



DOWNEY DIGEST

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A NOTE FROM DOUG

Spring is always an exciting time to be in the riding. As the weather turns to warmer days, I'm still hard at work voicing your concerns at Queen's Park. As you'll see throughout this edition of the Downey Digest, there have been plenty of exciting announcements recently to help make life more affordable for all Ontarians. The needs of Ontarians remain at the forefront. We are committed to ensuring that our province comes out of this pandemic stronger than ever!

ONTARIO LIFTS MASK MANDATE

As of March 21, 2022 the Ontario Government has lifted the masking mandate in most indoor settings, including schools, restaurants, gyms and retail settings.

Masks are still mandatory in certain settings, including public transit indoor areas and vehicles, home and community care provider locations **if** you are the employee or contractor, long-term care and retirement homes, and shelters and other congregate care settings that provide services to medically and socially vulnerable individuals.



ONTARIO LIFTS MASK MANDATES

Masks are also required to be work in health care settings, including:

- hospitals
- psychiatric facilities
- doctors' offices
- immunization clinics
- laboratories
- specimen collection centres.

Regardless of where you are, you are **encouraged** to wear a tight-fitting, well constructed mask if you feel it is the right choice for you.

Businesses and organizations may also choose to implement their own rules related to masking.

ONTARIO STAYCATION TAX CREDIT

The Ontario Government is encouraging residents to rediscover the province and support Ontario's tourism industry this year with **Ontario Staycation Tax Credit**. With this Personal Income Tax credit, residents will receive up to 20% of their eligible accommodation expenses for leisure stays in the province this year.

The temporary Personal Income Tax credit will allow Ontario residents to claim eligible accommodation expenses, up to a maximum of \$1,000 for individuals and \$2,000 for families.



ONTARIO STAYCATION TAX CREDIT

Ontarians could get back up to 20% on eligible accommodation expenses for stays between January 1 and December 31, 2022, at hotels, motels, lodges, bed-and-breakfast establishments, cottages, campgrounds and other short-term accommodations in Ontario that are subject to GST/HST.

Ontario residents will be able to apply for the credit when they file their 2022 personal Income Tax and Benefit Returns in 2023, and can receive the credit even if they do not owe income tax. Residents must keep detailed receipts for their eligible Ontario accommodation expenses.

ONTARIO EXTENDS FREEZE ON COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY TUITION

The Ontario government is extending the current tuition freeze for colleges and universities providing financial relief and predictability for students and families seeking access to affordable post-secondary education.

Prior to the 2019-20 tuition reduction, Ontario university tuition rates were the highest in any Canadian province. Ontario has now dropped to the fourth highest in Canada for undergraduate students and the second highest for graduate students.



The extended tuition freeze for Ontario residents builds on Ontario's historic 10 per cent reduction in tuition for the 2019-20 academic year, and the subsequent two-year freeze from 2020-22. These reductions represent the first of their kind in Ontario's history. The government's action to reduce and freeze tuition has provided students with tuition relief of about \$450 million annually when compared to tuition costs in 2018-19.

Students enrolled in a university undergraduate arts and science degree will pay an average of \$660 less in tuition than if the tuition reduction and freeze policy had not been put in place.