

NAMI Minnesota is working very hard to provide you with up-to-date information about COVID-19 and the steps being taken by local, state, and federal governments to maintain services and ensure safety. If you experience any problems accessing necessary mental health services, or are experiencing new barriers, due to COVID-19, please contact namihelps@namimn.org.

What is COVID-19?

Click for [Spanish](#), [Hmong](#), or [Somali](#).

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. This is a new virus and there is still much that experts are still learning. Here are the [facts from the Minnesota Department of Health](#) you need to know right now:

Symptoms: People diagnosed with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illnesses with symptoms of:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of Breath

If you have any of these symptoms, it is very important for you to stay home during your illness unless you are seeking medical care. These symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure** to the virus, so it is very important to exercise caution even if you don't feel sick.

Protect Yourself: The good news is that we have the tools to limit the spread of COVID-19. Here are the best ways to protect yourself, your family, and your community:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water.
- Stay home when you are sick
- Cover your cough with your elbow or a handkerchief
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

What should you do if you have symptoms? If you have the symptoms of COVID-19 and you can manage them at home, then you don't have to seek health care or get tested for the virus. Resources are limited, so only the people who urgently need treatment should seek additional medical care. If you are older or have an underlying medical condition, it may be helpful to notify your doctor for medical advice.

If you need more information, you can get answers to your health questions (7AM to 7 PM) at 651-201-3920 or 1-800-657-3903.

This information has been translated by the Department of Health into Amharic, Arabic, Chinese, Hmong, Karen, Russian, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese. The Department of Health has also developed and translated guidance to find low cost health care and/or insurance. [Click here](#) for the translated materials.

NAMI Minnesota encourages our supporters to take advantage of this information to make informed decisions and prevent the spread of COVID-19. NAMI Members are encouraged to work from home if possible, and to exercise caution when entering the public whenever it is necessary.

What About My Mental Health?

It is normal to feel anxious during this time. If you are worried about your mental health you can

- Call the warm line at 651-288-0400 or text "Support" to 85511; or call 844-739-6369
- Call the crisis team at **CRISIS or click here for the county numbers <https://mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/adults/health-care/mental-health/resources/crisis-contacts.jsp>
- Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- Crisis Text Line is available for free, 24/7 by texting MN to 741741
- Call the SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline at 1-800-985-5990

- For youth facing challenges with social distancing, you should check out this [great page](#) from Youth Move Peer resources.

Because people with mental illnesses have higher smoking rates, they are at a higher risk, so calling the mental health crisis team in order to avoid going to the ER is a good option. As more people may experience anxiety and panic attacks, be sure to call your primary care clinic or the crisis team for help.

Clozapine and Blood Draws

People have expressed concern about what to do if they are on clozapine because blood draws are required, and during this pandemic people are worried about the risk of exposing mental health and health care providers to COVID-19. NAMI Minnesota has asked for advice on this topic and were told that the FDA is providing the flexibility around requiring blood draws for clozapine during the pandemic, but individual patients should follow up with their prescribers to see what is best for them given the situation at the time of their blood draw, including their history of being on clozapine and their current health condition. You can also call the pharmacist if you will soon be in need of medication

In the case of weekly patients, many providers are still recommending a blood draw, especially if they are in their first few months of treatment. If the need for medication were emergent and the person can't or doesn't want to leave for labs, there may be an option for a mobile phlebotomist to have the blood drawn (unlikely in rural areas). This is general advice but it is really important that you check with your provider.

Department of Health

The Department of Health has the most up-to-date information about the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). And is the state agency in charge of the COVID-19 response. They will also have the most [up-to-date information and guidance](#) here in Minnesota. In addition to the general information we have already shared, there is also specific guidance for:

- [Health Professionals](#)
- [Long Term Care Facilities](#)
- [Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Providers](#)
- [First Responders and Law Enforcement](#)
- The Department of Health has also been issuing guidance for home-visiting programs. You can find answers from a Q/A on March 19th [here](#).

Department of Human Services

The Department of Human Services has also released information and guidance that will impact NAMI Minnesota members and supporters. Key updates include:

- [Guidance for child care providers](#), including a hotline operational from 7AM to 7PM at 1-888-234-1268
- [Direct Care and Treatment](#): Starting on March 13th, visits and outings have been cancelled for people staying in a state-operated treatment program.

The Department of Human Services is also working actively to address eligibility issues for Medical Assistance or MinnesotaCare, as well as any changes at the Federal Level. To find the most up-to-date information for providers, counties, tribes and members of the public including FAQ, [visit the DHS COVID-19 webpage](#). As changes evolve at federal and state levels, we will update this page with the latest information.

DHS has also recommended visiting their [programs and services page](#) if you need food assistance. You can also visit the [Minnesota Housing website](#) for assistance with housing.

Department of Employment and Economic Development

Click on these links for information for Employers from [DEED](#) and the [Department of Health](#)

For people who have lost their jobs or had their hours cut because of COVID-19:

DEED's Unemployment Insurance (UI) program assists workers who can't work, have their hours reduced or lose their jobs as a result of the pandemic. You should apply for benefits by visiting www.uimn.org if:

- Your employer has reduced your hours or shut down operations due to COVID-19
- You're unable to work due to being sick with COVID-19 or having been exposed to COVID-19
- You're unable to work because you are caring for an ill or quarantined family member with COVID-19
- You had to quit your job due to a lack of child care or you made reasonable efforts to find alternative child care and you requested time off/other accommodations from your employer, but your employer denied those requests

You may also be eligible for workers compensation if you become sick on the job and you have the right to other protections to care for yourself and your family. See more information on the [Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry's Worker Protections](#) page.

The website is the most efficient way to serve applicants and can accept applications Monday – Friday 6am – 8pm DEED is working to add Sunday hours. Applications are available in Español, Hmoob and Somali. Given the volume of expected applications, applications may take longer than usual to review and process. If you do need to talk to a someone you can call a Customer Service representative Monday-Friday, 8:00am to 4:30pm:

- Twin Cities area: 651-296-3644
- Greater Minnesota: 1-877-898-9090;
- TTY for the hearing impaired: 1-866-814-1252

Vocational Rehabilitation Services: DEED is continuing to offer voc-rehab services to people with disabilities. However, due to the COVID-19 outbreak these supports are now being offered remotely, with some rule If you have questions about the website or changes to the placement and retention services process for Voc-Rehab, please reach out to Evie Wold Evie.wold@state.mn.us or Maureen McAvoy Maureen.mcavoy@state.mn.us.

DEED has also a list of [Community services and financial assistance](#) for unemployed people. [Read important information about employer accommodations and the American with Disabilities Act from the Job Accommodation Network here.](#)

MNsure

Minnesotans with private health insurance through MNsure:

If your income has decreased because of a reduction in your hours or a job loss, it may make you eligible for advanced premium tax credits (APTC) and cost-sharing reductions (CSR). When you [report the change](#) in income, your eligibility for APTC and CSR will be redetermined.

- If this change makes you newly eligible for APTC or CSR, you may qualify to change plans in a special enrollment period. [Go to our website](#) for more information or [call our Contact Center](#).
- If you currently receive APTC, you can [make adjustments to the amount applied to your monthly premium](#).
- All four medical insurance companies that sell private health insurance plans on MNsure are waiving co-pays, co-insurance and deductibles related to COVID-19 diagnostic testing. You should [contact your insurance company](#) directly for questions about plan benefit details and how best to access care.

Any eligible Minnesotan who has [lost health coverage from their employer](#) (including because of a job loss) may qualify for a special enrollment period. Go to our website for a [list of qualifying life events](#) for more details on how to apply.

MNsure has just announced a new special enrollment period in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Starting on March 23rd, any Minnesotan can apply for health insurance on MNsure for coverage starting on April 1, with a deadline of April 21st to get coverage under this special enrollment period. If you need help with applying talk to a [navigator or broker](#) in your community or Call the Contact Center at 651-539-2099 (855-366-7873 outside the Twin Cities). Hours: Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m Need help, but don't have time to call? There is an [online help tool](#) that is tailored to assist with the most common questions. You can find information about common

technical issues, submitting an appeal, checking on the status of your enrollment, how to get help with a Medical Assistance or MinnesotaCare case, and more.

Department of Corrections

Over the weekend (March 28-29), one staff member from MCF-Red Wing and one inmate at MCF-Moose Lake tested positive for COVID-19. Like most people who contract COVID-19, both individuals are experiencing mild symptoms and do not require hospitalization. DOC is providing updates about its response to COVID-19, including updates on inmate testing, on its [website](#). Click [here to read a statement on the positive tests from Commissioner Schneland](#) and [here for a March 30th memo to residents](#). Click here to read the [Minnesota Department of Corrections COVID-19 FAQ](#) sheet (updated March 30th) and a [video message to residents from Corrections Commissioner Paul Schnell](#). And [Click here for updates for DOC Staff](#)

All in-person visiting has been suspended until further notice. To submit questions, please send an email to DOCCommunityinfo@state.mn.us.

The DOC has finalized plans to permit each person two free 5 minute phone calls each week. When you begin a call, you will be asked if you want to use one of your free calls. The call will automatically disconnect after 5 minutes. The two calls are available starting March 18th. DOC has implemented changes to increase access to video visiting. Video visits are paid for by the visitor. The week runs from Tuesday-Monday, so the two free calls renew on Monday night at midnight (Tuesday morning). Unused calls cannot be carried over from week to week.

Beginning April 1, any person wishing to conduct a video visit with an inmate will be provided one free 15 minute video visit per week. Additional 15 minute visits can be purchased for \$3.50, a rate that is 30 percent lower than the normal cost. For friends and family who do not have the necessary equipment to conduct a video visit or their loved one is not eligible for video visits, [videograms](#) are an excellent alternative. A videogram is a 30-second video that can be recorded with a smartphone and sent to a resident electronically. The cost is 4 stamps (\$1.60).

All medical copays are waived until further notice. Because the DOC has to consider a many months long process, they are planning to keep facility programming and other activity operational for as long as possible. They are working on how to do this in a way that keeps residents safe while allowing to avoid any sort of lockdown simply for health reasons. This planning includes: Work assignments, Education, MINNCOR, Flag time, Industry, and Recreation.

The DOC also submitted an update to the legislature on March 16th reporting:

“The DOC is also in the process of setting up weekly calls with the following partners: Labor unions representing the wide variety of staff that work in our facilities, field services, and central office, Jail administrators, Juvenile detention centers, Halfway houses, and County corrections. We are also in close contact with the Department of Public Safety, Minnesota Judicial Branch, and others as we figure out the various needs of the criminal justice system at this time.”

Ombudsperson for Department of Corrections

The Ombuds for Department of Corrections [submitted this letter](#) to the Governor, Chief Justice, and Legislative Leadership.

The new Office of Ombudsperson for the Department of Corrections has started a [Facebook page](#) to share ideas, best practices, and information about good correctional systems response. The posting of articles or other resources does not constitute a recommendation or endorsement by Minnesota's Ombudsperson for Corrections.

Because the office was just recently created, Minnesota's Office of the Ombuds for Corrections only has one staff member working on establishing the office, so messages on this page may go unanswered. If you have a concern about the response of a Minnesota state or local correctional facility specific to Covid-19, email mnobfccovid19@gmail.com.

Department of Human Rights

Information on mistreatment and discrimination due to COVID-19. To submit a complaint click [here](#) or call 651-539-1133. MDHR and the Department of Labor have a workers' protection PDF, [which includes info about employment discrimination with respect to COVID-19](#) and [Viruses don't discriminate and neither should we.](#)

Minnesota Judicial Branch

If you have a court case scheduled between March 16, 2020 and March 30, 2020 [contact the district court](#) to determine if your case will be heard or scheduled to a future date.

Chief Justice Lorie S. Gildea has issued a statewide order, [ADM20-8001](#) Continuing Operations of the Courts of the State of Minnesota Under a Statewide Peacetime Declaration of Emergency. The order goes into effect on Monday, March 23, 2020, and is in effect for the next 30 days or until another order is issued, whichever comes first. The order restricts in-person access to courthouses for only designated case types, and opens up additional opportunities for remote hearings. [Certain hearings](#) are exempted from Governor Walz's "stay-at-home" order. Other than specifically provided for by the order, case deadlines established by Court Rules remain in effect unless extended by an order of the Supreme Court or the presiding judge.

Except for [specific cases](#) detailed in the order, all other proceedings in all other case types shall be held by ITV or any other remote technology that permits the parties and attorneys to appear without being in the courtroom, or by review of the parties' submissions without oral argument, to the extent feasible and practicable. In all housing/eviction matters, hearings will be held in the courtroom on an emergency basis when there is a showing of individual or public health, or safety, at risk. Hearings will be held in the courtroom for any case type where there is an immediate liberty concern, or when public or personal safety concerns are paramount. In-person hearings will adhere to Minnesota Department of Health social distancing guidance to limit the number of people and the proximity of people in a courtroom to the extent possible.

This means that only a very small number of evictions will be considered by the courts. These are called "expedited evictions." The legal threshold for this form of eviction is if the tenant causes a nuisance or does something illegal; **AND** what they did seriously endangers the safety of other residents, their property, or the landlord's property. Your landlord CANNOT evict you for things like paying late rent or not moving out on time. However, it is important to know that these protections will not last forever and you should still abide by the rules of your lease and pay rent. If you're having trouble paying rent or other bills, you can [contact your county](#) and apply for short-term emergency assistance.

In an effort to reduce foot-traffic in courthouses, the State Court Administrator has taken the following temporary administrative actions, effective Monday, March 16, 2020, for the next 30 days: The Judicial Branch will stop sending out late penalty notices and assessing the late penalties for all citations. For offenses eligible for drivers' license suspension, the Judicial Branch will halt the automated process by which a person's license is suspended for failure to appear. The Judicial Branch will stop referring past-due payment cases to the Department of Revenue for collections.

Department of Education

The Minnesota Department of Education is the place to look for up-to-date information about school closures. Information includes closure guidance for Minnesota schools, a message from Commissioner Ricker, a Q-A on school-closure, and the priority categories for emergency workers. All this information be [found here](#) and will be updated regularly. For Higher Ed questions, see the [Coronavirus Updates](#) page by Office of Higher Ed.

Children of health care or emergency workers will be provided care by school districts. This includes children age 12 and under. See the list of emergency workers and full guidance to school districts [here](#). NAMI Minnesota has received clarification from MDE that community-based mental health workers are eligible for this support. There is a school and child care hotline: (7 am to 7 pm): 651-297-1304 or 1-800-657-3504.

The Department of Education has also issued guidance for **special education students**. Their [website now includes](#) answers to frequently asked questions, suggestions for distance learning, and other relevant resources for families of special education students. MDE has also [issued guidance](#) for school-district obligations for special education services during the COVID-19 outbreak.

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Local Criminal Justice/County Jails

March 23rd - Star Tribune: [Judge's order allows release of some Ramsey County inmates in light of coronavirus](#)
"Ramsey County Chief Judge John Guthmann on Monday issued a new order expanding the number of inmates at the county workhouse who are eligible for early release in an effort to stop the spread of the coronavirus. Anyone deemed "medically vulnerable" or otherwise at high-risk of contracting COVID-19, as well as individuals serving sentences for misdemeanor and gross misdemeanor offenses — with the exception of domestic violence-related crimes and certain DWI cases — now qualify to serve the rest of their term on electronic home monitoring. Nonviolent felons, including those convicted of theft and low-level drug possession, are also eligible for release. Ramsey County Community Corrections spokesman Chris Crutchfield said the workhouse is expected to release 20 people by the end of Tuesday."

March 17th - Pioneer Press: [Coronavirus triggers changes at Ramsey County Correctional Facility; talks continue about which inmates should be released](#)

March 15th - Star Tribune: [State Public Defender pushes for release of jail inmates because of coronavirus](#)

Hennepin County: All in-person visits to the Hennepin County Adult and Juvenile Detention Centers are cancelled until further notice. The Hennepin County Attorney's Office [has announced](#) that it is working with the Sheriff's Department and the County Public Defenders to determine a list of potential individuals who would be eligible for a new bail hearing and will make arrangements for their release pending trial in appropriate cases.

There is no statewide policy regarding jails. NAMI is monitoring county jail visitation cancellations. This is our current list of jails that have cancelled in-person visitation and we will update it as new information is made available. You can contact the county jail to see if there are special provisions for video or phone visits.

- **Anoka** - Social Visiting (family & friends) - On-site video visiting – no charge, Off-site video visiting – one free visit per week, others available @ normal price.
- **Dakota** - Social visiting (family and friends) is cancelled at this time. We encourage you to contact your loved one by video (now \$.25 per minute) or by email communication (\$.25 per email). Please visit www.inmatecanteen.com to set up an account.
- **Carver** - Social visiting has been suspended starting March 16 through March 31.
- **Scott** - Inmate visiting Changes: Effective Thursday, March 19, 2020: New inmate visiting hours: Mondays: 4:30 PM to 7:30 PM, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday: 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM and 1:30 PM to 3:30 PM, Saturday: 10:00 AM to 12:30 PM. Friday or Sunday: NO VISITING HOURS. Visitors must call 952-496-8327 one business day ahead of time to schedule a 20-minute visit. Visits will be scheduled on a first come basis. All visits will begin promptly on the HOUR and HALF HOUR and will last for 20 minutes. If a visitor is late for their scheduled visiting time, their visit will still end at the prearranged end-time; no extended time will be allowed. Cleaning/sanitation supplies will be made available and visitors are encouraged to clean the equipment before and after a visit. The Jail will allow no more than three (3) visitors into the visiting area at any time. Only one (1) visitor will be allowed per visit. Visitor must have a valid ID and be 18+. Inmates will only be allowed two (2) visits per week. To add money to an inmate's account or send an email to an inmate, visit www.jailatm.com. If you have questions regarding jail inmate visitation, or have a general jail-related question, please call 952-496-8327.
- **Stearns** - Changes to jail operations consist of the following:
 - Cancellation of all outside programming for jail inmates
 - Cancellation of all jail visiting hours for inmates
 - Initial health screening of all incoming arrests in jail garage prior to introducing anyone into the jail facility
 - The possibility of initial court hearings being heard via closed circuit television instead of appearing physically in court
- **Sherburne** - Sherburne County Jail effective immediately is ending on-site video visits between inmates and outside visitors. We're also suspending our fingerprinting services. Video visits can still be conducted remotely via our service agreement with Securustech.
- **Blue Earth** - Effective March 16, 2020: All on-site visiting sessions have been suspended. Remote visiting is highly encouraged and available at a reduced rate per minute at www.inmatecanteen.com.

- **St. Louis** - All visiting hours are suspended until further notice.
- **Winona** - The following are cancelled by the Winona County Jail effective March 13, 2020 until further notice: Public Fingerprinting, Public Jail visitations, Public jail tours, Inmate Work Crews (STS), Jail Program Bible Study, Jail Program NA and AA
- **Pine** - On-site Inmate Visitation is SUSPENDED until further notice.
- **Polk, Red Lake, Norman Tri-County Jail** - Volunteer led programs and activities are discontinued until further notice. Self-surrenders will not be accepted for the next 60 days - through Sunday, May 31, 2020. Work Release and Sentence-to-Service (STS) Programs will be suspended effective March 21, 2020. Visitors who are sick or who reside in a home with people who are sick should not come to the Justice Center to use the visi-mates. Professional visitors are encouraged to utilize non-contact options, such as video visitation or teleconference.
- **Red River Valley Juvenile Center (Polk, Red Lake, Norman)** - Volunteer led programs and activities are discontinued until further notice. All passes are discontinued and the need to access the community is evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Contact visits are discontinued effective March 18, 2020. Video visitation and/or non-contact visitation will still be permitted. Professional visitors are encouraged to utilize non-contact options, such as video visitation or teleconference. Contact Program Director Kyle Allen at (218) 470-8321 for additional information

Department of Commerce

The Commerce Department has issued this [warning about travel insurance](#). You can contact the office at Commerce Dept. Consumer Services Center: 651-539-1600 or [Complaints](#).

Department of Revenue

The Minnesota Department of Revenue (DOR) has announced that taxpayers filing their annual Minnesota Individual Income Tax return for tax year 2019 now have until Wednesday, July 15, 2020, to file and make their payments without any penalties or interest. Both the IRS and Revenue will accept federal and state 2019 individual income tax returns and payments through July 15, 2020, without assessing penalties or interest. "As Minnesota responds to the COVID-19 situation, we are providing this filing and payment grace period for 2019 to those who need it," said Revenue Commissioner Cynthia Bauerly. "We also encourage Minnesotans who do not need extra time to pay, to file and pay as soon as possible to do your part in providing on-going support to COVID-19 response across the state." Revenue is analyzing how other tax types may be impacted by this announcement. Up-to-date information will be available [on the department's COVID-19 website, including how to request abatements for penalty and interest for other taxes](#).

- Sales Tax Payment Extension for Eligible Businesses - DOR is granting a 30-day Sales and Use Tax grace period for businesses required to suspend or reduce services under Executive Order 20-04. [See Sales and Use Tax for details](#).
- Gambling Tax Payment Extension - DOR is granting a 30-day grace period for Lawful Gambling Tax payments for organizations that request an extension for their March 20 payment. [See Gambling Taxes for details](#).
- MinnesotaCare Tax Filing Extension - DOR is granting a 60-day extension for MinnesotaCare tax returns for organizations that request an extension for their March 16 return. [See MinnesotaCare Taxes for details](#).
- The Minnesota due date of April 15, 2020 has not changed for Corporation Franchise, S Corporation, Partnership, or Fiduciary taxes. However, under state law:
 - C corporations receive an automatic extension to file their Minnesota return to the later of November 15, 2020, or the date of any federal extension to file.
 - S corporations, partnerships, and fiduciaries receive an automatic extension to file their state return to the date of any federal extension to file.

Attorney General

Report any suspected scams to the Attorney General's Office: If you believe you have been the victim of, or were targeted by, a COVID-19 scam, please contact the Minnesota Attorney General's Office immediately. You can file a complaint online or by calling (651) 296-3353 (Metro) or (800) 657-3787 (Greater Minnesota).

Scams and how to avoid them: Scam artists are exploiting public anxieties surrounding COVID-19 to victimize consumers. Emerging scams include:

- Setting up websites to sell bogus products, fake COVID-19 vaccines, and other unproven treatments,
- Using fake emails, texts, and social media posts to deceptively solicit “donations” for victims, and
- Imposter scams where scammers send malicious emails impersonating government agencies such as the CDC in hopes that you will click on a link, and thereby download malicious software that will give the scammer access to your personal or financial information.

Attorney General Ellison is providing Minnesotans with the following tips and resources for spotting and avoiding these emerging COVID-19 scams:

- Don't click on links from unknown sources and ensure that your computer's anti-virus software is fully updated.
- Get updated information directly from relevant governmental agencies like the CDC or Minnesota Department of Health. The Minnesota Department of Health also has a COVID-19 Hotline at: 651-201-3920 or 1-800-657-3902 (7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday).
- Ignore online offers for “miracle” health products, treatments, or vaccinations. There is currently no FDA-approved vaccine to prevent COVID-19.
- Do your research before donating to a non-profit or charity.

Price-gouging: Attorney General Ellison's Office is also concerned with reports that some retailers may be engaged in price-gouging practices by selling essential goods or services (such as food, health care related goods or services, and medical supplies) at unconscionable or excessively inflated prices as a result of COVID-19. The Attorney General strongly encourages consumers to report such practices immediately.

Minnesota Housing Finance Agency

Governor Walz signed Executive Order 20-14 to suspend eviction proceedings during the COVID-19 peacetime emergency. The eviction moratorium will be in effect for the duration of the COVID-19 crisis. The Minnesota Multi Housing Association has also issued these guidelines for landlords:

- Waive late fees for residents who pay rent after the rent due date because they have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and related government actions.
- Offer flexible payment plans for residents who cannot pay rent by the due date.
- Cease new rent increase notifications on all residents starting April 1.
- Direct renters to available resources to assist with food, health, and financial assistance.
- Communicate with residents proactively that you are available to assist them and want to work with them to ensure they remain housed.

Here is information and resources distributed by the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency for housing for Minnesota Families:

Home Mortgage & Home Improvement Programs: Minnesota Housing homeownership and home improvement programs are continuing normal business operations (including accepting new loan commitments), with some modifications described below. The Partner Solutions Team (PST) will continue to offer support to our partners and consumers. While we will have phone support, it will be extremely limited. We encourage our partners to email us at mnhousing.solution@state.mn.us for faster service. Consumers should continue to reach out to us at mn.housing@state.mn.us. The Business Development Team will continue to work with partners via phone and email. We will not participate in any events, Real Estate Professional (REP) Sessions, trainings, or in-person events. The training team is able to offer support to users who access our eLearning training modules or our regularly scheduled webinars (Monthly Underwriting Conference Call and Monthly Fix Up Check-in).

Resources and information on affected events and trainings:

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[Homeownership Lender Training](#): note other options of webinars and eLearning modules if you need training

[Home Improvement Lender Training](#): note option of the Fix Up Monthly Check-in webinars

[REP Sessions](#): Contact Heidi Erickson to reschedule postponed sessions or for details on how to set up a session after it becomes safe to hold events.

[Community Events](#): As it becomes safe to participate in community events again, we will post opportunities for Partners to attend events with Minnesota Housing on our [event calendar](#).

Community Initiatives Impact Fund or Single Family Request for Proposals questions should be directed to Impact.Fund.MHFA@state.mn.us or an Impact Fund staff member. Rehabilitation Loan Program/Emergency & Accessibility Loan Program questions should be directed to [Tonya Taylor](#). HECAT and Homeownership Capacity program questions should be directed to [Que Vang](#).

Portfolio Management & Quality Control Portfolio Management is still actively supporting our borrowers and lenders. Please email mnhousing.portfolio@state.mn.us with any questions. Quality Control is still performing all of the same activities, and lenders should continue to email mnhousing.qc@state.mn.us.

Department of Veterans Affairs

Because of the vulnerability of the Veterans Homes' population, effective 3/13/20, the five Minnesota Veterans Homes have adopted a Restricted Visitor Policy. The Restricted Visitor Policy includes the following:

- Restricting visitors except for those visiting Residents at end of life or when deemed medically necessary
 - Using a single entrance for the facility
 - Allowing essential volunteers and vendors only
 - Requiring Visitors to complete a self-declaration screening at entrance
 - Conducting evaluative screening and education at facility entrance by a Home Clinical staff member
 - Providing MDVA Resident/Guest internet access to Residents to communicate with their families
 - Postponing public events and entertainment
 - Restricting activities to unit levels
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- The Adult Day Center (Vets Club) located on the Minneapolis Veterans Home Campus will close starting Monday, March 16 to April 6. The reopen date is tentative and subject to change. Staff are being reassigned and clients and families have been notified.

Metro Transit

Metro Transit will reduce service beginning Wednesday, March 25. This is to address a sharp decline in ridership and to focus our resources where they are most needed to provide critical travel during this crisis. Read more about the changes on the [Rider's Almanac blog](#) and continue to watch metrotransit.org/health for the latest information.

Remember:

- Use transit for essential travel only
- Exit out the back door of buses
- Keep distance between you and others, especially the driver
- When boarding, if the bus or train does not have space to allow adequate social distancing, wait for the next one, if possible
- Bus and light rail service is suspended nightly between 11 p.m. and 4:30 a.m. (METRO Blue Line airport shuttle between Terminal 1 and Terminal 2 stations continues to operate)
- Metro Transit Service Centers and Lost & Found are closed. Transit Information is available by phone (612-373-3333) and text (612-444-1161) Monday-Friday 6:30 a.m. – 9 p.m.; Customer Relations is available by phone (612-373-3333) and online Monday-Friday 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Routes will follow SATURDAY schedules unless noted [here](#). Some routes will follow Saturday schedules with additional trips. If your route does not have a schedule for Saturday service and is not listed here, it will not operate.

Metro Mobility

Metro Mobility and Transit Link continue to operate. To limit exposure, Metro Mobility and Transit Link are transporting only one passenger per ride, so drivers will take the passenger directly to his/her destination on both legs of the trip. For those who live more than ½ mile from a fixed-route bus stop and are eligible for Transit Link: Contact Transit Link at 651 602 5465, Monday- Friday 7:30 - 4:00 PM. Trips must be requested 1 to 4 *business* days in advance.

Certified [Metro Mobility](#) customers can now order groceries and household essentials online from a store that has online shopping and local pick up. Metro Mobility will pick your order up and deliver to your house. And the service is free — no fares for delivery. Delivery begins on Sunday, March 22. You can book same day or in advance, for groceries and household essentials, just like you book a ride for yourself. You'll receive your delivery within 60 minutes of the scheduled pickup time. Just tell the store that Metro Mobility is picking up and provide us your order number as proof of purchase for pick up. Our four-bag limit remains in effect. Pickups must be scheduled at a commercial location. Drivers will verify your photo ID at drop-off.

Book rides with your provider
West Zone (Transit Team)
Call 651-602-1100
E-mail WReservations@metc.state.mn.us

East Zone (First Transit East)
Call 651-602-1120
E-mail EReservations@metc.state.mn.us

South Zone (First Transit South)
Call 651-602-1180
E-mail SReservations@metc.state.mn.us

Contact the Metro Mobility Service Center
Service hours begin on Sunday March 22, Mon to
Fri, 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sat and Sun, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Call 651-602-1111
TTY 651-221-9886
metromobility@metc.state.mn.us

Comcast Update

Comcast Increases Access to and Speeds of Internet Essentials' Low-Income Internet Service to Support Americans Through the Coronavirus Pandemic

1. Offering new customers 60 days of complimentary Internet Essentials service, which is normally available to all qualified low-income households for \$9.95/month.

- Send all new customers a free self-install kit that includes a cable modem with a Wi-Fi router. There will be no term contract or credit check and no shipping fee.
- To sign up, applicants can simply visit www.internetessentials.com. The accessible website also includes the option to video chat with customer service agents in American Sign Language. There are also two dedicated phone numbers 1-855-846-8376 for English and 1-855-765-6995 for Spanish.

2. Increasing Internet speeds for the Internet Essentials service from 15/2 Mbps to 25/3 Mbps for all new and existing customers, which will be the speed of the service going forward. To receive the increased Internet speeds, existing customers will not need to do anything. The new speeds will be rolled out nationally over the next few days.

HR 6201: Federal Legislation on COVID-19 Response

Here is a summary of HR 6201, federal legislation signed into law on Wednesday, March 18th.

[Emergency Paid leave](#)

- In order to be eligible, the person must have been employed for 30 or more days before they were impacted by COVID 19, work for an employer with fewer than 500 employees, and meet one of these criteria
 - Worker has a COVID-19 Diagnosis
 - Worker is quarantined on recommendation of health care provider, employer, of government official to prevent spread of COVID-19
 - Worker is caring someone with COVID-19 or under quarantine
 - Worker is caring for child or another individual who is unable to care for themselves due to the COVID-19 related closure of a school, child-care facility, or other care program.
- This benefit will be available for up to three months where the employee had to take more than 14 days of leave from their work in response to COVID-19.
- Benefit will amount to two-thirds of an individuals average monthly earnings up to \$4,000, and must be offset by any state or private paid-leave benefit the individual receives.
- SSI benefits do not count as income or resources for the purposes of this program.

Paid Sick Leave

- All employers with fewer than 500 employees must allow workers to gradually accrue seven days of paid sick leave, as well as offer 14 days of sick leave immediately following a public health emergency.
- Paid sick days cover staying home when a child's school is closed due to a public health emergency, when the employer is closed due to a public health emergency, or if you or a family member is quarantined or isolated due to a public health emergency.
- Federal government will reimburse small businesses with 50 or fewer employees for the costs of providing the additional 14 days of sick leave.

Health Insurance

- Requires private health plans and Public Health Plans to cover COVID-19 testing without any cost-sharing by the enrollee.
- Federal government will pick up costs related to COVID-19 testing for people without health insurance.

Housing and Urban Development

HUD posted the following Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance and Technical Assistance (TA) materials on the [HUD Exchange Disease Risks and Homelessness Page](#):

- [CDC: Interim Guidance for Homeless Service Providers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Questions to Assist CoCs and Public Health Authorities to Limit the Spread of Infectious Disease in Homeless Programs](#)
- [Specific Considerations for Public Health Authorities to Limit Infection Risk Among People Experiencing Homelessness](#)
- [Eligible ESG costs for Infectious Disease Preparedness](#)

Families and individuals experiencing homelessness are more vulnerable to infectious diseases due to lack of access to primary care, mobility, and poor health status from extended episodes of homelessness. HUD strongly encourages Continuums of Care (CoCs) to contact local public health departments, Healthcare for the Homeless agencies, and other local health partners to ensure the unique needs and opportunities related to the homeless service system are incorporated. CoCs can take steps now to develop preparedness and response plans to protect against infection.

HUD has instituted an [immediate foreclosure and eviction moratorium](#) for single family homeowners with FHA-insured mortgages for the next 60 days. This does not apply to people who are renters.

Information from Association of Minnesota Counties

Counties are modifying operations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The following counties have declared emergencies or otherwise changed operations and we're sharing those we've received to-date. We will continue to update this page regularly with information we receive from counties.

- [Anoka](#)
- [Blue Earth](#)
- [Chisago](#)
- [Cook](#)
- [Crow Wing](#)
- [Dakota](#)
- [Goodhue](#)
- [Hennepin](#)
- [Houston](#)
- [Kandiyohi](#)
- [Koochiching](#)
- [Lac qui Parle](#)
- [Lake](#)
- [Le Sueur](#)
- [Lincoln](#)
- [Marshall](#)
- [McLeod](#)
- [Meeker](#)
- [Morrison](#)
- [Mower](#)
- [Nicollet](#)
- [Olmsted](#)
- [Otter Tail](#)
- [Pine](#)
- [Ramsey](#)
- [Renville](#)
- [Rice](#)
- [Rock](#)
- [Roseau](#)
- [Scott](#)
- [Sherburne](#)
- [Steele](#)
- [Traverse](#)
- [Wadena](#)
- [Waseca](#)
- [Washington](#)
- [Yellow Medicine](#)

Information for Immigrant Communities

Although undocumented people are usually not eligible for health insurance, they can still receive health care through free/low-cost clinics that serve the uninsured. Undocumented people are welcome and will not be turned away from free/low-cost clinics. If you have symptoms of a cold, like fever and dry cough, you should seek medical assistance to get tested for the Coronavirus. [Click here to find a free/low-cost clinic in Minnesota.](#) Job help and other resources are being offered virtually through the [International Institute of Minnesota](#). More information on unemployment benefits for immigrants [can be found at LawHelpMN's website](#). You cannot get unemployment benefits if you do not have permission to work in the United States. If you do have permission to work, you can get unemployment benefits. You have permission to work if you are a permanent resident, have a work visa, or have a work permit. For unemployment benefits, the government only counts the work you did while you had permission to work.

The Public Charge Rule made certain government assistance programs and other factors eligible criteria for denying immigrants visa extensions or a green card. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, U.S. Citizen and

Immigration Services (USCIS) has made exceptions to the Public Charge Rule. Federally funded programs that provide testing, treatment, and preventative care (including vaccines, if available) for the Coronavirus will not be considered factors in the visa and green card decisions. Additionally, if your place of employment closes down due to the pandemic, you lose your job, or you have to stop going to school, you may submit a statement along with your application to adjust status or extend visa explaining how the virus has affected your eligibility. [You can read the full USCIS response to COVID-19 regarding the Public Charge Rule here.](#)

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services announced also that they will accept all benefit forms and documents with reproduced original signatures, including the Form I-129, Petition for Nonimmigrant Worker, for submissions dated March 21, 2020, and beyond.

Undocumented Workers Employment Rights FAQ

As an undocumented worker, what are my rights under wage and hour laws?

Undocumented workers generally have the same wage and hour rights as other workers. Thus, the same Federal laws that apply to authorized workers generally apply to persons working without legal immigration status. These laws establish your right to minimum wage, overtime pay, breaks, tips, and other forms of wages. For example, an employer cannot refuse to pay you by saying that you should not have been working in the first place because you have no “papers.” (However, if you have been fired because you have a wage complaint, it’s less clear whether you can recover the income you lost due to being fired.) You can also contact the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). DOL should not question you about your immigration status nor report your lack of status if it is somehow revealed.

As an undocumented worker, what are my rights under health and safety laws?

Health and safety laws protect all employees regardless of their immigration status. Therefore, undocumented workers have rights to information regarding their health and safety rights. They have the right to refuse unsafe work if they reasonably believe it would create a real and apparent hazard to them or their co-workers.

As an undocumented worker, can I organize or participate in a union?

Yes. If you are an undocumented worker who doesn’t work for the government, the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) protects your right to organize a union, elect a union, and collectively bargain with employers. It also allows you to engage in “concerted activity” to improve working conditions for all employees even if there is no union yet. Concerted action occurs when two or more employees act, with their employer’s knowledge, to improve working conditions on behalf of all employees, or if one employee acts on behalf of others. If your employer violates the NLRA by retaliating against you for your union activity or by committing another unlawful labor practice, however, your remedies will be limited because of your immigration status. In particular, if you were unlawfully fired, you will not be entitled to “backpay” (your wages for the time you were unemployed because of the firing). Also, you will not be able to get your job back because, as an undocumented worker, you do not have legal work authorization. Filing a Union Activity Claim: If you choose to file a union activity claim, you should contact the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). The NLRB should not question you about your immigration status or report your immigration status if it is somehow revealed.

National Resources

For those looking for additional information, here are some links to helpful resources from National Organizations:

- [National Council](#): Resources and tools for providers and the general public.
- [SMI Advisor](#): This resource includes guidance from the APA on telemedicine, sample patient handouts, and links to helpful information from the CDC.