

# VT. GOVERNOR ZUCKERMAN NEWSLETTER

## APRIL 7, 2020 COVID-19 UPDATE

Dear Friends,

Vermonters have always found ways to work together during hard times. We lend a helping hand, take care of neighbors, and look out for one another. This pandemic is challenging us to the core and forcing us to adapt in ways we never could have imagined. Like you, I am at home juggling my family and my work and doing what I can to support Vermonters during these uncertain times. I try to focus on the positive although some days, it is tough.

Mostly I recognize and appreciate all those Vermonters who are going the extra mile to protect our community during these extremely difficult times, from first responders and healthcare workers to grocery clerks and childcare providers and so many more.

As we shelter in place, there are a lot of things we can't do. Let's focus on what we can.

### **One way to help is to get involved: The Administration put out a CALL FOR VERMONTERS TO SUPPORT COVID-19 RESPONSE**

Medical volunteers, blood and food bank donations and more needed as state ramps up response in anticipation of a surge in cases in the coming weeks.

Please consider signing up to volunteer to support the state's response to COVID-19: <https://vermont.gov/volunteer>. If you have medical and healthcare skills, please consider signing up for the Medical Reserve Corp (MRC). Other volunteers are needed to help keep foodbanks stocked, deliver meals, and help their communities.

### **Unemployment Insurance Town Hall**

The Vermont Department of Labor will hold its next Virtual Town Hall event today, April 7 at 2:00 pm (Topic: [Resources for the Self-Employed](#)) and Thursday, April 9 at 2 pm (Topic: [Employer Services and Rapid Response](#)). For more information visit the Department of Labor [website](#).

### **Unemployment Insurance**

We have been hearing a lot from folks having difficulty filing for unemployment. The Department of Labor is swamped with a much higher demand than ever before. In fact, they have processed more claims in the last two weeks than they typically do in a whole year.

We've been assured that a delay in processing will not impact eligibility or benefits. They will be retroactively paid.

You will receive the supplemental \$600/week from the Federal bill automatically; you don't have to do anything other than file your claim.

You can file your claim online: <https://vermont.force.com/DOLClaim/s/> as well as at this automated phone line: 800-983-2300. We're told there are much shorter wait times to file this way as opposed to calling the Unemployment Office.

### **FACEBOOK LIVE UPDATES**

Join us for regular updates on what the State is doing to help Vermonters during the COVID-19 pandemic at these Facebook Live Events. Go to: [www.facebook.com/VTLtGov/](http://www.facebook.com/VTLtGov/) to tune in.

**Thurs., April 9, 10:30 AM**

**Sat., April 11, 10:30 AM**

**Tues., April 14, 10:30 AM**

**Thurs, April 16, 10:30 AM**

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**Tues., April 7, 2 PM**

**Unemployment Ins.**

**Virtual Town Hall**

[Department of Labor Website](#)

During this time of social distancing, you can:

Take a walk

Take a virtual exercise class

Catch up on reading

Check in on family and friends

**Let us know what else you are doing.**

If you find this newsletter helpful, please feel free to forward it on and let people know they can sign up to receive future newsletters and updates at

[www.lt.gov.vermont.gov](http://www.lt.gov.vermont.gov)

## Resources for Individuals and Businesses:

### SBA Loans and Emergency Advances

The Agency of Commerce and Community Development is encouraging small business owners to consider applying for an [Economic Injury Disaster Loan](#). By applying for a loan, a business harmed by COVID-19 may be eligible for a grant that provides an emergency advance of up to \$10,000 within three days of a successful application. This resource is available to businesses now, and you can access it by reaching out directly to the SBA and filling out [an application on their website](#) or by reaching out to your [Regional Development Corporation](#), or the [Vermont Small Business Development Center](#).

The VT Dept. of Labor has set up a landing page with information on benefits coming out of the **Federal CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act**:

[https://labor.vermont.gov/CARESact\\_Vermont](https://labor.vermont.gov/CARESact_Vermont), and the Agency of Commerce and Community Development has set up the following resource page: <https://accd.vermont.gov/covid-19>, with “resources for business,” “resources for individuals,” and “resources of communities” sections.

### [The Small Business Owner's Guide to the CARES Act](#)

### Thank you to our Legislative Leaders

A huge shout out to our Representatives and Senators who have been working very hard to pass emergency legislation, to answer constituent questions, and to support their neighbors during these troubling times. We thank them for their service. Here's a great **summary** put together by Representative Zachariah Ralph of benefits to individuals and families provided by the federal stimulus bill: [What's in it for Vermonters?](#)

### New Guidance on Cloth Face Masks

Vermonters should wear cloth facial masks, or coverings, if they need to leave their homes for essential purposes, like going grocery shopping or to the pharmacy, or outdoors if other people are nearby.

The advice to wear cloth masks is based on new data about how COVID-19 can spread *before* a person has any symptoms. Because people may have COVID-19 but no symptoms, wearing a face mask may help keep people from spreading the virus. Face coverings are not a substitute for physical distancing and other prevention measures. [Read the CDC's guidance on how to use and make cloth masks](#). [Watch a video](#) of the U.S. Surgeon General on how to make your own face covering using items around the house.

Medical-grade mask supplies are needed for our health care workers and first responders. Please use cloth or other recommended facial coverings for your yourself and loved ones.

### **And lastly, if you're looking for a way to help your neighbors who may be less fortunate, please consider a donation to the United Way Covid-19 Relief & Response Fund**

Green Mountain United Way has launched a COVID-19 Relief & Response Fund designed to help our most vulnerable community members & working families our communities to be well-nourished, well-housed, mentally healthy, physically healthy, and financially secure during this unprecedented challenge.

100% of the dollars raised through this fund will be used to support organizations and people in Central Vermont and the three counties of the Northeast Kingdom. We know that keeping support local is important, so you can choose the region you would like your gift to support: Central Vermont, Northern NEK (Orleans & N. Essex Co), or Southern NEK (Caledonia & S. Essex Co), or donate to all regions and your gift will be used where it is needed most.

Support the Relief & Response Fund: <https://www.gmunityway.org/covid-19-relief-response-fund/>

Do you need help? Find resources here: <https://www.gmunityway.org/blog/covid-19-resource-page/>

Things are changing by the hour. We are here to help answer questions during this chaotic and uncertain time. Please reach out with questions and we will try to answer them as fast as we possibly can.

