



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.

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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 a.m. to 7 p.m. (interpreters available).

- **Health questions:** 651-201-3920 or 1-800-657-3903
- **[Emergency Operations Center Hotline:](#)** 651-297-1304 or 1-800-657-3504

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 when 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

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 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 a.m. to 9 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 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, 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.
- **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.

COVID-19 Vaccine

COVID-19 Vaccine Connector: The Minnesota COVID-19 Vaccine Connector was launched on February 18 and is a tool that helps Minnesotans find out when, where, and how to get a COVID-19 vaccine. If you or others are still in need of a vaccine:

- Visit the [Vaccine Connector](#) to be connected to your shot.
- You can also search [Vaccine Locations / COVID-19 Updates and Information - State of Minnesota](#) and make an appointment on your own (some vaccine providers are not yet serving all eligible populations).
- If you prefer, the state call center can be reached at 833-431-2053. It is open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Friday. The call center can also help you update your Vaccine Connector profile (if your situation has changed).
- If you live in an eligible ZIP code, you can make an appointment at the [FEMA vaccination clinic](#) at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds. Visit the Minnesota State Fair State Vaccination [webpage](#) to learn more. If you are already in the Vaccine Connector, you may be invited to an appointment at this location.

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

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.

Wrap Around Minnesota

Wrap Around Minnesota is an initiative to coordinate full-service community resources for students and families. The goal of this project is to develop a statewide wrap-around system that provides access to academic, social, health and basic needs services and supports for communities.

Push Text Messaging Campaign - Greater Twin Cities United Way, 2-1-1 Network: The Children's Cabinet collaborated with Greater Twin Cities United Way to develop a push text messaging campaign, STU211, to provide information and coordination for identified academic, food, health and housing resources available across the state. The goal of the campaign is to increase wrap around services by providing weekly information on relevant health, food, housing, and supports for Minnesota students and their families. **To opt-in to receive text messages, Text STU211 to 898-211.**

Cash and Economic Assistance

During this pandemic, some requirements for essential programs and services have been waived or modified to allow Minnesotans to receive the support they need. [This Department of Human Services \(DHS\) webpage](#) provides a summary of temporary changes to public assistance programs, such as Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), that

current participants and those interested in applying should know. A complete list of [temporary waivers from the Minnesota Department of Human Services \(DHS\) can be found here](#).

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 works support programs and tax credits and get assistance with applying including SNAP, WIC, School Meal Programs, Minnesota Health Care Programs, Energy Assistance, and Child Care Assistance.
- **ApplyMN:** [This web application](#) can connect you with state and county services to help meet your and your family's basic needs. Use it to apply for [cash assistance](#), [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\) benefits](#), [child care assistance](#), and Emergency Assistance. Call 651-431-4000 for questions.
- **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, had your hours greatly reduced, or are unable to work because of the COVID-19 pandemic, you should apply for Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits. To get more information about Unemployment Insurance or to apply for benefits, visit www.uimn.org. Learn more [information about unemployment insurance or apply here](#). The Governor has taken action to allow faster payments for unemployment benefits and waive the employer surcharge. In December, Congress also passed legislation that extended unemployment benefits to 13 weeks and created a new program for individuals who are unemployed due to COVID-19 but are unable to receive unemployment benefits. In March, Congress passed another federal stimulus bill that would extend benefits for the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Program (PUA), the Pandemic Unemployment Compensation program (PEUC), and the \$300 per week supplemental payment until early September. For more information on this federal stimulus legislation and unemployment benefits, refer to [this DEED webpage](#). If you receive an unemployment benefit payment of any amount for a qualifying week, you will receive a \$300 supplemental payment. This program is now extended through early September 2021. If you are eligible to receive a benefit payment of at least \$1, you will automatically receive the \$300 supplemental payment. You don't need to make any kind of special request to receive the \$300 supplemental payment.

DEED created [a resource webpage](#) for individuals receiving unemployment benefits to learn more about financial and community resources available to them. [More information](#) is available about the UI program for self-employed people.

People who are self-employed should follow [these step-by-step instructions](#). You can apply for regular unemployment the following ways:

- **Online:** Available **Sunday** through **Friday** from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. Follow the step-by-step instructions on how to apply if you are self-employed.
- **By phone:** Application help is available on **Friday** from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

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.

A COVID-19 Special Enrollment Period is open through July 16. Get a [quick estimate](#) for financial help to see if you qualify for low- or no-cost coverage or a tax credit. Or [apply today](#) for an official eligibility determination. **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 too high to qualify for financial help. For more information about these changes, please refer to [this FAQ](#).

Additionally, if your situation changes, such as income loss or job-based insurance loss, you may qualify for enrollment. Eligible families can enroll in Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare at any time. 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 peacetime emergency. 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 [saliva community testing](#) locations, [visit mn.gov/covid19](#). For more information on testing costs, please refer to this [COVID-19 Testing Costs FAQ](#).

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 include:

- **No costs for COVID-19 testing.** Minnesotans will not be charged for any costs related to COVID-19 testing. For more information on testing costs or what to do if you receive a bill for COVID-19 testing, please refer to this [COVID-19 Testing Costs FAQ](#).
- **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](#) continues to provide exam 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 its 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 to 5:30 and Saturdays from 9 a.m. until 1 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.
- **Minnesota Housing is pleased to announce that [RentHelpMN](#) is now open and accepting applications.** RentHelpMN makes it possible for eligible renters to get caught up on overdue rent and utilities dating back to March 13, 2020. It also makes provisions for those at risk of falling behind on rent payments due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please note that RentHelpMN is in Phase One, in which people with past due rent or who are at risk for falling behind who meet eligibility requirements are invited to apply. To apply for RentHelpMN, please visit renthelpmn.org or call 211. The 211 helpline has dedicated multilingual staff available to answer questions about RentHelpMN, 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

Visit renthelpmn.org to learn more about the program and eligibility requirements and to apply.

- 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.
- [Information and resources on Housing Discrimination and Eviction Protections](#). This site from the Minnesota Housing and Department of Human Rights provides information in multiple languages. Contact Minnesota's Discrimination Helpline with the Department of Human Rights at 1-833-454-0148 or on the [Human Rights website](#). Translation/interpretation services available.
- **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](#).

Suspending evictions during COVID-19

To protect the health and well-being of Minnesotans during the pandemic, the Governor signed an order to suspend evictions. However, rent is not reduced or waived during this time. Once the suspension has ended, owners can file for evictions and removals can be enforced. Not paying rent on time can impact credit or cause problems that impact future housing options. Here are resources that offer more information:

- **More information on the Executive Order.** This [Frequently Asked Questions document](#) provides more information about the order that suspended evictions. Resources are also available in [Spanish](#), [Hmong](#), and [Somali](#).
- **Emergency Assistance.** If you are a renter and need emergency assistance, talk to your landlord. You can also contact your [county or tribal human services agency](#), United Way, Community Action Agency, or the Department of Human Services.
- **Legal assistance.** If you're a renter, you can get legal help on a range of issues, including repairs, evictions, security deposits, landlord invasion of privacy, and more. Call [HOME Line's](#) at 612-728-5767.

If you receive an eviction notice. If you receive an eviction notice during peacetime emergency, you may contact the Attorney General's office to submit a [complaint](#).

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 Bureau's website](#).

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.

- **Energy Assistance Program (EAP):** The EAP provide grants for your home energy costs, from \$300 to \$1,600, based on household size, income, and fuel cost. Renters and homeowners are eligible and **the deadline to apply has been extended to September 1, 2021**. Income guidelines were recently increased to 60% of the state median income so more households will be eligible for assistance. Stimulus payments and pandemic assistance are not counted as income. Households in need of assistance with their utility bills may contact their local [Community Action agency, county or tribal human services agency](#), or the [Weatherization Assistance Program](#).

Only the past three months of income, not assets such as your home, are considered in determining eligibility. In addition to the initial grant, additional funds are available to:

- Help pay up to \$1,200 for past due bills or emergency fuel deliveries.
- Help homeowners get their broken furnace or boiler repaired or replaced. To apply, households should contact their local EAP service provider. Households can find their EAP provider:
- By calling **1-800-657-3710** and entering their zip code, or
- On [this list of service providers](#) by county or tribe at
- 29 local EAP service providers including Community Action Programs, counties, tribal governments and non-profits serve all areas of the state.

Find general EAP information at <https://mn.gov/commerce/eap.jsp>

- **Cold Weather Rule:** Special protections exist for Minnesotans facing disconnection between October 15 and April 15 under Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule. It is important to note that this protection does not prohibit utilities from disconnecting service, but that it requires several steps to be taken before disconnection. For more information about the Cold Weather Rule and what to do when having trouble paying your utility bill(s), visit this Attorney General's Office [webpage](#)
- **Weatherization Assistance Program:** The Weatherization Assistance Program provides free home energy upgrades to income-eligible homeowners and renters to help 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 weatherization is 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.

Child Care

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 and a map of open providers at mn.gov/childcare or call the Parent Aware Hotline at 1-888-291-9811 for assistance.
- **Child care providers.** Child care providers can remain open. 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 Children's Cabinet 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.

- **School-age care.** Many families will need care for their children during periods of hybrid and distance learning in order to report to work or fulfill other obligations. Families that need assistance with finding care refer to the section above on Families seeking child care.
 - Families in need of financial assistance should use [Children’s Defense Fund-Minnesota’s Bridge to Benefits screening tool](#) to determine child care financial supports for which they may be eligible. They are also encouraged to [apply for Child Care Assistance](#).
 - During a hybrid or distance learning model when students are not receiving in-person instruction, districts and charter schools will provide care for school-age children age 12 and under who are children of critical workers on Tier I of the state critical worker list. This care is provided during regular school hours at no cost.
 - For families with school-age children accessing the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), you may be eligible for increases of authorized hours during periods of distance or hybrid learning. Contact your local agency worker for more information.
- [COVID-19 Attendance Guide for Parents and Families \(PDF\) \(Hmong, Somali, Spanish\)](#): Guide for parents and families to understand when children can attend school, youth programs, and child care during COVID-19.
- [Home Screening Tool for COVID-19 Symptoms \(PDF\) \(Hmong, Somali, Spanish\)](#): Home screening tool for parents and guardians related to COVID-19.

Minnesota Safe Learning Plan for the 2020-21 School Year

The Safe Learning Plan uses a localized, data-driven approach that allows public schools to operate in a learning model that is responsive and prioritizes the health and safety of students, educators, and school communities. For the most updated information, visit the Stay Safe MN [Safe Learning Plan page](#).

- [Safe Learning Plan for the 2020-21 School Year document](#) This document explains the Safe Learning Plan for the 2020-21 School Year and outlines resources and supports that are available to school districts and charter schools for the upcoming school year. While reopening school buildings for in-person instruction is what we want for our students, the main priority must continue to be the health, safety, and wellness of our students, staff, and community. The plan prioritizes safe learning for all Minnesota students, including requiring school districts and charter schools to give families the option to choose distance learning for their student no matter which learning model their school is implementing.
- [Frequently asked questions about the Safe Learning Plan.](#)
- [Executive Order 20-82](#) *Requiring School Districts and Charter Schools to Provide a Safe and Effective Learning Environment for Minnesota’s Students during the 2020-21 School Year.*
- [Data for K-12 Schools: 14-day COVID-19 Case Rate by County \(PDF\)](#) includes data that can be used by schools in making decisions about their safe learning model. It shows the number of cases by county of residence in Minnesota over 14 days, per 10,000 people by the date of specimen collection (when a person was tested).
- [Minnesota Department of Education website](#) for educators and school district leaders looking for more information. This includes the [Due North Plan](#).
- [COVID-19 Attendance Guide for Parents and Families \(PDF\) \(Hmong, Somali, Spanish\)](#): Guide for parents and families to understand when children can attend school, youth programs, and child care during COVID-19.
- [Home Screening Tool for COVID-19 Symptoms \(PDF\) \(Hmong, Somali, Spanish\)](#): Home screening tool for parents and guardians related to COVID-19.
- [Safe Learning Model Dashboard](#): This dashboard allows users to view state- and district-level data on learning model implementation. Users can view an interactive map and have the option to filter the data by school district or charter school name, learning model type, grade level and effective date. The dashboard also includes a bar graph and a table showing breakdowns of the data by grade level and by district or charter school name.
- [Student Instruction COVID-19 Resources \(mn.gov\)](#): Trauma Resource Guide for Educators

Youth Programs

Youth programming is allowed to serve children and youth. 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 and summer school. The health and safety of children, students, teachers, staff and families is our top priority. If a program cannot adhere to the public health guidance it cannot operate at this time. More resources are available on the [Minnesota Department of Health](#) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) websites.

Food Resources

If you, your family, or someone you know is struggling with access to food, here's a list of resources and programs that can help. Check the COVID-19 [Food Support website](#) regularly for updates.

- **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. For the 2020-21 school year, benefits will start to be issued starting at the end of March. 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 foods, call 1-888-711-1151, use the [chat feature](#), 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 thru, or other alternatives pick up options for your safety. You can find a food shelf near you [using this map](#) from Hunger Solutions Minnesota.
- **Fare for All.** 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.
- **School Meal Program:** Schools are providing meals through three options. 1) the National School Breakfast and Lunch Program (NSLP) provides breakfast, lunch and afterschool snacks. The program uses the free, reduced and paid eligibility in this program. 2) Seamless Summer Program (SSO) provides meals to enrolled students at no charge, and 3) Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) can provide meals either as a closed enrolled program (feeding only enrolled students) or as an open site (feeding all students/children under 18 years of age).
USDA has clarified that schools can access the SSO and SFSP only as long as funds are available. Schools make decisions on which program to administer based on their learning model, meal production capacity and local needs. Please contact your school to learn about meal service the school provides. Families should still fill out the [Application for Educational Benefits](#) and return it to their child's school. Applications in languages other than English are available at the bottom of [this webpage](#).
- **EBT Online Shopping:** Minnesotans can now use their EBT food benefits online at [Amazon](#) 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. To find your local WIC program, you can call 1-800-942-4030.
- **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.

Financial Supports for College Students

To help college students, students with children, and families, students who fully withdraw from enrollment during the peacetime public health emergency due to COVID-19 will be eligible to have state grant eligibility from the term of withdrawal reinstated for the State Grant, Postsecondary Child Care Grant and Indian Scholarship programs.

The Higher Education Emergency Relief fund was created by the federal CARES Act and may provide emergency grants to postsecondary students for both 2019-2020 and 2020-2021. These grants are administered by colleges and universities and the process to apply will be determined by each institution. Find more information on the [State Financial Aid Guidance related to COVID-19 website](#).

Business Support

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 current status. 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](#)
- The Paycheck Protection Program. More funds were added to the PPP by Congress. The new deadline to apply for the program is May 31, 2021. Check out [this webpage](#) for updates.
- Free one-on-one business counseling regarding COVID-19 from [SBA Resource Partners](#).

Financial Supports for Child Care Providers. There are a number of federal and state resources available to child care providers as small businesses. Documents to help support you in finding these resources are available:

- [Child Care Financial Support Matrix](#)
- [Child Care Center Employees Financial Supports Outline](#)
- [Family Child Care Provider Financial Supports Outline](#)
- [Child Care Provider Unemployment FAQ](#)

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, including information on reasonable accommodations, unemployment insurance benefits, workers' compensation, changes to workers conditions and workplace safety and health.

- **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 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, 651-284-5050 or 877-470-6742. Alternative languages 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.
- **For questions about unemployment insurance**, visit www.uimn.org to learn more or to apply for benefits.

Taxes

Many free tax sites are suspending in-person tax preparation assistance. Here are some resources that can help you with tax-related services and guidance. The deadline to file 2020 taxes has been extended to May 17, 2021.

- 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. Many free tax return preparation sites in Minnesota 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](#).
- Free online filing options: Find out more information and the qualifications from [Minnesota Department of Revenue](#)
- 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 \(CTC\) & Advance CTC](#): The American Rescue Plan Act signed into law in March expanded the CTC so that many American parents will be eligible to receive \$3,000 for every child ages 6 to 17 and \$3,600 for every child under age 6. The IRS recently announced that these funds can be allocated in monthly payments, which are expected to start in July. The expanded amounts are tapered off once income hits \$75,000 for individuals and \$150,000 for married couples. To receive this credit, you must file your 2020 taxes, even if you're not required to file. The IRS urges people with children to file their 2020 tax returns as soon as possible to make sure they're eligible for the appropriate amount of the CTC as well as any other tax credits they're eligible for, including the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). Filing electronically with direct deposit also can speed refunds and future advance CTC payments. Refer to the above tax filing resources.

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. Now more than ever parents can utilize program services that include:

- Locating parents
- Establishing parentage and court orders for support
- Enforcing child support orders
- 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
- Pay with cash using PayNearMe – www.PayNearMe.com/Minnesota or MoneyGram at a participating retail location – www.moneygram.com/billpaylocations
- 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.

- [National Parent Helpline](#)
- [Postpartum Support International Helpline](#)
- [MDH Child and Family Resources About COVID-19](#)
- [Minnesota Communities Caring for Children Resources for Adaptation and Resiliency During the Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Outbreak](#)
- [Help Me Grow website](#)
- [Mask Social Story](#) and [Masks and Gloves Social Story](#)

Playworks FREE [Play At Home](#). 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](#).

Additional COVID Hotlines

[Health Questions Hotline](#): 651-201-3920 or 1-800-657-3903

[State Emergency Operations Center Hotline](#): 651-297-1304 or 1-800-657-3504

Resource Links for Families Affected by Recent Unrest

We know families may be in need of resources following the aftermath of Daunte Wright’s death and during and after the Derek Chauvin trial and sentencing, especially in the metro area.

- [Resource links](#) have been compiled on a temporary website to help support families and communities across the metro and beyond, including mental health and trauma supports, food access sites, health care sites, and other information.