

# EPL UPDATE #3

April 29, 2020

Dear EPL colleagues and CSU 52 Members,

It's been three weeks since my last update. I hope you are doing well, or as well as you can given the situation. Thank goodness that spring has finally arrived; the sunshine and warmth are a welcome change.

I have been watching the comments and concerns posted on the #staytogetherpl Facebook group, as well as those that I have received direct from members. There have been many questions about how to apply for Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) or Employment Insurance (EI), and the processes related to both. On a positive note, members are now receiving benefit money, however, it has become clear that all benefit payments are being processed under CERB and not EI.

Now that Federal Government benefit payments are being received, the next question is related to how the SUB Plan process will work, especially with the benefits being paid from CERB. As you probably know now, there is a glitch with respect to paying SUB Plan benefits for staff in receipt of CERB, and the glitch lies in the additional earnings limit that the Federal Government established for those receiving CERB.

The City of Edmonton SUB Plan which EPL is participating in, coordinates with Employment Insurance. The Federal Government made the decision to transition all COVID-19 temporary layoffs to CERB, which does not allow EPL to apply the SUB Plan "top up" to, as the EI benefit would have.

However, at this time, the Federal Government will allow EPL to "top up" CERB payments with an "allowance" of up to a maximum of \$1000 per month. This allowance, when combined with CERB, will provide up to a maximum of \$3000 income per month, and the allowance is payable to temporarily laid off employees for 16 weeks for permanent employees (benefitted 20 or more hours per week) and 8 weeks for part-time employees (less than 20 hours per week), temporary employees and Student Pages. These time frames are the same as those outlined in LOU #11, applicable to SUB Plan payments.

For some, CERB itself will be equal to or greater than 75% of average weekly insurable earnings, before deductions. For others, the provision of the "allowance" will provide 75% of average weekly insurable earnings before deductions, and for others even the provision of the allowance will not allow them to attain the 75% level.

Once the City, EPL, and Union(s) realized that we were not going to be able to get the SUB Plan top up to work with CERB, new solutions were sought. Over the weekend, EPL and CSU 52 agreed to an Addendum to LOU #11.

What has been agreed to for the time being is not perfect by any means, but it does allow a bit more time to try and resolve the issue, while continuing to support temporarily laid off staff according to the initial intent of LOU #11.

The City, EPL and the Union(s) are continuing to advocate to the Federal Government to amend the rules to allow the SUB Plan to be paid in addition to CERB. It is my understanding that Edmonton, and EPL are not alone in this situation, that there are many other larger municipalities facing this same challenge.

I realize that this may feel like a bit of a setback, and another uncertainty to deal with. Please be assured that CSU 52 continues to work together with EPL in the best interest of supporting our members. At EPL these programs that we are fortunate enough to participate in are not our own, so at times we are unable to share information as quickly as we might like to otherwise. This is in addition to the fact that these are uncharted waters for all of us.

I continue to recognize that these are difficult times, and although it may be challenging to do so, I encourage you to remain positive, give thanks to all those who continue to work to keep us safe, and above all else, may you and your loved ones stay healthy.

*Sincerely,*

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