

Text

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Resources for Virginia Workers, Families, and Businesses Impacted by COVID-19

The Commonwealth Institute for fiscal analysis has provided a helpful summary of assistance that has been made available for those affected by COVID-19.

Unemployment Insurance

Unemployment insurance has been made more accessible to the growing number of individuals who have lost their jobs or had hours significantly reduced due to the pandemic. The governor directed the Virginia Employment Commission to waive the one-week waiting period requirement for receiving unemployment benefits to ensure workers receive benefits as soon as possible. For individuals receiving unemployment insurance, requirements around reemployment appointments and weekly work search have been suspended.

Eligibility for unemployment benefits has also been expanded. Workers may be eligible for benefits if:

- their employer has temporarily slowed or ceased operations,
- they have been directed to self-quarantine by a public health official and are not receiving paid sick or medical leave from their employer, or
- they must stay home to care for an ill family member and are not receiving paid family medical leave from their employer.

For more information and to apply online for these benefits, visit the [Virginia Employment Commission](#). The Office of the Governor has also provided a [Frequently Asked Questions guide](#) for working people who have been affected by the public health emergency.

Housing

The Supreme Court of Virginia [granted](#) a judicial emergency, which includes a prohibition on new non-emergency evictions for tenants who are unable to pay rent as a result of COVID-19. Effective currently and through Monday, April 6, all non-essential, non-emergency court proceedings in all district and circuit courts are suspended (with some exceptions, such as to protect a defendant's

right to a speedy trial). Public housing agencies in Richmond and the Charlottesville area have also suspended evictions and at least one city (Richmond) has halted all evictions.

Additionally, the State Corporation Commission issued an [order](#) directing utilities it regulates, such as electric, natural gas, and water companies in Virginia, to suspend service disconnections for 60 days to provide immediate relief for any customer, residential and business, who may be financially impacted by COVID-19.

Medicaid

The governor and the Department of Medical Assistance Services have made changes to support people who are currently enrolled in Medicaid to ensure that cost isn't a barrier to treatment during the public health emergency. This includes:

- eliminated co-payments for any Medicaid or Family Access to Medical Insurance Security (FAMIS) services, including COVID-19-related treatment as well as other medical care,
- allowing Medicaid members to obtain a 90-day supply of many routine prescriptions, an increase from the 30-day supply under previous rules,
- waived pre-approval requirements for many critical medical services, as well as automatic extensions for approvals already in place,
- increased outreach efforts to Medicaid members who are higher risk and older in age, and
- expanded access to telehealth services, including allowing Medicaid reimbursement for providers who use telehealth with patients at home.

People can apply for Medicaid at any time. For more information about Medicaid and FAMIS eligibility, visit [CoverVA](#). To apply for Medicaid and other public benefits, visit [CommonHelp](#). And view this [fact sheet](#) for a summary of Medicaid changes during the public health emergency, frequently asked questions, and further resources in a variety of languages.

Food Security

State-mandated school closures impact families who rely on school meals for their children throughout the year. Many counties and cities in the state have continued to provide breakfast and lunch to students who need it, although the way meals are distributed differ. To find school meals for your student in Virginia, visit the [school meal finder](#) tool, where meal service site pick up times, days open, and addresses are compiled.

The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services is loosening income eligibility requirements for the [Emergency Food Assistance Program](#) to increase food access during the public health emergency. Delivery schedules for the [Commodity Supplemental Food Program](#) are being changed (while maintaining the quantity of food) and delivery signing requirements are removed to prevent spread to older residents. In addition, The Federation of Virginia Food Banks is

standardizing low- and no-touch distribution, pre-boxed items, and drive-through distribution mechanisms to prevent spread.

To find free food distribution sites organized by local school districts and other community organizations, text FOOD or COMIDA to 877-877. For food assistance program eligibility information and to apply for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), visit [CommonHelp](#). If you are pregnant or are caring for a child under age 5, you may also be eligible for WIC. You can learn about WIC eligibility [here](#) and apply online [here](#).

Child Care

The Department of Social Services (DSS) and the governor have issued guidance for child care centers to remain open while aligning with public health recommendations as closely as possible, although it's highly encouraged for parents to stay home with children if possible.

Temporary modifications have been made to the Child Care Subsidy Program to increase support and flexibility for enrolled families and providers. This includes:

- expanded eligibility for school-aged children designated for part-day to full-day care,
- increased paid absences from 36 to 76 days for providers, and
- automatic eligibility extension for families due for eligibility redetermination in the near future by 2 months and temporary suspension of the face-to-face interview requirement.

For more information on eligibility and to apply for the Child Care Subsidy Program, visit the [DSS website](#). The DSS has also put together a [frequently asked questions](#) page.

Deadline Extensions

The Virginia Department of Taxation is extending the due date of payment of Virginia individual and corporate income taxes. While filing deadlines remain the same, the due date for individual and corporate income tax payments will now be June 1, 2020. For information on deferring payments and how to file, visit [Virginia Tax](#).

The Department of Motor Vehicles will grant a 60-day extension to those who cannot renew their vehicle registration online, or whose license or registration expires before May 15. The governor has also [directed](#) the Virginia Department of State Police to suspend enforcement of Motor Vehicle Safety Inspections for 60 days.

Small Businesses

Small businesses and nonprofit organizations located throughout the state can apply for a loan of up to \$2 million from the Small Business Administration to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable,

and other expenses. Click [here](#) to submit a loan application for the SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan program.



Local Resources

Local governments, nonprofits, and community members are also acting to protect and help struggling families. One useful resource for Northern Virginia families is a [compilation by NAKASEC Virginia](#) of resources in Alexandria, Fairfax, Prince William, and Loudoun. And across Virginia, people are organizing to help their neighbors, like these disaster relief volunteers in [the Norfolk area](#). Much more challenging economic times are ahead of us, and doing our part everywhere we can will be critical.

Moving Forward

Bolstering access to health benefits, unemployment insurance, housing protections, and other critical services is a strong first step in ensuring that families and businesses are able to weather the effects of this public health emergency and help make ends meet. Virginians should take full advantage of the emergency resources available. Similarly, state leadership should take full advantage of the flexibility and resources afforded through federal [legislation](#) and continue strengthening the state's social safety net in order to maximize the well-being and health of all in the commonwealth.

– *Kathy Mendes, Research Assistant*