



# Minnesota's Children's Cabinet

We're committed to protecting the health, safety, and well-being of children. Below are resources to support you and your family during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Table of Contents

COVID-19 Guidance .....	2
Mental Health, Well- Being, and Resources for Special Health Needs.....	2, 3
COVID-19 Testing and Vaccine .....	3
Cash and Economic Assistance .....	3, 4
Health Care Coverage .....	4, 5
Housing .....	5, 6, 7
Child Care and Early Education, Youth Programs .....	7, 8
Food Resources.....	8, 9
Financial Supports for College Students.....	9
Business Supports.....	9, 10
Worker Supports, Safety and Health at the Workplace.....	10
Taxes.....	10, 11
Child Support.....	11, 12
Additional Family Supports .....	12
Make a Plan MN.....	12

## COVID-19 Guidance

For the latest information on COVID-19, please visit the [Minnesota Department of Health](#) website or call the MDH COVID-19 hotlines between 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. (interpreters available).

- **Health questions:** 651-201-3920 or 1-800-657-3903

Health information is available in [other languages](#), including [how to wash your hands](#).

## Mental Health, Well-Being, and Resources for Special Health Needs

It's important that everyone has access to the mental health care and well-being resources they need to stay healthy. State agencies are working together to ensure that mental health services are available to Minnesotans, including children, youth, and families, and connecting with private organizations to support those in need, including using telemedicine to replace clinic visits and other well-being supports to help families cope.

Visit the COVID-19 [Mental Health Supports page](#) to find information on hotlines, organizations, and other resources. Mental well-being supports available during the COVID-19 pandemic are available [on the Department of Health website](#). Mental health hotlines provide free support to assist Minnesotans experiencing mental distress. Resources are below:

- **Crisis Text Line:** The 24/7 emergency service is available if you or someone you know is experiencing a psychiatric or mental health crisis.
  - **Text MN to 741741**
- **County Crisis Contacts** – access a directory of mental health crisis phone numbers by county here:
  - [Adult Mental Health Crisis Response Numbers](#)
  - [Children Mental Health Crisis Response Numbers](#)
- **Minnesota Warmline:** Are you an adult needing support? Talk to a specialist who has firsthand experience living with a mental health condition.
  - Call 651-288-0400 or text "Support" to 85511
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:** The 24/7 lifeline provides support for those in distress, has prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and resources for professionals.
  - Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Disaster Distress Helpline:** Offers crisis counseling and support if you or a family member is experiencing emotional distress related to a disaster.
  - Call: 1-800-985-5990
  - **Peer Support Connection Warmlines:** Peer-to-peer telephone support that's safe and supportive. Open 5 p.m. to 9 a.m. Call or text: [1-844-739-6369](#)

Please also consider contacting the [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\) Minnesota](#) (1-888-NAMI-Helps/1-888-626-4435) or the [Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health](#) at (800-528-4511) to connect for help, to navigate the mental health system, for support and for resources.

In response to COVID-19, state agencies have developed and shared resources to support mental well-being as children and families adjust their daily lives to stop the spread of COVID-19. Some of the current resources include:

- [Supporting Mental Health Promotion during COVID-19 \(MDH\)](#)
- [Mental and Behavioral Health Resources During COVID-19 \(MDH\)](#)
- [Supporting people who have disabilities during COVID-19](#)

For parents or caregivers (especially those who have children with special health needs or different abilities) looking to talk to other parents for emotional support or one-on-one help in navigating resources, Minnesota has a number of organizations to help, including:

- **COVID Cares Stress Phone Support Service** is a resource for any Minnesotan experiencing stress. Call 833-HERE4MN (833-437-3466) for free telephone support from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. every day. The service is a collaboration with volunteers from the Minnesota Psychiatric Society, the Minnesota Psychological Association, the Minnesota Black Psychologists, and Mental Health Minnesota. The free service is also accessible at [FastTrackerMN.org](https://www.fasttrackermn.org), where searchers can also find psychiatric and mental health services availability and real-time Substance Use Disorder Treatment program openings.
- **Disability Hub MN** provides free statewide information, referral, and assistance service to help people with disabilities or chronic illnesses and their representatives connect to community services.
- **Family Voices of Minnesota** is a parent-run organization providing information, resources, and peer-to-peer support for families who have children with special health needs or disabilities.
- **PACER** is a resource for families of children with disabilities, including parent advocates and staff available to assist families at 952-838-9000 or [pacer@pacer.org](mailto:pacer@pacer.org).
- **The Fraser Hope Line** connects individuals to a mental health professional who can assist with issues relating to autism, mental health, or special needs at 612-446-HOPE (4673) or email: [fraserhopeline@fraser.org](mailto:fraserhopeline@fraser.org).

## COVID-19 Testing

Testing is free, safe, and simple. It helps protect Minnesota families from COVID-19 and slows the spread of the virus in our communities. [Find community testing site locations and more information.](#)

## COVID-19 Vaccine

Parents and families looking for information on the vaccine for children can visit: [mn.gov/vaxforkids/](https://mn.gov/vaxforkids/). If you or others are still in need of a vaccine:

- Ways to Find a Vaccine: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/findvax.pdf>.
- If you prefer, the MDH COVID-19 Public Hotline can be reached at 833-431-2053. It is open from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Saturdays.

If you are interested in learning more about the COVID-19 vaccine in MN, please visit: <https://mn.gov/vaccine/> for more information.

### Additional tools and resources:

- **Vaccine Communication Toolkit for Community Organizations:** [The COVID-19 Vaccine Communication Toolkit](#), available in Amharic, Arabic, Chinese, French, Hmong, Karen, Lao, Oromo, Russian, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese, is designed to help community and faith-based organizations educate communities about COVID-19 vaccine and combat misinformation about the COVID-19 vaccine.
- Vaccine FAQ: <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/vaxtruths.pdf>  
You can find one-pagers translated into a variety of languages [here](#).

## Cash and Economic Assistance

During this pandemic, some requirements for essential programs and services were waived or modified to allow Minnesotans to receive the support they need. However, the state's peacetime emergency has ended, resulting in nearly all of these waivers and modifications ending.

The federal Public Health Emergency (PHE) declaration is currently in place and some program modifications, such as continuous Medicaid coverage, are tied to that declaration.

The following resources are available if you, your family, or someone you know needs economic assistance:

- **Bridge to Benefits:** This [web-based screening tool](#) can help you identify if you're eligible for public support programs and tax credits and can help you get assistance with applying. Programs include SNAP, WIC, School Meal Programs, Minnesota Health Care Programs, Energy Assistance, Early Learning Scholarships, and Child Care Assistance.
- **MNBenefits:** [MNBenefits.org](#) is a new, mobile-friendly benefits application for Minnesotans. The tool allows families across the state to apply in under 20 minutes for Food Assistance (SNAP), Emergency Assistance, cash programs, Housing Supports (GRH), and Child Care Assistance.
- **Emergency Assistance:** Your household may be eligible for assistance to cover emergency needs, such as help paying rent or utility bills. Contact your [county or tribal human services agency](#) to learn about availability, eligibility, and how to apply.
- **Community Action Agencies:** [The MinnCAP website](#) gathers local, state, federal, and private resources that can help individuals and families with low incomes.
- **United Way 211 Resource Helpline:** [United Way 211](#) provides free and confidential information on health and human services. 211 is staffed 24/7 by trained Community Resource Specialists who assess needs and can provide you with referrals to the help that you seek. Call 2-1-1, text your zip code to 898-211, or visit the website to chat online with a Community Resource Specialist.
- **COVID-19 Funeral Assistance:** Under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, FEMA is providing financial assistance for COVID-19 related funeral expenses incurred after January 20, 2020. For more information about eligibility and application process, please refer to [this FEMA webpage](#).

**Unemployment Support:** If you lose your job or have your hours greatly reduced, you should apply for Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits. To get more information about Unemployment Insurance or to apply for benefits, visit [www.uimn.org](#). You can also apply by phone Monday - Friday, between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. by calling one of the following phone numbers:

- Twin Cities area: 651-296-3644
- Greater Minnesota: 1-877-898-9090
- TTY (for the hearing impaired): 1-866-814-1252

## Health Care Coverage

### State Programs

The State of Minnesota offers programs and resources that can help support you and your family's health during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**The American Rescue Plan includes several key health care provisions to the Affordable Care Act that will expand benefits available to Minnesotans only through MNSure.** This includes an increase in the amount of tax credits MNSure enrollees will receive to help them pay for their health insurance premiums and an expansion of tax credits to middle-income Minnesotans whose household income was previously too high to qualify for financial help. For more information about these changes, please refer to [this FAQ](#).

The open enrollment period for 2022 private coverage through MNSure has ended, but [you may be eligible to enroll outside the annual open enrollment period](#):

- **[Income changed?](#)** You may have new coverage options through MNSure.
- **[Lost or losing health insurance?](#)** You may be eligible for a 60-day special enrollment period. This special enrollment period is available year-round to qualifying individuals.
- **[Other qualifying life events](#)**—like having a baby, turning 26, or moving—may qualify for a [special enrollment period](#).
- If you qualify for [Medical Assistance or MinnesotaCare](#) or are a member of a federally recognized [American Indian tribe](#), you can enroll any time of year.

To apply, visit the [MNSure website](#). The website can help you see if you qualify for low- or no-cost coverage or a tax credit.

Find out more about eligibility or access the information in [another language](#). **Insurance professionals are available to provide free MNSure assistance to help you successfully enroll.** Find assistance using [MNSure's Assister Directory](#).

**Coverage renewals for continued services for Minnesota Health Care Programs are suspended during the federal public health emergency declaration.** If you or your family members are on Medical Assistance, MinnesotaCare, or the Children's Health Insurance Program, the annual renewal process and closures are suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic. Enrollment in the programs is still available.

**COVID-19 testing and diagnosis is free for many uninsured Minnesotans and federal law requires health insurance plans to cover diagnostic and serological or antibody testing at no cost to patients.** If you're uninsured, when you go in for your test, ask your health care provider for the [application for free COVID-19 testing](#). The provider will submit the application to the state and will bill the state for payment if you meet eligibility requirements. For more information on COVID-19 testing or to find testing locations, including free community testing and locations, [visit mn.gov/covid19](#).

### Minnesota Health Plans

State leaders have partnered with local nonprofit health plans to remove barriers to care and coverage during the COVID-19 pandemic. Refer to your health plan for a better understanding of changes specific to your coverage.

Some of the changes for **commercially insured** members may include:

- **No costs for COVID-19 testing.** Minnesotans will not be charged for any costs related to COVID-19 testing.
- **No costs for hospitalizations related to COVID-19.** Most plans will not charge members if they need to be hospitalized due to COVID-19 and use an in-network hospital.
- **Access to telemedicine.** Most plans and providers have increased access to telemedicine services, allowing Minnesotans to get the care they need from the safety of their homes.

**Employer coverage may vary.** Many Minnesotans are covered through their employers, who offer their own benefit structure. The State of Minnesota cannot mandate these benefits to these plans but is encouraging employers to offer similar COVID-19 coverage.

### Other Health Resources

- [Children's Dental Services](#) provides exams and cleaning services to children under age 26 and pregnant women of all ages. They are offering emergency care to any patient regardless of age and insurance status, including special needs patients, at their clinics at 728 E. Hennepin Ave. and 636 Broadway St. NE in Minneapolis. Most health insurance, including Medical Assistance, is accepted and sliding fee and free services are offered for those without insurance. Appointments will be available Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. If you have an urgent need for dental care, please call 612-746-1530 or 866-543-6009.
- [The MN Low-Cost Health Care Directory](#) is a list of low-cost or free physical, mental and dental health care clinics. This directory is compiled by Children's Defense Fund-Minnesota to help uninsured and underinsured Minnesotans find access to affordable health care.

## Housing

The following resources and changes help ensure all Minnesotans have a safe place to stay:

- [Information and resources on Minnesota Housing](#). This site offers a variety of resources and information that can help renters, homeowners, landlords, and lenders. This includes FAQs and information in multiple languages.
- **RentHelpMN is no longer accepting applications.**
- Some Tribal governments received federal funding to operate their own rental assistance programs. If you are connected to services through a Tribe in Minnesota, contact them directly for more information.
- **Domestic abuse and violence hotline.** There are places of sanctuary open for anyone facing domestic abuse, sexual violence, or sex trafficking. Call Minnesota's statewide crisis hotline at 1-866-223-1111, a 24-hour statewide hotline for victims, or send a text to 612-399-9995. Learn more about [Cornerstone](#) and Day One Services [on their website](#).
- Minnesota Housing has also received federal resources for federal assistance for homeowners. Information about this program can be found on this [webpage](#).
- Housing Resources for People with Disabilities: [Disability HUB MN](#).
- Affordable housing search tool: [HousingLink](#).
- If you need emergency financial assistance, contact your [county](#) or [tribal human services office](#). Anyone in Minnesota can also contact [Minnesota Community Action Partnership](#). You can also [apply for FHPAP funds by contacting grant administrators](#).
- **Homeowners.** If you're a homeowner experiencing difficulty making on-time mortgage payments, there may be options for you. Information is available on the [Consumer Financial Protection Bureau's website](#).
  - **Foreclosure Prevention Counseling:** If you are a homeowner who is struggling to pay your mortgage, [find a certified foreclosure prevention counseling agency in your area](#).
  - [Minnesota Homeownership Center](#): For foreclosure prevention counseling or questions about forbearance (postponing mortgage payments)
  - [Resources for Homeowners](#)
  - **HomeHelpMN:** The HomeHelpMN program will begin accepting applications for assistance on Tuesday, May 17, 2022. The application period will be open through Friday, June 17, 2022 but homeowners should not wait to apply. HomeHelpMN provides assistance for homeowners who have fallen behind on their mortgage or other eligible housing-related expenses due to effects of the pandemic. Eligible homeowners may receive up to \$35,000 in assistance for past-due expenses. Funds for the program are limited, and need is expected to be high. If applications received during the application period exceed available funding, applicants may be put on a wait list. Homeowners should submit their applications as soon as possible after the application period begins. For more information about the program, including who is eligible to apply and what expenses are covered, visit [HomeHelpMN.org](#) or call 1-800-388-3226. The Call Center is open Monday –Saturday from 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. A Language Line is available to provide access for callers who prefer a language other than English.
  - **Supports for people experiencing homelessness.** If you are in need of a place to stay tonight because you do not have housing, [contact the county you live in](#) and they will direct you to a shelter. Contact your region's coordinated entry system contact for an assessment of your housing and service needs. Refer to [this flyer](#) for more information on the coordinated entry system.
  - **No-Cost ID for Youth Experiencing Homelessness.** Young people can get a no-cost standard Minnesota ID card if they are 24 years old or younger and experiencing homelessness. This is not a driver's license and does not give youth the authority to drive. There is no minimum age for obtaining a standard Minnesota ID and the card expires every four years on the cardholder's date of birth. To obtain the ID, youth can apply in person at a regional DVS exam station, deputy registrar or driver's license agent office that accepts first-time applications. The application includes having a photo taken. A parent or guardian does not need to sign the application. Office locations and service information are available on the [Department of Public Safety - Driver and Vehicle Services Division \(DPS-DVS\) website](#). Please contact DPS-DVS at 651-297-3298 or email [drivers.licenses@state.mn.us](mailto:drivers.licenses@state.mn.us) for more information.

## Utilities and Technology

Utility payments may also be eligible under emergency assistance funding above. Some telephone, internet, and cell providers are not disconnecting services or are offering special payment plans. Many providers are also opening

public hotspots and offering free or reduced cost Wi-Fi for students and low-income families, including [Comcast Internet Essentials](#) or CenturyLink LifeLine [program](#).

**Energy Assistance Program (EAP):** EAP provides free grants for your home energy costs, now including water costs, from \$300 to \$2,000, based on household size, income, and fuel cost:

- Households may apply now for the 2021-22 program year, which started October 1. **All applications must be postmarked or received by EAP on or before May 31, 2022.**
- Income eligibility guidelines have increased to 60% of the state median income so more households are eligible for help. This means, for example, a household of four with an income of around \$68,000 could be eligible.
- Renters and homeowners are eligible.
- Stimulus payments and pandemic assistance are not counted as income.
- Only the past three months of income, not assets such as your home, are considered in determining eligibility.
- In addition to the initial grant, more funds are available to help homeowners get their broken heating systems, such as furnace or boiler, repaired or replaced.

To apply, contact your local EAP service provider. Find your local EAP service provider by calling 1-800-657-3710 and entering your zip code, or on this [list of EAP service providers by county or Tribe](#). 28 local EAP service providers including Community Action Programs, counties, Tribal governments, and non-profits serve all areas of the state.

**Weatherization Assistance Program:** The Weatherization Assistance Program provides free home energy upgrades to homeowners and renters to save energy and make sure your home is a healthy and safe place to live. If your household qualifies, an energy auditor may evaluate your home to determine if energy upgrades are needed. The auditor will look for opportunities to make your home more energy efficient by sealing air leaks, adding insulation and checking if the furnace is working properly. To apply, complete a [joint application](#) for Energy Assistance and Weatherization Assistance and mail it to your local Energy Assistance Program service provider.

Find general EAP information at [Energy Assistance Program / Minnesota.gov \(mn.gov\)](#).

## Child Care & Youth Programs

The COVID-19 pandemic has made significant impacts to child care services, both to families and providers. Here are some resources that can help.

- **Families seeking child care.** If you are a family in need of child care, you can find resources at [mn.gov/childcare](#), search for available providers on the [Parent Aware website](#), or call the Child Care Aware Parent Hotline at 1-888-291-9811 for assistance.
- **Child care providers.** Providers should stay updated on public health guidance and information on [mn.gov/childcare](#). We encourage providers to regularly update their status and capacity using the [Update Tool](#) to help connect families with needed care.
- For health-related questions in child care settings, contact the Minnesota Department of Health at [health.schools.covid19@state.mn.us](#). All other questions related to child care and COVID-19 should be directed to [childrenscabinet.mmb@state.mn.us](#).
- [2021-22 Family Guide Early Education - 11/5/21](#): Many children participate in early care and education settings to support their social, emotional and development needs. It is critical that schools and child care, students, families and communities take appropriate precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and protect the health and safety of littlest Minnesotans—especially as many of them are still not able to get vaccinated.

## K-12 Schools Guidance

The Minnesota Departments of Health and Education released updated [COVID-19 guidance for K-12 schools](#) that prioritizes the health of students, teachers and staff as well as in-person learning. The guidance provides best practices,

informed by CDC's recommendations, to prevent the spread of COVID-19 during the 2021-2022 school year. While local schools are making their own decisions regarding health and safety policies, the recommendations in the guidance are designed to support local school boards and school leaders and help Minnesota schools and students get back in the classroom safely.

### Other Education Resources:

- [Minnesota Department of Education website](#) for families, educators and school district leaders looking for more information. This includes the [Due North Plan](#).
- Student Instruction COVID-19 Resources (mn.gov): [Trauma Resource Guide for Educators](#).

### Youth Programs

The Department of Health [COVID-19 Prevention, Guidance for Certified Child Care, Youth Programs, and Camps](#) outlines how to safely operate youth and student programming. The health and safety of children, students, teachers, staff, and families is the top priority. More resources are available on the [Minnesota Department of Health](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) websites.

Check out this [Youth Summer Employment Update](#) from Minnesota's Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) that includes information on the youth employment market and tips and resources for youth job seekers.

## Food Resources

If you, your family, or someone you know is struggling with access to food, here's a list of resources that can help:

- **P-EBT.** The Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) is a temporary food benefit available to Minnesota families with children who would have received free or reduced-price meals if schools were open. The State of Minnesota's P-EBT plan for school-age children was approved by the USDA for the 2021-2022 school year. In January 2022, a first round of P-EBT food benefits went out to families whose children attend schools that closed or shifted to remote learning for at least five consecutive days in September, October or November. P-EBT benefits issued in 2022 include data reported from schools on eligible families whose children have to stay home because of quarantines for individual students, groups of students, or entire classrooms.
  - For those who received a P-EBT card for the 2020-2021 school year, please do not throw it away, in case the program is able to add benefits to your existing card. Once benefits are approved, DHS will text or email families and issue the benefits on children's P-EBT cards. Families who didn't previously have a P-EBT card will get a new one. To replace an existing card for \$2, call EBT Edge at 888-997-2227.
  - **P-EBT Summer Benefits.** DHS and MDE are working closely with the U.S Department of Agriculture (USDA) to provide P-EBT summer benefits to eligible families. To receive these benefits, families are encouraged to request an Application for Educational Benefits from their child's school, fill it out and return it to their child's school by the end of the school year. Eligible families will be notified when benefits become available.
  - Visit the Minnesota Department of Human Services [P-EBT webpage](#) for the latest information and check out the [frequently asked questions](#).
- **Hunger Solutions Minnesota.** This program works to end hunger across the state. This includes a [map with locations where there are free or low-cost meals for kids, a map with food shelves, discount groceries, and other resources](#). The Food Helpline can also assess your situation and provide solutions. If you're struggling to afford or access food, call 1-888-711-1151, or [fill out this form](#).
- **SNAP Outreach Specialists.** If you need food assistance, specialists can give you more information about receiving the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). [Get one-on-one support from a SNAP specialist and learn how to enroll](#) and use the benefit to make informed decisions about buying healthy, nutritious food.
- **Food shelves.** If you have an immediate need for food or are experiencing economic hardships that prevent you from being able to purchase food, your local food shelf can help. Many food shelves provide drive through or

other alternative pick up options for your safety. You can find a food shelf near you [using this map](#) from Hunger Solutions Minnesota.

- **Fare for All** is a cooperative food purchasing program of The Food Group that offers affordable groceries and packages of produce and meat for up to 40% off retail prices. Fare for All has 38 locations throughout Minnesota where food packages are sold once per month.
- **EBT Online Shopping:** Minnesotans can now use their EBT food benefits online at [Amazon](#), [Aldi](#), Hugo's Family [Marketplace](#) and [Walmart](#). More details are on the [DHS website](#).
- **WIC Program.** WIC is a [public health nutrition program](#) for low-income women, infants, and children up to age five. WIC provides nutrition education and breastfeeding support, supplemental foods, and referrals to other programs and services in the community. To apply for WIC services, call the [WIC Program](#) in your community to schedule an appointment or [apply online](#). To find your local WIC program, you can call 1-800-942-4030.
- **[Summer Eats App to find Summer Feeding Sites.](#)** When school isn't in session during the summer, kids 18 and under can receive free meals at locations that include park and recreation sites, community centers, libraries and schools. No registration is required. The Summer Eats App from Hunger Impact Partners shows distance and directions to the nearest site for free meals at hundreds of Minnesota locations during summer school closures. Developed with the Minnesota Department of Education, the app provides each site's menu and hours.
- **Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP).** [CSFP](#) provides healthy and nutritious food each month to low-income eligible seniors over age 60. Foods are distributed at more than 200 sites around the state. To find a CSFP site near you and to apply for the program, search the [MDH website](#) or call 1-800-657-3942.
- **Infant Formula Shortage.** Due to supply chain challenges and the temporary closure of a factory in Michigan, families across the country may be impacted by a shortage in the supply of formula. [This document](#) provides an overview of WIC flexibilities, of which Minnesota has taken full advantage, and resources and tips for families and child care programs impacted. The White House and federal agencies have taken several actions to increase production and imports and expedite supply in mid-May. These actions are expected to increase supply available in the next few weeks. Families are encouraged to follow [these tips](#) and to buy only what they need.

## Financial Supports for College Students

To help college students, students with children, and families, students may find core financial aid programs listed on the [Paying for College webpage](#).

Higher Education Emergency Relief funds may provide emergency grants to postsecondary students. These grants are administered by colleges and universities and the process to apply will be determined by each institution. Students should contact the Financial Aid Office at their school to find out specific information for their school's process. General information can be found on the [State Financial Aid Guidance related to COVID-19 website](#).

**Minnesota Future Together Grants.** This new program will provide eligible Minnesotans with a **tuition-free pathway** for earning a certificate, diploma, associate degree, or bachelor's degree at any public institution in the state. The grants are available starting spring 2022 through 2024 or until all funds are dispensed, whichever comes first. For more information, please refer to this [page](#) to learn more.

## Business Supports

Several state and federal programs have been built to assist small businesses struggling during the COVID-19 pandemic. Small businesses, including child care providers and nonprofits, may also be eligible for business supports. However, the status of these federal programs is changing — and may be closed — based on availability of federal dollars appropriated by Congress. Please check [sba.gov/disaster](#) for the current status of these programs. For an overall small business guide, use this [site](#).

Federal resources have included:

- The [Federal Small Business Administration COVID 19 Disaster Loans](#).
- Federal expansions to the [Small Business Administration's Economic Injury Disaster Loans](#).
- Free one-on-one business counseling regarding COVID-19 from [SBA Resource Partners](#).

**Child Care Stabilization Grant Program.** Licensed and certified child care programs that are operating and serving children, have a license/certification in good standing, and are not a subject of a fraud finding, are eligible for grant funds through the Child Care Stabilization Grant Program. For eligibility and application information, please refer to this [page](#) to learn more about the program.

## Worker Support and Safety and Health in the Workplace

**Worker Protections Related to COVID 19.** [This document on worker protections](#) from the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry, Minnesota Department of Human Rights, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, and Minnesota OSHA has information on Worker Protections Related to COVID-19, including use of sick leave and Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), discrimination, information on reasonable accommodations, unemployment insurance benefits, workers' compensation, changes to workers' conditions and workplace safety and health.

- **Frontline Worker Pay.** Gov. Tim Walz signed a bill passed by the Minnesota Legislature providing bonus pay for eligible COVID-19 frontline workers. Details of the program are still being finalized and will be posted here when they are available. The state is working on the online application system now. When the system is ready to accept applications, eligible workers will have 45 days to apply. It is anticipated the application will be open June 8 through July 22, 2022 with payments anticipated in early fall. Visit the [Minnesota Frontline Worker Pay](#) website and sign up here to receive updates about the program.
- **For questions on pay and other workplace rights and responsibilities** contact the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry at 651-284-5075, 800-342-5354 or [dli.laborstandards@state.mn.us](mailto:dli.laborstandards@state.mn.us) with questions.
- **For questions on accommodations or other workplace discrimination issues** contact Minnesota's Department of Human Rights Discrimination Helpline with the Department of Human Rights at 1-833-454-0148 or [online here](#). Translation/Interpretation services available. **For questions about COVID-19 and Civil Rights, visit this website.**
- **For questions about workplace safety and health** contact Minnesota OSHA Compliance at [osha.compliance@state.mn.us](mailto:osha.compliance@state.mn.us), 651-284-5050 or 877-470-6742. Languages other than English available via phone. For additional workplace support, visit [here](#).
- **For questions about whether you are entitled to workers' compensation benefits,** contact the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry at 800-342-5354 (press 3) or [dli.workcomp@state.mn.us](mailto:dli.workcomp@state.mn.us).
- **For questions about unemployment insurance,** visit [www.uimn.org](http://www.uimn.org) to learn more or to apply for benefits.

**Find A Job.** Search job postings, get help with resume writing, participate in virtual workshops and more on [CareerForceMN.com](http://CareerForceMN.com).

## Taxes

Here are some resources that can help with tax-related services and guidance. The deadline to file 2021 taxes was April 18, 2022, but you still have time to file and claim valuable refunds.

- **Free Tax Preparation Sites:** The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and AARP Tax-Aide programs help prepare federal and state income tax and property tax refund returns. You may qualify for free tax preparation for your returns, including the off-tax season months in the summer and fall. Free tax return preparation sites in Minnesota may have limited services due to COVID-19. Use the Minnesota Department of Revenue's [Find a Free Tax Preparation Site tool](#) — or try [this interactive map](#) to find open sites, hours, and contact information. You may be able to file your own return online for free. To check if you qualify, see [Free Electronic Filing](#).

- Additional languages: Find tax information in [additional languages](#).
- Economic Impact Payments: [Learn more about the economic impact payments](#), otherwise known as the federal stimulus.
- Expanded Child Tax Credit: There is still time to claim the 2021 Expanded Child Tax Credit. **Visit [ChildTaxCredit.Gov](#) to learn more on how to claim the credit.** Most families qualify for the 2021 expanded Child Tax Credit payment:
  - Anyone with a child who has a Social Security number can get the Child Tax Credit payment when they file their taxes, even if the parents or caretakers don't have a Social Security number themselves. Even if you made little or no income in 2021 and don't usually file your taxes, you are still eligible for the Child Tax Credit payment.
  - The Child Tax Credit payment does not count as income and will not affect public assistance benefits like food, childcare, or housing assistance. It will not impact your family's immigration status or ability to get a green card.
  - If you earned income during 2021, you may be able to get another refund through the Earned Income Tax Credit. Learn more about the [Earned Income Tax Credit](#).
  - You can get up to \$3,600 for each child under 6 years old and \$3,000 for each child between 6 and 17 years old
  - If you already got monthly advance Child Tax Credit payments in 2021, you will get the rest of the payment after you file a 2021 tax return. If you didn't get monthly payments in 2021, you will get the full payment when you file your 2021 income tax return.

## Child Support

The Minnesota Department of Human Services Child Support Division and county child support agencies believe every child has the right to support from both parents. Even when parents do not live together, a healthy co-parenting relationship is important for the well-being of their child. The division and counties help parents establish a financial partnership and together they help families become and remain self-sufficient. The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a heavy toll on Minnesota's children and families and highlighted the importance of child support. Parents can utilize program services that include:

- Locating parents
- Establishing parentage and court orders for support
- Enforcing child support orders
- Establishing parentage and court orders for support
- Collecting payments made by one parent and sending them to the other parent
- Reviewing, modifying, and adjusting orders for support
- Working with other states to establish and enforce orders

Parents interested in receiving child support services can go to the division's [applying for services](#) web page.

Most parents pay their child support through income withholding when employers deduct the support from the parent's paycheck. If income withholding is not an option or if parents need to make additional payments, they can:

- Pay online using Minnesota Child Support Online – [www.childsupport.dhs.state.mn.us](http://www.childsupport.dhs.state.mn.us).
- Pay with cash using PayNearMe – [www.PayNearMe/Minnesota](http://www.PayNearMe/Minnesota) or MoneyGram at a participating retail location – [www.moneygram.com/mgo/us/en/locations](http://www.moneygram.com/mgo/us/en/locations).
- Pay through automatic recurring withdrawal using this [automatic withdrawal form](#).

Parents court-ordered to pay child support may be eligible to ask the court to modify their existing order if there has been a significant change in income, expenses, child care, medical coverage, or other circumstances. For more information visit the division's [changing a child support order](#) web page.

Parents using Minnesota’s child support services can get case and payment information by registering with [Minnesota Child Support Online](#). This secure website is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. For more information visit the [division’s child support website](#) or contact their [county child support agency](#).

## Additional Family Supports

Below are some resources to support parents, guardians, or others caring for children that may be helpful.

- [Help Me Connect - A navigator connecting pregnant and parenting families with young children \(birth – 8 years old\) with services in their local communities that empower families to be healthy and safe.](#)
- [National Parent Helpline](#)
- [Postpartum Support International Helpline](#)
- [MDH Child and Family Resources About COVID-19](#)
- [Help Me Grow website](#)
- [Mask Social Story](#) and [Masks and Gloves Social Story](#)

Playworks FREE [Play At Home resources](#). Play is brain building, a central part of healthy child development, and a buffer against the negative impacts of stress. Through play, we learn to share, negotiate, solve challenges together, and celebrate shared experiences. Keep playing with Playworks FREE [Play At Home](#) resources for educators and families.

## Make a Plan MN

Developing an emergency plan can help you and your family be prepared for whatever comes your way. It is never too early to develop a plan for your family. It is also a good idea to revisit and update existing plans. This is especially true during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is requiring us to plan in different ways than other emergencies. One important plan to have in place is what to do if a parent or guardian becomes sick or hospitalized due to the virus.

We encourage you to develop a plan for how you, your family, and caregivers will respond to a potential illness or hospitalization. Having a plan can help reduce stress in the event of an emergency and help everyone transition. Start by having a conversation with everyone involved and use this as a [guide](#).