



Press Release
April 9th, 2020
For immediate release

NIC Takes Extraordinary Measures In Response to COVID-19

Castries, Saint Lucia, March 26th, 2020 - The past few weeks have been difficult for all of us. The Coronavirus Pandemic has put a serious strain on health care systems and economies of many countries, Saint Lucia included.

Alongside the direct health risk of contracting COVID-19, many workers have been laid off or made redundant with the closure of businesses, particularly in the tourism sector. There is an expectation from our contributors that the National Insurance Corporation (NIC) will intervene and provide some economic relief beyond its normal payment of benefit claims.

To help workers navigate the economic hardship arising from COVID-19, the NIC has moved quickly to put measures in place to provide income support to contributors directly affected by the virus. The program is expected to cost anywhere from \$40.1 million to \$80.2 million over a three-month period covering the months of April, May and June. Payments for the month of April are being planned for the last week in April or the soonest practicable time thereafter.

The NIC Economic Relief Program:

The NIC will pay 50% of insurable earnings (salary amount on which contributions is levied) subject to a minimum payout of \$500 and a maximum of \$1,500 MONTHLY to persons unemployed as a result of the Covid-19 crisis. In other words, a person with a monthly salary of \$3,000 or higher will receive \$1,500. A person with a monthly salary between \$1,001 and \$2,999 inclusive will receive 50% of salary. A person whose monthly salary is \$1,000 or less will receive \$500.

Who Qualifies:

All individuals who contribute to the NIC who were in employment in February 2020 and are currently out of work as a result of the COVID-19 crisis. Payments are to Employees only, not Employers.

Entitlement to Benefit/Qualifying criteria:

- Claimant must have contributed to the Fund for at least one month prior to February 2020
- Claimant is unemployed as a result of COVID-19

- Claimant is not in receipt of any other benefit from the NIC other than funeral grant. In such cases, the higher amount (economic relief or the NIC benefit already being received) will be paid

How to Claim

Claims are to be made using an electronic form which will be available on the NIC website, stlucianic.org, from Monday April 13th, 2020. You will be required to provide the following information:

- Name
- NIC#
- Date of Birth
- Company last worked for
- Date laid off
- Date vacation leave ends if on vacation leave
- Any financial or other relief /assistance being provided by your company you worked for
- Bank details

Provisions will be made for persons unable to file electronically to use designated boxes placed at the NIC offices at Castries, Vieux Fort and Soufriere.

How will Payment be Made

In light of the current restrictions necessitated by the Coronavirus Pandemic, payment will be made directly to your bank account via the Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) facility offered by the Banks using the bank information from claim forms.

These are extraordinary times. Know that, more than ever, the NIC remains committed to providing you with the support and service you may need. We will continue to provide information on the program as required and on the other measures we're taking to support our contributors during this difficult time.

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