

RIGCD and COVID-19

The Rhode Island Governor's Commission on Disabilities (RIGCD) has created the following resource guide to assist our community during the COVID-19 pandemic. Contained is information about accessing community resources, including those available for families with children, small business owners and employees, and individuals that fall within a high-risk population. We will share an updated version of this resource guide every other week, and encourage you to share this guide within your community, as well as to let us know of any resources that you would like us to include.

The RIGCD will also be taking the following precautions during this time:

- RIGCD staff will be working remotely until further notice. During this time, staff will be available by email and will be remotely monitoring phone lines. All RIGCD staff contact information can be found at www.gcd.ri.gov
- RIGCD Commission and Committee meetings have been cancelled until further notice
- All Livable Homes Modification Grant (LHMG) post-retrofit documentation deadlines have been extended until June 15th, 2020.

Unemployment and TDI

Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI)

- If you are unable to work but your place of business remains open, you may be eligible for TDI
- For COVID-19 related claims, DLT will waive the seven-day minimum amount of time that claimants must be out of work to qualify for TDI/TCI benefits
- For individuals under quarantine, DLT will waive the required medical certification, and instead will allow them to temporary qualify via self-certification that they were under quarantine due to COVID-19.

Unemployment

- If you are out of work and not being compensated, you may be eligible for unemployment benefits
- DLT will waive the seven-day waiting period for UI claims related to COVID-19
- For more information from DLT, please review the RI DLT COVID-19 Worksheet at <http://www.dlt.ri.gov/pdfs/COVID-19%20Workplace%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>

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Social Security, SNAP Benefits, and Open Enrollment

Social Security

- If you receive a Social Security benefit or Supplement Security Income payment by either direct deposit or mail, you will continue to do so during this time. For more information about Social Security benefits, including FAQs and warnings regarding suspension scams, please visit <https://www.ssa.gov/coronavirus/>

SNAP Benefits

- There have been modifications to the ABAWD waiver due to COVID-19. For more information, please visit <https://www.ri.gov/press/view/37992>

Open Enrollment

- Due to the potential spread of COVID-19, a special enrollment period is now available until April 15 for Rhode Islanders seeking health coverage
- For more information or to enroll now, please visit <https://healthsourceri.com/coverage-through-healthsource-ri/>

Community Resources

Food Assistance:

- The Rhode Island Community Food Bank maintains a Food Assistance list of local pantries within Rhode Island, which can be found at <https://rifoodbank.org/find-food>
- Catholic Social Services of RI has been authorized to distribute Stop and Shop gift cards to individuals temporarily out of work due to COVID-19. Gift cards will range from \$25-\$50, and will be available beginning March 18th. Contact the Woonsocket, West Warwick, or Wakefield satellite offices for more information
- Meals on Wheels is continuing to deliver meals during this time through their Home Delivered Meal Program. To contact someone about this program, please contact the Home Delivered Program by phone at 401-351-6700 or by email at info@rimeals.org.
- Robert Remigio, an ASL/English Interpreter, has offered to act as resource for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community, and to provide food/supply runs during this time. He can be reached at 401-477-9085. Thank you to those that have passed along this information.

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- The RI Office on Healthy Aging (OHA) has created an excellent guide for RI's 60+ population, including information on food and supply resources and early morning grocery hours. This guide, available in English and Spanish, can be found at http://www.oha.ri.gov/documents/COVID19_Senior%20Resources_One%20Ager.pdf
- The RI Coalition for the Homeless has a database of meal sites for low-income individuals available at <https://www.rhomeless.org/meal-sites>
- The Providence Animal Rescue League is offering free pet food to low-income community members with pets. More information can be found at <http://www.parl.org/programs/pet-food-pantry>.
 - They are also accepting donations of unopened cat and/or dog food, and have drop-off locations throughout the state

Housing:

- The Rhode Island Supreme Court has extended the eviction moratorium until May 17th, 2020. The Rhode Island Attorney General has issued guidance for law enforcement officials regarding landlord-tenant disputes, emphasizing that self-help evictions, in which landlords circumvent the court process to try to force tenants out, including preventing tenants from accessing the property, throwing belongings out, and/or cutting off utilities, are unlawful
- The RI Coalition for the Homeless has compiled a list of resources for those displaced by COVID-19, available at <https://www.rhomeless.org/covid-19>

Mutual Aid:

- Project LETS is coordinating a mutual aid program to offer assistance to the most vulnerable individuals in RI during this time. At this time, the program is available to individuals living in Woonsocket and Providence. More information can be found at <https://www.letserasethestigma.com/covid19>
- RAMP is working with communities throughout Rhode Island to match people with the essentials that they need in their area. To learn more or to request assistance please visit their website <http://www.rampsinclusion.com/> or email them at RampTina@yahoo.com

General Resources:

- Oakley Home Access is assessing for and installing ramps, stairlifts, and grab bars in order to assist with home discharge & fall prevention. They are offering Free Home Safety Assessments in person or via FaceTime as needed. Contact them at Info@Oakleyhomeaccess.com or 401-429-3882.

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Utilities:

- In response to the COVID-19 emergency, the Public Utilities Commission has directed all electric, gas, water, and wastewater utilities regulated by the Public Utilities Commission "to cease certain collections activities, including service terminations for nonpayment". The Commission has extended the moratorium until May 8th, 2020.
- National Grid is temporarily suspending collections-related activities, including service disconnections. These policies are effective immediately and will be in place through the end of April. Please note that regular billing will continue for all customers
- Several internet providers, including Comcast Xfinity, Charter Spectrum, Altice, and Cox Communications are offering free basic internet for 30-60 days for either low-income households or households with K-12 children. Please contact the individual provider for more information about their specific program
- Keep Americans Connected Pledge: The FCC has asked broadband and telephone service providers to sign this pledge, which, among other things, guarantees that providers will not terminate service to residential or small business customers for 60 days because of their inability to pay their bills due to COVID-19. More information, including a list of providers that have signed the pledge, can be found at <https://fcc.gov>

Essentials:

- Several companies, including Dave's Market, Stop & Shop, Target, Whole Foods, and Dollar General will be designating hours for shoppers over 60
- CVS will be waiving prescription RX delivery fees; please contact your local store to find out if your prescription is eligible

Mental Health:

- The RI Department of Health has released a list of resources and suggestions for coping with stress during this time, which can be found at <https://health.ri.gov/diseases/ncov2019/>
- If you feel overwhelmed or are unable to cope with your stress, please contact the Disaster Distress Helpline at 1-800-985-5590 or text TalkWithUs to 66746
- Prevent Overdose RI has a list of resources available for those living with substance use disorders that can be found at <https://preventoverdoseri.org/covid-19/>
- BHLink: If you are in a mental health or substance use crisis made worse by COVID-19 and you need immediate assistance, please contact 401-414-LINK(5465). If you are under 18, please contact 855-543-5465
- A map of behavioral health providers that are providing services during COVID-19 can be found at <https://www.bhlink.org/covid19>

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Physical Health:

- The YMCA and Planet Fitness will be streaming free online fitness classes daily
- Coverage of telehealthcare services has been expanded

Transportation:

- RIPTA has asked us to share the following information:
 - RIPTA has a webpage with all current information regarding responses to the COVID-19 outbreak: <https://www.ripta.com/covid-19>
 - They are urging all passengers (including RIDE passengers) to please sign up for email news alerts. To sign up, please visit <https://www.ripta.com/service-alerts>
 - RIPTA is strongly encouraging passengers and the public to follow them on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/RideRIPTA/> and to check their website regularly: www.ripta.com

Food Delivery:

- As announced during Governor Raimondo's press conference on April 1st, the State of Rhode Island will be partnering with Roch's Fresh Foods to offer delivery to anyone across the state. For more information, please call 211 or visit RIDelivers.com

Resources for Households with K-12 Children

- Due to school closures, free "Grab & Go" meals are available for K-12 children throughout Rhode Island. Food sites and details can be found at <https://health.ri.gov/diseases/ncov2019/about/foodsites/>
- Ocean State Libraries and the RI Office of Library and Information Services are developing a collection of online resources for students and families, which can be found at <https://olis-ri.libguides.com/online/earlychildhood>. This includes the Storybook at Home ebook collection
- Science centers, zoos, aquariums, and museums across the country are offering virtual visits to their exhibits. Virtual tours can be found at:
 - [Google Arts & Culture](#)
 - [San Diego Zoo](#)
- Several restaurants, including Moe's Southwest Grill, Burger King, iHop, and Boston Market are offering free kids' meals with the purchase of an adult entree. Please see individual restaurant websites for more information.
 - Several restaurant chains are also providing free food to healthcare workers and first responders with valid I.D.'s.

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Resources for Small Businesses

- COVID-19 Economic Injury Disaster Loans are now available from the Small Business Administration. Find out more information and apply at <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/>
- The Rhode Island Foundation and United Way of Rhode Island have launched a fund to support local nonprofit organizations on the front line of COVID-19 response efforts; more information can be found at <https://rifoundation.org>
- Microsoft has agreed to provide Office at no cost to RI business for the next 6 months
- Employers facing slowdowns in business due to COVID-19 may be able to benefit from the RI Workshare Program. Learn more at <http://www.dlt.ri.gov/ui/pdfs/WorkShare%20COVID19%20One-Pager.pdf>
- A short term bridge loan program has been announced for RI's smallest businesses. To be eligible, businesses must have first applied for the federal SBA small business disaster loan. Applications will be accepted starting April 3rd through rilisc.org or by contacting 521-HELP

How to Help

- Practice all RIDOH recommended preventative measures, including washing your hands, disinfecting surfaces, covering your cough, and practicing social distancing
- If you are able, make an appointment with the RI Blood Center to donate blood. Blood is a critical, perishable component of our healthcare system, and it must be constantly replenished. For more information or to make an appointment, please visit the RI Blood Center website at <https://www.ribc.org> or contact them at 800-283-8385
- If you are able to, please support your local business by purchasing gift certificates or placing delivery orders. If you place an order for food to be delivered, please designate a safe space outside of your home for deliveries to be placed, in order to keep both your family and your delivery driver safe
- If you are able to, please consider making a donation to your state or local community food bank. Individuals throughout our state face food insecurity on a daily basis, and a public health crisis such as COVID-19 places an increased strain on the organizations that serve these populations. Find your local food assistance program at <https://rifoodbank.org/find-food/>
- If you are a retired medical or behavioral health professional, you can register to volunteer to help with the COVID-19 pandemic at RIResponds.org

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- Census counting has started, and it is critical that every single Rhode Islander is counted, since federal funds coming into Rhode Island are determined by our census count. To complete the Census for your household, visit my2020census.gov
- Every night, write down where you went and who you were in contact with. If you get sick, this will be helpful information

EEOC Guidance Regarding the ADA and COVID-19

- The EEOC has released the following guidance regarding the ADA and COVID-19:
 - The ADA continues to apply during this time, but does not prevent employers from complying with CDC guidance regarding COVID-19
 - During a pandemic, ADA-covered employers may ask employees if they are experiencing symptoms of the pandemic virus
 - Generally, measuring an employee's body temperature is a medical examination. However, because the CDC has acknowledged community spread of COVID-19 and issued attendant precautions, employers may measure their employees' body temperature. Employers should remain aware that some individuals with COVID-19 may not have a fever
 - Employers can require employees to stay home if they have symptoms of COVID-19
 - When employees return to work following a COVID-19 related absence, employers can require documentation stating they do not have or no longer have the virus
 - The EEOC has provided further guidance in the document "Pandemic Preparedness in the Workplace and the Americans with Disabilities Act," which can be found at https://www.eeoc.gov/facts/pandemic_flu.html

RIDOH Resources

- RIDOH has several channels for the community to view and receive updated news, resources, and educational information about COVID-19. These resources include:
 - Partner Briefings: RIDOH distributes partner briefings with the most up-to-date information on COVID-19. Anyone can be added to the Partner Briefing distribution list by contacting Anna Tomasulo at Anna.Tomasulo@health.ri.gov.
 - Press Releases: All RIDOH press releases are posted to the homepage at health.ri.gov
 - RIDOH's COVID-19 Web Page for the Public: Our COVID-19 web page for the public, health.ri.gov/covid, is updated regularly with information from RIDOH and features syndicated content from the Centers for Disease Control

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- and Prevention (CDC), including helpful fact sheets available in multiple languages. These resources may be shared with your community partners
- Página Latina: An updated COVID-19 web page for the public is also available in Spanish on RIDOH's Página Latina at health.ri.gov/espanol.
 - COVID-19 Information Line: Information about COVID-19 is available to the general public by calling RIDOH's emergency information line at 401-222-8022 Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. After hours, the 211 call center can answer frequently asked questions from the public about COVID-19. General questions can also be emailed to RIDOH.COVID19Questions@health.ri.gov
 - Interim Guidance: Guidance for preventing COVID-19 spread in community is available from CDC including resources to help community-and faith-based organizations.

With regard to messaging, please emphasize with your partners the importance of taking the same measures that healthcare providers recommend annually to prevent the spread of the flu and other viruses. These measures are:

- Get your flu shot, and make sure the people around you do the same.
- Wash your hands often throughout the day. Use warm water and soap. If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand gel.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow. Viruses can spread by coughing or sneezing on other people or into your hands.
- Stay home from work or school if you are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious foods.
- Keep surfaces (especially bedside tables, surfaces in the bathroom, and toys for children) clean by wiping them down with a household disinfectant.