



Living Well Together

Featuring COVID-19 Service Information June 2020

**An Updated Newsletter of the
Georgetown Council on Aging**

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Director's Notes

As a result of the President's declaration of a National Emergency, the Governor's declaration of a Statewide Emergency, and the Town's order to move to a Public Health Emergency Level 3 protocol, the Georgetown Council on Aging and the Georgetown Senior Community Center (located in the left wing of the Perley School) are closed and will remain closed until further notice. On Monday July 13, Georgetown COA staff members will return to work in the COA Office at the Senior Center. At that time, the Senior Center will remain closed to the public but the staff will be available Monday – Thursday 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. to answer questions, provide information and support and to continue essential services. The on-going COVID-19 pandemic has meant significant disruption to our lives but the Georgetown COA is committed to providing a high level of service and support to older adults living in Georgetown. We know that much continues to change and evolve as a result of the pandemic and that how we live on a daily basis will continue to be affected and different for some time. We are hopeful that by the end of July we will be able to have one-on-one assistance appointments take place at the Senior Center. We are planning and hopeful that we will be able to have small group activities that are pre-registered and carefully scheduled by the end of August or beginning of September. One thing that we can be certain of even in an uncertain time, is that life is not static and will continue to evolve. Things will continue to change as we move forward and we will adapt to those changes. Never before has the old proverb "Absence Makes the Heart Grow Fonder" seemed ever truer. We have truly missed your company and will be so glad to be able to soon plan new times together – even if those times are different than what we enjoyed in the past! The time apart has reinforced what we know to be most important in life – family, friends, health, being kind and caring to others. We will be so glad to continue to grow with you as we find our way through these new challenges together. Please continue to take care of yourselves and each other and be well!

Georgetown COA Services Provided during COVID-19

The Georgetown Council on Aging and staff at the Georgetown Senior Community Center remain committed to serving older adults and their families in Georgetown during the current COVID-19 pandemic. The Georgetown Council on Aging staff members are working remotely from home but will return to the COA Office at the Georgetown Senior Community Center on Monday July 13. At that time, the Senior Center will still be closed to the public. With remote access to voice mail and email messages, staff members are able to continue essential services such as reassurance calls, provide deliveries of non-perishable food, personal care items and paper products from the COA food pantry, essential shopping assistance (groceries, pharmacies, etc.) with the COA Van, lend durable medical equipment, coordinate telephone appointments with the SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Everyone) Counselor as well as provide information, resources and referrals. Tai Chi classes with COA Instructor Chris Himmel are available on ZOOM. Georgetown COA Yoga Instructor Donna Bonin and Fitness Instructor Leah Miller have taped yoga and fitness classes for Georgetown Cable TV. Nutrition classes with Leigh Hartwell, a dietitian with Elder Services of Merrimack Valley (ESMV) are also planned for Cable TV. Check the Local Access Cable TV schedule to view and enjoy their classes. The scheduled can be seen at <http://gctv.georgetownma.gov/> For information, call or email Colleen. **To contact the Georgetown Council on Aging and Georgetown Senior Community Center, please call 978-352-5726 or email cfiorello@georgetownma.gov**

COA to offer Grab and Go Lunches

As staff returns to the Georgetown Senior Community Center on July 13, the COA is considering on-site lunch alternatives. The COA is at work with Elder Services of Merrimack Valley (ESMV) to develop a program that could offer **GRAB-and-GO** take-out lunches to local participants. For further information, please call the office at 978-352-5726.

Georgetown Peabody Library offers Contactless Curbside Pickup.

Although the Georgetown Peabody Library is currently closed along with other town departments and facilities, Georgetown Peabody Library has begun Contactless Curbside Pickup. Library staff are available to assist patrons in placing items from the Georgetown Peabody Library on hold with their individual library card. Staff will call to schedule a pick up time of the library materials.

Contactless Curbside Pickup Guidelines:

1. Place your holds online at www.georgetownpl.org, call 978-352-5728, or email.
2. The library will collect your requests pending their availability on GPL shelves (no MVLC at this time).
3. The library will call you to set up a pickup time. Curbside availability: Mondays 2-6 p.m. and Wednesdays and Fridays 12-4 p.m.
4. A receipt with return due dates will be included with your items.

Georgetown Peabody Library patrons and MVLC member library card holders may access high-quality local, state, and regionally funded online resources of full-text periodicals, health and business resources, biographical and literary databases, as well as general research resources that are available online in the library or from home. Home access to online

resources is possible by inputting your 14-digit public library barcode number. For more information and resources, please visit <https://georgetownpl.org/services/online-resources/>

Scam Alert from Georgetown Police Department

The Georgetown Police Department reports that there have been a number of reports of the Grandparent/arrest scams circulating in the area. The way the scam works is a scammer calls you pretending to be your grandchild (sometimes you can barely hear the speaker). The speaker tells you s/he has been arrested out of State and needs money. The phone is then handed to a second scammer who pretends to be a lawyer asking for money for a lawyer and bail. They tell you they need the money right away. The scammer instructs you to send the cash either UPS/FedEx etc. and overnight the cash or in some cases they have sent a person to your house to pick up the money. The Georgetown Police Department has found that these calls are random and the scammers do not know you. If you receive this type of scam, please call the Georgetown Police Department at 978-352-5700 immediately. Please talk to your elderly relatives, parents, and neighbors to get the word out about this scam. The scammers are getting tens of thousands of dollars off some victims! If you receive any call asking for money right away, but are unsure if the call is legitimate, please call the Georgetown Police Department for help. Please remember that no business uses iTunes cards or any other gift card as a form of payment on a bill.

This Magic Moment Memory Café Virtual Zoom Series Underway

Facilitated by Len Brennan of Elder Services of Merrimack Valley, a Memory Café offered through Zoom is underway. “This Magic Moment” Memory Café will be available through Zoom on Tuesdays June 9 and 23 and July 7, 11 a.m. – 12 p.m. The café includes fun engaging activities and a chance to meet new friends. It is a judgment free zone for both those who live with memory loss and their caregivers. To register, please call Lynn Brennan at 978-273-2501.

Senior Farmer’s Market Coupon Distribution

Summer is here, and that means there’s plenty of fresh produce available at Farmer’s Markets across the Merrimack Valley! Good nutrition is important throughout our lives, and helps to promote healthy living and healthy aging. The **Senior Farmer’s Market Nutrition Program** will offer a **limited supply of coupons to adults aged 60 and older who meet certain income guidelines**, to buy produce at their nearby Farmer’s Market. The coupons will be available through Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley’s Nutrition Program and distributed by **designated Senior Centers**. The coupons will be available on first come, first served basis on **Wednesday, August 5**. You will need to bring proof of where you live such as a phone bill or electric bill that includes your name and address. You will also need to sign a statement that says you are 60 years of age or older, live in the Merrimack Valley and that you meet the income criteria. For more information on the program, please call the Georgetown Council on Aging at 978-352-5726.

Unemployment Scam

Senator Bruce Tarr's office recently reported an increase in unemployment scams. In what appears to be a state-wide issue, Senator Tarr reported that some individuals in the area who have not applied for unemployment benefits have received letters of confirmation that they had applied for benefits. If you, or anyone you know, receive a letter from the Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) to confirm an application for unemployment benefits but have not applied for benefits, contact the DUA at mass.gov/unemployment-fraud or call the DUA Customer Service Department at 877-626-6800 to report the false unemployment claim..

Some Economic Impact Payments may be Issued On Prepaid Debit Cards

Congressman Seth Moulton has recently alerted constituents that some economic impact payments are being sent by prepaid debit card. Managed by a third-party outside of the government, the debit cards arrive in a plain envelope from "Money Network Cardholder Services." Unfortunately, Congressman Moulton's office reports that some people did not recognize the prepaid debit card as their economic impact payment and inadvertently threw out their cards. People who receive their Economic Impact Payment by prepaid debit card can do the following without any fees.

- Make purchases online and at any retail location where Visa is accepted
- Get cash from in-network ATMs
- Transfer funds to their personal bank account
- Check their card balance online, by mobile app or by phone

To learn more about the economic impact payments on prepaid debit cards, please visit <https://www.eipcard.com/faq> or www.irs.gov/eipfaq. Additional information is available in IRS News Release 2020-105, copy attached. For an electronic version of the IRS news release easily shared on social media visit IRS.gov/newsroom.

Securities and Exchange Commission warns about Investment Fraud

Unfortunately, the potential for investment fraud has also increased during the current pandemic. The Boston regional office of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has recently warned potential investors to be "wary of companies claiming they can help cure the coronavirus, or companies that have recently converted their business to a COVID-19 related venture. To date, the SEC has suspended trading in more than 20 companies claiming to provide coronavirus-related products and services." Potential investors should be wary of red flags such as unsolicited offers and pressure to immediately invest, they said. For more information about investment fraud and how to avoid it, please read our recent investor alerts, [Fraud Targeting Main Street Investors](#) and [Look Out for Coronavirus-Related Investment Scams](#). We strongly encourage anyone who becomes aware of possible securities fraud to report the activity using the SEC's online [Tip, Complaint, and Referral \(TCR\) system](#).

Veteran's Food Resources

Clear Path for Veterans New England offers a food resource site at Northern Essex Community College in Haverhill. The site is open on alternating Wednesdays, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. Photo Ids are needed along with DD-214. Pre-registration is available at

Crosby's Marketplace offers Early Shopping Hours for Older Adults

Crosby's Marketplace offers early shopping hours for older adults. On a daily basis, Crosby's Marketplace has set aside the hour from 7 – 8 a.m. as a dedicated opportunity for older adults 60 years and older to shop while limiting their exposure to others.

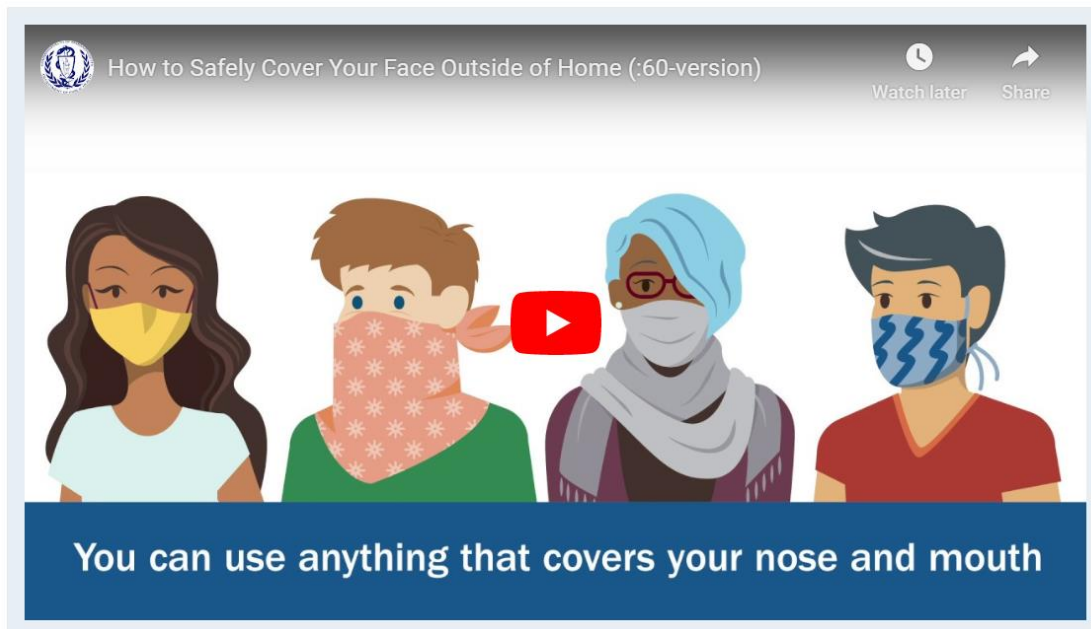
Meals on Wheels Continues to Serve

During the ongoing Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley, Inc. continues to provide essential services for elders. Some modifications of home care services have been necessary to ensure the safety and wellbeing of both consumers and staff but still continue to be offered in the community. The Meals on Wheels program has been expanded to include additional consumers. New participants can be added to the program. For information on Meals on Wheels and other home-care services, please call Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley, Inc. at 1-800-892-0890.

Important Information from the State Department of Public Health

- Governor Baker has issued an [Order](#) effective Wednesday, May 6 requiring face masks or cloth face coverings in public places where social distancing is not possible. This applies to both indoor and outdoor spaces. Exceptions include children under the age of 2 and those unable to wear a mask or face covering due to a medical condition. Learn about wearing face coverings and cloth masks in public, to slow the spread of COVID-19, as required in Governor Baker's Executive Order.

Watch this [Video](#): How to Safely Cover Your Face Outside of Home



Tips on the Proper Use of Masks and Face Coverings

- There are many things that you can do to help protect yourself and others from becoming infected with COVID-19. People who show no symptoms of illness may still be able to spread COVID-19. A face covering may help prevent you from spreading COVID-19 to other people.
- A face covering can include anything that covers your nose and mouth, including dust masks, scarves and bandanas.
- Do not use health care worker masks, such as the N95 masks - those should be preserved for healthcare workers.
- It is important that you wear these face coverings or masks in situations where it is difficult to maintain a social distance of six feet from others. For example, in a pharmacy or grocery store.
- When you wear a cloth mask, it should:
 - Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
 - Be secured with ties or ear loops
 - Include multiple layers of fabric
 - Allow for breathing without restriction
 - Be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape
- When putting on and taking off a mask, do not touch the front of it, you should only handle the ties or ear straps, and make sure you wash the cloth mask regularly. Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer after touching the mask.

- Cloth masks 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
- **In addition to wearing a cloth mask you should continue to practice proven methods to protect yourself.**
- Practice social distancing at all times by remaining 6 feet away from others when you have to leave your home for essential trips.
- Stay home if you are sick and avoiding close contact with others.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; using alcohol-based hand gel with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Clean things that are frequently touched (like doorknobs and countertops) with household cleaning spray or wipes.
- Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze. Use a tissue or your inner elbow, not your hands.

Registry of Motor Vehicle Updates

The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) has implemented further extensions to the renewal timelines for expiring motor vehicle inspection stickers, passenger plate registrations, driver's licenses and ID cards. Passenger plate registrations and inspection stickers that expired in March, April and May have been extended to June, July and August. Driver's licenses and ID cards that expired in June have been extended until October 2020, those that expired in July have been extended to November 2020 and those that expired in August have been extended until December 2020. Annual motor vehicle safety and emissions inspection stickers that expire in March, April and May have been extended until July 31. Passenger plate registrations that expired in June have also been extended until July 31. Renewals for standard driver's license, ID credentials and registration renewals can be performed online at www.Mass.Gov/RMV along with more than 40 other transactions that can be conducted online, over the phone, or by mail. For information about available services and additional steps the RMV has taken under the State of Emergency declaration, including the extension of expiring licenses / permits and vehicle inspection stickers, please visit: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/rmv-covid-19-information>. Currently, AAA locations continue to offer select RMV services to AAA members in Massachusetts. Customers seeking to do so in-person will not be able to make an appointment and should delay their visit to a Service Center at this time.

EBT card issuance changes at DTA (Department of Transitional Service) to expedite service to consumers

The state Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) will now mail EBT cards for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) locally (from within Massachusetts). Previously, DTA EBT cards were issued via the EBT vendor, Conduent, from an office in Indiana - and it took 7-10 days, or longer, for a DTA EBT card to arrive in the mail. By mailing

EBT cards locally, the goal is to reduce the number of days between DTA issuing the EBT card and the household receiving the card. Huge thanks to DTA for making this change. DTA local offices remain closed while DTA staff work remotely. Homeless households or households without a mailing address need to designate a mailing address to receive their EBT card and PIN. This can be a shelter, a trusted family or friend able to receive the EBT card and PIN and give it to the household.

USDA Approves Massachusetts Plan to Join Online EBT Grocery Purchase Pilot

BOSTON – The Baker-Polito Administration announced that Massachusetts received approval from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to move forward on participation in a pilot program that, once established, will allow households who receive food assistance benefits through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (<https://www.mass.gov/snap-benefits-formerly-food-stamps>) to purchase groceries online with electronic benefit transfer (EBT) cards. Massachusetts applied to participate in this federal pilot program on April 24th. Federal SNAP rules generally prohibit online purchases with an EBT card. In 2019, the USDA established a six-state pilot program to explore online SNAP EBT transactions for food purchases. In response to COVID-19, USDA has allowed additional states to apply to participate in the pilot program. Now that approval has been received, DTA will work with the state's EBT vendor, Conduent, and the two retailers participating in the federal pilot program, Walmart and Amazon, to implement the state's plan as soon as possible. DTA assists and empowers low-income individuals and families to meet their basic needs, improve their quality of life, and achieve long term economic self-sufficiency. DTA serves one in nine residents of the Commonwealth with direct economic assistance and food assistance, as well as workforce training opportunities. For more information related to DTA in light of COVID-19, visit <https://www.mass.gov/dta-covid-19-resources-and-support>

On-Line Resources for Physical Exercise and Activities

Physical exercise and activity are an important part of aging. Although we're unable to visit local gyms or take group classes at the Senior Center due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, there are some good on-line resources and strategies for remaining physically active on line through the National Institute on Aging (NIA). Including tips for fitting exercise into daily life, the NIA site includes photographs and written outlines regarding exercises to maintain endurance, balance, strength and flexibility. Safety tips are also included. For information visit <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/exercise-physical-activity>

2020 Census

Most households have receiving invitations to respond to the 2020 Census. Residents can respond online, by phone, or by mail. If a household does not respond to the 2020 Census, a

census taker will follow up in person to collect their response. This will occur between May-July. There are several ways that you can contact the U.S. Census Bureau for support. To complete online, please visit my2020census.gov The 2020 Census can also be completed by phone. Telephone lines are open every day from 7am to 2am Eastern Time. For assistance, please call 1-844-330-2020.

Income Tax Filing Deadlines Extended

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak, the state of Massachusetts has agreed to extend the 2019 state individual income tax filing and payment deadline from April 15 to July 15. This income tax relief is automatic and taxpayers do not need to file any additional forms to qualify. The agreement to move the state income tax filing deadline will match the July 15 deadline for filing federal individual income taxes. Individuals with questions or concerns regarding taxes can contact the Massachusetts Department of Revenue at (617) 887-6367 or send a secure e-message through [MassTaxConnect](#). At this time, all remaining appointments with the AARP Income Tax Preparation program at the Georgetown Senior Community Center have been cancelled. Further information may become available about the program in the near future.

Gig economy workers, self employed workers, and others can now file for unemployment in Massachusetts

Governor Baker's Administration has announced that workers can now file for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) through DUA at Mass.gov/PUA. Many workers who were not eligible under regular Unemployment Insurance (UI) are eligible for PUA. Self-employed individuals, gig workers, freelancers, and independent contractors (eg. Uber/Lyft drivers), individuals seeking part-time employment as well as individuals with insufficient work history to qualify for regular unemployment insurance are all able to file for UI as part of PUA. All workers who receive unemployment insurance either through the regular UI program or through PUA - should receive \$600/week on top of their base UI amount. This additional \$600/week payment will continue until the end of July. For a guide on UI and to learn more, please visit: Masslegalhelp.org/covid-19-unemployment

Alzheimer's Association Provides Support for Caregivers Providing Care for Individuals Living with Dementia at Home

During emergency situations such as the current COVID-19 pandemic, caregivers providing care for individuals living with Alzheimer's Disease or other dementia can experience significant challenges. Daily routines may be disrupted as resources and services are limited or not available. Recognizing those special challenges, the Alzheimer's Association has gathered COVID Tips – Caring for a Person with Dementia at Home that includes strategies for structuring the day, activities, tips for getting through the day with less stress and caregiver breaks. The resource material can be found at: <https://mcoaonline.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/COVID-Tips-Caring-for-a-Person-with-Dementia-at-HomeFINAL.pdf> For additional information, call the Alzheimer's Associations' 24/7 Hotline at 800-272-3900 or visit <https://www.alz.org>

COVID-19 Information available through 211

In partnership with the United Way, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health has opened "2-1-1" service to all callers seeking information on the current COVID-19 pandemic.

The 211 service is available 24 hours a day and seven days per week. Operators fluent in Spanish and other languages are available. Residents with questions regarding the pandemic can dial 2-1-1 from any landline or cellphone, or use the live chat option on the Mass 2-1-1 website located at mass211.org. They can also receive updates on mobile phones by texting "COVIDMA" to 888-777.

Veterans' Information

Although their office is currently closed due to the COVID-19 outbreak, Karen Tyler, the Director of Veterans' Services, can be reached by either email or telephone. For assistance, please email kt Tyler@eessexvets.com or phone (978) 356-3915. Information on programs and services available for veterans and their family members can be found at www.eessexvets.com

Virtual Museum/Gallery Tours and other On-Line Activities

While we spend time at home, we can still visit a variety of wonderful museums and historic sites around the world from the comfort and safety of our home. On-line visitors can tour galleries and collections at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem by visiting pem.org. Collections and galleries at the Addison Gallery of American Art in Andover are also available for virtual visits by visiting <https://addison.andover.edu>. Google Arts & Culture offers online tours and exhibits of hundreds of museums around the world, including the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum <https://artsandculture.google.com/partner/isabella-stewart-gardner-museum> and the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston <https://artsandculture.google.com/partner/museum-of-fine-arts-boston>. Plenty of virtual fun for all ages is available through the Trustees of Reservations at www.thetrustees.org. Their website includes virtual tours of some of their historic homes and properties along with selected readings, art and garden tours and garden information. For people seeking some on-line creative expression opportunities, the website creativebug.com includes creative doodling, sewing, knitting and other activities. The Haverhill Public Library also offers a virtual crafting hour on Fridays at 2 p.m. For the Zoom invitation and to access the session is to visit haverhillpl.org or to contact Brendan Kieran at bkieran@haverhillpl.org. The Memorial Hall Library in Andover offers links through websites to comic strips, film and TV comedies, joke collections, laughter yoga and strange stories on NPR. For information, visit mhl.org. At the Massachusetts Historical Society, it is possible to view the personal papers of John Quincy Adams and Thomas Jefferson. Virtual tours of the Massachusetts State House are also available and include the Great Hall, the Senate Chamber, and the office of the Speaker of the House. Visit <https://malegislature.gov/VirtualTour>

Stress Relief

As we are surrounded with difficult news regarding COVID-19, many of us have experienced increased levels of stress and anxiety. Both the CDC and Mass.gov offer information and resources to help us care for our emotional wellbeing at this time. Strategies such as controlling what we can control such as washing our hands and wearing gloves can help us focus on what we can do. Other strategies such as reducing isolation by reaching out through phone, computer or mail to others is also helpful as is limiting the amount of news that we consume. Enjoying music or a walk outside our homes can also lift our mood and spirits.

For more information, visit

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fprepare%2Fmanaging-stress-anxiety.html#reducing-stress

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/maintaining-emotional-health-well-being-during-the-covid-19-outbreak>

Help is always available by calling the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or the Samaritans at 1-877-870-HOPE (4673)

Stimulus Payment Scam Awareness

Rep. Lenny Mirra cautions residents that as stimulus payments are being sent out by the IRS, there are reports of scammers stealing these payments. Rep. Mirra reminds residents to please take precautions to make sure in order to avoid becoming a victim of theft or identity fraud.

If they have a 2018 or 2019 federal tax return on file and are eligible for a stimulus payment under the CARES Act, the IRS will deposit their stimulus payment directly into the bank account listed on their income tax return. Social Security recipients and railroad retirees will automatically receive a \$1,200 stimulus payment in the same way they receive monthly benefits, even if they did not file a return for 2018 or 2019. In order to protect payments, and personal data, Rep. Mirra reminds residents to avoid clicking on links sent by email or text messages that appear to originate from the IRS. The IRS will not contact individuals by telephone, email, social media or text message and ask for personal information. Residents are also asked to be on the watch for fake checks that arrive in the mail ask the recipients to "verify" information online or make a phone call to cash it. Other scams involve checks for too much money where recipients are asked to keep what they're owed and return the difference in cash, gift cards, or money transfers. If you do receive an unsolicited email, text message, or social media post that appears to be from the IRS and attempts to gather information you can forward it to phishing@irs.gov. To learn more about how to recognize and report phishing and online scams, please visit the IRS web site at www.irs.gov.

Beware of fraudulent offers for COVID-19 testing from door-to-door, grocery store, telephone and mail order offerings- It is probably a scam!

Lawrence, MA: The Massachusetts Senior Medicare Patrol (MA SMP) Program warns the public to be wary of anyone other than a treating physician who is offering you coronavirus testing. Be particularly suspicious of anyone offering COVID-19 testing in exchange for your Medicare number, money, or to gain access in to your home. Be careful! "Sadly, the scams around coronavirus testing are spreading almost as fast as the virus itself," said Lucilia Prates-Ramos, the statewide director of the MA SMP program. "Testing can only be ordered by a treating physician. We have heard about teams in white coats are going door-to-door offering virus testing. This is NOT a valid offer. What they are really interested in is robbing the elder or stealing their identify. We have heard reports of callers pretending to be a nurse offering test results once they get a credit card number. These kinds of calls are also not for real"

Never accept a coronavirus test from someone:

- Who comes to your door;
- Who approaches you at the grocery store or other community venue, parking lot, etc.;
- Who calls offering a mail-in test in exchange for money or Medicare number;
- Who calls to request your bank card or account information to pay for a test.

"If someone knocks at your door to offer medical testing, do not let them in," Prates-Ramos said. "Instead, call the police immediately. Remember: Never give your Medicare number to someone you don't know."

If a testing kit is mailed to you, do not accept it or return it to the sender, Prates-Ramos advises.

"Keep a record of the sender's name and the date you returned the items," Prates-Ramos said. "Then make a note to check your Medicare Summary Notice, if you are on traditional Medicare, or your Explanation of Benefits statement, if you have a Medicare Advantage plan, to make sure Medicare did not pay for the test kit. If you have any questions, please call us."

For details about scams related to coronavirus testing call the MA SMP Program at 800-892-0890 or visit the Federal Trade Commission website at:

<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2020/02/coronavirus-scammers-follow-headlines>

For more information on the coronavirus visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html>

<https://www.mass.gov/resource/information-on-the-outbreak-of-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>

<https://www.cms.gov/About-CMS/Agency-Information/EPRO/Current-Emergencies/Current-Emergencies-page>

COVID ... 19 & Extra Emergency SNAP Benefits: What You Need to Know

The Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) is issuing emergency SNAP (food stamp) supplements to many SNAP households to help buy food during the pandemic crisis. Congress approved special SNAP supplement benefits in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Will I get extra SNAP benefits?

If your monthly SNAP benefit is *less than* the maximum SNAP for your household, you will get a supplemental benefit up to the maximum SNAP grant. If you get the maximum SNAP benefit, you will not get extra SNAP. This is because of a decision made by USDA (the federal government), not DTA.

Household size	Max. SNAP
1	\$194
2	~355
3	\$SQ9
4	\$646
5	\$768
6	\$921
7	\$1,018

8	\$1,164
Each add'l member	+\$146

~ Examples		the max for 3.
Supplement	Individual A gets Supplement	Individual B gets Supplement
Family A gets \$200/mo in SNAP for one adult and 2 kids. This family will get a SNAP supplement of \$309 - boosting	Individual A gets \$194/mo in SNAP. This individual will NOT get any extra SNAP, because they already get the max for 3.	Individual B gets \$194/mo in SNAP. This individual will NOT get any extra SNAP, because they already get the max for 3.

If I qualify for extra SNAP, when will I get it?

- Eligible households will get 2 emergency SNAP payments on their EBT card.
- On March 31 extra SNAP payments were put on cards. Some households may get the payment in early April.
- In April extra SNAP payments will also be made. Details to come.

How do I learn how much I get in SNAP and if I get extra SNAP?

- DTA will not send you a notice if you get extra SNAP. Check your balance and your monthly SNAP benefit amount by:
 - o Going on the DTA Connect mobile app or DTAConnect.com.
 - o Calling the DTA Assistance line at 877-382-2363. Enter your SSN/year of birth to hear an automated message with your monthly SNAP amount.
 - o Call the EBT Customer Service number to check your balance: 800-991-2555 (the number on the back of your EBT card).
- If you have urgent questions for a DTA worker, you can also call the DTA Assistance line. There may be disconnects due to high call volume or long wait times to speak with a worker.

What if I need help food shopping?

Any member of your household can use the SNAP EBT card to food shop. Their name or picture does NOT need to be on the card. You can also give your EBT card temporarily to a *trusted friend or relative* to food shop for you. The store should not inspect the card or refuse to serve any customer with an EBT card and PIN.

What if I do not get SNAP?

If you are low-income we encourage you to apply. If you are approved, you may also qualify for an extra SNAP payment. To apply:

- The fastest way to apply is to apply online/on your smartphone at DTAConnect.com.
- Go to Mass.gov/SNAP to print a paper SNAP application and learn where to send it.
- Call the Project Bread FoodSource Hotline at 1-800-645-8333 to apply over the phone.

What if I need meals for my school age children?

While schools are closed, many school districts are providing pre-packaged school meals for children. To find out what your school district is doing and when you can pick up meals, go to: projectbread.org/COVID-19. Also, children who get SNAP or are approved for free or reduced-price meals will get additional EBT benefits, likely in April and/or May. More details to follow.

What other resources can help me?

DTA COVID-19 information and FAQ: Mass.gov/DTA/COVID-19

> For information for workers who have lost pay: [Masslegalservices.org/COVID-19workersandSNAP](https://masslegalservices.org/COVID-19workersandSNAP)

~ For help with emergency food resources in your community:

- o Call Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline: 1-800-645-8333
- o Call Mass 2-1-1
- o Direct info from the Food Bank in your area:
 - Greater Boston Food Bank: [GBFB.org/need-food](https://gbfb.org/need-food)

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This flier is up to date as of 4-1-20, information subject to
change

