

COVID-19 Small Business 7 Point Plan

- 1. Triple the funding for the Small and Medium Enterprise Relaunch Grant for businesses to receive \$10,000 each (up from the initial \$5,000) and lowering the qualifying threshold from 50 per cent revenue lost to 40 per cent revenue lost during any two-month period of the pandemic.**

Alberta small businesses are desperate. That's why we're calling on the Alberta government to expand the Small and Medium Enterprise Relaunch Grant, increasing the total amount a business can access from \$5,000 to \$10,000 and expanding the eligibility from 50% reduction in revenue from April or May 2020 to 40% revenue reduction over any two months during the pandemic.

- 2. Match the incoming Lockdown Support up to 25 percent to provide rental support to businesses forced to close as a result of COVID-19.**

Alberta small businesses haven't even dug themselves out of the debt acquired during the last shut down. Now, certain establishments are being shut down again.

The federal program has announced their Lockdown Support that will subsidize 25 percent of rent on top of the Canadian Emergency Rent Subsidy (CERS)¹.

We are calling on the provincial government to match the federal Lockdown Support and cover up to 25 percent of rent costs.

3. Reinstate the commercial eviction ban that expired on Aug. 31 for six months to April 2021.

Since the commercial eviction ban expired on Aug. 30, the majority of small businesses have not seen their revenues return. As Alberta enters the second wave of COVID-19 small business owners need to be protected from eviction.

4. Reinstate the ban on utility shutoffs for six months and institute a deferral of up to 6 months to April 2021, and amend legislation to authorize forgiveness on utility costs or reduced rates at a later date.

We are calling on the provincial government to reinstate the ability for small business owners to defer utility payments and ban shutoffs for up to six months.

5. Renew call for 50 per cent reduction on small business insurance and extend reduction to June 30, 2021.

¹ CERS is a federal rent subsidy that provides funds directly to the business without requiring the landlord to participate. The new program replaces CECRA and is scalable based on the percentage of lost revenue. CERS provides rent subsidy up to 65% while in operation and the Lockdown Support provides another 25% on top if a business is forced to close.

At the beginning of the pandemic, the NDP called on the provincial government to freeze insurance premiums and cut current rates by 50 per cent. Since we called for the freeze and reduction in business insurance, many small businesses have seen large increases in their premium. Nationwide, 56 per cent of small business owners have reported an increase in their insurance rates.

6. Provide government-backed low interest lines of credit of up to \$30,000

Many small businesses have accrued large amounts of debt that is through high interest sources like credit cards.

Fifty-nine per cent of small businesses report relying on loans with some form of interest during the COVID-19 pandemic, including credit cards, line of credits, loans from a bank or mortgage. Providing a government-backed loan can give these small businesses the opportunity to transfer their debt to a low-interest option.

7. Introduce a COVID-19 Risk Index that gives business the ability to plan for moving up or down a stage of the relaunch strategy.

Small business owners are demanding to have clear, well communicated, and science-based metrics that will trigger changes in the Alberta public health orders guiding their operating procedures.