

COVID-19

Resources & Information

U.S. Representative
KATHY CASTOR



Tampa Office
4144 N Armenia Ave, Suite 300
Tampa, FL 33607
Ph: (813) 871-2817

Washington, DC Office
2052 Rayburn HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515
Ph: (202) 225-3376

A message from Rep. Castor...

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dear Neighbor,

Our nation is facing one of the gravest health and economic emergencies in more than 100 years.

The coronavirus pandemic has had a deep impact on every aspect of American life — and bold action is required to address the health emergency, mitigate the economic damage and provide for a strong recovery.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, House Democrats have focused on ensuring our nation's response puts workers and families first: their health, their wages and their wellbeing.

We already have adopted a number of sweeping pieces of emergency legislation:

- The Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act
- The Families First Coronavirus Response Act
- The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act
- The Paycheck Protection Program & Health Care Enhancement Act
- The Heroes Act which the Senate refused to pass
- Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 (CAA)

Congress' emergency aid packages provide direct emergency cash assistance for individuals, expanded unemployment insurance, aid to local communities and small businesses, and robust resources for hospitals and frontline health care workers.

My COVID-19 Constituent Service Resource Toolkit will help you understand all the resources that are available to you — and how to access them. Stay safe.

Sincerely,

Kathy

Public Health Information

<u>Signs & Symptoms</u>	1
<u>Need to be tested?</u>	1
<u>Vaccines</u>	2

Individuals & Families

<u>Health Care</u>	2
<u>Unemployment Insurance</u>	3
<u>Paid Family and Sick Leave</u>	4
<u>Direct Cash Payments</u>	4
<u>Food Assistance</u>	5

Homeowners & Renters

<u>Mortgage Forbearance</u>	6
<u>Eviction Protections</u>	6
<u>Quick Response Assistance</u>	7

Businesses

<u>Paycheck Protection Program</u>	8
<u>Medium-Sized Businesses</u>	9
<u>Economic Injury Disaster Loans</u>	9
<u>Sick Leave Tax Credit</u>	9

Students

<u>Student Loan Relief</u>	10
<u>Free Internet Access for Families</u>	11
<u>Education Stabilization Funding</u>	11

Veterans

<u>Veterans</u>	12
-----------------------	----

Resources

.....	13
-------	----

The Florida Department of Health (DOH) has opened a COVID-19 hotline for Floridians. Individuals can get more information by calling (866) 779-6121 or emailing questions to COVID-19@flhealth.gov.

Governor Ron DeSantis has signed an Executive Order, which outlines that providers can only administer the COVID-19 vaccine to the following groups:

- Long-term care facility residents and staff.
- Persons aged 65 and older.
- Health care personnel with direct patient contact.
- Persons deemed to be extremely vulnerable to COVID-19 by hospital providers.

For more information, visit:

[Florida DOH COVID-19 Response Centers for Disease Control & Prevention \(CDC\)](#)
[Hillsborough County Department of Health](#)

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. This list does not include all possible symptoms. CDC will continue to update this list as we learn more about COVID-19:

Fever or chills	New loss of taste or smell
Cough	Sore throat
Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing	Congestion or runny nose
Fatigue	Nausea or vomiting
Muscle or body aches	Diarrhea
Headache	

NEED TO BE TESTED?

If you are symptomatic, please contact your health care provider or county health department immediately to speak with a health care professional about your symptoms. The Families First Coronavirus Response Act, passed by Congress in March, guarantees free coronavirus testing. Hillsborough County is offering free testing to ALL individuals that want a test, with or without symptoms. Please call (813) 272-5900 for more information. The County and State have opened additional testing locations:

1. Raymond James Stadium- drive-up
2. Lee Davis Community Resource Center - drive-up
3. 13012 Bullfrog Creek in Riverview
4. 1300 Sydney Dover Road in Dover

VACCINES:

Hillsborough County's first phase of the COVID-19 vaccination distribution is targeted to frontline health care workers and senior citizens.

Aged 65 and Over: Hillsborough County began scheduling appointments for residents 65 and over with extended call center hours. You can [visit the county's website for updates](#). In addition, the State of Florida and Hillsborough County have partnered to identify local drive-thru vaccination sites and Hillsborough County operate mobile vaccination units for transportation-challenged seniors – these have not opened.

Veterans: James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital has already begun to vaccinate frontline workers and high-risk patients in the hospital. All veterans who wish to receive the vaccine from the VA should notify their primary physician or contact Haley at 813-972-2000.

Information Regarding Second Doses for People Vaccinated Jan. 6-9 or Jan. 13-15

Hillsborough County is receiving questions about arrangements for second doses for people who received their initial COVID-19 vaccinations at the County's public vaccination sites.

People who received their first injection at any of Hillsborough County's public vaccination sites on Jan. 6-9 or Jan. 13-15 will be able to return to those sites for their second dose. In the coming days, these individuals will be contacted to confirm their second appointment.

Some important things to remember about the second dose:

- The vaccine appointment team is contacting residents to confirm the second shot.
- Origination of call center numbers may not be recognized by local carriers. While awaiting an appointment callback, we encourage you to answer all calls. BE AWARE that you will NEVER be asked for your social security number when scheduling a vaccination appointment.
- Residents must return to the site where they got their first dose of the vaccine to get their second shot at the time and date of their appointment
- Even if a resident does not get a call, text, or email confirming the second shot, they still should return to their vaccine site 21 days from the date of their initial shot to get their second dose. Resident should bring their COVID-19 Vaccine Record Card with them.

HEALTH CARE

Community Health Centers: If you do not have health care coverage, call your nearest Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC).

Tampa Family Health Centers - (813) 397-5300

Medicaid: Florida families and individuals can apply for health care coverage by visiting <https://www.myflorida.com/accessflorida/>.

Florida Medicaid - 1-866-762-2237

Medicare: Medicare recipients may be eligible for telehealth services such as virtual visits. Contact your provider for more information.

Florida ACCESS: To determine eligibility for assistance like SNAP or Medicaid, create an account at [Florida ACCESS](#).

Navigators: Covering Florida Navigators are here to help find a health plan that works for you. [Visit their website.](#)

INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES

Congress has secured numerous benefits to assist individuals and families through this trying time, including paid leave, direct cash payments and expanded unemployment benefits. To apply for unemployment assistance, visit [FloridaJobs.org](https://www.floridajobs.org).

For more information, visit:

[Florida ACCESS](#)

[Florida Department of Economic Opportunity](#)

[Covering Florida](#)

[Hillsborough County Social Services](#) - (813) 272-5900 or (813) 274-3710

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 extended Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) to March 14, 2021 and allows individuals receiving benefits as of March 14, 2021 to continue through April 5, 2021, as long as the individual has not reached the maximum number of weeks.

CARES also expanded eligibility so that more laid-off and furloughed workers than ever before (including those new to the job market) are able to file for Unemployment Insurance and will see an additional \$300 per week to match the average paycheck for up to 11 weeks of benefits.

o CareerSource Tampa Bay provides assistance with reemployment. Call: 813-930-7400 or visit: www.careersourcetampabay.com

INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES

PAID FAMILY & SICK LEAVE

Small and midsize companies (500 or fewer employees) are no longer required to provide two weeks of paid sick leave. The Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA), 2021, however, extended employer tax credits for paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave voluntarily provided to employees until March 31, 2021. However, the CAA did not extend employees' entitlement to leave beyond Dec. 31, 2020, meaning employers will no longer be legally required to provide such leave.

DIRECT CASH PAYMENTS

The CAA extends many relief programs from the CARES Act. This Act provides direct cash assistance of \$600 per eligible family member. The payment is \$600 per taxpayer (\$1,200 for married filing jointly), in addition to \$600 per qualifying child. The credit phases out starting at \$75,000 of modified adjusted gross income (\$112,500 for heads of household and \$150,000 for married filing jointly) at a rate of \$5 per \$100 of additional income.

[Click here](#) for FAQs from the IRS. For questions about the Direct Cash Payment, please call the IRS helpline at 800-919-9835.

FOOD ASSISTANCE

Crisis Center of Tampa Bay (2-1-1): Referral service for community resources and social services.

Feeding Tampa Bay has a list of food distribution sites and events available online at feedingtampabay.org/find-a-pantry/

Food Assistance for Seniors: Hillsborough County residents age 60 and older can apply for food assistance through Hillsborough County Aging Services. There is no income requirement to participate in the federally-funded program. For more information on receiving meals and to apply, call 813-272-5250.

Tampa YMCA Veggie Van: The unique and colorful “Veggie Van” is distributing free pre-packaged bags of produce in several neighborhoods in Hillsborough County. No ID, paperwork or pre-screening is required to receive the food. Learn more on the Veggie Van’s Facebook page @tampaveggievan.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), more commonly known as food stamps, ensures that Americans receive the food they need. SNAP recipients are now able to make eligible food purchases from Walmart and Amazon online using their EBT card.

To apply for SNAP, create an account with [Florida ACCESS](#).

Metropolitan Ministries provides food, rent and utility assistance, and emergency shelter. Visit <https://www.metromin.org/covid-19response/> or call 813-209-1000

Congress has secured a number of securities for homeowners and renters to stay in their home during this difficult time.

For more information, visit:

[Florida Legal Aid](#)

MORTGAGE FORBEARANCE

Homeowners with FHA mortgages have the right to request forbearance on their payments through February 28, 2021.

EVICITION PROTECTIONS

The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 extends the CDC eviction moratorium until January 31, 2021.

Renters residing in public or assisted housing, or in a home or apartment whose owner has a federally-backed mortgage, and who are unable to pay their rent, are protected from eviction for **4 months**. Property owners are also prohibited from issuing a 30-day notice to a tenant to vacate a property until after the 4-month moratorium ends. This protection covers properties that receive federal subsidies such as public housing, Section 8 assistance, USDA rural housing programs, and federally-issued or guaranteed mortgages. **Renters whose landlord is not abiding by the moratorium should contact the relevant federal agency that administers their housing initiative or their [local Legal Aid office](#).**

QUICK RESPONSE ASSISTANCE

In response to COVID19, Hillsborough County Social Services is offering limited rental payment assistance to eligible individuals and families. More information can be found [here](#).

Congress has secured numerous assistance initiatives for our small businesses. As the backbone of our economy, it is essential we support our small businesses during this trying time.

For more information, visit:

[Small Business Administration \(SBA\) Coronavirus Relief Options](#)

Upcoming SBA webinars can be found [here](#).

The following provide technical assistance, resources and consulting on SBA:

Florida Small Business Development Center at USF - USF@floridasbdc.org

[Hillsborough County Entrepreneur Center](#) - (813) 204-9267

Centre for Women - (813) 251-8437

PAYCHECK PROTECTION PROGRAM

The Paycheck Protection Program resumed on January 11, 2021. PPP loans can be forgiven when used for payroll costs (including paid leave, health care, and other costs) to retain workers, and other expenses such as rent, mortgage interest and utilities. Independent contractors, sole-proprietors and other self-employed persons are eligible for these loans. Eligible small businesses to apply now through their financial institution or community development financial institution.

Key PPP updates in the CAA:

- PPP borrowers can set their PPP loan's covered period to be any length between 8 and 24 weeks to best meet their business needs;
- PPP loans can cover additional expenses, including operations expenditures, property damage costs, supplier costs, and worker protection expenditures;
- PPP's eligibility is expanded to include 501(c)(6)s, housing cooperatives, direct marketing organizations, among other types of organizations;
- PPP provides greater flexibility for seasonal employees;
- Certain existing PPP borrowers can request to modify their First Draw PPP Loan amount; and
- Certain existing PPP borrowers are now eligible to apply for a Second Draw PPP Loan.

A borrower is generally eligible for a Second Draw PPP Loan if they:

- Previously received a First Draw PPP Loan and will or has used the full amount only for authorized uses;
- Has no more than 300 employees; and
- Can demonstrate at least a 25% reduction in gross receipts between comparable quarters in 2019 and 2020.

MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESS ASSISTANCE

Congress passed a fund administered by the U.S. Department of Treasury designed to provide low-interest bank financing to medium-sized businesses and nonprofits with 500 to 10,000 employees.

As of now, we do not have information about the protocols for the administration of this fund. As soon as we have this information we will provide it to you.

ECONOMIC INJURY DISASTER LOAN

Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) are low interest loans that provide vital economic support to small businesses to help overcome the temporary loss of revenue they are experiencing as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Small businesses that apply for EIDLs can request an advance of up to \$10,000.

PAID FAMILY & SICK LEAVE TAX CREDIT

Employers who provide required leave to their employees and who employ less than 500 employees are eligible for a tax credit to offset the costs of such leave. This tax relief will be provided against quarterly payroll taxes (those paid in connection the Form 941). For additional guidance, please refer to the [IRS's website](#).

For more information, visit:
[Florida Department of Education](#)
[Hillsborough County Public Schools](#)

STUDENT LOAN RELIEF

If you have student loan debt, Congress secured several options outlined below for borrowers that help provide relief:

- An extension of the federal student loan administrative forbearance period, the pause in interest accrual, and the suspension of collections activity through January 31, 2021.
- Federal student loan borrowers are not expected to make payments through January 31, 2021, though they will continue to be able to do so and benefit from the 0% interest rate as they pay down principal.
- Non-payments will continue to count toward the number of payments required under an income-driven repayment plan, a loan rehabilitation agreement, or the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program.
- For additional guidance on this critical relief, please refer to the [U.S. Department of Education website](#).

Florida Commissioner of Education has ordered upon reopening in August, all school boards and charter school governing boards must open brick and mortar schools at least five days per week for all students, subject to advice and orders of the Florida Department of Health, local departments of health, Executive Order 20-149 and subsequent executive orders.

FREE INTERNET ACCESS FOR FAMILIES

Hillsborough County Public Schools has a partnership with Spectrum, to provide free Wi-Fi access for 60 days to households with K-12 and/or college students who do not already have a Spectrum broadband subscription at any service level up to 100 Mbps. To enroll, call 1-844-488-8395. Installation fees will be waived for new student households. For more information, please visit [HillsboroughSchools.org](https://www.hillsboroughschools.org).

EDUCATION STABILIZATION FUNDING

Congress secured \$30.75 billion in funding through the CARES Act for school districts, states and higher education institutions to ensure state resources and investments are not diverted from life-long learning. The Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2021 provided \$82 billion to the Education Stabilization Fund.

For additional guidance on how to apply and learn about next steps as this critical relief becomes available, please refer to the [U.S. Department of Education website](https://www.ed.gov).

Veterans who are concerned they may have symptoms of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) should contact the [VISN 8 Clinical Contact Center](https://www.va.gov/visn8) at 1-877-741-3400 (toll free) before coming to a VA facility. Clinical staff are available to provide 24/7 virtual care and support, including nurse advice and triage. This service is available at no cost to Veterans enrolled for care in VISN 8. The VA has also launched a [COVID-19 website](https://www.va.gov/covid-19) with additional information for veterans.

RESOURCES

Office of U.S. Representative Kathy Castor - (813) 871-2817 (bilingual)

Website: Castor.house.gov

Alert Tampa (Emergency Alert System)

Text TAMPAREADY to 888-777 or TAMPALISTA al 888-777

Crisis Center of Tampa Bay - 2-1-1 (bilingual)

Website: crisiscenter.com

CareerSource Tampa Bay - (813) 930-7400

Website: CareerSourceTampaBay.com

Metropolitan Ministries - (813) 209-1000

Florida COVID-19 Call Center - 866-779-6121

Website: floridahealthcovid19.gov/

Alt. Contact: COVID-19@flhealth.gov

Florida Unemployment Assistance - 1-800-204-2418

Website: FloridaJobs.org

Hillsborough County - (813) 272-5900

Department of Health - (813) 307-8000

Social Services - (813) 272-5900 or (813) 274-3710

COVID-19 County Call Center - (813) 272-5900 (bilingual)

Website: hillsborough.floridahealth.gov/

School District - (813) 272-4000

Website: sdhc.k12.fl.us

Sheriff's Office (Non-emergency) - (813) 247-8200

BayCare Health System - 1-800-BAYCARE

Website: BayCare.org/Coronavirus/COVID-19-testing-centers

James A. Haley Veterans Hospital - (813) 972-2000

Website: tampa.va.gov/

VISN 8 Clinical Contact Center for Veterans - 1-877-741-3400

Website: visn8.va.gov/coronavirus.asp

Florida Small Business Development Center at USF - (813) 905-5800

Website: SBDCTampaBay.com

Alt. Contact: USF@floridasbdc.org

Feeding Tampa Bay - (813) 254-1190

Website: FeedingTampaBay.org

TECO - (813) 223-0800

Website: tecoenergy.com