



Living Well Together

Featuring COVID-19 Service Information April 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. The on-going COVID-19 pandemic has meant significant disruption to our lives. Suddenly, daily schedules that often include visits with friends at the Senior Center, lunch at a local restaurant, end-of-the year school celebrations with precious grandchildren and quiet times spent at weekly worship services have all come to a halt. Many of us know people or family members who have been directly affected by the coronavirus. We may know people who have become ill with the virus or have lost their jobs as a result of the disruption to businesses. Sadly, we may know some people who have lost their lives to COVID-19. Throughout all of the sadness and grief that has surrounded us at this time, we have also been surrounded by love, care and compassion. Community groups have donated groceries and other items to local food pantries and people living with need. Neighbors and friends call each other with offers to help with grocery shopping and just to check in with how we are holding up. Suddenly, we see neighbors and parents with children who are not typically home during the day, out for a daily walk together. Grandchildren send us wonderful drawings in the mail. We find ways to worship together on-line or with phone and email messages. The light that lives within each of us is not diminished. Collectively, we send our light out into the darkness to care for those who are sick and their healthcare providers and to support all who work to keep our communities safe and moving forward. We may be separate from each other at this time, but we know that we are never alone in the darkness. Now, more than ever, we are "*Living Well Together.*" We will see better days together soon. Until then, 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. With remote access to voice mail and email messages, staff members are able to continue some services such as reassurance calls, provide deliveries from the COA food pantry, essential shopping assistance (groceries, pharmacies, etc.), 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 are available on ZOOM. 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**

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

Households began receiving invitations to respond to the 2020 Census between March 12-20. There are additional reminders to respond that will be mailed throughout the month. Once you receive your invitation, you 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 ktyler@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

Registry of Motor Vehicles Updates

The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) has announced several measures to reduce customer volumes in physical locations and maintain proper social-distancing in order to keep residents safe and healthy. An appointment-only reservation system has been implemented for certain necessary and required in-person transactions at the RMV's eight open and operating Service Centers. These essential transactions include certain Commercial Driving License (CDL) transactions and some new registrations. Appointment reservation times will be available on a rolling basis up to two business days in advance on www.Mass.Gov/RMV in the [myRMV Online Service Center](#) under "Make or Cancel a Reservation." Customers who make an appointment will be sent a confirmation email that they should be prepared to show on arrival. There will be a delay of the October 2020 REAL ID compliance deadline. Effective March 25th and until April 7th, the RMV is also suspending the issuance of new REAL IDs and knowledge/written exams for non-commercial learner's permits, both of which are currently required, but non-essential, in-person transactions. Renewals for standard driver's license and ID credentials 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.

Further Extensions Implemented for Expiring Licenses, Permits, Motor Vehicle Inspection Stickers, and Passenger Plate Registrations

The Massachusetts Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) has implemented further extensions for expiring motor vehicle inspection stickers, passenger plate registrations, professional credentials, and licenses and permits, including Commercial Driver's Licenses and Permits (CDLs / CLPs). While 60-day extensions had already been implemented for most credentials, passenger plate registrations, and inspection stickers expired or expiring in March and April, this new action will apply the same 60-day extension to those expiring in May. Additionally, credentials expiring in March 2020 that previously were extended by 60 days will have an additional 60-day extension applied. The following new changes are now effective: All commercial and non-commercial driver's licenses, ID cards, and Learner's Permits that expire in May 2020 will now expire in July 2020 and do not need to be renewed at this time. Motor vehicle safety and emissions inspection stickers that expire on May 31, 2020 will now expire on July 31, 2020. While automotive repair and maintenance facilities continue to remain open as "essential services" and inspection stations may operate at their discretion, these annual inspections do not need to occur at this time. All passenger plate registrations that will expire in May 2020, will now expire in July 2020. Registration renewals can continue to be performed online at Mass.Gov/RMV during this time. 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.

Crosby's Marketplace offers Early Shopping Hours for Older Adults

Crosby's Marketplace has recently begun to offer 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

As the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic grows, 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.

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. 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>

Georgetown Peabody Library offers Online Resources

Although the Georgetown Peabody Library is currently closed along with other town departments and facilities, Georgetown Peabody Library 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/>

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	\$509
4	\$646
5	\$768
6	\$921
7	\$1,018
8	\$1,164
Each add'l member	+\$146

~ Examples	
<i>Supplement</i>	<i>No Supplement</i>
Family A gets \$200/mo in SNAP for one adult and 2 kids. This family will get a SNAP supplement of \$309 - boosting SNAP to \$509 (max for 3).	Family B gets \$509/mo in SNAP for one adult and 2 kids. This family will NOT get any extra SNAP, because they already get the max for 3.
Individual A gets \$16/mo in SNAP. This individual will get a supplement of \$178 - boosting SNAP to \$194 (max for 1).	Individual B gets \$194/mo in SNAP. This individual will NOT get any extra SNAP, because they already get the max for 1.

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](https://www.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

- ~ 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

Created by the Massachusetts Law Reform Institute.

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

