

Joint Collaborative Committees

Frequently Asked Questions

COVID-19 Office Safety Plan Support Grant for Community Physicians

Q. Are all physicians eligible to apply for this grant?

A. Payment will be made to physicians who meet the eligibility criteria. These physicians:

- Have an active practice in a community office that provides publicly-funded health services.
- Are paid under Fee For Service, Alternate Payment Plan, or Population-Based Funding arrangements (GP funding). APP physicians who are compensated on an hourly-based contract and have been able to claim their time developing a safety plan as part of their contract are not eligible.
- Have directly incurred eligible costs related to the development and implementation of a COVID-19 Safety Plan in a community office.

Q. Who is not eligible for the grant?

A. Non eligible physicians include:

- Physicians who have not directly incurred costs related to the development and/or implementation of a COVID-19 Safety Plan in a community office.
- Physicians without community offices. This may include locums, non-physician clinic operators, and fully hospital based ER doctors, and hospitalists without a community practice.
- Community physicians who have offices provided/funded by a health authority, hospital, or a third party employer.

Q. What are the eligible expenses for this grant?

A. Eligible expenses (incurred between March 15, 2020 to December 31, 2020) include:

- Physician, MOA, and staff time to plan and implement a COVID-19 Safety Plan AND/OR
- One-time costs such as physical barriers like Plexiglas and/or other office retrofitting/renovation directly related to a COVID-19 Safety Plan aligned with COVID-19 safety guidelines developed by [WorkSafeBC](#), [BCCDC](#) and the Provincial Health Office **with the exception of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**.

Q. Why isn't Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) covered?

A. While we acknowledge the need for PPE, and its escalating cost, the purchase of PPE is an ongoing operational expense, not a one-time expense. Also, it currently varies based on the practice and the region as to whether the clinic ownership, health authorities, or physicians themselves pay for PPE.

The intent of this one-time grant is to offset unexpected costs (time/material) that are needed to ensure knowledge and compliance of the guidelines as provided by BCCDC and WorkSafeBC in the establishment of a safe practice.

Q. If I have more than one community practice, can I apply multiple times?

A. No. A maximum of one claim per physician will be supported, irrespective of the number of offices physicians work in.

Q. I'm a part time physician, am I eligible to apply for this grant?

A. Yes, as long as you meet the eligibility criteria including being involved in planning, developing, and implementing a COVID-19 safety plan and have incurred related costs.

Q. I'm a physician working part-time in facility/emergency, and have my own community practice. Am I eligible to apply for this grant?

A. Yes, as long as you meet the eligibility criteria.

Q. I share a community office with other physicians. Are we each eligible for this one-time grant?

A. Yes, as long as each physician meets the eligibility criteria.

Q. What about physician clinic owners – can they claim the payments from the group of physicians working in their clinic?

A. This grant is intended to support individual practicing physicians in their development and implementation of a COVID-19 office safety plan. If a physician is also a clinic owner, they are eligible to apply for the grant as long as they meet the eligibility criteria.

Q. What about in instances where physicians in a clinic each contributed different amounts of time and funding in preparation of a COVID-19 safety plan?

A. It is important to note that this grant is intended for individual physicians. In cases where several doctors are working in one community clinic, the physicians may agree to pool their resources. The arrangement of contribution per physician in a clinic is left to the discretion and collaboration of doctors working in community clinics. Doctors of BC is not able to adjudicate decisions between physicians regarding this funding.

Q. How will you know if my safety plan & subsequent physical alterations to the office space have met the various provincial guidelines? Do I need to have my COVID office safety plan approved?

A. No. You do not need to provide your approved safety plan to access this grant. We believe in the integrity of every physician in BC to make the necessary alterations as per the provincial guidelines (found at [WorkSafe BC](#), [BCCDC](#)) in order to provide safe patient care.

Q. How do you ensure physicians who receive this one-time grant are eligible?

A. We believe in the integrity of BC physicians and rely on the honour system. However, you are required to retain your COVID-19 office safety plan, related receipts and/or time documentation for a period of 12 months from the time you submit your grant application form, in case we are asked to do an audit, or questions arise later.

Q. Do I need to submit invoices of products purchased or documentation of time spent along with my application?

A. Not with the application. However, you are required to retain receipts and/or time documentation for a period of 12 months from the time you submit your grant application form, in case we are asked to perform an audit, or questions arise later.

Q. After I submit my application, how long will it take to receive payment?

A. We aim to issue payment within six weeks upon receipt of an accurate and complete application form.

We are committed to coordinating payments in a quick a manner, where possible. However, we are anticipating a significant number of physicians with community offices to apply for this one-time grant. Your cooperation by completing all fields in the application form will help move the process along. Some information may need to be validated like ensuring you have a direct deposit set up with Doctors of BC, etc., and these steps may prolong the process.

Q. Is this taxable income?

A. Yes. Please note that Doctors of BC does not issue tax receipts.

Q. How does this grant differ from the Ministry of Health funding that compensates physicians for up to 35 hours for general COVID-19 planning? And can I apply for both simultaneously?

A. This \$1,000 grant is provided by the Joint Collaborative Committees and is meant to support individual physicians that develop and implement a COVID-19 safety plan in their individual/group practices. The COVID-19 planning compensation by the Ministry of Health is meant for community level planning, working with the divisions or health authorities in partnerships or networks of other physicians.

If you meet the eligibility requirements of multiple funding sources and there is no double payment occurring for the same expenses, you may apply for this grant. Please note that this grant requires you to fill out a separate application form which can be found [here](#).

If you have additional questions, e-mail: JCC@doctorsofbc.ca