

*Contents courtesy of:*

*State Representative Bob Merski - District 2*

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## **COVID-19 RESOURCES (ERIE, PA)**

*There's help out here during the virus so you can stay afloat while you're staying safe!*

### **ACCESS TO INFO & UPDATES:**

- In order to best serve residents with questions and concerns about COVID 19, Erie County Health Department stands ready to assist all residents and their concerns. <https://eriecountypa.gov/departments/health/>
- [Spreadsheet](#) shows which sectors/industries/businesses are open/closed
- FOR ANY GENERAL ASSISTANCE: United Way helpline (help connecting to all kinds of resources), call 2-1-1 or text your zip code to 898-211 or visit [PA211nw.org](http://PA211nw.org) ; sign up for text alerts at [pa211nw.org/text-alerts](http://pa211nw.org/text-alerts)
- Erie County Public Library - <https://erielibrary.org/services/edatabases/>.

### **YOUR RIGHTS:**

**REGISTER TO VOTE** (Deadline April 13, 2020 to register for Primary)

- [Online registration application](#)
- [Register by mail](#)
- [Find out if you are registered to vote](#)
- [Find your polling place](#)
- [Voting by Absentee Ballot](#)

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## HEALTHCARE AND COVID-19 TESTING:

### Drive-Thru Testing

- Allegheny Health Network is providing drive through testing at their West Side Pavilion located at 247 W Ridge Rd, Erie, PA 16506.
  - ***Those wishing to be tested must have a photo identification, an insurance card & a prescription from a physician\*\*\*\****
- [Highmark](#) will cover coronavirus testing, when recommended by a medical professional, for members of its fully insured group customers, as well as members of its Medicare Advantage and ACA plans. Self-insured health plan sponsors will be able to opt-out of the program.
- [UPMC and UPMC Health Plan](#) will waive any applicable deductibles, copayments, or other cost-sharing for COVID-19 testing when ordered by a member's treating medical provider. This no-cost coverage of COVID-19 testing as a preventive service will apply for members in all of UPMC's commercial UPMC Advantage group and individual products, UPMC for Life Medicare Advantage plans, and UPMC for You Medical Assistance plans. Self-insured or administrative services only (ASO) employer groups will be permitted to opt-out of preventive coverage at their discretion.
- For information on other providers, you can visit [HERE](#)

## INCOME ASSISTANCE, LOANS, GRANTS, ETC:

### Loans:

- For those in need of ECRDA Emergency Loan Fund information, please note that loans apps are being taken at: <https://www.executivepulse.net/SBEmergencyLoanapp>
  - Business owners in the city in need of short-term liquidity, please contact Tina Mengine at the [Erie County Redevelopment Authority](#), City of Erie Business Development Officer, Jenn Hoffman or City of Erie Director of DECD, Chris Groner about the Small Business Emergency Loan Fund.
  - Up to \$50,000.

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- Terms are 1-3 years
- No payment for 90 days
  
- Civic Institution Deferred Income Loan Program: Erie County Civic institutions that can demonstrate that they have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic will be able to access low-interest loans with deferred repayment plans. This Loan Fund will be administered by Bridgeway Capital. For more information, please contact <https://www.bridgewaycapital.org/erie-county-covid-19-response-fund/>.
- Small Business Loan Fund: Small businesses that can demonstrate negative financial impact as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic will be able to access low-interest loans with relaxed short-term repayment plans contingent upon developing global economic conditions. This Loan Fund will be administered by Bridgeway Capital. For more information, please contact <https://www.bridgewaycapital.org/erie-county-covid-19-response-fund/>.
- [The U.S. Small Business Administration](#) is offering designated states and territories low-interest federal disaster loans for working capital to small businesses suffering substantial economic injury as a result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19). Upon a request received from a state's or territory's Governor, SBA will issue under its own authority, as provided by the Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act that was recently signed by the President, an Economic Injury Disaster Loan declaration.

## Grants & Funds:

- Immediate Human Relief Fund: A grant fund established to offer immediate relief to the populations served by Food Pantries, Homeless Shelters, Youth/Child Care Centers, and Elder Care Centers. Organizations can apply for grants through the ECGRA online application system. [Apply Here](#)
- ROC - Restaurant Workers! - [check here](#) for a live list with tons of support resources
- Modest Needs is offering donations to HOURLY WORKERS who won't get paid during the COVID-19 outbreak. (<https://www.modestneeds.org>)

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### & wage workers

- Gig Workers Collective - National & State [resources here](#)
- [Mutual Aid Fund for LGBTQIA+ BIPOC](#) (no location restriction. Donate or apply for funds.)
- [Tailwind Small Business Relief Program](#)

Social marketing software provider [Tailwind](#) announces a \$1 million fund to help small businesses worldwide survive the COVID-19 economic crisis. Recipients of grants will receive:

- Up to three months of complimentary access to the Tailwind suite of marketing tools.
- Three "Pay it forward" grants to help others in their community.
- Free access to a new ["Survive & Thrive"](#) online course

Applications will be accepted through **April 30, 2020**. Details at <http://tailwindapp.com/covid>.

- [US Chamber Save Small Business Fund](#)

Fund to provide assistance to small businesses in the form of \$5,000 grants. The Save Small Business Fund, in collaboration with Vistaprint and with support from Merck, S&P Global Foundation and Travelers, will include contributions from corporations, philanthropies and individuals. The grant is expected to address small businesses' immediate needs like closures and job losses, as well as support their long-term recovery.

[Applications for the Chamber's fund](#) will **open on April 20**.

- [The Families and Workers Fund](#)

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Casey Foundation, and Amalgamated Foundation announced today the launch of the Families and Workers Fund, dedicated to serving the workers, families, and communities most devastated by the economic and health crises resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. With an aim to raise \$20 million, and initial commitment of \$7.1 million, the fund will provide flexible funding to organizations working to prevent workers and families from sinking deeper into poverty during the initial months of the pandemic, and to support policy and advocacy efforts that center workers and families in long-term economic recovery. The fund works to ensure responses to the pandemic are both fast acting, long lasting, and informed by the people most affected. Learn more about the [Families and Workers Fund here](#).

## **GOVERNMENTAL ASSISTANCE:**

- **TANF** (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) [here](#)
- **Unemployment** - File an initial claim [here](#) . UPDATE 03/07/20:
  - FYI: Please note that the UC waiting week has been suspended. Eligible claimants may receive benefits for the first week that they are unemployed.
  - The fast way to apply is online: <https://www.paclaims.pa.gov/UCEN/>
  - Please be patient -- due to high demand, our UC system may experience intermittent slowness. Our UC team is working hard to process your claims.
  - For more information, visit <http://uc.pa.gov/>
- [Disaster Unemployment Assistance](#)
- To qualify for DUA you must meet both of the conditions below:
  - Your job must have been lost or interrupted due to a presidentially declared disaster, and
  - You must not be eligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits.
  - Please see [website](#) for additional information on eligibility & applying for assistance

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[Learn more here](#).

### **PROTECTION FROM PRICE-GOUGING:**

- On Thursday, the Justice Department announced it is activating a central fraud hotline (1-866-720-5721 or [disaster@leo.gov](mailto:disaster@leo.gov)) and has ordered U.S. attorneys across the nation to appoint special coronavirus fraud coordinators

### **UTILITIES, RENT, ETC:**

- [FirstEnergy \(Penelec\)](#) - Temporarily suspends shutoffs and offer payment options to help ease hardships
- [National Fuel](#) is encouraging customers to contact them to discuss how they might be of assistance as numerous payment assistance programs are available. Late charges for people impacted by this pandemic will be waived.
- [Erie Water Works](#) is suspending its water service terminations for delinquent accounts until further notice. The need for safe hygiene practices is of the utmost importance at this time and water service is an important component of public health and safety. EWW is also suspending its meter replacement program, and will not be entering homes to capture water meter readings.
- Public Utility Commission [http://www.puc.pa.gov/about\\_puc/covid\\_19.aspx](http://www.puc.pa.gov/about_puc/covid_19.aspx)
- Heating Assistance [LIHEAP info here](#)
  - Anyone who receives LIHEAP also qualifies to have a broken heating system (furnace, boiler, gas line, etc) repaired or replaced at no cost to them. They can request a referral by calling the department of human services at 412-562-0330
- Spectrum won't terminate service for 60 days for residential or small business customers who face difficult economic circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic. They won't charge late fees for those customers facing difficult economic circumstances related to the pandemic

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- [FDA - Food Safety During COVID-19](#)
- Serious Eats food safety during COVID-19  
<https://www.seriousseats.com/2020/03/food-safety-and-coronavirus-a-comprehensive-guide.html>
- USDA Food Safety Guide - Before You Toss Food, Wait. Check it out!  
<https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2013/06/27/you-toss-food-wait-check-it-out>
- Anyone who is currently out of work due to COVID-19 and currently has NO income is eligible for SFPP and TEFAP using this [self-declaration of need form](#). On the self-declaration of need form, they can simply circle \$0 as they have no income. However, they should be advised that if/when their income resumes, they would need to fill out new paperwork and declare that if they intend to continue to obtain food through these programs.
  - Similarly, anyone who has lost hours, etc. because of COVID-19 and has a reduced income may be eligible for SFPP and TEFAP. On the self-declaration of need form, they should circle the income level that currently reflects their new (and potentially temporary) circumstances. As noted above, once their income picks back up, they would need to fill out new paperwork and declare that if they intend to continue to obtain food through these programs.
- [Second Harvest Food Bank](#) - 814-459-3663
- Apply for Food Stamps (SNAP) & get answers about eligibility. <https://www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Assistance/Pages/SNAP.aspx>
- [Meals on Wheels](#) - home meal delivery for people aged 60+ or those of any age that are younger if recovering from injury, illness, or surgery
- Guide to Edible Wild Plants - [free download, streaming](#)
- Check in the “CHILDREN & FAMILIES” section for more info about food resources specifically for children while out of school

## **FOOD: TAKE-OUT OPTIONS:**

- Erie Reader is updating [this list](#) of food take-out/delivery options.

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Due to COVID-19 concerns and a abundance of caution, The Erie Metropolitan Transit Authority has made the decision to implement a three-tiered emergency operations system to curtail transit to essential establishments.

### **CHILDREN & FAMILIES:**

- [Info on childcare centers](#) (closed except for care to allow essential healthcare & first responders to report for work)
- Erie County Public Library - [missing storytime while the libraries are closed?](#)
- [List of Education Resources for children out of school](#) - free subscriptions during pandemic
- [Scholastic Daily Projects](#) to keep kids reading, thinking, and growing
- [Lunch Doodles with Mo Willems](#)
- [ABCMouse](#) - free with code SCHOOL7771
- Erie School District Closed indefinitely. Distribution of meals to all persons under age 18 will continue at all district elementary, middle and high schools, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. THAT SCHEDULE MAY CHANGE. Please stay connected to district communication channels for updates. <https://www.eriesd.org/combatacovid>

### **FOR EDUCATORS TRANSITIONING TO ONLINE TEACHING:**

- [“Please Do a Bad Job of Putting Your Courses Online” by Rebecca Barrett-Fox](#)

### **MENTAL/BEHAVIORAL HEALTH & PEER SUPPORT:**

- UPMC Hamot's union with UPMC Western Behavioral Health at [Safe Harbor](#) improves access to mental health resources for people in Erie County.
- [Stairways Behavioral Health](#)



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- [Erie Alcoholics Anonymous](#)
- [Gaudenzia](#) - Our facilities remain open during this time to serve those in need of critical behavioral health services. We are following the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO) and well as state and local governments to keep individuals safe.

## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & SEXUAL ASSAULT RESOURCES:**

- [Crime Victim Center](#)
- [Mercy Center for Women](#)
- [SafeNet](#)
- Protection from Abuse orders will be heard as normal. For more information, visit: <https://eriecountypa.gov/courts/family-court/protection-from-abuse/>

## **LEGAL RESOURCES:**

- [Northwestern Legal Services](#)
  - Offices are closed to the public through the end of March, but services are still available. If you are in need of services, you can either apply online anytime or call (814) 452-6949.

## **VETERAN SERVICES:**

- [Erie County VA Hospital](#) - VA has implemented an aggressive public health response to protect and care for Veterans in the face of this emerging health risk. We are working directly with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other federal partners to monitor the outbreak of the virus.
- [Veteran's Temporary Assistance](#)
  - A person who served in the Armed Forces of the United States, including the reserve components and the National Guard, or

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Action; OR suffered a service-connected disability.

- Must demonstrate an immediate need for financial assistance in order to provide himself/herself and his/her family with the necessities of living.
- Must be a current resident of Pennsylvania.
- Upon the death of a veteran, his or her unmarried surviving spouse is eligible, provided the Veteran would have qualified for assistance prior to her/his death

## **RESOURCES FOR OLDER ADULTS/SENIORS** **ELDERLY:**

- [GECAC Area Agency on Aging](#)

- Area Agency on Aging is serving clients via the phone. Call the Senior Helpline at 814-459-4581 ext. 400. Be sure to leave your phone number so the staff can return your call. GECAC staff will not be conducting home visits.
- Please continue to call the Older Adult Protective Services to report elder abuse. Call 24/7 814-451-1520
- GECAC Meals on Wheels is delivering meals
- Ombudsman via phone
- Weatherization--crisis calls only. Contact the County Assistance Office at 461-2002
- HomePlus
- Work Ready via phone
- Re-Entry via phone. Call (814) 870-5408

- [PA Department on Aging](#)

- Alzheimer's Association

- Our [24/7 Helpline](#) and [website](#) have the resources to help all Pennsylvanians navigate the journey of Alzheimer's

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practice advice

- [ALZ Connected](#) an online community to connect through message boards all people impacted by Alzheimer's and dementia

## **HIV+ INFO:**

- HIV Counseling and Testing - [Erie County Health Department](#)
  - HIV testing is offered during our STD Clinic hours:
    - Tuesdays, 9:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.
    - Wednesdays, 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
  - Walk-in clients accepted during clinic hours; no appointment necessary.
  - HIV testing is also available by appointment. Call the Erie County Department of Health at 814-451-6714 to speak to the HIV nurse.

## **HOMELESS SERVICES:**

- **\*\*In order to access any of the below emergency shelters, you must first call 814-Shelter.\*\***
  - [Erie City Mission](#)
  - [Saint Patrick's Haven](#)
  - [The Upper Room](#)
  - [Community Shelter Services](#)
  - [Community of Caring](#)

## **IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE SERVICES:**

- [The U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants](#)
  - In our field offices, we are working with our clients in the refugee and immigrant communities to continue providing them with the

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we have gained in over 100 years of serving victims of natural calamities, survivors of torture and war all over our country.

### **PET CARE:**

- All Veterinary Services will remain OPEN
- [Pet Supplies Plus](#)
  - Curbside pickup at the Pet Supplies Plus found new favor among customers this week, as pet owners join the millions who are participating in social distancing — limiting their contact with others to avoid spreading the contagious coronavirus disease 2019.
- [Petsmart](#)
  - This situation continues to evolve quickly, and we will be monitoring it closely. Based on current guidance and our own standards and practices, we remain open for business and are committed to providing an outstanding experience for you and your pets.
- Mud Puppies: 864-0032 | 3867 Peach St. (delivery available)
- NickelPlate Mills: 454-7880 | 1932 Parade St.
- Buzz N' B's Aquarium & Pet Shop - 616-0065 | 2500 Yoder Dr (delivery available)
- Tractor Supply (order ahead - no drive-up service)
- [Erie Humane Society](#)
  - Animal shelters are considered “Essential” and we will continue to operate, with a “bare bones” crew, as we are the lifeline for our shelter pets. Here are our operational updates: We will continue to operate on a strict appointment-only basis. Appointments may be scheduled for pet adoption, fosters, stray animals, reclaims, and surrenders.
  - When you arrive for a scheduled appointment, please remain in your vehicle and call the shelter to notify us that you've arrived.

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- If you find a stray dog, please contact the appropriate animal control officer for your municipality (City of Erie, Millcreek, and Erie County). We are contracted with the City of Erie and Millcreek to accept stray dogs and return them to their owners when located.

## **SUPPORT FOR SMALL BUSINESSES:**

- Erie Regional Chamber & Growth Partnership
- Resource guide: [www.eriepa.com/coronavirus-erie](http://www.eriepa.com/coronavirus-erie)
- The chamber also puts out a daily briefing update via email: <https://bit.ly/erie-dailybriefing> and have created a "next steps" series for small business owners to help navigate the next right thing for them to do to be prepared and plan ahead for the aftermath of COVID-19: <https://bit.ly/nextsteps-erie>
- [Kiva](#) -0% loans for small businesses affected by COVID-19
- [Info for farms, farm markets, etc.](#)
- Governor Tom Wolf announced the availability of low-interest loans for small businesses and eligible non-profits in all 67 counties in Pennsylvania through the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)
  - SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loans offer up to \$2 million in assistance and can provide vital economic support to small businesses to help overcome the temporary loss of revenue they are experiencing. These loans may be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills that can't be paid because of the disaster's impact.
  - The interest rate is 3.75% for small businesses without credit available elsewhere; businesses with credit available elsewhere are not eligible. The interest rate for non-profits is 2.75%.
  - The full release can be found here: <http://j.mp/2QweqZU>
- [Honeycomb Credit](#) is offering discounted community-sourced loans for businesses impacted by COVID-19. Qualifying businesses can borrow \$10,000 - \$50,000 with an introductory 6-month interest-only period and no prepayment penalty.
  - Email: [info@honeycombcredit.com](mailto:info@honeycombcredit.com)

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### **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:**

- Second Harvest Food Bank
  - At this time, a small number of volunteers are needed to help pack food boxes, which will be our priority over the next few weeks.
  - Volunteer operations are being modified to ensure safe social distancing. The emphasis on extra health and safety measures requires limiting the number of volunteers per shift as well as instituting new project guidelines, including the use of disposable protective gloves.
  - If you are healthy and under the age of 60, please consider volunteering at Second Harvest. Children between the age of 10 and 17 must be accompanied by an adult.
- [United Way of Erie](#)
- [ServERIE](#)
- Sewing volunteers needed!
  - [A tutorial to make face masks at home for use by medical professionals \(mask supplies are running out; here's how to help\)](#)

### **ACTIVISM & SOCIAL JUSTICE:**

- Join unions, advocates, people of faith and community members from across the state, whose work serves millions of Pennsylvanians, to demand expanded healthcare access during this critical time. <http://bit.ly/amwfra> #AWFRA #supportamericanworkers

### **EMPLOYMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS & CAREER SERVICES:**

- <https://www.goerie.com/jobs>

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City of Pittsburgh [live streaming their events](#)

- Pittsburgh Public Theater - [goes online to bring classic theater to homebound theater lovers](#)
- [10 University Art Classes You Can Take For Free Online](#)
- Neil Gaiman's website for [adults](#) and one for [kids](#) -stories, videos, essays & more.

## **SELF-CARE FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS:**

- [Headspace app free](#) for healthcare professionals; will be able to access a full library of guided meditations (with a new one arriving each day), along with sleep sounds and bedtime exercises, all of which could help them destress. To register, you'll need your National Provider Identifier (NPI) and an email address.

## **CONNECTING & COMMUNITY DURING SOCIAL DISTANCE:**

- [NetflixParty!](#) Watch tv with friends while at home social distancing
- [Quarantine Chat](#) - free & worldwide; random chats with others stuck at home via phone
- Livestreams & Virtual Happy Hours [03/19/2020](#)

## **CENSUS 2020:**

- [Respond online](#), and make sure you are counted!