

## **CILT COVID-19 Fall Update**

*October 1, 2020*

As we are looking at increasing case counts in Ontario, CILT & Direct Funding remain committed to ensuring that participants in the Direct Funding Program can access their services in a safe environment, minimizing the risk of COVID-19.

The Direct Funding program is based on the Independent Living model. Self-Managers on the program take on the responsibility of acting as an employer and are therefore required to ensure they are providing a safe working environment. Recognizing that access to PPE during the pandemic has been difficult at times for Self-Managers, DF wants to remind Self-Managers of options for PPE coverage:

- As per a Self-Manager memo that went out May 28<sup>th</sup>, Self-Managers experiencing PPE shortages are asked to contact DF directly for assistance. We have some PPE available to send to Self-Managers who do not have an adequate supply. CILT cannot provide this on an ongoing basis but can assist Self-Managers with an insufficient supply, or who have no PPE.
- In March, DF provided an immediate one-time payment of \$550 to all Self-Managers across Ontario to use for COVID related expenses including buying PPE. These funds were drawn from CILT's Reserve funding as, to date, CILT has not received any additional funds from the MOH for any COVID related expenses. We requested additional funds in March to support Self-Managers and are hoping to have approval of those requests very soon. If and when we have release of those funds from MOH, we will issue an additional payment for PPE to Self-Managers.
- DF continues to authorize additional COVID related expenses on the DF program such as PPE, cleaning supplies etc. Again, should Self-Managers need to purchase additional PPE or have other related expenses, please get in touch with your DF program contact (found at: <https://www.dfontario.ca/contact.html>) for help with getting these expenses authorized and reimbursed.

CILT has been committed to supporting Self-Managers, and consumers broadly, since the start of the pandemic. Here are some of the other actions CILT has undertaken since March 2020:

- Moving CILT to remote work mode to protect CILT program participants, members and staff (March 13, 2020)

- Authorizing the use of additional funds under DF for Self-Managers with additional COVID related needs (March 16, 2020)
- Contributions to numerous community forums and discussions including those organized by the AODA Committee, and various news outlets (from March to present)
- Development of tracking mechanisms for these additional funds (March 2020 to present)
- Survey of CILT consumers about their CORE/IL program needs during the pandemic and adjusting programming accordingly (March 25, 2020)
- Distribution of information regarding Direct Funding as an “essential service” including letters for attendants to use as identification (March 26, 2020)
- The development of PPE guidance and COVID resources for consumers (from March to present)
- Series of Ontario-wide Zoom calls hosted by DF staff for Self-Managers to connect, share strategies for PPE purchase and to answer questions related to COVID needs (April-June, 2020)
- The establishment of CILT PPE supplier relationships in the absence of any previous supplier relationships (from April to present)
- Survey of Self-Managers regarding their PPE needs (April 17, 2020)
- Fundraising with private donors for funds to use towards PPE acquisition for consumers (from April to July)
- Acquiring PPE through TC LHIN, PPE suppliers and other partners for Self-Managers requiring emergency access to PPE (from May to present)
- Contributions to Ministry of Health and other health sector IPAC documents to work towards IL being represented (from May to present)
- Developing and providing webinars related to the needs of consumers during the Pandemic, including “Nothing About Us, Without Us: Disability, Advocacy, and COVID-19” on Thursday May 28, and “ODSP and COVID-19 Zoom Webinar” on June 25<sup>th</sup>
- Participation in ARCH’s Triage Protocol Advisory Committee (from April to present)

- Administration of the Temporary Pandemic Pay to Self-Managers and their attendants across Ontario (July to present)
- Advocacy related to the new Bill 175 and related regulations, including a presentation to the Legislative Standing Committee, written submissions and meetings with MOH staff (June 16th presentation and submission and ongoing consultation on regulations)
- Contributing to the Toronto Accessibility Advisory Committee Rebuild and Recovery Consultations (July 20, 2020)
- Hosting a Toronto Office of Rebuild and Recovery Survey and Disability Community Consultation (July 21, 2020)
- Hosting virtual mental health and well-being events for consumers, including Introduction to Mindfulness for Adults with Disabilities and CILT's virtual Peer Connect groups (Ongoing)
- Leveraging our communication and social media platforms (website, Facebook, Twitter pages) to elevate community awareness and engagement around the COVID-related needs of Ontarians with disabilities, including PPE.

CILT will continue to work to ensure that people with disabilities needs are visible and addressed during the COVID-19 Pandemic. If you are experiencing COVID related issues, do not hesitate to reach out to your Direct Funding contact or to CILT's Core team for assistance.