

COVID-19 HARDSHIP ISOLATION PAYMENT – GUIDELINES

The COVID-19 Hardship Isolation Payment is an ACT Government initiative that provides a safety net for Canberra workers who are required to isolate due to COVID-19 and meet eligibility requirements.

Reasons for isolation include where a person has:

- › had a COVID-19 test and is awaiting the result; or
- › returned a positive COVID-19 test; or
- › returned from a COVID 19 hotspot area and there is a Public Health Emergency Direction to self-isolate; or
- › been deemed a close contact and there is advice from Public Health authorities to self-isolate.

The Hardship Isolation Payment is available to everyone in the labour force who meet the eligibility criteria including casual, part time, full time workers and self employed individuals. ACT and Commonwealth Government Employees or those of a Government Business Enterprise are not eligible.

Eligible applicants can apply for any period of isolation entered into from 17 August 2020.

Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible to receive the Hardship Isolation Payment, you must:

- › currently reside in the ACT or work at least 80 per cent of the time in the ACT;
- › not be a dependant;
- › be unable to work as a result of having to isolate due to COVID-19;
- › not be receiving any income as a result of not being able to work;
- › have exhausted paid sick leave entitlements including any special pandemic leave or have no entitlement to such leave;
- › have less than \$5,000 in savings;
- › not be receiving Australian Government income support; and
- › not be employed by the ACT Government, Commonwealth Government, or Government Business Enterprise.

Applicants need to agree to self-isolate for the period required by Public Health Authorities, otherwise they will become ineligible and would need to repay any monies received.

Funding

A Hardship Isolation Payment up to \$1,500 is available for eligible applicants, including:

- › \$270 for those isolating while awaiting test results; or
- › \$90 per day up to a cap of \$1,500 for those:
 - required to isolate as a result of a positive test result
 - returning from an identified COVID-19 hotspot
 - having been deemed a close contact
 - with a test result taking more than three days.

Eligible applicants can generally receive one payment within a 30-day period.

If eligible applicants are directed by Public Health Authorities (ACT Health, Canberra Health Services, or authorities in other jurisdictions) or a GP to have more than one test within the 30-day period, they may be eligible to receive additional payments, the amount of which will be determined by the number of days in isolation required.

The most an applicant can receive in a 30-day period is \$1,500.



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Evidence Requirements

If you believe you meet the eligibility requirements you can complete the online **COVID-19 Hardship Isolation Payment application form** or contact CMTEDD by email at **TreasuryEnquiries@act.gov.au**.

The following supporting evidence will be required:

- › proof of identify (can include your driver licence, ACT Proof of Identity card)
- › a utility bill, receipt of payment for rent, or lease in your name if available;
- › proof of employment (payslips covering last four weeks);
- › proof of exhausted sick or paid pandemic leave balances for full time and part time employees (can include statements from employer or HR reports), or ABN (for self-employed individuals); and
- › evidence that you have no more than \$5,000 in savings (bank statement for each account held showing the latest balance of each account).

Evidence of a COVID 19 test, and/or requirements to self-isolate as a result of returning a positive test, returned from an identified COVID 19 hotspot or being a close contact will be sourced from Public Health Authorities (see section on privacy notice below).

You may be contacted for evidence, if your health records cannot be accessed, and asked to source your test result from your GP or private pathology laboratory.

How to apply

To apply, please complete the online **Hardship Isolation Payment form** and submit all supporting documentary evidence. Your application and the supporting documents will be assessed against the eligibility requirements. You will not be able to submit the form if you do not meet eligibility requirements.

The level of funding provided will depend on your individual circumstances. Where applicants do not provide the necessary information, the application will not be assessed. However, applicants may be contacted by CMTEDD to provide missing information. Successful applicants will receive the funding via an electronic bank transfer into their nominated account and will be notified of this via email.

If you return a positive result there is no need to reapply as the ACT Public Health authority will advise us of the duration of isolation and your payment will be adjusted accordingly.

If your isolation period has been extended, you may be eligible for funding up to the cap of \$1,500. In this instance please email **TreasuryEnquiries@act.gov.au** so your details can be confirmed with Public Health Authorities to assess your additional claim.

The taxation implications of any payments made to successful applications under this scheme may differ depending on an applicant's individual personal circumstances. The ACT Government is unable to provide taxation advice and it is recommended that you consult your own professional advisor to determine any taxation implications that may apply.

The payment is administered by the ACT Government's Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD)

Additional Information – Privacy Notice

We take your privacy seriously and we must handle your personal and sensitive information and any personal health information (referred to collectively as personal information) about you in a responsible and transparent way. Your personal information is also protected by law under the *Information Privacy Act 2014*, and the *Health Records (Privacy and Access) Act 1997*. When we collect your personal information, we must tell you about the following matters:

Why we are collecting your personal information

In completing the application form, you will be asked to give consent to the collection of the personal information provided in this form and provide CMTEDD the authority to contact any employer(s) detailed, Public Health Authorities (ACT Health, Canberra Health Services, or authorities in other jurisdictions), GPs, and/or your identified financial institution to access information for the purposes of administering the payment.

We are collecting your personal information including your financial circumstances, and if you have had a COVID-19 test or been directed to self-isolate or quarantine as a result of COVID-19, for the purposes of administering the COVID-19 Hardship Isolation Payment.

Who will we collect your personal information from?

In general, we will collect your personal information directly from you. However, with your consent, evidence of a test, and or requirements to self-isolate, as a result of a positive test, returning from an identified COVID 19 Hotspot or being a close contact, will be sourced from Public Health Authorities (including ACT Health, Canberra Health Services or authorities in other jurisdictions).

What happens if you don't give us your personal information?

If you do not provide the personal information requested, your application may be delayed or not be able to be assessed for eligibility.

To who will we disclose your personal information

Payments will be made based on the evidence provided in your application form. Your personal information provided in the Hardship Isolation Payment form may be used to randomly audit the program.

We may contact your employer(s); Public Health authorities (including ACT Health, Canberra Health Service or authorities in other jurisdictions); GPs; and/or your financial institution directly to confirm and verify the information provided in the application form is true and accurate. Where it is found that false or misleading information has been provided CMTEDD may take further action, including asking you to repay some or all of the received payment.

CMTEDD will not use or disclose your personal information for other purposes without your consent, or unless a permitted exception to disclosure applies. For example, CMTEDD may be required to disclose information, including personal information, to agencies where required or authorised by or under an Australian law, court/tribunal order, or may disclose your personal information to an enforcement body where CMTEDD reasonably believes that the disclosure is necessary for its or the other enforcement bodies, functions or activities.

Where to find out more about privacy

If you would like more information about how CMTEDD will handle your personal information, including how to access or correct the information we hold about you or to make a privacy complaint, please read our Privacy Policy available at: <https://www.cmtedd.act.gov.au/legal/privacy>.