

# NAMI COVID-19 Resources

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](mailto:namihelps@namimn.org).

The Minnesota Department of Human Services, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division website at [mn.gov/deaf-hard-of-hearing](http://mn.gov/deaf-hard-of-hearing) offers links to accessible COVID-19 information and resources to meet this need. If you need help [finding an ASL interpreter](#), would like to learn more about [working with interpreters](#) or about [assistive technology](#), these resources are also available on [Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division's website](#).

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# What is COVID-19?

Click for [Spanish](#), [Hmong](#), or [Somali](#). [Check here](#) for more resources in other languages.

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, Arabaic, 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?

NAMI Minnesota is very concerned about the mental health of the people we serve and the greater community. This is a very trying time. If you have questions about COVID-19, call the Department of Health at 651-201-3920 or 1-800-657-3903 from 7 am – 7 pm Monday through Friday.

If you are:

- Unsure about attending therapy sessions outside the home, especially people who are at higher risk, ask your health care provider about telemedicine or online mental health services.
- Worried about access to prescribed medications, you can ask your health care provider about getting 90-day supplies vs. a 60 or 30-day supply. If this is not possible, we encourage you to refill your medications as soon as they are allowed.

If you are worried about your mental health:

- Call the warm line at 651-288-0400 or text “Support” to 85511;
- Call the crisis team at \*\*CRISIS or click here for the [adult county numbers](#) or here for the [children’s crisis response numbers](#)
- 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

Minnesota has also developed and shared resources to support the wellbeing of children and adults as they adjust to sheltering in place:

- [Supporting Mental Promotion during COVID-19 \(MDH\)](#)
- [Mental and Behavioral Health Resources During COVID19 \(MDH\)](#)
- [Supporting people who have disabilities during COVID-19](#)
- [Resources for people with autism, their families, providers and educators during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

It’s also important to know that visits to inpatient mental health units may be curtailed, so find alternative ways to stay connected. More clinics may move to virtual visits to limit exposure. 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.

Lastly, take care of yourself. We know people are feeling overwhelmed and increasingly anxious. Remember that knowledge is power and don’t accept everything that you hear or read. Go to trusted sites such as the CDC or the Minnesota Department of Health.

While we are supposed to socially isolate ourselves to prevent the CONVO-19 from spreading, we don’t need to emotionally isolate ourselves. Check in with people you care about or neighbors who don’t have close family or friends by calling, emailing or connecting on social media. Keep a routine, eat healthy and take a walk. Download the apps that help with anxiety such as Calm or Headspace.

By doing what we can to minimize the spread of COVID-19 and by supporting each other, we will make it through this difficult time. NAMI Minnesota will continue to keep you updated as this situation evolves and share more information as things change. Please check our website for any updates about support groups, classes and the office and for more information on COVID-19 check the [Minnesota Department of Health’s website](#).

Other helpful resources:

- CDC [Mental Health and Coping During COVID-19](#)
- The Jed Foundation [Tips for Self-Care and Managing Stress](#)
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) [Taking Care of Your Behavioral Health: Tips for Social Distancing, Quarantine, and Isolation During an Infectious Disease Outbreak](#)
- SAMHSA [Coping With Stress During Infectious Disease Outbreaks](#)
- The National Child Traumatic Stress Network [Parent/Caregiver Guide to Helping Families Cope with the Coronavirus Disease 2019](#) (English, Spanish, and Chinese versions available).
- American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry [Talking to Children About Coronavirus](#)
- [Parenting Advice](#) from the World Health Organization

#### **For healthcare workers:**

- The Minnesota Psychiatric Society is launching free [COVID Cares support services](#) for healthcare workers, first responders and essential personnel available 9am-9pm daily, beginning Monday, April 13. Licensed mental health and substance use disorder personnel are available to talk with individuals on the front lines and provide them with support over the telephone. These special 20-minute support calls are offered to serve Minnesota health care workers, first responders and essential personnel.
  - [COVID Cares Support Service Information](#) (for general information, links, etc.)

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- [COVID Cares Support Service Schedule](#) showing providers with clickable phone numbers covering time 60-minute time slots from 9am to 9pm every day of the week.
- The Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement (ICSI) has created [this website specifically dedicated to supporting the mental health of healthcare workers](#) during the pandemic
- ICSI and the Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians (MAFP) are hosting weekly online support and education events for healthcare workers. Click [here for information on the MAFP events](#) and email [pstaack@icsi.org](mailto:pstaack@icsi.org) for more information on the ICSI events.

## Executive Orders

### Shelter in Place Order / Public Health Emergency

Governor Walz issued an executive order directing Minnesotans to shelter in place from Friday, March 27th at 11:59 PM until Friday, April 10th at 5:00 PM. Governor Walz issued a second executive order, extending the shelter in place requirements through May 3. Governor Walz has now issued a third executive order extending shelter in place requirements through May 15. The Shelter in Place order expired on May 15th. However, Governor Walz extended the public health emergency through June 12th and again through July 12. There are also restrictions on the types of gatherings and businesses that can open during the public health emergency. Bars, Restaurants, and Religious gatherings with more than ten people are still closed. Furthermore, at-risk populations are strongly encouraged to stay at home. This includes:

- 65 years and older.
- Living in a nursing home or a long-term care facility, as defined by the Commissioner of Health.
- Any age with underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled, including:
  - People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma.
  - People who have serious heart conditions.
  - People who are immunocompromised (caused by cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, or prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications).
  - People with severe obesity (body mass index (BMI) of 40 or higher).
  - People with diabetes.
  - People with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis.
  - People with liver disease.

This list is not comprehensive and you should consult your doctor to determine whether or not you should continue to remain at home. When leaving your home, it is strongly recommended for everyone to wear a manufactured or homemade cloth mask.

### Non-Critical Businesses During Public Health Emergency

Under [executive order 20-56](#), Governor Walz has begun the process of opening the economy, including non-essential businesses like retail stores and other businesses that sell, rent, maintain, or repair goods. In order to open up, these businesses must adopt a COVID-19 preparedness plan for customers and employees and allow no more than 50% of the buildings occupant capacity at any given time. If workers can work from home, they must continue to do so. Bars, restaurants, salons or barber shops, gyms, and places like a concert venue are not opened under this executive order. You can learn more about this next phase in the public health emergency and Minnesota's economy on the [DEED website](#).

### Worker Protections During the Public Health Emergency

With the end of the shelter in place order, more people will have the opportunity to go back to work. However, it is important for everyone to know that they do not have to go back to work. Under [executive order 20-54](#), Governor

Walz has set the bar for sanitary work conditions and has ensured that employees will not face retaliation because they choose not to work due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to all the other protections workers have under the law, this executive order guarantees that:

- Employers cannot retaliate against workers who ask questions or raise concerns about COVID-19 safety precautions.
- Employers cannot discriminate against or retaliate against a worker for wearing protective coverings like gloves or a face covering, so long as the protective coverings do not violate industry standards or existing policies related to health, safety, or decency.
- Workers have the right to refuse to work if they believe, in good faith, that the working conditions place them at risk of serious injury or death, including the belief that working conditions place them at risk of contracting COVID-19.

These protections are available to all workers in Minnesota regardless of their immigration status.

## Telemedicine

On Tuesday, Governor Walz issued an executive order to allow mental health providers licensed in other states to offer services in Minnesota for the duration of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. This will provide a short-term boost to Minnesota's mental health workforce. These providers must submit an application to the relevant licensing board in Minnesota and submit to the jurisdiction of this licensing board.

The practical impact of this executive order is that the treatment you get through telemedicine may be given to you by someone from another state. It's important to remember that this provider must be licensed and meet all the regulatory standards within the state of origin in order to provide mental health services here in Minnesota. In the event that you receive improper care via telemedicine, you should still contact regulators here in Minnesota even if the provider is from another state. You can read the [full executive order here](#).

## Eviction Moratorium

On March 23, 2020, Governor Walz signed Emergency [Executive Order 20-14](#) suspending evictions and writs of recovery for the term of the COVID-19 peacetime emergency. This Executive Order keeps people stably housed and prevents displacement during this health emergency.

Note that evictions and terminations are allowed in cases where the tenant seriously endangers the safety of other residents or for violation of 504B.171, subd. 1 (certain unlawful activities).

- This order took effect on March 24, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. and applies to households in their homes as of March 1, 2020. For more information about this order, please see [Summary of Executive Order 20-14](#) and [Frequently Asked Questions about Executive Order 20-14](#) (includes a referral list for property owners, renters, financial institutions, and borrowers).

What is Suspended During This Order?

- Filing residential evictions
- Lease terminations
- Carrying out a Writ of Recovery: Enforcing an eviction through forcible removal of a household by a sheriff or other officer

For Tenants:

- **Rent is not reduced or waived during this suspension.** Once the suspension has ended, owners can file for evictions and removals can be enforced.
- If you do not pay your rent, it could cause credit problems that will impact future housing options and those payments are critical for landlords/owners to pay their bills.

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- Having trouble making rent? First, be in touch with your landlord right away. Reach out early to discuss potential payment plans or accommodations. Second, you may be eligible for assistance.
- Local units of government (including counties and housing and redevelopment authorities) and nonprofits administer emergency assistance and short-term rental assistance programs that may be available. You may be eligible for other government programs as well depending on your circumstances.
- Many programs, including emergency assistance, can be accessed through the [Department of Human Services](#). Or you can reach out to your county through their [website](#) or by [phone](#).
- Short-term rental assistance through Minnesota Housing's Family Homelessness Prevention program may also be available. [Find your local program and contact them for assistance](#).

For other resources and referrals, please call:

- United Way 211: Free and confidential health and human services information for people in Minnesota.
- Website: [www.211unitedway.org](http://www.211unitedway.org)
- Call: 211 or 651.291-0211
- Toll Free: 800.543-7709
- Text: Text your ZIP code to 898211 for information
- Text MNCOVID to 898211 for COVID Resources
- \*Language assistance available in Español (Spanish) and Hmong

## DHS Flexibility

EO 20-12 provides the Department of Human Services with short-term flexibility to alter background study requirements, licensing and certification standards, requirements for in-person assessments, eligibility renewal standards for public programs, work or community engagement requirements, service delivery standards including treatment setting and staffing ratios, payment procedures, and more. The most important change for the mental health community relates to telehealth, where the executive order allows for flexibility regarding telehealth and other electronic strategies for communicating with providers or patients. Private plans in Minnesota have already agreed to reimburse telehealth from a person's home and by phone. You can find more information about these waivers in the next section.

## Status of DHS Waivers

Under Executive Order 20-12, the Department of Human Services (DHS) has the authority to seek federal waivers and provide additional flexibility so that healthcare providers can safely offer their services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

With the passage of legislation during the First Special Session of 2020, DHS can now continue to offer waivers in certain areas after the conclusion of the public health emergency. Here is the full break-down of the waivers in this agreement:

The following waivers are allowed to continue so long as they have federal authorization:

- CV 17: Preserving health care coverage under Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare. Under this waiver, an enrollee cannot lose their coverage unless they specifically request to be taken off.
- CV18: Waives work requirements for able bodied adults without children to get food stamp or SNAP benefits.
- CV 20: Eliminating cost-sharing requirements for COVID-19 diagnosis or treatment for Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare enrollees. This includes copayments and deductibles.
- CV 37: Temporarily waives the requirement for food stamp recipients to verify their eligibility every 6 months. Also allows for counties and tribes to process new food stamp applications.

- CV 59: Extends the eligibility for the Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) program between 8 to 18 months, with the benefit not going beyond September 30, 2020.
- CV 60: Extends the 60 month eligibility period for the federally funded Refugee Social Services Program, with additional months not going beyond September 30, 2020.

The legislation also extends these waivers through June 30, 2021

- CV 15: Allows for phone and video visits to provide services under a Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) waiver.
- CV 16: Expands the options for people with health insurance through the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Medical Assistance, and MinnesotaCare to access needed health services through telemedicine. This includes expanding the definition of telemedicine to include phone calls and nonsecure platforms like skype, allowing the providers first visit to be over the phone, allowing more than three telemedicine visits per week, and requiring managed care plans to follow these policies.
- CV 21: Expands ability for school-linked mental health and intermediate school district mental health programs to provide services via telemedicine. This includes using grant funds to expand telemedicine services, no longer requiring the first visit to be in person, waiving the three visit per week limit on telemedicine, and allowing for the use of telephone and other non-secured platforms like skype.
- CV 24: Waives the requirement for face-to-face visits for Minnesotans on Medical Assistance who receive targeted case management. This includes child welfare targeted case management, children's mental health targeted case management, adult mental health targeted case management, vulnerable adult or adult with developmental disabilities (VA/DD) targeted case management, and relocation service coordination targeted case management.
- CV 27: Waives the limit on the number of days a housing support recipient can be absent from their residence. This will allow for people to return to their residence after hospitalization or quarantine due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- CV 30: Allows additional mental health and substance use disorders to provide telemedicine via telephone or video visits. Eligible providers include licensed health care providers, mental health peer specialists, Adult Rehabilitative Mental Health Services (ARMHS), Children's Therapeutic Support Services (CTSS), and alcohol and drug counselors and other substance use disorder staff.
- CV 31: Allows counties to request not be held financially responsible for the increased charges when a patient no longer meets the criteria for care at the Anoka Metro Regional Treatment Center (AMRTC) and the Community Behavioral Health Hospitals (CBHHs), so long as the delay in discharge is due to challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- CV 38: Provides flexibility for for housing support settings to safely provide services in group and individual settings during the pandemic, including moving people to another setting in order to isolate and keep people safe.
- CV 43: Modifies a previous waiver on HCBS to further expand phone and video services for people living in their own homes in order to reduce social isolation and strengthen the health and safety of older adults and people disabilities, particularly those who are used to daily contact in day service facilities.
- CV 44: Allows for the remote deliver of adult day services remotely or in-person to one individual at a time. Day treatment providers can use alternative strategies to provide wellness checks, socialization, activities, meal delivery, assistance with the activities of daily living, and individual support to family caregivers.
- CV 45: Modifies requirements for substance use disorder providers, including treatment delivery, telemedicine, personnel and training requirements, and other areas.
- CV 49: Modifies standards for day treatment in order to provide services safely. Requires day treatment providers to notify the commissioner of human services if they intend to provide services during the public health emergency.



- CV 50: Modifies requirements for the Early Intensive Developmental and Behavioral Intervention (EIDBI) services for people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and related conditions. Changes include expanding the use of phone and video platforms, clarifying the limit on telemedicine visits, waiving the face-to-face requirement for EIDBI coordinated care conferences, and waiving the requirement to update the individual treatment plan in order to extend EIDBI services.
- CV 53: Allows Personal Care Assistance (PCA) providers to provide in-person oversight via telephone or video platforms and increasing the number of hours an individual worker to 310 hours per month.
- CV 64: Modifies standards for mental health centers so that they can safely serve their clients. Waivers for treatment deliver, personnel, and documentation are retroactive to March 13th. This includes permitting alternative mental health professional supervision of clinical services at satellite locations; permitting an alternative process for case consultation meetings; and permitting mental health professionals to provide required client-specific supervisory contact by telephone or video communication instead of face-to-face supervision.

Finally, also allows for all other waivers and modifications sought by DHS due to the COVID-19 pandemic to continue for no more than 60 days after the conclusion of the public health emergency.

Here are the key Waivers for the mental health community.

## Waivers Under Executive Order or Existing State Authority

### [Suspending application requirements for economic assistance and housing programs \(CV03\)](#)

The commissioner waived certain requirements for economic assistance and housing programs, affecting procedures for applications and interviews, verification, changes to existing applications and reporting. The affected programs include General Assistance, Housing Support, Minnesota Supplemental Aid, the Minnesota Family Investment Program and the Diversionary Work Program. The changes also reduce barriers for families applying for cash assistance, relieve eligibility workers of after-the-fact verifications, and ensure that participants do not have to repay cash assistance overpayments caused by state, local agency or system errors. These changes will reduce the number of face-to-face contacts in county and tribal offices while making it easier for Minnesotans in sudden financial crisis to receive assistance.

### [Allowing telemedicine alternative for School-Linked Mental Health services and Intermediate School District Mental Health services for children and their families \(CV21\)](#)

The commissioner temporarily waived certain requirements for School-Linked Mental Health and Intermediate School District Mental Health Innovation programs to allow for services via telemedicine. This action:

- Authorizes reimbursing school mental health providers for expanded telemedicine services through grant funds;
- Increases flexibility to no longer require the first visit be in person;
- Waives the three-day-per-week limit on telemedicine; and
- Allows telephone and other non-secured electronic communications platforms, such as Skype.

### [Waiving work requirements for certain SNAP participants \(CV18\)](#)

The commissioner waived work requirements for able-bodied adults without children who receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits.

The commissioner used existing authority under federal law to make this change during the public health emergency. Able-bodied adults without children are normally required to meet work requirements unless they give good cause, defined as circumstances beyond their control, such as illness, household emergency or unavailable transportation. States determine what qualifies as good cause, and the department considers the COVID-19 pandemic to be an emergency facing all Minnesota households.

#### [Allowing waiver of county cost when COVID-19 delays discharges from DHS-operated psychiatric hospitals \(CV31\)](#)

The commissioner will temporarily allow counties to request not to be held financially responsible for increased charges incurred for patients who no longer require inpatient care when discharge from DHS-operated psychiatric hospitals is delayed because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

State law requires counties to pay the full cost of care for patients admitted to the Anoka-Metro Regional Treatment Center or one of the six Community Behavioral Health Hospitals once they no longer require inpatient care.

Community-based programs that normally accept patients discharged from DHS-operated psychiatric facilities may no longer admit new patients because of COVID-19 concerns, which could result in delayed discharges from DHS facilities and increased costs for counties.

The commissioner's action allows for administrative review and possible waiver of a portion of a county's increased financial responsibility when a delay in discharge is directly related to the coronavirus pandemic and is beyond county control.

The action is retroactive to discharge delays occurring on or after the governor's declaration of the Peacetime State of Emergency, Executive Order 20-01, on March 13, 2020, and remains in effect until the end of the peacetime state of emergency.

#### [Allowing remote delivery of adult day services \(CV44\)](#)

The commissioner authorized licensed adult day service providers, directed to close on March 29, 2020, to provide certain similar services remotely and/or in-person to one individual at a time. This change means:

- Adult day services can be delivered remotely, via 2-way interactive video or audio communication.
- Providers may deliver in-person services to people in their own homes or residences.
- Providers may deliver in-person services to one person at a time in their licensed setting, such as to receive a bath
- Providers can deliver the following services in alternative ways:
  - Wellness checks and health-related services, including medication set-up and administration overseen by a nurse;
  - Socialization/companionship;
  - Activities;
  - Meals, delivered to participants' homes;
  - Assistance with Activities of Daily Living (ADLs), including bathing; and
  - Individual support to family caregivers.

This change will be effective upon federal approval and implementation of changes to DHS licensing rules. It will end when the peacetime emergency is over.

## Waivers with Federal Approval

### [Preserving health care coverage for Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare \(CV17\)](#)

The commissioner continued enrollment in public health care programs to ensure that no one enrolled in Medical Assistance or MinnesotaCare loses coverage during the pandemic, unless an enrollee requests that their coverage ends or moves out of Minnesota. The department is not sending notices on the need to renew coverage or closure notices to Minnesotans on Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare.

### [Allowing phone or internet visits for waiver programs \(CV15\)](#)

The commissioner waived certain requirements for face-to-face visits for seniors and people with disabilities receiving long-term services and supports. For people receiving home and community-based services under Medical Assistance, this means that assessments for needs can be done by phone or online connection, and that case managers can conduct phone or online visits. The affected programs are Alternative Care (AC), Brain Injury (BI) waiver, Community Alternative Care (CAC) waiver, Community Access for Disability Inclusion (CADI) waiver, Developmental Disabilities (DD) waiver, Elderly Waiver (EW), Essential Community Supports (ECS), and Federal OBRA Level II Evaluations. Personal Care Assistance (PCA) programs include assessments but do not require case management. This change also applies to people served under Rule 185 case management who choose not to waive the annual reassessment. These actions will protect people receiving services and case managers during the pandemic.

### [Expanding access to telemedicine services for Children's Health Insurance Program, Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare enrollees \(CV16\)](#)

- The commissioner eased certain limits on receiving care and services through telephone and video visits that can instead be provided safely and effectively without a face-to-face visit by:
- Expanding the definition of telemedicine to include telephone calls so providers who have a telemedicine agreement in place with DHS can serve patients through telephone visits;
- Allowing a provider's first visit with a patient to be conducted on the phone;
- Allowing Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Medical Assistance or MinnesotaCare enrollees to have more than three telemedicine visits in a week; and
- Requiring managed care plans to follow these policies.

These measures help enrollees and providers follow social distancing best practices.

DHS is also considering how best to provide flexibility for greater use of communications technology in specific settings and for certain types of treatment, including group therapy and residential treatment settings.

### [Expanding telemedicine in health care, mental health, and substance use disorder settings \(CV30\)](#)

The commissioner temporarily expanded access to telemedicine for Minnesotans enrolled in Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare who receive health care, mental health treatment, or substance use disorder treatment. Specifically, the commissioner expanded the providers who are permitted to provide services through telephone and video visits to include the following providers and their tribal provider equivalents:

Providers who are considered “licensed health care providers” under section 256B.0625, subdivision 3b, paragraph (e), and providers who licensed medical providers supervise;

- Mental health certified peer specialists and mental health certified family peer specialists where they are currently authorized to provide services;
- Mental health rehabilitation workers in Adult Rehabilitative Mental Health Services (ARMHS);
- Mental health behavioral aides in Children’s Therapeutic Support services (CTSS); and
- Alcohol and drug counselors, alcohol and drug counselor-temps, recovery peers, and student interns in licensed SUD programs.

The commissioner also temporarily expanded telemedicine (including telephone and video visits) to Rule 25 assessments, comprehensive assessments, and group therapy.

#### [Allowing phone or internet use for targeted case management visits \(CV24\)](#)

The commissioner waived requirements temporarily for face-to-face visits for Minnesotans on Medical Assistance who receive certain targeted case management services. This means case managers can conduct targeted case management visits by phone or the internet with adults receiving services or their legal guardians and with children receiving services and their parents or legal guardians. The affected programs include:

- Child welfare targeted case management
- Children’s mental health targeted case management
- Adult mental health targeted case management
- Vulnerable adult or adult with developmental disabilities (VA/DD) targeted case management
- Relocation service coordination targeted case management

## COVID-19 and Pregnancy

While there are still a lot of unknowns about the impact of COVID-19 on people who are pregnant, observations in China indicate that pregnant people do not appear to be at greater risk of contracting COVID-19 or suffering severe illness. While the influenza virus and some other types of coronaviruses are more likely to infect and cause severe illness in pregnant people, this does not seem to be the case with COVID-19. Nevertheless, it is understandable that many have concerns. Pregnant people should also take precautions to avoid contracting or spreading COVID-19. For more information on pregnancy and COVID-10, we encourage you to check out [this information](#) from Yale Medicine.

## 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](#).

NAMI members are also encouraged to contact the MDH hotlines between 7 AM and 7 PM (interpreters available)

- Health Questions: 651-201-3290 or 1-800-657-3903
- Schools and child care questions: 651-297-1304 or 1-800-657-3504

# 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:

- [Temporary changes to public assistance policies due to COVID-19](#)
- [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.

Starting May 28, 2020, almost 400,000 people who use the federally funded Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in Minnesota can purchase groceries online using their Electronic Benefit Transfer cards. For more information, see the [SNAP fact sheet](#).

To ensure 350,000 Minnesota school children who qualify for the federal free and reduced-price meal program have access to healthy food, the Minnesota Department of Human Services, in partnership with the Minnesota Department of Education and Code for America, recently launched the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer, also referred to as P-EBT, benefit.

The Federal Family First Coronavirus Response Act allows children eligible for the meal program to receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits retroactive to March through the first week in June. This is in addition to any SNAP, Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) or Unemployment Insurance benefits their families may already receive.

Individuals in need of assistance accessing or using these benefits can contact the P-EBT hotline after June 1, 2020, at 651-431-4050 or 800-657-3698, Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Families in need of additional assistance accessing foods are urged to contact their county or tribal human services office or the Minnesota Food Helpline at 888-711-1151 or [www.hungersolutions.org](http://www.hungersolutions.org).

The Department of Human Services has been encouraging people experiencing hunger to find out if they are eligible for SNAP. Information about SNAP and other hunger resources is collected on the DHS [food emergency](#)

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[webpage](#). Applications can be done online at [ApplyMN](#) or by phone, mail, fax or drop boxes at county and tribal human service offices. DHS has also recommends visiting their [programs and services page](#) if you need food assistance. You can also visit the [Minnesota Housing website](#) for assistance with housing.

DHS has a [FAQ page for alternative adult day services](#) to provide answers to questions from lead agencies and residential service providers about upholding a person's rights, person-centered practices and service suspensions and terminations during the peacetime emergency.

The Department of Human Services has also issued guidance for mental health and substance use disorder providers.

- [Latest Information for Adult Mental Health Providers](#)
- [Latest Information for Childrens' Mental Health Providers](#)
- [Latest Information for Substance Use Disorder Providers](#)

[The CDC recently issued guidance on continuing services to children with disabilities](#) during the pandemic. The guidance broadly requires that state or local education agencies and individualized education program teams continue to provide opportunities to students with disabilities during closures. If early intervention services offices are closed during the pandemic, they are not required to provide services to infants and toddlers with disabilities; however, if offices remain open and services cannot be provided in a certain location (such as in the child's home) the agency must ensure continuity of services.

## Income and Unemployment

Many people are experiencing job loss and or economic hardship due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Here are some resources that can help you navigate the public benefit system and learn about any support you may qualify for:

- Bridge to Benefits: This [web-based screening tool](#) can help you identify if you're eligible for public works programs, including SNAP, WIC, School Meal Program, Minnesota Health Care Programs, Energy Assistance, and Child Care Assistance.
- ApplyMN: This [web application](#) can connect you with state and county services to help meet your and your family's basic needs. Use it to apply for [cash assistance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\) benefits, child care assistance, and Emergency Assistance](#). Call 651-431-4000 for questions.
- Emergency Assistance: Your household may be eligible for assistance to cover emergency needs, such as help paying rent or utility bills. Contact your [county or tribal human services agency](#) to learn about availability, eligibility, and how to apply.
- Community Action Agencies: [This site gathers](#) local, state, federal, and private resources that can help individuals and families with low incomes.

The [Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security \(CARES\) Act](#) will provide relief to business and individuals during the pandemic. Most individuals with a social security number within certain income brackets are eligible to receive an "economic impact payment" or a stimulus check. Eligible retirees and recipients of Social Security, Railroad Retirement, disability or veterans' benefits as well as taxpayers who do not make enough money to normally have to file a tax return will receive a payment. This also includes those who have no income, as well as those whose income comes entirely from certain benefit programs, such as Supplemental Security Income benefits. [Here is more info for people with SSI](#).

You can read "[What You Need to Know](#)" from the IRS [here](#) and visit the [Economic Impact Payment Information](#) webpage here. You can read a more in depth [FAQ for individuals and businesses from the Tax Foundation here](#). If you will *not* automatically receive your economic impact payment contact [Legal Aid's Low-Income Taxpayer](#)

[Clinic](#) or by phone at 612-334-5970. The clinic is a statewide program operated by the Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid's Minneapolis office and can assist in filling out applications to receive your payment.

Click on these links for information for Employers from [the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development](#) (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](http://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

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.](#)

The [Bush Foundation](#) has compiled a list of funds and possible assistance for a variety of individuals and professions in Minnesota:

- [Bartenders](#)
- [Home care workers, nannies, and house cleaners](#)
- [Veterans](#)
- [Native American/Indigenous College Students](#)
- [Hospitality workers](#)
- [Delivery drivers and other tipped workers](#)
- [Restaurant workers](#) additional funds [here](#) and [here](#)
- [St. Paul Families](#)
- [Staples Motley school district](#)
- Artists: [Actors](#), [artists of color](#), [bluegrass music industry workers](#), [other music industry workers here](#) and [here](#), [general artists, writers and composers](#), [Chisago](#), [Isanti](#), [Kanabec](#), [Mille Lacs](#), and [Pine county artists](#), [experimental artists](#), [freelancers here](#), [Patreon artists](#), [Screen Actors Guild](#)

**Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS):** 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](mailto:Evie.wold@state.mn.us) or Maureen McAvoy [Maureen.mcavoy@state.mn.us](mailto:Maureen.mcavoy@state.mn.us).

DEED also recently announced more flexibility in Performance Based Agreements to help people with disabilities receiving services from VRS. Community partners may use the 20 hours of job coaching included in a PBA if a VRS participant has been laid off or furloughed from employment due to the pandemic and they require assistance applying for Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits and/or completing the ongoing UI reporting requirements to ensure continuation of benefits.

**Goodwill Easter Seals** is also offering supports for people who have experienced job loss and assist anyone in Minnesota with the following services:

#### Services offered

- Career navigators meet one-on-one with you to provide services tailored to meet your schedule and individual needs.
- Career counseling and assessments to help determine your career path
- Resume assistance, interview preparation and networking groups
- Funding for career certifications and training programs

#### Program benefits

- The program helps address and overcome other barriers to employment.
- Difficulty transferring skills to other occupations
- Challenges finding job openings
- Need for formal training or education to become reemployed

#### Eligibility

- Receiving or eligible for unemployment insurance
- Laid off

Goodwill Easter Seals can meet with job seekers remotely via phone, email and video conferencing. The Dislocated Worker program has no cost and can be catered to meet individual needs.

Contact Avery at [abardell@gesmn.org](mailto:abardell@gesmn.org) or 612-286-8597 to get started on a new career path!

## Department of Commerce

On April 2nd, Governor Walz announced that Minnesota health plans have agreed to waive costs for treatment of COVID-19. Minnesotans with commercial insurance—including individuals, small businesses, and some large businesses—are now eligible for the following benefits:

- Minnesotans will have no cost-sharing charges for COVID testing.
- Minnesotans who are hospitalized will have no cost-sharing charges for in-network hospitalization.
- Minnesotans will have expanded access to telemedicine services. This will help people stay home and access care if they need it.

Minnesota's non-profit health plans that have committed to this framework:

- Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota
- HealthPartners
- Hennepin Health
- Medica
- PreferredOne
- UCare



Many Minnesotans that receive coverage through their employer have self-insured plans. The Departments of Health and Commerce do not have regulatory authority over these plans, but many are implementing similar measures. [You can read America's Health Insurance Plans list of responses to the pandemic to see if your provider is waiving fees, cost-sharing, etc.](#)

#### Information about the Energy Assistance Program (EAP)

- Renters & homeowners are eligible.
- Assets such as the home are not considered in determining eligibility.
- Grants range from \$200 to \$1,400, based on household size, income, and fuel cost.
- The average grant is about \$500.
- In addition to the initial grant, additional Crisis funds are available to:
  - Help pay a past due bill or get an emergency fuel delivery.
  - Help homeowners get their broken furnace repaired or replaced.

#### EAP changes made to help during COVID-19

- The application deadline is extended to July 1.
- The annual Crisis maximum is increased to \$1,200 (up from \$600).
- EAP can help households pay a past due bill, even without a shut-off notice.
- Income eligibility is based on past one month of income only.
- EAP still has sufficient funds and expects more from the CARES Act.

Contact your local EAP service provider to apply by calling 1-800-657-3710 & entering your zip code, or find your service provider by county or tribe at

<https://mn.gov/commerce/consumers/consumer-assistance/energy-assistance/eap-provider.jsp>.

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](#).

[The Upper Midwest Agricultural Safety and Health Center](#) (UMASH) is participating in weekly webinars hosted by Agrisafe Network with information and support for food and agriculture industry workers during the pandemic.

## 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](#).
- Economic Impact Payments (one-time tax credit rebates, up to \$1,200 per adult and \$500 per qualifying child) are not considered taxable income. Do not include this when reporting your income to MNSure.
- If you are receiving unemployment compensation, including the additional \$600/week federal pandemic unemployment compensation payment, you must include those payments as income.
- 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.
- Year-round enrollment is available to anyone who qualifies for [Medical Assistance or MinnesotaCare](#) or is a member of a federally recognized American Indian tribe.
- Minnesotans who are enrolled in private health insurance plans through MNSure will have no out-of-pocket costs if they are hospitalized at an in-network facility to treat COVID-19. This waiver is in effect through May 31. This is in addition to the waiving of co-pays, co-insurance and deductibles related to COVID-19 diagnostic testing. [More information about COVID-19 testing and treatment covered](#).

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 announced a [new special enrollment period option](#) on May 14th that allows Minnesotans to enroll in private coverage. You may qualify if:

- Your household income recently decreased,
- You are newly eligible for an advanced payment tax credit because of your income change, *and*
- You had [minimum essential coverage](#) outside of MNSure at least one day in the last 60 days.

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

The DOC is providing updates about its response to COVID-19, including updates on testing and detailed measures for each facility on its [website](#). As of July 2nd there have been 342 total positive confirmed cases of COVID-19 out of 12,507 tested residents at DOC facilities. There have been 61 self reported cases in DOC staff. Two residents that tested positive for COVID-19 have died both following an outbreak at the Faribault facility.

Click here to read the [Minnesota Department of Corrections COVID-19 FAQ](#) sheet. To submit questions, please send an email to [DOCCommunityinfo@state.mn.us](mailto:DOCCommunityinfo@state.mn.us).

[Click here for updates for DOC Staff](#)

**Early Release:** Effective April 14, DOC is temporarily expanding the work release program to allow for eligible, incarcerated individuals within 90 days of release to apply for work release to private residences. You can find more details and resources for people being released [here](#). If your loved one is incarcerated and may qualify for medical release you can help them fill out an application to be released during the pandemic. [Click here to access instructions and the application for medical release.](#)

You can read this [Star Tribune article](#) with information about efforts to reduce the prison population by advocates and the Minnesota Legislature.

**All medical copays are waived until further notice.**

**Communication in DOC Facilities:** All in-person visiting has been suspended until further notice. All incarcerated people are now provided two free phone calls a week, as well as one free 15 minute video visit. In order to accommodate large numbers of people who need to talk to their families, while also not overcrowding around the phones and allowing for disinfecting protocols between uses, the DOC must limit the number of phone calls people are allowed during this time. As of 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. Youth residents at MCF-Red Wing already receive two free phone calls per week, and now they are also receiving two free five minute calls. In addition to the available J-Pay video visiting, Red Wing youth are being offered parental visits through other technology free of charge, which is being coordinated by case managers at the facility.

# Ombudsperson for Department of Corrections

The Ombuds for Department of Corrections [submitted this letter](#) on March 24th to the Governor, Chief Justice, and Legislative Leadership and this [legislative recommendation](#) on March 31st to state 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](mailto: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](#).

You can read [fact sheets](#) from Legal Services State Support about how the pandemic affects your rights regarding housing, unemployment, and more.

## Minnesota Judicial Branch

If you have a court case scheduled [contact the district court](#) to determine if your case will be heard or scheduled to a future date.

Following the Judicial Council determination in late May that the Minnesota Judicial Branch is in a new transitional phase, the Minnesota Supreme Court Chief Justice Lorie S. Gildea has issued an **order** regarding additional in-person access to courthouses and resources. The order requires each district court in every county, and the state-level appellate courts, to open at least one public service counter on or no later than June 15, 2020.

Courts must comply with the Judicial Council-approved **Minnesota Judicial Branch COVID-19 Preparedness Plan** ahead of their reopening dates. The Preparedness Plan addresses exposure control measures and specific recommendations courts will follow in order to reopen for in-person courthouse activities.

Litigants, attorneys, media, and members of the public who will be visiting courthouses should visit the new [reopening webpage](#) before visiting a courthouse. The new webpage lists cleaning, face covering, and social distancing procedures that will be followed by court staff. It also has information for jurors, and details for people who have questions about their local courthouse procedures.

Some counties may initially offer scheduling for courthouse access. Counties will detail local conditions and requirements on their local COVID-19 webpages. The order also requires courts to provide access to public access terminals (courthouse terminals) on the same schedule. When counters and terminals are reopened, they will maintain the hours of 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

This order does not change the continued use of remote hearing technology or the previously announced requirements to implement the Transitional Case Strategies for **Civil**, **Criminal**, **Juvenile**, and **Probate** case

types. [Self-Help Center](#) services will continue to be conducted by phone and email only. The [Minnesota State Law Library](#) will reopen to the public on June 15, 2020, by appointment only.

This means that still only a 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.

The State Court Administrator is authorized to extend due dates for most payable citations by 60 days, and to suspend the penalties for failure to appear and late payments. Certain exceptions apply. Cases that are not included in the 60-day due date extension may still be eligible for extensions. Any questions on fines and fees should be directed to the district court or the [Minnesota Court Payment Center](#).

### **Civil Commitment Updates:**

Civil commitment hearings are still occurring remotely based on Chief Justice Lorie Gildea's March 20th [order](#) to restrict court operations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The order allows for parties to appear remotely, however, each county has different technological capacity and the Chief Justice's order gives no specific guidance on ITV operations. NAMI Minnesota has learned from some counties that hearings are occurring by ITV when possible, or otherwise by phone. We believe that family members can attend hearings by phone if they request to do so. If you have a loved one in the commitment process, you should keep in contact with their attorney, and you can [contact the county district court](#) where your loved one's case is to ask questions. Each county is different and some county courts are taking precautions beyond the statewide order. In Hennepin County, the exams are also occurring remotely by ITV or phone. We believe that DHS is working to make their video system available across the state to assist counties and we will update this page as new information becomes available.

Chief Justice Gildea issued another order on April 9th in response to the extended stay-at-home order from the Governor. The order states: “Civil commitment proceedings that are before the Commitment Appeal Panel established under Minn. Stat. § 253B.19, subd. 1 (2018), shall continue as scheduled by the panel. The panel is authorized to conduct any proceedings or hearings by Interactive Video Teleconference (ITV) or other remote technology to the extent possible. Rule 14 of 2 the Special Rules of Procedure Governing Proceedings under the Minnesota Commitment and Treatment Act remains suspended for purposes of these proceedings.”

## Education/Child Care

Governor Tim Walz and Education Commissioner Mary Cathryn Ricker have announced that all Minnesota public school districts and charter schools will extend the Distance Learning Period for the rest of the 2019-20 school year. [Read Executive Order 20-41](#). Some students have received technology from schools to do distance learning and are also using these devices to access mental health care through telehealth. The Department of Education has issued [guidance](#) to school districts and charters to allow students to keep their devices over the summer. Find all updates from the Minnesota Department of Education [here](#). 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.

[Executive Order 20-42](#) ensures that people will not lose eligibility for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) if they receive certain relief payments. DHS has also announced in conjunction with Executive Order 20-42 that parents and caseworkers can apply for exemptions for absences in CCAP due to the pandemic. DHS has also extended eligibility redetermination due dates three months on cases with redeterminations due on or before June 30, 2020. This change will eliminate the potential need for parents to be out in their communities to obtain required verifications. Extending redetermination dates will also allow families to continue to receive care until P

## COVID-19 Planning Recommendations for Families

The Children's cabinet has also put together a list of recommendations for families to develop an emergency plan in case of a COVID diagnosis. This will help you and your family be ready to act quickly and make sure everyone is prepared for the disruptions that can come with a COVID-19 diagnosis. To learn more, you can check out this [information from the Children's Cabinet](#).

## Local Criminal Justice/County Jails

April 16th - Star Tribune: [COVID-related reforms bring cautious optimism from Twin Cities criminal justice activists](#)

April 14th - Star Tribune: [Ramsey County eliminates nearly \\$700,000 in criminal fines and fees](#)

March 23rd - Star Tribune: [Judge's order allows release of some Ramsey County inmates in light of coronavirus](#)

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](#)

Latest updates from [Hennepin](#) and [Ramsey County](#).

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](http://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](http://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](http://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 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](mailto:mnhousing.solution@state.mn.us) for faster service. Consumers should continue to reach out to us at [mn.housing@state.mn.us](mailto: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).

**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](mailto: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](mailto:mnhousing.qc@state.mn.us).

**Other Housing Resources:** If you or a loved one are facing challenges making rent, NAMI Minnesota recommends that you reach out to Homeline. You can get free legal advice and support at their [website](#).

Here is their general advice:

1. **If you are able to, pay your April rent.** If you can only pay a portion of your April rent, you should contact your landlord to discuss how much you can pay and when you can pay it. If you are able to secure a 'partial payment' agreement, put it in writing. Include these key details: when payments will be made, how much the payments will be, how much will still be owed after each payment, the date of the agreement.
2. **If you need help paying your rent,** you may be able to get temporary help from the county. This is called short-term emergency assistance. [You can find information on how to contact your county to apply for help online.](#)  
If your work hours have been reduced or eliminated, you can apply for unemployment insurance online in English, Spanish, Somali, or Hmong: [www.uimn.org](http://www.uimn.org). Phone lines are reserved for people who don't have internet access or who speak other languages. If this applies to you and you live in the Twin Cities area, call 651-296-3644.  
If you live in Minneapolis or St. Paul, those two cities have created funds to assist residents of each city:  
[Minneapolis Gap Funding](#)  
[St. Paul Bridge Fund](#)  
You can also try calling 2-1-1 to find out about other financial assistance programs.
3. **If paying April rent is an extreme burden for you and/or you are unable to pay,** consider contacting your landlord in writing to explain why and request a payment plan. [An example of a letter is available here.](#) That form letter asks for a delay or reduction in rent, a stop to rent increases and late fees, a 6 month period for repayment of rent, and the ability to break your lease if necessary. We suggest you add to your letter specific information about why you will have difficulty paying rent. Keep any papers you have about why you are unable to pay rent—for example, if you got a letter or an email about losing your job or getting fewer hours.

## Department of Veterans Affairs

[Click here to learn about financial assistance for veterans during the pandemic.](#)

[Click here for information about veterans homes.](#)

[Click here for information about visiting veterans cemeteries.](#)

Following the directive of Governor Walz, all MDVA employees who are able are now teleworking. Staff are available by phone and email and maintaining operations with minor adjustments.

Veterans who are currently enrolled in higher education programs will continue to receive GI Bill payments as they transition from on-site instruction to online instruction. This provision was included in new legislation signed into law by President Trump in March.



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
- 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. Bus service is suspended nightly between 11 p.m. and 4:30 a.m. Light rail service is suspended nightly between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m. Watch [metrotransit.org/health](https://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
- (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](mailto:WReservations@metc.state.mn.us)

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

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

## Cell Phones and Internet

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Lifeline program provides monthly discounts on phone and broadband service to qualifying low-income consumers. For more information on the program and how to apply, please visit <https://www.lifelinesupport.org/>.

Many fixed (landline) Lifeline carriers already offer unlimited local and toll-free calling to their subscribers, and mobile wireless Lifeline carriers that are temporarily offering unlimited calling to subscribers during the COVID-19 pandemic include the following:

- [Q Link Wireless](#) (until May 31st)
- TracFone, through its [SafeLink Wireless](#) brand (until May 29th)
- Virgin Mobile, through its [Assurance Wireless](#) brand (until May 20th)

To find Lifeline carriers in your area, please visit [this webpage](#).

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](http://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

NAMI Minnesota 7/6/2020

- 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, or 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 individual's 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.

- [Aitkin](#)
- [Anoka](#)
- [Becker](#)
- [Benton](#)
- [Blue Earth](#)
- [Brown](#)
- [Carlton](#)
- [Chisago](#)
- [Clay](#)
- [Cook](#)
- [Crow Wing](#)
- [Dakota](#)
- [Dodge](#)
- [Fillmore](#)
- [Goodhue](#)
- [Hennepin](#)
- [Houston](#)
- [Hubbard](#)
- [Isanti](#)
- [Kanabec](#)
- [Kandiyohi](#)
- [Koochiching](#)
- [Lac qui Parle](#)
- [Lake](#)
- [Lake of the Woods](#)
- [Le Sueur](#)
- [Lincoln](#)
- [Mahnomon](#)
- [Marshall](#)
- [McLeod](#)
- [Meeker](#)
- [Morrison](#)
- [Mower](#)
- [Nicollet](#)
- [Norman](#)
- [Olmsted](#)
- [Otter Tail](#)
- [Pennington](#)
- [Pine](#)
- [Pipestone](#)
- [Polk](#)
- [Ramsey](#)
- [Red Lake](#)
- [Redwood](#)
- [Renville](#)
- [Rice](#)
- [Rock](#)
- [Roseau](#)
- [Scott](#)
- [Sherburne](#)
- [Stearns](#)
- [Steele](#)
- [Swift](#)
- [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.
- [National League of Cities](#): National database of local actions taken by municipalities.