

These are informational/factual.

Question	Answer
<p><b>1. What is the COVID-19 Income Relief Payment?</b></p>	<p>The COVID-19 Income Relief Payment provides up to 12 weeks of financial support to people who have lost their job or business due to the impacts of COVID-19.</p> <p>It will help cushion the blow and minimise disruption for people as they look for other work or retrain.</p>
<p><b>2. How much can someone receive?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$490 per week for a person who was a full-time worker (normally working 30 hrs or more) or</li> <li>• \$250 per week for a person who was a part time worker (normally working between 15 and 29 hours).</li> </ul> <p>The payment will be made weekly for up to 12 weeks. This means people previously working full-time can get \$5,880 in total if they qualify for the entire 12-week period; or \$11,760 if they are a couple who are both eligible for the full-time rate in their own right. The payment will not be taxed.</p>
<p><b>3. Who can receive the COVID-19 Income Relief Payment?</b></p>	<p>To be eligible, a person must have lost their job (including self-employment) between 1 March 2020 and 30 October 2020 inclusively due to the impact of COVID-19.</p> <p>The person must have been normally working 15 hours or more a week (for 12 weeks or more) immediately prior to the loss of work.</p> <p>They must be a New Zealand citizen or a resident who normally works and lives in New Zealand.</p> <p>More detailed criteria will be on the Work and Income website so people can see if they qualify for the income relief payment. Applications open from 8 June.</p>
<p><b>4. When will the COVID-19 Income Relief Payment be available?</b></p>	<p>People can apply online from 8 June 2020 for the income relief payment. Applications will remain open until 13 November 2020.</p> <p>The payment is for people who experience a loss of work between 1 March 2020 and 30 October 2020, inclusively.</p>
<p><b>5. How do people apply?</b></p>	<p>Applications can be made online from 8 June until 13 November 2020. The Work and Income <a href="#">website</a> has information on how to apply.</p>
<p><b>6. Is it income-tested?</b></p>	<p>Yes it is - you will not be eligible for this payment if you have a partner earning \$2,000 per week or more in wages or salary (before tax).</p> <p>You will also not qualify if you receive a redundancy payment of \$30,000 (before tax) or more, income protection insurance payments or earnings-related ACC payments.</p> <p>The amount you receive is not affected by any non-work income you receive (e.g. rental income).</p>

Question	Answer
<p><b>7. Can people get this payment if they get a redundancy payment?</b></p>	<p>If someone receives a redundancy payment of \$30,000 or more for their job loss, they cannot receive this payment.</p>
<p><b>8. Can people get this payment if they are getting other payments – e.g. income protection insurance or earnings-related ACC payments - that replace some or all of their income?</b></p>	<p>No, they won't qualify if they get other payments that replace some or all of their income - e.g. income protection insurance payments for the job they lost or earnings-related ACC payments.</p> <p>If these payments stop, they may qualify for the COVID-19 Income Relief Payment, this will depend on their situation at the time. Work and Income will be able to assess eligibility.</p>
<p><b>9. Is the rate of this payment affected by other income, e.g. interest from savings?</b></p>	<p>The amount people may receive is not affected by any non-work income.</p>
<p><b>10. What if people lost one of multiple jobs?</b></p>	<p>If you are still employed in a job you will not qualify for the COVID-19 Income Relief Payment</p>
<p><b>11. What is the definition of a “partner” for the COVID-19 Income Relief Payment?</b></p>	<p>Generally, someone is considered to be part of a couple when they are married, in a civil union, or in a de facto relationship. A de facto relationship is defined as when two people aged 16 years or older are living together as a couple in a relationship in the nature of marriage or civil union. This is the same definition used for assessing entitlement to other MSD assistance.</p> <p><a href="https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/core-policy/relationship-status-for-benefit/introduction.html">https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/map/income-support/core-policy/relationship-status-for-benefit/introduction.html</a></p>
<p><b>12. Can people get this payment if their partner is still working?</b></p>	<p>Yes, if their partner's pre-tax salary or wages is less than \$2,000 a week.</p>
<p><b>13. How will the payment be made?</b></p>	<p>The payment will be made weekly for up to 12 weeks (fortnightly for people receiving New Zealand Superannuation or Veteran's Pension).</p> <p>For people receiving New Zealand Superannuation or Student Allowance at the same time, in most cases payments will be made to the eligible individual in a couple.</p> <p>For most other couples, MSD's payment system means payments will be split between both partners equally, even if only one qualifies. For one partner to be eligible while the other is working, the earning partner's pre-tax salary or wages must be less than \$2,000 a week.</p> <p>What this means in practice is, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In a couple where one individual is eligible for the part-time rate (\$250), each partner will receive \$125 per week from MSD (even if the other partner is still working).</li> <li>○ In a couple where one individual is eligible for the part-time rate (\$250) and one is eligible for the full-time rate (\$490) at the same time, each partner will receive \$370 per week from MSD.</li> </ul>

Question	Answer
<p><b>14. How many people will be eligible for the COVID-19 Income Relief Payment?</b></p>	<p>Given the uncertainty of the economic impact of COVID-19, it is difficult to estimate how many people will be eligible or how many will apply.</p> <p>Based on the Treasury BEFU 2020 forecasts, around 230,000 people could receive this payment.</p>
<p><b>15. What about those currently receiving a main benefit?</b></p>	<p>Someone cannot receive a main benefit at the same time as the COVID-19 Income Relief Payment. However, if they are eligible for the income relief payment, they may opt to receive that instead of their main benefit.</p> <p>Between 20 March 2020 and 15 May 2020, the number of people receiving Jobseeker Support increased by 43,500, from around 145,000 to 188,500.</p> <p>Many of these new recipients are likely to be eligible for the income relief payment. Therefore, from 8 June, we expect a number of people will choose to move from a main benefit to the income relief payment.</p>
<p><b>16. What is the process for people who have already lost their job?</b></p>	<p>If you lost your job after 1 March and before the payment goes live on 8 June, it will be paid from when you apply. It will not be paid retrospectively for any period before June 8. You'll be paid for a maximum of 12 weeks while you are not in work (in regular instalments).</p> <p>If you've already lost your job and you need support in the meantime, you may be eligible for other financial assistance from Work and Income. If you receive other support from Work and Income in the meantime you will still be able to apply for the income relief payment from 8 June.</p>
<p><b>17. Will I be better off on the income relief payment or a main benefit?</b></p>	<p>This will depend on your individual circumstances. If you previously worked part-time you may be better off on a main benefit. We recommend you talk with Work and Income about your specific circumstances once applications open. They'll help you work out the best option for you.</p>
<p><b>18. What happens if I do find work?</b></p>	<p>You need to tell Work and Income (or Studylink) that your circumstances have changed. When you start work, your income relief payments will stop.</p> <p>However, depending on your situation, you may be eligible for other financial assistance.</p> <p>These are uncertain times. If you subsequently lose this work for reasons outside of your control, you may be able to restart your income relief payment for the remainder of the 12-week period.</p>

Question	Answer
<p><b>19. Are the rules for working the same as for the main benefit?</b></p>	<p>No. The purpose of this payment is quite different, so there are different rules around work. There are expectations to seek work or retraining. For those who do return to work, the COVID-19 income relief payment will stop rather than be abated.</p> <p>Main benefits have an abatement scheme which encourages people to find work. For most benefits, this means that the level of payment reduces above a set amount as they return to work. There are obligations to look for work backed by sanctions.</p>
<p><b>20. Will there be any requirements for those receiving the COVID-19 Income Relief Payment to look for work?</b></p>	<p>Those receiving the income relief payment will have work expectations if appropriate for their circumstances. They should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be available for, and actively seeking, suitable work</li> <li>• take appropriate steps towards gaining new employment</li> <li>• engage with suitable work programmes and courses and identify and take opportunities for employment, re-deployment and training.</li> </ul> <p>Students receiving support from StudyLink will also need to continue to meet their study requirements.</p>
<p><b>21. What if I am working a few hours a week?</b></p>	<p>You are not eligible if you are working. The income relief payment is for people who are no longer employed in any work due to the impacts of COVID-19.</p> <p>People receiving it will be offered support to find employment.</p>
<p><b>22. What if I had my hours cut from full time to part time work. Will the income relief payment cover the income drop?</b></p>	<p>You are not eligible if you still have work. The income relief payment is for people who are no longer employed. People receiving it will be offered support to find employment.</p>
<p><b>23. What happens if I wasn't able to work during the lockdown but was receiving the wage subsidy – will I meet the hours?</b></p>	<p>If you were getting the wage subsidy to cover 15 or more hours of work per week (i.e. your 'normal' hours), you will meet the hours requirement.</p> <p>Depending on your circumstances, your relevant hours could be your contracted hours, the hours you were paid for, or the hours before leave caused by the lockdown.</p>
<p><b>24. If the payment lasts for 12 weeks, could someone apply for it again after receiving it for the initial 12 weeks?</b></p>	<p>People can only get 12 weeks of the payment. People can't apply for further payments if they've had 12 weeks. However, they may qualify for other assistance.</p>

Question	Answer
<p><b>25. Can someone receive the COVID-19 Income Relief Payment as well as supplementary assistance from MSD like Accommodation Supplement?</b></p>	<p>Yes – COVID-19 Income Relief Payment recipients may be eligible to receive both supplementary and hardship assistance. The income relief payment will be treated as income when assessing entitlement to these supports. This includes public housing support like income-related rent.</p>
<p><b>26. Will receiving the COVID-19 Income Relief Payment affect someone's Working for Families tax credits, student loan repayments or Child Support?</b></p>	<p>No – as the COVID-19 Income Relief Payment is not treated as income for these payments as it is non-taxable.</p> <p>The loss of income from losing their job is likely to mean some people may now qualify for more Working for Families and other supports.</p>
<p><b>27. Will I still be able to receive child support at the same time as this payment?</b></p>	<p>Yes.</p>
<p><b>28. Will the amount of child support I am entitled to be affected if my ex-partner receives the income relief payment?</b></p>	<p>This will depend on individual circumstances, however the income relief payment will not count as income for calculating child support obligations and payments.</p>
<p><b>29. Will tax be deducted from the COVID-19 Income Relief Payment?</b></p>	<p>No, the payment is tax free and will not be included in your taxable income for the year.</p> <p>It may be worthwhile checking whether you are still on the correct tax code for any other income you receive such as the PIE rate applied to KiwiSaver schemes and bank accounts.</p>
<p><b>30. Can someone receive the COVID-19 Income Relief Payment if they were a fixed-term employee?</b></p>	<p>Yes, in cases where they are no longer in any work due to their fixed-term agreement ending early or where existing contracts did not start as a result of the impacts of COVID-19.</p>
<p><b>31. Can someone receive the COVID-19 Income Relief Payment if they were previously self-employed?</b></p>	<p>Yes, as long as their business is no longer viable, with no prospect of work or income.</p> <p>The intention is that, where possible, viable businesses are supported via the Small Business cashflow loan scheme and the wage subsidy scheme, as well as other Government supports provided, to remain in trade.</p> <p>If you are in the process of applying for or have received a loan for your business from the Small Business cashflow scheme, you are no longer eligible for the income relief payment.</p>

Question	Answer
<p><b>32. Can I decide to stop my business, receive this payment, and then start it up again?</b></p>	<p>If your business or self-employment is not viable, with no prospect of upcoming work or income because of the impact of COVID-19, you may be eligible for the income relief payment.</p> <p>If you then got further work, you'd need to tell Work and Income and your income relief payment would stop.</p> <p>However, if you decided to stop your business for another reason and it was still viable, you would not be eligible for the income relief payment.</p> <p>The Small Business Cashflow Scheme is designed to support viable businesses.</p>
<p><b>33. Can someone receive the COVID-19 Income Relief Payment if they are on unpaid leave or parental leave?</b></p>	<p>If you lose your job due to the impacts of COVID-19 while you're on unpaid parental leave, unpaid leave or paid leave, you may be eligible for the income relief payment.</p> <p>However, you cannot receive the income relief payment at the same time that the government is paying you paid parental leave (but you can receive it after paid parental leave finishes if that is before applications end and you are eligible)</p>
<p><b>34. What about those who receive termination payments or holiday pay?</b></p>	<p>This will not affect the person's entitlement to the COVID-19 Income Relief Payment.</p>
<p><b>35. Can people receive the COVID-19 Income Relief Payment and the wage subsidy at the same time?</b></p>	<p>No, however if someone loses a job that was supported by the wage subsidy, they could then become eligible for the COVID-19 Income Relief Payment.</p>

Question	Answer
<p><b>36. What about students?</b></p>	<p>Students will be eligible for this scheme if they meet the criteria, as there are a large number of students who work to support themselves while studying.</p> <p>Students can receive the COVID-19 Income Relief Payment at the same time as receiving a Student Loan for living costs or a Student Allowance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For students getting a Student Loan for living costs, their rate of the income relief payment will depend of the numbers of hours worked.</li> <li>• Where someone or their partner is receiving a Student Allowance at the same time they can only receive the part-time rate (\$250 per week).</li> <li>• People receiving a Student Allowance and previously working 30 hours or more may opt to receive the Student Allowance or the full-time rate of the income relief payment.</li> </ul> <p>Students receiving support from StudyLink will still need to continue to meet their study requirements.</p> <p>Students will still be expected to look for work to replace the Income Relief Payment or to adjust their living costs down for when the Income Relief Payment finishes.</p> <p>The Income Relief Payment will not be treated as income for Student Allowance purposes.</p>
<p><b>37. What about those on New Zealand Superannuation/ Veteran's Pension?</b></p>	<p>People over 65 getting Veteran's Pension or New Zealand Superannuation can receive the income relief payment on top of their regular payments.</p> <p>However, the following groups cannot receive both payments, but can choose the COVID-19 income relief payment instead if they are eligible:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• individuals receiving Veteran's Pension when under 65 years</li> <li>• Veteran's Pension as a non-qualified partner or including a non-qualified partner</li> <li>• New Zealand Superannuation as a non-qualified partner or including a non-qualified partner.</li> </ul> <p>New Zealand Superannuation and Veteran's Pension recipients can choose to not include their non-qualified partner in that payment so that they or their partner can receive the income relief payment in addition to New Zealand Superannuation or Veteran's Pension.</p> <p>People in these situations should discuss their circumstances with Work and Income, as there may be implications for their future assistance by choosing this payment.</p>