

RIGCD AND COVID-19

The Rhode Island Governor's Commission on Disabilities (RIGCD) has created the following resource guide to assist our community during the COVID-19 pandemic. Contained is information about accessing community resources, including those available for families with children, small business owners and employees, and individuals that fall within a high risk population. We will share an updated version of this resource guide weekly, and encourage you to share this guide within your community, as well as to let us know of any resources that you would like us to include.

The RIGCD will also be taking the following precautions during this time:

- RIGCD staff will be working remotely from March 18th-March 31st, 2020. During this time, staff will be available by email and will be remotely monitoring phone lines. All RIGCD staff contact information can be found at www.gcd.ri.gov
- RIGCD Commission and Committee meetings have been cancelled until further notice
- All Livable Homes Modification Grant (LHMG) post-retrofit documentation deadlines have been extended 30 days. The Commission will revisit this extension at the beginning of April, and will further extend deadlines if necessary



UNEMPLOYMENT AND TDI

Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI)

- If you are unable to work but your place of business remains open, you may be eligible for TDI
- For COVID-19 related claims, DLT will waive the seven-day minimum amount of time that claimants must be out of work to qualify for TDI/TCI benefits
- For individuals under quarantine, DLT will waive the required medical certification, and instead will allow them to temporarily qualify via self-certification that they were under quarantine due to COVID-19.

Unemployment

- If you are out of work and not being compensated, you may be eligible for unemployment benefits
- DLT will waive the seven-day waiting period for UI claims related to COVID-19

For more information from DLT, please review the RI DLT COVID-19 Worksheet at <http://www.dlt.ri.gov/pdfs/COVID-19%20Workplace%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf>



COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Food Assistance:

- The Rhode Island Community Food Bank maintains a Food Assistance list of local pantries within Rhode Island, which can be found at <https://rifoodbank.org/find-food>
- Catholic Social Services of RI has been authorized to distribute Stop and Shop gift cards to individuals temporarily out of work due to COVID-19. Gift cards will range from \$25-\$50, and will be available beginning March 18th. Contact the Woonsocket, West Warwick, or Wakefield satellite offices for more information

Utilities:

- In response to the COVID-19 emergency, the Public Utilities Commission has directed all electric, gas, water, and wastewater utilities regulated by the Public Utilities Commission "to cease certain collections activities, including service terminations for nonpayment". This moratorium extends to 4/15/20 for residential customers and to 3/31/20 for other classes. In each case, the Commission will revisit the temporary moratorium prior to its expiration
- National Grid is temporarily suspending collections-related activities, including service disconnections. These policies are effective immediately and will be in place through the end of April. Please note that regular billing will continue for all customers



COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Essentials:

- Several companies, including Dave's Market, Stop & Shop, Target, Whole Foods, and Dollar General will be designating hours for shoppers over 60
- CVS will be waiving prescription RX delivery fees; please contact your local store to find out if your prescription is eligible

Mental Health:

- The RI Dept of Health has released a list of resources and suggestions for coping with stress during this time, which can be found at <https://health.ri.gov/diseases/ncov2019/>
- If you feel overwhelmed or are unable to cope with your stress, please contact the Disaster Distress Helpline at 1-800-985-5590 or text TalkWithUs to 66746

Physical Health:

- The YMCA and Planet Fitness will be streaming free online fitness classes daily
- Coverage of telehealthcare services has been expanded



RESOURCES FOR HOUSEHOLDS WITH K-12 CHILDREN

- Due to school closures, free "Grab & Go" meals are available for K-12 children throughout Rhode Island. Food sites and details can be found at <https://health.ri.gov/diseases/ncov2019/about/foodsites/>
- Ocean State Libraries and the RI Office of Library and Information Services are developing a collection of online resources for students and families, which can be found at <https://olis-ri.libguides.com/online/earlychildhood>. This includes the Storybook at Home ebook collection
- Several internet providers, including Comcast Xfinity, Charter Spectrum, Altice, and Cox Communications are offering free basic internet for 30-60 days for either low-income households or households with K-12 children. Please contact the individual provider for more information about their specific program
- Science centers, zoos, aquariums, and museums across the country are offering virtual visits to their exhibits. Virtual tours can be found at:
 - [Google Arts & Culture](#)
 - [San Diego Zoo](#)



RESOURCES FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

- COVID-19 Economic Injury Disaster Loans are now available from the Small Business Administration. Find out more information and apply at <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/>
- The Rhode Island Foundation and United Way of Rhode Island have launched a fund to support local nonprofit organizations on the front line of COVID-19 response efforts; more information can be found at <https://rifoundation.org>
- Microsoft has agreed to provide Office at no cost to RI business for the next 6 months
- Employers facing slowdowns in business due to COVID-19 may be able to benefit from the RI Workshare Program. Learn more at <http://www.dlt.ri.gov/ui/pdfs/WorkShare%20COVID19%20One-Pager.pdf>



HOW TO HELP

- Practice all RIDOH recommended preventative measures, including washing your hands, disinfecting surfaces, covering your cough, and practicing social distancing
- If you are able, make an appointment with the RI Blood Center to donate blood. Blood is a critical, perishable component of our healthcare system, and it must be constantly replenished. For more information or to make an appointment, please visit the RI Blood Center website at <https://www.ribc.org> or contact them at 800-283-8385
- If you are able to, please support your local business by purchasing gift certificates or placing delivery orders. If you place an order for food to be delivered, please designate a safe space outside of your home for deliveries to be placed, in order to keep both your family and your delivery driver safe
- If you are able to, please consider making a donation to your state or local community food bank. Individuals throughout our state face food insecurity on a daily basis, and a public health crisis such as COVID-19 places an increased strain on the organizations that serve this population. Find your local food assistance program at <https://rifoodbank.org/find-food/>



EEOC GUIDANCE REGARDING THE ADA AND COVID-19

The EEOC has released the following guidance regarding the ADA and COVID-19:

- The ADA continues to apply during this time, but does not prevent employers from complying with CDC guidance regarding COVID-19
- During a pandemic, ADA-covered employers may ask employees if they are experiencing symptoms of the pandemic virus
- Generally, measuring an employee's body temperature is a medical examination. However, because the CDC has acknowledged community spread of COVID-19 and issued attendant precautions, employers may measure their employees' body temperature. Employers should remain aware that some individuals with COVID-19 may not have a fever
- Employers can require employees to stay home if they have symptoms of COVID-19



EEOC GUIDANCE REGARDING THE ADA AND COVID-19

- When employees return to work following a COVID-19 related absence, employers can require documentation stating they do not have or no longer have the virus
- The EEOC has provided further guidance in the document "Pandemic Preparedness in the Workplace and the Americans with Disabilities Act," which can be found at https://www.eeoc.gov/facts/pandemic_flu.html



RIDOH RESOURCES

RIDOH has several channels for the community to view and receive updated news, resources, and educational information about COVID-19. These resources include:

- **Partner Briefings:** RIDOH distributes partner briefings with the most up-to-date information on COVID-19. Anyone can be added to the Partner Briefing distribution list by contacting Anna Tomasulo at Anna.Tomasulo@health.ri.gov.
- **Press Releases:** All RIDOH press releases are posted to the homepage at health.ri.gov
- **RIDOH's COVID-19 Web Page for the Public:** Our COVID-19 web page for the public, health.ri.gov/covid, is updated regularly with information from RIDOH and features syndicated content from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), including helpful fact sheets available in multiple languages. These resources may be shared with your community partners.



RIDOH RESOURCES CONTINUED

- **Página Latina:** An updated COVID-19 web page for the public is also available in Spanish on RIDOH's **Página Latina** at health.ri.gov/espanol.
- **COVID-19 Information Line:** Information about COVID-19 is available to the general public by calling RIDOH's emergency information line at 401-222-8022 Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. After hours, the 211 call center can answer frequently asked questions from the public about COVID-19. General questions can also be emailed to RIDOH.COVID19Questions@health.ri.gov
- **Interim Guidance:** Guidance for preventing COVID-19 spread in community is available from CDC including resources to help community-and faith-based organizations.



RIDOH RESOURCES CONTINUED

With regard to messaging, please emphasize with your partners the importance of taking the same measures that healthcare providers recommend annually to prevent the spread of the flu and other viruses. These measures are:

- Get your flu shot, and make sure the people around you do the same.
- Wash your hands often throughout the day. Use warm water and soap. If soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based hand gel.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow. Viruses can spread by coughing or sneezing on other people or into your hands.
- Stay home from work or school if you are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids, and eat nutritious foods.
- Keep surfaces (especially bedside tables, surfaces in the bathroom, and toys for children) clean by wiping them down with a household disinfectant.

