

## COVID-19 RESOURCES FOR RURAL MONTANA

We understand that the impacts of COVID-19 are being felt throughout the state, and that the economic impacts of closures are going to be significant across the state, including for our rural communities. The intent of the Stay at Home Directive and all other directives is to limit exposure and flatten the curve of this virus. Although many rural communities have few cases, and the goal of all these measures is to keep it that way and reduce exposure as much as possible.

Below is a list of resources available for business, communities, and individuals during this time. We will continue to update this as more directives come out and we have updated information, including guidance regarding the Federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Please visit to [State's COVID-19 resource site](#) for more information, as well as [MT Department of Health and Human Services](#) for updated information and current cases. You can also call the COVID Hotline at 1-888-333-0461.

### Economic and Business

- [Here](#) you can find the Stay at Home Directive and information about essential businesses.
- The [Coronavirus FAQ](#) can also help answer questions regarding the directive and essential businesses.
- If you still have **business related** questions, please call 1-800-755-6672
- Keep an eye on the [Governor's Office of Economic Development Facebook page](#) and the [Montana Department of Commerce](#) for updates regarding business assistance and other helpful resources.
- SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan and Advance- are available for small businesses in all 56 counties in Montana. This program received a \$10 billion expansion under the CARES Act and allows the SBA to provide a cash advance to the applying business. Businesses may now apply directly to the [SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loan program](#).
- Paycheck Protection Program- The Paycheck Protection Program is a loan designed to provide a direct incentive for small businesses to keep their workers on the payroll. SBA will forgive loans if all employees are kept on the payroll for eight weeks and the money is used for payroll, rent, mortgage interest, or utilities. Find out more information [here](#) and the [FAQ here](#).
- Non-Profit- For **non-profit specific** questions and resources go to the [Montana Non-Profits Association Website](#) for COVID-19 non-profit response, FAQ's, and updates. MNA provides several resources for nonprofits, including daily townhalls and COVID-19 relief information.

### Unemployment

- Unemployment- Unemployment benefits will be available to all Montanan's who are sick, quarantined, or laid off because of the COVID-19 outbreak. DLI has set up a streamlined process and is waiving the usual 1 week waiting period to receive benefits. Visit: [www.montanaworkers.gov](http://www.montanaworkers.gov) or call 444-2545.
  - Note: *DLI Unemployment is experiencing an unprecedented call volume to their unemployment insurance claims processing help line and the agency is working hard to provide service to everyone. Please be patient.*
  - Unless you have received official notification from Unemployment Insurance that you must call the call center, please search for your answer at [dli.mt.gov/employer-covid-19](http://dli.mt.gov/employer-covid-19) in order to free up phone lines for folks who are required to call in.

- If you are out of work or on reduced hours due to COVID-19, we encourage you to submit an unemployment insurance claim. Applicants can submit online at [MontanaWorks.gov](http://MontanaWorks.gov).
- The Federal CARES Act will also allow eligible individuals collecting unemployment to receive an additional \$600 per week. Please see at [dli.mt.gov/cares-act](http://dli.mt.gov/cares-act) for further guidance.
- Self-employed, independent contractors, and others- Under the CARES Act will expand Unemployment Insurance Benefits to those not traditionally covered, including the self-employed, independent contractors, and others.
  - Note: DLI has received some guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor on the administration of this new program and is awaiting complete details, but they are still working through details and implementing steps to process claims. They are prepared to backdate unemployment assistance claims authorized under the CARES Act.
- Employers- If you have questions about unemployment as an employer, please visit <http://dli.mt.gov/employer-resource-covid-19>

### **Healthcare and Insurance**

- Uninsured Montanans will be covered for COVID-19 testing and treatment.
- Governor Bullock has expanded access to telemedicine services for homebound Montana residents to help reduce visits to local hospitals and medical facilities, and for those who can't make it out to facilities. For more information please see the [Memo from DPHHS](#).
- The Department of Public Health and Human Services offers an expansion of mental health services to help Montanans during COVID-19. See Resources listed below or visit the [DPHHS Website](#)
  - The Montana Warmline: The service provides early crisis intervention with emotional support that can prevent a crisis. The Warmline is available at 877-688-3377 or at [Montana Warmline](#).
  - The Montana Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-TALK (8255) is also available.
  - The Montana Crisis Text Line, which can be accessed by texting "MT" to 741741.

### **Childcare, Schools and Education**

- Please visit the [Office of Public Instruction COVID site](#) for information about closures, school nutrition, emergency funding, testing, and more. Additional guidance can also be found [here](#).
- Childcare- Childcare is an essential business, and the Governor has provided [additional guidance](#) on childcare facilities to ensure that Montana's essential workers can receive access to childcare during the state of emergency
- College resources and information from [Montana University System](#).
- For a comprehensive list of resources, children's activities, and tools for the community, child care providers, families, and employers, go to the [Montana Child Care Connections COVID-19 resource page](#).
- [No Kid Hungry](#) is offering emergency grants to support local school districts and nonprofit organizations in their efforts to ensure kids get the nutritious food they need.

### **Homeowners and Rental**

- Limiting evictions, foreclosures, and disconnections for the duration of the Stay at Home Directive. [See Directive](#).
- [Low-Income Rental Assistance](#)- The Directive adds to Governor Bullock's temporary suspension of certain evictions, foreclosures and service disconnections by creating a program to provide

rental assistance to households experiencing substantial financial hardship due to COVID-19. The Montana Department of Commerce shall administer a program to provide rent assistance to low-income Montanans who have suffered substantial financial hardship as a result of COVID-19. The program will also include relief funds specifically for households with children eligible for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.

- Housing- [Montana Housing Guidance](#)

### **Local Governments**

- The Governor issued a [Directive](#) to waive the current requirement that local and county governments implement a 2-mill emergency levy in order to access new funding coming to the state through the federal CARES Act.
- Increase flexibility by providing measures for the [operation of local government](#).
- [Elections](#)- allowing local governments to conduct mail ballot elections and expand early voting.
- Other resources and information can be found at [Montana League of Cities and Towns](#) and [Montana Association of Counties](#).

### **Community Resources**

- The Montana Community Foundation and local community foundations have set up Local COVID-19 Funds. Find out more about your [local COVID-19 Fund](#).
- Community Service- Organizations that provide charitable and social services are considered an essential business when 'providing food, shelter, and social services, and other necessities of life for economically disadvantaged or otherwise needy individuals, individuals who need assistance as a result of this emergency, and people with disabilities' per the Governor's Directive. This would not include regular church services or gatherings where social distancing would be too difficult to maintain.
  - Live stream/virtual church services are allowed. Limited staff may record services at the church, but must follow social distancing.
- [MSU Extension](#)- Extension agents are in almost every county across the state and working online to provide resources to help families, businesses, ranches and communities during this time.

### **Outdoor Recreation**

- Montanans are still allowed to recreate outdoors during the Stay at Home Directive. At this time, Montana State Parks, Fishing Access Sites and Wildlife Management Areas remain open to day-use. Social distancing applies, and respect for the resources is critical to keeping public lands open. Because travel exacerbates the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, the public should use public lands in their communities, and non-local travel to sites is strongly discouraged.
- Check out [Fish, Wildlife and Parks](#) website for updates on closures, fishing, and hunting.
- Remember, any person (resident or non-resident) coming to Montana from another state or country for a non-work-related purpose must immediately [self-quarantine for 14 days](#). If a person will be present in Montana for fewer than 14 days, that person must self-quarantine for the duration of the visit.

### **Directives & More information:**

You can view all Directives [here](#).

- [Stay at Home & Extension](#)
- [14-day Quarantine for travelers](#)

- [COVID FAQ](#)
- [Joint Information Center](#)
- State General COVID-19 Hotline: 1-888-333-046
- Tourism Informational Hotline: 1-800-847-4868
- Website, details and maps: COVID19INFO@MT.GOV