

MANITOBA REGIONAL OFFICE

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DELIVERED VIA EMAIL: minfs@leg.gov.mb.ca

December 3, 2020

The Honourable Heather Stefanson
Minister of Families
Government of Manitoba
Room 357 Legislative Building
450 Broadway
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3C 0V8

Dear Minister:

RE: CAREGIVER WAGE SUPPORT PROGRAM

The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) has followed with interest the public launch of the Caregiver Wage Support Program (CWSP), a targeted wage supplement for lower-paid workers in direct care roles.

It is our understanding that this new program is jointly funded by the provincial and federal governments, as part of a strategy to boost wages and to assist direct care facilities with staff retention. Please note that CUPE was not consulted or informed by governments regarding the creation of this program.

CUPE appreciates several features of the program, including:

- The wage support is provided directly to workers, with minimal waiting time;
- At \$5 per hour, the wage support is substantial as a percentage of wages for workers earning less than \$25 per hour in the affected sectors;
- The wage support applies to both regular and overtime hours worked; and
- It appears that the application process will be simple and straightforward.

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MARK HANCOCK

National President/Président national

CHARLES FLEURY

National Secretary-Treasurer/Secrétaire-trésorier national

BENOÎT BOUCHARD, PAUL FAORO, FRED HAHN, JUDY HENLEY, SHERRY HILLIER

General Vice-Presidents/Vice-présidences générales

While we understand that targeted programs do not always have the scope to reach all worthy groups of recipients, we believe that the CWSP ought to be expanded to classifications of workers and facilities that seem to have been excluded. There are many direct care workers in Manitoba who are underpaid and undervalued and who have been put under significant additional financial, emotional, and health-related pressure due to the pandemic.

Based on the information posted by the Government of Manitoba, the following job positions are eligible for CWSP:

- Health Care Aide or equivalent
- Housekeeping Staff
- House Supervisor
- Direct Service Worker
- Youth Care Worker/Practitioner
- Recreation Worker

In addition, it is stipulated that the above positions must be at one or more of the following facilities:

- Child and Family Services (CFS) Group Home
- Community Living disABILITY Services (CLDS)
 - Shift-staffed group home or 24/7 cluster living arrangement
- Emergency Placement Resources Shelter
- Family Violence Prevention Shelter
- Homeless Shelter
- Personal Care Home
- Retirement Residence
- Supportive Housing Residence

The following workers are lower-paid direct caregivers, that we believe require the same wage boost as those announced as part of the CWSP. We ask you to expand the program, applying the eligibility criterion that they must be earning less than \$25/hour wage, to the following direct care positions that are essential or support essential workers during the current COVID-19 pandemic:

- All direct care Child and Family Services workers;
- All direct care health care workers, including home care, hospital, and community clinics;
- All direct care childcare workers;
- All frontline education employees working with students or supporting school infrastructure and safety; and
- All direct care social service workers.

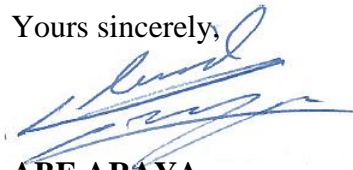
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In addition to our request to expand the program, we have questions to clarify the scope of existing eligibility criteria. There are positions for which we are unsure of eligibility, including:

- Child and Family Services
 - Drivers who transport clients to and from emergency shelters; and
- Home Care workers.

Please reply to these requests at your earliest convenience, and in any case prior to the first intake date of December 7, 2020.

Yours sincerely,



ABE ARAYA
PRESIDENT, CUPE MANITOBA

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