

## **Resources and Benefits During the Coronavirus Pandemic**

### **How and where to be tested in King County for the coronavirus that causes COVID-19**

- If someone believes they have been exposed to the coronavirus and are experiencing a fever, cough, or difficulty breathing. They should call their doctor first to determine if testing is necessary.
- Most of the testing currently available in the greater Seattle area is for patients and employees of certain health care systems, or people who meet guidelines set by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the state Department of Health (DOH).
- [Click here](#) for sites in King, Snohomish, Thurston, Pierce and Kitsap Counties that are doing testing, and who is eligible for testing at each site.
- Free COVID-19 testing is now available at Downtown Public Health Center (2124 - 4th Ave., Seattle, WA 98121) for people with symptoms of COVID-19 who are at highest risk for severe illness from the disease and don't have regular access to health care. Symptomatic health care providers, workers in congregate care settings and people working in critical infrastructure occupations will also be served. No appointment needed. Walk up hours are Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Please note: when you arrive, please remain at least 6 feet away from others. We may ask you to wear a mask while you are screened and awaiting testing.

### **Stimulus Payments to Individuals Under CARES Act**

- Under the CARES Act, single Americans will receive \$1,200, married couples will get \$2,400 and parents will get \$500 for each child under age 17. The payments start to phase out for individuals with adjusted gross incomes of more than \$75,000, and those making more than \$99,000 will not qualify at all. The thresholds are doubled for couples.
- The cash payments are based on either your 2018 or 2019 tax filings. People who receive Social Security benefits but don't file tax return are still eligible, too. They don't need to file taxes; their checks will be based on information provided by the Social Security Administration.
- The Seattle Times did a helpful [Q&A about how eligible people can get their stimulus check from the U.S. CARES Act](#). They'll arrive automatically for some people, but others — such as low-income taxpayers, some senior citizens, Social Security recipients, some veterans and people with disabilities — will need to file a very simplified tax return to receive the economic impact payment. It provides the government basic details including a person's filing status, number of dependents and direct-deposit bank information.
- The U.S. Treasury Department and Internal Revenue Service, which are working to deliver the stimulus checks to people, confirmed to The Associated Press this week that [households will not have to pay back the money in next year's tax filing](#).
- The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has launched a new electronic portal to help people on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and other non-filers receive their Coronavirus

Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) stimulus payments. Most Americans will receive their payments automatically based on the information from their tax returns. For individuals who are not required to file a tax return (non-filers), this portal provides a way to request payment.

- Learn more about [how to request payment as a non-filer](#)
- Visit the [Non-filers: Enter Payment Info portal](#)

#### **Temporary Student Loan Relief:**

- Under the U.S. CARES Act All loan and interest payments would be deferred through Sept. 30 without penalty to the borrower for all federally owned student loans.

#### **DSHS Community Service Offices During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Starting Friday, March 20, [Community Services Offices](#) will offer these in-person services only:

- Supplying WorkFirst vouchers for support services (pre-arranged with WorkFirst case manager)
- Providing gas cards (pre-arranged)
- Issuing initial EBT cards for new food assistance applications or emergency replacements
- Receiving paperwork (via drop boxes at CSO) such as verification submissions, report changes or applications for review

The full scope of Community Services Offices currently available by phone at 1-877-501-2233:

#### **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)**

##### *Family Emergency Assistance Program*

- Governor Inslee has directed the state Department of Social and Health Services to [expand eligibility](#) for the [Family Emergency Assistance Program](#) to include families without children.

##### *WorkFirst - Exempting WorkFirst Participation For Good Cause and Suspending the WorkFirst Sanction Process, including home visits*

- As of March 16, 2020, WorkFirst staff are temporarily suspending WorkFirst Sanction Reduction or Termination penalties due to concerns surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. WorkFirst services will be offered each month, however, if a participant does not continue to engage in their activity, no adverse action will be taken as a result of non-participation. Participants have good cause for non-participation since it is due to an event outside of their control. This also suspends the need for a home visit by our staff as part of the sanction process. This policy is temporary and will end when the outbreak is over.
- All WorkFirst participants are temporarily exempt from required participation. Clients can choose to continue participation and, to the extent possible we will continue case management by telephone, but participation will not be required. This is based on the Governor's declaration that schools close until April 27, and in anticipation that some early learning and childcare providers will follow suit, as well as closure of many

workplaces and service providers. Again, this policy is in response to emergency conditions and will end when the outbreak is over.

## **Food Security**

### *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)- Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents*

- Clients in all counties, including King County, will be temporarily granted good cause for not participating in required activities based on current partner and employer closures. DSHS will continue to offer a referral to any ABAWD client who is not participating in work or work like activities. Most State Board Community and Technical College ABAWD Navigators are continuing to work virtually with clients.

### *SNAP Benefit Increase through U.S. CARES Act*

- As of the week of March 30, some Washington residents who receive Basic Food benefits will have additional funds available for March and April 2020. Congress approved extra benefits up to the maximum allowed for each household. In Washington state, this means DSHS is giving additional benefits to approximately 277,000 households.
  - Recipients will get the difference between their regular monthly benefit and the maximum amount for their household size. For example, a two-person household that typically gets \$200 per month in food benefits will receive an additional \$155 in emergency benefits for March and April, bringing the monthly total to \$355. Some households already receive the maximum benefit amount and so will not see an increase.
  - People who are just now applying for benefits in March and April will receive the maximum household benefit amount once their application is approved. The average additional benefit amount is \$155; some will get more and some will get less. The benefits do not have to be paid back and do not affect any recipients' immigration status. If Congress extends these additional benefits in future months, DSHS will issue extra benefits for those months.
  - The emergency benefits for March will show up on EBT cards on April 4. Households who already received their regular April benefits on April 1-3 will receive the April supplement on April 4, and those who receive their normal benefits on April 4-20 will receive the additional amount on the usual date they receive benefits.

### *Other Increased Funding Through U.S. Families First Coronavirus Response Act*

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act, [H.R. 6201](#), became Public Law No: 116-127 on March 18. Among other things, the Act provided increased funding for certain nutrition assistance programs. Please note that the amounts listed are national; not Washington state.

- *The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children (WIC) – \$500 million to provide access to nutritious foods to low-income pregnant women or mothers with young children who lose their jobs or are laid off due to the COVID-19 emergency.*

- *The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) – \$400 million to assist local food banks to meet increased demand for low-income Americans during the emergency. Of the total, \$300 million is for the purchase of nutritious foods and \$100 million is to support the storage and distribution of the foods.*
- The Department of Agriculture is allowed to approve state plans to provide *emergency Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) food assistance to households with children who would otherwise receive free or reduced-price meals* if not for their schools being closed due to the COVID-19 emergency. In order to be eligible, the child's school must be closed for no less than 5 consecutive days.

#### *Food Security Program Operations*

- Food supply operations — including hunger relief and nutritional support services — are essential services that will remain open and operational through this crisis; this order *does NOT* ban people getting access to food. Remember:
  - Food banks and food pantries are essential services that will remain in operation through this restriction.
  - You can still go to a food pantry to pick up groceries but check the hours before you go. Hours of operation may vary and many hunger relief organizations are moving to new ways to distribute food, such as home delivery and drop-off sites.
- Governor Inslee has joined key nonprofits and local philanthropies to launch a coordinated, [statewide food relief fund](#) that will help reach those in need in every corner of Washington. The relief effort, called [WA Food Fund](#), is being managed by Philanthropy Northwest, a network of philanthropic organizations committed to helping communities across the Northwest. The effort will combine business and philanthropic dollars with individual fundraising to have the most effect. Donations will be directed to three organizations that deliver food to every food bank across Washington: Food Lifeline, Northwest Harvest, and Second Harvest.

#### *Child Nutrition Services*

- Many schools are offering meals to children during school closure.
  - Any child 18 or younger can receive meals free of charge.
  - Adults with disabilities who are enrolled in education programs may also qualify.
- In many cases, these meals are being delivered or dropped at off-school locations such as bus stops. Check your [local school district webpage](#) to find a meal service location near you.

#### *"Grab and Go" student meal sites in King County*

- All children up to 18 years of age are eligible to receive a free packed breakfast/lunch meal at the sites below. Children do not need to be enrolled in that school district to receive meals, but they do need to be present.
- Meals are "grab and go"—Students will not stay onsite to eat. For more specific details from each school district, [visit this website](#), identify the appropriate school district, and then click that district to get specific details.

### *USDA Nutrition Waivers*

- USDA Food & Nutrition Services have issued several waivers relating the 15 nutrition programs run out of that agency including child nutrition programs, WIC, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The waivers seek to ease program operations and protect the health of participants. A summary of the various nutrition program waivers can be found [here](#).

### *Emergency Food Access Resources*

- Public Health Seattle & King County has developed a [webpage with information about food access programs and services](#) to help support King County residents during this difficult time. The page will continue to be updated as more resources develop.

### *WIC Washington*

- Given recent employment changes and layoffs, [Washington WIC](#) is reminding families that [WIC is an important resource for vulnerable families](#). WIC is the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children. WIC gives families access to nutritious foods, nutrition education and breastfeeding support, health assessments and referrals. WIC is for pregnant people, new and breastfeeding moms, infants, and children under five. These services help diverse communities address their health needs during and after pregnancy and in early childhood. WIC currently has the capacity to serve additional people.

### **Health Insurance**

#### *Health Insurance Through Washington Healthplanfinder*

- In response to the ongoing COVID-19 situation in Washington state, the Washington Health Benefit Exchange (Exchange) today announced it is [extending the current special enrollment period for individuals who are uninsured](#). The original special enrollment period, that ran from March 10, 2020 through April 8, 2020, will now continue through May 8, 2020. Coverage will start May 1, 2020 for customers who enroll after April 8. To request a special enrollment or to report a change in income, contact an enrollment center, broker, or navigator to initially request. These insurance experts are available by phone to answer questions, assist in reporting a change in income, and get consumers enrolled in the right health plan. Consumers can find contact information [here](#).
- For people currently enrolled in health coverage through [Washington Healthplanfinder](#), is full of resources. Current enrollees are encouraged to update their information frequently, such as income changes. For more information, please visit [www.wahbexchange.org/coronavirus-faqs/](http://www.wahbexchange.org/coronavirus-faqs/)
- The Washington Health Benefit Exchange has developed a [COVID-19 Partner Toolkit](#) to that make sure people who need help figuring out next steps with health coverage know where to turn and how to get help. The toolkit includes:

- One pagers:
  - [COVID-19 FAQs \(PDF\)](#)
  - [Lost Job-Health Coverage](#)
  - [How to Report a Change \(PDF\)](#)
  - [COVID-19 Consumer Support Available \(PDF\)](#)
- Social media posts
- Talking points
- Public Service Announcements in English and Spanish
- Digital ads
- Additional collateral and materials

#### *Coverage of Health Services Related to COVID*

- Insurance Commissioner Mike Kreidler issued an [emergency order](#) to Washington state health insurers requiring them to waive copays, coinsurance and deductibles for [any consumer requiring testing \(www.doh.wa.gov\)](#) for coronavirus (COVID-19). Insurers also must allow a one-time early refill for prescription drugs and suspend any prior authorization requirement for treatment or testing of COVID-19. In addition, if an insurer does not have enough medical providers in its network to provide testing and treatment for COVID-19, it must allow enrollees to be treated by another provider within a reasonable distance at no additional cost. The order is effective immediately and applies to all state-regulated health insurance plans and short-term limited duration medical plans until May 4, 2020.
- [Click here](#) for Frequently Asked Questions about COVID-19 and health insurance.
- [Regence, Premera \(including Lifewise HealthPlan\)](#), and [Kaiser Permanente Washington](#) have all announced they are waiving any out-of-pocket payments for medical treatments related to COVID-19. The duration of this coverage varies by carrier (Kaiser Permanente through May 31<sup>st</sup>; Regence through June 30<sup>th</sup>; and Premera/Lifewise through October 1<sup>st</sup>). Individuals should speak to their health insurance company about specifics.

#### *Alien Emergency Medical Coverage*

- The Health Care Authority has done emergency rule changes to expand *Alien Emergency Medical (AEM)* coverage. AEM is a program for people who are experiencing a qualifying medical emergency and who aren't eligible for Medicaid due to citizenship status. Under the emergency rule, AEM clients can access care within the provider's office setting (outside of the emergency department, inpatient and other outpatient settings) to diagnose and treat COVID-19. This includes coverage for testing and treatment in any office, mobile, non-hospital based setting. Medications, medical supplies and follow-up visits may be covered in the certain situations. Details on this emergency expansion can be found [here](#).

#### *Guidance for People Without Insurance*

- What should you do if you don't have health insurance?

- If you do not have health insurance, you should see if your income qualifies you for free coverage ([www.hca.wa.gov](http://www.hca.wa.gov)). You can enroll in Medicaid year-round through Washington's Health Benefit Exchange ([www.wahealthplanfinder.org](http://www.wahealthplanfinder.org)). If you need an individual health plan, you have until April 8 to sign up for a health plan by calling the exchange at 1-855-923-4633. After April 8, you must qualify for a special enrollment to get covered.
- If you believe you need to be tested for coronavirus, you should contact a local medical provider first. Find a local community clinic ([www.wacomunityhealth.org](http://www.wacomunityhealth.org)) near you.

### *Apple Health*

- People who think they might be eligible for Apple Health coverage are able to apply year round.
- The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) has approved an 1135 Medicaid waiver request for Washington State. This waiver will allow the state more flexibility under the Medicaid program during the emergency. A summary of Washington's waiver request can be found [here](#).
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Health Care Authority (HCA) and its partners are taking the necessary steps to ensure individuals maintain their Apple Health (Medicaid) coverage. These steps include, but are not limited to, accepting attestation for retroactive medical coverage and granting an additional 30 days to provide verification. [Click Here](#) for Apple Health eligibility frequently asked questions about COVID-19

### *Telehealth*

- Governor Inslee signed a [proclamation](#) that provides payment parity between health care services provided in-person and those provided through telemedicine. Telemedicine claims must now be reimbursed at the same rate as care delivered face-to-face. Telemedicine claims cannot be denied by health insurance companies. [SB 5385](#), passed by the legislature would do the same thing, but it doesn't take effect until January 2021. The governor's action will allow the law to go into effect immediately to help increase access to care during the coronavirus outbreak.

### **Child Care**

- The King County Council has passed legislation releasing \$2.2 million in funding from Sound Transit educational taxes [to provide emergency child care to first responders and other essential workers who live or work in King County](#). King County anticipates funding approximately 300 slots in an estimated 60 sites. The funding provides an enhanced reimbursement for providers plus one-time funds to help providers offset increased costs for things like cleaning supplies or protective gear. The program is available to residents who work or live in King County outside the City of Seattle. For details, call Child Care Resources at 1-800-446-1114.
- For those who work or live in Seattle, the City of Seattle is rolling out an Emergency Child Care program to support first responders and essential workers, working with

childcare providers to open emergency childcare under new Public Health – Seattle & King County guidelines for childcare facilities operating during the COVID-19 crisis. If you are an essential worker living or working in the City of Seattle and have not already been contacted by your employer, [please visit this website to fill out an interest form](#).

- Many parents are trying to find childcare options for their children since the Governor ordered the closure of all Washington schools as part of social distancing measures put in place to prevent the coronavirus from spreading. Parents should try to keep their children at home. However, this is not always possible. Alternate care arrangements are particularly important for our medical workers, first responders and others serving vital functions during this public health emergency.
- If your child care facility closes due to COVID-19 concerns, please call the Child Care Aware Family Center at [1-800-446-1114](tel:1-800-446-1114) and their team can help you search for alternative child care.
- Child Care Guidance from OSPI - During long-term school closures, childcare will be critically important to support frontline healthcare workers and first responders who are focused on slowing the spread of COVID-19 in our communities. Governor Inslee has communicated an expectation that school districts will make accommodations to provide childcare for our healthcare and first responder families. [Click here](#) for a bulletin from OSPI that addresses guidance and resources related to school districts providing childcare.

### **IRS Tax Filing & Payment**

- The Treasury Department and the Internal Revenue Service are providing special tax [filing and payment relief](#) to individuals and businesses in response to the COVID-19 Outbreak. The filing deadline for tax returns has been extended from April 15 to July 15, 2020. The IRS urges taxpayers who are owed a refund to file as quickly as possible.
- The 2019 income tax filing and payment deadlines for all taxpayers who file and pay their Federal income taxes on April 15, 2020, are automatically extended until July 15, 2020. This relief applies to all individual returns, trusts, and corporations. This relief is automatic, taxpayers do not need to file any additional forms or call the IRS to qualify.
- This relief also includes estimated tax payments for tax year 2020 that are due on April 15, 2020.
- United Way of King County is providing virtual tax help to those in need. If you need help filing your taxes they have highlighted two options below: Self-filing with free software, such as [MyFreeTaxes.com](http://MyFreeTaxes.com) or virtual tax preparation guided by our local tax experts at [GetYourRefund.org](http://GetYourRefund.org).

### **Assistance for Workers**

The DSHS Employment Security Department provided this [helpful chart](#) that outlines different COVID-19 scenarios and benefits available.

COVID-19 Scenarios & Benefits Available						
COVID-19 SCENARIOS	Paid Sick & Safe Leave (Employer paid sick leave)		Unemployment Insurance		Paid Family & Medical Leave	
	Current Law	Emergency Rule	Current Law	Emergency Rule	Current Law	Industrial Insurance (LAI)
Worker is mildly ill with COVID-19.	✓		✗	✓	?	✗
Worker is severely ill with COVID-19.	✓		✗	✗	✓	✗
Worker was exposed and quarantined. Business remains open.	✓		✗	✓	✗	✗
Worker is caring for sick family member.	✓		✗	?	✓	✗
Schools are closed because of COVID-19 and worker has no children.	✓		✗	✗	✗	✗
Worker is immune-compromised and advised to self-quarantine.	✓		✗	✓	?	✗
Worker is afraid of gathering in a group and refuses to go to work (self-distancing).	✗		✗	✗	✗	✗
Employer must shut down due to quarantine.	✓		✓	✓	✗	✗
Employer shuts down due to a business slowdown or lack of demand.	✗		✓	✓	✗	✗
Employer reduces available hours due to business slowdown or lack of demand.	✗		✓	✓	✗	✗
Employer stays open in defiance of public health urging to close.	✓		?	?	✗	?
First responder is under quarantine.	✓		✗	✗	✗	✓

The Employment Security Department is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Language assistance services for limited English proficient individuals are available free of charge. Washington Relay Service: 711

✓ YES  
✗ NO  
? MAYBE

ESD.WA.GOV

### Unemployment Insurance

- The U.S. CARES Act adds \$600 per week in unemployment from the federal government on top of whatever base amount a worker receives from the state. That boosted payment will last for four months. For example, if an out-of-work person is receiving the national average of about \$340 per week, under the new federal program their take-home pay will be \$940.
- The U.S. CARES Act also adds 13 weeks of additional unemployment insurance. People nearing the maximum number of weeks allowed by their state would get an extension. New filers would also be allowed to collect the benefits for the longer period.
- Gig workers and Freelancers: Typically, self-employed people, freelancers and contractors can't apply for unemployment. The U.S. CARES Act creates a new, temporary Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program through the end of this year to help people who lose work as a direct result of the public health emergency.
- Governor Inslee has announced a [waiver of the one week waiting period](#) to receive unemployment insurance, to get more funds in the pockets of unemployed workers at a time when they need it most. The order is retroactive for claims filed up to March 8, the week of the governor's first emergency rule [expanding unemployment insurance criteria](#) to include more workers impacted by COVID-19.
- The Employment Security has programs designed to help individuals and employers during this unprecedented time. If a person is affected by COVID-19, Employment Security has programs that may be able to help. We adopted a series of emergency rules to relieve the burden of temporary layoffs, isolation and quarantine for workers and businesses.

- Click here for a helpful [worker Q&A](#) that provides answers to many of the frequently asked questions we are receiving about qualifying for unemployment benefits.
- The Governor has signed a [proclamation](#) that waives work search requirements in order to receive unemployment insurance. With this action, the Washington State Employment Security Department can provide immediate assistance to those who have been financially impacted by COVID-19.
- You can check your eligibility for unemployment and when to apply for benefits using [this eligibility checker](#). Once you have determined your eligibility:
  - Get ready to apply. [Download the application checklist](#).
  - Set up your account. [Watch the tutorial video to set up your account correctly](#). It is nine minutes long but will likely save a lot of time.

#### *Paid Family & Medical Leave*

- Washington now offers [Paid Family and Medical Leave](#) benefits. Some workers may be eligible for [Paid Family and Medical Leave if ill or caring for a family member who is sick with COVID-19](#).
- Quarantine (as well as school closures and childcare closures) are not qualifying events under the program at this time, but if someone is sick with the virus, they can of course get the medical certification and apply for the program.
- As with any illness, to be eligible for paid medical leave, a healthcare provider must certify that you are unable to work due to a serious health condition. If your healthcare provider certifies your illness meets the definition of “serious health condition” and you have the qualifying hours, you can use Paid Family and Medical Leave for COVID-19 cases.
  - Need to stay home? Medical certification can be done electronically. The [Certification of a Serious Health Condition form](#) can be emailed to your healthcare provider and emailed back to you, then uploaded to your Paid Leave account. Electronic signatures are accepted.

#### *Paid Sick Leave*

- Employees have rights, and employers have significant new responsibilities under Washington's Paid Sick Leave law, which was passed by voters in 2016 as part of Initiative 1433. As of Jan. 1, 2018, employers in Washington State are required to provide paid sick leave to their employees.
- The Washington Department of Labor & Industries has provided a [helpful Q&A about paid sick leave and coronavirus](#).

#### *Workers' Compensation*

- The Washington Department of Labor & Industries has provided a [helpful Q&A about workers compensation coverage and coronavirus](#). It includes answers for businesses, workers, and providers about workers' compensation coverage during the coronavirus outbreak.

### *Economic Retention, Resilience and Recovery Portal for Businesses and Workers*

- Commerce and ESD are working with other state partners to update a statewide portal to rapidly provide up-to-date information on resources and services available to support businesses and workers affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. Businesses and workers can go to [coronavirus.wa.gov](https://coronavirus.wa.gov) to access these sources in one place

### **Accessing Urgent/Emergency Dental Services**

- On March 19<sup>th</sup>, Governor Inslee [announced](#) restrictions on non-urgent dental procedures. Urgent/emergency dental procedures are still permitted, but finding a dentist could be more difficult than normal. DentistLink is a free dental referral service that connects people who either don't have a current dental provider or can't access their current provider with dental providers in their area who can provide urgent care. DentistLink is a service focused on people who have Apple Health (Medicaid) or do not have insurance. By calling offices and clinics across the state, DentistLink has compiled a current list of dental providers who are available to alleviate dental pain and treat dental emergencies during the COVID-19 pandemic until dental offices can resume regular schedules.

Here is how the DentistLink referral system works.

- People needing assistance can call or text DentistLink at 844-888-5465.
- A DentistLink referral specialist will respond as quickly as possible. Depending on volume, the user will likely hear back from DentistLink within a few hours.
- The referral specialist will ask a few questions related to the user's age, location and the nature of the dental problem.
- If the problem needs immediate attention, DentistLink will connect the user to a provider that is open to treat urgent problems.
- DentistLink is available at no cost to patients, dental care providers, and community partners.

### **Protections Against Foreclosures**

- The U.S. CARES Act includes housing protections against foreclosures on mortgages. The bill states that anyone facing a financial hardship from coronavirus shall be given a forbearance on a federally backed mortgage loan of up to 60 days, which can be extended for four periods of 30 days each. The legislation says that servicers of federally backed mortgage loans may not begin the foreclosure process for 60 days from March 18.
- The U.S. CARES Act also does not allow fees, penalties or additional interest to be charged as a result of delayed payments. It includes similar protections for those with multifamily federal mortgage loans, allowing them to receive a 30-day forbearance and up to two 30-day extensions.

### **Assistance for Renters**

- United Way of King County announced the expanded program of rental assistance beginning on Friday, April 10, 2020. Thanks to donations to the [Community Relief](#)

Fund and a variety of community partners, one month of rental assistance is being offered to people in King County struggling to pay rent due to the coronavirus. The following link provides information on eligibility and how to apply: <https://www.uwkc.org/renthelp/>

- On April 16<sup>th</sup>, Governor Inslee expanded protections for renters as COVID-19 continues to impact the finances of Washingtonians statewide. Inslee's new proclamation extends and expands the original order through June 4<sup>th</sup>. Just as in the original order, the new order prevents landlords from evicting in all situations that fall within the Landlord Tenant Act, and prohibits law enforcement from assisting in any evictions. In addition, today's proclamation also:
  - Prohibits residential evictions in other dwelling situations, including but not limited to: lots/parcels, transitional housing, and public lands – camping grounds
  - Prohibits enforcement of agreements to vacate.
  - Prohibits a landlord from requiring a non-paying tenant to move to a lesser unit, and prevents landlords from threatening to take action against tenants.
  - Prohibits landlords from assessing or threatening to assess late fees or other charges for non-payment.
  - Prohibits landlord from assessing (or threatening to assess) rent for housing/parcel where the tenants access or use was prevented as a result of COVID
  - Prohibits landlords from increasing rents or deposits for residential and commercial units.
  - Prohibits landlords from treating unpaid rent and charges as an enforceable debt, unless the landlord demonstrates by a preponderance of the evidence to a court that the resident was offered, and refused or failed to comply with, a reasonable repayment plan that was reasonable based on the individual financial, health, and other circumstances of that resident.
- Residential landlords are prohibited from serving a notice of unlawful detainer for default payment of rent. Residential landlords are also prohibited from issuing a 20-day notice for unlawful detainer, unless the landlord attaches an affidavit attesting that the action is believed necessary to ensure the health and safety of the tenant or other individuals.
- Under these measures, law enforcement may not enforce eviction orders based solely on non-payment of rent. This excludes other circumstances, such as the commission of a crime on the premises or nuisance issues.
- Additionally, residential landlords would be prohibited from initiating judicial action seeking a writ of restitution involving a dwelling unit if the alleged basis for the writ is the failure of the tenant or tenants to timely pay rent.
- The Office of the Attorney General created a hotline for complaints about evictions in violation of the governor's moratorium on certain residential evictions during the COVID-19 public health emergency.
- The Federal Housing Finance Agency directed Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to suspend foreclosures and evictions for at least 60 days due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

## **Utility Rate Payer Assistance**

- Governor Inslee called on [all public utilities](#) in Washington state to ensure the health and safety of their employees and the public by suspending disconnection tariffs for nonpayment during this emergency; waiving late fees for customers who are out of work or offering customers payment plans; and expanding bill assistance programs for customers who are economically impacted by this emergency.
- Using emergency authority granted by Governor Inslee, the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) [approved a proposal](#) by Puget Sound Energy (PSE) to extend existing bill assistance programs to households that have lost income due to the COVID-19 pandemic. PSE's new Crisis Affected Customer Assistance Program (CACAP) will use \$11 million of previous years' unspent funds from PSE's Home Energy Lifeline Program (HELP) to aid customers in need without affecting current programs or increasing rates. This program allows PSE to provide the funds directly to families who would not ordinarily meet the low-income requirements for HELP without having to go through a third-party administrator.

## **Support for people living homeless with COVID-19**

- With more intensive testing of individuals living homeless, and more positive cases expected, [King County announced they will open isolation and quarantine beds at a former hotel in Issaquah on Sunday, March 29](#), in addition to facilities already operational at a Kent motel and modular units set up in North Seattle. Individuals living homeless who test positive and need isolation will be provided transportation to one of these sites and supported in the following ways:
  - Medical personnel will provide monitoring, and social workers will ensure that any behavioral health or other services continue. The King County Facilities Management Division provides 24-hour security.
  - People at these facilities will receive meals prepared by FareStart and snacks delivered to their door. In addition, they may receive incentives including a cash value card upon discharge, so long as they have complied with all medical orders and social distancing practices.
  - Once they recover, they are provided free transportation from the site back to their city of origin.

## **Public Schools**

- Resources and guidance from OSPI regarding COVID-19 can be found [here](#).
- [Guidance for Long-term School Closures](#) as of March 23, 2020
- Guidance from OSPI on [support for graduating seniors](#)
- [Guidance from OSPI](#) addressing 1. Allowable building activities 2. Rulemaking 3. State and federal funding 4. Assessments 5. Federal accountability 6. Special education 7. Considerations for paid school staff 8. Meals and nutrition 9. Contact information (Dated March 13, 2020)
- [Meal & Nutrition Guidance](#) from OSPI/[Information from OSPI about school meals](#)
- COVID-19 in Schools: A Parent Guide ([English](#)) ([Spanish](#))

- The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction has compiled a webpage with [resources to support student well-being & school safety](#). With the long-term school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many students, educators, and their families may need additional support. The resources on this page are intended to support school districts, schools, students, parents, and families in recognizing and responding to signs of emotional and behavioral distress.
- **\*NEW\*** The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction has provided new [guidance related to grading student progress](#) in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the new guidance, for students in grades 9-12, no student will receive a “fail” grade for any course. Instead, teachers will assign grades or assign an “incomplete” for students who cannot engage in an equitable way. Beyond the prohibition of failing grades, school districts are allowed to do grading how they would like. For example, [Seattle school district](#) has chosen to limit grading to As or incomplete. Other school districts could choose to do more grades (such as still doing A, B, C and/or D). But they are not allowed to give an F grade and instead would give an incomplete. Students assigned an “incomplete” for a course will be given opportunities to reengage in the learning standards based on local school district decisions in consultation with the student/parents/guardians.

### Access to Telephones

- [Lifeline](#) is the Federal Communications Commission’s program to make communications services accessible to low-income consumers. While this service is not specific to COVID response, with an increase in unemployment we wanted to make sure people were aware of this resource. Lifeline provides subscribers a discount on monthly telephone service, broadband Internet access service, or voice-broadband bundled service purchased from participating providers. Lifeline is available to eligible, low-income consumers in every state, commonwealth, territory, and on tribal lands. The following Lifeline service providers are active in Washington:
  - [Access wireless](#)
  - [Assurance wireless](#)
  - [Budget mobile](#)
  - [enTouch wireless](#)
  - [Life wireless](#)
  - [Safelink wireless](#)
  - [Yourtel wireless](#)
- **How do people apply for the lifeline?** Federal regulations (47 CFR Part 54, sec. 54.400) allow one Lifeline subsidy per household. This means that clients must choose whether they want the subsidy applied to a landline or cell phone.
  - **Landline:** People who are interested should contact their phone service provider to request a lifeline application.
  - **Cell phone:** People who are interested should contact a lifeline cell phone carrier listed above.

### Access to Internet Service

Many internet service providers are waiving late payment fees and will not disconnect customers for late payments. In addition, some companies are offering free or low cost internet services.

- [Xfinity WiFi](#) public hotspots are now open to everyone.
- Comcast is offering 2 months free to new [Internet Essentials](#) customers in their service areas.
- [AT&T Access](#) offers low-cost internet.

#### **Translated COVID-19 Materials from King County**

- [Click here](#) and scroll down check the right side of the webpage for regularly updated COVID-19 resources in 15 languages.
- The King County COVID-19 Call Center is able to take calls using Language Line to assist members of our language communities. Instructions on how to access an interpreter are below; for instructions in other languages see the links to translated materials referenced above.
  - Call 206-477-3977
  - A message will play. Wait for a call center operator.
  - Say the language you want using the English term for it. For example: say “Spanish” (not Español).
  - The call center operator will call an Interpreter service. Do not hang up. Stay on the phone until the interpreter is connected.
  - Ask the interpreter your questions.

#### **COVID-19 and Public Charge: What Immigrant Communities Need to Know**

- Immigrants who are subject to a public charge inadmissibility test when they apply for a visa or green card should know that [U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services \(USCIS\) announced it will NOT consider testing, treatment, or preventive care](#) (including vaccines if a vaccine becomes available) related to COVID-19 in the public charge assessment. From their website: “USCIS encourages all those, including aliens, with symptoms that resemble Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) (fever, cough, shortness of breath) to seek necessary medical treatment or preventive services. Such treatment or preventive services will not negatively affect any alien as part of a future Public Charge analysis.”

#### **Nonprofits**

- The federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) (S. 748) provides significant funding for businesses, hospitals, schools, and social support programs, among many other things. Some key provisions for nonprofits include special emergency loans of up to \$10 million for eligible nonprofits and small businesses; an additional \$10 billion to the Emergency Injury Disaster Loan program so that eligible nonprofits and other applicants can get checks for \$10,000 within three days; a refundable payroll tax credit of up to \$5,000 for each employee on the payroll when certain conditions are met; and more. *Washington Nonprofits* provided this [helpful summary of key provisions in the bill for nonprofits](#).

## Guidance for Essential Businesses

- King County has produced a helpful document with [guidance for businesses who have been deemed essential](#) and are therefore still in operation. The document is also available in several other languages, which can be found [here](#).
- Food distribution is considered an essential business. King County has provided a document with tips on [how to align food distribution with COVID-19 prevention](#) measures.

## Resources for Businesses

- Governor Inslee has announced a new Working Washington Small Business Emergency Grant program to assist small businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Up to \$5 million in funds are provided through the Governor's Strategic Reserve Fund and administered by the State Department of Commerce. The grant program will provide a limited number of businesses in Washington's 39 counties with a grant up to \$10,000. More details on the grant can be found [here](#).
- Governor Inslee and the Department of Commerce have also announced they are partnering with organizations that serve economically disadvantaged communities across the state to provide [business resiliency assistance](#).
- Small businesses, non-profits, independent contractors or a self-employed individuals in need of financial help may be eligible for a forgivable loan from the SBA. Beginning last Friday, local banks began taking SBA applications and issuing forgivable loans. For more information go to [sba.gov](#).
- **\*NEW\*** The Washington State Department of Commerce announced on 4/23 a doubling of funds available to very small businesses impacted by COVID-19 through the [Working Washington Small Business emergency grant program](#). New funds are from the state's \$200 million emergency response fund approved by the Legislature in March. The program [launched April 7](#) with \$5 million from the Governor's Working Washington economic development strategic reserve fund. With today's infusion of new dollars, \$10 million is now available to address some of the estimated 25,000 applications. The Working Washington Small Business grants offer up to \$10,000 to businesses with up to 10 employees. Grant money can be used to pay for rent, utility bills, supplies, inventory and other operating expenses.

## Guidance & Resources for Parents and Families

- Public Health Seattle & King County has provided [new guidance for parents and guardians regarding what to do when you or your child gets COVID-19](#). Though usually mild in kids, COVID-19 can be serious for some adults. And that means it's especially important that parents and guardians protect their own health.
- The Washington Healthy Youth (WHY) Coalition supports families by providing up-to-date resources, including articles about talking to youth about the COVID-19 pandemic, links to virtual parenting sessions and seminars, and ideas for keeping youth busy and

engaged while staying at home. Visit [www.starttalkingnow.org](http://www.starttalkingnow.org) to find these resources. They also are posted regularly on the Start Talking Now Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/StartTalkingNowWA/](https://www.facebook.com/StartTalkingNowWA/)).