

Pennsylvania – COVID-19 Resources
(As of July 2nd, 2020)

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BASIC NEEDS – GENERAL

1. Human Services Launches Emergency Assistance Program to Help Low-Income Families Amidst COVID-19

May 8, 2020

Department of Human Services (DHS) Secretary Teresa Miller today announced an Emergency Assistance Program (EAP) to help low-income families who lost wages experiencing financial challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Families who qualify will be eligible for a one-time payment to assist them in meeting basic needs and help them secure more stable financial footing in the future.

https://www.media.pa.gov/Pages/DHS_details.aspx?newsid=529

- 2. Financial Assistance from the Hamer Foundation (through Centre County United Way):** Funds are available to help people who are facing financial struggles as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The goal is to help them achieve financial stability during this health crisis. Funds must be requested by a qualified non-profit organization. The maximum amount of funds that be requested for an individual/family is \$1,000.00
These funds can support, but are not limited to, the following financial assistance needs:

- Rent & mortgage payments
- Hotel/Motel (for emergency shelter)
- Food
- Utility bills
- Medication costs
- Childcare

Individuals in need must call Centre Helps at (814) 237-5855. Centre Helps will either qualify the individual or refer them to another nonprofit organization.

3. LIHEAP Recovery Crisis Program

LIHEAP Recovery Crisis benefits may be available if a household:

- Has their main or secondary energy source completely shut-off;
- Is notified that their utility service will be shut off in the next 60 days;
- Has broken energy equipment or leaking lines that must be fixed or replace; or,
- Is in danger of being without fuel in 15 days or less.
- Owes funds to a utility provider that would constitute a service termination if not for the Public Utility Commission's moratorium on terminations.

LIHEAP Recovery Crisis program will open on May 18, 2020, and run through August 31, 2020, or until all budgeted funding is expended. The LIHEAP Recovery Crisis maximum benefit will be \$800 for this period. Eligibility guidelines will be the same as those used during the 2019-20 LIHEAP season, and DHS will permit a file transfer agreement with utility providers to allow a utility to submit a LIHEAP Recovery Crisis application on behalf of a consenting household, provided the household has already received LIHEAP Cash to the utility during the regular season. Utility terminations are [prohibited for the duration](#) of the Governor's disaster declaration, but past due balances can be submitted as proof of Recovery Crisis eligibility if the utility company confirms that the balance would result in a termination if the moratorium was not in place.

DHS will also automatically issue a \$100 supplemental payment to approximately 100,000 households that received LIHEAP Crisis funds during the 2019-20 season. Any household that has not reached the maximum benefit in the 2019-20 season can apply for additional assistance up to the \$800 maximum limit.

More information about LIHEAP and household income eligibility is available [here](#). LIHEAP Recovery Crisis applications and instructions can be found here or can be submitted online at www.compass.state.pa.us.

FOOD

1. Wolf Administration Receives Approval to Launch Food Access Program for Students During COVID-19 Crisis

May 7, 2020

The Wolf Administration received approval from the Food and Nutrition Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for a plan to provide Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to students who are eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals at school through the National School Lunch Program. This program, known as Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT), will be temporary and is designed to bridge the gap left by schools closing and help families who may have strained resources due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

https://www.media.pa.gov/Pages/DHS_details.aspx?newsid=528

2. No One Should Go Hungry, Pennsylvanians Should Apply for Programs Designed for 'Times Like These'

First Lady Frances Wolf, Department of Human Services Secretary Teresa Miller, and Department of Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding today outlined food assistance programs available for Pennsylvanians to enroll in to get them through current COVID-19-induced tough times. They said Pennsylvanians should feel no shame in accepting state and federal food benefits that were, in fact, designed for unprecedented times like the coronavirus pandemic.

While most eligibility verifications for food assistance have been waived to reduce barriers to access during COVID-19 mitigation in Pennsylvania, there are several state programs that still require individuals to seek out and enroll in individually to qualify and receive benefit. These programs include:

- [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#) (SNAP): Formerly known as food stamps, SNAP provides assistance to low-income and working Pennsylvanians, allowing them to purchase produce and groceries for themselves and their family. SNAP helps more than 1.8 million Pennsylvanians, including about 700,000 children, about 690,000 people with disabilities, and about 300,000 older adults, expand purchasing power to ensure their household has enough food to avoid going hungry. SNAP is issued through a monthly payment to an electronic benefit transfer card, and benefits are based off income and household size. People can apply for SNAP online at www.compass.state.pa.us online at any time.
- [Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program](#): This program runs from June 1 through November 30 each year. Seniors must be 60 or older by December 31 of the program year and have income at or below 185% of the U.S. poverty level. Eligible seniors should call their county Aging office for information on distribution of vouchers. Vouchers are distributed on a first come, first serve basis.

- [WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program](#): This program runs from June 1 through November 30 each year, and recipients must be on the WIC program to receive this benefit. Children 1-year and older, and pregnant/post-partum women will receive vouchers for the program during their quarterly WIC visit (May through September).
- [Commodity Supplemental Food Program](#): Eligible participants include individuals who are at least 60 years old and whose household income is at or below 130% of the U.S. poverty level. To qualify, individuals must complete an application with proof of income. Questions about where/how to access this program can be directed to the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Food Assistance by calling 1-800-468-2433 or emailing ra-fooddist@pa.gov.
- [Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children \(WIC\)](#): Women who are pregnant or have had a baby in the past six months, or twelve if breastfeeding; infants and children under the age of five; and fathers, grandparents, and foster parents who are the legal guardian of a child under age five, may apply for WIC. WIC applicants must reside in Pennsylvania, have a medical or nutritional risk, and have a gross household income that does not exceed 185% of the U.S. poverty level.

In addition to applying for the benefits above, Pennsylvanians can receive immediate access to food resources by visiting a Feeding Pennsylvania or Hunger-Free Pennsylvania member food bank. Pennsylvanians out of work and without pay as a result of COVID-19 are [eligible to receive](#) state and federally sourced foods from Pennsylvania's food banks and pantries

3. YMCA Anti-Hunger Program – (On-site)

For more information contact Mel Curtis at 814-342-0889 or mcurtis@ymcaocc.org

All of these sites serve 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM Monday through Friday. On Friday they give out weekend food bags also. Lunches will be provided based on the number of the children in the vehicle. The meals will include a lunch and evening snack.

- **Bellefonte**
 - Beaver Farms, Bellefonte YMCA, Logan Fire Company, Continental Courts, Pleasant Gap Elementary, Governors Gate
- **Bald Eagle Area**
 - Citizens Fire Company, Pine Glen Fire Company, Snow Shoe EMA, Wingate Elementary
- **Philipsburg-Osceola Area**
 - Hope Fire Company, Osceola Mills Elementary, Philipsburg-Osceola Middles School, Moshannon Valley YMCA, Calvary United Methodist Church, Columbia Fire Company, Wallaceton Fire Company
- **Penns Valley Area**
 - Centre Hall Fire Company, Miles Township Fire Company, Millheim Fire Company, Progress Grange Family Centre (Friday Site)
- **State College Area**
 - State College YMCA, Ashworth Woods, Tudek Park, Multiple Mobile Feeding & Delivery

4. *(May 1st, 2020):* **The YMCA Anti-Hunger Program (home delivery)** is announcing today that we will be providing Home Delivery for families and Shut-Ins that don't have the means to get to our feeding sites or Food Giveaways, This is a major undertaking that will have an impact on those that are facing food insecurity This service will be available starting the week of May 4th. This system will tracked through and planned in a GIS Program to make sure we are efficient in delivering food to all residents that have contacted us. For more information contact Mel Curtis at 814-342-0889 or mcurtis@ymcaocc.org

5. *(Coming Soon!)* **Online Purchasing for SNAP Participants (Pilot Program):** DHS is working with its EBT vender and approved retailers to implement only payment for PA's SNAP recipients. It is expected that online grocery purchasing will be activated for SNAP participants by the beginning of June. Once active, only eligible food items normally paid for by SNAP will be able to be purchased online with SNAP benefits. Delivery feeds, driver tips, and other associated changes may not be paid for with SNAP benefits. This pilot program includes three approved retailers: Amazon, Walmart, and ShopRite.

6. **Senior 2020 Farmer's Market Vouchers:** Applications can be completed and mailed back to the Office of Aging; they cannot be completed in-person this year. Farmer's Market vouchers will then be mailed out to all eligible seniors who applied. Please see [Attachment A](#), [Attachment B](#), and [Attachment C](#) for the application and additional program information.

7. **Calvary Church Free Food Distribution:** Weekly box of dried goods, fruits, veggies, eggs, milk, and meat. No eligibility criteria! Everyone is welcome! Pick up OR delivery. **In order to get a box of food, please email Kendra Gettig at Kendra@calvarysc.org or call/text at 814.571.8293**

HOUSING

1. **Governor Wolf and Attorney General Shapiro Announce Protections from Foreclosures and Evictions Through July 10**

Governor Tom Wolf was joined by Attorney General Josh Shapiro today to announce that he signed an [executive order](#) that protects Pennsylvanians from foreclosures or evictions through July 10. The action builds on a Pennsylvania Supreme Court order which closed court eviction proceedings until May 11 and ensures no renter or homeowner will be removed from their home for 60 more days.

In almost all circumstances, renters and homeowners are required to continue making monthly payments. If you are a Pennsylvanian struggling to make your monthly payments, you should contact your landlord or mortgage servicer immediately.

The Wolf Administration provided [recommendations](#) last week to stem foreclosures, evictions and help people experiencing homelessness. The Department of Human Services activated the commonwealth's Sheltering Taskforce and is working with local and state partners to coordinate resources for people without housing. The Department of Community and Economic Development is also accepting applications for [Emergency Solutions Grants](#) to assist with the rapid rehousing of people experiencing homelessness, street outreach, homelessness prevention, and emergency shelter activities.

PHFA is also taking action to help homeowners and renters. The agency has stopped foreclosures and evictions and is offering forbearances with late fee waivers to homeowners with a PHFA mortgage who are experiencing a financial hardship because of COVID-19. PHFA also developed a list of [renters' rights and responsibilities](#) to clarify the situation for apartment residents and is working with landlords and property managers to distribute it to renters. PHFA is also encouraging Low-Income Housing Tax Credit building managers to be flexible on rent payments and to waive late fees for tenants whose employment has been affected by the crisis.

2. Rent Rebates to arrive early for seniors and people with disabilities

Governor Tom Wolf and Treasurer Joe Torsella today announced that many older homeowners, renters and people with disabilities will receive early rebates through the [Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program](#). Rebates are typically issued starting July 1, but the governor and treasurer are issuing the rebates starting tomorrow to approved applicants. The governor also signed HB 1076 today, which authorizes the early distribution.

The distribution of rebates by the Department of Revenue and Treasury is different than prior years. Rather than a large distribution of rebates on July 1, rebates will be processed and distributed on a first-in-first-out basis. This gradual process means some claimants will receive their rebates earlier than others.

For eligible applicants who have yet to file their Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program application, the Department of Revenue is offering help for those who need it. Eligible claimants are encouraged to call 1-888-222-9190 for guidance. Please keep in mind that department staff will work as quickly as possible to help claimants with their applications.

Applicants are encouraged to obtain the Property Tax/Rent Rebate claim form (PA-1000) and related information on the [Department of Revenue's website](#).

The deadline for older adults and Pennsylvania residents with disabilities to apply for rebates on rent and property taxes paid in 2019 was [extended from June 30 to Dec. 31, 2020](#).

3. 2020 PA CARES Rent Relief Program

<http://phfa.org/pacares>

Any resident or landlord (on behalf of their tenant) who is interested in this program should visit: <http://phfa.org/pacares> to review eligibility criteria and complete an application for assistance. This website will be live effective Monday, June 29th, 2020. The CARES RRP will officially open on Monday, July 6th, 2020.

For Centre County renters to be eligible for financial assistance under the CARES RRP, they will need to document at least a 30% reduction in annual income since March 1st, 2020 OR they must have become unemployed after March 1st, 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. If unemployed, they must have filed for unemployment compensation with the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry. Their household income cannot exceed Centre County's Area Median Income (AMI), adjusted for the number of people in their home. Renters who qualify may receive assistance equal to 100% of their monthly rent up to \$750/month, for a maximum of 6 months, for the time period between March 1st, 2020 and December 30th, 2020. This program is scheduled to open on Monday, July 6th, 2020.

EMPLOYMENT

1. Pennsylvania Launches COVID-19 Job Hiring Portal

The Department of Labor and Industry has launched a new [online job portal](#). People seeking employment can visit www.PAcareerlink.pa.gov and select the green "PA COVID-19 Jobs – Hiring Immediately" job portal banner to see active job openings. Selecting the "Apply Now" button for a listed position will redirect individuals to the employer's website or email where they can apply directly with the employer and speed up the hiring process.

Life-sustaining businesses can feature their job openings on the portal through an easy to use online form. Businesses must meet the criteria of a life-sustaining business and must have more than 10 job openings .

The PA COVID-19 job portal is updated daily so businesses in need are spotlighted and people searching for employment have the latest job information

2. Information for Pennsylvania's Employees Impacted By COVID-19

If you are employed in Pennsylvania and are unable to work because of Coronavirus disease (COVID-19), you may be eligible for Unemployment or Workers' Compensation benefits. The Department of Labor & Industry will continue to provide important employment benefit updates at their [website](#)

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

1. **Early Intervention** – Services during COVID-19 ([Attachment D](#))



Office of Aging

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MICHAEL PIPE, *Chair*
MARK HIGGINS
STEVEN G. DERSHEM

Willowbank Office Building
420 Holmes St., Room 245
Bellefonte, PA 16823-1488
Telephone 814.355.6716
Fax 814.355.6757

DIRECTOR
KEN PENDLETON

May 19, 2020

Good day,

Enclosed please find the application for the 2020 Farmers' Market Voucher Program. Due to our current circumstances, applications and delivery of the 2020 Voucher program will be completed by mail. Complete the entire form before mailing it back to the Office of Aging.

Please complete the form and mail it to:

FMV c/o Centre County Office of Aging
420 Holmes St., Room 245
Bellefonte, PA 16823

This is the same address on the bottom of the form. The application will be reviewed and the checks will be mailed out.

We are pleased to let you know that there has been an increase in the amount of each check. Each eligible person will receive 4 checks of \$6 each for a total of \$24.

With questions about the application, please call the Office of Aging Monday through Friday at 355-6716.

Thank you,

Sandy Schuckers
Centre County Office of Aging

FMNP and SFMNP Basic Rules and Regulations

- FMNP checks cannot be used before June 1, 2020 or after November 30, 2020.
- FMNP customers may buy only the fruits and vegetables grown in Pennsylvania
- Recipients must sign in the “Signature Recipient or Proxy” block on the front of the checks. Do this before going to the market or take a pen with you.
- At the market look for stands displaying the white Farmers Market Nutrition Program poster.
- Each check is worth \$6. Farmers are not permitted to give change for purchases for less than \$6.
- Program recipients may place orders online with FMNP approved farmer; however, you must pay with your paper FMNP checks. A proxy may go to markets to make the purchase for you.

Market information

To find a farmer’s market or farm stand with eligible farmers please download the FMNP app. The PA FMNP app is available in the Google Play store and the Apple Store for free. Search for PA FMNP farmers market locator and down load the app.

Or go to www.pafmnp.org to search our online farmers market and farm stand database.

For market with phone numbers please contact the market for changes to operating hours before visiting.

**** Note:** Program recipients are encouraged to practice social distancing and wear masks at markets and stands.

List of eligible Fruit and vegetables

Fruit

Apples	Berries	Grapes	Melons	Pears
Apricots	Cherries	Nectarines	Plums	Peaches

Vegetables

Artichokes	Cauliflower	Leeks	Parsnips	Tomatoes
Asparagus	Celery	Lettuce	Onions	Turnips
Beans (fresh)	Corn	Mushrooms	Radishes	Winter Squash
Beets	Cucumbers	Peppers	Rhubarb	Yams grown in PA
Broccoli	Eggplant	Potatoes	Rutabagas	Zucchini
Brussels sprouts	Greens	Peas	Spinach	
Cabbage	Kohlrabi	Okra	Sweet Potatoes	

No actual plants are permitted for purchase only the mature fruit and/or vegetable is allowable for purchase with the FMNP checks.

Fresh cut herbs are allowed if they are used for cooking or flavoring

- Processed food is not allowed for purchase with FMNP Checks. Jack-o-lanterns are not allowable
- Citrus or tropical fruits are not allowed for purchase with FMNP checks.

Nutrition Education

Nutrition information on basic nutrition, shopping, cooking and food safety can be found at <https://www.nutrition.gov/> The website also contains many different recipes.

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SENIOR FARMERS' MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM

2020 Application Form

To qualify you must be 60 or older (or turn 60 by 12/31/2020) and meet the household income guidelines.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

I certify that the information I have provided below for my eligibility determination is correct, to the best of my knowledge. This certification form is being submitted in connection with the receipt of Federal assistance. Program officials may verify information on this form. I understand that intentionally making a false or misleading statement or intentionally misrepresenting, concealing, or withholding facts may result in paying the State agency, in cash, the value of the food benefits improperly issued to me and may subject me to civil or criminal prosecution under State and Federal law.

Standards for eligibility and participation in the SFMNP are the same for everyone, regardless of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

I understand that I may appeal any decision made by the local agency regarding my eligibility for the SFMNP.

By signing this, I acknowledge that my total household income is within the Income guidelines: \$23,606 for 1 person in the household; or \$31,894 for 2 people in the household and that I am 60 years old or older (or will turn 60 by December 31, 2020).

1st Participant Name (print): _____ **Birth date** _____
(Person checks are for)

(Signature)

2nd Participant Name (print): _____ **Birth Date** _____
(Person checks are for)

(Signature)

Address (print): _____

Telephone Number: _____

Please circle the most appropriate identifier for each:

Ethnicity:	Hispanic or Latino	Not Hispanic or Latino	
Race:	American Indian or Alaskan Native	Asian	Black or African American
	Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	White	

If more responses are received than funding allows you will be notified by mail.

Please mail or email your completed form before **September 30, 2020** to: **FMV c/o Centre County Office of Aging**
420 Holmes St., Room 245, Bellefonte, PA 16823

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Early Intervention Services During COVID-19



Infant/Toddler and Preschool

Tele-Intervention services are now available! Services can be provided by phone and/or video technology. Your Early Intervention program can help you with ways to get services.

To Begin Tele-Intervention Services:

Connect with your local program by calling your Service Coordinator or Local EI Program Representative

Need Information to Contact Your Local Early Intervention Program?

Call the CONNECT Helpline:
1-800-692-7288

If you are unable to connect with your EI program, or you have difficulty starting Tele-Intervention services:

Please email the Office of
Child Development and
Early Learning:
ra-ocdintervention@pa.gov

