

CORONAVIRUS COMMUNITY RESOURCE GUIDE

**Illinois' 14th Congressional District
Rep. Lauren Underwood**

Last updated: March 27, 2020 5:00 p.m. CT



A Message from Congresswoman Underwood

Dear Neighbors,

I know that many of you are feeling anxious and uncertain in the face of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. This is a new and challenging threat. It has proven to spread throughout communities, and ours is no exception. That is why I prepared this resource for you: it is a practical document, with information about good public health practices and guidance for where you can turn for support as we all are affected by this outbreak.

I am sure that some of the information will be familiar. I wouldn't be doing my job as a nurse if I didn't remind you of the basic fundamentals like washing our hands, disinfecting surfaces around us, and staying home to stop the spread. These are repeated so frequently because these practices are essential, and they work. I hope that the information about Illinois' stay-at-home order, the lists of resources, and the summaries of actions that I and others in government have taken are informative and helpful to you.

Most of all, I hope that this document reminds you that although the challenge we face is significant, there are things we can do to respond effectively. Now is the time we need to come together as a community and follow the best science-based advice we have available. We know this will be hard, but as Illinoisians we have faced challenges together before. We are facing this challenge by using every tool that we have to help us through this crisis.

In this document, I describe steps that I have already taken to support families, workers, and small businesses during this pandemic. I know that many hardships remain, and I want you to know that my office stands ready to support you in every way we can. My office is taking your calls seven days a week at (630) 549-2190 or (202) 225-2976. Our phone lines are much busier than usual, but please know that if you leave a voicemail with a question, my staff will call you back. I also encourage you to sign up for email updates at my website underwood.house.gov.

The coming weeks will be difficult, and will require sacrifices by all of us: health care workers who selflessly put the needs of their patients and our community first; small businesses that are the backbone of our economy and will transition to manufacture urgently needed medical supplies; and students whose schools have closed and now are babysitting for the nurse next door and picking up groceries for the elderly couple down the street.

In these difficult times, heroes are already emerging. They are your neighbors, your family members, and your friends. Many of you are among them, and to you, I say *thank you*.

We are all in this together.

Sincerely,
Lauren Underwood

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SECTION I: Quick Contacts

For an immediate, life-threatening emergency, call 911.

If you feel sick and you are wondering if you have COVID-19, call your health care provider first. If you do not know who to call, you can call your county public health department:

- DeKalb County: (815) 758-6673
- DuPage County: (630) 221-7030
- Kane County: (630) 208-3801
- Kendall County: (630) 553-9100
- Lake County: (847) 377-8000
- McHenry County: (815) 334-4510
- Will County: (815) 740-8977

If you are unsure of which county you're in, you can call the Illinois Department of Public Health at 1-800-889-3931.

Congresswoman Lauren Underwood

- Call my office: (630) 549-2190 or (202) 225-2976
- Or email me [here](#).

Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH)

- Call the IDPH hotline for general questions about COVID-19 and Illinois' response and guidance: 1-800-889-3931
- Or send an email to: DPH.SICK@ILLINOIS.GOV

Local Public Health Departments

- **DeKalb County:** (815) 758-6673
- **DuPage County:** (630) 221-7030
- **Kane County:** (630) 208-3801
- **Kendall County:** (630) 553-9100
- **Lake County:** (847) 377-8000
- **McHenry County:** (815) 334-4510
- **Will County:** (815) 740-8977

Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES)

- For unemployment benefits questions, call: 1-800-244-5631
- Or visit the IDES website [here](#).

Illinois Department of Aging: Senior HelpLine

- If you're a senior citizen in Illinois trying to reach the Senior HelpLine, call: 1-800-252-8966.

U.S. Small Business Administration Disaster Loan Assistance

- If you lead a small business and have questions about applying for a Disaster Loan, call: 1-800-659-2955
- Or send an email to: disastercustomerservice@sba.gov.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Disaster Distress Helpline

- If you, or someone you care about, are feeling overwhelmed with emotions like sadness, depression, or anxiety, or feel like you want to harm yourself or others, **call 911**.
- If you, or someone you care about, is not in immediate danger and would like to call the Disaster Distress Helpline, call: 1-800-985-5990
- Or you can text "TalkWithUs" to 66746.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

- If you have general questions for the CDC, call: 800-232-4636.

American Red Cross and America's Blood Centers

- If you're healthy and able, set up an appointment to donate blood by visiting the website of:
 - [The American Red Cross](#)
 - [America's Blood Centers](#)

SECTION II. Information about the “Stay-at-Home’ Order in Illinois

What does the “stay-at-home” order mean?

On March 20, Governor JB Pritzker issued an [Executive Order](#) to require everyone living in the State of Illinois to stay at home, with exceptions for essential activities, essential government functions, and essential business and operations. All non-essential business operations are required to cease, aside from Minimum Basic Operations. The order went into effect on March 21 and currently extends through April 7.

If you want answers to any of the following questions about the order, visit this [website](#):

- [When does the order take effect?](#)
- [Where does the Stay at Home order apply?](#)
- [Is this mandatory or just guidance?](#)
- [How will this order be enforced?](#)
- [Will the Illinois National Guard be enforcing this order?](#)
- [I work in an essential service. How will the police know I'm allowed to be outside my house?](#)
- [Will grocery stores be open?](#)
- [How can I get medical care if I need it?](#)
- [What is the guidance for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities?](#)
- [What if I still have to go to work?](#)
- [What if I think my business should be closed but I'm still being asked to operate?](#)
- [Can I order food/groceries?](#)
- [A certain service is essential for me, but the Governor didn't include it, what do I do?](#)
- [Will public transportation and ridesharing be available?](#)
- [Will roads in Illinois be closed?](#)
- [Can I take a flight out of state?](#)
- [What if my home is not a safe environment?](#)
- [What about homeless people who can't stay at home?](#)
- [Can I visit friends and family?](#)
- [What about my pet?](#)
- [What is the difference between the Stay at Home order and social distancing?](#)
- [Can I leave home to exercise?](#)
- [Can I pick up meals being provided by my child's school?](#)
- [Can I go out to do laundry?](#)
- [Can I take my child to day care?](#)

Can I go outside my house at all?

Yes. The Governor’s Executive Order makes exceptions for essential activities, essential government functions, and essential business and operation. What this means is that you can leave your house:

- For health and safety, such as picking up medications or visiting a health care professional.
- For necessary supplies and services, such as getting groceries and food.
- For outdoor activity, such as walking, hiking, running, or biking.
- For certain types of work, which means performing work providing essential products and services at Essential Businesses or Operations (read more information below)
- To take care of others, such as caring for or transporting family members, friends, and pets.

For more detailed information about “essential activities,” you can refer to the Governor’s [Executive Order](#).

What is an “Essential Business and Operation”?

The Governor’s Executive Order provides exceptions to the order that people remain at home for cases in which people work for certain organizations and companies. These include:

- **Health Care and Public Health Operations**, such as hospitals; clinics; dental offices; pharmacies; public health entities; health care manufacturers and suppliers; blood banks; medical cannabis facilities; reproductive health care providers; eye care centers; home health care services providers; mental health and substance use providers; ancillary health care services — including veterinary care and excluding fitness and exercise gyms, spas, salons, barber shops, tattoo parlors, and similar facilities (see a more detailed list of examples [here](#)).
- **Human Services Operations**, such as any provider funded by DHS, DCFS or Medicaid; long-term care facilities; home-based and residential settings for adults, seniors, children, and/or people with disabilities or mental illness; transitional facilities; field offices for food, cash assistance, medical coverage, child care, vocational services or rehabilitation services; developmental centers; adoption agencies; businesses that provide food, shelter, and social services and other necessities of life for needy individuals — excluding day care centers, day care homes, group day care homes and day care centers licensed as specified in Section 12(s) of the order (see a more detailed list of examples [here](#)).
- **Essential Infrastructure**, such as food production, distribution and sale; construction; building management and maintenance; airport operations; operation and maintenance of utilities, including water, sewer, and gas; electrical; distribution centers; oil and biofuel refining; roads, highways, railroads, and public transportation; ports; cybersecurity operations; flood control; solid waste and recycling collection and removal; and internet, video, and telecommunications systems (see a detailed list of examples [here](#)).
- **Essential Government Functions** (see a detailed list of examples [here](#)).

- **Other specific exceptions from the order:** stores that sell groceries and medicine; food, beverage and cannabis production and agriculture; organizations that provide charitable and social services; media; gas stations and businesses needed for transportation; financial institutions; hardware and supply stores; critical trades, including plumbers, electricians, exterminators, cleaning and janitorial staff for commercial and governmental properties, security staff, operating engineers, HVAC, painting, moving and relocation services, and other service providers that maintain the safety, sanitation and essential operation of residences, Essential Activities, and Essential Businesses and Operations; mail, post, shipping, logistics, delivery and pick-up services; educational institutions, for purposes of facilitating distance learning, performing critical research, or performing essential functions; laundry services; restaurants for consumption off-premises; supplies to work from home; supplies for Essential Businesses and Operations; transportation, for purposes of Essential Travel; home-based care and services; residential facilities and shelters; professional services; day care centers for employees exempted by this Executive Order; manufacture, distribution, and supply chain for critical products and industries; critical labor union functions; hotels and motels, to the extent used for lodging and delivery or carry-out food services; and funeral services.

If you are wondering whether your business would be classified as an “Essential Business and Operation,” please refer to the detailed lists in the Governor’s [Executive Order](#). If you still have further questions after reviewing the Executive Order, you can contact the Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity at 1-800-252-2923 or CEO.support@illinois.gov.

How long does this last?

The stay-at-home order currently extends through April 7. To stay updated on this order and other actions by the State of Illinois, visit Illinois’ [COVID-19 website](#). You can also make sure you have the latest information on COVID-19 by signing up for my newsletter [here](#), following my [official Twitter account](#), and following the official Twitter accounts of the [Illinois Department of Public Health](#) and the [CDC](#).

When will the schools reopen?

At this time, Illinois schools (public and private) are scheduled to reopen on April 7. Continue to refer to Illinois’ [COVID-19 website](#) for any further updates to the timeline. You can also find answers to frequently asked questions about education in Illinois during the pandemic [here](#). You can find answers to frequently asked questions about child care center closures [here](#).

How many cases are there in our community?

The number of confirmed cases in Illinois increases by the day. For the most up-to-date information, visit the [Illinois Department of Public Health’s COVID-19 website](#). The State of Illinois also regularly updates a [map](#) that shows the number of positive cases by county. As of March 21, every county in our District has at least one case of COVID-19: that’s why it’s so

important that we follow the guidance of the [CDC](#) and [Illinois Department of Public Health](#). Together, we can stop the spread of COVID-19.

SECTION III. Public Health Information about COVID-19

What is COVID-19?

There are many types of human coronaviruses, including some that commonly cause mild upper-respiratory tract illnesses. COVID-19 is a new disease, caused by a novel (or new) coronavirus not previously seen in humans. The virus that causes COVID-19 is [spreading from person to person](#). Someone who is actively sick with COVID-19 can spread the illness to others. The virus that causes COVID-19 seems to be spreading easily and sustainably in the community (“community spread”). Find more information [here](#).

Where do I find accurate information?

In a rapidly evolving situation, it is especially important to seek out, follow, and share accurate information. The most reliable sources of information on COVID-19 are the [Illinois Department of Public Health](#) and [CDC](#). I will also be keeping you up to date with accurate information on my website’s [COVID-19 webpage](#) and my [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) accounts.

What are the symptoms?

Reported illnesses have ranged from mild symptoms to severe illness and death* for confirmed COVID-19 cases. The following symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

It is also critical to note that **you could still have COVID-19 even if you are not displaying these symptoms or any other symptoms**. You can also be contagious, and spread COVID-19 to others, even if you are “asymptomatic” (displaying no symptoms). You can be infected by someone displaying no symptoms. The “asymptomatic spread” of COVID-19 shows why it is so important to stay home whenever possible; wash your hands for 20 seconds; cough or sneeze into your sleeve; disinfect surfaces; and avoid touching your mouth, nose, and eyes.

*If you develop emergency warning signs for COVID-19, call your health care provider immediately. Emergency warning signs include, but are not limited to: trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or inability to arouse, and bluish lips or face. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning.

Who is at highest risk and what should they do?

While all of us are at risk for becoming infected with COVID-19, some populations face a higher risk for more serious complications from the virus. Individuals who face a higher risk of getting very sick from this illness are:

- Older adults (people aged 65 years and older): [8 out of 10](#) COVID-19 deaths reported in the U.S. have been in adults age 65 and older.
- People who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility.
- People who have serious underlying medical conditions:
 - People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
 - People who have heart disease with complications
 - People who are immunocompromised*
 - People of any age with severe obesity (body mass index [(BM)I]≥40) or certain underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled, such as those with diabetes, renal failure, or liver disease might also be at risk

* Many conditions can cause a person to be immunocompromised, including cancer treatment, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications

If you are in one of these populations, some steps that you can take include:

- Staying home.
- Washing your hands often.
- Avoiding close contact (6 feet, which is about two arm lengths) with people who may be sick.
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched services.
- Calling your healthcare professional if you have concerns about COVID-19 and your underlying condition or if you are sick.

Find more information [here](#).

How does it spread?

COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person to person:

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. Although people are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (the sickest), some spread might be possible before people show symptoms. While less common, there have been reports of this occurring with this new coronavirus, showing why it is so important to follow the stay-at-home order.

It is also less common, but still considered possible, for a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes. That is why it is so important to clean and disinfect your frequently touched surfaces.

If you are looking for a list of products that have been pre-approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for use against emerging enveloped viral pathogens and can be used during the COVID-19 outbreak, you can find it [here](#).

Some viruses are more contagious than others, and data so far suggest that the virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading easily and sustainably in the community. There is also “asymptomatic spread” of COVID-19, meaning that people can be contagious even if they do not feel sick at all or display any symptoms.

Find more information [here](#).

What do I do if I’m sick?

If you are sick, call your health care provider for medical advice. Your provider will tell you if you need a COVID-19 test, and other steps you should take. It’s also important that you take steps to prevent others from getting sick, regardless of whether you have tested positive for COVID-19. Some of these steps include:

- Stay home unless you are getting medical care.
- Separate yourself from other people in your home (“home isolation”).
 - Stay away from others: as much as possible, you should stay in a specific “sick room” and away from other people in your home. Use a separate bathroom, if available.
 - Limit contact with pets & animals as well.
- Call ahead before visiting your health care provider
- Cover your coughs and sneezes.
- [Clean your hands often](#).
- Avoid sharing personal household items.
- Clean all “high-touch” surfaces everyday
- Monitor your symptoms
- Follow [CDC guidelines](#) for discontinuing home isolation.

In all cases, follow the guidance of your health care provider and local health department. The decision to stop home isolation should be made in consultation with your health care provider and state and local health departments. Local decisions depend on local circumstances. Find more information [here](#).

What do I do if I’m caring for someone who is sick?

If you are caring for someone at home, monitor for emergency signs, prevent the spread of germs, treat symptoms, and carefully consider when to end home isolation:

- Monitor for emergency signs
 - Have their health care provider’s contact information on hand.

- If they are getting sicker, call their health care provider. For medical emergencies, call 911 and notify the dispatch personnel that they have or are suspected to have COVID-19 (a non-exhaustive list of emergency warning signs includes trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or inability to arouse, and bluish lips or face).
- Prevent the spread of germs
 - Have the person stay in one room, away from other people, including yourself, as much as possible.
 - [Clean your hands often.](#)
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
 - Every day, clean all surfaces that are touched often, like counters, tabletops, and doorknobs
 - Wash laundry thoroughly.
 - Avoid having any unnecessary visitors.
 - For any additional questions about their care, contact their health care provider or state or local health department.
- Treat symptoms:
 - Make sure the sick person drinks a lot of fluids to stay hydrated and rests at home.
 - Over-the-counter medicines may help with symptoms.
 - For *most people*, symptoms last a few days and get better after a week.
- Follow [CDC guidelines](#) for discontinuing home isolation.

Find more information [here](#).

What do I need to know about testing?

If you think you need to be tested for COVID-19, call your health care provider first. Do not go into a hospital or other health care facility before calling your health care provider. If you do not have or know your health care provider, call your health insurance company or your local public health department (see page 4). If you need assistance, you can call my office at (630) 549-2190 or (202) 225-2976.

Testing capacity has been a significant problem in Illinois and across the United States. Our community needs more tests than the federal government has provided. That's why I signed onto a bipartisan letter with the Illinois Congressional delegation to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, calling for more testing kits immediately. During negotiations in Congress over legislation in response to COVID-19, I included increased funding to facilitate the swift delivery of COVID-19 tests to rural and suburban communities like ours as a top policy [priority](#). In the [CARES Act](#), we secured billions of dollars of new funding for testing through hospitals and public health departments.

I will continue to demand more testing kits for our community. In the meantime, it is important to remember that **you might not get tested even if you are sick, and even without a test, you**

could still have COVID-19 and need to take the same steps as you would take with a positive test, including staying home to avoid spreading the virus. If you start to feel sick, call your health care provider, who will tell you if you need a test.

Find more information on testing, you can read a fact sheet from the House Committee on Energy and Commerce [here](#).

Are pregnant women at a greater risk?

On March 22, the CDC added pregnant people to the [list of populations](#) facing an elevated risk of having a severe illness due to COVID-19. However, the CDC does not currently have definitive data to confidently assess whether pregnant women have a greater chance of getting sick from COVID-19 than the general public nor whether they are more likely to have serious illness as a result. Pregnant women experience changes in their bodies that may increase their risk of some infections. With viruses from the same family as COVID-19, and other viral respiratory infections, such as influenza, women have had a higher risk of developing severe illness. It is always important for pregnant women to protect themselves from illnesses. Please visit the [CDC website](#) for more information.

The [CDC website](#) also has specific information about the extent to which there are any risks to an infant if the mother has COVID-19 during pregnancy or delivery, or while breastfeeding. At this time, CDC does not know if a pregnant woman with COVID-19 can pass the virus that causes COVID-19 to her fetus or baby during pregnancy or delivery, or through breastfeeding. CDC recommends that decisions about whether and how to start or continue breastfeeding should be determined by the mother in coordination with her family and health care providers.

Are people with HIV at a greater risk?

Although the risk of serious illness from COVID-19 for people with HIV is not known, people with HIV may have concerns and questions related to their risk. As more information becomes available, look for updates [here](#).

Are people with asthma at a greater risk?

People with asthma may be at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19. COVID-19 can affect your respiratory tract (nose, throat, lungs), cause an asthma attack, and possibly lead to pneumonia and acute respiratory disease. Please visit the [CDC website](#) for more information.

How do I protect myself?

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus. The virus is thought to spread mainly from person to person, particularly between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.

You can protect yourself by following the Governor's stay-at-home order and maintaining at least 6 feet of distance from nearby people when you need to leave your home for essential activities. You should also wash your hands often, clean and disinfect frequently touched services, and call your health care provider if you feel sick.

Find more information [here](#).

How do I protect my family?

To keep your family safe, you can start by creating a household plan of action to prevent people in your family from getting sick and so that you know what to do if someone becomes sick. Find more information [here](#).

If there is an outbreak in your community, be sure that your family follows these guidelines:

- Stay home and call your health care provider if you develop a fever, cough, or shortness of breath.
- If you develop emergency warning signs for COVID-19, get medical attention immediately. In adults, emergency warning signs include, but are not limited to:
 - Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
 - Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
 - New confusion or inability to arouse
 - Bluish lips or face
- Keep away from others who are sick
- Limit close contact with others as much as possible (about 6 feet).

Some people have reached out with questions about pets and COVID-19. In the United States, there is no evidence to suggest that any animals, including pets, livestock, or wildlife, might be a source of COVID-19 infection at this time. CDC also has not received any reports of pets or other animals becoming sick with COVID-19. However, because all animals can carry germs that can make people sick, it's always a good idea to practice healthy habits around pets and other animals. You can find more information about pets and COVID-19 [here](#).

Find more information about protecting your family [here](#).

How do I manage anxiety and stress?

The outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children.

People with preexisting mental health conditions should continue with their treatment and be aware of new or worsening symptoms. Additional information can be found at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). SAMHSA also offers a Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746. (TTY 1-800-846-8517). If you or a loved one are in immediate danger of causing harm to one's self or others, **call 911**.

Other steps you can take to support yourself are:

- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.
- Take care of your body. Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep, and avoid alcohol and drugs.
- Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
- Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.
- **Call your health care provider if stress gets in the way of your daily activities for several days in a row.**

Parents should also watch their children for changes in response to stress, which can take many forms, including:

- Excessive crying or irritation in younger children
- Returning to behaviors they have outgrown (for example, toileting accidents or bedwetting)
- Excessive worry or sadness
- Unhealthy eating or sleeping habits
- Irritability and “acting out” behaviors in teens
- Difficulty with attention and concentration
- Avoidance of activities enjoyed in the past
- Unexplained headaches or body pain
- Use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs

Some steps you can take to support your child include:

- [Take time to talk with your child or teen about the COVID-19 outbreak](#). Answer questions and share accurate information about COVID-19 in a way that your child or teen can understand.
- Reassure your child or teen that they are safe. Let them know it is okay if they feel upset. Share with them how you deal with your own stress so that they can learn how to cope from you.
- Limit your family’s exposure to news coverage of the event, including social media. Children may misinterpret what they hear and can be frightened about something they do not understand.
- Try to keep up with regular routines. If schools are closed, create a schedule for learning activities and relaxing or fun activities.
- Be a role model. Take breaks, get plenty of sleep, exercise, and eat well. Connect with your friends and family members.

- Learn more about helping children cope [here](#).

Find more information [here](#).

Can I still travel?

On March 19, the Department of State issued a Level 4 Global Health Advisory, the highest level advisory. The Department of State advises U.S. citizens to **avoid all international travel** due to the global impact of COVID-19. In countries where commercial departure options remain available, U.S. citizens who live in the United States should arrange for immediate return to the United States, unless they are prepared to remain abroad for an indefinite period. U.S. citizens who live abroad should avoid all international travel.

Many countries are experiencing COVID-19 outbreaks and implementing travel restrictions and mandatory quarantines, closing borders, and prohibiting non-citizens from entry with little advance notice. Airlines have cancelled many international flights and several cruise operators have suspended operations or cancelled trips. If you choose to travel internationally, your travel plans may be severely disrupted, and you may be forced to remain outside of the United States for an indefinite timeframe. For more information, please visit travel.state.gov.

The CDC has also issued guidance for travel within the United States. You can find more information [here](#), while also keeping in mind the stay-at-home order and restrictions on [non-essential activities](#) in Illinois at this time: planes and any other form of travel should only be used for essential purposes.

How do we reduce stigma?

Public health emergencies, such as the outbreak of COVID-19, are stressful times for people and communities. Fear and anxiety about a disease can lead to social stigma, such as when people associate COVID-19 with a population or nationality, despite that such populations or nationalities have no higher risk for the disease. Simply put, viruses don't discriminate, and neither should we. Speak up if you hear, see, or read misinformation or harassment, and show compassion and support for those most closely impacted. Find more information [here](#).

SECTION IV. Resources to help you

I'm a worker who lost my job because of COVID-19.

COVID-19 has disrupted many people's livelihoods throughout our community and all across the country. If you do not have paid sick leave or you are unable to work due to COVID-19, you can apply for unemployment insurance [here](#).

Governor Pritzker also issued an Executive Order to waive the 7-day waiting period for residents to apply for unemployment benefits, so if you qualify, you can file and become immediately eligible. You can find more information [here](#). You can call the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) at 1-800-244-5631 or my office at (630) 549-2190 or (202) 225-2976 if you have any questions. IDES also has an FAQ page about unemployment benefits during COVID-19 that you can find [here](#).

I was proud to support the bipartisan [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#) in Congress, which included funding for unemployment compensation, and I can assure you that I am doing everything in my power to get you the support you need in upcoming legislation as well. I have been fighting for workers and small business owners across our community as Congress has negotiated new legislation to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak. I prioritized support for workers in those negotiations, and many of my priorities were included in the [CARES Act](#):

- Delivers immediate financial support for individuals, with up to \$1,200 per individual and \$500 per child in direct assistance.
- Provides individuals receiving unemployment benefits with an additional \$600 per week for up to four months, on top of state unemployment benefits to make up for 100 percent of lost wages.
 - An additional 13 weeks of federally funded unemployment insurance benefits are immediately available for individuals who have exhausted their state unemployment benefits.
- Ensures independent contractors and those who are self-employed have access to worker protections, including unemployment insurance and small business loans. Includes credit protection provisions for consumers whose finances are negatively affected.
- Ties common-sense worker and consumer protections to assistance to airlines and other industries, helping ensure taxpayer funds are being used appropriately.

You can read about all of my priorities that were included in the CARES Act [here](#). You can find answers to frequently asked questions about unemployment compensation in the CARES Act [here](#). You can also find answers to frequently asked questions about unemployment in Illinois [here](#), including:

- [What is Unemployment Insurance \(UI\)?](#)
- [What determines if I'm able to work?](#)

- [What determines if I'm available for work?](#)
- [What determines if I'm actively seeking work?](#)
- [What if I'm temporarily laid off because the place where I work is temporarily closed due to COVID-19?](#)
- [What if I quit my job because I am generally concerned over the COVID-19 virus?](#)
- [What if I'm confined to my home for one of the following reasons:](#)
- [What if I leave work because my child's school has temporarily closed, and I feel I have to stay home with the child?](#)
- [I have exhausted my rights to UI. Will additional benefits be available because of the COVID-19 situation?](#)

You can also find information about new paid leave rights from the Families First Coronavirus Response Act [here](#) and an FAQ document [here](#). You can find additional resources from the Department of Labor in response to COVID-19 [here](#). You can find a list of 10 things you should know about unemployment insurance in Illinois [here](#). Additional resources from the Illinois workNet Center include:

- [Rapid Response Layoff & Reporting Services](#)
- [Getting Help for the Coronavirus - For Individuals and Workers](#)
- [Illinois Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act \(WARN\) Reporting & Services](#)

My family is struggling financially because of the COVID-19 outbreak.

In addition to expanded unemployment benefits, there is other economic assistance that the State of Illinois has made available:

- **Utility Relief:** Governor Pritzker and Attorney General Raoul urged the Illinois Commerce Commission to immediately institute a moratorium on shutoffs for all utility companies across Illinois - including energy, telecommunications and water - until the state disaster proclamation has been lifted. The Governor is also requesting changes to payment and collection policies to ensure Illinoisans aren't saddled with utility debt as a result of COVID-19. Several have announced plans to maintain services and waive late payment fees.
- **Food Access:** In addition to funding for food and nutrition services in the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#), Governor Pritzker is also working with food banks across Illinois to expand services. To find your local food bank, visit this [website](#).
- **Meals through Schools:** The Illinois State Board of Education obtained a waiver from the federal government to continue distributing meals to all children who qualify for free and reduced-price lunch. The Governor is encouraging schools to expand their meal distribution program to all children under 18 or to any student enrolled in an Illinois school, regardless of their age.

- **Medicaid Waiver:** Governor Pritzker applied for a waiver to expand Medicaid access in Illinois. I signed a letter in support of his waiver request to ensure that anyone who needs coverage - especially in the midst of a global pandemic - can get it.
- **Taxpayer Support:** I was pleased to see that [Tax Day was pushed back to July 15](#) for people to file their federal [and state](#) income taxes for 2020. The Illinois Department of Revenue has also created a specific webpage to provide information and resources to help Illinois taxpayers, businesses, and others affected by COVID-19. You can visit that website [here](#) or send state income tax questions via email to: REV.TA-IIT@illinois.gov. You can make and track state tax payments [here](#). The IRS has set up a website [here](#) with resources to help taxpayers. You can learn about the IRS “People First” initiative to help taxpayers during COVID-19 [here](#). You can find an FAQ guide on filing and payment deadlines from the IRS [here](#).
- **Free/Low-Cost Internet:** Various broadband providers and mobile carriers are offering free or low-cost access in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The National Digital Inclusion Alliance has [information on providers and programs offering free or low-cost broadband](#). Please visit this [website](#) for more information.
- **Mortgage help and housing:** The Federal Housing Finance Agency created a [website](#) to offer information to homeowners who need mortgage help due to COVID-19. There’s also information from Fannie Mae [here](#) and Freddie Mac [here](#).
- **Homelessness:** If you know of anyone who is experiencing homelessness during the COVID-19 outbreak, you can call DuPage**Pads** Street Outreach at 866-682-3846 x2275.

Please do not hesitate to call my office (630-549-2190 or 202-225-2976) if you need assistance with any of these services. I am also working hard in Congress to make sure you get the support you need and deserve. The [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#) included an emergency sick days program, emergency paid leave benefits, emergency unemployment insurance, and full coverage of testing for COVID-19. I have also lifted the voice of northern Illinois families into conversations in Congress about COVID-19 legislation through my legislative [priorities](#). Many of those priorities were featured in the [CARES Act](#), including:

- Delivers immediate financial support for individuals, with up to \$1,200 per individual and \$500 per child in direct assistance.
- Requires group health plans and health insurance issuers offering group or individual health insurance to cover any qualifying coronavirus preventive service—including vaccines—without cost-sharing.
- Increases funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant program by \$3.5 billion and temporarily expands eligibility to keep childcare options available for essential workers responding to coronavirus regardless of their income level.

- Includes credit protection provisions for consumers whose finances are negatively affected.
- Includes \$820 million for activities authorized under the Older Americans Act related to coronavirus, including \$100 million for family caregivers and \$200 million for supportive services.
- Defers student loan payments for 6 months, through September 30, 2020, without penalty to the borrower for all federally owned loans.
 - Suspends interest accrual for such loans, meaning balances for borrowers will not grow.

You can read about all of my priorities that were included in the CARES Act [here](#).

The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) has also released [resources](#) to help you protect yourself financially from the impact of COVID-19. CFPB offers a few steps if you have trouble paying your bills or meeting other financial obligations:

- Contact your lenders and loan servicers
 - If you're not able to pay your bills on time, contact your lenders and servicers to let them know about your situation. Being behind on your payments can have a lasting impact on your credit. The CFPB and other financial regulators have encouraged financial institutions to work with their customers to meet their community needs.
 - Credit card companies and lenders may be able to offer you a number of options to help you. This could include waiving certain fees like ATM, overpayments, and late fees, as well as allowing you to delay, adjust, or skip some payments. When contacting your lenders, be prepared to explain:
 - Your situation
 - How much you can afford to pay
 - When you're likely to be able to restart regular payments
 - In the case of [mortgages](#), be prepared to discuss your income, expenses and assets
 - If you are having trouble [paying your auto loan payments](#), your lender may have options that will help. Our tips include changing the date of your payment, requesting a payment plan, and asking for a payment extension.
 - If you have [student loans](#), you can visit the Department of Education's [website](#) for up-to-date information.
- Work with housing and credit counselors to understand your options
 - These trained professionals provide advice for little or no cost, and they will work with you to discuss your situation, evaluate options, and even help you negotiate with your lenders and servicers.
 - **HUD-Approved Housing Counselors:** U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)-approved [housing counselors](#) can discuss

options with you if you're having trouble paying your mortgage loan or reverse mortgage loan. This may also include [forbearance](#) or a modified payment program.

- **Credit Counselors:** Reputable [credit counseling organizations](#) are generally non-profit organizations that can advise you on your money and debts, and help you with a budget. Some may also help you negotiate with creditors. There are specific [questions to ask to help you find a credit counseling organization](#) to work with.
- Warning: If you're considering working with a [debt settlement company](#) to address your debts, be skeptical of any company that promises to do it for an upfront fee.
- Contact debt collectors
 - If you currently have a debt in collections, you can work with collectors to identify a realistic repayment plan. The Bureau offers a number of [resources for contacting and negotiating with debt collection companies](#).
- Check your credit reports
 - If you're working with lenders on payment assistance programs or forbearance, routinely [check your credit reports](#) to make sure the statements are accurate and that any delinquencies have not been improperly reported. Your credit reports and scores play an important role in your future financial opportunities.
- If you lose your income
 - If you do not have paid sick leave or you are unable to work due to COVID-19, you can apply for unemployment insurance in Illinois [here](#). Governor Pritzker also issued an Executive Order to waive the 7-day waiting period for residents to apply for unemployment benefits, so if you qualify, you can file and become immediately eligible. You can find more information [here](#). You can call the Illinois Department of Employment Security at 1-800-244-5631 or my office at (630) 549-2190 or (202) 225-2976 if you have any questions.
 - Older adults may be impacted by the coronavirus and quarantine procedures in different ways than the general public. There may be government benefits available to older adults who need financial help. Visit [benefitscheckup.org](#) for more information and to see if you qualify for any state or local assistance.

The State of Illinois also has resources for families and children that you can find [here](#). As always, please do not hesitate to [contact my office](#): my team stands ready to help you navigate available resources. You can also find additional resources from the Department of Labor in response to COVID-19 [here](#).

I'm a small business owner affected by COVID-19.

Nobody in our community has been left unaffected by the COVID-19 outbreak, but our small businesses have borne an outsized share of the burden. Small businesses are the backbone of our economy, and that is why I championed expanded low-interest federal loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) in the [Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act](#). I also worked with the entire Illinois Congressional delegation to send a letter to SBA Administrator Jovita Carranza calling for SBA to support Governor Pritzker's request for a SBA Economic Injury Declaration for Illinois.

On March 20, I [announced](#) that Illinois small businesses suffering economic injury due to COVID-19 are now able to access SBA low-interest loans. I will be working closely with Governor Pritzker and local chambers of commerce to ensure that the small businesses who need these funds are able to access them. A fact sheet on SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans can be found [here](#).

The SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans offer up to \$2 million in assistance per small business and can provide vital economic support to small businesses to help overcome the temporary loss of revenue they are experiencing. These loans may be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable, and other bills that can't be paid because of the pandemic's impact. SBA offers loans with long-term repayments in order to keep payments affordable, up to a maximum of 30 years. Terms are determined on a case-by-case basis, based upon each borrower's ability to repay. You can find more information [here](#).

Illinois small business owners may apply by visiting the SBA website [here](#). Illinoisans seeking additional assistance applying for SBA loans should call SBA at 1-800-659-2955 or call my office at (630) 549-2190 or (202) 225-2976.

Resources from the Illinois workNet Center can be found [here](#). Governor Pritzker also launched an emergency small business grants and loans program. You can find more information [here](#), including a:

- Hospitality Emergency Grant Program
- Illinois Small Business Emergency Loan Fund
- Downstate Small Business Stabilization Program

Small businesses are at the heart of my [priorities for COVID-19 legislation](#) in Congress, and I was proud to see many of the provisions I called for included in the [CARES ACT](#):

- Provides \$9.5 billion for agricultural producers impacted by coronavirus, including producers of specialty crops and producers that supply our local food systems.
- Delivers over \$377 billion in support to small businesses.
 - \$10 billion in Emergency Economic Injury Grants to small businesses that apply for Economic Injury Disaster Loans.

- The loans can be used to pay for expenses that could have been met if the pandemic had not occurred, including payroll and other operating expenses.
 - The grants can be used to provide paid sick leave to employees, maintain payroll, meet increased production costs due to supply chain disruptions, or pay business obligations, including debts, rent, and mortgage payments.
 - Expands eligibility for Economic Injury Disaster Loans to include private nonprofits, cooperatives, and others.
 - Waives the credit elsewhere test and certain other requirements.
- Nearly \$350 billion for a Paycheck Protection Program to provide small businesses with zero-fee loans of up to \$10 million with principal and interest deferred for up to one year.
 - Up to eight weeks of average payroll and other costs will be forgiven if the business retains its employees and their salary levels.
 - Loans can be used for payroll support, such as employee salaries, paid sick or medical leave, insurance premiums, and mortgage, rent, and utility payments.
 - Waives affiliation rules for businesses in the hospitality and restaurant industries, franchises that are approved on the SBA's Franchise Directory, and small businesses that receive financing through the Small Business Investment Company (SBIC) program.
 - Waives the collateral and personal guarantee requirements and the credit elsewhere test.
- Provides \$562 million to ensure prompt processing of Economic Injury Disaster Loans.
- Includes \$275 million in grants to Small Business Development Centers and other institutions that can provide information, resources, and guidance to small business owners during this crisis.

You can read about all of my priorities that were included in the CARES Act [here](#). You can learn more about the small business provisions of the CARES Act [here](#).

On March 23, I hosted a [Facebook Live Discussion](#) with the Illinois District Director of the SBA, Robert "Bo" Steiner. You can watch [here](#). Here is some other information for Illinois businesses that might be helpful to you:

Disaster Loan information: If you have questions about applying for a Disaster Loan, you can visit this [website](#), call SBA at 1-800-659-2955, or email them at disastercustomerservice@sba.gov. You can also reach out to [my office](#) any time.

Preventing the spread of COVID-19 at your business: If your business is eligible to remain open during the stay-at-home order and you are looking for guidance on how to

prevent the spread of COVID-19, you can find resources from the Illinois Department of Public Health [here](#) and from the CDC [here](#).

All registered Illinois retailers operating eating and drinking establishments: You can find guidance on short-term relief from penalties for late sales tax payments Due to COVID-19 [here](#). You can find a specialized FAQ document for companies in the food industry [here](#).

Leave requirements: If you have questions about how the new Families First Coronavirus Response Act will affect your business, you can find more information [here](#). An FAQ document can be found [here](#). You can find additional resources from the Department of Labor in response to COVID-19 [here](#).

Producing PPE/ventilators/other medical equipment and supplies: If you are a manufacturer with the ability to produce PPE, ventilators, or other medical equipment and supplies:

- You can donate PPE for Illinois' health care workforce and first responders during the COVID-19 outbreak by filling out [this form](#) or by emailing: PPE.donations@illinois.gov (you can find more information [here](#)).
- You can donate medical equipment and supplies to support federal COVID-19 efforts through FEMA by emailing specifics to: nbeoc@fema.dhs.gov
- You can sell medical equipment and supplies to FEMA by emailing specifics to: nbeoc@fema.dhs.gov or registering through the [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#) website.
- You can also call my office at (630) 549-2190 or (202) 225-2976 for guidance.

Becoming a child care provider: If you are interested in becoming a child care provider through the newly available Emergency Child Care Center license, you can find more information, as well as the application forms, [here](#).

Business FAQs: Finally, if you are looking for answers to frequently asked questions for businesses in Illinois, you can find them [here](#), including:

- [How long will the restaurant and bar closure last?](#)
- [Does the ban include movie theaters? What about cafes at grocery stores and other entertainment venues, such as ice rinks?](#)
- [Does the ban include restaurants/concessions at airports?](#)

- [What about small, family owned restaurants that don't have delivery or take-out capability?](#)
- [Are catered events allowed?](#)
- [Are patrons allowed to enter the restaurant to pick-up food and/or order and then leave?](#)
- [What time is end-of-business on Monday for bars and restaurants? Some bars are open till 2am. Can they stay open till then or do they need to close at midnight?](#)
- [Are coffee shops closed?](#)
- [Are delivery fees going to be really high?](#)
- [Is the state working with delivery companies to set pricing?](#)
- [Will I qualify for unemployment benefits since my restaurant is closed?](#)
- [How can I make sure my food delivery isn't contaminated?](#)
- [What safety measures are being implemented at restaurants providing meals via drive-throughs and curbside pick-up? Are there state mandated measures?](#)
- [Can I still get groceries delivered?](#)

I want more information on the direct payments from the federal government.

The House Committees on Ways and Means, led by Chairman Richard Neal, released a helpful FAQ document to address some common questions about the direct payments (known as “rebates”) included in the [CARES Act](#):

Why is Congress proposing to pay rebates to individuals?

The public health and economic consequences of COVID-19 are significant. These rebates help Americans afford what they need during this public health crisis, as many are experiencing a significant cash crunch.

When will the rebates be distributed?

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) will work to deliver rebates quickly in the form of advance payments. For people who filed a federal income tax return in 2018 or 2019, payment processing will be based on payment or address information already on file with the IRS. Electronic distributions will be automatic to an account the payee authorized January 1, 2018 or later.

How large are the rebates?

The amount of the rebate depends on family size. The payment is \$1,200 for each adult individual (\$2,400 for joint filers), and \$500 per qualifying child under age 17. The advance payment of rebates is reduced by \$5 for every \$100 of income to the extent a taxpayer's income exceeds \$150,000 for a joint filer, \$112,500 for a head of household filer, and \$75,000 for anyone else (including single filers).

Do rebates need to be repaid?

No, rebates do not need to be repaid. If an individual experienced an income loss in 2020 or if they have an increase in family size, they may be able to claim an additional credit of the difference when the individual files their 2020 tax federal income tax return in 2021.

How will rebates be delivered?

It depends. Rebates will be delivered automatically—by the IRS—to most Americans who file individual federal income tax returns. When available, electronic direct deposit will be used in place of mailing a physical check.

Many individuals don't need to file a tax return. Are non-filers eligible for rebates?

Yes. There is no earned income requirement to be eligible for a rebate, but non-filers may need to take additional steps to receive their rebates. The Social Security Administration will share information for Social Security (Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance) beneficiaries with the IRS to help ensure these beneficiaries receive an automatic advance payment. The IRS will conduct a public awareness campaign to reach other non-filers and provide them with information on how they can access rebates.

How will a person who has recently moved access rebates?

The IRS will determine payment delivery systems for everyone entitled to rebates.

Will the rebates affect my eligibility for federal income-targeted programs?

No, the rebate is considered a tax refund and is not counted towards eligibility for federal programs.

What identification requirements apply to receive rebates?

Taxpayers must have Social Security Numbers for themselves and their qualifying children in order to receive rebates.

If you still have questions, please call my office at (630) 549-2190 or (202) 225-2976.

I'm a veteran in our community.

If you're a veteran in crisis or concerned about one, connect with VA's caring, qualified veterans Crisis Line responders for confidential help. Many of them are veterans themselves. This service is private, free, and available 24/7:

- To connect with a Veterans Crisis Line responder anytime day or night:
 - Call 800-273-8255, then select 1.
 - [Start a confidential chat](#).
 - Text 838255.
 - If you have hearing loss, call TTY: 800-799-4889
- You can also:

- Call 911.
- Go to the nearest emergency room.
- Go directly to your nearest VA medical center. It doesn't matter what your discharge status is or if you're enrolled in VA health care: [Find your nearest VA medical center](#).

If you are a veteran and you have symptoms of COVID-19 - including fever, cough, and shortness of breath - **call your VA medical facility or call MyVA311** (844-698-2311, press #3 to be connected) **before you visit local VA medical facilities, community providers, urgent care centers, or emergency departments in your community.** You can also send secure messages to your health care providers via [MyhealththeVet](#), VA's online patient portal. VA clinicians will evaluate your symptoms and direct you to the most appropriate providers for further evaluation and treatment. **This may include referral to state or local health departments for COVID-19 testing.**

You can visit this [website](#) for answers to the following questions:

- What's COVID-19?
- What should I do if I have symptoms?
- What's VA doing to deal with COVID-19?
- Can I be tested for COVID-19?
- What should I do if I have an upcoming VA health appointment?
- How do I reschedule or cancel my upcoming VA appointment?
- What if I tried to call my clinic, and I can't get through?
- What should I do if I need to refill my prescription?
- Can I use emergency care?
- I don't have symptoms, but I feel anxious and overwhelmed. What can I do?
- How do I talk to someone right now?
- How do I know if my VA health facility is still open for regular appointments?
- Can I visit a patient at a VA facility?

For more information on what veterans should do about COVID-19, how to protect yourself, and the current number and location of VA COVID-19 cases, visit this [website](#). And to learn more about what to expect if you're planning to visit a VA facility, you can find information [here](#).

As conversations continue on legislation to respond to COVID-19, I have [prioritized](#) the needs of workers, families, and, as always, members of our community who have worn the uniform. I was proud to support the [CARES Act](#), which provided \$19.57 billion to ensure the VA has the equipment, tests, and support services necessary to provide veterans with the care they need during the pandemic. You can read about all of my priorities that were included in the CARES Act [here](#).

If you are a veteran with any questions, or if you need assistance in any way during the COVID-19 outbreak, please call my office at (630) 549-2190 or (202) 225-2976.

I'm a senior citizen in our community, or I care for a senior citizen.

[The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) reports](#) that older adults are at a higher risk for severe illness due to COVID-19. However, **this is not a time for panic; it is a time for preparation and precautions.**

First, it is important to remember that if you are ever in an emergency, call 911. For non-emergencies, the Illinois Department of Aging has established a Senior HelpLine. You can call 1-800-252-8966 to reach the HelpLine. The Department of Aging has also published COVID-19 guidance for older adults in our state on their [website](#):

- Take precautions:
 - Cancel non-essential appointments
 - Schedule telehealth sessions for appointments you can't miss
 - Designate an emergency contact
 - Wash your hands frequently (scrub for 20 seconds with soap and water)
 - Use hand sanitizer when soap isn't available

- Travel:
 - The Governor's stay-at-home order requires that all forms of travel only be used for essential activities

- Daily activities:
 - Avoid public places where crowds may gather and poorly ventilated buildings where the risk of transmission is higher

- If you need to isolate yourself:
 - Remain in contact with family or friends, updating them on your condition
 - Keep at least 6 feet of distance from people
 - Exercise caution. If temporarily opting out of your daily activities would reduce your anxiety, staying home might be in your best interest.

- Stock up on essentials:
 - Ensure you have enough groceries and household essentials to last you a prolonged period of time
 - Consider mail ordering your prescriptions to have access to several weeks of medicines and supplies

- Watch for symptoms:
 - COVID-19 symptoms include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. If you experience these symptoms, call your health care provider.

- If have trouble breathing, persistent pain or pressure in the chest, new confusion or inability to arouse, bluish lips or face, or any other serious concerns, call 911 immediately.
- If you think you're sick:
 - Call your doctor before going in for a test
 - Avoid using public transportation

You can also find guidance on how to protect yourself as an older adult from the CDC's website [here](#).

Given the importance of social distancing for senior citizens, grocery stores in Illinois have created special hours during the COVID-19 pandemic. During these hours, only senior citizens and people with underlying health conditions are allowed to shop for groceries. You can find a list of hours for every participating grocery store [here](#). And if you're not sure if your grocery store is participating, give my office a call and we will help you find out! My office number is (630) 549-2190 or (202) 225-2976.

If you are looking for more information about what services related to COVID-19 are covered by Medicare, you can find that information [here](#). I was proud to support the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#), which ensures that Medicare covers the [lab tests for COVID-19](#). You pay no out-of-pocket costs.

If you are caring for a senior citizen during this pandemic, make sure you have reviewed all of the information in this section and have shared key health advice with your elderly neighbors. I am committed to providing you with the support you need as you offer critical assistance to vulnerable members of our community. In my [priorities](#) for legislation in response to COVID-19, I included an increase in funding for Older Americans Act caregiver and supportive services to meet the increased needs related to coronavirus. The [CARES Act](#) provided \$955 million to the Administration for Community Living to support family caregivers and provide additional protections for our senior citizens during COVID-19. You can read about all of my priorities that were included in the CARES Act [here](#).

For any senior citizen in our community with questions about COVID-19, or if you are in need of any assistance, please give us a call at (630) 549-2190 or (202) 225-2976.

I receive Social Security benefits/Supplemental Security Income.

If you receive Social Security benefits or Supplemental Security Income, you can find answers to your COVID-19 questions [here](#), including the following frequently asked questions from the Social Security Administration (SSA):

Question: Will I continue to receive my Social Security benefit or Supplemental Security Income payment if I use Direct Deposit?

Answer: Yes. You will continue to receive your monthly benefit amount if you use Direct Deposit.

Question: Will I receive my Social Security benefit or Supplemental Security Income payment by mail?

Answer: Yes. Please visit the [United States Postal Service](#) for their latest statements about COVID-19. You can visit the SSA website to learn how to sign up for [Direct Deposit](#).

Question: Will SSA provide in-person services during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Answer: No. Please do not come into a local SSA office.

Question: How can I get help from SSA?

Answer: SSA will provide limited, critical services via phone, mail, and online, while they focus their efforts on serving people most in need:

- [Online](#) – You can conduct most business online without assistance
- By Phone
 - You can call your [local office's General Inquiry \(GI\) line](#). SSA has employees available to help you.
 - You can call SSA's National 800 Number: 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778).

Question: If SSA offices are closed, will I still have my hearing?

Answer: Yes. SSA will contact you prior to your scheduled hearing to offer you a hearing by phone.

You can find more general information [here](#). If you have questions about whether you are eligible for the direct rebate payments in the [CARES Act](#) as a Social Security/Supplemental Security Income recipient, here is more information from the [House Committee on Ways and Means](#):

Social Security and SSI recipients are eligible for the rebate payments.

- Everyone is eligible for the full rebate payments as long as they have an SSN and their household income is not too high. Rebate payments start to phase out at the thresholds of \$75,000 single, \$112,500 head of household, and \$150,000 married. This includes Social Security beneficiaries (retirement, disability, survivor) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) recipients.
- The full rebate amounts are \$1,200 per adult and \$500 per child.
- Many people will be paid automatically by IRS: everyone who filed a 2019 or 2018 tax return, and all Social Security beneficiaries (whether or not they filed a return). Others – including SSI recipients, who often do not file taxes – may need to take additional action to be determined by the IRS. One possibility is that they

would be asked to file some sort of abbreviated return to get the payments, like with the 2008 stimulus rebates.

- Like other tax credits, these payments do not count as income or resources for means-tested programs. So receiving a rebate will not interfere with someone's eligibility for SSI, SNAP, Medicaid, ACA premium credits, TANF, housing assistance, or other income-related federal programs.
- These rebates do not affect receipt of state or federal unemployment compensation.
- The bill also requires the Treasury Department, in conjunction with SSA and other federal agencies, to conduct a "public awareness campaign" about the rebates, especially targeting those who do not file tax returns.
- The bill gives the Social Security Administration \$38 million for its role in helping carry out the rebates, in addition to \$300 million to bolster its overall service delivery in light of the significant challenges posed by COVID-19.

The Act's payroll tax provisions have no effect on Social Security's trust funds.

- The bill lets employers temporarily delay payment of their share of Social Security payroll taxes. This does not mean they don't owe those taxes, but rather that they will make the payments in 2021 and 2022. This effectively allows the Federal government to loan these businesses funds to ensure they can continue operating during this crisis.
- Additionally, certain provisions in the CARES Act, and the recently-enacted Families First Coronavirus Response Act, rely on payroll tax credits to provide much-needed support for businesses during this time.
- None of these provisions change the amount or timing of money deposited into the Social Security trust funds, as the bill replenishes the trust funds from general revenues.
- They also do not alter the fundamental nature of Social Security as a contributory system where individuals earn their benefits with each paycheck.

I have student loans.

I have heard from several constituents who are concerned about paying their student loans right now. That's why I have [prioritized](#) allowing for deferrals of student loan payments with no interest for the duration of this crisis and for a period thereafter as students and families get back on their feet. My priority was reflected in the [CARES Act](#), which defers student loan payments for 6 months, through September 30, 2020, without penalty to the borrower for all federally owned loans. It also suspends interest accrual for such loans, meaning balances for borrowers will not grow. You can read about all of my priorities that were included in the CARES Act [here](#).

You can also find tips on managing student loan debt from the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau [here](#). Federal Student Aid has also developed a [website](#) with information on student loans during COVID-19, which includes an FAQ section:

Question: On March 13, 2020, the President announced that interest would be waived on all federally held student loans. Which loans are covered by the announcement?

Answer: All loans owned by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) will have interest waived. That includes Direct Loans, as well as Federal Perkins Loans and Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program loans held by ED. Please note that some FFEL Program loans are owned by commercial lenders, and some Perkins Loans are held by the institution you attended. These loans are not eligible for this benefit at this time.

Question: How can I take advantage of this program if I have Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program and Federal Perkins loans not owned by ED?

Answer: You could consolidate your FFEL Program or Federal Perkins loans not owned by ED into a Direct Consolidation Loan, which would be eligible. However, if you consolidate, and after the 0% interest rate waiver ends, the interest rate may be higher than what you are currently paying, and any outstanding interest will capitalize, meaning that any outstanding interest is added to your principal balance. Your servicer can provide you with information about how your loan balance, interest rate, and total amount paid would change if you consolidated into a Direct Consolidation Loan.

Question: Who can tell me if my loans will have their interest rate reduced?

Answer: Contact your [loan servicer](#) online or by phone to determine if your loans are eligible. Your servicer is the entity to which you make your monthly payment. If you do not know who your servicer is or how to contact them, visit [StudentAid.gov/login](#) or call us at 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243; TTY for the deaf or hearing-impaired 1-800-730-8913) for assistance.

Question: If my loans are owned by ED, do I need to do anything for the interest on my loans to be waived?

Answer: No, ED will automatically adjust your account so that interest doesn't accrue. The account adjustment will be effective March 13, 2020. During this period of no interest, if you continue to make payments, the full amount will be applied to principal. However, if your loan had already accrued interest prior to President Trump's March 13 announcement, your payments will first be used to pay off that outstanding interest.

For answers to many other additional frequently asked questions about student loans, you can visit this [website](#).

I'm a member of the health care/emergency response workforce.

As a nurse, I know how demanding careers in health care can be in normal times. In times like these, our health care and emergency response workforce is made up of true heroes. We owe

our doctors, nurses, and other health care workers an enormous debt of gratitude. We also owe them a much greater level of support.

We have taken some steps: the [Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act](#) includes funding to help states' responses to COVID-19. On March 17, I announced that \$14.6 million in federal resources were awarded to Illinois, which can be used for purposes that include providing medical equipment and supplies, like the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that our workforce so desperately needs, and surge staffing to deal with the spike in patients.

Even with these measures, there are still massive PPE and staffing shortages that we must address swiftly and seriously. Our community has not received sufficient PPE supplies from the federal government. That is why I signed onto a bipartisan letter from the Illinois Congressional delegation to the U.S. Department of Health and Services to demand immediate federal assistance to Illinois for PPE like masks, respirators, gowns, and gloves.

I am [prioritized](#) the health care workforce in negotiations on COVID-19 legislation in Congress. Many of my priorities are reflected in the [CARES Act](#):

- Includes bipartisan legislation that Congresswoman Underwood introduced on March 13, 2020, to commission a report on the security of America's medical product supply chain.
- Requires the Strategic National Stockpile to include personal protective equipment (PPE) and diagnostic tests.
- Provides \$1 billion for the Defense Production Act to be invoked so that more PPE can be produced and distributed to communities like ours.
- Provides \$45 billion to a disaster relief fund for state and local governments that can be used for PPE and other purposes.
- Provides funding to the CDC to support the efforts of states and communities to purchase PPE, coronavirus testing kits, and invest in other preparedness and response efforts.
- Includes \$100 million for Assistance to Firefighters Grants, which can pay for PPE and other supplies our first responders need.

You can read about all of my priorities that were included in the CARES Act [here](#).

To address PPE shortages, if anyone in the community has any of the following items, they are greatly needed by our health care workforce and first responders:

- Masks:
 - N-95
 - Earloop
 - Surgical
- Gowns:
 - Isolation

- Non-Descript
- Gloves:
 - Nitrile
 - Sterile
 - Surgical
- Eye Protection:
 - Face Shields
 - Goggles

If you have any of these items to donate in Illinois, you can fill out [this form](#) or email: PPE.donations@illinois.gov (you can find more information [here](#)). The [FEMA website](#) also has more information about donating or selling medical equipment and supplies. You can call my office at (630) 549-2190 or (202) 225-2976 for guidance as well.

If you are a member of the health care workforce, or a first responder or member of law enforcement, additional resources are below:

- [Illinois Department of Public Health Clinical and Public Health Guidance for Managing COVID-19](#) [Interim Guidance (subject to change); March 18, 2020], which includes information on PPE, testing, and return-to-work practices.
- [CDC Information for Health Care Professionals](#), which includes information on evaluating and testing patients, infection control, clinical care, home care, ending isolation for immunocompromised patients, and guidance for EMS.
- [CDC Strategies for Optimizing the Supply of PPE](#), including eye protection, isolation gowns, facemasks, and N95 respirators.
- [CDC Answers to Frequently Asked Questions for Health Care Professionals](#) about COVID-19.
- [CDC Resources for First Responders and Law Enforcement](#), including interim guidance for EMS systems and information for law enforcement personnel.
- [CMS FAQs](#) about Medicare Provider Enrollment Relief.
- [CMS Toolkit](#) on Telehealth and Telemedicine for providers during the pandemic.
 - [CMS Toolkit](#) on Telehealth for ESRD specifically during the pandemic.

You can find a fact sheet on PPE from the House Committee on Energy and Commerce [here](#). You can also find resources from the State of Illinois [here](#), which includes:

- [IDPH Clinical Guidance](#)
- [Patient Under Investigation Form](#)
- [Hospital Patient Warning Sign English, Spanish, and Chinese](#)
- [IDPH Coronavirus Disease Laboratory Testing](#)
- [Laboratory Test Requisition Form](#)

Providers are also urged to sign up for SIREN, the State of Illinois Rapid Electronic Notification System, which IDPH uses to send COVID-19 alerts and guidance. To register for SIREN, go to <https://siren.illinois.gov/agreement.php> or send an email to dph.siren@illinois.gov.

If you are a retired health care provider looking to reenter the workforce during the COVID-19 pandemic, you can sign up [here](#) and find additional guidance [here](#). Other resources on licensing can be found on the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation [COVID-19 page](#) as well.

Finally, if you are a member of the health care or emergency response workforce and need child care services, please see the section below and visit this [website](#). You can also call (888) 228-1146 for a dedicated helpline that has been created so that Illinois' Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&Rs) can help connect essential workers and their families to emergency child care. Illinois has also launched an [emergency child care provider search](#).

I need access to child care or can help provide child care services.

With public and private schools closed across Illinois, many families are searching for child care options. The State of Illinois' Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies recently launched a dedicated helping to connect essential workers and their families to emergency child care. You can find more information [here](#), and **if you are an essential worker who needs emergency child care, you can call the toll-free helpline at (888) 228-1146** or use this [emergency provider search](#).

If you are seeking to provide child care, the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development says that all volunteers who take care of children should have a current background check. Below is a list of potential individuals and organizations who work with children and may already be background checked:

- Child care and support staff whose program has closed
- School teachers and auxiliary staff whose school has closed
- Already active classroom assistants
- Already active parent volunteers
- Faith-based programs
- Independent tutoring programs
- Volunteer sports programs
- Children's museum staff
- Music and arts programs
- Park district programs
- After school programs
- Local public health department staff
- Community college early care and education students and faculty
- Members of the Red Cross
- Community service organizations

Stay tuned to this [website](#) for more information. The State of Illinois has also published an [FAQ document](#) about child care center closures in the state.

I am a leader at a hospital, public health department, long-term care facility/nursing home, or community health center.

Hospitals, local public health departments, long-term care facilities, and community health centers in our District and throughout Illinois are in desperate need of support. That's why I called for direct funding for them in my COVID-19 legislative [priorities](#), which were ultimately reflected in the [CARES Act](#)

- Delivers \$100 billion directly to hospitals to support their health care providers and their operations as they respond to coronavirus.
- Delays scheduled Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital cuts through November 30, 2020.
- Suspends the Medicare sequester cuts for an additional year.
- Extends mandatory funding for community health centers at current levels through November 30, 2020 and provides \$1.32 billion in supplemental funding to community health centers on the front lines of testing and treating patients for coronavirus.

You can read about all of my priorities that were included in the CARES Act [here](#). I also want to share several resources with leaders of these organizations:

- PPE Requests
 - Local public health departments, hospitals, long-term care facilities, and other clinics and facilities can find guidance on requesting PPE from IDPH [here](#).
 - You can also submit requests to the new [Project N95](#) National COVID-19 Medical Equipment Clearinghouse.
 - Local public health departments, hospitals, long-term care facilities, and other clinics and facilities looking to purchase PPE from 3M can send requests by email to: globsecopscenter@mmm.com.
 - As my office finds additional information about PPE, we will share it with you immediately.
- Swab Requests
 - Below is a list of manufacturers from whom you can directly purchase swabs. As my office finds additional information about the availability of other medical equipment and supplies, we will share it with you immediately:
 - **Copan Diagnostics:** 800-216-4016
 - **Becton, Dickinson and Company:** 201-847-6800
 - **Thermo Fisher Scientific:** 781-622-1000 & 800-678-5599
 - **Princeton BioMeditech Corporation:** 732-274-1000

- Guidance
 - [Illinois Department of Public Health Clinical and Public Health Guidance for Managing COVID-19](#) [Interim Guidance (subject to change); March 18, 2020], which includes information on PPE, testing, and return-to-work practices
 - [Illinois Department of Public Health Guidance for Long-Term Care Facilities](#)
 - [CDC Interim Guidance for Healthcare Facilities: Preparing for Community Transmission of COVID-19 in the United States](#)
 - CDC information for [local health departments](#)
 - [CDC Resources for Hospitals and Healthcare Professionals Preparing for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19](#)
 - [CDC Interim Guidelines for Collecting, Handling, and Testing Clinical Specimens from Persons for Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
 - [CDC Prepare to Care for COVID-19: Get Your Practice Ready](#)
 - [CDC Criteria for Return to Work for Healthcare Personnel with Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19](#) (Interim Guidance)
 - CDC Preparing for COVID-19: [Long-term Care Facilities, Nursing Homes](#)
 - CDC Interim Additional Guidance for Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 in [Outpatient Hemodialysis Facilities](#).
 - CDC PPE [Burn Rate Calculator](#)
 - House Energy and Commerce Committee Fact Sheets on [PPE](#) and [testing kits](#).

If you lead a hospital and you have questions, comments, or ideas for the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), you can send them to: dph.hospitaladmin@illinois.gov. Hospitals are also urged to sign up for SIREN, the State of Illinois Rapid Electronic Notification System, which IDPH uses to send COVID-19 alerts and guidance. To register for SIREN, go to <https://siren.illinois.gov/agreement.php> or send an email to dph.siren@illinois.gov.

I am a mayor or other local leader.

The new [COVID-19 Local Response Initiative](#) from Bloomberg Philanthropies provides resources for mayors and other local leaders to inform your COVID-19 response strategies. There are best practices and tutorials on how to apply for and receive aid, as well as monitoring expenses. You can learn more on their website [here](#).

I also worked hard to ensure that the CARES Act would include funding for state and local responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. The CARES Act establishes a \$150 billion relief fund to help states and localities address unexpected budget gaps caused by the coronavirus response. You can read more about my priorities that were included in the CARES Act [here](#).

I've noticed scams, fraud, or price gouging in the COVID-19 response.

During national emergencies, there are often scam attempts as bad actors prey on people during a vulnerable time. On March 20, a federal prosecutor, Assistant U.S. Attorney Tyler

Murray, was [named](#) to lead the fight against fraud related to the COVID-19 pandemic in the Northern District of Illinois.

If you notice fraud related to COVID-19, you should file it with the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center [here](#). You can also report price gouging and fraud to Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul [here](#). It is important to be on the lookout for these scams: the FBI has already seen an [increase](#) in the number of fraud schemes related to COVID-19. Here is some advice from the FBI on how to protect yourself:

Scammers are leveraging the COVID-19 pandemic to steal your money, your personal information, or both. Don't let them. Protect yourself and do your research before clicking on links purporting to provide information on the virus; donating to a charity online or through social media; contributing to a crowdfunding campaign; purchasing products online; or giving up your personal information in order to receive money or other benefits. The FBI advises you to be on the lookout for the following:

- **Fake CDC Emails:** Watch out for emails claiming to be from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) or other organizations claiming to offer information on the virus. Do not click links or open attachments you do not recognize. Fraudsters can use links in emails to deliver malware to your computer to steal personal information or to lock your computer and demand payment. Be wary of websites and apps claiming to track COVID-19 cases worldwide. Criminals are using malicious websites to infect and lock devices until payment is received.
- **Phishing Emails:** Look out for phishing emails asking you to verify your personal information in order to receive an economic stimulus check from the government. While talk of economic stimulus checks has been in the news cycle, government agencies are not sending unsolicited emails seeking your private information in order to send you money. Phishing emails may also claim to be related to:
 - Charitable contributions
 - General financial relief
 - Airline carrier refunds
 - Fake cures and vaccines
 - Fake testing kits
- **Counterfeit Treatments or Equipment:** Be cautious of anyone selling products that claim to prevent, treat, diagnose, or cure COVID-19. Be alert to counterfeit products such as sanitizing products and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including N95 respirator masks, goggles, full face shields, protective gowns, and gloves. More information on unapproved or counterfeit PPE can be found [here](#). You can also find information on the U.S. Food and Drug Administration [website](#),

and the Environmental Protection Agency [website](#). Report counterfeit products [here](#) and to the [National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center](#).

- If you are looking for accurate and up-to-date information on COVID-19, the CDC has posted extensive guidance and information that is updated frequently. The best sources for authoritative information on COVID-19 are www.cdc.gov and www.coronavirus.gov. You may also consult your health care provider for guidance.
- The FBI is reminding you to always use good cyber hygiene and security measures. By remembering the following tips, you can protect yourself and help stop criminal activity:
 - Do not open attachments or click links within emails from senders you don't recognize.
 - Do not provide your username, password, date of birth, social security number, financial data, or other personal information in response to an email or robocall.
 - Always verify the web address of legitimate websites and manually type them into your browser.
 - Check for misspellings or wrong domains within a link (for example, an address that should end in a ".gov" ends in ".com" instead).

In addition to protecting yourself, also be sure to look out for older adults. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) [reminds us](#) that scammers often target older adults because seniors may have more assets or regular income in the form of retirement benefits or savings and because they're often more polite and trusting than other age groups. As [older adults are at a higher risk](#) for serious illness, they may also be isolating themselves.

Social isolation is already an issue for older adults and can lead to a host of issues, including an increased likelihood of falling for scams due to a need to connect to others. This issue could grow in response to virus prevention tactics like social distancing and quarantines. Phone calls and video chats can help older adults and their families connect during this period where health officials encourage limiting contact.

Older adults, as well as their family members should be aware of common types of scams, as well as how to prevent and report them. The CFPB offers helpful [resources](#) with more information. Please do not hesitate to reach out to [my office](#) for assistance as well.

I am looking for information for people with disabilities.

The [Administration for Community Living](#) offers several resources from their non-federal partners to provide information about COVID-19 to people with disabilities and caregivers for people with disabilities, as well as caregivers for other vulnerable populations:

- [These suggestions](#) for family members and friends who support people living with Alzheimer's disease and similar illnesses were put together by the Emory University Goizueta Alzheimer's Disease Center. They also may be helpful for people providing support to loved ones for any reason.
- The Family Caregiver Alliance is [collecting COVID-19 resources and articles](#) for family caregivers.
- Generations United has produced [a COVID-19 fact sheet \(PDF\)](#) with information to help grandfamilies stay healthy, informed and connected during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Thank you to [Green Mountain Self-Advocates](#) for creating this [booklet about COVID-19](#). It was created by people with disabilities, for people with disabilities. Thank you also to the California DD Council for translating it into [Spanish](#).
- University of North Carolina: [Supporting Individuals with Autism Through Uncertain Times](#).
- Emergency communication tool from [Temple University Institute on Disabilities](#).
- The Center for START Resources has posted language access resources on its [COVID-19 Resources](#) page.
- [Common Questions and Answers About COVID-19 for Older Adults and People with Chronic Health Conditions](#), created by the Alliance for Aging Research and the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases.
- The Paralysis Resource Center, an ACL grantee, has created [this resource](#) for people living with paralysis.
- [Tips for First Responders](#) was developed by the University of New Mexico, Center for Development and Disability, the American Association on Health and Disability, and other partners and offers quick, easy-to-use procedures for assisting people with disabilities in an emergency.

SECTION V. What is Congresswoman Underwood doing in response to COVID-19?

Congresswoman Underwood's priorities for our District

Since the day I was sworn into office, I have been committed to championing the issues that matter for our District, from making health care affordable and accessible to investing in our local economy, including our workers and small businesses. Those priorities are as important now as ever.

You might have seen stories in the news about large legislative packages that Congress is working on in response to COVID-19. In fact, we've passed three bipartisan bills already: the [Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act](#), the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#), and the [CARES Act](#). I have provided you with summaries of those bills below. Yet as important as those bills are, we know there is still more work to do to keep our community safe and restore people's livelihoods.

As Congress has debated the policies included in these legislative packages, and as debates continue on forthcoming legislation, I want to be very clear about my priorities: I will be fighting for Illinois' 14th. That is why my team and I are constantly calling business owners, mayors, public health officials, and constituents across the District so that we would know what challenges you're facing. As the [CARES Act](#) was being negotiated, I released my [Priorities to Help the Fourteenth District of Illinois](#). When Congress passed the CARES Act on March 27, many of the [priorities](#) that I fought for were included in the package::

- **A \$150 Billion State and Local Coronavirus Relief Fund:** Creates a \$150 billion State and Local Coronavirus Relief Fund to provide states and localities additional resources to cope with the coronavirus pandemic. It is estimated that our state of Illinois will receive approximately \$4,914,000,000 billion in desperately needed funds to benefit our state's residents.
- **\$260 Billion in Dramatically Expanded Unemployment Benefits:** Includes numerous provisions to improve unemployment benefits including providing an additional \$600 per week for the next four weeks, providing an additional 13 weeks of federally funded benefits, and expanding eligibility to include workers in the gig economy and self-employed workers.
- **Immediate Direct Cash Payments to Lower and Middle-Income Americans:** Provides for immediate, direct cash payments to lower-and middle-income Americans of \$1,200 for each adult and \$500 for each child, beginning to phase out at an annual income of \$75,000 for an individual and \$150,000 for a household. These payments will provide individuals with the cash they need right now to survive with much of the economy currently shut down.
- **More Than \$375 Billion in Small Business Relief:** Provides more than \$375 billion in small business relief, including \$349 billion for forgivable loans to small businesses to pay their employees and keep them on the payroll; \$17 billion for debt relief for current and new SBA borrowers; and \$10 billion in immediate disaster grants.

- **More than \$100 Billion for Our Hospitals and Health Care Workers:** Provides an investment of more than \$100 billion in direct funding for hospitals and health systems to support their urgent needs in response to COVID-19 and to protect our health care workers with the personal protective equipment their patients' safety and their own.
- **More Than \$100 Billion in Additional Emergency Appropriations, Including the Following:**
 - **Transit Agencies:** Provides \$25 billion to transit agencies, which have all seen a drastic drop in revenues as social distancing has been implemented. This funding is to be used to protect the jobs of the employees of the transit agencies, funding their paychecks during this public health emergency. Illinois will receive \$1,615,873,750 billion under this program.
 - **HUD Emergency Solution Grants:** Provides \$2 billion for HUD Emergency Solution Grants to states that will be distributed by formula. These grants are designed to address the impact of the coronavirus among individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and to support additional homeless assistance, prevention, and eviction prevention assistance. Of this \$2 billion, our state will receive \$98,949,834 million. In addition, the bill provides an additional \$2 billion for these grants that will be allocated by HUD to the most hard-pressed areas.
 - **Child Care and Development Block Grant:** Supports child care and early education by providing \$3.5 billion for the Child Care and Development Block Grant. Illinois will receive \$117,547,157 million under this emergency appropriation.
 - **Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP):** Provides \$900 million to help low-income families pay their heating and cooling bills. Illinois will receive \$ \$13,004,000 million for this purpose during this public health emergency.
 - **Byrne-Justice Assistance Grant Program:** Provides \$850 million for this program, giving additional support to state and local law enforcement agencies, thereby allowing them, for example, to obtain the personal protective equipment and other medical items they may need during this public health emergency. Illinois will receive \$31,913,921 million under this appropriation.
 - **CDC Coronavirus State, Local and Tribal Grants:** Provides about \$750 million in CDC State, Local, and Tribal Grants to help agencies cope with the public health emergency. The minimum award for our state is \$16,297,000 million. In addition, states can apply for additional funds above their minimum award, based on their needs.
 - **Election Assistance:** Provides \$400 million for Election Assistance Grants for states to help prepare for the 2020 elections. Coronavirus is already resulting in the postponement of some primaries and this funding can help states make voting safer for individuals. Funding can be used, for example, to increase the ability to vote by mail, expand early voting, and expand online registration. Illinois will receive \$13,899,434 million for these purposes.

You can read about all of my priorities that were included in the CARES Act [here](#).

Summary of the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act

On March 6, the President signed the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act into law. This was the first bill that Congress passed in response to COVID-19, and I was proud to support it. In fact, this “Phase I” deal had near-unanimous support in the House and the Senate. It provides \$8.3 billion in emergency funding to respond to COVID-19.

That money is already coming to our community: on March 17, I [announced](#) a \$14.6 million award of federal resources to Illinois to support our state’s response to COVID-19. That funding came directly from the “Phase I” Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act. Additionally, on March 20, I [announced](#) that Illinois small businesses suffering economic injury due to COVID-19 are now able to access low-interest federal loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), a policy that I championed in the Phase I legislation as well.

A full summary of the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act can be found [here](#). Some of the key policies include:

- More than \$2 billion to help federal, state, local, and tribal governments prevent, prepare, and respond to the crisis.
- More than \$3 billion for research, development, and review of vaccines, therapeutics, and diagnostics to help protect the health and safety of the American people.
- Nearly \$1 billion for health care preparedness, pharmaceuticals and medical supplies, and community health, including:
 - Approximately \$500 million for procurement of pharmaceuticals, masks, personal protective equipment (PPE), and other medical supplies, which can be distributed to state and local health agencies in areas with a shortage of medical supplies.
 - \$100 million for Community Health Centers, supporting smaller health clinics in under-served urban and rural areas. We have five Community Health Centers in Illinois’ 14th Congressional District.
 - Funding for hospital preparedness, state and local pathogen treatment centers, and medical surge capacity to increase capacity at health facilities across the country.

- Assistance for small businesses impacted by the coronavirus outbreak: \$1 billion in loan subsidies that would provide \$7 billion in low-interest loans for small businesses impacted by financial losses as a result of the coronavirus outbreak.
- Funding for programs to promote mental health and substance abuse treatment and prevention.
- Funding to combat this public health threat overseas to prevent and respond to wider spread of the virus.
- A waiver to expand access to telehealth services.

You can find more detailed information [here](#).

Summary of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act

The Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act can be considered “Phase I” of Congress’ response to COVID-19, and the Families First Coronavirus Act can be considered “Phase II.” The Families First Coronavirus Response Act also passed the House and Senate with overwhelming bipartisan support and was signed into law by the President on March 18. I worked hard with my Democratic and Republican colleagues to ensure that we not only passed a law to address the impacts of the outbreak, but also to ensure that critical assistance is delivered where it is most needed, including communities like ours in Illinois.

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act has a few key components, including expanded paid leave, the establishment of free testing for COVID-19, protections for our health care workforce, and critical benefits for children and families. You can find a full summary of the bill [here](#). Some of the policies you will see in the summary include:

- Emergency Paid Sick Days
 - Establishment of a new federal emergency paid leave benefits program for workers who have COVID-19, are quarantined due to the possibility of having COVID-19, are caring for someone with COVID-19, or are caring for another dependent as a result of COVID-19, such as a child whose school has closed.
 - Requires all employers to allow employees to gradually accrue seven days of paid sick leave and to provide an additional 14 days available immediately in the event of any public health emergency, including the current COVID-19 crisis.
 - Requires all employers to provide an additional 14 days of paid sick leave, available immediately at the beginning of a public health emergency, including the current COVID-19 crisis.
 - Reimburses small businesses for the costs of providing the 14 days of additional paid sick leave used by employees during a public health emergency.

- \$5 million for the Department of Labor to administer the emergency paid sick days program.
- Emergency Unemployment Insurance Stabilization and Access
 - \$1 billion for emergency grants to states for activities related to processing and paying unemployment insurance (UI) benefits.
- No-Cost COVID-19 Testing
 - Provides no-cost testing for COVID-19 to individuals with private insurance, Medicare, Medicare Advantage, Medicaid, CHIP, and TRICARE.
 - Also provides no-cost testing for COVID-19 to individuals without health insurance, veterans, federal workers, and American Indians/Alaska Natives.
- Health Care Workforce Protections
 - Development and implementation of comprehensive infectious disease exposure control plans to protect health care workers from exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Food and Nutrition
 - \$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.
 - \$400 million to assist local food banks to meet increased demand for low-income Americans during the emergency.
 - \$250 million for the Senior Nutrition program in the Administration for Community Living (ACL) to provide approximately 25 million additional home-delivered and pre-packaged meals to low-income seniors who depend on the Senior Nutrition programs in their communities.
 - Assistance for families who lose access to free and reduced-price lunches for children when schools close.
 - Expanded eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

You can find more detailed information [here](#).

Summary of the CARES Act

After the “Phase I” and “Phase II” deals earlier in March, Congress passed the CARES Act on March 27 with strong bipartisan support. The CARES Act provides much-needed relief for Illinois families, small businesses, and our health care system. Many of the [priorities](#) that I advocated for in the CARES Act were included in the bill, which you can read about [here](#) and in the section above. You can find a full summary of the CARES Act [here](#). Some of the other key policies include:

- Unemployment Insurance (\$260 billion)

- Full Paycheck Replacement: \$600 increase for every American, which equates to 100 percent of wages for the average American without a paycheck struggling through the crisis
- Extension of Benefits: An additional 13 weeks of federally-funded unemployment insurance benefits are immediately made available.
- Expanding Access: Allow part-time, self-employed, and gig economy workers to access UI benefits.
- Marshall Plan for our Health System (\$150 billion)
 - Equipment and Infrastructure: Personal and protective equipment for health care workers, testing supplies, increased workforce and training, new construction to house patients, emergency operation centers and more.
 - Enhanced Health Investments: Additional funding is also dedicated to delivering Medicare payment increases to all hospitals and providers to ensure that they receive the funding they need during this crisis, and new investments in our country's Strategic National Stockpile, surge capacity and medical research into COVID-19.
- Small Business Rescue Plan (\$377 billion)
 - \$350 billion in loan forgiveness grants to small businesses and nonprofits to maintain existing workforce and help pay for other expenses like rent, mortgage, and utilities.
 - \$10 billion for SBA emergency grants of up to \$10,000 to provide immediate relief for small business operating costs.
 - \$17 billion for SBA to cover 6 months of payments for small businesses with existing SBA loans.
- Robust Worker and Transparency Protections on Government Loans
 - No stock buybacks or dividends for the length of any loan provided by the Treasury plus 1 year.
 - Restrictions on any increases to executive compensation.
 - Protect collective bargaining agreements.
 - Real-time public reporting of Treasury transactions under the Act, including terms of loans, investments or other assistance to corporations.
 - Prohibition on businesses controlled by the President, Vice President, Members of Congress, and heads of Executive Departments getting loans or investments from Treasury programs.
 - Creation of Treasury Department Special Inspector General for Pandemic Recovery to provide oversight of Treasury loans and investments and a Pandemic Response Accountability Committee to protect taxpayer dollars.
 - Creation of a Congressional Oversight Commission to enhance legislative oversight of pandemic response.
- Direct Payments to Working Americans

- Direct cash payments of \$1200 to Americans (the full payment is available for individuals making up to \$75,000 (individual) and \$150,000 (married), then phases out for people with income above those levels).
- An additional \$500 cash payment is available per child.
- State and Local Coronavirus Expenditures Fund (\$150 billion)
 - Illinois is [projected](#) to receive approximately \$4.9 billion to support our state's COVID-19 response.
- Student Loan Relief
 - Exclude up to \$5,250 in qualifying student loan repayments paid by the employer on behalf of the employee from income for income tax purposes to encourage employers to implement student loan repayment programs.
- Protecting Aviation Industry Jobs
 - Direct payroll payments to keep millions of airline workers on the job and receiving paychecks.
 - Airline companies will be prohibited from stock buybacks and dividends for the entire life of the grant plus one year.
 - Collective Bargaining Agreements negotiated by workers will be protected.
- Emergency Appropriations (\$330 billion, including the \$100 billion for hospitals and health care providers mentioned above)
 - \$16 billion to replenish the Strategic National Stockpile supplies of pharmaceuticals, personal protective equipment, and other medical supplies, which are distributed to State and local health agencies, hospitals and other healthcare entities facing shortages during emergencies.
 - \$1 billion for the Defense Production Act to bolster domestic supply chains, enabling industry to quickly ramp up production of personal protective equipment, ventilators, and other urgently needed medical supplies, and billions dollars more for federal, state, and local health agencies to purchase such equipment.
 - \$4.3 billion to support federal, state, and local public health agencies to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the coronavirus, including for the purchase of personal protective equipment; laboratory testing to detect positive cases; infection control and mitigation at the local level to prevent the spread of the virus; and other public health preparedness and response activities.
 - \$45 billion for FEMA's Disaster Relief Fund, more than doubling the available funding, to provide for the immediate needs of state, local, tribal, and territorial governments, as well as private non-profits performing critical and essential services, to protect citizens and help them recover from the overwhelming effects of COVID-19. Reimbursable activities may include medical response, personal protective equipment, National Guard deployment, coordination of logistics, safety measures, and community services nationwide.

- \$30.75 billion for grants to provide emergency support to local school systems and higher education institutions to continue to provide educational services to their students and support the on-going functionality of school districts and institutions.
- \$25 billion in aid to our nation's transit systems to help protect public health and safety while ensuring access to jobs, medical treatment, food, and other essential services.
- \$10 billion in grants to help our nation's airports as the aviation sector grapples with the most steep and potentially sustained decline in air travel in history.
- \$3.5 billion in additional funding for the Child Care Development Block Grant to provide child care assistance to health care sector employees, emergency responders, sanitation workers, and other workers deemed essential during the response to the coronavirus.
- More than \$7 billion for affordable housing and homelessness assistance programs. This funding will help low-income and working class Americans avoid evictions and minimize any impacts caused by loss of employment, and child care, or other unforeseen circumstances related to COVID-19, and support additional assistance to prevent eviction and for people experiencing homelessness
- More than \$6.5 billion in Federal funding for CDBG, the Economic Development Administration, and the Manufacturing Extension Partnership to help mitigate the local economic crisis and rebuild impacted industries such as tourism or manufacturing supply chains.
- \$400 million in election assistance for the states to help prepare for the 2020 election cycle, including to increase the ability to vote by mail, expand early voting and online registration, and increase the safety of voting in-person by providing additional voting facilities and more pollworkers.
- \$2 billion in funding to strengthen response capacity and support tribal governments.
- \$1 billion to recapitalize Amtrak after steep ridership declines related to the outbreak. This will keep thousands of Amtrak employees employed, and ensure America's intercity passenger rail stays on track.

You can read a detailed section-by-section summary of the CARES Act [here](#).

Letters to demand immediate action

As we advance legislation in Congress to respond to COVID-19, I have also supported letters to different public officials to demand immediate action to help workers, families, and businesses in our District. Some of these letters have led to direct support: for example, I signed onto a letter with the Illinois Congressional delegation in support of Governor Pritzker's request for a Small Business Administration (SBA) Economic Injury Declaration for Illinois so that we could get desperately needed financial assistance to our small businesses.

Days later, the Governor's request was granted. If you're a small business owner in our community looking to apply for an SBA loan as a result of COVID-19, visit this [website](#). The letter to the SBA was one of many that I've recently championed in response to the pandemic. Some of the others include:

- On February 27, [I wrote a letter to the Secretary of the Veterans Affairs](#) to urge him to conduct proactive risk communication to Veterans in response to the growing public health threat of COVID-19.
- On March 5, [I joined Representatives Rosa DeLauro and Katie Porter to write a letter](#) to the leaders of the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Labor, and the IRS to raise concerns about the affordability and accessibility of COVID-19 diagnostic testing and services.
- On March 18, I joined the entire Illinois Congressional delegation to ask the U.S. Small Business Administration to issue an Economic Injury Declaration for Illinois to assist small businesses during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- On March 18, I joined a bipartisan Illinois Congressional coalition to write to the Secretary of Health and Human Services in support of Governor Pritzker's COVID-19 response requests for Illinois. These included more PPE (like masks, respirators, gowns, and gloves), more testing kits, and an approval of a Medicaid waiver to expand coverage.
- On March 18, I signed onto a bipartisan letter to the Secretary of Education to take steps to ensure that the financial burden of university closures and migration to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic do not result in financial burdens for students.
- On March 18, I signed onto a bipartisan letter led by the Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to the Secretary of the VA to request more frequent updates on the availability of testing kits, medical equipment and supplies, and staff to ensure we have sufficient resources for our Veterans during the COVID-19 outbreak.
- On March 20, I joined a bipartisan Illinois Congressional coalition to write to Governor Pritzker in support of emergency funding for our Community Health Centers in Illinois, five of which are in our District.
- On March 23, ten years from the day the Affordable Care Act was signed into law, I signed onto a [letter](#) to ask the President to drop the lawsuit to repeal the ACA, which would threaten health care access for millions of Americans in the midst of a global pandemic.

- On March 24, I joined the entire Illinois Congressional delegation to ask the Department of Defense to support Governor Pritzker's request for support from the National Guard for our state's COVID-19 response efforts.

I will continue to use every tool I have to ensure that our community has access to the support we need during this crisis and after it.

Communication with constituents

It is always important for leaders to show up, listen, communicate, and be accountable - and that is especially true in a crisis. That's why I am committed to being accessible throughout this pandemic. My team and I have made hundreds of calls to business owners, mayors, public health officials, and constituents across the District so that we can learn about what you are going through and develop solutions to help. Please do not hesitate to reach out to my office [online](#) or by phone: (630) 549-2190 or (202) 225-2976.

I am also constantly looking for new ways to answer your questions and communicate important information with you. On March 18, I [hosted](#) a Facebook Live Town Hall to virtually meet with members of our community and respond to the questions you have about COVID-19. You can re-watch the full town hall [here](#). I've also hosted recent Facebook discussions with the U.S. [Small Business Administration](#) Illinois District Director, Robert "Bo" Steiner, and the Executive Director of the [Kendall County Health Department](#), Dr. Amaal Tokars.

I'll be doing more digital events soon, so to make sure that you know about them, you can [sign up for my newsletter](#) and follow me on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#). I'll also use those channels to deliver important updates on COVID-19.

Whether you are reaching out as an individual looking for guidance on applications for unemployment benefits, a mom looking for reliable public health information, or a small business owner in need of financial relief, my team is ready to help you during this emergency. [Please give us a call or email us any time.](#)

SECTION VI. What is the State of Illinois doing in response to COVID-19?

Helpful links and state resources

The State of Illinois has developed many resources to provide you with up-to-date information relevant to our state and communities. Here is a list of important links:

- A list of the many [forms of economic assistance](#) that Governor Pritzker is working to provide to Illinois families during the pandemic, including information about:
 - Loans for small businesses
 - Unemployment insurance
 - Utility relief
 - Food access
 - Medicaid waiver
 - Taxpayer support
 - Free/low-cost Internet
- [Illinois' COVID-19 Information Hub](#)
- [Illinois Department of Public Health \(IDPH\) COVID-19 Website](#)
- [Illinois COVID-19 News](#)
- Around 2:30pm CT every day, the Governor provides updates on the COVID-19 outbreak in Illinois. You can tune in [here](#).
- If you have a general questions about COVID-19 or Illinois' response, call 1-800-889-3931 or send an email to DPH.SICK@ILLINOIS.GOV
- [How to prevent the spread of COVID-19](#)
- [How to prepare for COVID-19](#)
- [Answers to frequently asked questions](#) about COVID-19, as well as specific information about the [stay-at-home order](#), and FAQs about [business](#), [education](#), and [unemployment](#).
- [Answers to frequently asked questions](#) about the closure of child care centers.
- [Resources to help](#) with any of the following categories: food, medicine, shelter, recovery, help at home, and talking with someone.

Governor Pritzker's Executive Orders

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Pritzker has issued a series of Executive Orders to take immediate actions to protect Illinoisans. The full text of each Executive Order can be found [here](#). Some of the orders include:

- **Executive Order Number 10 - Stay At Home:** All individuals must stay at home, with exceptions for essential activities, essential government functions, and essential businesses and operations. All non-essential business and operations must cease, aside from Minimum Basic Operations. Business can continue with employees working from home. Local government units across the state must halt all evictions, and gatherings of more than 10 people are prohibited.

You can also find more information about this Executive Order in Section II of this document.

- **Executive Order Number 9 - Telehealth:** All health insurers regulated by the Department of Insurance are required to cover telehealth services and reimburse providers at the same rate as in-person visits and are prohibited from imposing any cost-sharing for in-network providers.

If you have questions about whether certain health care services, including mental health care services, that are delivered via telehealth can be covered by your insurance plan, it is best to call your insurance company for more information.

- **Executive Order Number 5 - K-12 Schools:** All public and private K-12 schools must close for educational purposes; however, this will not affect the availability of school buildings to supply food for students in need. This order has been extended through April 7.

You can find the complete list of Executive Orders, and the full text of each order, [here](#).

Schools and Education

Some parents and administrators have reached out to my office with questions about the public and private school closures, which are currently scheduled to last through April 7. The most up-to-date information about school closures in Illinois can be found on the website of our [State Board of Education](#). You can also email COVID19@isbe.net with any questions or concerns. If you are a teacher, parent, or student looking for continuing education resources while schools are closed, you can find them [here](#).

You can find answers to frequently asked questions about education in Illinois [here](#), including:

- [How will this closure impact administration of Spring 2020 state-mandated assessments and accountability?](#)
- [Have any Open Meetings Act \(OMA\) requirements been relaxed?](#)

- [How is ISBE treating its Board meeting?](#)
- [Should districts consider canceling meetings?](#)
- [How will days be counted during the mandated closure?](#)
- [How will days be counted, if schools closed before the mandated closure?](#)
- [Can districts utilize E-learning Days in lieu of Act of God during the mandated closure?](#)
- [Are ROEs/ISCs required to approve E-Learning Plans during the mandated closure?](#)
- [Are districts required to change the dates of spring break if dates do not fall within the mandated closure timeframe?](#)
- [Are districts required to provide meals to students during closure?](#)
- [Are districts required to complete a form to provide non-congregate feeding for students?](#)
- [If districts use buses to deliver meals, is that mileage reimbursable?](#)
- [Can schools and school districts that do not participate in the federally funded school lunch or breakfast program provide meals to students?](#)
- [What are the timelines for return to school?](#)
- [Are non-public schools mandated to close pursuant to Executive Order 2020-05?](#)
- [How does the mandated closure impact prekindergarten programs?](#)
- [Can behind-the-wheel instruction for driver's education continue during the closure?](#)
- [What if a district has a question regarding special education?](#)
- [Can districts have staff in school buildings during the mandated closure, including for teacher institute days?](#)
- [Is a district required to have an administrator in every school building?](#)
- [Can school administration require that teachers and staff come into school during the closure?](#)

The CDC also has released guidance on keeping children healthy while school is [out](#).

SECTION VII. What is the Administration doing in response to COVID-19?

Basic information & mythbusting COVID-19 rumors

For the latest information from the COVID-19 Task Force at the White House, you can visit [Coronavirus.gov](https://www.coronavirus.gov). You can find official health information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [here](#).

You can visit FEMA's [website](#) for responses to myths that have started to circulate about COVID-19. The website addresses rumors such as:

Myth: There is a national lockdown and the entire country will be quarantined for two weeks.

Fact: There is no national lockdown. As with all information online or shared via social media, it is important to verify the source of the information. You can find the latest information as well as links to additional resources at www.coronavirus.gov.

Myth: FEMA has deployed military assets.

Fact: No, FEMA does not have military assets. Like all emergencies, response is most successful when it is locally executed, state managed and federally supported. Each state's governor is responsible for response activities in their state, to include establishing curfews, deploying the National Guard if needed and any other restrictions or safety measures they deem necessary for the health and welfare of their citizens.

Myth: I need to stockpile as many groceries and supplies as I can.

Fact: Please only buy what your family needs for a week. It is important to remember that many families may be unable to buy a supply of food and water for weeks in advance. Consumer demand has recently been exceptionally high – especially for grocery, household cleaning, and some healthcare products. Freight flows are not disrupted, but stores need time to restock.

Myth: I heard that the government is sending \$1,000 checks. How do I sign up?

The U.S. Government is not mailing checks in response to COVID-19 at this time.. Anyone who tells you they can get you the money now is a scammer. It's important that you only trust information coming from official sources. The Federal Trade Commission recently provided more information about this scam and other common COVID-19 related scams on their website.

Myth: Only those over 60 years of age and those with existing health problems are at risk from the Coronavirus.

It is an unfortunate rumor that only people over 60 years of age are at risk of getting this disease. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), those at higher risk include older adults and people with serious chronic medical conditions. However, symptoms can range from mild to severe with and may have different complications for

each individual. The CDC has a list of COVID-19 symptoms you may experience. Please continue to follow the official information from the CDC.

Other federal efforts

A comprehensive list of efforts by various federal departments and agencies in response to COVID-19 can be found [here](#). You will find information on:

- Health and safety
- Travel, immigration, and transportation
- Money and taxes
- Education
- Scams and fraud
- Benefits and grants
- Housing
- Federal building status updates and national parks
- Voting and elections
- Communications
- Business
- International cooperation
- Cybersecurity
- Federal workforce

Find more information [here](#).

SECTION. VIII. What are the counties in our District doing in response to COVID-19?

Overview

My team and I have been in regular contact with local officials and public health departments to hear from them about the challenges they are confronting in responding to COVID-19 and to learn how we can help. Some of the most relevant information about the COVID-19 outbreak in your community and what is being done in response will come from your local leaders. Below is a set of resources to learn more about your county's approach to COVID-19, and who you can call with any questions.

Contact information

- DeKalb County
 - [County website](#)
 - [County public health department website](#)
 - [County COVID-19 information](#)
 - Public health department contact information: (815) 758-6673

- DuPage County
 - [County website](#)
 - [County public health department website](#)
 - [County COVID-19 information](#)
 - Public health department contact information: (630) 221-7030

- Kane County
 - [County website](#)
 - [County public health department website](#)
 - [County COVID-19 information](#)
 - Public health department contact information: (630) 208-3801

- Kendall County
 - [County website](#)
 - [County public health department website](#)
 - [County COVID-19 information](#)
 - Public health department contact information: (630) 553-9100

- Lake County
 - [County website](#)
 - [County public health department website](#)
 - [County COVID-19 information](#)
 - Public health department contact information: (847) 377-8000

- McHenry County
 - [County website](#)

- [County public health department website](#)
- [County COVID-19 information](#)
- Public health department contact information: (815) 334-4510

- Will County
 - [County website](#)
 - [County public health department website](#)
 - [County COVID-19 information](#)
 - Public health department contact information: (815) 740-8977

SECTION IX. How can I help?

Stay at home

In challenging times, it is easy to succumb to fear. But I often think about a quote from Fred Rogers, the man behind the television show “Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood.” Mr. Rogers said, “When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, ‘Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.’”

It is true that COVID-19 has caused people to be scared. But it has also brought out the helpers, from our heroic health care workforce caring for patients right now to families picking up groceries for their elderly neighbors who cannot leave home. We all have a responsibility to step up, and I have been inspired to see how many people in our community are rising to the occasion.

If you want to help in these difficult times, the first step is following the Governor’s stay-at-home order: unless there’s an essential activity that would cause you to leave - like picking up food for your family or a neighbor who cannot get out of the house - you and your community will be safer if you stay home. This is a sacrifice, but when I am reminded of the sacrifices that our health care workers are making right now, I know it is worth it.

Spread accurate information

It is also important to spread accurate information about COVID-19: one of the main sources of fear for people is the inaccurate information that they might be seeing on their social media feeds or by word of mouth. You have a critical role to play in making sure that people know and understand the basic facts and science. Point them to this document, or the COVID-19 websites from the [CDC](#) and [State of Illinois](#).

You can even send people the link to these [resources](#): handy one-page documents from the CDC on basic COVID-19 facts and guidance for stopping the spread.

Help high-risk populations

While most of us in Illinois can still leave home to buy groceries, go for a walk, or even head into work if we are in certain professions, others cannot leave their homes at all. With the elevated risks that COVID-19 poses to older adults and people with underlying health conditions, it is hard for some of our neighbors to leave their homes for any reason right now.

There are several ways you can help these neighbors. You can offer to pick up any meals, groceries, or medications they need. It’s also important to call to check in: make sure your elderly family members and neighbors have what they need. Sometimes, that might just be someone to talk to. If someone has an issue that you do not know how to resolve, please don’t hesitate to call our office: (630) 549-2190 or (202) 225-2976.

For more information on specific volunteering opportunities in Illinois, including food delivery, visit this [website](#). Giving DuPage has also put together a list of local volunteering needs [here](#).

Help the health care and emergency workforce

The people on the frontlines of this crisis are our health care and emergency workers. The doctors, nurses, police officers, firefighters, emergency medical services personnel and other members of the health care and first responder workforce in our community are demonstrating deep bravery and selfless service. Their work has been nothing short of heroic.

As these men and women leave home every day to care for the sick and keep us safe, we can also consider ways to help them. With schools closed, some might be looking for babysitters. Others could use a hand in picking up food for their families. If you can, give them a call and see how you can be a helper too.

For more information on specific volunteering opportunities in Illinois, visit this [website](#). Giving DuPage has also put together a list of local volunteering needs [here](#).

If you are healthy and able, give blood

It is understandable why people might be hesitant to give blood in the midst of this pandemic. But donations are critically important right now: the nation's blood supply "[faces a dire shortage](#)." You could [save up to three lives](#) with your selfless gift.

If you are healthy and able, you can set up an appointment with the Red Cross [here](#) or with America's Blood Centers [here](#).

Help address shortages in medical equipment and supplies

Our hospitals and other health care facilities are facing a massive shortage of "Personal Protective Equipment" (PPE), including:

- Masks:
 - N-95
 - Earloop
 - Surgical
- Gowns:
 - Isolation
 - Non-Descript
- Gloves:
 - Nitrile
 - Sterile
 - Surgical
- Eye Protection:
 - Face Shields
 - Goggles

If you have any of these items to donate in Illinois, you can fill out [this form](#) or email: PPE.donations@illinois.gov (you can find more information [here](#)). The [FEMA website](#) also has more information about donating or selling medical equipment and supplies. You can call my office at (630) 549-2190 or (202) 225-2976 for guidance as well.

The situation in front of us is a great challenge. But I know that the spirit of our community and our nation is greater. We are all in this together!