



## **Background**

The Canadian Association of Exposition Management (CAEM) represents over 500 producers, venues, and suppliers of commercial events – also referred to as trade shows, consumer shows and/or expositions. The business events industry, including commercial events, directly employs 229,000 people across the country and contributes \$33 billion in direct spending annually to local economies. Expositions contribute to increased business development, support for the tourism and transport industries, and drive research, innovation, and professional connections across countless industries. CAEM represents convention centers such as the Vancouver Convention Centre, Edmonton Expo Centre, Exhibition Place, Metro Toronto Convention Center and many more. We also represent, trade show and consumer show members such as the Canadian International Auto Show, Calgary Stampede, Canadian National Exhibition, Toronto International Boat Show, Vancouver International Boat Show, and Montreal Motorcycle Show, just to name a few.

## **Issue**

The commercial events sector has been one of the most impacted sectors in the pandemic. There has been no work-from-home option for expositions. As a result, businesses in the sector have been without revenue for over 19 months.

To address this, since February 2021, CAEM has been meeting with Federal MPs to raise our industry's voice and ask for assistance in securing extensions to existing Federal programs such as CEWs and CERS, but also requesting sector specific funding as CAEM members have been excluded from all available COVID-19 tourism relief funding. We continued this advocacy during the recent general election and thank the MPs, candidates, and government officials for their continued support as we continue to advocate for our members.

With the introduction of proof of vaccination programs and the easing of capacity limits happening across the country, our members are beginning to plan for late fall and winter 2022 events, but reopening does not mean recovery and these businesses have a long road ahead before they achieve any kind of profitability.

The Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) and the Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy (CERS) have been critical in keeping the sector afloat this last year. We welcome the commitment made to introduce a temporary wage subsidy and rent subsidy stream from September 2021 – May 2022 for hard hit sectors such as ours experiencing a minimum of 40% revenue loss. Relief and liquidity remain major challenges for most businesses in the sector which have not been eligible or have been declined government funding through the Tourism Relief Fund and the Major Festivals and Events Program. Therefore, the promised temporary wage and rent subsidy stream, where our sector would be able to access a maximum rate of up to 75%, is so very critical to our industry's survival.

Without the temporary wage and rent subsidy, this \$33 billion sector will not recover which means significant job losses among the 229,000 Canadians employed in the industry.

## **Asks**

The commercial events sector needs to know that government will continue to provide wage and fixed cost support until public health restrictions are permanently lifted and normal travel and events can resume in earnest.

1. Ensuring that the government delivers on its commitment to introduce a temporary wage subsidy and rent subsidy for hardest hit sectors like commercial events until May 2022.
2. Making program funding be forgivable, to provide businesses that have faced substantial hardship – due to the complete shutdown and cyclical nature of the industry – with appropriate support.