating member chambers, and Communitech.
- There are more ways for organizations to easily find out how to access rapid antigen tests. Visit [ontario.ca/testingonsite](https://ontario.ca/testingonsite) to find out more.
- A COVID-19 rapid screening test can be performed anywhere (e.g., on-site, at the place of employment) and does not require shipping a specimen to a lab for processing. It takes about 15 minutes to yield a result.
- Rapid antigen point-of-care testing does not replace public health measures, such as symptom

screening, physical distancing, masking and hand hygiene. Any positive results from a rapid antigen point-of-care test must be confirmed with laboratory-based chain reaction (PCR) testing.

- Employees can self-swab using a COVID-19 rapid test under the supervision of a trained employee or business owner.
- Frequent screening with rapid antigen tests increases the chances of early identification of cases in otherwise asymptomatic individuals.

### **Additional Resources:**

- [Rapid Screening Pilot launches in Waterloo Region](#)
  - [Ontario Making it Easier to Administer Rapid COVID-19 Testing in the Workplace](#)
  - [2021 Budget - Ontario's Action Plan: Protecting People's Health and Our Economy](#)
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## **ONTARIO INTRODUCES PAID COVID-19 LEAVE**

On Thursday, April 29, 2021, Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development, introduced legislation that require employers to provide employees with up to \$200 of pay for up to three days if they are missing work because of COVID-19. This program will be retroactive to April 19, 2021 and effective until September 25, 2021, the date the CRSB will expire.

This temporary time-limited access to three paid leave days, is to ensure employees can pay their bills as they help stop the spread of the virus, including by getting tested, waiting for their results in isolation or going to get their vaccine. The province will partner with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board to deliver the program and reimburse employers up to \$200 per day for each employee.

The province has offered to provide funding to the federal government to double CRSB payments to Ontario residents, adding an additional \$500 per week to eligible individuals for a total of \$1,000 per week. Combined with the province's proposed three days of paid COVID-19 leave, doubling the CRSB would provide Ontario workers with access to the most generous pandemic paid leave in the country.

Ontario looks forward to continuing discussions to secure Ottawa's commitment to administer the program with the top-up to all Ontario applicants.

If an eligible worker learns that they must isolate for longer than 50 per cent of the time they would have otherwise worked for the week, whether because of a positive COVID-19 test or risk of exposure, they may apply for the [Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit](#) if they haven't taken a paid leave day under this proposal.

Employers and their workers can call a dedicated COVID-19 Sick Days Information Centre hotline at 1-888-999-2248 or visit [Ontario.ca/COVIDworkerbenefit](https://ontario.ca/COVIDworkerbenefit) to get more information and updates about the proposed Ontario COVID-19 paid leave days.

### **QUICK FACTS:**

- [Currently, the Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit \(CRSB\) provides \\$500 per week, before taxes.](#)
- Recipients are entitled to up to four weeks between September 27, 2020, and September 25, 2021.

### **Additional Resources:**

- [Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit](#)
  - [COVID-19 safety checklist for workplaces](#)
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## **TFW (TEMPORARY FOREIGN WORKER PROGRAM)**

Historically, industry operators have had on going challenge with regard to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. This is a program that has been incredibly helpful to the industry on their labour challenges, particularly for certain hospitality positions. The criteria on the TFW program has been restrictive for the Tourism and Hospitality sector contrary to how this program benefits other sectors, such as Agriculture in particular. More recently one of our members (Living Water Resorts) has gained the attention of Minister

particular, more recently, one of our members (Living Water Resorts) has gained the attention of Minister Qualtrough where specific provisional amendments would significantly assist our sector on the restrictive red tape on this program. Resorts of Ontario has also communicated with Minister Qualtrough supporting the recommendations which would benefit the Resort Sector.

If you currently use or depend on the TFW (Temporary Foreign Worker Program), we ask your support to write directly to Minister Qualtrough and our local MP with the recommendation that an exemption from the LMIA qualification criteria be provided for the tourism industry.

Please note that the Association specifically asked that the proposed policy adjustment which would allow LMIA applications for temporary foreign workers in rural resort regions that exceed 6% unemployment, by expanding script on "Positions in Accommodation and Food Services and Retail Trade Sectors" to incorporate "resort businesses in tourism regions throughout Ontario".

See ROO's March letter to Minister Qualtrough ([LINK](#)).

For the resort sector, employers of Accommodation and Food Services industry have not been very successful in hiring Canadians for entry level positions. This has been a historic and ongoing challenge for our sector throughout rural Ontario. The proposed amendment would remove the barrier we are presently faced with and facilitate our stakeholders' ability to surmount historical workforce challenges, while protecting Canadian jobs.

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## ROO RISK MITIGATION UPDATE:

Resorts of Ontario has been updating the Protocols manual which will be distributed to members next week. In the meantime, if you would like a word document of the existing copy, please reach out to [Michelle@resortsofontario.com](mailto:Michelle@resortsofontario.com)

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## FAQ (FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS) BY MEMBERS:

On today's member network call, the following question was asked – please see below for responses.

**Q1. With the Ontario Government Stay-at-Home Emergency Order scheduled to end on May 20, 2021, what are resorts' plans for opening?**

- a few resorts advised that at this time, they are planning to re-open for the Victoria Day long weekend
- based on anecdotal information, it is rumoured that the Ontario Government will be extending the Stay-at-Home Emergency Order for another two weeks, beyond May 20, 2021.
- overall, agreement that this is a very difficult decision for resorts – recognizing the status of the pandemic in context of what resorts can / should do.





## REMINDER – RESORTS OF ONTARIO MEMBER NETWORK TELECONFERENCE CALL

Please join your resort peers / colleagues next Friday, May 14, 2021 from 9:30 to 10:00 a.m. on COVID updates, along with member updates, questions, and best practice sharing.

### Join us:

9:30 am on Friday, May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021 - DIAL: 1.888.289.4573 - Code 2623007#

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## We're Here to Help!

If you need any advice, assistance with your marketing/message, please reach out to us at any time. We are here to help you!

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