



STOP THE SPREAD AND STAY SAFE!

COVID -19 SCREENING PROGRAM FOR
COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS PROGRAM INFORMATION & APPLICATION SUPPORT

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Canada



Canadian
Red Cross

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PROGRAM INFORMATION

1. What is the program?

The *Stop the Spread and Stay Safe!* Program is being launched in partnership with Health Canada to provide COVID-19 Antigen Rapid Tests to community organizations to support front facing workers and organizations operating in high-risk settings and the communities they serve. By providing free tests and support to implement screening programs, community organizations can help to stop the transmission of COVID-19 and protect their personnel (staff and volunteers) through regular COVID-19 screening.

2. What types of organizations can qualify for the program?

The program is available to Canadian community organizations that are currently undertaking frontline or direct service delivery of critical services or supports and includes organizations operating in high risk settings where public health measures can't all be implemented.

To qualify, organizations should also have at least five (5) personnel, which can be a combination of volunteers and/or staff, undertaking direct service delivery.

For the purposes of this program, community organizations include:

- Charities
- Non-profit organizations
- Indigenous organizations

3. When you are talking about program eligibility for organizations, what do you mean by the concepts of 'front facing', 'front line' and 'close contact'? What do you mean by 'organizations operating in a high-risk setting'?

The program focused on organizations working in higher risk contexts where the risk of transmission is higher. This includes community organizations that are currently undertaking direct service delivery of critical services or supports.

"Front line" or "front facing" means working directly and in "close contact" (where the services or the context makes it difficult to maintain social distance) with other personnel or clients (not remotely or virtually) including, but not limited to, food delivery/ distribution, personal services, sheltering support, etc.

"Organizations operating in a high-risk setting" includes organizations working in contexts where public health measures can't all be implemented.

4. What is the objective of the program? Why should my community organization apply?

For over a year, community organizations have played a vital role in supporting Canadians through this pandemic. In partnership with Health Canada, the Canadian Red Cross COVID-19 Screening for Community Organizations Program aims to ensure front line essential organizations can continue providing critical services and contribute to reducing the spread of COVID-19. Through screening and rapid action for front facing personnel, organizations will mitigate the spread of COVID19, and help keep their personnel and communities safe, and contribute to the collective response to COVID-19.

5. What is testing as part of a screening program?

As COVID-19 Antigen Rapid Tests are generally not diagnostic, the purpose is to implement a screening program using testing as part of your organization's tools to keep your personnel safe and mitigate impacts to COVID-19 like masks,

handwashing, social distancing, and cleaning protocols. This program will help you to stand up a screening program using the testing to allow your organization to take mitigative action and make informed decisions, this includes better confidence in safety of work and/or getting tested in the case of a positive result.

6. What is a rapid antigen test?

Rapid antigen testing used for serial testing in individuals without symptoms can help identify active COVID-19 infection based on the presence of antigens (specific proteins on a virus's surface). The sample is collected using a shallow nasal swab. The test results are typically available within 15-20 minutes.

Note: Rapid antigen tests are not as accurate as "PCR" laboratory, polymerase chain reaction tests. If a rapid antigen test is positive, the individual will be asked to go for a Lab PCR COVID-19 diagnostic test to confirm the result. This also allows local public health authorities to identify the nature of the virus and track variants of concern.

7. What is the difference between a rapid COVID-19 antigen test (rapid test) and a public health (PCR, polymerase chain reaction) test?

Antigen screening tests provide rapid results within 15 – 20 minutes, however they are less sensitive and therefore are not as accurate as PCR test. By less sensitive and accurate, there may be more false negatives and is only a test to provide an indication, not a diagnosis. PCR tests are the tests formally administered by your local health authority and are used to diagnose people who are infected with COVID-19. After a preliminary positive screening, a follow-up PCR test is needed within 24 hours to confirm the diagnosis.

8. What types of organizations are not eligible for the program?

Government bodies and for-profit businesses are not eligible to apply for this program, but can access rapid COVID-19 rapid antigen tests through [Health Canada](#).

Individuals are not eligible to apply for this program but may have access to COVID-19 testing through local health providers and pharmacies. Please check your local public health authority for more information.

9. Is this program available in my area?

The program is currently available to community organizations based or working in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan. Please complete the [registration form](#) in the application portal and we will notify you when the program becomes available in your Province or Territory.

10. Who do I contact if I have questions?

You can contact us by email at COVID19ScreeningProgram@redcross.ca for help, check the application guide with step-by-step instructions, or call the call centre at 1-888-381-8246. You can also go through the Frequently Asked Questions to see if what you need is in this document.

APPLICATION SUPPORT

11. Where can I apply?

Interested community organizations can apply by visiting the [application portal](#) and creating an account.

12. Do I have to complete my application all at once?

No, you can save your application and come back to it later until you are ready to submit.

13. Can multiple people in our organization access the application form?

Yes. Multiple users can access the same application form for your organization, but all users must have their own individual user accounts in order to do so.

14. Can organizations make changes to their application after it has been submitted?

No you cannot make changes after your application is submitted, but you can contact us [by email](#) at COVID19ScreeningProgram@redcross.ca if you have forgotten something or want to provide more information.

15. Will I be required to provide documentation to validate my organization?

If you are a non-profit organization, you will be required to provide some documentation. You can find that on page 4 of the [Application Guidelines](#). You can upload the required documents through the application form.

If you are a registered charity, you need to provide your Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) Registration number in the application form.

16. I can't get access to the required documents as we are all working remotely during COVID-19.

Most documentation should be also available online and copies of originals are permissible. However, we recognize that COVID-19 will present some challenges for applications. Please contact us at COVID19ScreeningProgram@redcross.ca for more assistance. Please put as much information in the email as you can outlining what documentation is not accessible.

17. How long does the application take to complete?

The application takes about 15 to 20 minutes to complete.

18. Can I apply on behalf of a different organization?

No. Each organization is required to submit their own application. If your organization is approved, you will access required information and reporting templates through your profile on the application portal. Each organization must have a unique profile in the system.

19. What if my organization has multiple locations? Can I submit those in one application?

If your organization has multiple locations that want to participate in a screening program, we ask that each location submit an individual request form within the application portal. This is because the requirements of each location are critical to the success of your screening program. We will need to understand how many personnel are participating in each location, how

many rapid tests are required, the storage options for tests at the location, disposal options at each location, and then contact people at each location.

20. How will I know the status of my application?

You can check your application profile in the [portal](#) for the status of your application and where it is in the review process.

21. How many rapid tests can I apply for?

The rapid tests are to support your overall screening program for your personnel who are working in frontline roles and are in close contact with others, including other personnel and clients. The application form will ask you to input the number of personnel who meet this criteria. If your organization is approved, we will ship you enough rapid tests to support twice weekly testing for that number of personnel over the next 6 months. This will be broken into multiple shipments.

22. Can I distribute rapid tests to other organizations?

Community organizations are required to apply individually to the *Stop the Spread and Stay Safe!* program, as reporting on the use and results of the tests is required.

23. Can the rapid tests be used for clients of community organizations?

The primary intent of the *Stop the spread and Stay Safe!* program is to provide community organizations with COVID-19 antigen rapid tests for their frontline workers in close contact to mitigate their risks. Effective December 6, 2021, Health Canada has approved screening for clients served by participating organizations. As a reminder, clients are required to be 16 years of age and older, and the screening is not mandatory.

24. Is the CRC offering any funding to support this program?

There is no funding available for this program, but the support provided and the rapid tests are free of charge to community organizations, through funding from the Government of Canada.

25. What support is available to Official language minority communities for the application process?

The application form and all support materials are available in both official languages on the Canadian Red Cross [website](#). Further, the call centre is also available to support both English and French callers, as is the program team who can provide personalized support to successful applicants.

SCREENING & RAPID ANTIGEN TESTS

26. Why is it so important to do screening?

Screening, like adhering to public health guidance and using personal protective equipment, can be a tool used by your organization to reduce your risk and the risk to those you support and serve.

Screening programs are meant to improve the ability to detect potential outbreaks, leading to faster contact tracing and containment. Screening generally uses rapid tests vs. PCR tests and should not be considered a substitute for testing symptomatic individuals.

It's important to do screening in a consistent way, and report on results, in order to identify asymptomatic and presymptomatic individuals to isolate cases of COVID-19 before they spread in communities. This helps to mitigate the spread of the virus and the known variants.

One third of all cases are asymptomatic and over 50% of all diagnosed cases caught it from an asymptomatic carrier. If we can find and isolate the asymptomatic carriers, we could cut our case count in half, at least. Asymptomatic screening can detect individuals who are asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic.

27. Most of our staff and volunteers are vaccinated. Does that still make their test meaningful?

Fully vaccinated people can still contract COVID-19 and spread it. They are just better equipped with an immune response to fight off the virus and avoid severe complications.

Rapid antigen testing used for serial testing in individuals without symptoms can help identify active COVID-19 infection based on the presence of antigens (specific proteins on a virus's surface). The tests help to detect otherwise asymptomatic cases and mitigate risks and is intended to reduce transmission. A Screening Program using Rapid Antigen Tests is one of the tools, used with medical masks, hand-washing, social distancing, and cleaning protocols, that can reduce the spread of COVID-19. Even with vaccination, testing is critical to early detection and mitigations to reduce individual and collective risk.

28. Do rapid tests indicate COVID-19 variants?

Rapid tests indicate whether or not there is a presence of COVID-19 antigens in your body. If there are antigens, you will get a "presumptive positive" result on your rapid test. Based on your provincial guidelines, you will need to go for a PCR test to confirm if you are positive for COVID-19.

If the PCR test is positive, there's an additional analysis of your results that determines if there is a known COVID-19 variant present.

29. What kind of supports are available to my organization in order to set up a screening program?

The Canadian Red Cross is able to provide your organization with several supports including:

- a detailed set of guidelines outlining how to stand up a screening program;
- tip sheets for the personnel participating in the program;
- access to training on different aspects of rapid antigen testing;
- access to the call centre for basic questions and help;
- access to a team of program staff who can provide more personalized support and get information from a team of Canadian Red Cross experts on health;
- webinars on a range of topics relevant to your program.

30. How often should someone be screened for COVID-19 using the rapid antigen tests?

The recommended frequency for this program is to test personnel twice per week or more frequently depending on how your workforce is organized and the nature of your work.

31. What kind of test will be distributed (brand)?

The Canadian Red Cross will be distributing the PanBio™ COVID-19 Antigen Rapid Tests approved and provided by the Government of Canada.

32. How and where should rapid tests be stored?

The tests being distributed through this program (PanBio™ COVID-19 Antigen Rapid Tests) need to be stored at room temperature, between 2 and 30 degrees Celsius. They can also be stored in a refrigerator if you cannot ensure temperature control in your facility. They should not overheat and should not be frozen.

33. How quickly do you get results from these tests?

A COVID-19 rapid screening test can be performed on-site and does not require shipping a specimen to a lab for processing. It takes approximately 15-20 minutes to receive a result.

34. What is the accuracy of these tests?

These are highly accurate in the range of 90% accuracy in detecting if someone is at risk for having COVID-19. However this means that there are also false positives, such as detecting antigens from previous infections.

35. I've heard that some rapid tests only show if you have a respiratory illness. What do these tests look for?

The approved rapid antigen tests are specific to testing for traces of the COVID-19 virus. It is not a fully diagnostic test, meaning that it will not confirm that you have COVID-19. If your result is a presumptive positive, you need to follow the next steps from your provincial government guidelines, typically accessible through your local public health authority. In some provinces and territories, that will mean going for a PCR test to confirm if you have COVID-19. Remember that you can be asymptomatic and still have COVID-19.

36. Why was this antigen-based test chosen to be distributed by the Canadian Red Cross as opposed to other tests?

The Government of Canada determined which model would be distributed through this program. More information on this specific test can be found [here](#).

37. Who needs to be screened in my organization? Is it mandatory for all personnel?

Screening for your personnel is not mandatory, but highly recommended.

38. How is the screening administered - through the nose or mouth?

The rapid antigen test is a short nasal swab and is not invasive. You will insert the swab into each nostril about 2.5 cm (1 inch), rotate 10 times, and leave in place for 3 seconds.

39. Who is able to administer the tests?

The guidelines for this vary across the provinces and territories. If you are selected as a successful organization your guidelines will be tailored to the relevant regulations and requirements.

The *Stop the Spread and Stay Safe!* program is open to organizations with personnel in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan at the current time.

Alberta - The test must be administered under the supervision of someone trained on the self-swabbing process to ensure the sample collection and the test is done properly. Please access the training videos and resources found [here](#). Please note

after orienting yourself to the materials, you will need to complete the quiz and pass with a minimum of 80%. We would advise you keep this quiz on file with your organization.

British Columbia - In British Columbia, tests can be done by a health professional or a trained individual. Individuals are considered trained once they have watched the appropriate training and passed a training [Competency Assessment](#). The provincial Guidelines and Requirements can be found [here](#) and the accompanying training videos [here](#). The CRC program focuses on the supervised self-swabbing method.

Manitoba - In Manitoba, the workplace rapid testing program has finished, but the Canadian Red Cross recommends that the tests be done under the supervision of a trained individual (individuals are considered trained once they have watched the appropriate training. CRC training videos can be viewed [here](#) and common questions about rapid testing in Manitoba can be found [here](#).)

New Brunswick - Tests must be done under the supervision of a trained individual. Individuals are considered trained once they have watched the appropriate training, which can be found [here](#).

Nova Scotia - In Nova Scotia, tests can be done by a trained individual. Individuals are considered trained once they have watched the appropriate training videos. You can access the Nova Scotia training videos [here](#) and the CRC videos [here](#). This includes both supervised testing, or someone self-swabbing in an unsupervised setting. The Stop the Spread Guideline for Nova Scotia focuses on the supervised self-swabbing method.

Ontario - The Ontario Government authorizes “self” screening or swabbing using these kits. However, there is a requirement that a Screening Lead who has received the mandatory training be present. No one other than the individual should perform the swab procedure on themselves. In Ontario, trained individuals may self-administer a nasal swab without additional supervision.

Prince Edward Island - In Prince Edward Island, the test must be administered under the supervision of someone else within the same workplace who is trained on this process to ensure the sample collection and the test are done properly. The CRC has developed training videos which can be accessed [here](#).

Saskatchewan - Individuals in Saskatchewan have to undergo the [designated training](#) referenced in the Guidelines in order to perform the test or supervise individuals in self-swabbing. In some jurisdictions, individuals may only self-swab and it is not permissible for the test to be performed by another individual. Your organization should determine what you wish to offer and may perhaps elect to only allow for individuals to self-swab as this can decrease organizational risk.

40. Do I need medical personnel to administer or supervise testing?

The guidelines for this vary across the provinces and territories. The *Stop the Spread and Stay Safe! program* is open to organizations with personnel in Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan at the current time.

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Ontario - The Ministry of Health guidelines requires that a trained individual supervises the screening process, but that individuals can swab themselves under that supervision.

Prince Edward Island - In Prince Edward Island, the test must be administered under the supervision of someone else within the same workplace who is trained on this process to ensure the sample collection and the test are done properly. The CRC has developed training videos which can be accessed [here](#).

Saskatchewan - Self-swabbing is voluntary, per Saskatchewan Provincial guidance. Non-healthcare professionals who undergo training to ensure compliance and safety ([SHA online training program](#)) are able to either perform the test or supervise individuals in self-swabbing. In some jurisdictions, individuals may only self-swab and it is not permissible for the test to be performed by another individual. Your organization can determine what you wish to offer and may perhaps elect to only allow for individuals to self-swab as this can decrease organizational risk.

Once your application is approved, you will receive an information package to help set up your screening program while the rapid antigen tests are shipped to your location.

41. Is a deposit or payment required to apply to the Program? Does the Canadian Red Cross ever ask for banking info, credit card info, or extensive personal information as part of its application process?

At the point of application for this program, the Canadian Red Cross requires extremely limited personal information. We do not require financial deposits, payments or contributions at any time for the Stop the Spread and Stay Safe! Program. Please note that the Canadian Red Cross will never ask for your banking information or credit card information (except when you are making a financial donation).

Unfortunately, bad actors and individuals seeking to commit fraud see health emergencies and disasters as an opportunity to commit fraud against those impacted and organizations like the Canadian Red Cross. If you receive an email or phone call from someone posing as the Canadian Red Cross, and when in doubt, you can call us at 1-800-418-1111 or email us at COVID19screeningprogram@redcross.ca to validate that the outreach is from the Canadian Red Cross.

42. I am worried that I have received a fraudulent survey, that the survey I have received is not real, or that I have been contacted by a fraudulent party in relation to the Stop the Spread and Stay Safe! Program.

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