

THE VERMONT BERNIE BUZZ

NEWS *from* SENATOR BERNIE SANDERS



COVID-19 Crisis: Resources for Vermonters

This is an unprecedented moment in American history. We must face this crisis courageously and compassionately.

My office is here — know that we are doing everything we can to fight for you and to be responsive. We have compiled the following resources for Vermonters during this difficult time— I hope you find this information helpful. Do not hesitate to contact my office with questions or concerns by phone at **802-862-0697** or **1-800-339-9834**, or on our [website](#).

We're all in this together.

Health

Vermont 2-1-1: If you are sick and have questions on how to proceed, contact your health care provider or call **2-1-1**. Visit 2-1-1's site here: <https://vermont211.org/>

Vermont Department of Health: For the most up-to-date guidance on public health measures in Vermont, visit: <https://www.healthvermont.gov/response/coronavirus-covid-19>

- The VDH has translated information about how to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and stay healthy in 11 different languages: Arabic, Bosnian, Dinka, French, Kirundi, Lingala, Nepali, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, and Vietnamese
- **VDH's Vermont Help Link:** Visit this new site to find free, confidential information and referrals to substance use prevention, treatment and recovery services: <https://vthelplink.org/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: For guidance on how to protect yourself and public health measures on the federal level, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Vermont Health Connect and **Vermont Medicaid** are accepting applications. If you need health insurance, sign up by calling **855-899-9600** or visiting: <https://portal.healthconnect.vermont.gov/VTHBELand/welcome.action>

Vermont Department of Mental Health: For mental health resources visit <https://mentalhealth.vermont.gov/how-to-get-help> or call **2-1-1**

- **Vermont Peer Support Line:** To receive non-judgmental support and speak to a “peer” call or text **833-888-2557**

Vermont Health Care Advocate: A free resource available to help *all* Vermonters solve problems related to health care: <https://vtlawhelp.org/health>

Crisis Text Line: For 24/7 free, confidential counseling text HOME to **741741**

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: For 24/7 free, confidential support for anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress, call **1-800-273-8255**

General Information and State Resources:

Vermont 2-1-1: For statewide resources call **2-1-1** or visit <https://vermont211.org/>

Vermont Emergency Management: For information on the state’s response to COVID-19: <https://vem.vermont.gov/covid19/disaster>

- Local governments and private nonprofit organizations taking emergency protective measures in response to COVID-19 may be eligible for FEMA reimbursement — learn more here: <https://vem.vermont.gov/news/information-federal-public-assistance-eligibility-covid-19>

Vermont Agency of Commerce & Community Development: Visit their new COVID-19 Resource Recovery Center site with information for businesses, communities and individuals: <https://accd.vermont.gov/covid-19>

VT state volunteer site: If you’d like to volunteer your skills and help our state get through this crisis visit: <https://www.vermont.gov/volunteer>

Office of the Vermont Attorney General: To report a scam related to the coronavirus pandemic, contact VT AG’s Consumer Assistance Program at **1-800-649-2424**, or by email at AGO.CAP@vermont.gov.

- Find updates from this office here: <https://ago.vermont.gov/covid-19-updates-and-information-from-the-attorney-general/#>

Vermont Public Service Department:

- Vermont’s utility response — a moratorium on disconnections: <https://publicservice.vermont.gov/content/covid-19-vermont-electric-and-natural-gas-response>
- Connectivity resources- internet and telecommunication services: <https://publicservice.vermont.gov/content/new-connectivity-resources-support-you-during-covid-19-state-emergency-vermont>
- An interactive map of public buildings where WiFi is publicly available for Vermonters to access at all hours, safely from a parked vehicle: <https://vtpsd.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=c926d155167d4a5586e8e1aca1701cfa>

FEMA: Information for Vermont manufacturers about how they may help provide medical supplies for front line health care workers and patients: <https://www.fema.gov/coronavirus/how-to-help>

Social Security Administration: Offices are closed for in-person service. Vermonters should use online services or reach their local office directly by phone. Find information here: <https://www.ssa.gov/coronavirus/>

Vermont League of Cities and Towns: Find information on state and local funding in the federal stimulus package here: <https://www.vlct.org/coronavirus>

How to Report a Concern Regarding Potential Non-Compliance of the Stay Home Executive Order: https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=O5O0IK26PEOcAnDtzHVZxp8VolcMV9NNu0QyG_vdGAVUN1pLSTdOMERRR1dXOVpZMDBZUEtNVlhXMi4u

Food & Nutrition

Vermont 2-1-1: If you're experiencing food insecurity call **2-1-1** for assistance.

Hunger Free Vermont: How to access food during this crisis — from school meals, to resources for families with young children, to meal delivery programs for seniors — read this comprehensive guide: <https://www.hungerfreevt.org/coronavirus>

SNAP (3SquaresVT) benefits: If your financial situation has changed due to this crisis, you may be eligible for this benefit. To apply call **1-800-479-6151** or visit: <https://dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/3SquaresVT>

WIC Nutrition Program benefits: If you're pregnant, a caregiver, or a parent with a child under 5, you may be eligible for this benefit. To find more information call **1-800-464-4343**, text VTWIC to **855-11** or visit: <https://www.healthvermont.gov/family/wic>

School Meals: Contact your child's school to apply for free meals and to find meal sites in your district. More information on how to apply for school meals can be found here: <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/nutrition/school-meals-information-for-families-and-caregivers/apply-for-free-and-reduced-lunch>

Meal programs for seniors: Find information about meal delivery programs for seniors by calling the Senior Helpline at **1-800-642-5119**

Vermont Food Bank: Call **1-800-585-2265** or visit: <https://www.vtfoodbank.org/>

Vermont Retail & Grocers Association: For information on what retailers and grocers are doing in response to the crisis — delivery, curbside pick-up and designated hours: <https://vtrga.org/news/stores-offering-vulnerable-hours-and-additional-services-in-response-to-covid-19>

Economic Services

VT Department of Children and Families — Economic Services Division (ESD): If your financial situation has changed during the COVID-19 pandemic, you may qualify for economic benefits including 3SquaresVT, Fuel Assistance, General Assistance and Housing Assistance. Visit the ESD page here:

<https://dcf.vermont.gov/esd>

- To reach the **Benefits Service Center** call **1-800-479-6151** or visit: <https://dcf.vermont.gov/esd/contact-us%20>
- To apply for **heating assistance** call **1-800-479-6151** or click here: <https://dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/fuel-assistance>
- To apply for **SNAP benefits (3squaresVT)** call **1-800-479-6151** or click here: <https://dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/3SquaresVT>
- DCF COVID-19 Information Page: <https://dcf.vermont.gov/COVID-19>

Community Action Agencies: For statewide services — including emergency food help, fuel and utility assistance, housing assistance, and referral information — visit: <https://vermontcap.org/> or

<https://dcf.vermont.gov/partners/caps>

- **Bennington-Rutland Opportunity Council (BROC)** — Southwestern Vermont
<https://www.broc.org/>
- **Capstone Community Action Agency** — Central Vermont
<https://www.capstonevt.org/>
- **Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO)** — Northwestern Vermont
<https://www.cvoeo.org/>
- **Northeast Kingdom Community Action Agency (NEKCA)** — Northeast Kingdom
<http://nekcavt.org/>
- **Southeastern Vermont Community Action Agency (SEVCA)** — Southeastern Vermont
<https://www.sevca.org/>

Economic Relief Payment Information:

Read our full summary and FAQ information regarding the economic impact payments, as well as our update on how Social Security and Supplemental Security Income recipients will receive their payment [here](#)

Internal Revenue Service (IRS): Visit the IRS economic impact payment information center site for comprehensive information and updates: <https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/economic-impact-payment-information-center>

- If you need to file your 2018 or 2019 tax return, you can file for free using IRS Free File program here: <https://apps.irs.gov/app/freeFile/>
 - The tax filing deadline has been extended to July 15th, 2020
- For Social Security, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Railroad Retirement and VA beneficiaries who did not file tax returns for 2018 or 2019 and have children under the age of 17 — they should enter their payment information on the new Non-Filer website to ensure they receive the full amount they're eligible for here: <https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/non-filers-enter-payment-info-here>

- New beneficiaries since January 1st, 2020 should also enter their information on this site.
- Social Security and Railroad Retirement beneficiaries in this category should enter their information by **April 22nd**.
- SSI and VA beneficiaries in this category should enter their information by **April 30th**.
-If beneficiaries miss the deadline, they will not receive the additional amount they are eligible for, \$500 per child, until they file their 2020 taxes next year.
- Check on the status of your payment, add direct deposit information, and get answers to frequently asked questions here: <https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/get-my-payment>

Small Businesses and Nonprofits

Read our full summary on support for small businesses and nonprofits [here](#)

- Nonprofit Resource Guide: [here](#)

Small Business Owner's Guide: [here](#)

Paycheck Protection Program: To apply for the program with an eligible lender, use this form:

<https://www.sba.gov/document/sba-form--paycheck-protection-program-borrower-application-form>

- Visit www.sba.gov for a list of SBA lenders
- Paycheck Protection Program Overview: [here](#)
- Paycheck Protection Program- Borrowers Information Sheet: [here](#)

Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL): To apply for a loan, and the advance of up to \$10,000, click here:

<https://covid19relief.sba.gov/#/>

The **Small Business Administration (SBA)** coordinates with the **Vermont Small Business Development Center**, which can assist with applications and help businesses think through their options. Call **802-728-9101** or **800-464-7232**, or request assistance here: <https://www.vtsbdc.org/register/>

Local SBA office: Call **1-800-659-2955** or visit: <https://www.sba.gov/local-assistance/find/>

Employee retention tax credit: Find information about refundable tax credits available to employers that provided paid sick and family leave to employees due to COVID-19 here:

<https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/irs-employee-retention-credit-available-for-many-businesses-financially-impacted-by-covid-19>

Small Business Debt Relief Program: Find information about immediate relief for small businesses with existing non-disaster SBA loans here: <https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans>

Vermont SCORE can assist with EIDL applications. Call **802-764-5899** or email:

champlain.valley@scorevolunteer.org. Visit the website here: <https://champlainvalley.score.org/>

The Center for Women and Enterprise can assist women-owned businesses:

<https://www.cweonline.org/About-CWE/CWE-Vermont>

Vermont Agency of Commerce & Community Development: For further business resources: <https://accd.vermont.gov/about-us/disaster-planning/covid-19-guidance-vermont-businesses>

Vermont Department of Labor: <https://labor.vermont.gov/covid19>

Vermont Agency of Agriculture Support for food producers: <https://agriculture.vermont.gov/covid-19-information>

Unemployment Insurance

Read our full summary on unemployment insurance [here](#)

Vermont Department of Labor:

- **To file an initial claim** call **1-877-214-3330** or **1-888-807-7072**, or complete this form: <https://vermont.force.com/DOLClaim/s/>
- **If you've already applied for unemployment insurance:** Complete your weekly claim by calling **1-800-983-2300** or complete the online form: <https://uipublic01.labor.vermont.gov/Claimantportal/portal/login.aspx>
 - The VT DOL has implemented an alphabetized order for Vermonters to file their weekly claims in an attempt to reduce call volumes and deliver benefits faster. Visit the following site to see when you should file your weekly claim or receive assistance: <https://labor.vermont.gov/alphabetized-structure-information>
- **If you are self-employed:** Visit the following site for instructions on submitting your initial and weekly claims for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA): <https://labor.vermont.gov/pua>
 - If you have questions about the PUA program call **877-660-7782**
 - Sign up to receive newsletter updates from the VT DOL here: https://labor.vermont.gov/CAREsact_Vermont/SelfEmployed
- **For general claims assistance:** Call **1-877-214-3332**. Visit the VT DOL site for more information on establishing your unemployment claim, and answers to some frequently asked questions: <https://labor.vermont.gov/>

Employment

Vermont Emergency Management: List of Essential Workers:

<https://vem.vermont.gov/sites/demhs/files/Critical%20Service%20and%20Function%20Guidance.pdf>

How to File a Complaint about Health or Safety Concerns at the Workplace:

- Federal Employees (OSHA): https://www.osha.gov/workers/file_complaint.html
- All Other Employees (VOSHA): <https://labor.vermont.gov/vermont-occupational-safety-and-health-administration-vosha>

Career Resource Centers: <https://labor.vermont.gov/workforce-development/find-your-local-career-resource-center>

Child Care/Early Education

Vermont Department of Children and Families: Child care for essential workers — if you need childcare, fill out this form: <https://webportalapp.com/webform/essentialworkers>

- If you need child care for foster families, fill out this form as well.

Vermont Agency of Education: Find information about providing childcare for essential workers here: <https://education.vermont.gov/documents/guidance-child-care-essential-persons-covid19>

Let's Grow Kids: Find information and resources for children and families, early educators, and employers here: <https://www.letsgrowkids.org/coronavirus>

Centers for Disease Control: How to speak with children about coronavirus: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/talking-with-children.html>

Education

Vermont Agency of Education: Guidance for VT schools: <https://education.vermont.gov/news/covid-19-guidance-vermont-schools>

Vermont Afterschool Inc: Resources for afterschool and youth-serving organizations: <http://www.vermontafterschool.org/coronavirus/>

School Meals: Contact your child's school to apply for free meals and to find meal sites in your district. More information on how to apply for school meals can be found here: <https://education.vermont.gov/student-support/nutrition/school-meals-information-for-families-and-caregivers/apply-for-free-and-reduced-lunch>

Consumer Finance Protection Bureau: Information for student loan borrowers: <https://www.consumerfinance.gov/about-us/blog/what-you-need-to-know-about-student-loans-and-coronavirus-pandemic/>

Federal Student Aid & COVID-19: Information about relief for federal student loan borrowers: <https://studentaid.gov/announcements-events/coronavirus>

Vermont Student Assistance Corporation: <https://www.vsac.org/covid-19-updates-ways-vsac-can-help>

Housing

Read our full summary on housing resources, rent and mortgage relief [here](#)

Emergency Housing: If you need emergency housing call **2-1-1**.

- To learn about emergency assistance for housing needs click here: <https://dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/EA-GA>

Federal Housing Finance Agency: Relief for homeowners:

<https://www.fhfa.gov/Homeownersbuyer/MortgageAssistance/Pages/Coronavirus-Assistance-Information.aspx>

USDA Rural Development: Relief for homeowners with USDA mortgages:

<https://rd.usda.gov/coronavirus>

Vermont Legal Aid: If you need legal advice regarding your housing situation call **1-800-889-2047** or fill out a request form: <https://vtlawhelp.org/vlh-intake>

- Information on foreclosures: <https://vtlawhelp.org/foreclosures-coronavirus>

Vermont Tenants: For information and referrals for tenants call **802-864-0099**

Vermont Agency of Commerce & Community Development — COVID-19 Recovery Resource Center:

<https://accd.vermont.gov/covid-19/individuals#individual-housing>

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau: Guide to COVID-19 mortgage relief options:

<https://www.consumerfinance.gov/about-us/blog/guide-coronavirus-mortgage-relief-options/>

Public Housing Authorities in Vermont: To apply for public housing and housing choice vouchers (Section 8), visit the following sites:

- **Barre Housing Authority:** <http://www.barrehousingauthority.com/>
- **Bennington Housing Authority:** <https://www.benningtonhousingauthority.org/>
- **Brattleboro Housing Authority:** <http://www.brattleborohousing.org/>
- **Burlington Housing Authority:** <https://burlingtonhousing.org/>
- **Montpelier Housing Authority:** <https://www.montpelier-vt.org/434/Housing-Authority>
- **Rutland Housing Authority:** <https://www.rhavt.org/>
- **Springfield Housing Authority:** http://springfieldhousingauthorityvt.org/Home_Page.html
- **Winooski Housing Authority** <http://www.winooskihousing.org/>
- **Vermont State Housing Authority** <https://www.vsha.org/>

Directory of Affordable Housing in Vermont: <https://www.housingdata.org/>

Vermont Agency of Commerce & Community Development: Directory of Housing Organizations:

<https://accd.vermont.gov/housing/partners/housing-organizations>

USDA Rural Development Multi-Family Housing Rentals:

https://rdmfhrentals.sc.egov.usda.gov/RDMFHRentals/select_county.jsp?st=vt&state_name=Vermont&st_cd=50

Vermont Housing Finance Agency: Find information about grants now available to nonprofit housing providers and public housing agencies here: <https://www.vhfa.org/news/blog/vhfa-grants-120000-help-meet-immediate-housing-needs-arising-coronavirus-pandemic>

Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition: <http://www.vtaffordablehousing.org/>

Mobile Home Program: Find information about support available to mobile home owners and resident associations here: https://www.cvoeo.org/?fuseaction=dep_intro&dept_id=13

Vermont Department of Children and Families: Find information about extended housing support for homeless Vermonters here: <https://dcf.vermont.gov/dcf-blog/covid19-housing-supports>

Vermont Coalition of Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs: <https://vcrhyp.org/>

Vermont Coalition to End Homelessness: <https://helpingtohousevt.org/>

Emergency Responders

Vermont Department of Public Safety: COVID-19 resources for fire departments, law enforcement, and EMS here: https://vsp.vermont.gov/covid19/le_resources

State of Vermont: Request personal protective equipment [here](#)

U.S. Fire Administration: Guidance on COVID-19 cost recovery for fire and EMS departments here: https://www.usfa.fema.gov/coronavirus/public_assistance_grants.html

Center for Crime Victim Services: <http://www.ccvv.vermont.gov/news/center-for-crime-victim-services-covid-19-response-and-resources/>

Immigrants

Vermont Immigrant Assistance Project: South Royalton Legal Clinic – Vermont Law School: <https://www.vermontlaw.edu/academics/clinics-and-externships/south-royalton-legal-clinic/projects>

Association of Africans Living in Vermont (AALV): <https://www.aalv-vt.org/copy-of-health-and-behavior>

Intimate Partner Violence

VT Network: If you are experiencing sexual or domestic violence you can still access resources during this crisis. Visit the following site to contact your local organization: <https://vtnetwork.org/covid-19-resources/>

- Domestic Violence Hotline: **800-228-7395**
- Sexual Violence Hotline: **800-489-7273**

Legal Resources

Vermont Law Help: COVID-19 legal and benefits updates for Vermonters: <https://vtlawhelp.org/coronavirus-updates>

Legal Services Vermont: <https://legalservicesvt.org/>

South Royalton Legal Clinic — Vermont Law School:

<https://www.vermontlaw.edu/academics/clinics-and-externships/south-royalton-legal-clinic/projects>

Seniors

Vermont Area Agencies on Aging: Information and help for older Vermonters and their families:

<https://dcf.vermont.gov/partners/aaa>

- **Age Well VT:** <https://www.agewellvt.org/>
- **Central Vermont Council on Aging:** <https://www.cvcoa.org/>
- **Northeast Kingdom Council on Aging:** <https://www.nekcouncil.org/>
- **Senior Solutions – Council on Aging for Southeastern Vermont:**
<https://www.seniorsolutionsvt.org/>
- **Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging:** <https://www.svcoa.org/>

Meal programs for seniors: Find information about meal delivery programs for seniors by calling the Senior Helpline at **1-800-642-5119**

- **Vermont Meals on Wheels:** <https://www.vermont4a.org/meals-nutrition>

Vermont Senior Centers: <https://asd.vermont.gov/services/vermont-senior-centers>

Resources for Vermonters with Disabilities

Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living Department: Find information for development services providers here: <https://dail.vermont.gov/novel-coronavirus-information/developmental-service-providers>

Vermont Center for Independent Living: <https://www.vcil.org/>

Green Mountain Self Advocates: Find information about peer support here:

<http://www.gmsavt.org/about-us/locate-a-group-near-you/>

Vermont Meals on Wheels: <https://www.vcil.org/services/meals-on-wheels>

Military Personnel

Department of Defense:

- Fact Sheet regarding COVID-19 personnel, pay and benefits:
<https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Releases/Release/Article/2127448/fact-sheet-covid-19-military-personnel-pay-and-benefits-policy/>
- Coronavirus response: <https://www.defense.gov/Explore/Spotlight/Coronavirus/>

Veterans

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs: Coronavirus FAQs-What veterans need to know:
<https://www.va.gov/coronavirus-veteran-frequently-asked-questions/>

VA White River Junction Medical Center & Community Based Outpatient Centers (CBOCs):
<https://www.whiteriver.va.gov/emergency/index.asp>

Vermont Veteran and Family Outreach: Available 24 hours a day — call **1-888-607-8773**:
<https://www.ngfamily.vt.gov/Programs-Services/Vermont-Veteran-Outreach/>

Vermont National Guard Family Programs:
<https://www.ngfamily.vt.gov/Programs-Services/Vermont-Veteran-Outreach/Veteran-Outreach-Contact/>

Veterans Crisis Line: Available 24 hours a day — call **1-800-273-8255** and press 1, or text **838255**. Find more information here: <https://veterans.vermont.gov/veterans-crisis>

- Support for deaf or hard of hearing, call **1-800-799-4889**

VA Debt Management Center & COVID-19: If you have a VBA benefit debt and need financial relief, call **1-800-827-0648**. Find more information here: <https://www.va.gov/debtman/>

Vermont Office of Veterans Affairs: Benefits and services for Vermont veterans:
<https://veterans.vermont.gov/>

Vermont Veterans Legal Clinic: South Royalton Legal Clinic — Vermont Law School:
<https://www.vermontlaw.edu/academics/clinics-and-externships/south-royalton-legal-clinic/projects>

Traveler Information

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

U.S. Department of State- Bureau of Consular Affairs:
<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/ea/covid-19-information.html>

- **Country Specific Information:**
<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/COVID-19-Country-Specific-Information.html>

American Citizens Services and Crisis Management: Information and assistance for Americans overseas experiencing emergencies: <https://www.usa.gov/federal-agencies/american-citizens-services-and-crisis-management>

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program: <https://step.state.gov/step/>

Department of Homeland Security: Information about COVID-19 screening and traveler restrictions:
<https://www.dhs.gov/coronavirus/coronavirus-news-updates>

- Information about travel across the U.S./Canadian border:
<https://www.dhs.gov/news/2020/03/23/fact-sheet-dhs-measures-border-limit-further>

Vermont Stay-Home Order: <https://vem.vermont.gov/StayHome>