



Broward Update

Mayor Dale V.C. Holness



March 24, 2020

It is my sincerest hope that everyone by now is aware of the severity of the coronavirus pandemic and its impact here in Broward County. We are working with the Florida State Department of Health, the Governor's Office, our cities, and of course the Federal Government as we make moment to moment decisions as information is assessed and analyzed.

Broward has issued **Emergency Order 20-01**, now in effect, which closes non-essential businesses, but your grocery store, pharmacy, doctor's office, gas stations, even restaurants are allowed to deliver food or you can pick it up at their location. You can view the EO 20-01 [here](#):

Broward has issued **Emergency Order 20-02**, now in effect, which temporarily closes County parks and implements schedule changes and activities to support social distancing for bus riders. The order also restates some provisions of Emergency Order 20-01 regarding essential businesses. You can view the EO 20-02 [here](#):

This is a public health effort to stop the spread of COVID-19. These decisions are made in the interest of public safety.

There are a variety of government assistance programs, financial companies, non-profit organizations, and utilities willing to step in to help those who may be unemployed or otherwise can't afford to pay bills due to the coronavirus.

REEMPLOYMENT (UNEMPLOYMENT) INSURANCE:

Reemployment insurance is available for those who lost their job, were sent home without pay, workers staying home to take care of their families, or those who had to be hospitalized or quarantined. You can apply for reemployment assistance at floridajobs.org.

MORTGAGE RELIEF:

Many mortgage lenders are willing to postpone mortgage payments during this crisis, without negative credit penalties. Foreclosures and evictions have been suspended for two months. Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac is allowing borrowers to suspend mortgage payments for up to 12 months if you can prove financial hardship. Call your mortgage lender for specific details. Qualifications may be different from lender to lender.

SBA ECONOMIC INQUIRY LOAN:

Small businesses and non-profit organizations can apply for a low interest loan up to \$2 million. Go to sba.gov

Federal Tax Filing Extension. The IRS has extended the filing deadline from April 15 to July 15. More Information at <http://www.irs.gov/coronavirus>.

FLORIDA SMALL BUSINESS EMERGENCY BRIDGE LOAN PROGRAM:

On Monday March 16, 2020, Governor Ron DeSantis activated the Florida Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan Program to support small businesses impacted by COVID-19. The bridge loan program will provide short-term, interest-free loans to small businesses that experienced economic injury from COVID-19.

The application IS NOW OPEN as of March 17, 2020 and will remain open through May 8, 2020. More information is at FloridaDisasterLoan.org.

The Governor has requested the federal Small Business Administration (SBA) make the Economic Injury Disaster Loan program available for Florida's small businesses impacted by COVID-19. The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) stands ready to assist Florida's small businesses in accessing this funding when available.

The Broward County Office of Economic and Small Business Development is strongly encouraging EVERY Broward County business to complete the Florida Business Damage Assessment Survey which has been activated to assess the impact of COVID-19 on Florida's local business operations. The survey can be taken online at <https://floridadisaster.biz/>.

UTILITIES:

Florida Power and Light has agreed to suspend electricity disconnection for failure to pay until the end of March. Late fees of \$5 and a 1.5% penalty still apply. Teco People's Gas has suspended disconnections through April.

Comcast has suspended service disconnections and late fees for internet customers who contact the company and explain their economic hardship due to COVID-19. The company is also offering free wi-fi hotspots and waived data caps on usage. Comcast is also offering Internet Essential services free for the next two months to low-income families who qualify. Go to <https://www.xfinity.com/prepare>

AT&T won't terminate your wireless phone service, home phone or broadband service for residential or small business customers who can't pay their bill due to the coronavirus. Late payments are being waived as well. If your child is enrolled in the National School Lunch Program or Head Start, AT&T is offering two months of free service if ordered before April 30th. Details at about. www.att.com

CREDIT AND BANK CARDS:

Citi is waiving monthly service fees and waiving penalties for early CD withdrawals. Forbearance programs and credit line increases are also available.

PNC has emergency hardship loans at low rates. It's also waiving or refunding fees associated with certain loans, credit cards, mortgages, and other lending products.

Truist (SunTrust/BB&T) is providing payment relief assistance on loans, personal credit cards, and business loans. ATM fees are waived, and the company is offering 5% cash back for grocery and pharmacy charges through April 15th.

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Wells Fargo has options to assist people with their mortgage. Small business owners can qualify for fee waivers, deferral payments, and other assistance.

Chase is allowing those financially impacted by the coronavirus to get fees waived and extended payments on mortgages, credit cards, and auto loans.

Bank of America is offering payment relief on a case by case basis.

FOOD PROGRAMS:

SNAP is a food assistance program offered through the state. To apply go the myflorida.com/accessflorida.

FarmShare collects fruits and vegetables from Florida farmers for distribution. Visit <https://www.farmshare.org/agencies>

Summer BreakSpot distributes free breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks to kids and teens. For a location near you visit <https://summerbreakspot.freshfromflorida.com>

Feeding South Florida is collecting money to help families and individuals in Broward, Palm Beach and Miami-Dade counties. To request help or donate visit feedingsouthflorida.org.

BROWARD COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS: Closed until April 15th.

Broward County Public Schools (BCPS) will continue to support students and their families through the coronavirus crisis by offering its grab-and-go meal service, which has been expanded from nine to 47 locations: 23 elementary schools, nine middle schools and 15 high schools throughout Broward County. **The meals will be provided Monday through Friday, from March 30 until April 15: • Breakfast: 8 – 10 a.m. • Lunch: 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.**

These meals will be available at the following schools:

Elementary Schools: Mary M. Bethune, Challenger, Coconut Palm, Charles Drew, Flamingo, Stephen Foster, James Hunt, Lake Forest, Lloyd Estates, Thurgood Marshall, Meadowbrook, Norcrest, Oakridge, Orange Brook, Parkside, Annabel C. Perry PK-8, Pines Lakes, Pinewood, Quiet Waters, Royal Palm, Sawgrass, Village, Walker

Middle Schools: Coral Springs, Driftwood, Glades, Lyons Creek, Rickards, Sawgrass Springs, Seminole, Sunrise, Westpine

High Schools: Boyd Anderson, Coconut Creek, Coral Springs, Deerfield Beach, Dillard, Blanche Ely, Charles W. Flanagan, Hallandale, McArthur, Miramar, Nova, Plantation, South Broward, Stranahan, J.P. Taravella

For information: <https://www.browardschools.com/coronavirus>

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS (FDVA):

The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA) is restricting visitor access to the State Veterans' Nursing Homes and Domiciliary until further notice, except for family members of those residents undergoing end-of-life care.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has also temporarily restricted access to their nursing and community living center facilities to only essential visitors until further notice.

All VA Medical Centers in Florida are implementing enhanced screening protocols at their facilities. VA Outpatient Clinics are also implementing enhanced screening protocols. Please plan to arrive at the facility well in advance of your appointment to allow additional time for the screening process.

Veterans who are concerned they may have symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19) are encouraged to contact the VISN 8 Clinical Contact Center at 1-877-741-3400 (toll free). Clinical staff provide 24/7 virtual care and support, including nurse advice and triage. The service is available at no cost to veterans enrolled for care in the VA Sunshine Healthcare Network (VISN 8).

GOVERNOR RON DESANTIS HAS PROVIDED SEVERAL UPDATES ON FLORIDA'S EFFORTS TO RESPOND TO COVID-19:

Governor Ron DeSantis Executive Order 20-70 signed on Friday March 20, 2020 orders all restaurants, bars, taverns, pubs, night clubs, banquet halls, cocktail lounges, cabarets, breweries, cafeterias, and any other alcohol and/or food service businesses with seating of more than 10 people within the incorporated and unincorporated areas of Broward and Palm Beach Counties to close on-premises service of customers. Kitchens can remain open for delivery services, pick-up or take out services.

Executive Order 20-70 does not apply to grocery stores, pharmacies, gas stations and convenience stores, except for those that discrete portions of such establishments that provide alcohol and/or food service with seating for more than 10 people. The order does not apply to ancillary restaurant services such as at airports, port facilities, secure facilities and hospitals. Other essential services may be determined by the county administrators.

Executive Order 20-70 states the Broward County and Palm Beach County Administrators shall have the ability to enforce, relax, modify or remove these closures, as warranted. Municipalities may impose more stringent standards within their jurisdictions.

Governor DeSantis directed the Department of Health to hire additional epidemiologists from university health programs to help with workload.

Governor DeSantis directed the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) to extend all existing nursing home and assisted living facility licenses for 90 days to remove distraction from patient care.

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Governor DeSantis directed Emergency Management Director Jared Moskowitz to expand his emergency order and prohibit all visitation to nursing homes, assisted living facilities, adult family-care homes, long-term care facilities and adult group homes to all visitors for the next 30 days.

Governor DeSantis directed the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles to suspend drivers' license renewal requirements for 30 days.

Governor DeSantis directed all agencies to suspend for 30 days licensing and registration renewal requirements for existing professional licenses (e.g. realtors).

Governor DeSantis announced that the State ordered an additional 2,500 test kits to supplement the adequate resources already available to test for COVID-19. These additional test kits will enable the Department of Health, working with Florida health care providers, to test up to an additional 625,000 individuals.

BROWARD COUNTY LIBRARIES: Closed on Thursday, March 19, 2020.

BROWARD COUNTY PARKS: All parks were closed Monday, March 23 at midnight.

BROWARD COUNTY TRANSIT (BCT): Effective March 24, 2020, bus fare collections for BCT riders is temporarily suspended on all bus service including TOPS paratransit.

DEPARTMENT OF ELDER AFFAIRS:

All Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders (SHINE) participation in scheduled outreach events, presentations, and in-person SHINE/Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) counseling has been suspended until further notice. SHINE volunteers and staff will continue to provide counseling services, but the services will be conducted over-the-phone with future considerations for the use of webinars and Facebook LIVE. Visit <http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/index.php> or call 1-800-963-5337.

AGENCY FOR HEALTH CARE ADMINISTRATION:

The Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) will be granting a 90-day extension to all licenses for health care providers and regulated facilities.

DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE:

The Department of Revenue's Child Support Program is working to reduce when customers are required to visit a local child support office and is providing new connect/customer service options.

Efforts include rescheduling genetic testing sample collection appointments and postponing other types of appointments. The Program will soon be implementing the ability for parents to enter into written agreements over the phone, and the Program will be providing new fax, email and form drop-off processes.

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FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM:

All colleges and universities are urged to switch to remote learning for the rest of the spring semester. Campuses are to be closed and students sent home.

For more information visit: <https://www.flbog.edu/2020/03/11/state-university-system-statement-on-covid-19/>

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS:

FDC has suspended visitation at all correctional institutions statewide through April 5, 2020. The decision to reinstate the normal visitation schedule will be evaluated in consultation with the Department.

Inmates will continue to have access to mail, email, phone calls and video visitation. Legal visits will not be impacted. FDC has partnered with vendors to provide some complimentary phone and video visitation services.

Anyone entering a correctional institution will be screened upon entrance.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (FDOT):

Pursuant to Executive Order 20-52 issued by Governor Ron DeSantis, FDOT has suspended size and weight restrictions for divisible loads on any vehicles transporting emergency equipment, services, supplies, and necessary agricultural commodities on state roads.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAY SAFETY AND MOTOR VEHICLES (FLHSMV):

Pursuant to Executive Order 20-52, FLHSMV has waived commercial truck hours of service regulations and other related regulations so that emergency supplies, equipment, commodities and resources can be moved more quickly and efficiently throughout the state.

FLHSMV continues to encourage Floridians through social media and other channels to use convenient [online options](#), rather than visiting an office location, to complete transactions for driver licenses, ID cards, motor vehicle or vessel registrations, and more.