

Training for young people – Circuit breaker grant – Music funding – Housing HUB – Response to Overdose crisis – Vaccinations - Survey

Dear Community Members,

This week, the Throne Speech outlined the government's commitment to supporting people, businesses, and communities, while working to put the pandemic behind British Columbians and building a strong recovery for everyone <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2021PREM0032-000692>. It was my honour to be one of the first to respond in support of the Throne Speech, as “the table is set” in anticipation of next week's budget for 2021/22. It's important to continue to highlight the extraordinary programs this government continues to create to provide aid to help everyone and businesses in these unprecedented times.

Future Leaders Program – Jobs for young people

Young people have faced incredible challenges this past year as the pandemic has drastically impacted the job market. Young people face significantly higher unemployment early in their careers as they try to build experience for the future. Youth are also often the first to feel the impact of economic shifts. During the pandemic, youth unemployment peaked at 29%, over 15 percentage points above the provincial average. As of March 2021, youth unemployment sits at 12.1%, above the general unemployment rate in B.C. of 6.9%.

The new “Future Leaders Program” will create jobs and provide opportunities for more than 5,000 young people in the in the growing tech sector, environment and natural resource fields. Spread the word to young people of these upcoming opportunities and get young people dialed into the economy: [StrongerBC Future Leaders Program](#).

Circuit Breaker Relief Grant

Restaurants, gyms, and bars have been acutely affected by the most recent requirements to help flatten the 3rd wave curve. This week, the industry-directed Circuit Breaker Relief Grant opened to eligible businesses. Make sure you send along the info to those who will benefit: [Circuit Breaker Business Relief Grant](#). Affected businesses, including restaurants, bars, breweries, wineries, gyms, and fitness centres can receive up to \$10,000 in one-time funding to help with expenses, as well as unexpected costs that resulted from the restrictions.

[Amplify BC Music Funding B.C.'s music industry gets an encore | BC Gov News](#)

Amplify BC will receive secure funding of \$22.5 million over the next three years, to support the music industry during the pandemic and strengthened for the future, so that people can work in the sector long term.

This is huge for the music industry. This program will be administered by Creative BC, Amplify BC offers four programs:

- **Live Music** supports the operations, development and adaptation of venues, festivals and concert presenters in B.C.
- **Music Company Development** supports the operations, development and adaption of music companies in B.C.
- **Music Industry Initiatives** support the development of B.C.'s music industry, funding projects that support training, skills development, export activities, business development, research and up-and-coming talent.
- **Career Development** supports the careers of emerging and established artists in B.C., funding sound recordings, music videos and marketing initiatives.

For all our Courtenay-Comox musicians, make sure you get connected so we can continue to have a vibrant music scene here!

[**\\$2 billion to support thousands of new homes for middle-income families**](#)

Everyone deserves a safe and affordable place to call home, but the BC Liberals let the housing crisis spiral out of control, and the pandemic has only caused prices to rise more. This week, we added \$2-billion to HousingHub for the development of thousands of new homes for middle-income households. This means \$2 billion in low interest rate loans to development partners through BC Housing's HousingHub to finance the construction of thousands of new homes

across B.C. for middle-income families over the next three years. This is a revolving borrowing program. Once the loans are repaid by the developer, we will invest that money back into the affordable housing market, continuing to increase the number of homes that will be built for middle-income households over time – beyond the initial three years.

B.C. moves forward on drug decriminalization, new overdose emergency response funding

This week we marked the sombre milestone of the 5th anniversary of B.C.'s overdose emergency. Each life lost to overdose is tragic and represents dreams and hopes cut short.

We were making progress before the pandemic, but COVID-19 has made the drug supply increasingly more toxic. We are moving forward on decriminalization and committing \$45 million over three years to sustain and enhance services in every health authority to prevent overdoses and connect people to supports.

Vaccinations and looking ahead

On April 15th, 7,561 vaccines were administered to adults in Island Health – our highest recorded daily total. To date we have delivered 196,877 first doses, just over 26% of Island Health's adult population. The vaccines are working and providing protection from severe illness and death. Let's focus our collective efforts on stopping the spread while the vaccination effort continues so we can all put COVID-19 behind us. As of April 15th, people aged 50+, Indigenous people aged 18+, and those who are clinically vulnerable can register in our online system, to get a notification when it is their turn to book a vaccine appointment. You can find the most up-to date schedules and information about vaccine booking at gov.bc.ca/getvaccinated.

Everyone has thoughts on what we need to move forward. Please feel free to share your thought in this survey: <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/covid-19-survey>

My constituency office is available by phone or email. Available hours are Monday to Thursday 10am-4pm, and Fridays by appointment only. You can reach us at 250.703.2410 or Ronna-Rae.Leonard.MLA@leg.bc.ca if you have any questions or need assistance with provincial supports.

Sincerely,

Ronna-Rae Leonard
MLA Courtenay-Comox

COVID Resources:

For medical info, visit bccdc.ca or call 811

For vaccination info, visit gov.bc.ca/getvaccinated

For provincial supports and BC's Restart Plan, visit gov.bc.ca/covid19 or call 1-888-COVID-19 (1-888-268-4319) or text 604-630-0300

For employer guidelines on returning to work safely, visit WorkSafeBC

Take the self-assessment at covid19.thrive.health

For seniors looking for additional support, or for those looking to support seniors, call 2-1-1 or visit bc211.ca

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/RonnaRaeLeonard/>

Instagram: @ronna-rae-leonard

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYLQfuaKQV-itCluryo2hQg>

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MY OFFICE REMAINS OPEN TO ASSIST BY PHONE OR EMAIL

www.ronna-rae-leonard.ca



It is a privilege to live and work on the traditional lands of the K'omoks First Nations.

