

Insights

Texas - COVID-19 Community Resource Guide

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Firm Thought Leadership

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

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

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

Topics include:

- COURT PROCEEDINGS
- COVID-19 TESTING POLICIES/PROCEDURES
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COURT PROCEEDINGS

Are the Texas federal courts open?

The courts of the Northern District are open, but visitors must wear a mask or face covering that completely covers their nose and mouth while inside any courthouse in the Northern District. Additionally, visitors are expected to practice social distancing while inside the courthouse. For more information, visit the

Northern District's website at <http://www.txnd.uscourts.gov/>. Recent orders permit the use of video teleconferencing for criminal proceedings; however, you are encouraged to stay up to date on any new or additional orders: <http://www.txnd.uscourts.gov/special-order-13-court-orders-and-updates-during-covid-19-pandemic>.

The courts of the Eastern District are open, but with reduced staff. Additionally, *pro se* parties are encouraged to file pleadings via U.S. Mail, email, or fax during this time to limit exposure to court staff and others through 11:59 p.m. on August 31, 2020: http://www.txed.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/goFiles/General%20Order%2013_signed.pdf. For additional information on the Eastern District, visit <http://www.txed.uscourts.gov/>.

The courts of the Western District are open, but access is restricted pursuant to order of the court. On July 2, 2020, the Western District issued an order that automatically continues all civil and criminal bench and jury trials that were scheduled to begin on any date through August 31, 2020: <https://www.txwd.uscourts.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/SupplementOrderRegardingCourtOperationsUnderTheE>. Additional guidance regarding the Western District is available at <https://www.txwd.uscourts.gov/> or <https://www.txwd.uscourts.gov/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance/>.

Courts of the Southern District are generally closed. Courts continue to issue short-term notices of closure; thus, it is imperative to check court orders and notices of closure frequently at <https://www.txs.uscourts.gov/page/covid-19-general-and-special-orders>. For additional information regarding the Southern District, visit <https://www.txs.uscourts.gov/>.

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

Are trial settings going forward?

Many courts have continued civil and criminal bench and jury trials; however, some have authorized video and audio conferencing for certain criminal proceedings. It is important to check the status of each court as well as confirm and consult the presiding judge's orders. Individual judges may continue to conduct bench trials during this time, being mindful to minimize the number of people present in the courtroom.

What about other matters?

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

Are there any physical restrictions in place for federal courthouses?

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

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

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

Resources:

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

PROCEEDINGS IN TEXAS STATE COURTS

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

On June 26, 2020, Governor Abbott renewed the state of disaster for Texas that was initially released on March 13, 2020: <https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-takes-executive-action-to-contain-spread-of-covid-19-2>.

Following this declaration, the Texas Supreme Court issued its eighteenth emergency order on June 29, 2020. This order generally limits the operations of the courts in Texas, extending certain deadlines in many cases and implementing safety protocols. The order is available at <https://www.txcourts.gov/supreme/administrative-orders/2020/>.

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

Courts also can conduct proceedings away from the courthouse, with reasonable notice to those involved. These measures will remain in place until August 31, 2020, unless extended by order of the Texas Supreme Court.

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

The Texas Supreme Court has ordered that “[a]ny deadline for the filing or service of any civil case that falls on a day between March 13, 2020, and August 1, 2020, is extended until September 15, 2020.” This does not include deadlines for perfecting appeals or for other appellate proceedings. However, the Court has ordered that requests to extend such deadlines “should be generously granted.”

The Texas Supreme Court has also given the state's lower courts the power to “modify or suspend any deadlines and procedures, whether prescribed by statute, rule, or order, for a stated period ending no later than September 30, 2020.” <https://www.txcourts.gov/media/1448109/209080.pdf>.

For the current orders still in effect, please visit <https://www.txcourts.net/emergency-orders>. These orders provide for extended deadlines for attorney professional disciplinary and disability proceedings, which have been tolled until August 15, 2020. Additionally, the stay on eviction proceedings is no longer in place; however, housing subject to the federal moratorium under Section 4024 of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (“CARES”) Act may be protected until July 25, 2020. See Emergency Order 15 at https://81db691e-8a8c-4e25-add9-60f4845e34f7.filesusr.com/ugd/64fb99_94a4b7a89909441181f5cdffd8aab25.pdf.

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

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

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

- The Court has made clear that, for purposes of determining a person's right to possession of and access to a child under a court-ordered possession schedule, the existing trial court order shall control in all instances. The original published school schedule shall also control. Possession and access are not affected by COVID-19-related school closures.
- Similarly, shelter-in-place orders do not impact rights to possession of and access to children. Court-ordered possession schedules still control.
- With that said, parties can alter possession schedules by agreement based on impacts due to COVID-19 (if they are allowed to do so by their court orders).
- Similarly, lower courts in the State of Texas still have the power to modify their own orders on possession of and access to children, as appropriate.

See <https://www.txcourts.gov/media/1448109/209080.pdf>.

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

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

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

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

email so that the court can locate your case and provide you accurate information.

Resources:

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

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

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

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COVID-19 TESTING POLICIES/PROCEDURES

Texas - Austin

Are drive-through testing sites available in Travis County?

- Public COVID-19 testing is now available in Austin, Texas. Individuals seeking testing must answer a few questions online (<http://austintexas.gov/department/covid-19-information/if-you-are-sick>) to see if they are eligible for testing. If individuals are eligible for testing, they can sign up for testing at a drive-through location.
- If you need to be tested and do not have access to a vehicle, you can contact https://communitycaretx.org/contact_us.html for other options.

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

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

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

Texas - Dallas

Are drive-through testing sites available in Dallas County?

Yes. There are two drive-through testing sites available from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Central Time, Monday to Saturday:

- University of Dallas at 1845 E. Northgate Drive, Irving, Texas 75062; and
- Ellis Davis Field House at 9191 South Polk Street, Dallas, Texas 75232.

Anyone who is exhibiting symptoms of potential COVID-19 infection, including the following may be tested at one of the drive-through sites:

- Shortness of breath;
- Cough;
- Fever;
- Chills;
- Muscle pain;
- New loss of taste or smell;
- Vomiting or diarrhea; and/or
- Sore throat.

The following people can also get tested at one of the drive-through sites:

- Anyone 65-years-old or older;
- Anyone with chronic health issues (diabetes, asthma, heart issues, etc.);
- Any first responders, Dallas Area Rapid Transit (“DART”) drivers, healthcare workers, grocery store and essential retail store workers; or
- Persons without symptoms who have been actively engaged in large group settings within the past 15 days.

For additional information regarding testing in Dallas, please visit <https://www.dallascounty.org/covid-19/testing-locations.php>.

Texas - Houston

Are drive-through testing sites available in Harris County?

Yes. There are currently multiple drive-through testing sites available in Houston, Texas. All testing sites can be found at: <https://txdps.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=8bf7c6a436a64bfe9a5ce25be580e4ff>.

- Any Houstonian, regardless of symptoms, may receive one free COVID-19 test at one of these drive-through testing sites. Individuals must call (832) 393-4220 for an access code and will then receive directions to nearest testing site. Visit <https://houstonemergency.org/covid-19-testing/> for more information on testing in Houston.

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EDUCATION/SCHOOL RIGHTS AND RESOURCES

What is the current status of school in Texas?

According to the June 26, 2020 Executive Order GA-28, Texas public schools may resume summer operations as provided by, and under the minimum standard health protocols found in, guidance issued by the Texas Education Agency (“TEA”). Private schools and institutions of higher education were encouraged to adopt similar standards and requirements. Additionally, graduation ceremonies may occur pursuant to the minimum standard health protocols. See https://gov.texas.gov/uploads/files/press/EO-GA-28_targeted_response_to_reopening_COVID-19.pdf.

For up-to-date support and guidance from the TEA, visit <https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/health-safety-discipline/covid/coronavirus-covid-19-support-and-guidance>.

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

On June 29, 2020, Governor Abbott extended Texas Health and Human Services Commission's application deadline for the federal Pandemic-Electronic Benefit Transfer program ("P-EBT") to July 31,

2020: <https://gov.texas.gov/es/news/post/governor-abbott-hhsc-extend-deadline-for-pandemic-food-benefits-for-families-affected-by-covid-19-school-closures>.

Eligible families include those who lost access to free or reduced-price school meals through the National School Lunch Program due to school closures.

School District Information

- The Austin Independent School District ("AISD") is offering meals for children under the age of 19 while school is closed. Currently, AISD is offering curbside meal pickups at 17 schools across the city, Monday through Friday, between the hours of 9:00 am and 11:00 am Central Time. AISD school buses will also deliver meals to bus stop locations across the city, Monday through Friday. For a complete list of locations and times, visit <https://www.austinisd.org/covid19/meals>. Parents and caregivers may pick up meals for children, even when the child is not present, provided that they have one of the following forms of documentation at the point of meal service: (1) official letter/email from school that shows children as enrolled; (2) individual student report cards; (3) attendance record from Parent Portal of school website; (4) birth certificate for children not in school; or (5) student ID cards. Meal packs are offered at curbside and bus delivery meal sites. Please note that AISD will not serve meals while the district is closed July 6-10, 2020; however, service will resume on Monday, July 13, 2020.
- Round Rock Independent School District recently extended curbside breakfast and lunch for the following day from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm Central Time, Monday through Friday, through July 31, 2020. For the latest information and a complete list of pickup locations and times, visit <https://roundrockisd.org/coronavirus/>.
- The Dallas Independent School District is offering a free meal pickup service once a week for children. The meals are available for all children through the age of 18 (or age 19 if the child turns 19 during the current school year), and to students with disabilities regardless of age. However, the children must be present to receive the meals. The meals are currently being distributed once a week every Thursday between 9:00 am and 12:00 pm Central Time at strategic locations throughout the district. Those strategic locations are provided here: <https://www.dallasisd.org/Page/62476>. The meals will be distributed curbside at the main entrance of the location.
- The Houston Independent School District has temporarily closed most of its curbside summer meal sites for two weeks, beginning Friday, July 3, 2020. The sites will undergo deep cleaning and sanitization prior to re-opening on Monday, July 20, 2020. A full list of open meal sites and distribution times is available at <https://www.houstonisd.org/SummerMeals>. The meals are available for present children and teens up to the age of 18.
- Other individual school districts are providing curbside breakfast and lunch distribution programs for parents to pick up. Please check with your local school district to see if they are providing meals.

Food Bank Information

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

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

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

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

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

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

Additionally, the TEA and Texas American Federation of Teachers (“Texas AFT”) have additional information for students and teachers regarding school closures. The TEA also has provided information for remote learning for school year 2020-2021:

- School Year 2020-2021 Attendance and Enrollment
FAQ: https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/covid/sy_2020-21_attendance_and_enrollment_faq_remote_only.pdf;
- Remote Instruction Guidance for School Year 2020-2021: https://tea.texas.gov/sites/default/files/covid/overview_of_remote_instruction_21.pdf;
- Texas Home Learning Information: <https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/health-safety-discipline/covid/covid-19-support-texas-home-learning>.

Additional TEA COVID-19 updates are available at <https://tea.texas.gov/texas-schools/health-safety-discipline/coronavirus-COVID-19-support-and-guidance>. Texas AFT’s COVID-19 updates are available at <https://www.texasaft.org/topics/COVID-19/>.

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EVICCTIONS

Texas - State

As of July 5, 2020, the Texas Supreme Court has not extended its emergency order staying eviction proceedings. However, housing subject to the federal moratorium under Section 4024 of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (“CARES”) Act may be protected until July 25, 2020. See Emergency Order 15 at https://81db691e-8a8c-4e25-add9-60f4845e34f7.filesusr.com/ugd/64fb99_94a4b7a89909441181f5cdffd8aab25.pdf. For additional information, please visit <https://www.txcourts.net/emergency-orders>.

Do I still owe rent?

Yes. Emergency orders have only temporarily stopped eviction proceedings from occurring; thus, rent is still owed. Eviction proceedings, except for those subject to the CARES Act, were able to commence on May 19, 2020.

Texas- Austin

What if I'm unable to pay my rent?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Travis County Justices of the Peace issued a standing order regarding COVID-19, which reset all non-essential court proceedings for after July 22, 2020. No eviction proceedings (commercial or residential) will be held until after July 22, 2020, and no writs of possession will be issued by a Justice Court until July 29, 2020. For more information, visit <https://www.traviscountytx.gov/justices-of-peace> and https://www.traviscountytx.gov/images/justices_of_peace/Doc/standing_order-regarding-covid-19-justice-peace-effective-06162020.pdf.

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

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

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

What if my home is not a safe environment?

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

- Stop Abuse for Everyone (“SAFE”): (512) 267-7233;
- Hope Alliance: (800) 460-7233; or
- The National Domestic Violence Hotline: (877) 863-6338.

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

Texas – Dallas

As of July 5, 2020, the moratorium on evictions in Dallas County has not been extended. This means you could be evicted for failure to pay rent. Answers to frequently asked questions on evictions in Dallas County are available at <https://dallascityhall.com/departments/fairhousing/Pages/COVID-19-EVICTION-FACTS.aspx>. For more up-to-date orders issued by Dallas Judge Jenkins, visit <https://www.dallascounty.org/COVID-19/judge-orders.php>.

Do I still owe rent?

Yes. Rent is due during and after the moratorium on eviction proceedings.

Texas – Houston

As of July 5, 2020, there is no moratorium on eviction proceedings in Houston. If you qualify for and need legal assistance, you may apply for help by submitting the Houston Volunteer Lawyers' application (https://hvloi.legalserver.org/modules/matter/extern_intake.php?pid=138&h=652683&) via email to info@hvlp.org. Additional information is available at <https://www.makejusticehappen.org/node/569> and <https://www.makejusticehappen.org/Evictions>.

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GOVERNMENT GRANTS/LOANS

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

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

Texas provides the following resources for information related to small businesses, unemployment, the restaurant relief fund, and payment programs for taxes, among others. See the following for more information:

- <https://gov.texas.gov/business/page/coronavirus>;
- https://gov.texas.gov/uploads/files/business/FAQs_Small_Business_Coronaviru and
- <https://comptroller.texas.gov/about/emergency/>.

A list of available grants for various industries is also available here: <https://texas.grantwatch.com/cat/56/coronavirus-covid-grants.html>.

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HOMELESSNESS AND INDIVIDUALS IN COMMUNITY/SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Texas - Austin

How do the City's orders affect those experiencing homelessness?

Individuals experiencing homelessness are encouraged to practice social distancing, where possible. Resources available to the homeless are available at <http://austintexas.gov/department/austins-homeless-strategy-covid-19-support>. The City has reported that clean-ups are happening less frequently and that crews are not asking people to relocate unless they are in immediate danger. Individuals experiencing homelessness are, however, strongly encouraged to find shelter.

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

Are shelters and other resources still available?

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

The Austin Resource Center for the Homeless (located at 500 E 7th Street, Austin, TX 78701) can house up to 130 men and provides assistance with medical and legal issues. The Austin Shelter for Women and Children (located 4613 Tannehill Ln, Bldg 3, Austin, TX 78721) can help homeless women and children find housing. Additionally, during the COVID-19 pandemic, individuals experiencing homelessness may quarantine at the Crowne Plaza near I-35 and E Hwy 290 (6121 North I-35, Austin, TX 78752).

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

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

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

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

Call the COVID-19 Hotline at (512) 978-8775 for guidance if you are experiencing symptoms (e.g., fever, cough, and shortness of breath) and have had close contact with others who have or may have the virus. Medical professionals will answer the phones and triage callers—specifically those who have no insurance and no established provider—to prevent them from going directly to a clinic, urgent care facility, or emergency department. Stay away from others and follow the guidance from the hotline staff. The hotline is available from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Central Time.

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

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

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

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

Construction of affordable housing, facilities for individuals experiencing homelessness, and facilities that provide social services is considered "as critical infrastructure" and is exempt from the city's Stay Home – Work Safe Order. For more information on Austin's most recent stay-home orders, visit <http://austintexas.gov/department/covid-19-information/stay-home-order>.

Additional Information:

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

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

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

Texas - Dallas

Are homeless shelters open?

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

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

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

Dallas Resources for the Homeless:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Metrocare Services (www.metrocareservices.org):

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

North Texas Behavioral Health Authority (<https://ntbha.org/>):

- The COVID-19 Mental Health Support Line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at (833) 251-7544.
- The North Texas Behavioral Health Authority Crisis Line also is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at (866) 260-8000.

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

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

Texas - Houston

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

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

Houston has implemented a three-prong response focusing on prevention, emergency response and recovery. Prevention measures have included placing more than 20 handwashing stations in the areas with the highest concentrations of homeless individuals, repurposing the Fonde Recreation Center into a shelter and distributing safety equipment to shelters throughout the city. If an emergency response is needed, homeless agencies, shelters, outreach teams and even homeless individuals themselves can call the Homeless Testing hotline at (713) 286-6047 where they will be quickly assessed and provided with transportation to a Homeless Testing site by specialized Yellow Cabs through a partnership with METRO and operated by Healthcare for the Homeless - Houston. Additionally, Houston has set up the The Joint, City and County Quarantine & Isolation Facility, to provide shelter, food and medical care to enable individuals who are referred directly from a hospital or the city's Homeless Testing program to self-quarantine and isolate as needed.

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

If you are looking for a way to help, such shelters have indicated that they are in desperate need of donations of cleaning and hygiene supplies and personal protective equipment such as masks. Additionally, please be aware that the CDC

has recommended against giving out cash to the homeless at this time so as to reduce the chance that the virus is spread through this medium.

Please regularly check for updates on the Mayor's Office of Homeless Initiatives website at <http://www.houstontx.gov/homeless> and the Coalition for the Homeless website at <https://www.homelesshouston.org/covid-19>.

Where can the homeless receive shelter, food, and medical care?

The Coalition for the Homeless maintains and frequently updates a list of Houston locations providing shelter, housing, meals and medical assistance. Information regarding those locations is available at <https://www.homelesshouston.org/covid-19>. Available shelters are listed below and a map of those shelters is available at https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/2d521d2c/files/uploaded/Street_Map_Final_011519.pdf:

- Emergency Shelter for Men:
 - Star of Hope – Men's Development Center
1811 Ruiz, Houston, TX 77002
(713) 227-8900
<http://sohmission.staging.wpengine.com/our-services/mens-development-center/>
- Emergency Shelter for Women and Families:
 - Star of Hope Cornerstone Community
2572 Reed Road, Houston, TX 77051
<http://sohmission.staging.wpengine.com/our-services/women-and-family-development-center/>
 - Salvation Army – Family Residence (housing is currently full; however, submit your navigation needs online under “Life Navigation Needs”)
1603 McGowen, Houston, TX 77004
(713) 650-6530
<https://www.salvationarmyhouston.org/>
- Emergency Shelter for Youth (Ages 18-24):
 - Covenant House
1111 Lovett Blvd, Houston, TX 77006
(713) 523-2231
<https://www.covenanthousetx.org/services/housing-programs/>
 - Salvation Army – Young Adult Resource Center
1621 McGowen, Building A, Houston, TX, 77002
(713) 658-9205
<https://www.facebook.com/SalvationArmyHoustonYARC/>
- Day Shelter:
 - The Beacon
1212 Prairie Street, Houston, TX 77002
(713) 220-9737
<https://www.beaconhomeless.org/>
- Veterans:
 - VA McGovern Drop In Center – Veteran Service Center
1418 Preston, Houston, TX 77002
(713) 797-2913
https://www.houston.va.gov/overview_homeless.asp
- Domestic Violence:

- Houston Area Women's Center
1010 Waugh Dr, Houston, TX 77019
(713) 528-2121
<https://www.facebook.com/HoustonAreaWomensCenter/>
- The Bridge Over Troubled Water
3811 Allen-Genoa Rd, Pasadena, TX 77504
(713) 473-2801
<http://tbotw.org/>
- Fort Bend County Women's Center
501 E Highway 90A, Richmond, TX 77406
(281) 342-4357
<https://fbwc.org/>
- Bay Area Turning Point
210 S Walnut St, Webster, TX 77598
(281) 338-7600
<http://www.bayareaturningpoint.org/>

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MEDICAID

Medicaid & CHIP – Texas

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, Texas has relaxed certain requirements related to eligibility for receiving or continuing coverage and to become a Medicaid provider. Texas Health and Human Services is maintaining, and regularly updating, a COVID-19 information page, located at <https://hhs.texas.gov/services/health/coronavirus-COVID-19/medicaid-chip-services-information-providers>. The provisions discussed below are based on this website at the time of publication of this portion of the guide. We recommend you visit the Texas Health and Human Services (“Texas HHS”) website to stay informed of the ongoing updates to Texas’s Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Program (“CHIP”) programs in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

What are Medicaid and CHIP?

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

Testing and Treatment for COVID-19

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

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

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services have released a fact sheet detailing the COVID-19 related treatments covered by Medicaid, which can be found here <https://www.cms.gov/files/document/03052020-medicaid-COVID-19-fact-sheet.pdf>. Answers to additional frequently asked questions are available at <https://www.medicaid.gov/state-resource-center/downloads/covid-19-faqs.pdf>.

CHIP Copayments

Copayments for office visits for those covered by CHIP for services provided from March 13, 2020 through July 31, 2020 have been waived.

Copayments are not required for covered services delivered via telemedicine or telehealth to those covered by CHIP. For more information, visit <https://hhs.texas.gov/services/health/coronavirus-covid-19/medicaid-chip-services-information-providers>.

Extra Medicine or Supplies

Medicaid recipients may be eligible for a 30-day supply of medication if the pharmacist cannot reach your prescriber. Please be sure to contact your pharmacy to determine eligibility and inquire about free home delivery.

In-Home Care Backup Plans

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

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

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

For more information, please review Information Letter 2020-08, which was revised June 30, 2020: <https://apps.hhs.texas.gov/providers/communications/2020/letters/IL2020-08.pdf>.

Face-to-Face Visits

Face-to-face service coordination visits have been suspended through July 31, 2020 for:

- STAR Health, STAR Kids, STAR+PLUS, STAR Managed Care Organizations, and Dual Demonstration Medicare-Medicaid Plans;

- Fee-for-service Medicaid 1915(c) waiver case managers and service coordinators for Community Living Assistance and Support Services, Texas Home Living, Deaf-Blind with Multiple Disabilities, and Home and Community-based Services;
- General Revenue service coordinators;
- Community First Choice service coordinators; and
- Pre-admission Screening and Resident Review habilitation coordinators.

See <https://hhs.texas.gov/services/health/coronavirus-covid-19/medicaid-chip-services-information-people-receiving-services> for additional information.

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

To ensure members do not experience a gap in services due to the temporary suspension of face-to-face service coordination visits for COVID-19, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission is extending enrollment in the Medically Dependent Children's Program and STAR+PLUS Home and Community Based Services for members with individual service plans expiring through July 31, 2020. The extension applies to the member's Screening and Assessment Instrument, STAR+PLUS HCBS Medical Necessity Level of Care, and corresponding individual service plans.

Dual Demonstration, STAR+PLUS, STAR Health, and STAR Kids MCOs will extend enrollment for 90 days for members with individual service plans expiring through July 31, 2020, assess the needs of these members within 90 days, and extend authorizations for waiver services for these members until the assessment occurs.

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission is also extending Intellectual Disability/Related Condition assessments and individual plans of care expiring through July 31, 2020 for individuals who are enrolled in the following programs:

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

For additional information related to the Community Living Assistance and Support and Deaf Blind with Multiple Disabilities programs, see Information Letter 2020-12

at <https://apps.hhs.texas.gov/providers/communications/2020/letters/IL2020-12.pdf>.

Information Letter 2020-11 addresses the Home and Community-based Services Program and the Texas Home Living program and is available

at <https://apps.hhs.texas.gov/providers/communications/2020/letters/IL2020-11.pdf>.

School Health and Related Services

School Health and Related Services are provided to students with a disability to ensure individuals benefit from special education programs. While schools are temporarily closed for in-person classroom attendance, schools may continue to

provide instruction utilizing alternative means of delivery. If the school is unable to provide instruction using alternative means of delivery, the services are not considered eligible for reimbursement under the School Health and Related Services program. Providers are encouraged to work with Managed Care Organizations to ensure that clients have access to needed services during this time.

For more information, see http://www.tmhp.com/News_Items/2020/06-June/06-29-20%20Multiple%20Medicaid%20COVID-19%20Flexibilities%20Extended%20Through%20July%2031,%202020.pdf.

Additionally, families are encouraged to work with their primary care provider and health plan to access needed services during this time.

Texas's 1135 Waiver

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

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

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

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RENEWING GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE, LICENSES AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

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

The Texas Department of Motor Vehicles continues to provide services by phone, postal mail, and email until further notice. Operations at county tax offices will vary from county to county.

On May 26, 2020, the DMV began providing certain in-person services by appointment only, operating at 25% capacity. According to the DMV's answers to frequently asked questions, "You will have 60 days from the date the department announces that normal operations have resumed to have your vehicle inspected and complete the registration process. To receive email notification of this announcement, please subscribe to our mailing list at https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/TXDMV/subscriber/new?topic_id=TXDMV_290." More information can be found at: <https://www.txdmv.gov/COVID-19>.

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

The Texas Department of Public Safety has extended the expiration date of Texas identification cards, driver licenses, commercial driver licenses, and election identification certificates. If your Texas identification card, driver license, commercial driver license, or election identification certificate expires on or after March 13, 2020, you are granted a waiver for the expiration date for 60 days after the Department provides further public notice that normal operations have resumed. Texas driver license and identification card holders who are eligible may conduct a renewal, address change or replacement transaction online by visiting Texas.gov. More information can be found at https://www.dps.texas.gov/director_staff/media_and_communications/pr/2020/c

What government benefits are available and how do I apply?

New applications for the Texas Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (“SNAP”), Texas Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (“TANF”), and Texas Children’s Health Insurance Policy (“CHIP”), and Medicaid are being accepted online. Visit YourTexasBenefits.com or log into the “Your Texas Benefits” mobile app. Although office locations will remain open, Texans are encouraged to apply online or through the mobile app. If you recently applied for SNAP or Medicaid or received a notice to call Texas Health and Human Services, you do not need to call or speak to anyone to complete your application. More information can be found at <https://hhs.texas.gov/services/health/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-information-people-receiving-services>.

Additionally, Governor Abbott announced an extension of emergency SNAP benefits on July 2, 2020. See the press release at https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-hhsc-announce-extension-of-emergency-snap-benefits-during-covid-19-pandemic_2.

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

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

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

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

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

How can I stay updated?

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

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TANF/SNAP BENEFITS

TEXAS TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (“TANF”)

What is TANF?

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

Eligible households receive monthly cash and Medicaid benefits.

What Benefits are available?

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

How much cash can I get per month through TANF?

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

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

*For each additional person, add \$70.

Do I qualify?

To qualify for TANF, you must be:

- A resident of Texas;
- Pregnant or responsible for a child (or multiple children) under 19 years of age;
- A U.S. national, citizen, legal alien, or permanent resident; and

- Be under-employed (working for very low wages), unemployed, or about to become unemployed.

Here is a guide for the maximum monthly income to qualify for TANF benefits:

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

* For each additional person, add \$43.

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

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

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

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

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

Where do I apply for TANF benefits?

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

What information will I need when applying?

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

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

Are there rules if I receive TANF benefits?

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

- Train for a job or look for work;
- Follow child support rules;
- Not quit a job;
- Not abuse alcohol or drugs;
- Take parental skills classes;
- Get vaccines for their child; and
- Make sure their child is going to school.

TEXAS SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (“SNAP”)

What is SNAP?

The SNAP program is a support service that helps people buy the food they need for good health. On July 2, 2020, Governor Abbott extended emergency SNAP benefits: https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-hhsc-announce-extension-of-emergency-snap-benefits-during-covid-19-pandemic_2.

How does it work?

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

Do I qualify?

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

Family size	Monthly amount of income allowed
1	\$1,718

2	\$2,326
3	\$2,933
4	\$3,541
5	\$4,149
For each additional person, add:	\$608

Adults ages 18 to 49, with no children in the home, can get SNAP for only 3 months in a 3-year period. However, the benefit period may be longer if you work at least 20 hours a week or are in a job or training program. During the COVID-19 pandemic, federal law now requires that states must stop counting months toward the 3-month time limit. Therefore, even able-bodied adults without dependents and who are not working or participating in work activities an average of 20 hours per week are not subject to time limits until further notice.

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

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

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

How much can I receive in SNAP benefits?

Eligible recipients of SNAP benefits can receive monthly benefits up to the following amounts based on family size and monthly income qualification. However, due to COVID-19, all SNAP recipients will get the maximum amount for their household size for July.

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

Can I use my SNAP benefits for grocery delivery, or do I have to go into the store?

Starting May 18, recipients of SNAP benefits will be able to order groceries online for delivery from Walmart and Amazon. As additional stores become available for grocery delivery, those additions will be listed on [YourTexasBenefits.com](https://www.yourtexasbenefits.com).

Can I use SNAP benefits to buy anything?

No. SNAP benefits cannot be used to:

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

Where do I apply for SNAP benefits?

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

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

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

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UTILITY ASSISTANCE

Texas - Austin

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

Depending on your circumstances, your utility services may not be disconnected. Texas passed the COVID-19 Electricity Relief Program and the city of Austin passed the Utility Bill Relief Program in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

What is the State of Texas COVID-19 Electricity Relief Program and am I eligible?

Under a new state program called the State of Texas COVID-19 Electricity Relief Program that is helping eligible Texans keep their power on during the COVID-19 outbreak, your energy company will waive late fees, extend payment due dates with no down payment required, reduce down payments, and defer balances if you qualify. If you've recently filed for unemployment with the Texas Workforce Commission, you're eligible. If you're the primary account holder and receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ("SNAP") or Medicaid, you're automatically enrolled and do not need to apply online or over the phone.

Apply at <https://www.txcovid19erp.org/> or call the Texas Lifeline 24/7 at (866) 454-8387. Note that, as of July 2, 2020, the program was extended through August 30, 2020.

The State of Texas has partnered with SOLIX to process all relief fund applications through the Texas Lifeline. If you call, you may experience long wait times as

agents work to serve all Texans in need of assistance. For more information, please visit <https://electricityplans.com/electricity-relief-program-covid19-bill-payment-assistance/>.

To enroll, you must:

- Enroll online at <https://www.tx-covid19erp.org/> or call Solix at (866) 454-8387
- Provide the first and last name of the account holder
- Confirm the service address with city and ZIP code

You may also be asked to provide your account number, ESID (can be found on your electricity bill), the last four digits of the account holder's Social Security number (SSN) and/or the telephone number associated with the account.

After enrolling, eligible participants will be required to submit both their electricity bill and a copy of their acceptance from the Texas Workforce Commission within 30 days to Solix via:

- Fax: (877) 215-8018
- Mail: P.O. Box 4060, Killeen, Texas 76540-4060
- Email: tx_covid-19electricity_relief@solixinc.com

What is the Utility Bill Relief Program and am I eligible?

On April 9, 2020, the city of Austin passed the "Utility Bill Relief" in response to COVID-19. Please find details on the bill at <https://austinenergy.com/ae/about/news/coa-bill-relief>.

The City of Austin has suspended utility shutoffs for nonpayment and all late fees are waived until September 30, 2020. Regulatory electric charges are reduced by 32% for residential (set at 7.814 cents/kWh for usage above 1,000 kWh) and commercial customers, which will result in about a 4% reduction of the total bill. This change for residential customers is in effect immediately and on May 1, 2020 for commercial customers. Both reductions will extend under September 30, 2020. If your utilities have been disconnected, you should call the Customer Care Contact Center at (512) 494-9400 to get reconnected. The press release is available at <https://austinenergy.com/ae/about/news/news-releases/2020/city-of-austin-suspends-utility-disconnects-amid-COVID-19>.

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

- CenterPoint Energy
- Atmos Energy
- Texas Gas Services

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

Can I get help paying my utilities?

Austin Energy, which manages customer care and billing for all City of Austin utilities, offers several programs to help customers facing temporary and long-

term financial difficulties and serious medical problems. The following Customer Assistance Programs are available to eligible customers:

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

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

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

- **Utility Bill Discounts:** Austin Energy provides waivers for electric and water customer charges and discounts on electrical and water volume usage charges through September 30, 2020.

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

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

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

- **Financial Support Plus 1:** Austin Energy provides emergency financial aid to customers who are temporarily unable to pay their utility bill due to unexpected emergencies, which now includes hardship due to COVID-19, through September 30, 2020. This program has received additional funding.

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

- **Services for the Medically Vulnerable:** If someone in your household has a long-term disease, ailment, or critical illness, you may be eligible to join the City of Austin's registry of medically vulnerable customers. Eligible customers receive additional time to pay bills and personal case management from the City of Austin. To check eligibility requirements, visit <https://austinenergy.com/ae/residential/your-bill/customer-assistance-programs/services-for-medically-vulnerable>.

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

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

bill/customer-assistance-programs.

How do I make my utility payments?

Both City of Austin walk-in utility payments centers remain closed as of July 5, 2020.

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

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

For a list of authorized pay stations and available drop boxes, visit <https://austinenergy.com/ae/commercial/your-bill/bill-payment-options/payment-locations>.

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

- **Austin Energy:** Residential and commercial customers can contact the Customer Care Center at (512) 494-9400 to make payment arrangements, determine eligibility for Customer Assistance Programs, to start, stop, or reconnect services, or ask any service-related questions.
- **Texas Gas Services:** Customers in need of assistance can call (800) 700-2443 for self-service or to speak to a representative. For updates related to COVID-19, please visit <https://www.texasgasservice.com/coronavirus>. Disconnect activity is suspended through July 11, 2020, unless otherwise extended.
- **CenterPoint Energy:** Natural gas customers who would like to discuss payment options should call (800) 752-8036. Customers may also request assistance and request a payment arrangement or extension online at <https://www.centerpointenergy.com>. CenterPoint's COVID-19 response is available at <https://www.centerpointenergy.com/en-us/corporate/covid19>.
- **Atmos Energy:** Customers with any questions are encouraged to call (888) 286-6700. Atmos Energy also offers help paying bills and budget billing programs. For updates related to COVID-19, please visit <https://www.atmosenergy.com/safety/COVID-19>.

Texas - Dallas

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

Yes. The Public Utility Commission of Texas has enacted measures intended to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 hardships on power, water, and sewer customers statewide. On March 26, 2020, the Commission issued an Order Related to COVID-19 Electricity Relief Program, which "authorize[d] a customer-assistance program for certain residential customers of electric service in areas of the state open to customer choice." A copy of the order is available at https://interchange.puc.texas.gov/Documents/50664_107_1057678.PDF. Information on the COVID-19 Electricity Relief Program is available at <http://www.puc.texas.gov/covid-19/>; and <https://www.txcovid19erp.org/>.

Can residential electric providers disconnect your service due to nonpayment?

No. The COVID-19 Electricity Relief Program “creates a temporary exemption from disconnections for nonpayment for eligible residential customers in areas open to customer choice,” which includes Dallas. For more information, visit <https://electricityplans.com/electricity-relief-program-covid19-bill-payment-assistance/>; and <https://www.texastribune.org/2020/03/26/texas-bans-utility-shut-offs-during-coronavirus-outbreak/>. Further, the Public Utility Commission of Texas will require retail electric providers “to offer deferred payment plans to customers who have experienced financial hardship due to the state of disaster.” A customer who has entered into a deferred payment plan, however, may be unable to buy electricity from another retail electric provider until their debt has been paid. https://interchange.puc.texas.gov/Documents/50664_107_1057678.PDF

Who do I call if my utilities have been shut off?

Water: Dallas Water Utilities has suspended water service disconnects until further notice. If you have been financially impacted by COVID-19, contact Water Customer Service at (214) 651-1441 to make payment arrangements.

Electricity: Under the COVID-19 Electricity Relief Plan, electricity providers must (1) immediately offer a deferred payment plan to any residential customer who requests it and (2) suspend disconnections for residential customers who have been added to the state’s unemployment and low-income list due to the effects of COVID-19 (to enroll in the list, contact the state’s low-income list administrator at (866) 454-8387).

How do residential customers sign up for relief?

The customer must contact the Low-Income List Administrator (“LILA”). The residential customer must provide LILA an attestation of unemployment (to be followed by documentation of unemployment within 30 days) and sufficient information to identify the customer’s electric service account (e.g., service address, account number, and telephone number). As of July 5, 2020, the program is available through August 31, 2020: <https://www.opuc.texas.gov/coronavirus.html>.

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

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

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

How long will this relief last?

The COVID-19 Electricity Relief Program is currently set to end on August 31, 2020; however, it may be extended if the Public Utility Commission of Texas determines that the need for the program continues to exist: <https://www.puc.texas.gov/agency/resources/pubs/news/2020/PUCTX-PR-ERPupdate-07022020.pdf>. Additionally, the Commission has recognized that the current state of disaster continues to bring new challenges that may require modifications to the program.

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

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

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

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

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

Ambit Energy: The State of Texas has created the COVID-19 Electricity Relief Program to help protect customers who are low income or unemployed as a result of COVID-19. Eligible customers will temporarily receive protection from disconnection. Those who receive assistance through SNAP or Medicaid should be automatically enrolled in this relief program. Those who have recently filed for unemployment with the Texas Workforce Commission may be eligible as well and should call to confirm eligibility with the third-party administrator, Solix.

To enroll, you must:

- Enroll online by visiting <https://www.txcovid19erp.org/> or by calling Solix at (866) 454-8387
- Provide the first and last name of the account holder
- Confirm the service address with city and zip code
- You may also need to provide your account number, ESID (can be found on your electricity bill), the last four digits of the account holder's social security number (SSN) and/or the telephone number associated with the account.

After enrolling, eligible participants will be required to submit both their electricity bill and a copy of their acceptance from the Texas Workforce Commission within 30 days to Solix via:

- Fax: (877) 215-8018
- Mail: P.O. Box 4060, Killeen, Texas 76540-4060
- Email: tx_covid-19electricity_relief@solixinc.com

For additional details and online enrollment, please visit <https://www.ambitenergy.com/covid19-relief>.

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

AT&T: AT&T committed to extending certain customer relief programs during COVID-19 through June 30, 2020. As of July 5, 2020, AT&T has not re-extended its relief programs. Please check AT&T's COVID-19 Consumers Archive for updated information: https://about.att.com/pages/COVID-19/consumers_archive.html

Currently, AT&T Internet customers will not be charged for Internet overage charges through September 30, 2020. <https://about.att.com/pages/COVID-19.html>. Should you find yourself in financial trouble and unable to pay your bill, contact AT&T at (800) 288-2020 or dial 611 from your AT&T device for wireless.

Atmos Energy: Atmos Energy has temporarily suspended natural gas disconnections for non-payment as well as certain other work including construction projects that might otherwise temporarily interrupt service. If you have been financially impacted by COVID-19, Atmos has programs to help, including Sharing the Warmth and Budget Billing.

- Sharing the Warmth: <https://www.atmosenergy.com/customer-service/bill-payment-assistance>.
- Budget Billing: <https://www.atmosenergy.com/customer-service/budget-billing>.

For more information from Atmos, customers should call (888) 286-6700.

Charter Communications: As of July 5, 2020, Charter has not extended its 60-day free broadband internet & WiFi offer for households with students (K-College) and educators who do not already have a Spectrum account that ended June 30, 2020. Should Charter extend this program, you may enroll by calling (844) 488-8395. For more information, see <https://corporate.charter.com/newsroom/charter-extends-free-60-day-spectrum-broadband-internet-and-wifi-offer-through-june-30>; <https://corporate.charter.com/newsroom/covid-19-update-charter-continues-to-keep-customers-connected>.

Charter also has not extended its pledge to not terminate service or charge late fees for residential or small business customers who face difficult economic circumstances related to COVID-19 through June 30, 2020. Charter also will continue to offer Spectrum Internet Assist, Charter's high-speed, low-cost broadband program for eligible low-income households.

For more information, please visit <https://corporate.charter.com/newsroom/charter-covid-19-update>.

Comcast: As of July 5, 2020, Comcast has not extended its commitment to not disconnect a customer's Xfinity Internet, Xfinity Mobile, or Xfinity Voice service or will waive late fees through June 30, 2020. For more up-to-date information, visit Comcast's COVID-19 response page at https://www.xfinity.com/prepare?rid=18645124915&mid=20200627_Adhoc_CM_Crisis_COVIDUpdate7; <https://corporate.19>.

However, you may contact Xfinity to create a flexible payment option. Comcast also has opened access to its Xfinity Wi-Fi hotspots that are located in businesses and outdoor locations across the country to anyone who needs them for free, including to non-Xfinity internet subscribers. For a map of Xfinity Wi-Fi hotspots, visit <https://www.xfinity.com/mobile/network/map>. Once at a hotspot, consumers should select the "xfinitywifi" network name in the list of available hotspots and then launch a browser.

Comcast also permanently increased speeds for all of its new and existing Internet Essentials customers across the country.

Dallas Water Utilities: Dallas Water Utilities has suspended water service disconnects until further notice. Customers who are financially impacted by COVID-19 should contact Water Customer Service at (214) 651-1441 to make payment arrangements.

Discount Power: The State of Texas has created the COVID-19 Electricity Relief Program to help protect customers who are low income or unemployed as a result of COVID-19. Eligible customers will temporarily receive protection from disconnection. Those who receive assistance through SNAP or Medicaid should be automatically enrolled in this relief program. Those who have recently filed for unemployment with the Texas Workforce Commission may be eligible as well and should call to confirm eligibility with the third-party administrator, Solix.

To enroll, you must:

- Enroll online by visiting <https://www.txcovid19erp.org/> or by calling Solix at (866) 454-8387
- Provide the first and last name of the account holder
- Confirm the service address with city and zip code
- You may also need to provide your account number, ESID (can be found on your electricity bill), the last four digits of the account holder's social security number (SSN) and/or the telephone number associated with the account.

After enrolling, eligible participants will be required to submit both their electricity bill and a copy of their acceptance from the Texas Workforce Commission within 30 days to Solix via:

- Fax: (877) 215-8018
- Mail: P.O. Box 4060, Killeen, Texas 76540-4060
- Email: tx_covid-19electricity_relief@solixinc.com

For additional details and online enrollment, please visit https://www.discountpowertx.com/en_US/Page/coronavirus.jsp.

Green Mountain Energy: The State of Texas has created the COVID-19 Electricity Relief Program to help protect customers who are low income or unemployed as a result of COVID-19. Eligible customers will temporarily receive protection from disconnection. Those who receive assistance through SNAP or Medicaid should be automatically enrolled in this relief program. Those who have recently filed for unemployment with the Texas Workforce Commission may be eligible as well and should call to confirm eligibility with the third-party administrator, Solix.

To enroll, you must:

- Enroll online by visiting <https://www.txcovid19erp.org/> or by calling Solix at (866) 454-8387
- Provide the first and last name of the account holder
- Confirm the service address with city and zip code
- You may also need to provide your account number, ESID (can be found on your electricity bill), the last four digits of the account holder's social security number (SSN) and/or the telephone number associated with the account.

After enrolling, eligible participants will be required to submit both their electricity bill and a copy of their acceptance from the Texas Workforce Commission within 30 days to Solix via:

- Fax: (877) 215-8018
- Mail: P.O. Box 4060, Killeen, Texas 76540-4060
- Email: tx_covid-19electricity_relief@solixinc.com

After enrolling, Green Mountain Energy requests that you contact them at <https://www.greenmountainenergy.com/customer-service-center/contact-us/>.

For more information, please

visit: <https://www.greenmountainenergy.com/2020/03/coronavirus-and-our-customers>.

- If requesting a payment extension, you must call prior to the disconnection notice due date to request the extension. A payment extension allows extra time beyond your original due date to pay your balance without fear of disconnection. However, you may be assessed a late fee, a disconnection notice fee (if you received a disconnection notice) and a disconnect recovery fee.
- For those looking to sign up for a deferred payment plan, note that as part of the COVID-19 Electricity Relief Program, deferred payment plans will be offered to all customers, upon request. A deferred payment plan allows you to pay the balance you owe in installments along with your regular monthly bill. A reminder that if you agree to a deferred payment plan, you will not be able to switch to another electricity provider until your deferred balance is paid in full. Amounts you owe for enrollment deposits, final bills and write-off amounts may not be included.

Any customer who requests a deferred payment plan should note that they need to (1) pay 50% of what you owe up front and (2) be prepared to pay the rest in installments along with your next few current monthly bills.

Fort Worth Water Department: The Fort Worth Water Department is temporarily suspending disconnections due to nonpayment through September 7, 2020. Additionally, the Department started assessing late fees for nonpayment on July 1, 2020; however, the 10% late fee will not apply to previous balances accrued on bills due between April 1, 2020 and June 30, 2020. Customers experiencing financial hardship due to the COVID-19 event should call (817) 392-4477 between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. to make payment arrangements. More information is available at <http://fortworthtexas.gov/news/2020/06/Water-Shutoffs-Resume/>; and <http://fortworthtexas.gov/COVID-19/>.

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

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

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

For more information, please visit: <https://news.reliant.com/press-releases/press-release-details/2020/Reliant-Helping-Customers-During-Coronavirus-Pandemic/default.aspx>; and <https://www.reliant.com/en/about/community/covid-19-support.jsp>.

Stream: The State of Texas has created the COVID-19 Electricity Relief Program to help protect customers who are low income or unemployed as a result of COVID-19. Eligible customers will temporarily receive protection from disconnection. Those who receive assistance through SNAP or Medicaid should be automatically enrolled in this relief program. Those who have recently filed for unemployment with the Texas Workforce Commission may be eligible as well and should call to confirm eligibility with the third-party administrator, Solix.

To enroll, you must:

- Enroll online by visiting <https://www.txcovid19erp.org/> or by calling Solix at (866) 454-8387
- Provide the first and last name of the account holder
- Confirm the service address with city and zip code
- You may also need to provide your account number, ESID (can be found on your electricity bill), the last four digits of the account holder's social security number (SSN) and/or the telephone number associated with the account.

After enrolling, eligible participants will be required to submit both their electricity bill and a copy of their acceptance from the Texas Workforce Commission within 30 days to Solix via:

- Fax: (877) 215-8018
- Mail: P.O. Box 4060, Killeen, Texas 76540-4060
- Email: tx_covid-19electricity_relief@solixinc.com

After enrolling, Stream requests that you contact them at <https://mystream.com/en/contact>.

- If requesting a payment extension, you must call prior to the disconnection notice due date to request the extension. A payment extension allows extra time beyond your original due date to pay your balance without fear of disconnection. However, you may be assessed a late fee, a disconnection notice fee (if you received a disconnection notice) and a disconnect recovery fee. However, you will not be charged a 5% late fee penalty for delinquent bills for electricity service, as a result of the COVID-19 Electricity Relief Program detailed above
- For those looking to sign up for a deferred payment plan, note that as part of the COVID-19 Electricity Relief Program, deferred payment plans will be offered to all customers, upon request. A deferred payment plan allows you to pay the balance you owe in installments along with your regular monthly bill. A reminder that if you agree to a deferred payment plan, you will not be able to switch to another electricity provider until your deferred balance is paid in full. Amounts you owe for enrollment deposits, final bills and write-off amounts may not be included. Any customer who requests a deferred payment plan should note that they need to (1) pay 50% of what you owe up front and (2) be prepared to pay the rest in installments along with your next few current monthly bills (invoices).

For more information, please visit: <https://mystream.com/blog/Coronavirus-and-Stream>.

TriEagle Energy: Under a new state program that is helping eligible Texans keep their power on, TriEagle Energy will waive late fees, extend payment due dates with no down payment required, reduce down payments, and defer balances. If you've recently filed for unemployment with the Texas Workforce Commission, you're eligible. Apply at <https://www.txcovid19erp.org/> or call the Texas Lifeline 24/7 at (866) 454-8387. If you're the primary account holder and receive SNAP or Medicaid, you're automatically enrolled and do not need to apply online or over the phone. The State of Texas has partnered with SOLIX to process all relief fund applications through the Texas Lifeline. If you call, you may experience long wait times as agents work to serve all Texans in need of assistance. For more information, please visit <http://www.trieagleenergy.com/TX/CustomerService/FAQ.aspx>.

TXU Energy: Under a new state program that is helping eligible Texans keep their power on, TXU Energy will waive late fees, extend payment due dates with no down payment required, reduce down payments, and defer balances. If you've recently filed for unemployment with the Texas Workforce Commission, you're eligible. Apply at <https://www.txcovid19erp.org/> or call the Texas Lifeline 24/7 at (866) 454-8387. If you're the primary account holder and receive SNAP or Medicaid, you're automatically enrolled and do not need to apply online or over the phone. The State of Texas has partnered with SOLIX to process all relief fund applications through the Texas Lifeline. If you call, you may experience long wait times as agents work to serve all Texans in need of assistance. For more information, please visit <https://www.txu.com/help-center/covid-19.aspx>.

If you need payment flexibility, call TXU Energy at (800) 242-9113 if you need more time to pay. TXU Energy can work with you on a deferred payment plan. With a

one-time down payment, you can spread your remaining balance over the next five months.

If you or someone you know needs bill payment assistance, additional support is available through TXU Energy Aid. Call 2-1-1 or visit 211texas.org and search Electricity Bill Assistance to find programs in your area.

Verizon: As of July 5, 2020, Verizon has not extended its no late fee or termination of service program that was through June 30, 2020. If you contacted Verizon by June 30, 2020 to protect your account, you have been automatically enrolled in a repayment program: <https://www.verizon.com/support/residential/announcements/covid-19>.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.verizonwireless.com/support/covid-19-faqs/>.

XOOM Energy: If you have been financially impacted by COVID-19, contact XOOM Energy directly to learn about payment extensions and deferred payment plan options by phone at (888) 997-8979 or online at <https://xoomenergy.com/en/contact-us>. Also, the State of Texas has created the COVID-19 Electricity Relief Program (ERP) to help protect customers experiencing financial hardship as a result of COVID-19. Eligible customers will temporarily receive protection from disconnection. Those who receive assistance through SNAP or Medicaid are automatically enrolled in this relief program. Those who have recently filed for unemployment with the Texas Workforce Commission may be eligible as well and should call to confirm eligibility with the Public Utility Commission of Texas' third-party administrator of the COVID-19 ERP, Solix.

To enroll, you must:

- Enroll online at <https://www.txcovid19erp.org/> or call Solix at (866) 454-8387
- Provide the first and last name of the account holder
- Confirm the service address with city and ZIP code

You may also be asked to provide your account number, ESID (can be found on your electricity bill), the last four digits of the account holder's Social Security number (SSN) and/or the telephone number associated with the account.

After enrolling, eligible participants will be required to submit both their electricity bill and a copy of their acceptance from the Texas Workforce Commission within 30 days to Solix via:

- Fax: (877) 215-8018
- Mail: P.O. Box 4060, Killeen, Texas 76540-4060
- Email: tx_covid-19electricity_relief@solixinc.com

Contact XOOM Energy to let them know that you have attempted to enroll with Solix. Also, if your payment due date is coming up, contact XOOM Energy so they can work with you on a deferred payment plan. Please note, that you will be eligible for a deferred payment plan with XOOM Energy even if your enrollment with Solix is not successful. If you need help paying your bill, please

visit <https://xoomenergy.com/en/coronavirus-health-and-safety-tips> or call customer service at (888) 997-8979.

For more information, please visit <https://xoomenergy.com/en/coronavirus-health-and-safety-tips>.

Texas - Houston

Can I seek help paying for utility bills?

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

Utility Provider

- Most utility companies provide payment assistance and/or payment plans for bills in certain situations. Such situations include customers who are experiencing temporary financial difficulties, including unexpected unemployment, sudden illness, or an emergency or personal crisis. For more information, visit https://www.needhelppayingbills.com/html/energy_assistance_program.html
- Contact your utility company immediately after you know you will not be able to pay your bill, not after the service has been disconnected. This link provides descriptions of the assistance from the main utility companies in Texas and contact information for those companies: https://www.needhelppayingbills.com/html/texas_utility_and_cooling_assistance.html

Charity

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

Government – State of Texas COVID-19 Electricity Relief Program

A new state program called the State of Texas COVID-19 Electricity Relief Program is helping eligible Texans keep their power on during the COVID-19 outbreak. Under this program, your energy company will waive late fees, extend payment due dates with no down payment required, reduce down payments, and defer balances if you qualify. If you've recently filed for unemployment with the Texas Workforce Commission, you're eligible. If you're the primary account holder and receive SNAP or Medicaid, you're automatically enrolled and do not need to apply online or over the phone.

Apply at <https://www.txcovid19erp.org/> or call the Texas Lifeline 24/7 at (866) 454-8387.

The State of Texas has partnered with SOLIX to process all relief fund applications through the Texas Lifeline. If you call, you may experience long wait times as agents work to serve all Texans in need of assistance. For more information,

please visit <https://electricityplans.com/electricity-relief-program-covid19-bill-payment-assistance/>.

To enroll, you must:

- Enroll online at <https://www.txcovid19erp.org/> or call Solix at (866) 454-8387
- Provide the first and last name of the account holder
- Confirm the service address with city and ZIP code

You may also be asked to provide your account number, ESID (can be found on your electricity bill), the last four digits of the account holder's Social Security number (SSN) and/or the telephone number associated with the account.

After enrolling, eligible participants will be required to submit both their electricity bill and a copy of their acceptance from the Texas Workforce Commission within 30 days to Solix via:

- Fax: (877) 215-8018
- Mail: P.O. Box 4060, Killeen, Texas 76540-4060
- Email: tx_covid-19electricity_relief@solixinc.com

Government – Other Programs

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

BakerRipley

Contact Information:

- UtilityAssistance@BakerRipley.org
- <https://www.bakerripley.org/services/utility-assistance-program>
- (713) 590-2327
- 3838 Aberdeen Way, Houston, Texas 77025

Eligibility Requirements:

- Must be a resident of Harris County;

