

CORONAVIRUS COMMUNITY RESOURCE GUIDE

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

Last updated: March 23, 2020 8:00 a.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 Illinoisans 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](#).

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](#). 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: [8 out of 10](#) COVID-19 deaths reported in the U.S. have been in adults age 65 and older.

- People who have serious underlying medical conditions:
 - Heart disease
 - Diabetes
 - Lung disease
 - Immune compromised

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.

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. Congress is also actively negotiating legislation in response to COVID-19, and I included increased funding to facilitate the swift delivery of COVID-19 tests to rural and suburban communities like ours in my [priorities](#) for those negotiations.

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?

The CDC does not currently know if 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).

Find more information [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 at 1-800-244-5631 or my office at (630) 549-2190 if you have any questions.

I was proud to support the bipartisan [Families First 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 considers new legislation to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak. You can take a look at my priorities [here](#), which include:

- Pass an economic recovery plan for workers that provides immediate financial support for individuals.
- Ensure every American worker has access to paid sick leave.
- Temporarily ease certain requirements for unemployment insurance so that workers who are furloughed have income and businesses can quickly rehire as necessary
- Ensure independent contractors and those who are self-employed have access to worker protections, including income supports like paid leave and unemployment insurance
- Increase and expand the child tax credit to offset families' additional expenses.
- Prevent credit reporting agencies from using adverse credit events related to coronavirus in determining a credit score, and from including them in consumers' credit reports.
- Allow deferral 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.
- Condition industry bailouts on common-sense worker and consumer protections that ensure taxpayer funds are being used appropriately.

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?](#)

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 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 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](#).
- **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.

Please do not hesitate to call my office (630-549-2190) 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 Act included an emergency sick days program, emergency paid leave benefits, emergency unemployment insurance, and full coverage of testing for COVID-19. I will also be bringing the voice of Northern Illinois families into conversations in Congress about COVID-19 legislation. The [priorities](#) that I have raised up include:

- Eliminate the cap on state and local tax (SALT) deductions to give families tax relief and reverse undue pressure on state and local budgets.
- Increase and expand the child tax credit to offset families' additional expenses.
- Create a temporary federal tax credit for families who incur additional child care costs because of circumstances credibly related to coronavirus (i.e. parent is a clinician or first responder working overtime, normal caregiver is immunocompromised, coronavirus-related transportation or logistical barriers to normal child care, etc.)
- Increase funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant and temporarily expand eligibility to keep childcare options available for those who are working to respond to coronavirus.
- Increase and expand the child tax credit to offset families' additional expenses.
- Prevent credit reporting agencies from using adverse credit events related to coronavirus in determining a credit score, and from including them in consumers' credit reports.
- Pass an economic recovery plan for workers that provides immediate financial support for individuals.
- Ensure every American worker has access to paid sick leave.

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 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.

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. Small businesses are at the heart of my [priorities for COVID-19 legislation](#) in Congress, which include:

- Create targeted and immediate grant relief for restaurants, small hotel operators, and other small businesses at risk of closing or bankruptcy in the coming weeks.
- Temporarily ease certain requirements for unemployment insurance so that workers who are furloughed have income and businesses can quickly rehire as necessary.

- Set a 0% interest rate for all Small Business Administration (SBA) loans related to coronavirus, and provide extra funding for those loans in addition to that enacted by the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act.
- Eliminate the early payoff penalty on SBA loans related to coronavirus.
- Provide additional SBA funding for administration of these loans to ensure prompt processing of applications and disbursement of funds.
- Provide personnel assistance to guide small business owners through this crisis, potentially in partnership with local small business centers or community development financial institutions.
- Suspend the Trump Administration's retaliatory tariffs to provide economic relief to Illinois farmers and manufacturers.
- Ensure that farmers' access to the resources they need for a successful planting season is not unnecessarily affected.
- Create a federal tax credit for businesses who incur substantially higher costs for functions essential to responding to coronavirus as the supply chain adjusts to this crisis.
- Investigate longer-term solutions to address the fact that many insurance policies available to small businesses do not cover damages or business interruption injuries from communicable disease outbreaks, even in a case like this where the state has ordered closures.

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](#).

Producing PPE: If you are a manufacturer with the ability to produce PPE, ventilators, or other medical equipment and supplies, please call my office: (630) 549-2190 and email PPE.donations@illinois.gov (you can find more information [here](#)).

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'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 center](#) before going to a clinic, urgent care center, or emergency room. 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 will be [prioritizing](#) the needs of workers, families, and, as always, members of our community who have worn the uniform. In addition to prioritizing economic protections for all of our residents in Illinois' 14th Congressional District, I'll be especially focused on ensuring that veterans' educational benefits are not automatically cut back due to the shift to online learning. 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.

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.

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 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 the next legislative package 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.

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.

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 also making sure the health care workforce is [prioritized](#) in COVID-19 legislation that Congress is negotiating:

- Immediately increase funding for our public health infrastructure and workforce.
- Immediately increase funding to facilitate the swift delivery of personal protective equipment (PPE) and coronavirus tests to rural and suburban communities.
- Create grant funding to reimburse organizations that are incurring additional costs to buy extra PPE or paying higher prices for it in order to protect health care workers, first responders, and others who need it. Grants should be reimbursable for these costs and for other supply costs related to coronavirus.
- Provide both funding and flexibility to address the surge in mental health needs related to coronavirus.

We could use your help as well. If you have any of the following items, please email PPE.donations@illinois.gov and call my office (630-549-2190) immediately (you can find more information [here](#)):

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

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.

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](#)

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](#).

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 is developing a resource to connect Illinoisans with information to understand the options for offering and accessing child care for essential workers during this pandemic. For more information, please stay tuned to this [website](#), which will soon include an application for essential workers to identify their need for child care.

If you need child care immediately, the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development recommends that all volunteers who take care of children have a current background check. Below is a list of potential individuals and organizations who already work with children in your community 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.

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](#):

- Immediately increase funding for our public health infrastructure and workforce.
- Immediately increase funding to facilitate the swift delivery of personal protective equipment (PPE) and coronavirus tests to rural and suburban communities.
- Create a new Hospital and Health System Disaster Fund that provides much-needed funding directly to our health systems, while ensuring that systems serving under-resourced and rural communities receive the full support they need to provide quality care.
- Postpone scheduled Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital cuts and suspend Medicare sequester cuts for the duration of this crisis.

- Immediately increase operational funding for the Community Health Center Fund so that community health centers can respond sufficiently to coronavirus.
- Create grant funding to reimburse organizations that are incurring additional costs to buy extra PPE or paying higher prices for it in order to protect health care workers, first responders, and others who need it. Grants should be reimbursable for these costs and for other supply costs related to coronavirus.
- Provide both funding and flexibility to address the surge in mental health needs related to coronavirus.
- Increase funding for Older Americans Act caregiver and supportive services to meet the increased needs related to coronavirus.

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 Steps Healthcare Facilities Can Take Now](#) to Prepare 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](#)
- House Energy and Commerce Committee Fact Sheets on [PPE](#) and [testing kits](#).

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.

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 two bipartisan bills already: the [Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act](#) and the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#). I have provided you with summaries of those bills below. Yet as important as those bills are, the magnitude of this pandemic demands an even larger-scale response.

As Congress debates the policies that will be included in upcoming legislative packages, I want to be very clear about my priorities: I will be fighting for Illinois' 14th. That is why my team and I called hundreds of business owners, mayors, public health officials, and constituents across the District so that we would know what challenges you're facing. In response, I released my [Priorities to Help the Fourteenth District of Illinois](#) for the legislation that Congress is developing. I encourage you to read the [full list](#), but I also wanted to highlight a few key components:

First, I am calling for policies to protect families who face not only health risks associated with the pandemic, but also significant disruptions to their livelihoods. These policies include:

- Ensure coverage of treatment, therapies, and vaccines for coronavirus without cost-sharing for all Americans.
- Ensure every American worker has access to paid sick leave.
- Pass an economic recovery plan for workers that provides immediate financial support for individuals.
- Increase and expand the child tax credit to offset families' additional expenses.
- Eliminate the cap on state and local tax (SALT) deductions to give families tax relief and reverse undue pressure on state and local budgets.

Second, I'm calling for aid to community organizations and entities, including our heroic health care workforce:

- Immediately increase funding for our public health infrastructure and workforce.
- Immediately increase funding to facilitate the swift delivery of personal protective equipment (PPE) and coronavirus tests to rural and suburban communities.
- Create a new Hospital and Health System Disaster Fund that provides much-needed funding directly to our health systems, while ensuring that systems serving under-resourced and rural communities receive the full support they need to provide quality care.

- Provide both funding and flexibility to address the surge in mental health needs related to coronavirus.
- Increase funding for Older Americans Act caregiver and supportive services to meet the increased needs related to coronavirus.

Finally, I am making sure that our small businesses can access emergency support in the midst of a pandemic that has caused so many of our community's private sector leaders to temporarily close their companies or significantly scale back their operations. My priorities include:

- Create targeted and immediate grant relief for restaurants, small hotel operators, and other small businesses at risk of closing or bankruptcy in the coming weeks.
- Set a 0% interest rate for all Small Business Administration (SBA) loans related to coronavirus, and provide extra funding for those loans in addition to that enacted by the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act.
- Provide personnel assistance to guide small business owners through this crisis, potentially in partnership with local small business centers or community development financial institutions.
- Ensure that farmers' access to the resources they need for a successful planting season is not unnecessarily affected.
- Create a federal tax credit for businesses who incur substantially higher costs for functions essential to responding to coronavirus as the supply chain adjusts to this crisis.

You can read all of my priorities for the next COVID-19 legislative package [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 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 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](#).

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.

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.

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'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](#).

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.
- **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.

Finally, 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?](#)

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.

For more information on specific volunteering opportunities in Illinois, including food delivery, visit this [website](#).

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](#).

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, or if you're a manufacturer who can produce PPE or medical equipment like ventilators, please call my office (630-549-2190) and email PPE.donations@illinois immediately (you can find more information [here](#)).

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!