



Congresswoman
VERONICA ESCOBAR
Texas' 16th Congressional District

Updated April 14, 2020

Coronavirus Resource Guide

Daily Update: April 14, 2020

Today, [El Paso authorities are reporting](#) a total of 300 positive COVID-19 cases and two COVID-19 related deaths. For updates on the number of confirmed and pending cases in Texas, please visit the [DSHS website](#).

This is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation, and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) will provide updated information and guidance as it becomes available.

What Congress is Doing

Every day, Congresswoman Escobar sees the need for further action to combat the coronavirus crisis. The number of confirmed cases, deaths, unemployment claims, and lost jobs are devastating.

More emergency resources are desperately needed now to sustain the life and death fight to protect the lives and livelihoods of the El Pasoans, that is why Congresswoman Escobar and her colleagues in Congress are working to pass an interim emergency legislation and a *CARES 2 Act* that will extend and expand the bipartisan *CARES Act*.

These efforts will build on previously passed bipartisan legislation to protect El Paso families and workers, address the spread of coronavirus in a smart, strategic way, provide the resources and authorities our federal agencies need to track, combat, and mitigate the virus, treat Americans with the disease, and develop a vaccine and additional treatments.

On March 4, 2020, Congresswoman Escobar and her colleagues in Congress took a first step by passing an [\\$8.3 billion emergency response supplemental package](#), which included funding for vaccine development, support for state and local governments, and assistance for affected small businesses. This legislation was followed up by H.R. 6201, the bipartisan [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#), which the President also signed into law, which guaranteed free coronavirus testing, established paid leave, enhanced Unemployment Insurance, expanded food security initiatives, and increased federal Medicaid funding.

Building on top of the swift action that House Democrats took to move these two critical pieces of coronavirus response legislation into law, on March 27, 2020, Congresswoman Veronica Escobar voted for the third coronavirus response bill, the bipartisan H.R. 748, the [Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security \(CARES\) Act](#). The CARES Act, which was signed into law by President Trump, secures critical provisions for El Paso workers and their families and invests \$2 trillion to help our public health systems, state and local governments, and small businesses in the face of the coronavirus pandemic.

On April 10, 2020, [Congresswoman Escobar announced](#) that El Paso health centers, educational institutions, Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, and the City of El Paso received more than of \$95 million in initial federal grant funding provided by the CARES Act to respond to and meet the evolving health and economic needs created by the coronavirus pandemic.

A summary of the CARES Act is available [here](#), and an overview of the major components Congresswoman Escobar fought to include for El Paso's hard-working families is available [here](#).

In the sections below, you will find more information about how these three sweeping pieces of legislation that have been signed into law support you and your family.

Hotlines and Testing

COVID-19 Testing

Your doctor will help make the decision if you should get tested for COVID-19. If you do not have health insurance, you can still get tested for COVID-19 if your doctor or healthcare provider recommends it.

The City of El Paso Department of Public Health (DPH), the Border Regional Advisory Council (BorderRAC), and other public health partners are collecting specimens to test for COVID-19. The drive thru COVID-19 samples are being collected for first responders,

healthcare workers, persons any age with symptoms and underlying medical conditions, and patients with a doctor's order. Find more information, [here](#).

For information about testing, you just need to call your doctor and/or access care the way you usually do. If you need help finding a doctor or accessing medical care, visit [here](#) or call 2-1-1 and they can direct you to low- or no-cost providers in El Paso.

COVID-19 Hotlines

The City of El Paso Department of Public Health (DPH) is now offering information about COVID-19 via (915) 212-6843 or (915) 21-COVID. The hotline will be operational effective immediately from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Hospitals in Texas' 16th Congressional District

[El Paso Children's Hospital](#)

Visitation is limited to 1 parent/legal guardian 18 years of age or older. All visitors will be screened upon entering the facility.

[University Medical Center](#)

[The Hospitals of Providence](#)

[Las Palmas Del Sol](#)

Please be advised that on March 23, 2020, Hospitals of Providence, Las Palmas Del Sol Healthcare and University Medical Center of El Paso jointly announced an immediate implementation of a "no visitors" policy until further notice.

El Paso's "Stay Home, Work Safe" Order

In an ongoing effort to suppress the spread of COVID-19, the City and the County of El Paso have issued a "Stay Home, Work Safe" order for the area that went into effect at 11:59 p.m. on March 24, 2020 and will be in effect until further notice.

The order directs the public to stay home except to obtain [essential services](#), and non-essential businesses are temporarily required to cease activity.

The order will continue until further notice and those who are found violating it could face a fine of not more than \$1,000 or be jailed for up to 180 days. Learn more about

the “Stay Home, Work Safe” order [here](#).

Texas Executive Orders and Public Health Disaster Declaration

Texas Executive Order

On March 31, 2020, Governor Greg Abbott issued an Executive Order implementing Essential Services and Activities Protocols for the entire state of Texas. The protocols renew the Governor's directive to avoid eating or drinking inside bars, restaurants, and food courts, although use of drive-thru, pickup, and delivery is highly encouraged. The order prohibits visiting gyms or massage establishments, and expands to include tattoo studios, piercing studios, and cosmetology salons. It also extends social distancing measures to April 30, 2020, and schools will remain closed to in-person classroom attendance through May 4, 2020. Read the order [here](#) and learn more about essential services designation [here](#).

Texas Public Health Disaster Declaration

On March 19, 2020, Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Commissioner Dr. John Hellerstedt declared a public health disaster in Texas, because COVID-19 “has created an immediate threat, poses a high risk of death to a large number of people, and creates a substantial risk of public exposure because of the disease’s method of transmission and evidence that there is community spread in Texas.” Read the declaration [here](#).

Economic Impact Payments

The public health and economic consequences of COVID-19 are significant. For that reason, Congress appropriated funds to help Americans afford what they need during this public health crisis, as many are experiencing a significant cash crunch.

Individuals making up to \$75,000 (\$150,000 for married workers) will receive payments of \$1,200 with an additional \$500 payment per minor child. The payments decrease ratably and stop altogether for single workers making more than \$99,000 (\$198,000 for married workers and \$218,000 for a family of four.)

These payments will be issued by the IRS via direct deposit and will be based on 2019 or 2018 tax return or 2019 Social Security statement.

If you receive Social Security, retirement or other social safety net benefits, you may still qualify for direct payments. These payments will not be taxable nor represent

“resources” for program eligibility purposes. Click [here](#) for more information from the IRS.

FAQs

Who is eligible for the Economic Impact Payment?

U.S. citizens or resident aliens who:

- Have a valid Social Security number,
- Could not be claimed as a dependent of another taxpayer, and
- Had adjusted gross income under certain limits.

Who will receive the Economic Impact Payment automatically without taking additional steps?

Most eligible U.S. taxpayers will automatically receive their Economic Impact Payments including:

- Individuals who filed a federal income tax for 2018 or 2019
- Individuals who receive Social Security retirement, disability (SSDI), or survivor benefits
- Individuals who receive Railroad Retirement benefits

Who should use Non-Filers: Enter Payment Info to provide additional information to receive the Economic Impact Payment?

Eligible U.S. citizens or permanent residents who:

- Had gross income that did not exceed \$12,200 (\$24,400 for married couples) for 2019
- Were not otherwise required to file a federal income tax return for 2019, and didn't plan to

You can provide the necessary information to the IRS easily and quickly for no fee through [Non-Filers: Enter Payment Info](#) page. After providing this information you won't need to take any additional action.

Additional Resources:

[IRS Get my Payment](#)

[CARES Act: Economic Impact Payments Questions and Answers](#)

Unemployment Insurance and Emergency Paid Leave

Unemployment Insurance

If you lost your job because of the coronavirus pandemic, you may be eligible for Unemployment Insurance benefits. In Texas, unemployment benefits claims are evaluated by:

- Past wages
- Job Separations
- Ongoing Eligibility Requirements

If your claim is accepted, your weekly benefit amount may be between \$69 and \$521. For more information about unemployment benefits in Texas, please visit the [Texas Workforce Commission's website](#) or call TWC's Tele-Center at 800-939-6631 from 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Central Time Monday through Friday.

Emergency Paid Leave

Many workers in our country currently have no paid leave and are being forced to choose between their paycheck, their health, and the health of the people around them. The emergency paid leave provisions passed by Congress and signed into law by the President are a critical step toward protecting families' financial security and mitigating the spread of the coronavirus. [Here](#) you can find information on eligibility for emergency paid sick leave and paid family leave.

Additional Resources:

[CARES Act: Unemployment Insurance and Emergency Leave](#)

[Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Questions and Answers](#)

[Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Employer Paid Leave Requirements](#)

[Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Employee Paid Leave Rights](#)

[COVID-19 Resources Job Seekers](#)

[State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry \(STEAR\)](#)

[WorkForce Solutions Borderplex](#)

Small Businesses

Guidance for Businesses and Employers

Health and government officials are working together to maintain the safety, security and health of the American people. Small businesses are encouraged to do their part to keep their employees, customers and themselves healthy. The Small Business Administration launched a page dedicated to providing [Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus](#).

Paid Sick and Family Leave Tax Credit

Employers who provide required leave to their employees and who employ less than 500 employees are eligible for a tax credit to offset the costs of such leave. This tax relief will be provided against quarterly payroll taxes (those paid in connection the Form 941). For additional guidance, please refer to the IRS's [website](#).

Funding Options

In addition to traditional SBA funding programs, the *CARES Act* established several new temporary programs to address the COVID-19 outbreak. See below for additional information on the new temporary programs: [Paycheck Protection Program \(PPP\)](#), [EIDL Loan Advance](#), [SBA Express Bridge Loans](#), and [SBA Debt Relief](#).

Paycheck Protection Program

The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) is a loan designed to provide a direct incentive for small businesses to keep their workers on the payroll. SBA will forgive loans if all employees are kept on the payroll for eight weeks and the money is used for payroll, rent, mortgage interest, or utilities.

You can apply through any existing SBA 7(a) lender or through any federally insured depository institution, federally insured credit union, and Farm Credit System institution that is participating. Other regulated lenders will be available to make these loans once they are approved and enrolled in the program. You should consult with your local lender as to whether it is participating in the program. Lenders may begin processing loan applications as soon as April 3, 2020. The Paycheck Protection Program will be available through June 30, 2020. For more information and to apply visit [here](#).

Economic Injury Disaster Loan Emergency Advance

The Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) provides vital economic support to small businesses to help overcome the temporary loss of revenue they are experiencing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This program is for any small business with less than 500 employees (including sole proprietorships, independent contractors and self-employed persons), private non-profit organization or 501(c)(19) veterans organizations affected by COVID-19.

Businesses in certain industries may have more than 500 employees if they meet the [SBA's size standards](#) for those industries.

The Economic Injury Disaster Loan advance funds will be made available within days of a successful application, and this loan advance will not have to be repaid. To apply for a COVID-19 Economic Injury Disaster Loan and loan advance, [click here](#).

SBA Express Bridge Loans

The Express Bridge Loan Pilot Program allows small businesses who currently have a business relationship with an SBA Express Lender to access up to \$25,000 quickly. These loans can provide vital economic support to small businesses to help overcome the temporary loss of revenue they are experiencing and can be a term loans or used to bridge the gap while applying for a direct SBA Economic Injury Disaster loan. If a small business has an urgent need for cash while waiting for decision and disbursement on an Economic Injury Disaster Loan, they may qualify for an SBA Express Disaster Bridge Loan. For more information and to apply visit [here](#).

SBA Debt Relief

As part of debt relief efforts, the SBA will automatically pay the principal, interest, and fees of current 7(a), 504, and microloans for a period of six months. The SBA will also automatically pay the principal, interest, and fees of new 7(a), 504, and microloans issued prior to September 27, 2020. If you have questions about your current loan and whether or not your loan is automatically deferred, please contact your [Loan Servicing Office](#).

Local Assistance

SBA works with a number of local partners to counsel, mentor, and train small businesses. In addition to the [El Paso District Office](#), you can contact SBA Partners, such as SCORE offices, Women's Business Centers, Small Business Development Centers and Veterans Business Outreach Centers. When faced with a business need, use the [SBA's Local Assistance Directory](#) to locate the office nearest you.

Additional Resources:

[El Paso Covid-19 Business Survey](#)

[WorkForce Solutions Borderplex](#)

[Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Employer Paid Leave Requirements](#)

[CARES Act: Small Business Owner's Guide](#)

[Texas Workforce Commission COVID-19 Resources for Employers](#)

Students and Educators

Federal Student Loan Relief

If you have student loan debt, Congress secured several options outlined below for borrowers that help provide relief through September 30, 2020. During this period, a borrower will be able to:

- Pause payments for federal student loan borrowers who have Direct Loans and Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL), which means these borrowers will not be required to make any payments toward outstanding interest or principal balance.
- Suspend interest accrual for such loans so that these balances don't accrue.
- Avoid forced collections such as garnishment of wages, tax refunds, and Social Security benefits.
- Halt negative credit reporting.
- Ensure a borrower continues to receive credit toward Public Service Loan Forgiveness,
- Income-Driven Repayment forgiveness, and loan rehabilitation.

For additional guidance on how to apply and learn about next steps as this critical relief becomes available, please refer to the U.S. Department of Education [website](#).

Additional Resource:

[Student Aid FAQ for COVID-19](#)

Stabilization Funding for Education

Congress secured \$30.75 billion in funding for school districts, states and higher education institutions to ensure state resources and investments are not diverted from life-long learning. For additional guidance on how to apply and learn about next steps as this critical relief becomes available, please refer to the U.S. Department of Education [website](#).

School Meals

To respond to school closures across the country due to coronavirus, Congress provided emergency funding for Child Nutrition Programs to ensure students can still receive their free or reduced-price school meals during this time. Visit the Texas Education Agency (TEA) [website](#) to find free school meal pick-up locations near you.

Texas' 16th Congressional District School and Colleges Closures

On March 31, 2020, Governor Abbott issued an executive order declaring that schools will remain temporarily closed to in-person classroom attendance until May 4, 2020. Below information about current operations for school districts, universities, and colleges across Texas' 16th Congressional District:

[Anthony ISD](#)

Drive through pick up meals will be available at various locations to children ages 18 and under.

Canutillo ISD

Bus delivery and curbside pickup of breakfast and lunch to children ages 18 and under will be available.

Clint ISD

Meals will be available for pick-up at all schools and various bus drop-off locations for all children ages 18 and under.

EPISD

Take-home meals for students at 50 school sites throughout the District in a drive-thru setting will be provided to children ages 18 and under.

Socorro ISD

Families may pick up both breakfast and lunch at select schools within the district.

Ysleta ISD

Curbside delivery of breakfast and lunch meals at select schools for children ages 18 and under will be provided.

University of Texas at El Paso

Starting March 30, 2020, all UTEP course instruction will be provided online for the remainder of the spring semester.

El Paso Community College

EPCC will offer all classes, operations and support services online until further notice.

Western Tech

Students will adhere to their online/distance learning through Friday, May 1, 2020 and will return to their normal class schedules at their respective campus on Monday, May 4, 2020.

Southwest University

Starting April 6, 2020, remote instruction will be provided online for the remainder of the spring semester.

Online Education Resources:

[PBS Learning Media](#)

[Education Resources for Kids and Families from the Library of Congress](#)

[Education Resources for Teachers from the Library of Congress](#)

[Distance Learning Resources from the Smithsonian](#)

Veterans

Congress has provided robust emergency funding to ensure the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has the equipment, tests, and support services – including setting up temporary care sites, mobile treatment centers and increasing telehealth visits to allow more veterans to get care at home – necessary to provide veterans with the additional care they need. For further guidance as this funding and initiatives are implemented, please refer to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs' [website](#). General information on VA's COVID-19 Response plan and precautions can be found [here](#).

Veterans experiencing coronavirus symptoms of fever, cough, and shortness of breath, must call to call the El Paso VA at (915) 564-6100 or call MyVA311 (844-698-2311, press #3 to be connected), before visiting local VA medical facilities, community providers, urgent care centers, or emergency departments.

Veterans can also send secure messages to their health care providers via [MyhealthVet](#), VA's online patient portal. VA clinicians will evaluate veterans' symptoms and direct them to the most appropriate providers for further evaluation and treatment. This may include referral to state or local health departments for COVID-19 testing. The El Paso VA is working to expand video health appointments during the COVID-19 crisis. A video explaining how to use VA Video Connect (VVC) services can be found [here](#).

The VA will also be using [waiver authority](#) to rehire interested retired VA healthcare providers. Retired VA clinicians who are interested in returning to the VA can register [here](#).

The significant impact COVID-19 has on daily routines may cause unanticipated stress on some veterans in crisis. Help is available for veterans in crisis by calling the Veteran Crisis Line at 1 (800) 273-8255 and pressing 1, at [VeteransCrisisLine.Net/Chat](#), or by texting 838255.

Additional Resources:

[Coronavirus FAQs: What Veterans need to know](#)

[VA's Public Health Response to Coronavirus](#)

Service Members

On March 30, 2020, the Department of Defense (DOD) announced that out of a concern for operational security, the aggregate number of individual service member cases at individual unit, base or Combatant Commands won't be reported. DOD will continue to offer a public daily update of the full number of cases. Learn more [here](#).

On the evening of March 25, 2020, Fort Bliss escalated to Health Protective Condition Charlie requiring only mission essential personnel to physically report for their duties.

Mission essential personnel are determined by individual unit chains of command, supervisors, and leadership. As of now, essential services, such as the PX, Commissary, DFACs, and other food service facilities, remain unaffected. All other personnel are being told to telework from home where possible for the safety of themselves, our Soldiers and families, and the local community. For daily COVID-19 facility and service updates, and periodic Fort Bliss virtual Town Halls on these issues, visit [here](#).

Additional Resources:

Resources and services are available to service members, their families and survivors through Military OneSource, the Military and Family Life Counseling program, and the Spouse Education and Career Opportunities. These services include:

- A dedicated section is available on [Military OneSource](#) to keep service members and their families informed about the impacts of COVID-19 on the military community.
- Beginning March 24, 2020, Military OneSource will offer [non-medical counseling video sessions](#) for children and youth who may feel overwhelmed by the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Military OneSource will be live on [Facebook](#) Monday through Friday at noon Eastern Time to highlight available resources. All videos will be available for on-demand viewing.

Coronavirus Scams and Fraud

IRS Fraud

The Internal Revenue Service is urging taxpayers to be on the lookout for a surge of calls and email phishing attempts about the Coronavirus. These contacts can lead to tax-related fraud and identity theft. Taxpayers should watch not only for emails but text messages, websites and social media attempts that request money or personal information. Learn more about reporting suspected scams by going to the [Report Phishing and Online Scams](#) page on IRS.gov.

Social Security Fraud

The Office of the Inspector General of Social Security Administration is warning the public about fraudulent letters threatening suspension of Social Security benefits due to COVID-19 or coronavirus-related office closures. The Social Security Administration

(SSA) will not suspend or discontinue benefits because their offices are closed. For more information about Social Security and COVID-19, visit [here](#).

Coronavirus Scams

Scammers are taking advantage of fears surrounding the coronavirus pandemic. The FTC and FDA have jointly issued warning letters to sellers of unapproved and misbranded products, claiming they can treat or prevent coronavirus. The companies' products include teas, essential oils, and colloidal silver.

The FTC says the companies have no evidence to back up their claims — as required by law. The FDA says there are no approved vaccines, drugs or investigational products currently available to treat or prevent the virus.

These scams may also come through emails and web links with unscrupulous individuals claiming to represent the CDC or other health authorities. Read the FTC tips on how to avoid all types of coronavirus scams [here](#).

File a Complaint

El Pasoans who believe they have encountered disaster scams, including price gouging, should call the Office of the Attorney General of Texas' toll-free complaint line at (800) 621-0508 or [file a complaint online](#).

Additional Resources:

[Beware of Scams Related to the Coronavirus](#)

[Avoid Scams While Finding Help During Quarantine](#)

[Esté Alerta con las Estafas Relacionadas con el Coronavirus \(Spanish\)](#)

Housing

Texas Supreme Court Halt Evictions

On March 19, 2020, the Texas Supreme Court [issued an order](#) halting eviction proceedings statewide until April 19, 2020, effective immediately. This Order is effective immediately and expires April 19, 2020, unless extended by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

According to the order, landlords may proceed with eviction cases only if the actions of the occupants "pose an imminent threat" of physical harm to the landlord, the landlord's employees or other tenants, or if the occupants are engaging in criminal activity.

Mortgage Forbearance

Homeowners with FHA, USDA, VA, or Section 184 or 184A mortgages (for members of

federally-recognized tribes) and those with mortgages backed by Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac have the right to request forbearance on their payments for up to 6 months, with a possible extension for another 6 months without fees, penalties, or extra interest. Homeowners should contact their mortgage servicing company directly.

National Moratorium on Evictions and Foreclosures

To help renters and homeowners remain stably housed during and after a Coronavirus outbreak. [HUD announced](#) a short-term moratorium on evictions in public housing, and [Freddie Mac](#), [Fannie Mae](#), and the Federal Housing Administration announced a moratorium on foreclosures for homeowners. Renters whose landlord is not abiding by the moratorium should contact the relevant federal agency that administers their housing program or their local Legal Aid office.

Food Assistance

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), more commonly known as food stamps, ensures that families receive the food they need, especially if they are newly unemployed. Congress has invested in SNAP in the last three bills to help El Paso families put food on the table during this crisis. In order to apply for SNAP, visit DHHS' [website](#).

Additional Resource:

[Committee on House Agriculture Fact Sheet and FAQs on anti-hunger programs](#)

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children (WIC) provides access to nutritious foods to low-income pregnant women or mothers. To see if you are eligible for WIC benefits click [here](#). To learn more about how to apply for WIC click [here](#). To learn about Texas WIC, click [here](#).

Additional Resource:

[U.S. Department of Agriculture's Coronavirus Nutrition Response](#)

School Meals

To respond to school closures across the country due to coronavirus, Congress provided emergency funding for Child Nutrition Programs to ensure students can still receive their free or reduced-price school meals during this time. Visit the Texas Education Agency (TEA) [website](#) to find free school meal pick-up locations near you or the respective school district website: [Anthony ISD](#), [Canutillo ISD](#), [Clint ISD](#), [EPISD](#), [Socorro ISD](#), and [Ysleta ISD](#).

El Pasoans Fighting Hunger Food Bank

Congress has now secured \$850 million in emergency funding for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) to help food banks face increased utilization and demand in El Paso and countless communities across the country due to the coronavirus.

In our community, El Pasoans Fighting Hunger, El Paso's only food bank, and its partners are working diligently to reduce the risk of food insecurity in our community during the coronavirus outbreak. The El Pasoans Fighting Hunger Food Bank transitioned to a drive-thru distribution method. Below locations and operating hours:

West: Sunland Park Mall at 750 Sunland Park Drive

Monday & Friday – 10AM-2PM

West: Abundant Living Faith Center West at 7100 N. Desert Blvd.

Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday from 10AM-2PM

Central: Kelly Center for Hunger Relief at 915 N. Florence

Tuesday & Wednesday, Friday & Saturday from 10AM-2PM

Northeast: Katie's Pantry at 4801 Sun Valley

Monday through Friday from 10AM-2PM

East/Socorro/Clint/San Elizario/Fabens: El Pasoans Fighting Hunger Food Bank

Monday through Friday from 9AM-3PM

Additional Resources:

[El Pasoans Fighting Hunger Volunteer Opportunities](#)

[Get Shift Done for El Paso Initiative to Support Restaurant Workers](#)

Utility Assistance and Bills

Energy Assistance for Low Income Families

Congress appropriated \$900 million to help low income Americans and their families heat and cool their homes. To learn more about the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) in Texas, click [here](#).

Federal Help with Paying Bills

Many hard working El Paso families are currently struggling due to the economic and health impacts of the coronavirus outbreak. The federal government has several assistance programs to help low-income individuals with paying phone bills, medical bills and other expenses. You can also learn more about how apply for temporary assistance due to coronavirus [here](#).

El Paso Utilities

El Paso Electric

Will continue normal business hours. Suspended service disconnections for non-payments until further notice.

El Paso Water

Suspended service disconnections for non-payments until further notice.

Texas Gas Service

Suspended service disconnections for non-payments through May 1.

Comcast

Will not disconnect a customer's internet service or assess late fees if during this bill period. Xfinity WiFi hotspots in El Paso will be available to anyone who needs them for free.

Charter

Provides free Spectrum broadband and Wi-Fi internet for the next 60 days to households with K-12 students or college students who don't already have a subscription. Spectrum WiFi hotspots in El Paso will be available to anyone who needs them for free.

Mental Health

Resources from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides guidelines for coping with a disaster or traumatic event which can be found [here](#). Tips include:

- Take care of your body
- Connect with others
- Take breaks
- Stay informed
- Avoid too much exposure to news
- Seek help when needed

Resources from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA)

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) has a Disaster Distress Helpline dedicated to providing immediate crisis counseling for people who are experiencing emotional distress related to any natural or human-caused

disaster. **You can call 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746. (TTY 1-800-846-8517)**

Callers to the hotline can also connect with counselors in over 100 other languages via 3rd-party interpretation services: to connect with a counselor in your primary language, simply indicate your preferred language to the responding counselor and she/he will connect to a live interpreter (interpretation in less commonly-spoken languages may require calling back at an appointed time). [Learn more and download information](#) about the Disaster Distress Helpline in 30 of the most commonly-spoken languages in the U.S.

Additional Resources:

[UNICEF guidance for teenagers during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

[National Alliance on Mental Illness' \(NAMI\) Coronavirus Resources and Information Guide](#)

[Coping with a Disaster or Traumatic Event:](#)

[Helping Children Cope with Emergencies](#)

[Resources for State and Local Governments](#)

[Resources for Community and Religious Leaders](#)

[Emergency Responders: Tips for taking care of yourself](#)

Travel

Starting March 21, 2020, the United States and Mexico are temporarily restricting all non-essential travel across its borders for a period of 30 days subject to extension upon review. According to the Department of Homeland Security, non-essential" travel includes travel that is considered tourism or recreational in nature. Essential travel" includes:

- U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents returning to the United States
- Individuals traveling for medical purposes
- Individuals traveling to attend educational institutions
- Individuals traveling to work in the United States (individuals working in the farming or agriculture industry who must travel between the U.S. and Mexico to work)
- Individuals traveling for emergency response and public health purposes (government officials or emergency responders entering the U.S. to support Federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial government efforts to respond to COVID-19 or other emergencies)

- Individuals engaged in lawful cross-border trade (truck drivers supporting the movement of cargo between the U.S. and Mexico)
- Individuals engaged in official government travel or diplomatic travel
- Members of the U.S. Armed Forces, and the spouses and children of members of the U.S. Armed Forces, returning to the United States
- Individuals engaged in military-related travel or operations.

Texas Executive Order Mandating 14-Day Quarantine for Travelers

Starting March 26, 2020, [Governor Greg Abbott issued a series of executive orders](#) mandating 14-day self-quarantine for air and road travelers arriving to Texas from designated areas.

Air travel: Individuals traveling to Texas, with Texas being their final destination, through an airport from the areas below will be subject to a mandated self-quarantine of 14 days and must complete the [Form for Arrivals from Areas Designated for Mandatory Self-Quarantine](#) and abide by the [Mandatory Terms of Self-Quarantine](#).

- State of New York
- State of New Jersey
- State of Connecticut
- State of Louisiana
- State of California
- State of Washington
- City of Atlanta, Georgia
- City of Chicago, Illinois
- City of Detroit, Michigan
- City of Miami, Florida

Road travel: Effective Monday, March 30, 2020, every person who enters the state of Texas through roadways from Louisiana will be subject to the mandated 14-day self-quarantine and must complete the [Form for Arrival for Road Travelers from Areas Designated for Mandatory Self-Quarantine](#). DPS has been tasked with enforcing GA-12, and the public can expect to see an increased law enforcement presence along the Texas/Louisiana border.

DHS Notice of Arrival Restrictions on China, Iran and Certain Countries of Europe

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued a [Notice of Arrival Restrictions](#) outlining the process for American citizens, legal permanent residents, and their immediate families who are returning home after recently visiting certain European countries (listed below), China, and Iran. Americans returning from the affected countries will now be

required to travel through 13 airports, including Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport (DFW) in Texas.

Upon arrival, travelers will proceed to standard customs processing. They will then continue to enhance entry screening where the passenger will be asked about their medical history, current condition, and asked for contact information for local health authorities. Passengers will then be given written guidance about COVID-19 and directed to proceed to their final destination, and immediately home-quarantine in accordance with CDC best practices.

Global Level 4 Health 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.

Travelers are strongly encouraged to enroll in the State Department's [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#) to receive alerts and make it easier to locate them in an emergency.

Additional Resources and FAQs

FAQs

Congresswoman Veronica Escobar has heard from many El Pasoans who are concerned about the coronavirus and wants to answer some of your frequently asked questions. Click [here](#) to read frequently asked questions on the coronavirus.

Additional Resources

The [City of El Paso](#) provides a list of closures, cancellations, and suspensions that can be found on the COVID-19 information and status banner. In addition, for more information on COVID-19, visit, [EPHealth.com](#) and [EPSalud.com](#). Additionally, the 2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Center is available 24/7. Caller can dial 2-1-1 and select option 6.

[El Paso County](#) provides the latest information on the level of activation the city/county is in, further information on COVID-19 prevention, emergency preparedness for your pets, and printable resource information about COVID-19.

Day Care Options

The City of El Paso has partnered with the YWCA Paso del Norte Region to provide service to the families affected by closure of the Galatzan and Veterans Recreation

Centers childcare programs. Parents can find a YWCA in their neighborhood by contacting the YWCA online at www.ywcaelpaso.org or calling (915) 519-0000.

Transportation

Sun Metro is waiving all bus fares on Fixed Route, BRIO and LIFT services until further notice. Effective Wednesday, March 25, 2020 Sun Metro will implement service modifications in response to COVID-19, including the suspension of the streetcar service. For more information about the service modifications and safety updates, visit www.sunmetro.net.

National, State, and Local Park Closures

During the ongoing public health threat, park superintendents have been given authority to close areas within national parks. Please [check with individual parks](#) for specific details about park operations.

Starting April 7, 2020, Texas State Parks will temporary close to the public. [The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department](#) (TPWD) will continue to stay current with the latest public health recommendations and will announce when a definite reopening date has been determined.

All [City of El Paso public parks, pools, recreational centers and facilities remain closed until further notice](#), including parks, hike and bike trails, whether formally recognized by the City or not; including, but not limited to any golfing in public or private courses; any gathering in school recreation areas, tennis clubs, and any other private recreational club and recommends against hiking in the Franklin Mountains.

FEMA Major Disaster Declaration

On March 25, 2020 President Trump granted a Major Disaster Declaration for the State of Texas triggering the release of federal funds to help people and communities recover from COVID-19 that occurred January 20, 2020 and continuing. For a list of programs available under this declaration, please check [here](#).

Español

Pandemia del Coronavirus (COVID-19)

El 13 de abril del 2020, las autoridades de El Paso reportaron un total de 300 casos positivos de COVID-19 y dos muertes relacionadas con el COVID-19. Para información específica de Texas, por favor visite el sitio web del [Departamento Estatal de Servicios de Salud de Texas \(DSHS\)](#).

Esta es una situación emergente y rápidamente cambiante, y el [Centro para el Control y la prevención de Enfermedades \(CDC\)](#) provee información actualizada y guías.

¿Qué está haciendo el Congreso?

Nuestro país enfrenta una de las emergencias económicas y de salud más graves de los últimos 100 años. La pandemia del coronavirus ha impactado de manera profunda y en todos sus aspectos la vida cotidiana en El Paso y el resto del país. Para enfrentar esta emergencia de salud pública, mitigar el daño económico y proporcionar una fuerte recuperación, se requieren medidas audaces.

Desde el comienzo de esta epidemia, la Congresista Veronica Escobar y los Demócratas de la Cámara de Representantes se han enfocado en asegurar que la respuesta de nuestra nación ponga a los trabajadores y a las familias a la vanguardia: su salud, sus salarios y su bienestar.

Ya han aprobado y promulgado tres leyes de gran alcance:

- La Ley de Asignaciones Suplementarias para la Preparación y Respuesta Ante el Coronavirus
- La Ley de Respuesta al Coronavirus Primero Familias (Families First)
- La Ley de Ayuda, Socorro y Seguridad Económica Contra el Coronavirus (CARES)

En su conjunto, estas tres leyes amplían dramáticamente los medios de vida financieros para las familias, establecen nuevos beneficios y protecciones para los trabajadores, crean nuevas herramientas para que las pequeñas empresas puedan cubrir los salarios de sus empleados y otros gastos necesarios, y proporcionan ayuda para los estudiantes y las escuelas.

A continuación, información sobre algunos de los beneficios que están disponibles para los paseños y cómo accederlos.

Seguro de Desempleo

Más trabajadores sin empleo y con despido temporal (incluso los que han ingresado al mercado laboral más recientemente) serán elegibles para el Seguro de Desempleo y recibirán \$600 adicionales por semana para igualar el sueldo promedio para un máximo de 4 meses de beneficios. Estos beneficios estarán disponibles de inmediato.

Las personas que deseen más información sobre los beneficios para los desempleados (UI por sus siglas en inglés) deben visitar la página web del Texas Workforce Commission, [aquí](#).

Pagos de Impacto Económico

La pandemia del coronavirus ha producido graves consecuencias en la salud pública y en la economía. Estos reembolsos ayudarán a los paseños a comprar lo que necesitan durante esta crisis de salud pública, especialmente cuando muchos están sufriendo faltas o rebajas de sueldo significativas.

Los individuos con ingresos hasta \$75,000 (\$150,000 para los trabajadores casados) recibirán pagos de \$1,200 con un pago adicional de \$500 por cada hijo menor de edad. Los pagos

disminuyen proporcionalmente y cesan por completo para los trabajadores solteros que ganan más de \$99,000 (\$198,000 para trabajadores casados y \$218,000 para una familia de cuatro miembros familiares).

El IRS (Servicio de Ingresos Internos) emitirá estos pagos por medio de un depósito directo y se basarán en la declaración de impuestos del año 2019 o 2018, o su estado de cuenta del Seguro Social del 2019.

Si recibe beneficios del Seguro Social, jubilación u otros beneficios de la red de seguridad social, aún puede calificar para recibir pagos directos. Estos pagos no estarán sujetos a impuestos ni representarán "recursos" para propósitos de elegibilidad del programa. Haga clic [aquí](#) para obtener más información del IRS.

Permiso de Emergencia Pagado

Muchos trabajadores en Estados Unidos actualmente no tienen acceso al permiso pagado y se ven obligados a elegir entre su salario y su salud, o la salud de las personas que los rodean.

Las disposiciones de permiso pagado de emergencia aprobadas por el Congreso y promulgadas por el presidente son un paso crítico para proteger la seguridad financiera de las familias y mitigar la propagación del coronavirus. De clic [aquí](#) para encontrar una información sobre su elegibilidad.