

Minnesota's Children's Cabinet

We're committed to protecting the health, safety, and well-being of children. Below are resources to support you and your family during the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 Guidance

For the latest information on COVID-19, please visit the [Minnesota Department of Health](#) website or call the MDH COVID-19 hotlines between 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. (interpreters available).

- **Health questions:** 651-201-3920 or 1-800-657-3903
- [Emergency Operations Center Hotline:](#) 651-297-1304 or 1-800-657-3504
- **Schools and child care questions:** 651-297-1304 or 1-800-657-3504

Health information is available in [other languages](#), including [how to wash your hands](#).

Mental Health, Well-Being and Resources for Special Health Needs

Now, more than ever, it's important everyone has access to the mental health care and well-being resources they need to stay healthy. State agencies are working together to ensure that mental health services are available to Minnesotans, including children, youth, and families, and connecting with private organizations to support those in need, including the telemedicine to replace clinic visits and other well-being supports to help families cope.

Visit the COVID-19 [Mental Health Supports page](#) to find information on hotlines, organizations and other supports. Mental well-being resources during the time of COVID-19 are available [here](#). Mental health hotlines provide free support to support Minnesotans experiencing mental distress. Resources are **below**.

- **Crisis Text Line:** The 24/7 emergency service is available if you or someone you know is experiencing a psychiatric or mental health crisis.
 - **Text MN to 741741**
- **County Crisis Contacts** – access a directory of mental health crisis phone numbers by county here:
 - [Adult Mental Health Crisis Response Numbers](#)
 - [Children Mental Health Crisis Response Numbers](#)
- **Minnesota Warmline:** Are you an adult needing support? Talk to a specialist who has firsthand experience living with a mental health condition.
 - Call 651-288-0400 or text "Support" to 85511
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** The 24/7 lifeline provides support when in distress, has prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and resources for professionals.
 - Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Disaster Distress Helpline:** Offers crisis counseling and support if you or a family member is experiencing emotional distress related to a disaster.
 - Call: 1-800-985-5990

Please also consider contacting the [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\) Minnesota](#) (1-888-NAMI-Helps / 1-888-626-4435) or the [Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health](#) at (800-528-4511) to connect for help, to navigate the mental health system, for support and for resources.

In response to COVID-19, state agencies have developed and shared resources to support mental well-being as children and families adjust their daily lives to stop the spread of COVID-19. Some of the current resources include:

- [Supporting Mental Promotion during COVID-19 \(MDH\)](#)
- [Mental and Behavioral Health Resources During COVID19 \(MDH\)](#)
- [Supporting people who have disabilities during COVID-19](#)

For parents or caregivers (especially those who have children with special health needs or different abilities) looking to talk to other parents for emotional support or one-on-one help in navigating resources, Minnesota has a number of organizations to help including:

- [Disability Hub MN](#) provides free, statewide, information, referral and assistance service to help people with disabilities, chronic illnesses and their representatives connect to community services.
- [Family Voices of Minnesota](#) is a parent-run organization providing information, resources, and peer-to-peer support for families who have children with special health needs or disabilities.
- [PACER](#) is a resource for families of children with disabilities, including parent advocates and staff available to assist families at 952-838-9000 or pacer@pacer.org.

Cash and Economic Assistance

During this pandemic, some requirements for essential programs and services have been waived or modified to allow Minnesotans to receive the support they need. [This DHS webpage](#) provides a summary of temporary changes to public assistance programs, such as Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), that current participants and those interested in applying should know. A complete list of [temporary waivers from the Minnesota Department of Human Services \(DHS\) can be found here](#).

The following resources are available if you, your family, or someone you know needs economic assistance:

- **Bridge to Benefits:** This [web-based screening tool](#) can help you identify if you're eligible for public works support programs and get assistance with applying including SNAP, WIC, School Meal Programs, Minnesota Health Care Programs, Energy Assistance, and Child Care Assistance.
- **ApplyMN:** [This web application](#) can connect you with state and county services to help meet your and your family's basic needs. Use it to apply for [cash assistance](#), [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\) benefits](#), [child care assistance](#), and Emergency Assistance. Call 651-431-4000 for questions.
- **Emergency Assistance:** Your household may be eligible for assistance to cover emergency needs, such as help paying rent or utility bills. Contact your [county or tribal human services agency](#) to learn about availability, eligibility, and how to apply.
- **Community Action Agencies:** [This site gathers](#) local, state, federal, and private resources that can help individuals and families with low incomes.
- **United Way 211 Resource Helpline.** [United Way 211](#) provides free and confidential information on health and human services. 211 is staffed [24/7](#) by trained Community Resource Specialists who assess needs and can provide you with referrals to the help that you seek. Call 2-1-1, text your zip code to 898-211, or [visit the website](#) to chat online with a Community Resource Specialist.

Unemployment Support: If you lose your job, had your hours greatly reduced, or are unable to work because of the COVID-19 pandemic, you should apply for Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits. To get more information about Unemployment Insurance or to apply for benefits, visit www.uimn.org. Learn more [information about unemployment insurance](#) or [apply here](#). The Governor has taken action to allow faster payments for unemployment benefits and waive the employer surcharge. Congress also passed legislation that provides an additional \$600 a week for individuals receiving unemployment benefits, extends unemployment benefits to 13 weeks, and a new program for individuals who are unemployed due to COVID-19 but are unable to receive unemployment benefits. [More information](#) about is available about the UI program for self-employed people. **People who are self-employed should follow [these step-by-step instructions](#). You can apply for regular unemployment the following ways:**

- **Online:** Available **Sunday** through **Friday** from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. Follow the step-by-step instructions on how to apply if you are self-employed.
- **By phone:** Application help is available on **Friday** from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Health Care Coverage

State programs

The State of Minnesota offers programs and resources that can help support you and your family's health during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The special MNSure open enrollment period in response to COVID-19 ended on April 21. However, if your situation changes due to COVID-19, such as income loss or job-based insurance loss, you may qualify for enrollment. Eligible families can enroll in Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare at any time. Find out more about eligibility or access the information in [another language](#). **Insurance professionals are available to provide free MNSure assistance to help you successfully enroll.** Find assistance using [MNSure's Assister Directory](#).

Coverage renewals for continued services for Minnesota Health Care Programs are suspended during the peacetime emergency. If you or your family members are on Medical Assistance, Minnesota Coverage, or the Children's Health Insurance Program, the annual renewal process and closures are suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic. Enrollment in the programs is still available.

COVID-19 testing and diagnosis is free for many uninsured Minnesotans and Federal law requires health insurance plans to cover diagnostic and serological or antibody testing at no cost to patients. If you're uninsured, when you go in for your test, ask your health care provider for the [application for free COVID-19 testing](#). The provider will submit the application to the state and will bill the state for payment if you meet eligibility requirements. For more information on COVID-19 testing or to find testing locations, [click here](#).

Minnesota Health plans

State leaders have partnered with local nonprofit health plans to remove barriers to care and coverage during the COVID-19 pandemic. Refer to your health plan for a better understanding of changes specific to your coverage.

Some of the changes for **commercially insured** members include:

- **No costs for COVID-19 testing.** Minnesotans will not be charged for any costs related to COVID-19 testing.
- **No costs for hospitalizations related to COVID-19.** Most plans will not charge members if they need to be hospitalized due to COVID-19 and use an in-network hospital.
- **Access to telemedicine.** Most plans and providers have increased access to telemedicine services, allowing Minnesotans to get the care they need from the safety of their homes.

Employer coverage may vary. Many Minnesotans are covered through their employers, who offer their own benefit structure. The State of Minnesota cannot mandate these benefits to these plans but is encouraging employers to offer similar COVID-19 coverage.

Other Health Resources

- [Children's Dental Services](#) continues to provide exam and cleaning services to children under age 26 and pregnant women of all ages. They are offering emergency care to any patient regardless of age and insurance status, including special needs patients, at its clinics at 728 E. Hennepin Ave. and 636 Broadway St. NE in Minneapolis. Most health insurance, including Medical Assistance, is accepted and sliding fee and free services are offered for those without insurance. Appointments will be available Monday through Friday from 8:00 to 5:30 and Saturdays from 9 until 1 p.m. If you have an urgent need for dental care, please call 612-746-1530 or 866-543-6009.
- [The MN Low-Cost Health Care Directory](#) is a list of low-cost or free physical, mental and dental health care clinics. This directory is compiled by Children's Defense Fund-Minnesota to help uninsured and underinsured Minnesotans find access to affordable health care.

Housing

The following resources and changes help ensure all Minnesotans have a safe place to stay during the Stay Safe order.

- [Information and resources on Minnesota Housing](#). This site offers a variety of resources and information that can help renters, homeowners, landlords, and lenders. This includes FAQs and information in multiple languages.
- [Information and resources on Housing Discrimination and Eviction Protections](#). This site from the Minnesota Housing and Department of Human Rights provides information in multiple languages. Contact Minnesota's Discrimination Helpline with the Department of Human Rights at 1-833-454-0148 or [online here](#). Translation/Interpretation services available.
- **Domestic abuse and violence hotline.** There are places of sanctuary open for anyone facing domestic abuse, sexual violence, or sex trafficking. Call Minnesota's statewide crisis hotline at 1-866-223-1111, a 24-hour statewide hotline for victims, or send a text to 612-399-9995. [Learn](#) more about [Cornerstone](#) and Day One Services [here](#).

Suspending evictions during COVID-19

To protect the health and well-being of Minnesotans during the pandemic, the Governor signed an order to suspend evictions. However, rent is not reduced or waived during this time. Once the suspension has ended, owners can file for evictions and removals can be enforced. Not paying rent on time can impact credit or cause problems that impact future housing options. Here are resources that offer more information:

- **More information on the Executive Order.** This [Frequently Asked Questions document](#) provides more information about the order that suspended evictions. (Also available in [Spanish](#), [Hmong](#), and [Somali](#)).
- **Emergency Assistance.** If you are a renter and need emergency assistance, talk to your landlord. You can also contact your [county or tribal human services agency](#), United Way, Community Action Agency, or the Department of Human Services.
- **Legal assistance.** If you're a renter, you can get legal help on a wide range of issues, including repairs, evictions, security deposits, landlord invasion of privacy, and more. Call [HOME Line's](#) hotline at 612-728-5767.

If you receive an eviction notice. If you receive an eviction notice during peacetime emergency, you may contact the Attorney General's office to submit a [complaint](#).

Homeowners: If you're a homeowner experiencing difficulty making on-time mortgage payments, there may be options for you. Information is available on the [Consumer Financial Bureau's website](#).

Utilities and Technology

Utility payments may also be eligible under emergency assistance funding above. Many telephones, internet, and cell providers signed the "[Keep America Connected Pledge](#)" and are not disconnecting services or are offering special payment plans. Many providers are also opening public hotspots and offering free Wi-Fi for students and low-income families.

- **The Energy Assistance Program (EAP):** This program helps pay for home heating costs and furnace repairs for income-qualified households. Learn how to [apply](#) to your [local Energy Assistance provider](#) through July 1.
- **Comcast:** Families eligible for programs like the National School Lunch Program, Housing Assistance, Medicaid, SNAP, SSI and others can apply to Comcast's Internet Essentials program to receive internet services at \$9.95 per month plus tax. More information and how to apply is [available here](#). Comcast is opening its Xfinity Wi-Fi Network nationally for free and has [a reduced-cost device purchasing program](#) for those who qualify.
- **Minnesota Afterschool Advance** can help families purchase Chromebooks at a 75% discount using an advance of the State K-12 Education Tax Credit. [Learn more and find out if you qualify here](#).

Child Care

The COVID-19 pandemic has made significant impacts to child care services, both to families and providers. Here are some resources that can help.

- **Families seeking childcare.** If you are a family in need of child care, you can find resources and a map of open providers at mn.gov/childcare or call the Parent Aware Hotline at 1-888-291-9811 for assistance
- **Child care providers.** Child care providers can remain open. Providers are encouraged to prioritize children of essential workers and beyond with public health guidance and information on mn.gov/childcare. We encourage providers to [regularly update their status and capacity to help connect families with needed care](#).
- For specific health questions regarding your care settings, reach out to the MDH school and childcare team at health.schools.covid19@state.mn.us.

Youth Summer Programs

Youth programming is allowed to serve children over the summer and the Department of Health [youth guidance](#) outlines how to safely operate youth and student programming and summer school. The health and safety of children, students, teachers, staff and families is our top priority. If a program cannot adhere to the public health guidance it cannot operate at this time. More resources are available on the [Minnesota Department of Health](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) websites.

Food Resources

If you, your family, or someone you know is struggling with access to food, here's a list of resources and programs that can help. Check the COVID 19 [Food Support website](#) regularly for updates.

- **Hunger Solutions Minnesota.** This program works to end hunger across the state. This includes a [map with locations where there are free or low-cost meals for kids, or a map with food shelves, discount groceries, and other resources](#). The Food Helpline can also assess your situation and provide solutions. If you're struggling to afford or access foods, call 1-888-711-1151, use the [chat feature](#), or [fill out this form](#).
- **SNAP Outreach Specialists.** If you need food assistance, specialists can give you more information about receiving the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). [Learn how to enroll and use the benefit](#) to make informed decisions about buying healthy, nutritious food.
- **Food shelves.** If you have an immediate need for food or are experiencing economic hardships that prevent you from being able to purchase food, your local food shelf can help. Many food shelves provide drive thru, or other alternatives pick up options for your safety. More information can be found on [Second Harvest Heartland's website](#).
- **Free Meals for Kids App.** As public schools and community meal sites are closed, this site connects kid under the age of 18 to free nutritious meals. [Use the site](#) to find more than 400 locations across the state where that are providing free meals for kids, or download the mobile app.
- **Food support for school-age children:** P-EBT is a program that is part of federal and state response to ensure food access for school-age children during school closures. It's for students in Minnesota who are normally able to get free or reduced-price school meals. Families already enrolled in the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) will receive up to \$325 per child in P-EBT benefits automatically (no need to take action) on their Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card. If you aren't receiving SNAP or MFIP and your children has free or reduced priced school meals, starting June 8 at 12 p.m., you can [apply for P-EBT](#) to receive up to \$325 per child to help buy food for your family.
- Minnesotans can now use their EBT food benefits online at [Amazon](#) and [Walmart](#). More details can be [found here](#).
- **WIC Program.** WIC is a [public health nutrition program](#) for low-income women, infants and children up to age five. WIC provides nutrition education and breastfeeding support, supplemental foods, and referrals to other programs and services in the community. To apply for WIC services, call the [WIC Program](#) in your community to schedule an appointment. To find your local WIC program, you can call 1-800-942-4030.

- **Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP).** [CSFP](#) provides healthy and nutritious food each month to low-income eligible seniors over age 60. Foods are distributed at more than 200 sites around the state. To find a CSFP site near you and to apply for the program, search the [MDH website](#) or call 1-800-657-3942.

Financial Supports for College Students

To help college students, students with children, and families remain financially whole during the pandemic, students will continue to receive current state financial aid payments, even if they withdraw from classes. This includes being paid for scheduled work study hours and child care grants they were depending on. More information can be found at: [State Financial Aid Guidance during COVID-19](#).

Business Support

Over the past few weeks, several state and federal programs have been built to assist small businesses struggling during the COVID-19 pandemic. Small businesses, including child care providers and nonprofits, may also be eligible for business supports. However, the status of this federal program is changing – and may be closed – based on availability of federal dollars appropriated by Congress. Please check [sba.gov/disaster](#) for current status. For an overall small business guide, use this [site](#).

Federal resources have included:

- The [Federal Small Business Administration COVID 19 Disaster Loans](#)
- Federal expansions to the [Small Business Administration's Economic Injury Disaster Loans](#)
- The [new Paycheck Protection Program](#)

Free one-on-one business counseling regarding COVID-19 from [SBA Resource Partners](#).

Financial Supports for Child Care Providers. Licensed child care programs can now apply for grants to support them during the peacetime emergency. Recipients are selected on a month-to-month basis, with grants starting at \$4,500. [Learn more about eligibility and how to apply](#). In addition to child care specific funding available, there are a number of federal and state resources available to child care providers as small businesses. Documents to help support you in finding these resources are available:

- [Child Care Financial Support Matrix](#)
- [Child Care Center Financial Supports Outline](#)
- [Family Child Care Provider Financial Supports Outline](#)

Worker Support and Safety in Health in the Workplace

Worker Protections Related to COVID 19. [This document on worker protections](#) from the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry, Minnesota Department of Human Rights, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, and Minnesota OSHA has information on Worker Protections Related to COVID-19, including use of sick leave and Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), discrimination, including information on reasonable accommodations, unemployment insurance benefits, workers' compensation, changes to workers conditions and workplace safety and health.

- **For questions on pay and other workplace rights and responsibilities** contact the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry at 651-284-5075, 800-342-5354 or dli.laborstandards@state.mn.us with questions.
- **For questions on accommodations or other workplace discrimination issues** contact Minnesota's Department of Human Rights Discrimination Helpline with the Department of Human Rights at 1-833-454-0148 or [online here](#). Translation/Interpretation services available. **For questions about COVID-19 and Civil Rights, visit this website.**
- **For questions about workplace safety and health contact** Minnesota OSHA Compliance at osha.complaine@state.mn.us, 651-284-5050 or 877-470-6742. Alternative languages available via phone. For additional workplace support, visit [here](#).
- **For questions about whether you are entitled to workers' compensation benefits,** contact the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry at 800-342-5354 (press 3) or dli.workcomp@state.mn.us.
- **For questions about unemployment insurance,** visit www.uimn.org to learn more or to apply for benefits.

Taxes

The date for filing taxes has been moved from April 15 to July 15, 2020. Many free tax sites are suspending in-person tax preparation assistance. Here are some resources that can help you with tax-related services and guidance.

- Free online filing options: Find out more information and the qualifications from [Minnesota Department of Revenue](#)
- Additional languages: Find tax information in [additional languages](#)
- Economic Impact Payments: [Learn more about the economic impact payments](#), otherwise known as the federal stimulus

Additional Family Supports

Below are some resources to support parents, guardians, or others caring for children that may be helpful.

- [National Parent Helpline](#)
- [Postpartum Support International Helpline](#)
- [MDH Child and Family Resources About COVID-19](#)
- [Minnesota Communities Caring for Children Resources for Adaptation and Resiliency During the Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Outbreak.](#)
- [Help Me Grow website](#)
- [Mask Social Story](#) and [Masks and Gloves Social Story](#)

Playworks FREE [Play At Home](#). Play is brain building, a central part of healthy child development, and a buffer against the negative impacts of stress. Through play, we learn to share, negotiate, solve challenges together, and celebrate shared experiences. Keep playing with Playworks FREE [Play At Home](#) resources for educators and families.

Additional COVID Hotlines

- [Health Questions Hotline](#): 651-201-3920 or 1-800-657-3903
- [State Emergency Operations Center Hotline](#): 651-297-1304 or 1-800-657-3504

Resource Links for Families Affected by Recent Unrest

We know families may be without their local grocery store, pharmacy, and other supports following unrest and damage in the aftermath of George Floyd's death, especially in Minneapolis and St. Paul.

- [Resource links](#) have been compiled on a temporary website to help support families and communities across the metro and beyond, including mental health supports, food access sites, health care sites, and other information.