



# Kent County Resources

## COVID-19 Preparedness

Information as of September 17th (Subject to change)

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### Commonly asked Questions and Answers

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## **I have questions about the Executive Order changes that went into effect on July 17th, 2020. Where can I find the latest information?**

On Friday July 17, Governor Whitmer rescinded Executive Order 2020-147, issuing revised face covering requirements in Executive Order 2020-153. As with the original order, individuals are required to wear a face covering over their nose and mouth when in an indoor public space, outdoors when 6-ft distance can not be kept, and when waiting for or riding public transportation. Exceptions to the order, such as medical intolerances, are outlined in the executive order. Michigan businesses are required to deny service to customers not wearing a face covering. A violation of the order is a misdemeanor subject to a \$500 criminal penalty. In addition, Executive Order No. 2020-153, clarifies that businesses may not assume that an unmasked customer cannot medically tolerate a face covering, though they may accept a customer's verbal representation to that effect. The order also clarifies that wearing a mask at a polling place for the purpose of voting in an election is not required, though wearing a mask to protect yourself and others is strongly encouraged. Additionally, the Order explicitly requires public safety officers to wear a face covering unless doing so would seriously interfere with the performance of their responsibilities. For those who have questions about the state's actions to mitigate the spread of coronavirus, please call the COVID-19 Hotline at 888-535-6136 between 8am-5pm daily or visit [https://www.michigan.gov/whitmer/0,9309,7-387-90499\\_90705-535105--,00.html](https://www.michigan.gov/whitmer/0,9309,7-387-90499_90705-535105--,00.html) for a summary of the executive order.

## **I have questions about the recommendation to wear a cloth face covering in public. Where can I find accurate information?**

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends wearing cloth face coverings over your nose and mouth in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies), **especially** in areas of significant community-based transmission. Read below for details to consider when wearing a mask to protect yourself and others. For a full summary of CDC recommendations, call 800-232-4636 or visit the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>.

- The cloth face cover is meant to protect other people in case you are infected. You can spread COVID-19 even if you don't feel sick.

- Continue to keep about 6 feet between yourself and others. The cloth face cover is not a substitute for social distancing.
- Cloth face coverings should **NOT** be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.
- The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other medical first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.

**UPDATE:** Per Governor Whitmer’s Executive Order, all medically-able individuals must wear a non-medical grade face covering when in enclosed public spaces, unable to abide by social distancing requirements in outdoor public spaces, and when waiting for or riding public transportation.

### **I need a mask, where can I find one?**

**The Rapid** distributes masks at Central Station and Bus Operators, as needed.

**Senior Neighbors** provides masks for individuals 60+, call 616-459-6019.

**DHHS** distributes masks from their Human Complex site located at 121 Franklin St. SE Grand Rapids, MI 49507.

**NOTE:** For the most up-to-date information, call 211.

### **I have questions about the virus COVID-19. Where can I find accurate information?**

**Kent County Health Department** - Call 888-535-6136 or email [covid@kentcountymi.gov](mailto:covid@kentcountymi.gov)  
<https://www.accesskent.com/Health/coronavirus> for on demand updates specific to Kent County.

**Center for Disease Control** - Call 800-232-4636 or visit  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov> for the most trusted, accurate information regarding the virus.

**State of Michigan** - Visit <https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus> for local updates on restrictions and instructions from the state government, answers to frequently asked questions and subscribe to e-newsletter updates from MDHHS, the State Emergency Operations Center and Executive Office of the Governor.

### **I need non healthcare related needs resources, like food, diapers or clothing. What community resources are available?**

Call **2-1-1** or visit <https://www.mi211.org/> for information about resources closest to where you live. 24 hours a day 7 days a week, including non-healthcare related needs.

### **I have health care concerns, but am not sure who to contact. Who can I call?**

***If you have severe or life-threatening symptoms, please call 911.*** If you are experiencing symptoms and are unsure if you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, review the CDC poster.

Testing criteria for COVID-19 **has been expanded** in Michigan to include individuals with mild symptoms and workers still reporting to work in person, whether they have symptoms or not. Visit [www.michigan.gov/coronavirus/0,9753,7-406-99891\\_99912---.00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus/0,9753,7-406-99891_99912---.00.html) to find a testing center nearest you. Individuals who require assistance accessing this content are encouraged to contact the COVID-19 Hotline at 888-535-6136.

**Spectrum Health** - Spectrum is offering free virtual COVID-19 screenings 24/7 to people in the state of Michigan who are experiencing symptoms, call 833-559-0659 or visit <https://www.spectrumhealth.org/covid19>. For additional Spectrum Care Support, call 616-391-8943. These services are free, no health insurance needed.

- Free phone screening for COVID-19
- Health Education on COVID-19
- Help locating needed resources

**Mercy Health** - Mercy Health is offering virtual COVID-19 screenings 24/7 to patients who are experiencing symptoms through its MyChart Portal, call 833-247-1258 or visit <https://www.mercyhealth.com/health-and-wellness/coronavirus>.

**Cherry Health**- For COVID-19 screenings, call their COVID-19 Hotline at (616) 965-8347, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

**NOTE:** Most healthcare facilities have started resuming normal health care services. Call your doctor to determine the best path forward for your health and wellbeing.

## **I'm a Veteran who has healthcare and/or benefit related concerns, but am not sure who to contact. Who can I call?**

***If you have severe or life-threatening symptoms, please call 911.*** If you are experiencing symptoms and are unsure if you are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, review the CDC poster.

Testing criteria for COVID-19 **has been expanded** in Michigan to include individuals with mild symptoms and workers still reporting to work in person, whether they have symptoms or not. Visit [www.michigan.gov/coronavirus/0,9753,7-406-99891\\_99912---.00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus/0,9753,7-406-99891_99912---.00.html) to find a testing center nearest you. Individuals who require assistance accessing this content are encouraged to contact the COVID-19 Hotline at 888-535-6136.

**Veteran Affairs** - If you are a U.S veteran with concerns regarding possibly having the Coronavirus, you can call 888-838-6446 to speak to a triage nurse regarding your symptoms. You can also visit <https://www.va.gov/find-locations> to find one of VA's more than 2,000 health care, counseling, benefits, and cemeteries facilities, plus VA's nationwide network of community health care providers.

If you are a Veteran in crisis or concerned about one, you can connect with VA's caring, qualified responders for confidential help. Many of them are Veterans themselves.

- Call 800-273-8255 and press 1 (Call TTY if you have hearing loss 800-799-4889)
- Text 838255
- Start a confidential chat: <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net>

For emergency financial resources available to service members and veterans, visit <https://penfedfoundation.org/community-resources-for-veterans-and-service-members/>.

## **I am experiencing mental stress and don't have someone to talk to, what resources are available?**

If you're feeling emotional distress due to the COVID-19 pandemic, help is available. There are many ways to connect with emotional-support services without the need to leave home. Visit [www.michigan.gov/staywell](http://www.michigan.gov/staywell) to find a comprehensive list of mental health resources.

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** - Call 1-800-273-8255 (TTY 800-799-4889) or visit <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat/> to speak with a counselor. The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals.

**Michigan Stay Well Counseling via the COVID-19 Hotline** - Call 1-888-535-6136 and press "8" to talk to a Michigan Stay Well counselor. Counselors available 24/7 - confidential and free.

**Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)** - Call 800-985-5990 (TTY 800-846-8517) to reach SAMHSA's Disaster Distress Helpline or text TalkWithUs to 66746.

**Certified Peer Support Specialist Warmline (MDHHS)** - Call 888-733-7753 seven days a week from 10am to 2am to speak with a certified peer support specialist. This warmline is intended to serve individuals living with persistent mental health challenges including anxiety, depression and trauma. Individuals in crisis, including those considering suicide, are urged to contact the Disaster Distress Helpline 24/7 at 800-985-5990 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 24/7 at 800-273-8255.

**Michigan Crisis Text Line** - If you are experiencing emotional stress and anxiety but are more comfortable texting than talking, text the keyword RESTORE to 741741 - Available 24/7.

**Mental Health and Substance Abuse Help** - Network 180, Forest View Psychiatric Hospital and Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services are available 24/7 to help those struggling with mental health or substance use during the COVID-19 pandemic. Help begins by picking up the phone.

Network180: 616-336-3909

Forest View: 800-949-8439

Pine Rest: 800-678-5500 or 616-455-9200

## **I and/or someone I know feels unsafe with another member of their household. What resources are available right now?**

Safe Haven and YWCA are available by phone and video if in need of safety planning, counseling, support groups, legal assistance, etc. Additionally, if in need of shelter, contact them to see availability depending on risk factors.

Questions? Need help? Contact their 24/7 confidential hotlines:

**YWCA:** 616-454-9922 | **Safe Haven:** 616-452-6664

Or visit their websites: **YWCA:** [ywcawcmi.org](http://ywcawcmi.org) | **Safe Haven:** [safehavenministries.org](http://safehavenministries.org)

## **I can't afford food or healthcare and need financial assistance. What resources are available?**

**Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS)** - Need food, healthcare, etc. assistance, apply for benefits through the MiBridges Portal at <https://newmibridges.michigan.gov/> or call 888-544-8773. Income requirements have been lifted at this time.

For specific COVID-19 Emergency Response from MDHHS:

- Call the COVID-19 Hotline at 888-535-6136, seven days a week, 8am to 5pm
- Email [COVID19@michigan.gov](mailto:COVID19@michigan.gov) 24/7. Emails will be answered seven days a week, 8am to 5pm
- Subscribe to an e-newsletter for updates:  
<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/MIDHHS/subscriber/new>

**Economic Impact Payment (Stimulus Check)** - To check your status and eligibility, go to [www.irs.gov/coronavirus/economic-impact-payments](http://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/economic-impact-payments). If you manage an account for someone else (as a Representative Payee), individuals will start receiving checks sometime in May. For the latest information visit, [www.ssa.gov/news/press/releases/2020/#5-2020-1](http://www.ssa.gov/news/press/releases/2020/#5-2020-1).

### **Did you receive a card in the mail?**

Some taxpayers are receiving their Economic Impact Payment (Stimulus Check) by means of a prepaid debit card mailed in mid-late May. It will come in an envelope associated with Money Network. This is supported by the Treasury Department's Bureau of the Fiscal Service and is verified through the IRS. For more information, go to [www.eipcard.com](http://www.eipcard.com) or call 800-240-8100.

**SNAP Benefit Update** - Households receiving SNAP benefits that are not currently receiving the maximum amount allowed per household will continue to receive an additional amount to raise benefits to the max for September. These additional benefits will be issued between September 20th and September 30th as a separate payment from the assistance that is provided earlier in the month. If you already receive the maximum benefits, you will not receive more. Check your account here: <https://newmibridges.michigan.gov/>.

## **I need my prescriptions, but I'm having trouble picking them up from my regular pharmacy. What delivery options do I have?**

**CVS Pharmacy** is offering free delivery of eligible prescriptions and everyday essentials. You can request delivery by calling the store, selecting your delivery options within the CVS Pharmacy app or through a link via an "order ready" text message. Visit [www.cvs.com/content/delivery](http://www.cvs.com/content/delivery) or call your local CVS pharmacy for additional details or to check your prescription's delivery eligibility. Find store locations and details by visiting [www.cvs.com/store-locator/landing](http://www.cvs.com/store-locator/landing).

**Walgreens Pharmacy** offers free delivery for eligible prescriptions. Not all prescriptions are eligible for delivery at this time. For more information about eligibility, talk to the pharmacy directly. Visit [www.walgreens.com/topic/pharmacy/prescription-delivery.jsp](http://www.walgreens.com/topic/pharmacy/prescription-delivery.jsp) or call your local Walgreens for additional details. Find store locations and details by visiting [www.walgreens.com/storelocator/find.jsp](http://www.walgreens.com/storelocator/find.jsp).

**Meijer Pharmacy** - You may be eligible to have your prescriptions mailed to you. Contact your local Meijer pharmacy for more details. Find store locations and details by visiting [www.meijer.com/shop/store-finder](http://www.meijer.com/shop/store-finder).

## **How can I apply for unemployment?**

**Michigan Unemployment Office** - The state of Michigan is opening up unemployment filing to self-employed workers, independent contractors, low-wage workers and those with a limited work history. Because of the high rate of applicants, they ask that you follow the below schedules for applying.

**Online Filing Schedule** - <https://www.michigan.gov/UIA>

Customers are encouraged to use off-peak times 8pm-8am.

- Last names beginning with letters A-L are asked to file claims on Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays
- Last names beginning with letters M-Z are asked to file claims on Sundays, Tuesdays, or Thursdays
- Saturdays will be available for anyone to accommodate those who could not file during their allotted window

**Call Center Filing Schedule** (866-500-0017)

- Last names beginning with letters A-L are asked to call on Mondays and Wednesdays between 8am-6pm.
- Last names beginning with letters M-Z are asked to call on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 8am-6pm.
- Fridays between 8am-6pm and Saturdays between 7am-2pm are open for anyone who could not file during their allotted days.

## **I and/or my family does not qualify for the CARES Act or other government assistance due to citizenship status. What financial resources can help?**

**La Lucha Fund** - For undocumented and mixed status families this fund was established to provide financial resources to those families who are not eligible for unemployment, CARES Act Relief and other governmental support. They will allow families to pay for basic needs such as rent, groceries, cleaning supplies and medicine. If applicable, please contact:

Erika VanDyke  
616-648-6079  
[latinxgr@gmail.com](mailto:latinxgr@gmail.com)

## **I'm looking for low cost or free food meals. What options are available?**

*Food services are changing regularly, call ahead to double check hours.*

**MelTrotter** 616-454-8249  
225 Commerce Ave SW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503  
Meals: Breakfast at 7am. Dinner at 7:15pm.

**Dégagé Ministries** 616-454-1661  
144 Division Ave S, Grand Rapids, MI 49503  
Free to-go meals from 8:30-9:30am and 5-6pm around the corner (139 Sheldon) 7 days a week.

**God's Kitchen** 616-224-0217  
303 Division Ave S, Grand Rapids, MI 49503  
Meals: Monday-Saturday: 12:30pm to 2:00pm. Sunday: 2:30-4pm \*Meals are grab and go at the back door, dining area closed\*

### **Heartside Gleaning Initiative**

Free Produce Giveaways happen every Saturday at La Grave Church (107 La Grave Ave, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503) from 2:45-3:45pm.

### **Community Food Club**

The Community Food Club (1100 South Division Ave, Grand Rapids, MI 49507) is looking to accept new members. You pay a membership fee (between \$11 and \$15 for a 30 day membership and shop using points based on household size. At this time, no proof of income needed. Go to <https://communityfoodclubgr.org/> for more information.

## **I need to go to the grocery store, but I'm worried about exposure due to being high risk. What should I do?**

**SpartanNash stores** (D&W Fresh Market, Family Fare) are setting aside time for store guests most at risk of contracting the virus, including older adults, pregnant women & immunocompromised individuals every Tuesday/Thursday from 7-9am. Stores hours vary by location.



**Walmart** stores have implemented new open hours from 7-8:30pm unless the store normally opens later. There is an hour-long senior shopping event every Tuesday for customers aged 60 and older that will start one hour before the store opens. Store hours vary by location.

**Meijer** stores have implemented new open hours from 8am-Midnight (but select stores close at 11pm). Check online to find your local store: <https://www.meijer.com/shop/en/store-finder>. Stores and pharmacies will provide dedicated shopping times for senior citizens and customers with chronic health conditions on Tues/Thurs from 6-8am. Essential service workers and Meijer Team Members can shop on Mons/Weds from 6-8am.

**Target** stores have expanded dedicated shopping time for its most vulnerable guests, making the first store hour open on Tuesdays and Wednesdays available for those over 65 years old, pregnant women and those defined by the CDC as vulnerable or at-risk. To confirm local store opening times, visit [Target.com/store-locator](https://www.target.com/store-locator).

## **I'm looking for low cost or free food options for kids. What options are available?**

### **School Meal Sites**

*Grab & Go Meal Sites starting August 24th: Monday, Wednesday, & Fridays from Noon to 1:30pm. Students MUST be enrolled in a GRPS school to receive lunches, but can go to any location if enrolled.*

**Alger Middle School** (921 Alger St. SE)  
**Buchanan Elementary** (1775 Buchanan Ave SW)  
**Burton Elementary** (2133 Buchanan Ave SW)  
**Campus Elementary** (710 Benjamin Ave SE)  
**Cesar E. Chavez Elementary** (1205 Grandville St SW)  
**City High Middle School** (1720 Plainfield Ave NE)  
**Dickinson Academy** (448 Dickinson St. SE)  
**East Leonard Elementary** (410 Barnett ST NE)  
**GR Ford Academic Center** (851 Madison Ave SE)  
**CA Frost Academy** (1417 Covell Ave NW)  
**Harrison Park** (1440 Davis Ave NW)  
**Kent Hills Elementary** (1445 Emerald Ave NE)  
**Ottawa Hills High School** (2055 Rosewood Ave SE)  
**Sherwood Park Academy** (3659 Chamberlain Ave SE)  
**Sibley Elementary** (943 Sibley St NW)  
**Westwood Elementary** (1525 Mount Mercy Dr. NE)

For more information from GRPS on assistance and additional food sites, visit <https://www.grps.org/coronavirus>.

## **I'm looking for low cost or free food that I can cook at home. What food pantry options are available?**

**Double Up Food Bucks Alert:** In response to COVID-19 many locations that accept bridge cards are getting rid of the \$20/day limit. This means you can get even more healthy food using Double Up when you buy fruits and veggies with your Bridge Card. Find all Double Up Food Bucks Updates by visiting <https://www.doubleupfoodbucks.org/resources/covid-19/>.

**Family Network of Wyoming** 616-885-9919

1029 44th St SW Wyoming MI 49509

<https://fntw.org/services/food-pantry/>

Mondays 2:30-5pm & Wednesday 1:30-4:30pm. Prepares boxes to give out.

**WestMinster Food Pantry** 616-456-1456

47 Jefferson Ave SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Thursday 10:30-2:30pm, grab and go meals to previous clients only.

**Other Way Ministries** 616-454-4011

839 Sibley St NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Food pantry hours: Monday-Friday 9am-3pm, Tuesdays until 6pm

The food pantry is now call-in only! Call ahead or upon arrival during the times listed above. All that is required is self-declared need. No documents necessary. Delivery service is available to those who need it. To see items in stock:

<https://theotherway.org/covid-19-resources-recursos/>.

For more locations, open hours and contact information go to Feeding America's website:

[www.feedwm.org/findfood/](http://www.feedwm.org/findfood/).

For mobile food pantries, go to [www.feedwm.org/mobile-pantry-schedule/?county=Kent](http://www.feedwm.org/mobile-pantry-schedule/?county=Kent) for the daily locations in Kent County.

For another full list of free food pantry options in Kent County, refer to

[www.needhelppayingbills.com/html/kent\\_county\\_food\\_banks.html](http://www.needhelppayingbills.com/html/kent_county_food_banks.html) to locate ones near you.

**I need to pick-up food from the grocery store, food pantry, school grab and go site, etc. near me, but I don't have access to transportation. What options do I have?**

**Health Net of West Michigan** is providing transportation coordination to pick up food at any food site in Kent County. Health Net will arrange transportation through one of their vendors to take clients to and from the site they are picking up food. The site can be any place that the client obtains food (food pantry, mobile site, school grab and go site, grocery store, food club, etc.). The eligibility criteria are as follows:

- Client resides in Kent County
- Food site is in Kent County
- Client passes COVID-19 phone screening provided by Health Net Intake staff

Call 616-632-1015 to assess your eligibility and get transportation scheduled.

## I am a senior looking for assistance. What assistance is there?

### **Kent County Senior Assistance** 616-456-5664

Area Ageing of Western Michigan and partners are providing seniors with support through wellness checks and delivering of essential items. If interested in learning more and connecting with resources, call 616-456-5664.

### **Meals on Wheels** 616-459-3111

Food Pantry Services for individuals 60 and older  
1954 Fuller NE, Suite B Grand Rapids, MI 49505

Mondays 8:30am-3:30pm, Wednesdays 8:30am-3:30pm, and Thursdays 9:30-4pm. Contact them online <https://mealsonwheelswesternmichigan.org/meals-on-wheels/food-pantries/>.

### **Meal Delivery for 60+**

If you are 60+ you may qualify for home delivered meals through your local area agency on aging. If you are eligible after you sign up, your regional agency or volunteer will contact you to have meals delivered. Meals can be fresh, frozen or shelf stable (non-perishable). Apply through: <https://newmibridges.michigan.gov/s/request-meal-delivery-reassurance>.

## I am looking for school related information for my children?

Grand Rapids Public Schools is starting with virtual learning for the first quarter, until October 21st. Check the website for the most up-to-date information. Go to <https://www.grps.org/all-grps-news-events/1044-welcome-back-to-school> or [grps.org](https://www.grps.org) to find the latest updates regarding schooling plans.

GRPS is providing social-emotional and mental support to GRPS families and students. Reach out to Jamal Fischer, at 616-819-7050 to access resources and best next steps.

## I need to use the bus, but don't know what options are available?

**May Mobility** the downtown (autonomous shuttle) is suspending service until further notice.

**DASH west & DASH north** runs every 8 minutes from Monday through Saturday: Monday - Friday: 6:30am - 10pm; Saturday: 10am - 10pm; No service on Sunday.

**The Rapid** has a service schedule (indicated below).

The following routes will run every 15 minutes from 6am to 6pm, and every 30 minutes from 6pm to 10pm on the weekdays:

Route 2 (Kalamazoo)	Route 4 (Eastern)	
Route 9 (Alpine)	Route 28 (28th Street)	Silver Line

The following routes will run every 30 minutes from 6am to 6pm.

Route 1 (Division)	Route 3 (Madison)	Route 5 (Wealthy)
Route 6 (Eastown/Woodland)	Route 7 (West Leonard)	Route 8 (Grandville/Rivertown Crossings)

Route 10 (Clyde Park)	Route 11 (Plainfield)	Route 12 (West Fulton)
Route 13 (Michigan/Fuller)	Route 14 (East Fulton)	Route 15 (East Leonard)
Route 16 (Wyoming/Metro Health)	Route 17 (Woodland/Airport)	Route 44 (44th Street)
Route 18 (Westside)	Route 24 (Burton)	

**NOTE:** As of August 1, the Rapid is no longer accepting paper transfers or change cards. You can only ride using a Wave card, which you can order online at <https://wave.ridetherapid.org/>, pick one up at Rapid Central Station, or visit one of the 60+ retail locations, such as Speedway, Walgreens, or CVS. Find more retail locations by visiting <https://wave.ridetherapid.org/retail-locations/>!

Additionally, the Silver Line Route is ending its No Fare Zone from the Wealthy Stop to Central Station. Fare payment will be required along the entire Silver Line Route.

### **I have safety concerns about crime, can I call the police?**

Police are still responding but if you need to call 911, advise the operator if you or anyone in your home has symptoms or is quarantined. If able, meet officers outside of home and maintain a recommended 6-ft. distance.

**Local safety alerts** - Sign up for the citywide Nixle Alerts by texting GrandRapids to 888-777 or for more local texts, text your zip code to 888-777. You can also go to [www.nixle.com](http://www.nixle.com) to sign up and customize your user profile based on the type, times and ways you want to receive the alerts – text, email, online and social media.

### **I have concerns about fake/scamming emails, phone calls and text messages with topics related to the COVID-19 crisis. Where can I get accurate information?**

The **Federal Communications Commission (FCC)** has received reports of scam and hoax text message campaigns and scam robocalls offering free home testing kits, promoting bogus cures, selling health insurance, and preying on virus-related fears. Read below for a few tips to help you protect yourself from scams:

- **Do not** click on links in texts related to the virus, and check [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus) for the most current information.
- **Be wary** of phone calls and text messages that claim to be from the World Health Organization (WHO), or charity organizations, asking for account information or money.
- Many consumers will receive checks as part of the federal government response to the coronavirus. **No one** will call or text you to verify your personal information or bank account details in order to "release" the funds.

For more information about scam calls and texts, visit the [www.fcc.gov/consumers](http://www.fcc.gov/consumers) and the [www.fcc.gov/covid-scams](http://www.fcc.gov/covid-scams). You can also file a complaint about such scams at [www.fcc.gov/complaints](http://www.fcc.gov/complaints).

**UPDATE:** Beware of scammers spoofing the Kent County Health Department's main number 616-632-7100, calling residents to offer medication while asking for Medicaid and Medicare numbers for billing purposes. Anyone who receives a phone call they suspect to be a scam is advised to hang up.

**2-1-1's FraudSupport Program** - 2-1-1 in West Michigan has partnered with the Cybercrime Support Network to make sure that victims of cybercrime have the resources they need while guiding them through the process of reporting, recovering, and reinforcing their security. Contact 211 for assistance and to answer questions.

## **I'm having trouble paying my bills because my income has been affected. What can I do?**

**Heat and Warmth Fund (THAW)** - DTE and SEMCo Energy Customers: THAW wants to make it easier for Michigan residents to get the help they need to afford their utility bill. Individuals will need to complete and be approved for State Emergency Relief (SER) as well as complete the Affordable Payment Plan application from THAW. For program details, visit [https://thawfund.org/assistance\\_programs/affordable-payment-plans-dte-lsp-semco-map-consomers-energy-care-uppco-ease/](https://thawfund.org/assistance_programs/affordable-payment-plans-dte-lsp-semco-map-consomers-energy-care-uppco-ease/). If you have further questions or require assistance, please call THAW's Utility Assistance Center 8:30am-5pm M-F at 800-866-8429, and a specialist will be able to assist you.

**DTE** customers impacted by COVID-19 are encouraged to call 800-477-4747 to determine eligibility for payment assistance or shutoff protection. For the most accurate information, visit <https://newlook.dteenergy.com/wps/wcm/connect/dte-web/quicklinks/footer/covid19-residential>.

**Consumers Energy** customers who need help paying their energy bills are encouraged to call 800-477-5050 to discuss their assistance options. For the most accurate information, visit [www.consumersenergy.com/company/media/news-and-information/emergency-response](http://www.consumersenergy.com/company/media/news-and-information/emergency-response).

**Comcast/Xfinity** - <https://corporate.comcast.com/covid-19>

Customer Service: 800-934-6489

*Check the website for the most accurate information.*

- Flexible and extended payment options
- Support for university students
- Wi-Fi hotspots open to anyone in the public who needs it

**Internet Essentials** - [www.internetessentials.com/covid19](http://www.internetessentials.com/covid19)

Customer Service: 855-846-8376

- Provides reduced price plans to qualifying households
- New customers: Two free months of internet service if you apply by 12/30/20

**Spectrum** - [www.spectrum.net/support/covid-19-community-assistance/](http://www.spectrum.net/support/covid-19-community-assistance/)

Customer Service: 833-267-6094

*Check the website for the most accurate information.*

- Offering Spectrum Internet Assist to eligible low-income customers
- No data caps or hidden fees

- WiFi hotspots open for public use

**Assurance Wireless** - [www.assurancewireless.com/](http://www.assurancewireless.com/)

Customer Service: 888-321-5880

*Check the website for the most accurate information.*

- This carrier provides free and reduced price plans and phones to qualifying individuals
- Individuals affected by COVID-19 who lost employment may qualify for LifeLine service
- Unlimited calling and text for all customers
- An additional 20GB of data for all customers

**AT&T** - <https://about.att.com/pages/COVID-19.html>

Customer Service: 800-288-2020

*Check the website for the most accurate information.*

- Waiver requests can be submitted if unable to pay bill during COVID-19

**Cricket Wireless** - [www.cricketwireless.com/support/fraud-and-safety/covid-19.html](http://www.cricketwireless.com/support/fraud-and-safety/covid-19.html)

Customer Service: 800-274-2538

*Check the website for the most accurate information.*

- Plans starting as low as \$30/mo
- BridgePay to split bill into multiple payments
- Providing distance-learning resources

**Metro by T-Mobile** - [www.metrobyt-mobile.com/ongoing-updates-covid-19](http://www.metrobyt-mobile.com/ongoing-updates-covid-19)

Customer Service: 888-863-8768

*Check the website for the most accurate information.*

- Plans starting as low as \$30/mo
- Most plans include unlimited talk, text, and data

**SafeLink Wireless** - <https://media.tracfone.com/wps/wcm/connect/phones/safelink/covid>

Customer Service - 800-378-1684

- This carrier provides free and reduced price plans and phones to qualifying individuals
- Individuals affected by COVID-19 who lost employment may qualify for LifeLine service
- Unlimited calling and text for all customers
- An additional 5GB of data provided to all customers

**Sprint** - [www.sprint.com/en/landings/covid-19.html](http://www.sprint.com/en/landings/covid-19.html)

Customer Service: 888-211-4727

*Check the website for the most accurate information.*

- Call to make payment arrangements due to COVID-19 hardships

**T-Mobile** - [www.t-mobile.com/brand/ongoing-updates-covid-19](http://www.t-mobile.com/brand/ongoing-updates-covid-19)

Customer Service: 800-937-8997

*Check the website for the most accurate information.*

- Call to make payment arrangements due to COVID-19 hardships
- If relief you've obtained is ending, contact again if you need additional options

**Tracfone** - [www.tracfone.com/covid/](http://www.tracfone.com/covid/)

Customer Service: 800-867-7183

- Customers on SNAP or Medicaid may qualify for payment assistance

**US Cellular** - [www.uscellular.com/covid-19](http://www.uscellular.com/covid-19)

Customer Service: 888-944-9400

*Check the website for the most accurate information.*

- Data overage charges waived
- Limited data plans will remain on high-speeds once limit has been reached
- For customers with unlimited plans, 15GB of hotspot data will be offered

**Verizon** - [www.verizonwireless.com/support/covid-19-faqs/](http://www.verizonwireless.com/support/covid-19-faqs/)

Customer Service: 800-922-0204

*Check the website for the most accurate information.*

- Offers payment arrangements to help you pay your bill
- Customers who contacted Verizon by June 30, have been enrolled in a payment plan (review billing statement for additional information)

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*Prepared by the Dwelling Place Community Building and Engagement Staff.*

*Information is subject to change. Updated versions available on Fridays.*

*To limit the spread of COVID-19, please share this document digitally.*

*See content that is out of date or want to see an added resource?*

*Email [community@dwellingplacegr.org](mailto:community@dwellingplacegr.org)*

