

# COVID-19 FEDERAL AGENCY ACTIONS & RESOURCES

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## Contacting Senator Paul for Assistance

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Senator Paul is ready to provide assistance to all Kentuckians in need of help navigating the federal response and ongoing community needs related to COVID-19. Please contact our state office at 270-782-8303 or visit our website at [www.paul.senate.gov](http://www.paul.senate.gov).

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## General Resources

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The Commonwealth of Kentucky's homepage for COVID-19 resources:

- <https://govstatus.egov.com/kycovid19>

Assistance with unemployment benefits:

- <https://www.usa.gov/unemployment>

Opportunities to volunteer and serve the community:

- <https://www.usa.gov/volunteer>

The White House and CDC's official COVID-19 website:

- <https://www.coronavirus.gov/>

The Official Guide to Government Information and Services:

- <https://www.usa.gov/coronavirus>

Be suspicious if you receive calls, emails, or other communications claiming to be from the Treasury Department and offering COVID-19 related grants or stimulus payments in exchange for personal information, or an advance fee, tax, or charge of any kind, including the purchase of gift cards, as these may be scammers.

- Contact [www.ic3.gov](http://www.ic3.gov) to report suspicious communications.
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## Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

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HHS is the lead agency responding to the public health challenges posed by COVID-19. They have assembled substantial COVID-19 resources and responses to FAQs here, via the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>)

- **Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR)** is developing [new medical treatments](#) and [warns about medicare, COVID-19 testing and treatment scams](#).
- 1-888-INFO-FDA is the **FDA Hotline**—operating 24 hours a day—for finding supplies for testing or diagnostic developments.
- 1-800-CDC-INFO is the public hotline for questions relating to anything CDC-related.

- Guidance for K-12 Schools and Childcare Programs: (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>)
- Guidance for healthcare facilities: (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/healthcare-facilities/index.html>)
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)** is studying the virus worldwide and helping communities respond locally. Check the CDC's [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) page](#) for news and guidance.
- **Centers for Medicare and Medicaid** has guidance for [Medicare recipients](#) and [Medicare providers](#).
- **Administration for Community Living** offers [information for older adults, and people with disabilities](#).
- **Food and Drug Administration** is [working with the medical industry to develop vaccines, drugs, and diagnostic tests](#). For healthcare professionals, they offer [FAQs about diagnostic testing](#).
- **National Institute on Drug Abuse** [advice for people with substance use disorders](#).
- **National Institutes of Health** are [researching COVID-19 treatments and a vaccine](#) and [posted updates on the grants process](#).
- Resources for higher risk populations: (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/index.html>)

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## Small Business Administration (SBA)

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- The U.S. Small Business Administration is offering designated states and territories low-interest federal disaster loans for working capital to small businesses suffering substantial economic injury as a result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19). Upon a request received from a state's or territory's Governor, SBA will issue under its own authority, as provided by the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act that was recently signed by the President, an Economic Injury Disaster Loan declaration.
- For specific SBA Loan information: <https://www.sba.gov/page/guidance-businesses-employers-plan-respond-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>
- Any such Economic Injury Disaster Loan assistance declaration issued by the SBA makes loans available to small businesses and private, non-profit organizations in designated areas of a state or territory to help alleviate economic injury caused by the Coronavirus (COVID-19).
- SBA's Office of Disaster Assistance will coordinate with the state's or territory's Governor to submit the request for Economic Injury Disaster Loan assistance.
- Once a declaration is made for designated areas within a state, the information on the application process for Economic Injury Disaster Loan assistance will be made available to all affected communities as well as updated on our website: [SBA.gov/disaster](https://www.sba.gov/disaster).
- SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loans offer up to \$2 million in assistance per small business and can provide vital economic support to small businesses to help overcome the temporary loss of revenue they are experiencing.
- These loans may be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills that can't be paid because of the disaster's impact. The interest rate is 3.75% for small businesses without credit available elsewhere; businesses with credit available elsewhere are not eligible. The interest rate for non-profits is 2.75%.
- SBA offers loans with long-term repayments in order to keep payments affordable, up to a maximum of 30 years. Terms are determined on a case-by-case basis, based upon each borrower's ability to repay.
- SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loans are just one piece of the expanded focus of the federal government's coordinated response, and the SBA is strongly committed to providing the most effective and customer-focused response possible.

- For additional information, please contact the SBA disaster assistance customer service center. Call 1-800-659-2955 (TTY: 1-800-877-8339) or e-mail [disastercustomerservice@sba.gov](mailto:disastercustomerservice@sba.gov)
- Visit [SBA.gov/disaster](https://www.sba.gov/disaster) for more information.

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## Department of Labor (DOL)

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Department of Labor has information for employers and workers on [preparing workplaces and responding to COVID-19 in the workplace](#).

- Resources from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration for employers and employees, including hazard recognition and workers' rights: <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/>
- Resources for employees and employers during public health emergencies: (<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic>)
- Background on the Administration's efforts on unemployment flexibility: (<https://www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/eta/eta20200312-0>)
- An FAQ page for how to apply for unemployment insurance:
- (<https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/unemployment-insurance>)
- Navigating worker's compensation during the COVID-19 pandemic:
- (<https://www.dol.gov/owcp/dfec/InfoFECACoverageCoronavirus.htm>)
- Background and information on DOL and the Department of Agriculture's partnership to identify labor needs among H-2A employers: (<https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2020/03/19/usda-and-dol-announce-information-sharing-assist-h-2a-employers>)

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## Department of Energy (DOE)

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- The Department of Energy (DOE)'s general website for coronavirus information: <https://www.energy.gov/coronavirus-hub>
- DOE has provided this resource to learn more about what DOE and its laboratories are doing to combat COVID-19. <https://www.energy.gov/articles/how-doe-and-our-labs-are-combating-covid-19>
- DOE, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), and the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) are working together to ensure the continued reliability of the U.S. energy grid. [https://www.energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2020/03/f72/COVID-19\\_Release\\_DOE\\_FERC\\_NERC\\_0320\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2020/03/f72/COVID-19_Release_DOE_FERC_NERC_0320_FINAL.pdf)

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## United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

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A comprehensive list of USDA actions and resources in response to COVID-19 can be found here (<https://www.usda.gov/coronavirus>). Answers to frequently asked questions related to food safety, access to food, pet safety, USDA loans, and USDA service centers can all be found on that website.

- **H-2A/Agriculture Labor:** On March 17, the Department of State announced they will be suspending routine immigrant and nonimmigrant visa services until further notice. A State Department Representative stated they will continue processing H-2A visas, but they will be prioritizing applicants that benefit from Interview Waiver provisions, such as returning workers. This information was reiterated by USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue, who noted a process for new enrollees is being worked out and the Department of Labor also needs to issue guidance, as DOL is the third agency involved in the operation of the H-2A program. Farmers with may send questions about H-2A to the USDA via this email

– [AgLabor@usda.gov](mailto:AgLabor@usda.gov). USDA has also created an H-2A resource page - <https://www.farmers.gov/manage/h2a>.

- **Farm Service Agency:** Farm Service Agency Kentucky Director, Brian Lacefield, stated FSA offices will remain open to serve producers in Kentucky. Producers are encouraged to call their local FSA office to make an appointment before coming for an in-person meeting.
- **Meal Deliveries for Rural School Students:** USDA announced it will be partnering with private vendors to provide food boxes to rural students. The food delivery system will prioritize students who do not currently have access to an approved meal distribution site under the Summer Food Service Program and who live in an area with an active outbreak of coronavirus. For more information about the program or if you are a vendor or you know of vendors who would like to partner with USDA to provide meals, please reference USDA's press release (<https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2020/03/17/usda-announces-feeding-program-partnership-response-covid-19>).
- **Farm Credit Administration:** FCA, an independent federal agency which oversees a network of government-backed lenders for the agriculture industry, has called on institutions to work with borrower whose operations are affected by COVID-19. FCA Board Chairman Glen Smith said lenders can extend the terms of loan repayments, restructure debt obligations, and ease some loan documentation terms for certain borrowers. <https://ww3.fca.gov/news/Lists/News%20Releases/Attachments/606/NR-20-04-03-17-20.pdf>
- **Livestock Haulers – Hours of Service Exemption:** The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, which is part of the Department of Transportation, has issued a temporary “hours of service” exemption to livestock haulers. The exemption will be effective until at least April 12. Drivers who desire to drive under this exemption are encourage to print out, read in its entirety, and keep a copy of the Expanded Emergency Declaration ([available here](#)) in their cab at all times. The Livestock Marketing Association received guidance from the Office of the Secretary of Transportation that all livestock movement fits these exemption definitions.

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## Department of Education (ED)

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The Department of Education (ED) has assembled a comprehensive list of information and resources for schools and school personnel, which can be found here (<https://www.ed.gov/coronavirus?src=feature>).

- **Serving Students with Disabilities and Protecting Students' Civil Rights:** ED released a webinar on ensuring accessibility for students with disabilities for schools utilizing online learning platforms in response to COVID-19. They also provide a fact sheet for educators and school administrators on how to protect students' civil rights as they take steps to keep students safe and secure. <https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/us-department-education-releases-webinar-fact-sheet-protecting-students-civil-rights-during-covid-19-response>
- ED has developed guidance specific to the needs of both elementary and secondary schools, as well as institutions of higher education.
- **Student Loans:** Federal Student Aid has issued COVID-19 information for students, borrowers, and parents. <https://studentaid.gov/announcements-events/coronavirus>
- **For the KIDS:** For parents and caregivers looking for ways to assist children with learning from home:
  - The **Smithsonian Institute** has multiple distance learning resources available for children of all ages: <https://learninglab.si.edu/distancelearning>
  - **America's Public Television Stations** also has nationwide resources, including games and videos: <https://apts.org/news/station-stories/public-media-education-resources-in-response-covid-19-pandemic>

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## Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

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The Environmental Protection Agency has assembled a list of resources, including a list of disinfectants, as well as drinking water and wastewater information. <https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus>

- To help mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 and contain its spread, the EPA is directing most of its employees across the country to telework.
- EPA's list of over disinfectant products to protect against the coronavirus can be found here (<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>)
- **NOTE:** The COVID-19 virus **has not** been detected in drinking-water supplies. Based on current evidence, the risk to water supplies is low. **Americans can continue to use and drink water from their tap as usual.** (<https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-drinking-water-and-wastewater>)

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## Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

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Homeland Security (DHS) is engaged in a Department-wide, layered response to help limit the spread of the pandemic, maintain heightened security at our international borders, airports and seaports, and is providing operational support to its federal partners as well as state, local, tribal and territorial governments throughout the country.

Some items of note for Kentuckians:

- The State Department is advising Americans to avoid all international travel: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/ea/travel-advisory-alert-global-level-4-health-advisory-issue.html>
- Acting Secretary Chad F. Wolf issues instruction supplementing a decision issued on January 31, 2020, directing all flights from specified countries be routed through designated U.S. airports where the government is focusing public health resources. For a list of arrival restrictions due to coronavirus, visit: <https://www.dhs.gov/publication/notices-arrival-restrictions-coronavirus>
- The personnel office for the federal government has directed agencies to "minimize face-to-face interactions": <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/M-20-16.pdf>. As a result, as of March 17, all Social Security offices have closed: <https://www.ssa.gov/agency/emergency/>
- DHS is enforcing broad travel restrictions, and more may soon be added. If you must travel, you also may be subject to a health screening. Know before you go – familiarize yourself with the Centers for Disease Control's resource page for travelers at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>.
- If you are currently visiting China, Iran, or Europe, or if you have visited China, Iran, or Europe at any point in the past two weeks, your travel will be affected by these restrictions and you will be asked to take certain other precautions. For additional information, visit: [https://www.dhs.gov/news/2020/03/17/fact-sheet-dhs-notice-arrival-restrictions-china-iran-and-certain-countries-europe?utm\\_source=hp\\_slideshow&utm\\_medium=web&utm\\_campaign=dhsgov](https://www.dhs.gov/news/2020/03/17/fact-sheet-dhs-notice-arrival-restrictions-china-iran-and-certain-countries-europe?utm_source=hp_slideshow&utm_medium=web&utm_campaign=dhsgov).
- The Federal Emergency Management Agency is the lead agency in charge of the federal government's response to the pandemic, and their coronavirus page is being frequently updated with news, fact sheets, frequently asked questions and information on donating and volunteering: <https://www.fema.gov/coronavirus>
- Some Transportation Security Administration field personnel have contracted the virus. TSA is publishing that information at: <https://www.tsa.gov/coronavirus>.
- If you have an immigration-related matter scheduled with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, your appointment may have been suspended. For more information, visit <https://www.uscis.gov/about-us/uscis-response-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>.

- DHS and the Federal Trade Commission are warning consumers to stay alert for online scams and other malicious cyber activity. You can view their guidelines for remaining secure on the Internet at: <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/features/coronavirus-scams-what-ftc-doing> and: <https://www.us-cert.gov/ncas/current-activity/2020/03/06/defending-against-covid-19-cyber-scams>.
- The U.S. Fire Administration has published some important guidance for first responders and law enforcement at: [https://www.usfa.fema.gov/current\\_events/coronavirus.html](https://www.usfa.fema.gov/current_events/coronavirus.html).

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## Department of the Interior (DOI)

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- National Park superintendents are empowered to modify park operations, including closing facilities and cancelling programs, to address the spread of the coronavirus.
- DOI Secretary David Bernhardt has suspended all entrance fees to all National Park Service areas that plan to remain open. The suspension will remain in place until further notice. <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1207/statmentonparkopscovid19.htm>
- The National Park Service (NPS) is taking extraordinary steps to implement the latest guidance from the White House, **Centers for Disease Control & Prevention** (CDC), and local and state authorities to promote social distancing. The NPS is modifying operations, until further notice, for facilities and programs that cannot adhere to this guidance. Where it is possible to adhere to this guidance, outdoor spaces will remain open to the public.
- Fish and Wildlife Services facilitates are currently open to the public.

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## Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

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The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has assembled its COVID-19 resources and responses to FAQs here (<https://www.hud.gov/coronavirus>)

- Interim guidance for homeless service providers to plan and respond to coronavirus disease 2019 (<https://files.hudexchange.info/resources/documents/Interim-Guidance-for-Homeless-Service-Providers-to-Plan-and-Respond-to-COVID-19.pdf>)
- COVID-19 FAQs for the Public Housing, Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) (including the Project-based Voucher Program (PBV)) and Native American Programs ([https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/PIH/documents/COVID19\\_FAQ\\_PIH\\_Final.pdf](https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/PIH/documents/COVID19_FAQ_PIH_Final.pdf))

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## Department of State (DOS)

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- A country-by-country breakdown of COVID-19 information and status: (<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/COVID-19-Country-Specific-Information.html>)
- FAQs for Americans returning from Europe: (<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/presidential-proclamation--travel-from-europe.html>)
- FAQs on the Global Travel Restriction for US Citizens: (<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/ea/travel-advisory-alert-global-level-4-health-advisory-issue.html>)

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## Department of Transportation (DOT)

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- The Department of Transportation is working to expedite delivery of grocery and medical supplies. For more information, visit: <https://www.transportation.gov/briefing-room/connections/how-dot-helping-truckers-expedite-delivery-groceries-and-medical-supplies>.
- Secretary Chao posted information on how the federal government is working to keep public transit safe. <https://www.transportation.gov/connections/making-public-transit-safer-during-covid-19-outbreak>.
- The Federal Transit Administration published information to help grantees and agencies prepare for COVID-19. <https://www.transit.dot.gov/coronavirus>