

# COVID-19 UPDATES & RESOURCES

## FAMILIES & WORKERS

### **Paid Family/Sick Leave**

Under the Families First Act, employers under 500 employees are required to:

- Provide 80 hours (2 full 40-hour weeks) of paid sick leave relating to COVID-19 through the end of 2020 for you if you exhibit symptoms, need to self-quarantine, or care for a child. Part time workers receive the amount of sick leave correlating to their normal two-week schedule. The pay is 100% if the you are sick or quarantining, and 2/3rds pay when you are caring for a child.
- Provide 12 weeks of job-protected paid family leave if your child's school or child-care facility is closed. This includes two weeks of unpaid leave, followed by 10 weeks of paid leave. You will receive 2/3rds of your usual pay during this time, and you may choose to overlap the initial two weeks of unpaid leave with two weeks of paid sick leave provided in the bill.

### **Unemployment Insurance**

If you were laid off, work for a business that closed, or are facing reduced hours to help stop the spread of COVID-19, you can file or reopen an unemployment claim. Unfortunately, independent contractors and self-employed individuals are generally not eligible for unemployment insurance. These individuals may be eligible for SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans. To apply or review eligibility, visit <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/>. Self-employed individuals are also eligible for the payroll tax credit to reimburse for the costs of paid sick leave under the Families First Act.

#### To Apply for Unemployment Insurance:

File a claim online at <https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdle/file-claim> or call 303-318-9000 or 1-800-388-5515. The Colorado Department of Labor and Education is working on ways to expedite issuing payment of unemployment benefits consistent with flexibilities from the Families First Act. For more information, follow this [Step by Step Guide](#).

For more COVID-19 specific resources and information related to employment, please visit [CDLE's COVID-19 Resource Page](#).

### **Health Insurance**

A new special enrollment period is available in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. Uninsured Coloradans can enroll in a health insurance plan between March 20th and April 3rd for coverage starting April 1, 2020. [Click here](#) to call (855) 752-6749 to enroll or for assistance.

### **Mortgage/Rental Assistance**

The Federal Housing Administration (FHA) will implement an immediate moratorium on all foreclosures and evictions for single family homeowners with FHA-insured mortgages for the next 60 days. Governor Polis is also working on issue state-level guidance for housing authorities. Many local housing authorities have eased their eviction policies through April as well.

### **2019 Tax Filing**

A 90-day delay for individuals and businesses for both filing and paying their taxes has been announced. The new deadline is July 15th. Governor Polis has also announced a [delay for state tax filing with the same deadline](#).

### **School Closures**

All of Colorado's K-12 private and public schools have been [directed to suspend in-person learning](#)

[from March 23 to at least April 17](#). I encourage you to contact your individual school district and/or school for additional information about virtual learning during this closure.

## **SMALL BUSINESSES**

The \$8.3 billion supplemental package passed by Congress authorized \$7 billion in low-interest loans to affected small businesses. On March 19, 2020, the SBA declared Colorado eligible for Economic Injury Disaster Loan assistance. The SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans offer up to \$2 million in assistance per small business which may be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills that can't be paid because of the impact of COVID-19. Interest rates for small businesses and non-profits ranges from 2.75% to 3.75% with long-term repayments available.

**Colorado small businesses may now apply for the loans through the SBA website. To apply for a loan or check your application status, visit <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/>.**

## **SENIORS**

Several retailers have specific hours for seniors and other at-risk populations. Check your local store for specific or updated hours.

- *Target*: The first hour of shopping each Wednesday will be open to vulnerable guests, including the elderly and those with underlying health concerns.
- *Safeway/Albertsons*: Two hours, from 7:00 to 9:00 a.m., every Tuesday and Thursday mornings are reserved for vulnerable shoppers, including senior citizens, pregnant women or those with compromised immune systems.
- *King Soopers*: The first hour of shopping each Monday, Wednesday, and Friday will be open to senior citizens.
- *Whole Foods*: All Whole Foods Market stores in the U.S. and Canada will let customers who are 60 and older shop one hour before opening to the public.

## **FOOD ASSISTANCE**

*Hunger Free Colorado* - Food Resources Hotline: (855-855-4626)

*Jeffco Action Center* - Offering drive-thru or walk-up services with an appointment. Appointments can be made by calling (720) 215-4850.

- They also offer rent and utility assistance by calling:
  - o Rent assistance: (720) 407-6712
  - o Utility assistance: (720) 407-6674

*Food Pantries* - Links to local food banks, including those in Adams and Jefferson counties can be found here: <https://www.foodbankrockies.org/emergency-assistance/>.

*Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)* - SNAP enrollment is continuing, and benefits will continue to be available on the regular schedule. Some county offices have closed, and enrollment may be done online or by phone.

- Adams County - Building is closed, but services are fully operational
  - o Phone: 303.227.2700

- Jefferson County - Building is closed, but services are fully operational
  - o Phone: (303) 271-1388

*The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)* - Colorado WIC is open and serving clients, though many clinics are providing services remotely. [Contact your local clinic](#) to ask what options you have.

Additionally, please see below for specific resources in our community:

- Jefferson County - <https://www.jeffco.us/4019/Jeffco-Community-Resources>
- Adams County - <http://www.adcogov.org/coronavirus-community-resources>

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

Local food pantries and blood banks are in desperate need of volunteers and donations. The state has also established a website to engage healthy volunteers and encourage donations at [helpcoloradonow.org](http://helpcoloradonow.org).

***Tomorrow, March 22nd from noon until 4:00 p.m., a drive to collect personal protective equipment (PPE) and other medical supplies at Empower Field at Mile High. Details can be found [here](#).***

## FEDERAL RESPONSE

Congress is moving quickly on a series of packages to respond to the COVID-19 crisis and has already passed two substantial relief packages to respond directly to the healthcare needs of our communities. The latest federal package, the *Families First Act*, was signed into law on March 18th and includes many important provisions for workers, families and employers, such as:

- Allows everyone with or without health insurance to be tested for COVID-19 without costs (no co-pay, coinsurance, or deductible), and ensuring doctor's visits that result in a COVID-19 test are cost-free.
- Requires employers with fewer than 500 employees to provide 80 hours of emergency paid sick leave to self-quarantine, seek a diagnosis or preventive care, or receive treatment for COVID-19 through the end of 2020.
  - If you are caring for a child, the pay is reduced to two-thirds of your normal pay.
  - Part-time workers receive the amount of sick leave correlating to their normal two-week schedule.
- Adds emergency family job protected leave under FMLA for COVID-19 through the end of 2020 if an employee has to care for their children in the event of a school closure or their childcare provider is unavailable.
  - If your child's school or childcare facility is closed, you are eligible for up to 12 weeks of job-protected paid family leave – this includes two weeks of unpaid leave (that you can overlap with the initial two weeks of paid sick leave), followed by 10 weeks of paid leave at two-thirds your usual pay.
- Extends emergency unemployment insurance provisions to those who lose their jobs or can't find work during the COVID-19 crisis and provides flexibility for states.
- Creates a refundable payroll tax credit for employers providing the paid sick leave and family and medical leave to alleviate the burden on these small businesses. Self-employed and gig economy workers are eligible for this refundable payroll tax credit.

- Supports food assistance programs like SNAP, WIC, and emergency food assistance.

### **Additional Supplemental Legislation**

Congress is now working on a third package which will make further investments in the immediate public health response as well as start the needed economic recovery. I am very supportive of getting significant direct assistance to individuals and families, as well as loans and other assistance to businesses hard hit by the impact on our communities. Congress hopes to pass this package as soon as possible, at which point our office will have more resources to share.

## **CONTACT US**

In order to help limit the spread of COVID-19, staff members in my district and Washington D.C. offices will be teleworking temporarily. We are committed to continuing to provide effective and responsive communication and constituent assistance during this time.

**Constituents can reach our office by phone at (303) 274-7944 or (202) 225-2645 or by email at [perlmuttercasework@mail.house.gov](mailto:perlmuttercasework@mail.house.gov).**

Thank you for your understanding as we work through the best way to continue effective and responsive communication during this time.

## **RELIABLE SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

It's important to rely on reliable sources of information for accurate information about COVID-19. Below you can find information about specific cases in Colorado, and actions and announcements from Governor Polis:

- CDC web page: [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov)
- State public health web page: <https://covid19.colorado.gov/>
- Facebook ([facebook.com/CDPHE](https://facebook.com/CDPHE)) and Twitter ([@CDPHE](https://twitter.com/CDPHE))
- CO HELP is Colorado's novel coronavirus hotline:
  - Call 303-389-1687 or 1-877-462-2911
  - Email [COHELP@RMPDC.org](mailto:COHELP@RMPDC.org)

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

What: **Telephone Town Hall** – A live conference call you can participate in from your own home. This Telephone Town Hall will focus specifically on the COVID-19 with representatives from Jeffco Public Health and the Small Business Administration (SBA).

When: Monday, March 17, 2020 | 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. MT

Where: [Click here to sign up](#) and receive a call when the town hall is starting or call (303) 274-7944 with questions.

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What: **Telephone Town Hall** – A live conference call you can participate in from your own home. This Telephone Town Hall will focus specifically on the latest updates and answering your questions related to COVID-19.

When: Monday, March 30, 2020 | 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. MT

Where: [Click here to sign up](#) and receive a call when the town hall is starting or call (303) 274-7944 with questions.