



# IOWA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

June 6, 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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## **Iowa Department of Human Rights Receives CARES Act Funding to Help Low-Income Families**

The Iowa Department of Human Rights' Division of Community Action Agencies received approximately \$10.8 million to supplement its regular annual [Community Services Block Grant](#). The funds will be used to support Iowa's statewide network of community action agencies to help prevent, prepare for, or respond to the coronavirus. Many agencies are already involved with food banks, food delivery initiatives, clothing, diapers, and addressing other emergency needs for households with limited income.

Additionally, approximately \$4.2 million was received to supplement the annual Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP). The LIHEAP program assists households with a portion of their home heating bills, particularly those facing disconnection or who have trouble paying their utility bill. Interested persons can apply for LIHEAP (deadline June 30) and other assistance at their local community action agency. Information about your local community action agency can be found on the Iowa Department of Human Rights' website at <https://humanrights.iowa.gov/dcaa/where-apply>.

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## **Eviction and Foreclosure Prevention Program**

The COVID-19 Eviction and Foreclosure Prevention Program will provide short-term relief to income-eligible renters and homeowners who are at risk of eviction or foreclosure due to a documented COVID-19 related loss of income after March 17, 2020. There is a

maximum of \$3,200 for rental assistance, and a maximum of \$3,000 for mortgage payment assistance. The [Iowa Community Action Association](#) (ICAA) and Iowa's local community action agencies are partnering with the Iowa Finance Authority (IFA) and Iowa Workforce Development to assist in reviewing and approving rental relief applications, and will assist renters with their applications.

Additional program details and the application are available at [Iowa Finance Authority's](#) website.

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## COVID-19 Related Legal Information

The Iowa State Bar Association, Iowa Legal Aid and the Polk County Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project are co-hosting the next [People's Law School](#) information session on June 16, 2020, 5:30-7:00 p.m. The virtual session will be focused on COVID-19 related legal issues. Topics include employee rights, unemployment, workplace safety issues, evictions, foreclosures, debt collection and stimulus payments. The event is free and open to the public. Online registration is available until June 16. To register, click [here](#).

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## Iowa Spanish Helpline 515-344-3936

The Iowa Department of Human Rights' Office of Latino Affairs, [EMBARC](#), and the Iowa Spanish Helpline Task Force launched the Iowa Spanish Helpline (Linea de Ayuda en Iowa) to assist Spanish speakers with case management services and connecting them to resources during the pandemic. For more information, visit the website of the [Iowa Department of Human Rights](#).

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## Resources for Uninsured

### COVID-19 Testing Coverage

Throughout the duration of the COVID-19 public health emergency, Iowans who do not have health coverage and wish to be tested for COVID-19 may complete an [application for COVID-19 Testing Coverage](#). If an individual is found eligible using this application form, the health coverage will only pay for medical tests for COVID-19 but not other medical costs such as doctor visits, hospital care, or prescriptions. To apply for full medical benefits, visit [dhsservices.iowa.gov](#) or go to [Healthcare.gov](#). The Help Center number is 1-855-889-7985.

### Free TeleMobile Clinic

The University of Iowa TeleMobile Clinic is offering free telemedicine appointments for patients who are uninsured. The TeleMobile Clinic can help with chronic diseases and medications, acute minor medical illnesses, mental health, and signing up for insurance. Text or call 319-535-2684. To view the TeleMobile Clinic multilingual videos, click [here](#).

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## Aid for Farmers/Ranchers

The USDA's Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) provides direct payments to agricultural producers whose operations have been impacted by the coronavirus. Applications are being accepted through August 28, 2020. Producers may apply through

the Farm Service Agency at their local USDA Service Center. For more information on eligibility, where to apply, payment calculator, and assistance, visit the USDA's website at <https://www.farmers.gov/cfap>.

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## You can catch COVID-19 in warm weather

As summer approaches, there remains the question if warm weather and temperatures can slow the spread of COVID-19.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), you can catch COVID-19 no matter how sunny or hot the weather is. The [CDC](#) states that there is much more to learn about the transmissibility, severity, and other features associated with COVID-19 and investigations are ongoing. The best way to protect yourself is to continue to follow public health guidelines--wash your hands frequently, practice social distancing, wear a mask, clean and disinfect, and monitor your symptoms. For information on other myths and scams, visit the Iowa Department of Human Rights at <https://humanrights.iowa.gov/covid-19/myth-busters> (Google Translate feature available for multiple languages).

**FACT:**  
Exposing yourself to the sun or to temperatures higher than 25C degrees DOES NOT prevent nor cure COVID-19

You can catch COVID-19, no matter how sunny or hot the weather is. Countries with hot weather have reported cases of COVID-19. To protect yourself, make sure you clean your hands frequently and thoroughly and avoid touching your eyes, mouth and nose.

World Health Organization #Coronavirus #COVID19

27 April 2020

The infographic features a blue background with yellow and white text. On the right, there is an illustration of a person shielding their eyes from a bright sun, with a thermometer showing a high temperature next to it.

Source: World Health Organization

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## Easing Restrictions for Facilities

The State has issued guidance to ease restrictions for long-term care facilities, as well as the Iowa Department of Human Services' (DHS) facilities within the Mental Health and Disability Services Division. View the guidelines below for rules on opening facilities, visitation, and safety measures.

- [IDPH Guidance for Long-Term Care Facilities](#)
- [DHS Mental Health and Disability Services](#)

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## Legislature Reconvened

The Iowa Legislature resumed session on June 3 after pausing it in March due to the coronavirus. For information on legislators, bills, schedules, and legislative agendas, visit <https://www.legis.iowa.gov/>.

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## Unemployment Benefit Programs

Two unemployment benefit programs, Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) and State Extended Benefits, are now available to lowans. The Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation provides an additional 13 weeks of federally funded benefits to lowans who have exhausted their 26 weeks of regular state unemployment benefits. After their allotted weeks of regular state unemployment and the 13 weeks of PEUC are exhausted, unemployed workers will be eligible for State Extended Benefits. For more information, visit [IWD's website](#) and [press release](#).

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## Iowa receives \$26.2 million in emergency education relief to expand broadband access

The State of Iowa has received \$26.2 million in federal relief to ensure education continues for students of all ages impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Iowa's grant is part of the nearly \$3 billion Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) Fund authorized by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. The GEER fund allows governors to determine how to best meet the needs of students in public and non-public schools, postsecondary institutions, and other education-related organizations.

Better enabling remote learning for K-12 and postsecondary students is the goal of Iowa's GEER application. It focuses on providing and expanding broadband access and improving access to technology in other ways. That could include providing Wi-Fi hotspots and devices. Funding also may be used to offer professional development related to remote learning to educators in school districts and non-public schools as well as in public and private colleges and universities.

View the news release by clicking [here](#).

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### **Previous Newsletters**

[May 29, 2020](#)

[May 22, 2020](#)

[May 15, 2020](#)

[May 8, 2020](#)

[May 1, 2020](#)

[April 24, 2020](#)

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[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**

Lucas State Office Building  
321 E 12th Street

Des Moines, IA 50319  
515-242-5640 or 1-800-351-4659  
[Contact Us Form](#)