



Rhode Island Department of Health

Rhode Island COVID-19 Information

Last updated on Thursday, May 28 2020, 08:44:16 AM

Topics

En Español

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Alerts and Latest guidance

- **Reopening Rhode Island's economy:** Phase 2 reopening guidelines and restrictions are expected to go into effect in early June. More details are provided on [Reopeningri.com](https://reopeningri.com).
- Rhode Island Commerce and RIDOH will be holding virtual forums for businesses this week. Following the discussion, there will be an opportunity to ask questions. The sessions are as follows:
 - Gyms and fitness studios: Wednesday, 10 a.m. — [LINK](#)
 - General businesses: Wednesday, 4:30 p.m. — [LINK](#)
 - Personal services (Hair, Nails, Massage Therapists, Etc.): Thursday, 10:30 a.m. — [LINK](#)
 - Restaurants: Thursday, 4:30 p.m. — [LINK](#)
- **Travelers:** Anyone who returns to Rhode Island from **another state** must quarantine for 14 days after returning. A list of states and locales by stay-at-home order can be found [here](#).
- **CRUSH COVID RI** is a COVID-19 pandemic response app which provides Rhode Islanders easy access to all of the resources required during the public health crisis, including a location diary that helps users identify the people and places they are in contact with and a symptom checking survey.
- **CDC Update:** CDC has released new resources to assist states to reopen.
- **New Regulations:** In order to prevent further spread of COVID-19 as individuals begin to leave their homes more frequently and establishments begin to reopen, protective measures must be followed and implemented for individuals and establishments to resume operations so that the public's health and welfare is protected.
- **Houses of Worship:** Houses of worship will begin to reopen the weekend of May 30th. Building capacity limits will be set to 25% of their overall capacity. This decision was made in consultation with faith leaders across Rhode Island.
- **Multiple Languages:** Information, factsheets, posters, and resources about COVID-19 are available in many languages.
- **Public Libraries:** Many Rhode Island libraries are offering curbside pickup of preordered library books. Check your local public library's website for details.
- **Gatherings:** All gatherings of more than 5 people are banned. Individuals should be interacting with the same people every day to minimize the risk of spread. This order does not apply to healthcare workers in a workplace setting, public transportation or office buildings. However, people must practice social distancing at all times.
- **Face Coverings:** When people are in public, they should wear a cloth face covering. A cloth face covering is a material that covers the nose and mouth. It could be sewn by hand or improvised from household items such as scarves, T-shirts, or bandanas. The only exceptions from these rules are for anyone whose health would be in jeopardy because of wearing a face covering or any children under 2 years old. Face coverings are also not required for people who can easily, continuously, and measurably maintain at least six (6) feet of distance from other people. Businesses should refer to for rules and guidance on face coverings.

- **Commuters:** Those who are able to work from home should do so, and anyone commuting in and out of the state for work should remain in their home when not at work.
- **Retail Businesses:** Non-critical retail stores can reopen with capacity limits. Recreation and entertainment businesses will remain closed. This includes theaters, cinemas, bowling alleys, concert venues, museums, and zoos. Close-contact businesses will also remain closed. This includes gyms, fitness centers, yoga studios, hair salons, nail salons, barber shops, and tattoo parlors.
- **Restaurants:** Starting Monday, May 18th, restaurants will be able to begin limited outdoor dining in addition to their take-out, delivery, and drive-through operations. Regulation and guidelines are available at reopeningri.com.
- **Multisystem inflammatory syndrome associated with COVID (MIS-C):** MIS-C is a rare, new health condition appearing in children. Some doctors think the condition is related to having coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), but the connection is still not clear.

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Behavioral Health

- Adults seeking mental or behavioral health support should call BH Link at 414-LINK(5465).
- For services for children, call 855-543-5465 or visit Kids Link. Additional information for children is available at Bradley Hospital's COVID resource website. Other resources for children:
 - COVID picture book
 - Video: Something Strange Happened to My City
 - Unstuck: 10 things to do to Stay Safe and Sane During the Pandemic – ages 13-18
 - A Kid's Guide to Coronavirus – age 3-8. Colorful picture book, explaining what the virus is, how it spreads, and what kids can do to help.
- People with moderate to severe opioid use disorder (OUD) can access telehealth service for initiation of buprenorphine treatment 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Call Rhode Island's Buprenorphine Hotline 401-606-5456.
- Mental and Behavioral Health Resources
- **Quitting Smoking and Vaping:** People who use tobacco are at higher risk of more severe illness from COVID-19 because the virus that causes COVID-19 attacks the lungs.
 - The state's FREE **Rhode Island Nicotine Helpline** is ready to help tobacco users quit and manage stress to stay quit. Certified tobacco treatment specialists (TTS) provide motivational interviewing counseling by phone. Adults 18+ may also receive FREE Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) gum, patches, or lozenges mailed direct to their home. Call 1-800-QUIT NOW (1-800-784-8669)
 - Teens ages 13+ can also get FREE, safe, and confidential vaping and smoking quit support by visiting www.mylifemyquit.com or texting **START MY QUIT** to 855-891-9989.
- The Rhode Island State Council on the Arts team is working to provide information and resources for artists as well as working to spread the word about experiences for audiences to enjoy from home.

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Commerce/Business Information

- All business guidance materials and information about reopening are available at www.reopeningRI.com.
- Business economic support and guidance can be found at the RI Commerce website or by calling 521-HELP (521-4357).
- Business owner information about COVID-19: [click here](#)

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Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV)

- Rhode Islanders will have a 90-day extension on expirations for March, April, and May. This will apply to all licenses, registrations, inspections, permits, and temporary plates.
- The DMV is open by appointment only.
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Employment Related Issues

- **Financial Support for Employees/Workers**
 - Rhode Island Commerce, Relief for Employees/Workers English | Spanish
 - Unemployment Insurance Fact Sheet English and Spanish | American Sign Language
 - Unemployment Insurance, COVID-19 Resources: Frequently Asked Questions English
- The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training has set up a COVID-19 Assistance Line and email address (401-462-2020; dlt.covid19@dlt.ri.gov). They are intended to provide support to people regarding COVID-19 and employment issues. The phone line is staffed Monday to Friday during business hours.
- **EmployRI:** The Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, Skills for Rhode Island's Future and Commerce have re-launched a state job-seeking platform to help connect Rhode Islanders with nearly 2,000 open jobs. Many of the jobs posted are frontline positions in the fight against COVID-19. Jobseekers can visit www.EmployRI.org to find jobs as well as other important resources including information on unemployment insurance, resume tips and other COVID-19 updates. Employers looking to hire quickly can post jobs on EmployRI for free and dedicated specialists at SkillsRI will facilitate matches with qualified candidates.

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Grief Support

- The pandemic has led to a series of losses, from our sense of safety to our social connections to our financial security. Many people are reckoning with individual losses, including illness and death due to the novel coronavirus, or loss of employment as a result of economic upheaval. Grief counseling points to ways we can heal.

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Health Insurance Information

- **Medicaid:** Rhode Island Medicaid will be suspending all terminations and quarterly income verifications for the duration of this emergency. Uninsured individuals who are Medicaid eligible can enroll at any time. Visit HealthSourceRI.com to enroll or call customer support or use the web chat function between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Monday-Friday at 1-855-840-4774.
- A special enrollment period is available for Rhode Islanders who have lost their employer-sponsored coverage. You may also qualify to sign up for coverage through HealthSource RI if you have lost your employer sponsored coverage due to job loss, or if you have experienced another qualifying life-changing event. You must sign up within 60 days of your qualifying life event.
- Health plans issued in Rhode Island are now providing temporary new benefits during the COVID-19 State of Emergency.
- The Governor signed an executive order to relax onerous regulations and eliminate barriers to care during this crisis. The order includes the following protections through May 27th:
 - Medications: Insurers cannot make changes to what drugs are covered unless the changes benefit patients.
 - Provider Referrals: Insurers are required to relax the referral process to allow for more time and leniency. No referrals are necessary for telehealth.
 - Prior Authorization: In-patient hospital and rehabilitation, long-term care and telemedicine in-network services cannot be suspended because an individual doesn't have prior authorization. In addition, no prior authorization is needed for testing or treatment of COVID-19.
 - Behavioral Healthcare: No referrals or other benefit review approvals are required for a patient to access needed mental and behavioral health care.

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Healthcare Facilities, Nursing Homes, Assisted Living

- Nursing home administrators have been directed to not allow any visitors (unless they are essential to the care of a resident). Additionally, nursing home administrators have been directed to continue actively screening staff, vendors, and all other people who enter facilities for illness and COVID-19 risks (for example, travel history or exposure to someone under investigation for COVID-19).
- **Oak Hill Center in Pawtucket** has signed a contract with the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) to serve as a COVID-19 Specialty Nursing Home. As of April 15, Oak Hill Center will only be accepting new patients who are known or suspected of being COVID-19 positive or who have COVID-19 symptoms. **Oakland Grove Health Care Center in Woonsocket** has also signed a contract with RIDOH to be a COVID-19 Specialty Nursing Home, and as of May 3 will only be accepting new patients who are known or suspected of being COVID-19 positive or who have COVID-19 symptoms.
 - Current residents who do not have COVID-19 symptoms will be relocated to a separate unit within Oak Hill Center with other symptom-free patients. All residents will continue to be very closely monitored for any COVID-19 symptoms and very aggressive infection control measures will remain the standard. In addition, staff who are caring for COVID-19 negative patients will not be working on units with COVID-19 positive patients.
 - Serving as a COVID-19 Specialty Nursing Home is a critical public health need right now. It assures all patients receive the level of care they need, and Oak Hill Center can be supported as a skilled nursing facility that will specialize in care of patients with COVID-19.
- Check hospital websites for visitation restrictions.

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Home Owners and Renters Protections

- Rental assistance: Rhode Island has made \$1.5 million in emergency rental assistance available to low-income renters who have been impacted by the COVID-19 emergency and are at immediate risk of homelessness. Those who qualify can receive a grant of up to \$5,000 to support past due rent payments and other fees. Requirement information and details are available at [HousingHelpRI.com](https://www.housinghelpri.com) or by calling 211.
- RIHousing is closely monitoring the latest news about the coronavirus (COVID-19) and working hard to ensure there are no disruptions to service for our customers and partners.
- More than 20 financial institutions in RI have pledged the following relief to their residential borrowers.
- Mortgage Forbearance: Homeowners with FHA, USDA, VA, or Section 184 or 184A mortgages (for members of federally-recognized tribes) and those with mortgages backed by Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac have the right to request forbearance on their payments for up to 6 months, with a possible extension for another 6 months without fees, penalties, or extra interest. Homeowners should contact their mortgage servicing company directly.
- Eviction Protections: Renters residing in public or assisted housing, or in a home or apartment whose owner has a federally-backed mortgage, and who are unable to pay their rent, are protected from eviction for 4 months. Property owners are also prohibited from issuing a 30-day notice to a tenant to vacate a property until after the 4-month moratorium ends. This protection covers properties that receive federal subsidies such as public housing, Section 8 assistance, USDA rural housing programs, and federally-issued or guaranteed mortgages.

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Parks and Recreation

- Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) will be reopening state parks in a graduated manner during the first phase of reopening Rhode Island's economy. While DEM will be staggering park openings, reducing the size of parking areas and restricting hours of operation and activities to prevent crowds, many diverse and varied outdoor spaces will be open for Rhode Islanders to safely enjoy while adhering to public health guidance on gathering and social distancing. DEM hopes to reopen all parks by the end of May. DEM's announcement is available online.
- **State Beaches:** East Matunuck State Beach and Scarborough State Beach will reopen on Memorial Day, May 25th, in a limited capacity. Bathrooms and concessions will be closed, and reduced parking will be enforced. The reopening of all beaches, including bathrooms and concessions, is planned for the beginning of Phase 2.
- Visit the DEM website for information on Marina, Yacht Club and Harbor Master COVID-19 guidance.
- Visit individual city/town websites for local parks and recreation information.
- Pursuant to Executive Order 20-32, recreational facilities are currently closed. RIDOH is in the process of developing emergency regulations for the operation of public swimming pools, including pools at apartment and condominium complexes. These regulations will apply to seasonal and year-round licensees. Once the

regulations are promulgated, they will be posted here, on the Secretary of State website, and on ReopeningRI.com.

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Resources for Undocumented Immigrants

- **Get healthcare:** The following places provide access to healthcare regardless of immigration status. These places may ask about your status, but only to help determine your eligibility for coverage, and must keep this information confidential.
 - Community Health Centers: Call 401-274-1771 or see the Rhode Island Health Center Association website to find a health center near you (for adults and children).
 - Rhode Island Free Clinic (for adults only): Call for an eligibility appointment: 401-274-6374.
 - Clinica Esperanza-Hope Clinic (for adults only): For patients who might have COVID-19, call 401-408-0238. For general questions, call 401-347-9093.
- **Get tested:** There are ways for patients for people without health insurance to get tested for COVID-19.
- **Hospital care:**
 - **Seeking care:** Anyone, regardless of immigration status, can seek healthcare at hospitals, emergency departments, and health centers. If you have symptoms of COVID-19, call first before showing up at the facility.
 - **Charity Care:** If you need care at a hospital, ask about the hospital 'charity care' program and request an application. The hospital may cover all or part of your bill if you are unable to pay. Charity care is available regardless of immigration status.
 - **Emergency Medicaid:** If you are in need of emergency services at a hospital (in-patient or emergency room), but are ineligible for Medicaid solely because of your immigration status, you may nevertheless be eligible to have Medicaid pay the hospital bills. The hospital will help you apply.
- **Health insurance:** Medicaid coverage for undocumented pregnant women is available, regardless of immigration status, as long as income and state residency requirements are met. You can apply for Medicaid any time. Call 1-855-840-4774 or apply online at healthsourceri.com
- **Access to interpreters:** All Rhode Island healthcare providers who receive federal funds are required to provide interpretation services for their patients, at no cost to the patients, regardless of immigration status.
- **Public Charge:** USCIS has released a statement declaring that testing, treatment, and preventive care related to COVID-19 will not negatively affect any immigrant in a future public charge determination. As a reminder, WIC does not ask immigration status and is not included in public charge determinations.
- **More information:** The Economic Progress Institute has posted information online for undocumented immigrants, and for DACA, TPS, and DED holders.

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School and Child Care Information and Summer Camps

- **Child Care:** The State mandated closure of child care sites, family and center, will expire on May 31st. Rhode Island has authorized child care programs to reopen as of June 1, 2020 under new, emergency child care licensing regulations.
 - Rhode Island has partnered with Care.com to increase childcare access to Rhode Islanders. In addition to providing 90 days of free, premium access to their website, Care.com has created portals specifically for frontline workers and caregivers in Rhode Island. Frontline workers looking for child care can visit www.care.com/rineed to find a local caregiver. Rhode Island residents interested in becoming caregivers can visit www.care.com/rigive to register. Potential caregivers are subject to Care.com's extensive background and safety checks. While child care services are not typically free of charge, the Rhode Island portal gives residents the ability to waive their fees and volunteer as caregivers, providing additional support to frontline workers.
- **Summer programs:** The state plans to allow summer camps and other youth summer programs to operate in person—under new, strict regulations—starting June 29th. A full list of regulations and guidance will be available on reopeningri.com when finalized.
- Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) COVID-19 Information:
- **Distance learning:**
 - School buildings will remain closed and distance learning will continue through the end of the school year in June.

- Parents looking for support as their students engage with distance learning can access a new helpline through the Rhode Island Department of Education and Highlander Institute at 909-414-4927.
- **WIFI:** To ensure that all Rhode Island students have access to WiFi necessary for distance learning at home, the Governor today announced that all households that have a smart phone with a WiFi hot spot feature and have cell phone service from the four most common providers in our state - Verizon, AT&T, T-Mobile, and Sprint - will be able to activate the hot spot feature for free. There will be no activation fee, no usage fee, and no overage fee. This policy will last until June 30th.
- Due to the closure of schools, free "Grab and Go" meals are available for children throughout Rhode Island.

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Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

- To support Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients and their families, the Rhode Island Department of Human Services (DHS) worked with the federal government to increase benefit amounts for some SNAP households. The federal government has allowed states to give all SNAP households the maximum SNAP benefit for their household size for the months of March, April, May, and June. DHS is also allowing states to extend deadlines for those due to recertify in the months of March, April, and May 2020.
- The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) recently granted Rhode Island the authority to issue Pandemic-EBT benefits (P-EBT) to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and non-SNAP households with one or more children who have temporarily lost access to free or reduced price meals at school due to COVID-19 school closures. For households receiving SNAP benefits, the additional benefits will be added to their existing EBT cards. Households not currently receiving SNAP benefits will receive a new P-EBT card in the mail with benefits automatically added and a personal identification number (PIN) and setup instructions. .

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Violence Prevention

- People who are surviving violence in their relationships or families may be experiencing increased isolation and danger caused by social distancing measures during the COVID-19 pandemic. A comprehensive resource document can be found in English and Spanish.
- The Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence and all of its member agencies are open, as are domestic violence shelters. Rhode Islanders seeking help can call the 24/7 confidential hotline at 1-800-494-8100. Services are provided in English and in Spanish. While courts are closed for non-essential business including evictions, they are open for all domestic violence matters.

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Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Services

- **Changes to respond to COVID-19**
 - All WIC sites are open and providing remote services (by phone) and mailing benefits or adding benefits to the eWIC cards for those in the Pilot sites.
 - RIDOH has submitted waivers for many regulations and food items to increase access to the program and its benefits. Vendors will be notified when substitutions are approved. RELATED VENDOR NOTICE
 - WIC is a public health program that improves birth outcomes and children's long term health outcomes. WIC does not ask immigration status and is not a part of Public Charge.
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COVID-19 Press Releases



05/26/2020 20:45 EDT

Governor Raimondo Announces Virtual Forums for Businesses

05/22/2020 20:30 EDT

Governor Raimondo Extends Travel Restrictions and Gathering Size Limits Through Phase 1, Unveils Plans for Phase 2 of Reopening

05/21/2020 21:15 EDT

Governor Raimondo, Dr. Alexander-Scott Provide Update on the State's Response to COVID-19

05/20/2020 19:30 EDT

Governor Raimondo, Dr. Alexander-Scott Provide Update on the State's Response to COVID-19

May 20, 2020

Raimondo Unveils CRUSH COVID RI, State's One-Stop Pandemic Response App

More+