



COVID-19 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Miscellaneous

Do I have to pay my bills or debts during the coronavirus pandemic?

Generally, all debts and bills still have to be paid. There are some exceptions when the debt is held by or backed by a government entity because the federal government has made special exceptions for them in light of the COVID-19 outbreak (for instance, federal student loans). However, private debts are still due. There are limits on how these debts can be enforced.

For instance, most utility companies will not disconnect your utilities right now for lack of payment, and eviction filings cannot set a date for an Answer until after June 1, 2020. Because of these court closures and restrictions, lawsuits to force you to pay your debts may be delayed. However, the debt is still due even if enforcement for nonpayment is delayed. Therefore, if you are having trouble paying a bill or debt, it is best to stay in touch with your creditor and attempt to negotiate a mutually agreeable plan.

What scams should I be aware of right now?

Scams and frauds have increased dramatically in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Older adults are particularly at risk and may be offered useless supplements and cures, home test kits, and other devices. The Federal Trade Commission provides guidance on addressing identity theft and other scams, which can be found [here](#).

Please note that the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) does not contact individuals by text message, email, or social media. More information can be found on the IRS website [here](#).

Can I file a court case right now to sue someone, get a divorce, or get custody, etc.?

You can still file many types of cases right now in most jurisdictions. However, in-person hearings are generally only being held for emergency or public safety reasons. For instance, if you file a protection order, you will likely still have to appear in court. Be sure to wear a face mask and gloves. Other cases can still be filed, but hearings are generally not being held or are being held by phone or webcam. If your case is not urgent, it is best to wait.

That being said, if you need to file a case, courts are accepting filings via email and fax. Some courts are mailing court forms to those who do not have access to a printer or computer.

Contact the courthouse in the county where you plan to file if you need forms, or want to obtain the email or fax number for filing documents with the court. There is also information on the Alpine Legal Services [website](#) about filing in the 9th Judicial District, which includes Garfield, Pitkin, and Rio Blanco counties.

DISCLAIMER: Alpine Legal Services has compiled these FAQ pages for residents in our service area (Aspen to Parachute, Colorado) in order to provide the public with general legal information. This information is not intended as legal advice specific to your situation. While Alpine Legal Services strives to provide correct, updated information, the legal landscape is developing on a daily basis and we cannot guarantee the accuracy of all information provided here. **Please contact an attorney for legal advice.**