

July 22, 2021

David,

Thank you and the members of the Construction Employers Coalition for the questions relating to the Worker Income Protection Benefit (WIPB). I am responding on behalf of Deputy Meredith.

Please see responses to your questions below. I would be happy to discuss further if needed.

Q1: Details of contractual relationship between WSIB and Ministry to administer this program.

- In late April 2021, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board was engaged to administer the government's WIPB.
- The WSIB was asked to carry out the WIPB in accordance with a funding agreement established with the province and will use the funds only for the purpose of carrying out the project.
- WSIB has created new accounts to keep government funds separate from WSIB premiums.
- WSIB cannot utilize employer premiums for the administration and employer reimbursement of the WIPB. This is set out in the Bill that amended the *Employment Standards Act*.
- The agreement is valid until April 2022 to allow for program wind down, reporting and post program auditing.
- For the duration of the agreement, weekly reporting on spending and performance will be submitted to the province for oversight.

Q2: Information about the claims for reimbursement submitted, i.e., number of claims, processing time for a claim, number of claims etc., allowed versus denied claims.

- Some key statistics related to WIPB are being posted publicly and can be found by visiting [Ontario COVID-19 Worker Income Protection Benefit | Ontario.ca](https://www.ontario.ca/en/health-and-social-services/ontario-covid-19-worker-income-protection-benefit)
- As of yesterday, almost 15,000 claims had been received. The claims for reimbursement totalled \$13.2 million.

- The first large payment file went out on July 15th and more will follow every two weeks. The goal is that employers will now receive reimbursement by direct deposit two weeks from application.
- Some data such as allowed vs denied claims will be reported when there is more data available after several months. I can tell you anecdotally that about 3200 out of 3400 claims were approved in the first batch. Others were sent for further review or banking information provided for direct deposit reimbursement was incorrect.

Q3: Projected costs to administer this program.

- It is estimated that it could cost up to \$32M to administer the WIPB.
- The WSIB received a payment of \$12.5M upon execution of the funding agreement and a schedule has been set for the flowing of funds thereafter. This includes weekly monitoring of program administration spending and future need.

Q4: Have WSIB staff been realigned or have third party contractors been engaged, what is the scope and funds used for such etc.?

- A small, distinct team within the WSIB is responsible for the administration of the WIPB program.
- The WSIB has engaged third-party service providers to support the administration of the program.
- The scope for use of government funds for the administration of the WIPB involves:
 - WSIB Program Administration, Oversight, Management and Reporting
 - Third party administrator to set up the claims management solution plus ongoing oversight and administration (Deloitte engaged)
 - Fraud prevention program
 - Cyber security
 - Technology (solution build, infrastructure, reporting tools, ongoing maintenance & enhancements)
 - Tier 2 Online Support Team

Yours truly,

[Original signed by]

Marcelle Crouse

Associate Deputy Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development