



April 15, 2020

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

I write once more with further updates regarding the emergency benefits for artists and arts groups during this COVID-19 pandemic. Again, I thank so many of you for the insights and candour you have given me in our conversations and emails as you illuminate your concerns, issues, realities and creative initiatives. The survey results I am receiving from various arts disciplines are very helpful and enlightening. As the Prime Minister said this morning, artists and the arts “reflect on life and they dream”. Canada’s artists have continued to provide inspiration, solace, diversion and meaning throughout this national and international crisis, and I applaud all.

There have been recent clarifications and modifications to assistance programs and I want to highlight three key areas.

**1. CERB ELIGIBILITY:**

It has been confirmed now that artists and others who earn less than \$1000.00 a month are eligible to apply for, and receive, CERB benefits. Thank you for your patience as we all awaited these modifications. I am sure it will help those who are receiving some monies for teaching their art, copyright fees, royalties, honoraria, and other small levels of income. I want to thank Minister Guilbeault for addressing this concern which he and I discussed.

I also want to confirm that seasonal workers who will be without work this summer are also eligible for CERB.

**2. EMERGENCY WAGE SUBSIDY FOR ARTS GROUPS:**

This subsidy IS available for arts organizations as well as business. It will pay 75% of workers’ salaries to a maximum benefit of \$847 per week, or 75% of the employee's pre-crisis weekly remuneration, whichever is less.

As you will see from the response to the attached question, asked on my behalf in the Senate sitting last Saturday, the organization does NOT have to pay the other 25% to qualify. Further, regarding endowment funds, the principle held in organizations’ endowments cannot be used, but investment income can be.

**3. MENTAL HEALTH ASSISTANCE:** It has now been announced that mental health support is available for anyone who feels the need. That support can be accessed through the mental health portal on Canada.ca.

Indeed, one can find the details of all these programs at Canada.ca.

In addition to COVID-19, many of us are watching the rising of potential flood waters. It is my sincerest hope that people and properties will be safe, and that our museums and public collections will be protected too. That safety is compounded in the parts of the country where entering buildings is prohibited due to COVID-19.

The issues in the Arctic are enhanced due to weather, distances, costs and systemic histories. I am currently working with a small group of senators on specific concerns and issues in the Arctic, many of which were noted in the report of the Senate Special Committee on the Arctic; *Northern Lights; A Wake-up Call for the Future of Canada*.

In the meantime, I want to give a huge 'Shout-out' to all the front-line workers who are dedicating themselves so diligently in all regions of Canada, urban, rural, south and north.

Again, I extend my sincere condolences to all who have lost loved ones, and who are worried about their loved ones. These are surreal, unparalleled times and while I know we all will come through this dark period in world history, we will emerge with changed personal and collective realities.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me with any concerns, creative thoughts, or any matter in which you think I might be able to assist. Also feel free to send this email to others and give my email address to those who might like it.

Stay safe, and stay well.

Best regards,



Patricia Bovey, FRSA, FCMA  
Independent Senator from Manitoba