



Canadian Media Guild
La Guilde canadienne des médias
CWA/SCA CANADA



April 9, 2020

The Hon. Steven Guilbeault
Minister of Canadian Heritage

The Hon. Bill Morneau
Minister of Finance

The Hon. Carla Qualtrough
Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion

Dear Ministers,

As labour leaders representing thousands of media workers, we are writing to urge the federal government to make the CERB program more widely available to precarious workers.

These are tough times for all Canadians struggling with the added demands of a pandemic. For workers who don't have a stable living wage, it is devastating.

The problem is especially acute in the media industry, where precarious temporary and part-time workers make up growing proportion of the workforce, including 25% of staff at the CBC. Many struggle to make ends meet at the best of times; during this historic public health crisis, thousands are in dire financial need.

The random nature of the available work renders many precarious workers ineligible for the Canadian Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) program. We therefore urge you to expand the program so that more media workers are able to benefit.

A small change to the eligibility criteria would bring much-needed relief and support to talented, creative, hard-working media workers. A fair and easily adopted change to the eligibility policy would be to top-up salaries of applicants up to the \$2,000 limit, regardless of hours worked.

We urge you to consider the positive impact this could have on one of Canada's essential industries, where workers continue risking their personal health and safety to keep Canadians abreast of critical news at this historic time.

CWA Canada represents about 6,000 media workers at newspapers and other media companies coast to coast, including staff at the CBC who are members of the Canadian Media Guild.

Sincerely,

Martin O'Hanlon, President, CWA Canada, The Media Union
Carmel Smyth, President, Canadian Media Guild, CWA Canada Local 30213