



Insights

Texas - COVID-19 Resource Guide for Individuals

15 April 2020

Firm Thought Leadership

To help address the concerns of individuals in our communities affected by COVID-19, Baker Botts has published an extensive COVID-19 Resource Guide.

The page below specifically pertains to Texas. To see all of the jurisdictions covered, please click [here](#).

This Guide provides general information only that may or may not be applicable in individual circumstances. It is not intended as legal advice. For legal advice in specific circumstances, please consult your own lawyer. This material may constitute attorney advertising in some jurisdictions.

Topics include:

- COURT PROCEEDINGS
- COVID-19 TESTING POLICIES/PROCEDURES
- EDUCATION/SCHOOL RIGHTS AND RESOURCES
- EVICTIONS
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COURT PROCEEDINGS

Are the Texas federal courts open?

The courts of the Northern and Eastern Districts are open, but with reduced staff. The courts of the Western District are open, but access is restricted pursuant to order of the court. The courts of the Southern District are closed to the public.

Most clerks' offices are open with minimal personnel for processing mail and intake needs. Electronic filing through the CM/ECF system remains available.

More information on the current status of the courts of each district and division can be found below:

- **Northern District:** <http://www.txnd.uscourts.gov/>.
- **Eastern District:** <http://www.txed.uscourts.gov/>.
- **Western District:** <https://www.txwd.uscourts.gov/>.
- **Southern District:** <https://www.txs.uscourts.gov/>.

Are trial settings going forward?

Generally, all jury trials in both criminal and civil matters are suspended until at least May 1, 2020, to be reset by the presiding judge. Individual judges may continue to conduct bench trials during this time, being mindful to minimize the number of people present in the courtroom.

What about other matters?

Other deadlines and scheduled appearances generally remain in place, although telephonic or video hearings are encouraged where possible. You should contact the court or case manager for more information.

Are there any physical restrictions in place for federal courthouses?

For the time being, entry to most federal courthouses in Texas is prohibited for the following:

- Persons who have traveled to any of the countries listed in the Level 3 Travel Health Notice on COVID-19 from the CDC within the last 14 days
<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/warning/coronavirus-global>;
- Persons who reside or have had close contact with someone who has traveled to one of those countries within the last 14 days;
- Persons who have been asked to self-quarantine by any doctor, hospital, or health agency;
- Persons who have been diagnosed with, or have had contact with anyone who has been diagnosed with, COVID-19; and
- Persons with fever, cough, or shortness of breath.

If you have a scheduled hearing or appearance and any of these categories apply to you, you should inform the court or case manager to reschedule or make other arrangements as appropriate.

Resources:

A collection of Federal District Court updates can be found at <https://www.uscourts.gov/about-federal-courts/court-website-links/court-orders-and-updates-during-covid19-pandemic>.

PROCEEDINGS IN TEXAS STATE COURTS

How have court proceedings in Texas state courts been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic?

On March 13, 2020, Governor Greg Abbott declared a state of disaster in all 254 counties in the State of Texas. <https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-declares-state-of-disaster-in-texas-due-to-covid-19>

Following this declaration, the Texas Supreme Court began issuing a series of orders applicable to civil—and in some instances, criminal—cases generally aimed at implementing social distancing and other practices recommended or required by governments and health experts. <https://www.txcourts.gov/supreme/administrative-orders/2020/>

As a general rule, for any civil or criminal case, courts in the State of Texas may allow or require anyone involved in a hearing, deposition, or other proceeding of any kind to participate remotely, such as by teleconferencing or videoconferencing. The courts must avoid risk to court staff, parties, attorneys, jurors, and the public.

The Texas Supreme Court also has ordered that courts should not conduct “non-essential proceedings” in person if doing so would be contrary to local, state, or national directives regarding maximum group size.

Courts also can conduct proceedings away from the courthouse, with reasonable notice to those involved.

These measures will remain in place until May 8, 2020, unless extended by order of the Texas Supreme Court.

Have deadlines and statutes of limitations been stayed or tolled as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

The Texas Supreme Court has ordered that “[a]ny deadline for the filing or service of any civil case is tolled from March 13, 2020, until June 1, 2020,” unless otherwise extended by the Court. This does not include deadlines for perfecting appeals or for other appellate proceedings. However, the Court has ordered that requests to extend such deadlines “should be generously granted.”

The Texas Supreme Court has also given the state’s lower courts the power to “modify or suspend any and all deadlines and procedures” in civil cases for a “stated period ending no later than 30 days after the Governor’s state of disaster has been lifted.” <https://www.txcourts.gov/media/1446056/209042.pdf>

In addition, the Texas Supreme Court has affirmatively ordered that deadlines be tolled in limited, specific instances:

- All deadlines in attorney professional disciplinary and disability proceedings have been tolled until May 8, 2020; and
- With limited exceptions for cases involving imminent threat to persons or criminal activity, no trials, hearings, or other proceedings may be conducted; and all deadlines are tolled in eviction proceedings until after April 30, 2020, unless otherwise extended.
<https://www.txcourts.gov/media/1446205/209046.pdf>;
<https://www.txcourts.gov/media/1446345/209052.pdf>

Do these restrictions, limitations, and alterations apply in family court proceedings?

Generally, yes. Where relevant, the orders issued by the Texas Supreme Court that are referenced above apply in family court proceedings in the State of Texas.

The Texas Supreme Court has also issued specific orders related to family law matters and the impact of school closures and shelter-in-place directives resulting from COVID-19:

- The Court has made clear that, for purposes of determining a person's right to possession of and access to a child under a court-ordered possession schedule, the original published school schedule is controlling. Possession and access are not affected by COVID-19-related school closures.
- Similarly, shelter-in-place orders do not impact rights to possession of and access to children. Court-ordered possession schedules still control.
- With that said, parties can alter possession schedules by agreement based on impacts due to COVID-19 (if they are allowed to do so by their court orders).
- Similarly, lower courts in the State of Texas still have the power to modify their own orders on possession of and access to children, as appropriate. <https://www.txcourts.gov/media/1446251/209050.pdf>

What should I do if I have a court hearing or trial in the near future?

First, check to see if you have received a notice specific to your case regarding the hearing or trial. These may be available online via the clerk of court's or court's website or mailed to you, depending on the court in which your case is pending.

If you have not received a specific notice, check the court's website in which your case is pending to see if any COVID-19-related orders have been issued by that court. Many courts have issued such orders, canceling jury trials and hearings or announcing limited court hours.

In addition to checking the court's website for general information, you can contact the court directly, usually by email or phone, to determine whether your trial or hearing will go forward or has been canceled or rescheduled. For most courts, you can find phone numbers and email addresses on the court's website. Be sure to have ready your case number when you call or to include it in your email so that the court can locate your case and provide you accurate information.

Resources:

The Texas Supreme Court orders referenced and quoted above are available at <https://www.txcourts.gov/supreme/news/texas-supreme-court-coronavirus-update/>. The Court is continuing to update its page as additional orders and information related to COVID-19 become available.

A court by court summary can be found at <https://www.txcourts.gov/programs-services/court-security/emergency-court-preparedness/closures/>.

The website for the court in which your case is pending is also a good resource, as most courts are posting orders and restrictions specific to their court online.

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COVID-19 TESTING POLICIES/PROCEDURES

Texas - Austin***Are drive-through testing sites available in Travis County?***

- Testing sites in Travis County are not available to the general public. Testing remains limited and testing locations are prioritizing testing for healthcare workers, hospital patients, individuals who live in nursing homes and those who have a high risk of complications.
- To get tested at any of these testing sites, patients must first be screened and obtain a doctor referral. Prioritization is given to patients with a specific combination of symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath) and risk factors (travel, close contact with confirmed cases, or underlying health conditions).

Private healthcare providers locally may provide their own testing. Contact your doctor for more guidance.

If you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, you are encouraged to avoid visiting a clinic or hospital and instead use telehealth virtual visits or call your doctor. For a list of services, visit <http://austintexas.gov/departments/COVID-19-information/if-you-are-sick>.

- Your doctor will complete a form, and you will be notified whether you qualify for a test and provided a test-site location based on your symptoms and risk factors.
- Until you hear from your doctor, stay at home and follow the recommended social distancing procedures.

People who are experiencing COVID-19-like symptoms and have no insurance and no established medical provider should call CommUnityCare at (512) 978-8775.

Texas - Dallas***Are drive-through testing sites available in Dallas County?***

Yes. There are two drive-through testing sites available from 8:00am to 8:00pm Central Time each day of the week in the following locations:

- Parking Lot E at the American Airlines Center at 2500 Victory Boulevard, Dallas, Texas; and
- Ellis Davis Field House at 9191 South Polk Street, Dallas, Texas.

Anyone who is exhibiting the following symptoms can be tested at one of the drive-through sites:

- Shortness of breath;
- Cough; or
- Temperature of 99.6 or higher.

Texas - Houston***Are drive-through testing sites available in Harris County?***

Yes. There are currently ten drive-through testing sites available in the following locations (all testing sites can be found

at: <https://txdshs.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=297f10f479d74b569322084e5215541e>);

Houston Health Department testing sites

- The Houston Health Department has two free drive-through testing sites. The Houston Health Department currently is allowing testing of anyone who wants a test, even if the individual is not exhibiting symptoms. To receive a testing location and a test, individuals MUST call the COVID-19 call center at (832) 393-4220 between 9:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. to receive a unique identification code and instructions on where to go for testing.

United Memorial Medical Center at 510 W. Tidwell Road, Houston, Texas 77076

Delmar Stadium at 2020 Magnum Rd., Houston, Texas 77092

M.O. Campbell Center at 1865 Aldine Bender Rd., Houston, Texas, 77032

Butler Stadium at 13755 S. Main St., Houston, Texas 77035

Goose Creek ISD – Stallworth at 2102 East Archer Road, Baytown, Texas 77521

- For the above testing sites, anyone who wishes to be tested must be pre-screened. Individuals can register for pre-screening online at <https://www.ummcscreening.com/>. If, after pre-screening, the individual is deemed eligible, they will be directed to a drive-thru testing site.

Katy ISD – Legacy Stadium at 1830 Katyland Drive, Katy, Texas 77493

- Individuals visiting the site must be referred by a healthcare provider and must have a healthcare notification to be tested

Northeast Houston at Forest Brook Middle School at 7525 Tidwell Rd., Houston, Texas 77016

- Pre-screening is not required.

My Family Doctor Clinic 6430 Hillcroft Ave., Houston, Texas 77081

- Patients will have to fill out a pre-screening form at the drive-through in order to be tested. Only those at risk of the disease will be tested.
- Patients without insurance can be screened and tested for \$150
- Patients with insurance can be screened and tested for free with no copay.

Oakbend Medical Center at 4911 Sandhill Drive, Sugar Land, Texas 77479 (8:00 am to 1:00 pm Monday-Friday)

- Patients must complete a telehealth visit by calling (281) 238-7870 to determine whether testing is necessary;
- Tests are \$100 for individuals without insurance
- A \$40 deductible must be paid by people with insurance

Smart Financial Center at 18111 Lexington Blvd., Sugar Land, Texas 77479 (9:00 am to 4 pm first-come, first served)

- Anyone who is exhibiting the following symptoms can be tested at this drive-through site:
- Shortness of breath;
- Dry/persistent cough; or
- Temperature of 100.0 or higher.

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EDUCATION/SCHOOL RIGHTS AND RESOURCES

What is the current status of school in Texas?

On March 31, 2020, Governor Abbott issued a new executive order, requiring schools to remain closed through May 4, 2020. Education may continue online or through other methods. Additionally, individual school districts may extend the time of closure.

My family depends on school-funded meal programs. Are there any resources available to provide meals for my children who normally receive meals at school?

- The Austin Independent School District is offering meals for children under the age of 19 while school is closed. Currently, AISD is offering curbside meal pickups at 16 schools across the city, Monday through Friday, between the hours of 11:00 am and 1:00 pm. AISD school buses will also deliver meals to bus stop locations across the city, Monday through Friday. For a complete list of locations and times, visit <https://www.austinisd.org/covid19/meals>. Parents and caregivers may pick up meals for children, even when the child is not present, provided that they have one of the following forms of documentation at the point of meal service: (1) official letter/email from school that shows children as enrolled; (2) individual student report cards; (3) attendance record from Parent Portal of school website; (4) birth certificate for children not in school; or (5) student ID cards. Meal packs are offered at curbside and bus delivery meal sites. Round Rock Independent School District is also offering curbside breakfast from 8:00 am to 9:00 am and lunch from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm. For the latest information and a complete list of pickup locations and times, visit <https://roundrockisd.org/coronavirus/>.
- The Dallas Independent School District is offering a free meal pickup service for children. Children will receive five breakfasts, lunches, and suppers. The meals are available for all children through the age of 18 (or age 19 if the child turns 19 during the current school year), and to students with disabilities regardless of age. However, the children must be present to receive the meals. Starting April 9, 2020, the meals are being distributed once a week every Thursday between 10:00 am and 1:00 pm at strategic locations throughout the district. Those strategic locations are provided here: <https://www.dallasisd.org/Page/62476>. The meals will be distributed curbside at the main entrance of the location.
- The Houston Independent School District has relaunched the food distribution program in which parents can pick up meals for their children from schools in the Houston area. For a complete list of locations and times,

please check your local Houston news service. Currently, the City of Houston is operating a curbside meal program at 50 community centers across the city, Monday through Friday between the hours of 1:00 pm and 3:00 pm. The meals are available for present children and teens up to the age of 18.

- Other individual school districts are providing curbside breakfast and lunch distribution programs for parents to pick up. Please check with your local school district to see if they are providing meals.
- Additionally, the Houston Food Bank provides an online list of food distribution locations across the City of Houston at <https://www.houstonfoodbank.org/>. The Houston Food Bank and its partners will continue to provide services throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Those seeking food assistance from the Houston Food Bank should either call the Houston Food Bank helpline at (832) 369-9390, or visit the Houston Food Bank website at <https://www.houstonfoodbank.org/covid19> for a list of food distribution locations across the City of Houston, as well as COVID-19 updates. To find the nearest Houston Food Bank food pantry in your area, text “FOOD” to (855) 308-2282. Additionally, visit <https://www.houstonfoodbank.org/covid19/> for a list of Summer Meal Sites for children around Houston. Lastly, the Houston Food Bank is encouraging eligible families in need of food assistance to apply for the Summer Food Service Program and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Links to both applications can be found through the Community Assistance Page of the Houston Food Bank website <https://www.houstonfoodbank.org/our-programs/communityassistanceprogram>.
- The Central Texas Food Bank is an “essential service” and its distribution network of pantries are exempt from shelter-in-place orders. The Central Texas Food Bank has added additional drive-thru distribution locations for April. For a list of distribution and mobile pantry locations and schedules, visit <https://www.centraltexasfoodbank.org/get-help>. The Central Texas Food Bank also provides a list of meal sites by school district and a tool to locate your nearest Food Bank Pantry at <https://www.centraltexasfoodbank.org/get-help/help-kids>. Additionally, the Central Texas Food Bank is continuing to help with food or benefits assistance by appointment. To schedule an appointment, call the Central Texas Food Bank hotline at (855) 366-3401, or visit <https://www.centraltexasfoodbank.org/schedule-appointment>. If you would like to help the Central Texas Food Bank, consider donating or volunteering. Visit <https://www.centraltexasfoodbank.org/coronavirus-COVID-19-update> for more information.
- The North Texas Food Bank, with help from the National Guard, remains open. A list of North Texas Food Bank food pantry locations is provided at <https://ntfb.org/our-programs/get-food-assistance/>. Additionally, the North Texas Food Bank’s Mobile Pantry remains open, though the program is now exclusively a drive-thru model to reduce the risk of COVID-19 spread. You must have a vehicle to pick up from the Mobile Pantry. Upcoming Mobile Pantry pick-up events and locations are provided at <https://ntfb.org/mobile-pantry>. Individuals wanting to help those in need may donate to the North Texas Food Bank at https://give.ntfb.org/site/Donation2?df_id=1400&mfc_pref=T&1400.donation=form1&_ga=2.260324996.8033224.15863451742582481.1586345825. Individuals may also volunteer by signing up at <https://ntfb.org/get-involved/volunteer/>.

A list of additional food pantries throughout North Texas is provided at <https://www.foodpantries.org/ci/tx-dallas>. Additional essential resources, such as diapers, wipes, and other hygiene items, are available through Hope Supply Co. (<https://hopesupplyco.org/>).

Once schools reopen, can a school board add minutes to the school day for students to make up for lost time? Alternatively, can the commissioner approve reduced operation time of schools for the year?

- For each school year, each school district must operate for at least 75,600 minutes. The Commissioner may approve the operation of schools for less than the number of minutes required in the event of extreme weather conditions or a calamity that causes the closing of schools. If the commissioner chooses not to approve reduced operation time, the school district may choose to add additional minutes to the normal school hours to compensate for the minutes lost due to any extreme weather conditions or other calamities. See Texas Education Code § 25.081, Operation of Schools.

If schools are open, can parents who are concerned that their child will contract COVID-19 choose not to send their children to school without withdrawing them?

- Local education agencies have broad discretion to determine whether an absence is excused and impose minimum attendance requirements. If the absences are considered unexcused, the absence may contribute to truancy, and truancy actions may result. See Texas Education Code § 25.087, Excused Absences.

The Texas Education Agency and Texas American Federation of Teachers have additional information for students and teachers regarding school closures.

- Texas Education Agency: <https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/health-safety-discipline/coronavirus-COVID-19-support-and-guidance>.
- Texas AFT: <https://www.texasaft.org/topics/COVID-19/>.

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EVICTIONS

Texas - State

The Texas Supreme Court issued an emergency order that stays eviction proceedings through April 30, 2020, unless otherwise extended. For additional information, please visit <https://www.txcourts.gov/media/1446345/209052.pdf>.

Do I still owe rent?

Yes. The emergency order only temporarily stops eviction proceedings from occurring; this order does not mean you do not owe rent or that you will not receive a notice of eviction. Unless otherwise extended, eviction proceedings will continue on May 1, 2020.

Texas- Austin

What if I'm unable to pay my rent?

The City of Austin provides a list of potential resources for those who need assistance paying rent or utilities at <http://www.austintexas.gov/page/resources-renters-help-paying-your-rentutilities>. Some of those programs include:

- **Tenant-Based Rental Assistance Program (“TBRA”):** The Housing Authority of the City of Austin manages the TBRA, which provides rental subsidies and case management support services to low-income families.

At this time, the Housing Authority of the City of Austin is only accepting individuals that qualify through the Coordinated Assessment administered by the Ending Community Homelessness Coalition.

For more information, either call (512) 477-1314 or visit <https://www.hacanet.org/residents/assisted-housing/>.

- **Travis County Family Support Services:** This program provides rental assistance once every 12 months to applicants who register for workforce development, education, or job training services.
- **Advocacy Outreach:** This program administers state grant funding to help people experiencing homelessness pay for moving expenses and/or security deposits. It also provides financial aid, loans, and grants for rent and/or energy bills. For more information, contact any of the following organizations:
Catholic Charities of Central Texas: (512) 651-6100
St. Matthew's Episcopal Church: (512) 345-8314
St. Vincent de Paul, St. Austin's Catholic Church: (512) 477-9471
Austin Resource Center for the Homeless, Inc.: (512) 305-4100
Travis County Family Support Services Division: (512) 267-3245
Austin Texas Health and Human Services Department: (512) 972-5011

How can I get help if I think I am at risk of losing my home?

Travis County Justices of the Peace issued a standing order regarding COVID-19, which reset all non-essential court proceedings for after May 8, 2020. No eviction proceedings (commercial or residential) will be held until after May 8, 2020, and no writs of possession will be issued by a Justice Court until May 13, 2020. For more information, visit <https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/justices-of-peace> and <https://www.traviscountytexas.gov/images/docs/jp-COVID-19-standing-order.pdf>.

Look to the Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Department (“NHCD”) for additional resources. These include resources for homeowners and resources for renters, such as resources to avoid mortgage foreclosure and resources concerning tenants' rights and the eviction process. NHCD employees are continuing regular business operations by phone and electronically. For assistance, dial 311. Additional information is available at <http://www.austintexas.gov/news/nhcd-transitions-remote-operations-offices-closed-COVID-19-0> and <https://austintexas.gov/news/nhcd-website-offers-housing-financial-resource-information-amid-COVID-19-outbreak>.

The Austin Tenants Council, which is providing services remotely, offers counseling on the eviction process. For more information, call (512) 474-7006 or visit <http://www.housing-rights.org/>.

If you need legal assistance, Legal Advice Clinics are held every Wednesday for Travis County. For more information, visit <http://www.vlsoct.org/advice/>.

What if my home is not a safe environment?

If it is not safe for you to remain in your home, you are urged to find another safe place to stay while the City's Stay Home – Work Safe Order is in effect. For assistance, please contact:

- SAFE: (512) 267-7233;
- Hope Alliance: (800) 460-7233; or
- The National Domestic Violence Hotline: (877) 863-6338.

For more information, visit <http://www.austintexas.gov/article/stay-home-work-safe-order-information>.

Texas – Dallas

Dallas County has halted eviction proceedings for 60 days starting March 18, 2020, unless otherwise extended. For more information, visit <https://www.dallascounty.org/COVID-19/judge-orders.php>.

Can I be evicted in Dallas County right now?

No. Dallas County has suspended eviction hearings and writs of possession at least until May 23, 2020.

Do I still owe rent?

Yes. The suspension of eviction hearings does not suspend your obligation to pay rent.

Texas – Houston

The Texas Supreme Court issued an emergency order that stays eviction proceedings (subject to limited exceptions) through April 30, 2020, unless otherwise extended. For additional information, please visit <https://www.txcourts.gov/media/1446345/209052.pdf>.

If you qualify for legal assistance, you may apply for help by submitting the Houston Volunteer Lawyers' application (<https://www.makejusticehappen.org/node/26/application-forms>) via email to info@hvlp.org. Additional information is available at <https://www.makejusticehappen.org/node/569>.

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GOVERNMENT GRANTS/LOANS

What are state and local governments doing in response to COVID-19 to provide assistance through grants, loans, or other programs?

Assistance offered by state and local governments vary greatly and individuals and small businesses should seek resources within their state providing more specific information.

- Texas provides the following resources for information related to small businesses, unemployment, the restaurant relief fund, and payment programs for taxes, among others. See the following for more information:
- <https://gov.texas.gov/business/page/coronavirus>;
- https://gov.texas.gov/uploads/files/business/FAQs_Small_Business_Coronaviru and
- <https://comptroller.texas.gov/about/emergency/>.

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HOMELESSNESS AND INDIVIDUALS IN COMMUNITY/SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Texas - Austin

How does the shelter in place order affect those experiencing homelessness?

Individuals experiencing homelessness are exempt from Austin's shelter-in-place order issued March 24, 2020. The City has reported that clean-ups are happening less frequently and that crews are not asking people to relocate unless they are in immediate danger. Individuals experiencing homelessness are, however, strongly encouraged to find shelter.

To the extent that individuals are using shared or outdoor spaces, they should practice social distancing as much as possible by maintaining at least a six-foot distance from other individuals, washing hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds as frequently as possible or using hand sanitizer, covering coughs or sneezes (into the sleeve or elbow, not hands), regularly cleaning highly-touched surfaces, and not shaking hands. Austin also encourages individuals to stay where you shelter whenever possible and to limit interactions with people who are at risk.

Are shelters and other resources still available?

Governmental and other entities are strongly encouraged to make shelter available as soon as possible and, to the maximum extent practicable, use COVID-19 risk-mitigation practices. Any business or organization that provides food, shelter, social services, or other necessities of life for economically disadvantaged or otherwise needy individuals is considered an essential business or organization. Essential businesses and organizations are strongly encouraged to remain open to the greatest extent possible. Additionally, housing and shelter personnel are considered to provide essential government functions.

For a list of available service organizations, shelters, bathrooms, hand-washing stations, and food access, visit <http://www.austintexas.gov/departments/accessing-resources-during-COVID-19>.

The City of Austin launched an interactive online map to connect people with services. To view the basic needs map, visit www.AustinTexas.gov/Homelessness.

Dial 211 for the latest information about where and when you can access free food during the COVID-19 pandemic.

I think I have COVID-19, what do I do?

Call the COVID-19 Hotline at (512) 978-8775 for guidance if you are experiencing symptoms (e.g., fever, cough, and shortness of breath) and have had close contact

with others who have or may have the virus. Medical professionals will answer the phones and triage callers—specifically those who have no insurance and no established provider—to prevent them from going directly to a clinic, urgent care facility, or emergency department. Stay away from others and follow the guidance from the hotline staff. The hotline is available from 8:00am to 5:00pm Central Time.

People with no insurance and no established provider may also call CommUnityCare at (512) 978-9015. CommUnityCare will triage people over the phone and send them to the appropriate location.

Are there any resources for organizations that provide services to people experiencing homelessness?

The City of Austin has compiled a list of resources for service providers at <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/COVID-19-resources-providers>.

Additionally, the City of Austin and Travis County are complying with the CDC's guidance for homeless shelters. For more information, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/homeless-shelters/index.html>.

Construction of affordable housing, facilities for individuals experiencing homelessness, and facilities that provide social services is considered “as critical infrastructure” and is exempt from the city's Stay Home – Work Safe Order.

More Information:

If you are experiencing homelessness, Austin has compiled a list of resources that are typically available for those experiencing homelessness: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/resources-those-experiencing-homelessness>.

As part of the city's COVID-19 response, Austin has repurposed its homelessness strategy website to share critical information directly with people experiencing homelessness. For more information, visit www.austintexas.gov/homelessness.

To learn more about how to prevent the spread of COVID-19, visit <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/austins-homeless-strategy-COVID-19-support>.

Texas - Dallas

Are homeless shelters open?

Yes. Dallas homeless shelters remain open and continue to provide services to those in need of food and shelter. However, due to the need to increase spacing between beds and shift to all-day operations, capacity may have decreased.

Are homeless shelters taking extra precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19?

Yes. Homeless shelters are taking steps, such as continuous cleaning, decreasing beds, increasing the spacing between beds, and limiting volunteers to ensure those they serve and who serve are as safe as possible. Additionally, some shelters have moved to all-day operations so that those without homes have safe and clean places to quarantine.

Dallas Resources for the Homeless:

Austin Street Center (<https://www.austinstreet.org/>):
 2929 Hickory Street
 Dallas, Texas 75226
 (214) 428-4242

- Because of the Dallas County Shelter-in-Place Order, Austin Street Center is now sheltering current clients around the clock. As a result, Austin Street Center may be unable to accept new intakes.

The Bridge (<https://bridgenorthtexas.org/>):
 1818 Corsicana St. |
 Dallas, Texas 75201
 (214) 670-1100

- As chairs and beds are being spaced further apart, the number of individuals that The Bridge can serve is diminishing. The Bridge is still actively providing three meals per day, hygiene services, and recovery services. The Bridge can help direct those in need to other facilities.

The Salvation Army (<https://www.salvationarmydfw.org/p/services/homeless>):
 The Salvation Army Denton Shelter
 1508 East McKinney St.
 Denton, Texas 76201
 (940) 566-3800

Arlington Family Life Shelter
 712 West Abram
 Arlington, Texas 76004
 (817) 860-1836

Carr P. Collins Social Service Center
 5302 Harry Hines Blvd
 Dallas, Texas 75235
 (214) 424-7000

Mabee Social Service Center
 1855 E. Lancaster Ave.
 Fort Worth, Texas 76103
 (817) 344-1800 or dial 1811

Metrocare Services (www.metrocareservices.org):

- The clinic at The Stewpot is currently closed, but the clinic at The Bridge remains open. Hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00am to 5:00pm Central Time. You are strongly encouraged to access their telehealth services, if possible. Please call (214) 670-1143 for more information.

North Texas Behavioral Health Authority ():

- The COVID-19 Mental Health Support Line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at (833) 251-7544.

- The North Texas Behavioral Health Authority Crisis Line also is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at (866) 260-8000.

OurCalling (<https://www.ourcalling.org/>):

- OurCalling has created a directory of shelters, kitchens, and clinics where those in need can get food, shelter, and medical care. All of this may also be accessed via their mobile app for smartphones and tablets.

Texas - Houston

What resources are available to the homeless in Houston and how can I help?

Individuals experiencing homelessness are among the most vulnerable to COVID-19, as such individuals tend to be older, or suffer from underlying illnesses such as diabetes, hypertension and heart disease. Many also suffer from mental illness, which means they might not understand what's happening to them when they get sick.

Given the complexity of the COVID-19 outbreak and the difficulties it poses for shelters, many of which are always overcrowded, the Mayor's Office of Homeless Initiatives is currently working with other major cities to determine a set of best practices before it issues any protocols. Meanwhile, the city is still working on setting up a testing site accessible to the homeless, as well as a quarantine facility for those unable to self-quarantine due to homelessness.

Many Houston shelters and their partner organizations are attempting to reduce the spread of COVID-19 by limiting or restricting outside volunteers, increasing the number of brown-bag meals that are handed out to avoid large groups eating at the shelters, and limiting the number of homeless individuals who can access services like laundry and shower facilities at any given time. On April 13, 2020, the City of Houston and Harris County opened a new homeless shelter with 150 beds available to prevent other shelters from becoming over-crowded.

If you are looking for a way to help, such shelters have indicated that they are in desperate need of donations of cleaning and hygiene supplies and personal protective equipment such as masks. Additionally, please be aware that the CDC has recommended against giving out cash to the homeless at this time so as to reduce the chance that the virus is spread through this medium.

Please regularly check the Mayor's Office of Homeless Initiatives for updates: <http://www.houstontx.gov/homeless>.

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MEDICAID

Medicaid & CHIP – Texas

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, Texas has relaxed certain requirements related to eligibility for receiving or continuing coverage and to become a Medicaid provider. Texas Health and Human Services is maintaining, and regularly updating, a COVID-19 information page, located at <https://hhs.texas.gov/services/health/coronavirus-COVID-19/medicaid-chip-services-information-providers>. The provisions discussed below are based on this

website at the time of publication of this portion of the guide. We recommend you visit the Texas HHS website to stay informed of the ongoing updates to Texas' Medicaid and CHIP programs in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additional information can be found at <https://hhs.texas.gov/services/health/coronavirus-COVID-19/coronavirus-COVID-19-information-people-receiving-services>.

What are Medicaid and CHIP?

Medicaid is a joint state-federal program that provides health coverage and other benefits, such as nursing home coverage, to certain categories of individuals who cannot otherwise afford such coverage. CHIP is the Children's Health Insurance Program, a joint state-federal program, which provides health coverage to eligible children through both Medicaid and separate CHIP programs.

Testing and Treatment for COVID-19

Medicaid and CHIP will cover COVID-19 testing for those covered by either program. Healthcare providers will work with local public health officials to determine if an individual should be tested for COVID-19.

No prior authorization is required on the COVID-19 lab test for those covered by Medicaid and CHIP.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services have released a fact sheet detailing the COVID-19 related treatments covered by Medicaid, which can be found here <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/03052020-medicaid-COVID-19-fact-sheet.pdf>.

CHIP Copayments

Copayments for office visits for those covered by CHIP for services provided from March 13, 2020 through April 30, 2020 have been waived.

Copayments are not required for covered services delivered via telemedicine or telehealth to those covered by CHIP.

Extra Medicine or Supplies

Medicaid recipients are advised to call their pharmacy and ask if they are able to get a 30-day supply of medication and inquire as to the availability of free home-delivery.

In-Home Care Backup Plans

You or your legally authorized representative should ask your in-home care provider, service coordinator, or case manager about what to do if your provider cannot come to work because they become sick. You or your legally authorized representative are advised to work with your in-home care provider, your service coordinator, or case manager to develop a backup plan if one is not in place or to update any existing backup plans. Make sure to keep a copy of the backup plan.

Provider agencies are required to have backup and emergency plans in place, which include plans for what to do if an in-home care provider cannot work because they become sick. Your provider agency, managed care organization, and service coordinator must support you in developing those plans.

If you use the Consumer Directed Services option, you or your legally authorized representative should work with your managed care organization and service coordinator or case manager to develop a backup plan if you do not have one. Financial Management Services Agencies can help you make Consumer Directed Services budget revisions as needed.

Face-to-Face Visits

Face-to-face service coordination visits have been suspended through the end of April 2020 for:

- STAR Health, STAR Kids, STAR+PLUS, STAR Managed Care Organizations, and Dual Demonstration Medicare-Medicaid Plans;
- Fee-for-service Medicaid 1915(c) waiver case managers and service coordinators for Community Living Assistance and Support Services, Texas Home Living, Deaf-Blind with Multiple Disabilities, and Home and Community-based Services;
- General Revenue service coordinators;
- Community First Choice service coordinators; and
- Pre-admission Screening and Resident Review habilitation coordinators.

During this suspension period, service coordinators and case managers may make contact via telephone to ensure client needs are being met. However, assessments and reassessments, such as the Screening and Assessment Instrument and Medical Necessity Level of Care, may not be completed over the phone at this time.

To ensure members do not experience a gap in services due to the temporary suspension of face-to-face service coordination visits for COVID-19, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission is extending enrollment in the Medically Dependent Children's Program and STAR+PLUS Home and Community Based Services for members with individual service plans expiring through April 2020. The extension applies to the member's Screening and Assessment Instrument, STAR+PLUS HCBS Medical Necessity Level of Care, and corresponding individual service plans.

Dual Demonstration, STAR+PLUS, STAR Health, and STAR Kids MCOs will extend enrollment for 90 days for members with individual service plans expiring through April 2020, assess the needs of these members within 90 days, and extend authorizations for waiver services for these members until the assessment occurs.

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission is also extending Intellectual Disability/Related Condition assessments and individual plans of care expiring through the end of April 2020 for individuals who are enrolled in the following programs:

- Community Living Assistance and Support;
- Deaf Blind with Multiple Disabilities;
- Home and Community-based Services Program; and
- Texas Home Living

School Health and Related Services

School Health and Related Services are provided to students with a disability to ensure individuals benefit from special education programs. If school is not in session and special education programs are not being provided, these services are not considered eligible for reimbursement under School Health and Related Services. Families are encouraged to work with their primary care provider and health plan to access needed services during this time.

Texas's 1135 Waiver

On March 25, 2020, Texas applied for what is known as an “1135 waiver,” which requests that the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services waive or modify various regulations related to certain government-provided healthcare programs, including Medicaid and CHIP.

In its waiver request, Texas made various requests intended to make it easier for members to maintain their coverage, increase the number of providers enrolled in Medicaid in the State of Texas, extend various deadlines related to appeals and fair hearings, and otherwise ease the burden of administering the Medicaid program during the COVID-19 outbreak.

On March 30, 2020, portions of this waiver request were approved. A copy of Texas's waiver request can be found at <https://hhs.texas.gov/sites/default/files/documents/services/health/coronavirus-COVID-19/section-1135-waiver-COVID-19.pdf>. The notification of partial approval can be found at <https://www.medicaid.gov/state-resource-center/disaster-response-toolkit/federal-disaster-resources/entry/54093>.

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RENEWING GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE, LICENSES AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

How has COVID-19 impacted vehicle registration, vehicle titling, and disabled parking placard requirements?

To reduce the need for in-person transactions, the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (“DMV”) has temporarily waived certain requirements for vehicle registration, vehicle titling, and disabled parking placards. The DMV also granted a temporary extension to obtain initial registration, renewal of registration, vehicle titling, and the renewal of a permanent disabled parking placard. There is also a temporary extension for an individual with an expired 30-day temporary permit to obtain another permit or Texas registration.

The temporary waiver applies to vehicle owners in all Texas counties. The temporary waiver is in effect until 60 days after the DMV notifies the public that normal vehicle registration, vehicle titling, and related services have resumed. The 60-day period will be the same for all counties. More information can be found at: <https://www.txdmv.gov/COVID-19>.

How does COVID-19 impact the renewal of driver licenses and identification cards?

The Texas Department of Public Safety has extended the expiration date of Texas identification cards, driver licenses, commercial driver licenses, and election identification certificates. This suspension will be in effect until 60 days after the Department of Public Safety provides further public notice that normal driver

license operations have resumed. More information can be found at https://www.dps.texas.gov/director_staff/media_and_communications/pr/2020/03.

What government benefits are available and how do I apply?

New applications for the SNAP, TANF, CHIP, and Medicaid are being accepted online. Visit YourTexasBenefits.com or log into the “Your Texas Benefits” mobile app. Although office locations will remain open, Texans are encouraged to apply online or through the mobile app. More information can be found at <https://hhs.texas.gov/about-hhs/communications-events/news/2020/03/hhs-encourages-texans-apply-online-benefits>.

How do I renew my current SNAP and/or Medicaid benefits?

Current SNAP and Medicaid recipients will have their benefits renewed automatically. No further action is necessary, and recipients will be notified by mail when it is time for them to renew their benefits. More information can be found at <https://www.yourtexasbenefits.com/Learn/Home>.

How do I renew government benefits other than SNAP and Medicaid?

Texas Health and Human Services is encouraging Texans to submit benefit applications and other paperwork online at <https://yourtexasbenefits.com/> or via the “Your Texas Benefits” mobile app. Through the website or the mobile app, Texans can:

- Create a new account;
- Find their username on existing account;
- Upload files;
- Update their phone number; and
- Report changes.

How can I stay updated?

As the COVID-19 response develops, new and updated information may be obtained by calling the Texas hotline at 211. The hotline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

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TANF/SNAP benefits

TEXAS TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (“TANF”)

What is TANF?

The TANF program is a support service for Texas families that provides monthly cash payments and medical assistance to dependent children in need and the parents or relatives with whom they live.

Eligible households receive monthly cash and Medicaid benefits.

What Benefits are available?

Monthly cash payments to help pay for food, clothing, housing, utilities, furniture, transportation, phone, laundry, supplies for the home, medical supplies not paid for by Medicaid, and other basic needs.

How much cash can I get per month through TANF?

The chart below provides benefits based on the number of children and parents/caretakers in the household:

Family size	Child-only cases	Home with 1 parent or 1 caretaker	Home with 2 parents or 2 caretakers
1	\$104	\$126	-----
2	\$149	\$262	\$200
3	\$209	\$303	\$332
4	\$249	\$364	\$372
5	\$320	\$404	\$432

*For each additional person, add \$70.

Do I qualify?

To qualify for TANF, you must be:

- A resident of Texas;
- Pregnant or responsible for a child (or multiple children) under 19 years of age;
- A U.S. national, citizen, legal alien, or permanent resident; and
- Be under-employed (working for very low wages), unemployed, or about to become unemployed.
- Here is a guide for the maximum monthly income to qualify for TANF benefits:

Family size	Child-only cases	Home with 1 parent or 1 caretaker	Home with 2 parents or 2 caretakers
1	\$64	\$78	-----
2	\$92	\$163	\$125
3	\$130	\$188	\$206
4	\$154	\$226	\$231
5	\$198	\$251	\$268

* For each additional person, add \$43.

Families also can receive a one-time payment of TANF benefits for a family crisis, such as losing a job, losing a home, or a family emergency (such as a family member suffering from COVID-19).

To determine eligibility, visit
https://www.benefits.gov/benefit/1679#Eligibility_Checker.

I am a grandparent caring for a child who receives TANF benefits, do I qualify to receive benefits?

Yes. These are the general monthly income limits for grandparents seeking TANF benefits:

Family size	Monthly income limit
1	\$2,127
2	\$2,904
3	\$3,620
4	\$4,367
5	\$5,114
For each additional person, add:	\$747

Where do I apply for TANF benefits?

Apply online at <https://www.yourtexasbenefits.com/Learn/Home> or over the phone by dialing 211 (option 6).

What information will I need when applying?

Be ready to answer questions about everyone applying, such as:

- Social Security number and birth date;
- Citizenship or immigration status;
- Money from jobs and other sources;
- The value of cars and other property; and
- Costs you pay for bills.

Are there rules if I receive TANF benefits?

Yes. Parents or caretakers receiving TANF benefits must agree to:

- Train for a job or look for work;
- Follow child support rules;
- Not quit a job;
- Not abuse alcohol or drugs;
- Take parental skills classes;

- Get vaccines for their child; and
- Make sure their child is going to school.

TEXAS SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (“SNAP”)

What is SNAP?

The SNAP program is a support service that helps people buy the food they need for good health.

How does it work?

- SNAP food benefits are put on a Lone Star Card and can be used just like a debit card at any store that accepts SNAP.
- If you apply and are eligible for SNAP benefits, you will receive a Lone Star Card from your local Health and Human Services Commission benefit office or by mail.

Do I qualify?

To qualify for SNAP benefits, you must follow the work rules listed below and have monthly income lower than the following amounts:

Family size	Monthly amount of income allowed
1	\$1,718
2	\$2,326
3	\$2,933
4	\$3,541
5	\$4,149
For each additional person, add:	\$608

Adults ages 18 to 49, with no children in the home, can get SNAP for only 3 months in a 3-year period. However, the benefit period may be longer if you work at least 20 hours a week or are in a job or training program.

What are the work rules that I have to follow if I receive SNAP benefits?

Recipients of SNAP benefits who are between the ages of 16 and 59 must look for a job or be in an approved work program. If you already have a job, you can't quit without a good reason.

Some adults might not have to work to get benefits, such as those who have a disability or are pregnant.

How much can I receive in SNAP benefits?

Eligible recipients of SNAP benefits can receive monthly benefits based on the following:

Family size	Monthly SNAP amount
1	\$194
2	\$355
3	\$509
4	\$646
5	\$768
For each additional person, add:	\$146

Can I use SNAP benefits to buy anything?

No. SNAP benefits cannot be used to:

- Buy tobacco;
- Buy alcoholic drinks;
- Buy things you cannot eat or drink; or
- Pay for food bills you owe.

Where do I apply for SNAP benefits?

Apply online at <https://www.yourtexasbenefits.com/Learn/Home> or over the phone by dialing 211 (option 6).

I'm already a recipient of SNAP benefits, do I need to renew?

No. Currently, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, SNAP and Medicaid recipients will have their benefits renewed automatically. Additionally, recipients will be notified by mail when it is time for them to renew their benefits. For more information, visit <https://www.yourtexasbenefits.com/Learn/Home>.

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UTILITY ASSISTANCE

Texas - Austin

Will my utility services be disconnected if I am unable to pay?

The City of Austin has suspended utility shutoffs for nonpayment and is providing courtesy reconnections. If your utilities have been disconnected, you should call the Customer Care Contact Center at (512) 494-9400 to get reconnected. The press release is available at <https://austinenenergy.com/ae/about/news/news-releases/2020/city-of-austin-suspends-utility-disconnects-amid-COVID-19>.

Additionally, the following companies have temporarily suspended natural gas service disconnections due to nonpayment:

- CenterPoint Energy
- Atmos Energy
- Texas Gas Services

For additional updates related to COVID-19, visit <https://austinenergy.com/ae/about/news/COVID-19-updates>.

Can I get help paying my utilities?

Austin Energy, which manages customer care and billing for all City of Austin utilities, offers several programs to help customers facing temporary and long-term financial difficulties and serious medical problems. The following Customer Assistance Programs are available to eligible customers:

- **Payment Arrangements:** Eligible customers can be placed on a deferred payment plan to ensure that they receive uninterrupted utility services as they work with their utility representative to develop a long-term plan that meets their financial needs.

To check eligibility, visit <https://austinenergy.com/ae/residential/your-bill/bill-payment-options/payment-arrangement/payment-arrangement>.

If you have questions or would like to set up a payment arrangement, either call Customer Care at (512) 494-9400 or email Residential Customer Care at customercare@coautilities.com.

- **Utility Bill Discounts:** Austin Energy provides waivers for electric and water customer charges and discounts on electrical and water volume usage charges.

Customers on low or fixed incomes who participate in certain state, federal, or local assistance programs, such as Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (“SNAP”), and Children’s Health Insurance Program (“CHIP”), may qualify. Customers may also be eligible if their household income is less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.

For more information, or to print an application, visit <https://austinenergy.com/ae/residential/your-bill/customer-assistance-programs/cap-discounts/>.

For eligibility questions, or to request a form by mail, call (855) 319-6630.

- **Financial Support Plus 1:** Austin Energy provides emergency financial aid to customers who are temporarily unable to pay their utility bill due to unexpected emergencies.

To apply, contact one of the social service agencies listed on the Financial Support Plus 1 website at <https://austinenergy.com/ae/residential/your-bill/customer-assistance-programs/financial-support-plus1/>.

- **Services for the Medically Vulnerable:** If someone in your household has a long-term disease, ailment, or critical illness, you may be eligible to join the City of Austin's registry of medically vulnerable customers. Eligible customers receive additional time to pay bills and personal case management from the City of Austin.

To check eligibility requirements, visit

<https://austinenergy.com/ae/residential/your-bill/customer-assistance-programs/services-for-medically-vulnerable>.

Once a licensed physician verifies eligibility, you may join the registry by calling Customer Care at (512) 494-9400. Please have ready the name and number of your physician and the type of medical equipment in your household.

For more information, visit <https://austinenergy.com/ae/residential/your-bill/customer-assistance-programs>.

How do I make my utility payments?

Both City of Austin walk-in utility payments centers are closed as of March 18, 2020.

Customers are encouraged to make City of Austin utility payments online at www.coautilities.com and to call Customer Care at (512) 494-9400 for service needs. Additional payment options include the following:

- Mailing a money order or check to P.O. Box 2267, Austin, Texas 78783-2267;
- Paying at authorized locations, including most Austin H-E-B, Fiesta Mart, and Randall's stores; or
- Using an authorized payment drop box location.

For a list of authorized pay stations and available drop boxes, visit

<https://austinenergy.com/ae/commercial/your-bill/bill-payment-options/payment-locations>.

Who do I contact if I have a problem with my utility services?

- **Austin Energy:** Residential and commercial customers can contact the Customer Care Center at (512) 494-9400 to make payment arrangements, determine eligibility for Customer Assistance Programs, to start, stop, or reconnect services, or ask any service-related questions.
- **Texas Gas Services:** Customers in need of assistance can call (800) 700-2443 for self-service or to speak to a representative. For updates related to COVID-19, please visit <https://www.texasgasservice.com/coronavirus>.
- **CenterPoint Energy:** Natural gas customers who would like to discuss payment options should call (800) 752-8036. Customers may also request assistance and request a payment arrangement or extension online at <https://www.centerpointenergy.com>.
- **Atmos Energy:** Customers with any questions are encouraged to call (888) 286-6700. Atmos Energy also offers help paying bills and budget billing programs. For updates related to COVID-19, please visit <https://www.atmosenergy.com/safety/COVID-19>.

Texas - Dallas

Has the government taken steps to offer utility assistance in Dallas?

Yes. The Public Utility Commission of Texas has enacted measures intended to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 hardships on power, water, and sewer customers statewide. On March 26, 2020, the Commission issued an Order Related to COVID-19 Electricity Relief Program, which “authorize[d] a customer-assistance program for certain residential customers of electric service in areas of the state open to customer choice.” A copy of the order is available at https://interchange.puc.texas.gov/Documents/50664_107_1057678.PDF.

Can residential electric providers disconnect your service due to nonpayment?

No. The COVID-19 Electricity Relief Program “creates a temporary exemption from disconnections for nonpayment for eligible residential customers in areas open to customer choice,” which includes Dallas. See <https://www.texastribune.org/2020/03/26/texas-bans-utility-shut-offs-during-coronavirus-outbreak/>. Further, the Public Utility Commission of Texas will require retail electric providers “to offer deferred payment plans to customers who have experienced financial hardship due to the state of disaster.” A customer who has entered into a deferred payment plan, however, may be unable to buy electricity from another retail electric provider until their debt has been paid. https://interchange.puc.texas.gov/Documents/50664_107_1057678.PDF

How do residential customers sign up for relief?

The customer must contact the Low-Income List Administrator (“LILA”). “The residential customer must provide LILA an attestation of unemployment (to be followed by documentation of unemployment within 30 days) and sufficient information to identify the customer’s electric service account (e.g., service address, account number, and telephone number).”

The LILA will then determine which customers are eligible for the COVID-19 Electricity Relief Program, and retail electric providers will stop submitting orders to disconnect services for those customers. <https://www.texastribune.org/2020/03/26/texas-bans-utility-shut-offs-during-coronavirus-outbreak/>

What happens after you inform your electricity provider that you are unable to pay a bill?

When a customer informs their electricity provider of “an inability to pay a bill, or to make a deferred payment plan installment, the REP will inform the customer of the COVID-19 Electricity Relief Program and will provide instructions for the customer to contact the [LILA] to self-enroll.” Moreover, once the COVID-19 Electricity Relief Program is implemented, “[t]he moratorium on disconnections for nonpayment currently implemented by the transmission and distribution utilities will end.” The electricity provider will be permitted to collect the remaining balance from its customers after the COVID-19 Electricity Relief Program ceases.

How long will this relief last?

The COVID-19 Electricity Relief Program is currently set to end on September 26, 2020; however, it may be extended if the Public Utility Commission of Texas determines that the need for the program continues to exist. Additionally, the

Commission has recognized that the current state of disaster continues to bring new challenges that may require modifications to the program.

What is not included in the COVID-19 Electricity Relief Program?

The program does not include commercial services and it does not require electricity providers to reconnect customers whose services were cut off prior to the COVID-19 crisis. <https://www.texastribune.org/2020/03/26/texas-bans-utility-shut-offs-during-coronavirus-outbreak/>

Can water, sewer, and natural gas utilities charge late fees or disconnect customers for nonpayment during this emergency?

The Public Utility Commission of Texas has announced that “Texas water and sewer utilities and integrated electric utilities outside of the [Electric Reliability Council of Texas] market . . . whose rates are set by the [Commission], may not charge late fees or disconnect customers for nonpayment during the emergency.” <https://www.puc.texas.gov/agency/resources/pubs/news/2020/PUCTX-MR-PR-COVID19-OM-FIN.pdf>. The Commission’s announcements, however, do not impact natural gas services, which are regulated by the Railroad Commission of Texas. <https://www.dallasnews.com/business/2020/03/26/texas-halts-water-and-power-disconnects-amid-wave-of-layoffs/>

What steps have energy and telecommunications companies announced to assist the public during the COVID-19 crisis?

Ambit Energy: Ambit is assisting those who may have difficulty paying bills by:

- Waiving late payment fees;
- Extending payment due dates, with no partial payment required; and
- Reducing monthly payments by allowing customers to pay their balances over five equal installments.

If you need payment assistance, contact Ambit at (817) 282-6248.

AT&T: At least until May 12, 2020, AT&T will:

- Not terminate the service of any wireless, home phone, or broadband residential or small business customer because of their inability to pay their bill due to disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Waive any late payment fees that any wireless, home phone, or broadband residential or small business customer may incur because of economic hardship related to the COVID-19 pandemic; and
- Waive domestic wireless plan overage charges for data, voice, or text for residential or small business wireless customers incurred because of economic hardship related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

If you find yourself in financial trouble and unable to pay your bill, contact AT&T at (800) 288-2020 or dial 611 from your AT&T device for wireless. For the time being, all AT&T consumer home internet wireline and fixed wireless internet customers may use unlimited internet data.

Additionally, AT&T will continue to offer internet access for qualifying limited income households at \$10 a month through the Access from AT&T program.

AT&T has expanded eligibility to the Access from AT&T program to households participating in the National School Lunch Program and Head Start. New Access from AT&T program customers are currently eligible for two months of free service.

Atmos Energy: According to the City of Dallas, Atmos Energy's Sharing the Warmth program aids customers who have been financially impacted by COVID-19. To apply for the program, customers should call (888) 286-6700 or visit <https://www.atmosenergy.com/customer-service/get-help-paying-your-bill>.

Charter Communications: At least until May 12, 2020, Charter Communications will:

- Offer free Spectrum broadband and Wi-Fi access at any service level up to 100 Mbps for 60 days to households with teachers or K-12 and/or college students who do not already have a Spectrum broadband subscription. To enroll, call (844) 488-8395. Installation fees will be waived for new student households;
- Offer Spectrum Internet Assist, a high-speed broadband program, to eligible low-income households, delivering speeds of 30 Mbps;
- Open its Wi-Fi hotspots across its footprint for public use; and
- Not cap data or impose any hidden fees.

Comcast: At least until May 12, 2020, Comcast will:

- Open access to its Xfinity Wi-Fi hotspots that are located in businesses and outdoor locations across the country to anyone who needs them for free, including to non-Xfinity internet subscribers. For a map of Xfinity Wi-Fi hotspots, visit <https://www.xfinity.com/mobile/network/map>. Once at a hotspot, consumers should select the "xfinitywifi" network name in the list of available hotspots and then launch a browser;
- Provide unlimited data plans to all of its customers for a 60-day period at no additional charge; and
- Not disconnect internet services or assess a late fee for nonpayment.

Although Comcast will not disconnect your internet service or assess a late fee for nonpayment, be sure to contact customer service to let them know if you cannot pay your bills during the COVID-19 pandemic. Flexible payment plans may be available.

For more information regarding Comcast's response to COVID-19, please visit <https://www.xfinity.com/prepare>.

Dallas Water Utility: Until further notice, Dallas Water Utility has suspended all water disconnections and late fees, effective March 16, 2020. If you have questions regarding making a payment or if you need to make payment arrangements, please call (214) 651-1441

Discount Power: Payment extensions and/or deferred payment plans are available. If you're seriously ill, you may qualify for other options. You can enroll online or by calling Solix at (866) 454-8387. For additional details and online enrollment, please visit https://www.discountpowertx.com/en_US/Page/coronavirus.jsp.

Green Mountain Energy: Payment extensions and/or deferred payment plans are available. If you're seriously ill, you may qualify for other options. You can enroll online or by calling Solix at (866) 454-8387. For additional details and online enrollment, please visit <https://www.greenmountainenergy.com/2020/03/coronavirus-and-our-customers>.

- If requesting a payment extension, you must call prior to the disconnection notice due date to request the extension. A payment extension allows extra time beyond your original due date to pay your balance without fear of disconnection. However, you may be assessed a late fee, a disconnection notice fee (if you received a disconnection notice) and a disconnect recovery fee.
- For those looking to sign up for a deferred payment plan, you must call prior to the disconnection notice due date written in your notice in order to be eligible. A deferred payment plan allows you to pay the balance you owe in installments along with your regular monthly bill. On a deferred payment plan, you are typically expected to pay a percentage of what you owe up front. You will pay the rest in installments along with your next few current monthly bills (invoices). Additionally, if you agree to a deferred payment plan, you will not be able to switch to another electricity provider until your deferred balance is paid in full. Amounts you owe for enrollment deposits, final bills and write-off amounts may not be included.
- Updates related to COVID-19 are available at <https://www.greenmountainenergy.com/2020/03/coronavirus-and-our-customers>.

Fort Worth Water Department: According to spokeswoman Mary Gugliuzza, the Department is temporarily suspending disconnections due to nonpayment. This applies to residential, commercial, and industrial accounts. For more information, call (817) 392-4477.

Reliant Energy: Reliant is supporting customers who are facing hardships associated with COVID-19 by:

- Providing payment extensions and waiving late fees;
- Assisting customers with deferred payment plans; and
- Offering bill payment assistance through Reliant's CARE program.

Additionally, Reliant is pausing payment-related disconnects for residential and small commercial customers. If you have questions or concerns, you can reach Reliant by visiting <https://www.reliant.com/en/residential/customer-care/contact-us/index.jsp>, downloading the Reliant app, or calling (866) 735-4268.

Stream: Payment extensions and/or deferred payment plans are available. If you're seriously ill, you may qualify for other options. You can enroll online or by calling Solix at (866) 454-8387. For additional details and online enrollment, please visit <https://mystream.com/en/blog/Coronavirus-and-Stream>. The company itself has said:

We are keeping a close eye on the coronavirus (COVID-19) situation and working to help any customers who have been impacted. Contact us directly and our Customer Support Agents can see if you qualify for a payment extension or deferred payment plan.

If requesting a payment extension, you must call us before the disconnection notice due date to request the extension. A payment extension allows you extra time beyond your original due date to pay your balance without fear of disconnection. However, you may be assessed a late fee, a disconnection notice fee (if you received a disconnection notice) and a disconnect recovery fee.

For those looking to sign up on a deferred payment plan, you must call us before the disconnection notice due date written in your notice in order to be eligible. A deferred payment plan allows you to pay the balance you owe in installments along with your regular monthly bill. On a deferred payment plan, you are typically expected to pay a percentage of what you owe up front. You will pay the rest in installments along with your next few current monthly bills (invoices).

If you agree to a deferred payment plan, you will not be able to switch to another electricity provider until your deferred balance is paid in full. Amounts you owe for enrollment deposits, final bills and write-off amounts may not be included.

Additionally, if you're seriously ill, you may qualify for other options.

TriEagle Energy: According to the City of Dallas, due to the COVID-19 crisis, TriEagle Energy will waive late fees, extend payment due dates with no down payment required, reduce down payments, and defer balances over five equal installments.

TXU Energy: If you or someone you know needs bill payment assistance, additional support is available through TXU Energy Aid. Dial 211 or visit <https://www.211texas.org/> and search "electricity bill assistance" to find programs in your area.

Verizon: At least until May 13, 2020, if you are experiencing hardship because of COVID-19 and cannot pay your bill in full, Verizon will not charge you a late fee or terminate your service. Additionally, Verizon is offering free international long-distance calling to countries identified by the CDC as level 3 impacted by COVID-19. Verizon also is adding 15 GB of data across nearly all of its plans, to be used between March 25, 2020 and April 30, 2020. To be eligible, you must be on a qualifying postpaid (unlimited or shared), Jetpack, or prepaid plan.

XOOM Energy: If you have been financially impacted by COVID-19, contact XOOM Energy directly to learn about payment extensions and deferred payment plan options by phone at (888) 997-8979 or online at <https://xoomenergy.com/en/contact-us>. For additional details, please visit <https://xoomenergy.com/en/my-account>.

Texas - Houston

Can I seek help paying for utility bills?

Yes. You can seek assistance with respect to your utility bills from three places: (1) your utility provider; (2) a charity; or (3) the government.

Utility Provider

- Most utility companies provide payment assistance and/or payment plans for bills in certain situations. Such situations include customers who are experiencing temporary financial difficulties, including unexpected

unemployment, sudden illness, or an emergency or personal crisis. For more information, visit

https://www.needhelppayingbills.com/html/energy_assistance_program.html.

- Contact your utility company immediately after you know you will not be able to pay your bill, not after the service has been disconnected. This link provides descriptions of the assistance from the main utility companies in Texas and contact information for those companies:

https://www.needhelppayingbills.com/html/texas_utility_and_cooling_assi.ht

Charity

- Charities may provide assistance and/or referrals to other programs.
- This link lists the Texas charities that can provide aid or referrals:
https://www.needhelppayingbills.com/html/texas_charities_organizations_.ht
- This links lists Harris County specific charities that can provide aid or referrals: <http://hchatexas.org/wp-content/uploads/Emergency-Assistance-List-04-30-14.pdf>.

Government

- The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (“LIHEAP”) helps families with their energy costs. More information is available at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ocs/programs/liheap>.
- In Texas, LIHEAP is administered under the Comprehensive Energy Assistance Program (“CEAP”), which funds local organizations. To apply, you must submit an application with your local organization, which may be found at <https://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/texans.htm>.
- For specific information on CEAP, please visit <https://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/community-affairs/ceap/>.
- The amount of help or benefits you can receive from the government is usually determined by your household size, income, your fuel type, and location. There are two different types of assistance available: cash grants (on-going help); and crisis grants (emergency grant after receiving a disconnect notice).
- Under CEAP, the Houston organizations that provide utility bill assistance are:

BakerRipley

- Contact Information:
- UtilityAssistance@BakerRipley.org
- <https://www.bakerripley.org/services/utility-assistance-program>
- (713) 590-2327
- 3838 Aberdeen Way, Houston, Texas 77025
- Eligibility Requirements:
- Must be a resident of Harris County;
- Must meet the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Income Guidelines;
- Must show proof of identity for all household members – current/valid Texas Driver’s License, Texas ID, U.S. Passport, U.S. Military ID or U.S. Permanent Resident Card;

- Must provide proof of Citizenship or legal residency for all household members – U.S. Passport, U.S. Birth Certificate, U.S. Permanent Resident Card;
- Must provide proof of income for the past 30 days for all household members 18 years of age and older – such as employer gross wages, Social Security, Unemployment, SNAP, TANF, Child Support, Adoption Subsidies, Food Stamp Award Letter, Retirement, V.A. Disability, etc.;
- Must provide a copy of electric bill; and
- Must provide a copy of current gas bill (if applicable).

Galveston County Community Action Council, Inc

- Contact Information:
- robin.henry@gccac.org
- (409) 765-7878
- 4700 Broadway, Galveston, Texas 77550

Texas Information and Referral Network (Dial 2-1-1)

- Contact Information:
- <https://www.211texas.org/>
- (877) 541-7905

Gulf Coast Community Services Association

- Contact information:
- <https://www.gccsa.org/emergency-assistance-2/>
- Eligibility Requirements:
- Must be a resident of Harris County;
- Must meet the federal income guidelines for poverty in accordance with their household number; and
- Participants must have a disconnect notice.

Helpful Resources:

- https://www.needhelppayingbills.com/html/need_help_with_electric_bills.htm

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VOTING RIGHTS/RESTRICTIONS

State primary runoff elections in Texas were scheduled for May 26, 2020. Are they postponed?

Yes. Governor Abbott delayed all runoff primary elections until July 14, 2020. Early voting will begin on July 6, 2020.

What about local elections that were scheduled for May 2, 2020?

Governor Abbott issued a proclamation allowing political subdivisions to postpone their local elections until November 3, 2020. The special election for Texas State Senate District 14 (in and around the Austin area), which is to fill the seat being vacated by Senator Kirk Watson, has been postponed to July 14, 2020.

If live in another state, where can I find information about elections in my state?

The following website from Ballotpedia is a good resource that includes a state-by-state breakdown of voting and election changes in response to COVID-19: [https://ballotpedia.org/Political_responses_to_the_coronavirus_\(COVID-19\)_pandemic_2020](https://ballotpedia.org/Political_responses_to_the_coronavirus_(COVID-19)_pandemic_2020).

back to top**APPENDIX AND SOURCES****General**

The New York Times is maintaining and updating a list of stay-at-home orders: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/coronavirus-stay-at-home-order.html>.

Stranded U.S. citizens in need of emergency assistance should contact the local embassy or consulate or the Overseas Citizens Service ((202) 501-4444). Please be aware of any updated embassy information: <https://www.state.gov/coronavirus/>.

If you're currently abroad, consider enrolling in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program: <https://step.state.gov/step/>.

Travelers should be aware of current restrictions and requirements issued by the CDC and DHS: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/from-other-countries.html>; see also <https://www.dhs.gov/publication/notices-arrival-restrictions-coronavirus>

- Check the appropriate embassy websites if you need to travel out of the country: .

Mental Health & Wellness

CDC guide to stress and coping with the COVID-19 outbreak: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html>.

Leadership strategies for business managers, educators, parents, and others: <https://www.apa.org/news/apa/2020/03/COVID-19-leadership>.

Daily strategies for self-care and awareness: <https://www.nami.org/getattachment/About-NAMI/NAMI-News/2020/NAMI-Updates-on-the-Coronavirus/COVID-19-Updated-Guide-1.pdf?lang=en-US>.

How to cope with social distancing and isolation: <https://www.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/tips-social-distancing-quarantine-isolation-031620.pdf>.

Meditation guide: <https://www.headspace.com/meditation/meditation-for-beginners>.

Yale University's free course, "The Science of Well-Being": <https://www.coursera.org/learn/the-science-of-well-being>.

Information from the World Health Organization: https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_1.

Information from the CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

Information from NIH: <https://www.nih.gov/health-information/coronavirus>.

Disaster Distress Helpline: <https://www.samhsa.gov/disaster-preparedness>; call (800) 985-5990.

National Domestic Violence Hotline: <https://www.thehotline.org/>; call (800) 799-7233; TTY (800) 787-3224.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>; call (800) 273-TALK (8255).

NAMI HelpLine: <https://www.nami.org/>; call (800) 950-6264.

State Resources

All states

- Taxes. The Tax Foundation is tracking state legislative responses to COVID-19, including extensions of deadlines to file state tax returns and pay taxes: <https://taxfoundation.org/state-tax-coronavirus-covid19/#timeline>.

Texas Resources

Courts

- The Texas Supreme Court orders aimed at implementing social distancing and other practices recommended or required by governments and health experts: <https://www.txcourts.gov/supreme/news/texas-supreme-court-coronavirus-update/>.

Education

- Governor Abbott's executive order closing Texas schools: <https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-issues-executive-order-implements-statewide-essential-services-and-activities-protocols>

Evictions

- The Texas Supreme Court's emergency order staying eviction proceedings: <https://www.txcourts.gov/media/1446203/209045.pdf>
- Contact Houston Volunteer Lawyers for additional information: <https://www.makejusticehappen.org/node/569>.

Family Law

- For information related to the suspension of family law proceedings, see information from the Texas Supreme Court, available at: <https://www.txcourts.gov/supreme/news/texas-supreme-court-coronavirus-update/>.

Medicaid

- Texas Health and Human Services' COVID-19 information page:
<https://hhs.texas.gov/services/health/coronavirus-COVID-19>.
- Texas provides the following resources for information with regard to small businesses, unemployment, restaurant relief fund, payment programs for taxes, among others:
- <https://gov.texas.gov/business/page/coronavirus>;
- https://gov.texas.gov/uploads/files/business/FAQs_Small_Business_Coronavir and
- <https://comptroller.texas.gov/about/emergency/>.

Renewing Government Assistance, Licenses, and Other

- New and updated information can be found by calling the Texas hotline at 211.
- Information related to Texas benefits:
<https://www.yourtexasbenefits.com/Learn/Home>.
- Temporary suspension of Texas vehicle registration renewals:
<https://www.txdmv.gov/COVID-19>.
- Temporary suspension of Texas driver licenses and identification card renewals:
https://www.dps.texas.gov/director_staff/media_and_communications/pr/2020c

Stay-at-Home Orders

- The New York Times' list of stay-at-home orders:
<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/us/coronavirus-stay-at-home-order.html>.

TANF/SNAP Benefits

- Learn more: <https://www.yourtexasbenefits.com/Learn/Home>.
- Check eligibility: https://www.benefits.gov/benefit/1679#Eligibility_Checker.
- Apply online: <https://www.yourtexasbenefits.com/Learn/Home> or dial 211 (option 6).

Voting Rights/Restrictions

- Delay of all runoff primary elections:
<https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-postpones-runoff-primary-election-in-response-to-COVID-19>.
- Postponing of local elections: <https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-issues-proclamation-allowing-for-postponement-of-local-elections-set-for-may-2nd>.
- Postponing the special election for Texas State Senate District 14:
<https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-issues-proclamation-postponing-special-election-for-texas-senate-district-14>.

Texas Resources -- Austin

Assistance for the Homeless

- Available service organizations, shelters, bathrooms, hand-washing stations, and food access: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/accessing-resources-during-COVID-19>.
- The City of Austin's list of resource for service providers: <http://www.austintexas.gov/department/COVID-19-resources-providers>.

Information for people experiencing homelessness:
www.austintexas.gov/homelessness.

Business Resources

- Information regarding resources available to Austin businesses is available under "Workforce & Business Resources" at <http://austintexas.gov/article/COVID-19-community-resources#>.
- Information regarding resources available to Texas businesses: <https://gov.texas.gov/business/page/coronavirus>.

Evictions

- Travis County has stayed eviction proceedings: <https://www.traviscountytx.gov/images/docs/jp-COVID-19-standing-order.pdf>; see also <https://www.traviscountytx.gov/news/2020/1945-novel-coronavirus-COVID-19-information>.

Local Bar Association Information

- Information from the Austin Bar Association: <https://www.austinbar.org/for-the-public/legal-resources/updates-on-COVID-19/>.

Utility Assistance

- The City of Austin has suspended utility shutoffs for nonpayment and is providing courtesy reconnections. Customers can call (512) 494-9400 to get reconnected. See <https://austinenergy.com/ae/about/news/news-releases/2020/city-of-austin-suspends-utility-disconnects-amid-COVID-19>.
- Eligible Customers can be placed on a deferred payment plan. To check eligibility, visit <https://austinenergy.com/ae/residential/your-bill/bill-payment-options/payment-arrangement/payment-arrangement>. To set up a payment arrangement, call Customer Care at (512) 494-9400, or email Residential Customer Care at customer-care@coautilities.com.
- For information related to utility discount programs, or to print an application, visit <https://austinenergy.com/ae/residential/your-bill/customer-assistance-programs/cap-discounts/>. For eligibility questions, or to request a form by mail, call (855) 319-6630.

Texas Resources -- Dallas

Assistance for the Homeless

- Help is available from the following organizations:
- Austin Street Center: <https://www.austinstreet.org/>.
- The Bridge: <https://bridgenorthtexas.org/>.

- The Salvation Army: <https://www.salvationarmydfw.org/p/services/homeless>.
- Metrocare Services: <http://www.metrocareservices.org>.
- North Texas Behavioral Health Authority: www.ntbha.org.
- OurCalling: <https://www.ourcalling.org/>.

Business Resources

- Information regarding resources available to Dallas businesses: <https://dallascityhall.com/Pages/Coronavirus-Resources.aspx>.
- Information regarding resources available to Texas businesses: <https://gov.texas.gov/business/page/coronavirus>.

Evictions

- Dallas County has halted eviction proceedings: <https://www.dallascounty.org/COVID-19/judge-orders.php> for more information.

Local Bar Association Information

Information from the Dallas Bar Association:
<https://www.dallasbar.org/index.cfm?pg=COVIDGovtResources>.

Utility Assistance

- Information regarding utility deferments: <https://dallascityhall.com/Pages/Coronavirus-Resources.aspx>.
- Call the Dallas Water Utility at (214) 651-1441 if you have questions regarding making a payment or if you need to make payment arrangements.
- To apply for electricity relief under Atmos Energy's 'Sharing the Warmth program,' visit <https://www.atmosenergy.com/customer-service/get-help-paying-your-bill> or call (888) 286-6700.
- Information on assistance provided by Reliant: <https://news.reliant.com/press-releases/press-release-details/2020/Reliant-Helping-Customers-During-Coronavirus-Pandemic/default.aspx>. Customers can also call (866) 735-4268.
- Information provided by Stream: <https://mystream.com/en/blog/Coronavirus-and-Stream>.
- Information provided by TriEagle Energy: <https://www.trieagleenergy.com/TX/CustomerService/Faq.aspx>.
- Information provided by TXU Energy: <https://www.txu.com/help-center/COVID-19.aspx>.
- Information provided by XOOM Energy: <https://xoomenergy.com/en/my-account>.

Texas Resources -- Houston

Assistance for the Homeless

- Information from the Mayor's Office of Homeless Initiatives: <http://www.houstontx.gov/homeless/>.

Business Resources

- Information regarding resources available to Houston businesses: <https://www.houstontx.gov/obo/covid19-resources-small-businesses.html>.
- Information regarding resources available to Texas businesses: <https://gov.texas.gov/business/page/coronavirus>.

Evictions

- Harris County has halted evictions: <http://www.jp.hctx.net/evictions/> for more information.

Local Bar Association Information

- Information from the Houston Bar Association: <https://hba.org/index.cfm?pg=COVID-19-response>.

Utility Assistance

- Descriptions of the assistance from the main utility companies in Texas and contact information for those companies: https://www.needhelppayingbills.com/html/texas_utility_and_cooling_assi.ht
- Harris County charities that can provide aid or referrals: <http://hchatexas.org/wp-content/uploads/Emergency-Assistance-List-04-30-14.pdf>.
- Information from the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs: <https://www.tdhca.state.tx.us/texans.htm>.
- BakerRipley Utility Assistance program: <https://www.bakerripley.org/services/utility-assistance-program>.
- Information regarding assistance from the Galveston County Community Action Council, Inc. is available by email at robin.henry@gccac.org or by calling (409) 765-7878.
- Information regarding assistance from the Gulf Coast Community Services Association: <https://www.gccsa.org/emergency-assistance-2/>.

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