



# IOWA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

May 22, 2020

## **We are here to help.**

*COVID-19 has affected various aspects of life for Iowa residents, communities, and businesses. Information surrounding COVID-19 is rapidly changing and can be overwhelming. To help Iowans navigate information, the Iowa Department of Human Rights has compiled some resources about health and safety, language access, food, employment, grants, and more that we will be sending out in a weekly email. We hope these resources will help Iowans stay safe, healthy, informed, and resilient during these challenging times.*

During the pandemic, it is especially important for us to serve as a catalyst of information to provide support and resources to Iowans, particularly vulnerable Iowans who are experiencing additional challenges, to help them understand the state's response to COVID-19.

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## **COVID-19 Tests Expanded for More Iowans**

### **Testlowa-Testing, Sites, Schedule**

[Press Release](#)

Testlowa is expanding the testing criteria, and the COVID-19 test will be provided to anyone who is interested in being tested, regardless of symptoms or potential exposure to the virus. To take or retake the assessment, go to the website at [Testlowa.com](https://testlowa.com).

Visit <https://coronavirus.iowa.gov/> for a list of Testlowa sites, schedule, and COVID-19 information in Iowa.

Call Testlowa with questions about testing: 515-575-2131 or 844-844-1561 (toll free). Lines are open 8am - 8pm 7 days a week (except Holidays).

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## **Governor Reynolds Signs Proclamation to Reopen More Businesses**

On May 20, 2020, Governor Kim Reynolds issued a proclamation allowing more businesses to open. Each business, venue, and activity must follow specific guidelines outlined in the proclamation. Beginning May 22, movie theaters, museums, aquariums, zoos, and wedding venues may reopen with appropriate public health measures. Swimming pools may reopen for lap swimming and swimming lessons. Effective June 1, schools may reopen school-sponsored activities, including baseball and softball.

Guidance for youth sports and how to protect players, families, and communities:

- [Iowa Department of Education](#)
- [CDC Considerations for Youth Sports](#)

To view the full proclamation, click [here](#). In partnership with the Iowa Department of Public Health, visit the Iowa Department of Human Rights' [Language Access](#) page for translated summaries of the proclamation in multiple languages,

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## **Need Help with Your Home Energy Bill?**

### **Utility Disconnections Can Resume**

[Iowa Utilities Board News Release 5/20/20](#)

The Iowa Utilities Board announced that certain conditions and requirements must be met before disconnection of customers' utility service can resume.

Starting May 28, municipal utilities providing electric and natural gas service and electric cooperatives may resume disconnection of service, subject to certain conditions and requirements.

Starting July 1, investor-owned utilities that are rate-regulated by the Iowa Utilities Board can resume disconnections of natural gas, electric, and water service, subject to conditions and requirements.

There are exceptions for a customer or a member of the customer's household who tested positive for COVID-19 or for a customer who has a health condition that requires the use of electric or natural gas service.

The order uses a phased in approach to allow customers time to seek assistance or enter into a payment agreement with the utility.

An individual who receives a disconnection notice or who has difficulty paying a utility bill is encouraged to contact their local community action agency.

### **Home Energy Assistance Application Deadline Extended to June 30, 2020**

Iowa families are facing many challenges as they cope with the COVID-19 virus. Some have lost jobs or had their hours of employment reduced. These circumstances could lead to difficulty in paying their utility bill.

There is help available through the Iowa Department of Human Rights' network of local community action agencies that have offices in all 99 counties. Families can apply for the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) that can help pay a portion of an eligible household's utility bill. Those who have not already applied, or who are facing disconnection, are encouraged to do so at this time.

The deadline for individuals to apply has been extended to June 30, 2020.

Community action agencies also have other types of help available, such as food and clothing pantries, and other services. You can find a link to information about your local community action agency by going to the Iowa Department of Human Rights' website at <https://humanrights.iowa.gov/dcaa/where-apply> or by dialing 2-1-1.

The extended LIHEAP application deadline information is available in multiple languages on the Iowa Department of Human Rights' website at <https://humanrights.iowa.gov/covid->

## Beware of Scams

### Utility Scams

If you receive a call, email, or an unscheduled visit from someone claiming to be from your utility company, the Iowa Utilities Board reminds customers never to provide credit card numbers or other personal information when receiving suspicious contact or demands for immediate payment. Customers should contact their utility company directly regarding payment and service.

Customers can report suspicious scam activity to the [Consumer Protection Division of the Iowa Attorney General's Office](#) or by calling 888-777-4590.

For more information, visit the Iowa Utility Board's website: <https://bit.ly/3g3OpfK>

Scammers are using a number of methods to defraud consumers using scams and misinformation about testing, treatment, and charities. The Iowa Department of Human Rights has compiled a Q&A on how to protect yourself against coronavirus myths, rumors, and scams at <https://humanrights.iowa.gov/covid-19/myth-busters>.

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## Take the 2020 Census

The Iowa Department of Human Rights reminds Iowans to complete the 2020 Census. The Department's governor-appointed commissioners are raising awareness in their local communities on the value of completing the census.

Getting a complete and accurate count of the state's population affects federal funding, congressional representation, and impact on communities. The census asks questions about people living in the household, race, age, and sex. Census data determines how federal funding is allocated to states and local communities for health, education, transportation, and more vital programs. You can respond by mail, online, or over the phone.

To help everyone respond to the census, visit the U.S. Census Bureau's website for translated information and videos in multiple languages, American Sign Language, and braille and large print.

- Language Support <https://2020census.gov/en/languages.html>
  - U.S. Census 2020 <https://www.census.gov/en.html>
  - Iowa Data Center <https://www.iowadatacenter.org/2020census>
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## I Care Mask Challenge

### Wearing a mask in public

Wearing a mask is key to protecting your health and the health of everyone around you. The I Care Mask Challenge was developed by the Genesis Youth Foundation, in cooperation with Immigrant and Refugee serving organizations. This [video](#) gives mask wearing advice for Iowans in multiple languages. You can learn more about the Genesis Youth Foundation at <https://www.genesisyouthfoundation.org/>.

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# Voting Access and Poll Workers Needed!

## Vote by absentee ballot in the June 2nd primary: deadline to request is today!



Be [#VoterReady](#) for the Iowa June 2nd primary election. A voting Iowan is an Iowan empowered to influence and create change at the federal, state, and local level, and casting your ballot is as easy [as registering](#), [requesting an absentee ballot](#), and [voting](#).

The Iowa Secretary of State's Office is encouraging Iowans to [vote absentee](#) in the June 2nd primary to help reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. The deadline to [request an absentee ballot by mail](#) is **TODAY**, Friday May 22,

2020. You can track your ballot [here](#). You can also download the form and find other options to vote by visiting their website at <https://sos.iowa.gov>.

## Voting with Assistance

The Iowa Secretary of State's Office also has information to assist voters with disabilities. For more information about accessible voting locations, curbside voting, accessible voting equipment, and accessible services, please visit the Secretary of State's page at <https://sos.iowa.gov/disabilities.html>.

## Poll Workers Needed!

Helping voters vote, answering their questions, guiding them through the voting process and guarding the integrity of our elections is paramount in determining the will of the voters in selecting our leaders.

Most precinct election officials are in their 60s and 70s and their vulnerability to COVID-19 puts them in a high-risk population.

Would you sign up to serve in their place? If you're interested in serving, please complete this form: <https://pollworker.iowa.gov/#form>.

Learn more at: <https://pollworker.iowa.gov/>.



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## Workplace Guidance

### U.S. Department of Labor provides guidance on paid leave related to COVID-19

 **Quick BENEFITS TIPS FROM DOL**

# How much paid leave can employees take?

In general, applies to you if you are an employee of either a private employer with fewer than 500 employees or a covered public sector employer



|   |            |  |  |
|---|------------|--|--|
|  <p>You are following a federal, state, or local quarantine or stay-at-home order or are quarantined by a health care provider</p>               | <b>OR</b>  | <p>You have COVID-19 symptoms and are seeking a diagnosis</p>  | <p><b>TIME OFF</b><br/>Up to two weeks or 80 hours of paid sick leave at higher of regular rate or minimum wage*</p>     |
|  <p>You must care for someone under a federal, state, or local quarantine or stay-at-home order or are quarantined by a health care provider</p> | <b>OR</b>  | <p>You must care for your child whose school, child care provider, or place of care is unavailable due to COVID-19</p> | <p><b>TIME OFF</b><br/>Up to two weeks or 80 hours of paid sick leave at higher of 2/3 regular rate or minimum wage*</p> |
|  <p>You must care for your child whose school, child care provider, or place of care is unavailable due to COVID-19</p>                          | <b>AND</b> | <p>You've been employed at least 30 calendar days</p>  | <p><b>TIME OFF</b><br/>Up to 10 additional weeks of family leave paid at 2/3 regular rate*</p>                           |

\*Paid leave is capped at specific maximum amounts per worker

**Learn more at [dol.gov/FFCRA](https://dol.gov/FFCRA)**



(Click [here for the PDF version](#) of this infographic.)

For written guidance: <https://blog.dol.gov/2020/05/11/are-you-eligible-for-covid-19-paid-leave>

For general information on COVID-19 policies and law in the workplace from the U.S. Department of Labor:

- English (with links to additional languages as you scroll down the page): <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic>
- Español: <https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/spanish-speakingtopic>

## Help Lines

### Do you or a loved one need help?

If you or a loved one are facing a problem with alcohol, drugs, gambling, mental health or suicidal thoughts, [YourLifelowa.org](https://www.yourlifelowa.org) is available for lowans to chat live, text, or call and get reliable information and treatment options, and find nearby help. Call: (855) 581-8111; Text: (855) 895-8398 or visit: <https://yourlifelowa.org/>

Yourlifelowa also offers information to assist parents and teens: [Help for Parents](#)  
[Help for Teens](#)

### Mental Health Crisis Lines

- **Disaster Distress Helpline** ([SAMHSA](#))  
Call 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** ([Link](#))  
Call 800-273-8255 or [Chat with Lifeline](#)
- **Crisis Textline** ([Link](#))  
Text HOME to 741741
- **Veterans Crisis Line** ([VA](#))  
Call 800-273-8255 or text 838255



### **Iowa Victim Services Still Available During COVID-19**

All 24 victim service programs in Iowa continue to offer 24/7 free and confidential support and resources. Most of these services are being done remotely, including survivor support groups, counseling, and more. To find a victim service program in your area, visit: <https://www.iowacasa.org/help> or <https://www.icadv.org/iowa-victim-service-programs>. For culturally specific programs, visit: <https://www.iowacasa.org/culturally-specific-programs> or <https://www.icadv.org/culturally-specific>.

If you need immediate assistance, contact the Iowa Victim Service Call Center at 1-800-770-1650 or text IOWAHELP to 20121. Helpline and textline services are available in English and Spanish.

### **Crisis Response Helpline**

In partnership with Immigrant and Refugee Led Faith and Community Organizations, EMBARC has created a [crisis response website](#) to provide accurate and timely information about the coronavirus. News is shared via translations, video, and audio recordings in ethnic languages.

For more information, visit: <https://sites.google.com/embarciowa.org/embarc-crisis-response/home>.

### **COVID-19 Hotlines**

- COVID-19 Questions for Individuals: Dial 2-1-1
- Iowa Multilingual COVID-19 Phone Line: 877.558.2609
- Legal Information Hotline for COVID-19: 800.332.0419
- Iowa Dept. of Corrections COVID-19 Hotline: 515.373.5457

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## **Visiting the Outdoors this Weekend?**

In efforts to reduce the spread of COVID-19, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is encouraging the use of the online services for purchasing licenses, submitting applications, payments and other daily tasks and interaction with DNR staff.

The **FREE Go Outdoors Iowa app** is available at the App store and Google Play. The Go Outdoors Iowa app allows users to purchase and view hunting and fishing licenses and submit harvest and quota reports, all from your cell phone.

- **Full list of DNR's online services:** <https://www.iowadnr.gov/about-dnr/about-dnr/online-services-databases>.
- **Up-to-date information on DNR services, facilities and events impacted by Covid-19:** <https://www.iowadnr.gov/About-DNR/Covid-19>.
- **Technical information for regulated businesses in regards to Covid-19:** <https://www.iowadnr.gov/About-DNR/Social-Media-Press-Room/Disaster-Assistance#3057321-covid---19-outbreak>.

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## Other Resources and Information

### **Iowa Economic Development Authority seeking input from businesses and organizations on impact of COVID-19**

The Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) is inviting businesses and organizations to help Iowa's economic recovery and growth by completing a new survey developed by the University of Northern Iowa's (UNI) Institute for Decision Making and Strategic Marketing Services. Participation is vital to state efforts to understand the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on Iowa businesses and organizations. IEDA will use survey results to inform public policy on recovery and growth, including potential resources for businesses and organizations. The deadline to complete the survey is Friday, May 29 at 5 p.m. Click [here](#) for the survey.

### **Iowa Department of Transportation seeking input**

The Iowa Department of Transportation is seeking input from Iowans concerning the FY 2021 - 2023 Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) goals for the Federal Highway Administration funded projects. The Iowa DOT is seeking public participation on its goal-setting process from minority, women, general contractor groups, community organizations, and other officials. The next input meeting will be held Thursday, June 18, from 1:00-2:00 p.m. View the Iowa DOT's [news release](#).

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### **Previous Newsletters**

[May 15, 2020](#)

[May 8, 2020](#)

[May 1, 2020](#)

[April 24, 2020](#)

[April 17, 2020](#)

[April 10, 2020](#)

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Are there other resources we should know about? Let us know.

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**Iowa Department of Human Rights**

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515-242-5640 or 1-800-351-4659

<https://humanrights.iowa.gov/contact-us-0>