

# 2020-21 COVID-19 Response

The 2020-21 Budget includes over \$900 million in new expenditure related to our fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, for individuals, for businesses and for initiatives to help our economy recover.

Government is also responding to the COVID-19 pandemic through re-directing existing funds, policy and fee changes, and deferrals of certain taxes and utility fees for individuals and businesses.

The following table details government's new budgeted expenditures in response to COVID-19.

Saskatchewan COVID-19 Response and Support Measures 2020-21 Funding (\$M)		
Ministry/Agency	Measure	Total
Various	Capital Plan – Stimulus Year 1	375.7
ER	Accelerated Site Closure Program	150.0
GR/PCS	Emergency Pandemic Response Gaming Grant	50.0
TED/FI	Saskatchewan Small Business Emergency Payment	50.0
FI	Temporary Wage Supplement	56.0
FI	Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance	12.6
FI	Self-Isolation Support Program	2.0
JAG/CP	Enhanced Court Technology	4.3
CP/IJS	Facility Isolation Requirements	2.7
<b>New GRF Appropriation</b>		<b>703.3</b>
Summary	COVID-19 Health and Safety Contingency	200.0
Summary	AgriRecovery Response for the Livestock Sector	7.5
<b>Summary Budget Total</b>		<b>910.8</b>
<b>Deferrals</b>		<b>675.0</b>
<b>COVID-19 Spending within Existing Funds</b>		<b>147.9</b>

## Capital Plan – Stimulus Year 1 – \$376 million

Government announced \$2 billion in additional capital funding to be completed over the next two years, in addition to Government's \$5.5 billion previously planned capital funding. Of the \$2 billion stimulus package, \$375.7 million is planned for 2020-21.

## Accelerated Site Closure Program – \$150 million

This two-year, \$400 million program funded by the federal government, provides for the clean-up of inactive oil and gas wells and facilities. The Budget includes \$150 million in new funding for Energy and Resources, which the Ministry will use, in partnership with SRC, to contract with service companies to do abandonment and reclamation work.

## Emergency Pandemic Response Gaming Grant – \$50 million

In recognition of lost gaming transfer revenue as a result of casino closures, the Budget provides one-time funding of \$50 million for emergency pandemic support for First Nation and Métis organizations (\$45million via Government Relations) and the Community Initiatives Fund (\$5 million via Parks, Culture and Sport).

Flow through amounts for gaming agreements, initially presented on March 18, 2020, have been reduced by \$81 million to reflect updated casino net income forecasts.

**Saskatchewan Small Business Emergency Program – \$50 million**

The program provides grants for small and medium-sized enterprises (business and not-for-profits) directly affected by government public health orders related to COVID-19, up to \$5,000. Total cost is expected to be \$50 million.

**Temporary Wage Supplement – \$56 million**

A federal-provincial cost-shared program providing a \$56 million temporary top-up to the salaries of lower-income workers employed in essential services. The cost to Saskatchewan is expected to be \$2.8 million.

**Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance – \$13 million**

This federal program will provide forgivable loans to commercial property owners to assist with rent owing by small businesses experiencing hardship as a result of COVID-19. The Province will contribute a maximum of \$12.6 million to the program.

**Self-Isolation Support Program – \$2 million**

This program targets Saskatchewan residents forced to self-isolate that are not covered by federal employment insurance programs and other supports. The program will provide \$450 per week, for a maximum of \$900 per applicant. The Budget provides \$2.0 million for this program.

**Enhanced Court Technology – \$4 million**

Funding for the implementation of an online dispute resolution system for provincial offences and installation of video conferencing equipment for RCMP, municipal police, and correctional facilities. The Budget provides \$4.1 million new capital funding and \$200K operating funding for this project.

**Facility Isolation Requirements – \$3 million**

Funding for the acquisition and operation of temporary structures for additional inmate living space within the correctional facility footprint to support distancing and isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Budget provides for \$2.0 million new operational and \$700K capital funding for this project.

**COVID-19 Public Health and Safety Contingency – \$200 million**

A \$200 million Public Health and Safety Contingency is included in the Summary Budget to address difficulties in forecasting full year requirements for the pandemic.

**AgriRecovery Response for Livestock Sector – \$8 million**

The Ministry of Agriculture will participate in the federal government's cost-shared AgriRecovery response cattle set-aside. The Budget includes a new summary expense of \$7.5 million representing federal flow through dollars, for a total program cost of \$12.5 million.

**Deferrals of Taxes and Fees – Up to \$675 million**

Government has allowed businesses, taxpayers and ratepayers to temporarily defer the payment of taxes and fees to support their cash flow and address short-term liquidity shortfalls. Government has announced temporary deferrals of Provincial Sales Tax remittance, Crown utility bills, Education Property Tax collection, and an interest free moratorium on student loans. Deferred taxes and fee are estimated to total up to \$675 million.

### **COVID-19 Spending within Existing Funds – \$148 million**

Some support measures are being funded within the initial 2020-21 spending plan that was outlined in the March 18 Estimates book or through existing summary entity budgets.

- \$118 million has been identified by the health sector in new expenditure commitments related to hospital equipment, testing equipment, personal protective equipment and operating costs to address the pandemic.
- \$7.0 million for post-secondary students, including emergency bursaries for students whose studies and employment are disrupted as a result of COVID-19, expense costs related to the six-month student loan moratorium, and changes to student loan contribution requirements.
- \$6.4 million for Social Services COVID-19 response, including four monthly \$100 respite payments for caregivers of individuals with intellectual disabilities, one-time additional funding of \$171,000 targeted at meeting cost pressures at emergency shelters, and a one-time \$50 cash benefit for Income Assistance clients.
- \$5.0 million to partially offset higher premium costs of Western Livestock Price Insurance program caused the market uncertainty of COVID-19.
- \$5.0 million for Saskatchewan's share of the cost of participation in the national AgriRecovery set-aside program to support livestock producers through the COVID-19 related market disruption.
- \$3.5 million of COVID-19 related expenses for the Provincial Emergency Operations Centre operated by the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency. These include PPE, checkpoints, communications, and other services.
- \$1.2 million capital spending to develop a new electronic filing system for the Court of Queen's Bench.
- \$1.0 million for a one-time grant to Regina and District Chamber of Commerce to partner with all other Saskatchewan regional Chambers of Commerce for province-wide buy local campaign.
- \$400,000 for Saskatchewan's participation in federal-provincial cost-shared funding of \$28M to support the University of Saskatchewan's Vaccine and Infectious Disease Organization – International Vaccine Centre. Government of Saskatchewan has provided \$4.2M since the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak in January 2020.
- \$370,000 to New North, the province's northern communities' association, to help establish, staff and maintain community checkpoints as part of the public health order to address COVID-19 in the province's far north. This includes \$20,000 directly to the Northern Village of La Loche to support local public safety, food security and educational initiatives organized by the community to encourage physical distancing and self-isolation of residents.