

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE April 5, 2020

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The State of Florida Issues COVID-19 Updates

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – The State of Florida is responding to COVID-19. In an effort to keep Florida residents and visitors safe and aware regarding the status of the virus, the Florida Department of Health will issue this update every day, seven days per week.

Governor Ron DeSantis is in constant communication with Florida Division of Emergency Management Director Jared Moskowitz and State Surgeon General Dr. Scott Rivkees as the State of Florida continues to monitor and respond to the threat of COVID-19.

Actions the state has taken to respond to COVID-19:

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

- At the direction of Governor DeSantis, State Surgeon General Dr. Scott Rivkees declared a Public Health Emergency for COVID-19 in Florida.
- Governor DeSantis announced that the State ordered an additional 2,500 test kits to supplement the adequate resources already available to test for COVID-19. These additional test kits will enable the Department of Health, working with Florida health care providers, to test up to an additional 625,000 individuals. The Governor also suspended non-essential in state and all out-of-state travel for state employees for 30 days.
- Tested more than 100,000 Floridians. Florida is now the state with the second-highest number of tested individuals (as of 4/4/20).
- Additional demographic Information is now available for the counties most impacted by COVID-19.
- Established an Incident Management Team to coordinate response operations.
- Defined a high-level phased response strategy for COVID-19.
- Activated a dedicated incident command post for on-site response activities.
- Conducted three public health and health care stakeholder conference calls to provide statewide updates on the current outbreak situation, response actions and guidance for pandemic planning. Over five hundred participants joined the calls.
- Established a public call center for questions regarding COVID-19. The call center launched Monday, March 2 and is open 24/7.
- Developed and distributed COVID-19 presentation materials to County Health Departments (CHD) for use at community meetings.
- Activated the Joint Information Center in coordination with the Division of Emergency Management.
- Developed and implemented protocols for investigation, surveillance and monitoring for COVID-19 to rapidly detect and contain cases.
- Established mechanisms for monitoring and coordination with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) regarding epidemiological activities.

- Distributed CDC Interim Guidance for public health personnel evaluating Persons Under Investigation (PUI) and asymptomatic close contacts of confirmed cases at their home or non-home residential settings to CHDs.
- Approved and disseminated an updated Clinician Screening Tool for identifying COVID-19 PUIs.
- Implemented testing at all three State Public Health Laboratories.
- Distributed updated CDC guidance for schools to CHDs and the Department of Education.
- Distributed updated laboratory guidance regarding implementation of testing at State Public Health Laboratories.
- Developing a laboratory surge plan.
- Identifying and monitoring close contacts of presumptive cases. Any close contacts with symptoms will be tested.
- Implemented private lab testing.
- Developed and disseminated pandemic planning guidance.
- Advised CHDs and HCCs to retain expired personal protective equipment until further notice.
- Developing infographics for first responders (fire, law enforcement and EMS) regarding infection control and personal protection for COVID-19.
- At the Governor's direction, a public-private partnership has been put in place between Memorial Healthcare in Broward and the National Guard to set up a mobile testing unit.
- At the direction of Governor DeSantis hiring additional epidemiologists from university health programs to help with workload.
- Governor DeSantis directed the Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA) to extend all existing nursing home and assisted living facility licenses for 90 days to remove distraction from patient care.
- Launched an interactive data tracking dashboard on floridahealthcovid19.gov that is updated twice daily.
- Developing protocols for County Health Departments in the protection of their staff and clinic activities through the development of safety and health guidance.
- Continue to have daily hospital calls and began having daily calls with the aging and vulnerable population groups.
- Continue to coordinate efforts for obtaining lab testing supplies.

FLORIDA DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

- Florida is receiving its third shipment from the SNS. Once the shipment has been received in its entirety, Florida will have received the following from the SNS. These materials are being distributed across the state.
 - N95s 540,000
 - Faceshields 246,000
 - Coveralls 1,026
 - Gloves 714,354
 - Surgical Masks 1,290,000
 - Gowns 201,000
- After conducting a thorough assessment of needs, Director Moskowitz has requested the following supplies through Direct Federal Assistance. Supplies are being delivered on a rolling basis, and inventory is being distributed throughout the state 24 hours a day.
 - 5 mobile intensive care units
 - 5,000 ventilators
 - 5,000 hospital beds

- 50,000 two oz. bottles of hand sanitizer
- 250,000 coveralls
- 500,000 gloves
- 500,000 gowns
- 500,000 collection kits
- 100,000 16 oz. bottles of hand sanitizer
- 150,000 Personal Protective Equipment kits, including coveralls, gowns, and goggles
- 2 million N95 face masks
- To support communities responding to COVID-19, Governor DeSantis has directed FDEM Director Jared Moskowitz to expedite the delivery of more than \$170 million in Hurricane Irma reimbursements to cities, counties and hospital districts that have now reached the 50-percent auditing threshold to receive funds.
- Find more information on DEM's response to COVID-19 [here](#).

FLORIDA AGENCY FOR HEALTH CARE ADMINISTRATION

- The Agency created new temporary Personal Care Attendant program to give long-term care facilities an avenue to fill staffing shortages. The program provides an 8-hour training of required skills to assist in direct care so that personal care attendants can temporarily perform additional duties.
- AHCA and the Department of Children and Families have been working together to ensure current Medicaid recipients maintain benefits during the COVID-19 state of emergency. Agencies have also extended Medicaid application deadlines.
- AHCA has made on-site visits to over 900 long-term care and residential facilities since the onset of the COVID-19 emergency. Additionally, AHCA has made over 2,000 telephone calls to residential providers statewide to assess infection control and prevention strategies, ensure county health department and local emergency operations center contact information are up to date, and assess supplies--specifically PPE.
- Find more information on ACHA's response to COVID-19 [here](#).

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL REGULATION

- DBPR has updated the dedicated webpage for filing complaints related to compliance with executive orders related to department stakeholders. The page, available at <http://www.myfloridalicense.com/DBPR/eo-complaints/> now provides a field for reporting compliance concerns related to vacation rentals as restricted by Executive Order 20-87. The Department's Division of Hotels and Restaurants continues to monitor, review, and assign complaints received through this form for follow-up by division inspectors.
- Find more information on DBPR's response to COVID-19 [here](#).

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

- DCF worked with DOH to develop precautionary protocols for child welfare professionals and adult protective investigators who may have to make in-person visits to ensure the safety of those vulnerable populations.
- Under Governor DeSantis' Direction, DCF temporarily increased SNAP recipients' benefit amount to the maximum monthly allotment based on household size.
- Find more information on DCF's response to COVID-19 [here](#).

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

- FDC is closely aligned with the [CDC Interim Guidance on Management of COVID-19 in Correctional and Detention Facilities](#).
- New inmate commitments from county jails will undergo additional screening and 14-day quarantine before placement within the general population.
- Anyone entering a correctional institution is screened in accordance with Federal, State and Department guidelines.
- FDC has suspended visitation and volunteer programs at all correctional institutions statewide through April 5, 2020.
- Outside inmate work squads have been restricted.
- Find more information on FDC's response to COVID-19 [here](#).

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

- DEO is working to provide paper applications to Floridians who need to file for Reemployment Assistance benefits. More information can be found on our website floridajobs.org/COVID-19.
- DEO recently announced \$100 million of additional funds available to local governments in [communities impacted by Hurricane Irma](#) through the [Rebuild Florida Infrastructure Repair Program](#). Local governments may apply individually or as a regional group for funding. Funding can also be used as leverage to match funding for other federal programs to carry out eligible, federal CDBG-DR infrastructure activity. The deadline to complete an application is June 30, 2020. For more information about the program, including how to complete an application, visit the Rebuild Florida Infrastructure Repair Program's
- Governor DeSantis waived the work search and work registration requirements for individuals requesting Reemployment Assistance benefits. Individuals filing an application in CONNECT, the online Reemployment Assistance application, for benefits from March 15, 2020 until May 2, 2020, will not be required to complete the work registration in Employ Florida. For additional questions about Reemployment Assistance, please visit the [Frequently Asked Questions](#).
- Governor DeSantis' request to the federal U.S. Small Business Administration to make the Economic Injury Disaster Loan program available for Florida's small businesses impacted by COVID-19 has been granted. Small businesses are eligible to apply for the SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans that offer up to \$2 million in economic assistance to help small businesses overcome the temporary loss of revenue resulting from COVID-19.
- The Business Damage Assessment survey is activated to assess the impact of COVID-19 on Florida's local business operations. The survey, managed by DEO, will evaluate businesses affected by COVID-19 and the impacts the virus has had on the local economy so actions to implement appropriate relief programs can begin. The survey can be taken online [here](#).
- Find more information on DEO's response to COVID-19 [here](#).

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

- FDOE has compiled resources, information, and best practices for distance learning on its emergency response page.

- The Florida Virtual School has created the Online Learning Community with engaging and informative content for teachers and parents of K-12 students.
- Commissioner of Education Richard Corcoran has recommended that all Florida public and private K-12 school campuses extend campus closures through May 1, 2020, following White House guidance and the CDC's extension of social distancing guidelines until April 30th.
- Find more information on The Department of Education's response to COVID-19 [here](#).

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ELDER AFFAIRS

- The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (LTCOP) recently participated in COVID-19 conference calls with the Florida Health Care Association, the SEOC Aging and Vulnerable Population, and the National State Ombudsman Program (NASOP) and disseminated information gained from these calls through LTCOP Regional conference calls.
- LTCOP required vulnerable staff (those 65 and older and/or with health issues) to work at home and provided them with appropriate technology to do so.
- DOEA began reviewing resources and tools used for other disaster-related events in the prevention of Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation (ANE) of elders and researching how they may be specifically applied for use in the unprecedented COVID-19 crisis as reports of ANE begin to increase.
- DOEA forwarded all new and updated Centers for Disease Control and Prevention COVID-19 guidance and resources to all Area Agencies on Aging (AAA).
- Find more information on DOEA's COVID-19 response here: elderaffairs.org

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

- At the direction of Governor DeSantis and to successfully uphold CDC guidance to maximize social distancing and avoid gatherings larger than 10 people, DEP closed all Florida State Parks to the public effective Monday, March 23. Park field staff are on-site to maintain grounds.
- In addition, since Tuesday, March 24, public access to lands within DEP's Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas has been closed. This closure includes state-owned uplands, such as beaches, islands, sand bars and emergent shoals within Aquatic Preserves. Vessel landings are strictly prohibited.
- In accordance with provisions of the Department's Emergency Final Order, the Division of Waste Management has developed new guidance and protocol for inspections and cleanup, including those completed at PRP sites and storage tank facilities.
- Find more information on DEP's response to COVID-19 [here](#).

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAY SAFETY AND MOTOR VEHICLES

- The Florida Highway Patrol is assisting with the implementation and enforcement of Executive Order 20-86 at the direction of Governor DeSantis.
- At the direction of Governor DeSantis, the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles has issued an [Emergency Order](#) extending all Florida driver licenses, commercial driver licenses and identification cards that will expire now through April 15, 2020.
- Pursuant to Executive Order 20-52 issued by Governor DeSantis, FLHSMV Executive Director Rhodes has waived commercial truck hours of service regulations and other

related regulations so that emergency supplies, equipment, commodities and resources can be moved more quickly and efficiently throughout the state.

- Find more information on FLHSMV's COVID-19 response [here](#).

FLORIDA OFFICE OF INSURANCE REGULATION

- OIR has issued [Informational Memorandum OIR-20-04M](#) providing general guidance on the treatment of policyholders as part of the state's ongoing efforts to protect Floridians.
- OIR has issued [Informational Memorandum OIR-20-03M](#) directing all insurers and other entities regulated by OIR to review and update their business continuity and/or continuity of operations plans. Companies are directed to immediately contact OIR if their continuity plans are activated and/or if business operations become compromised so it can work with insurers to avoid any disruption in consumer services.
- OIR has issued [Informational Memorandum OIR-20-02M](#) as a reminder to all health insurers, health maintenance organizations, and other health entities to allow for early prescription refills following the Governor's Executive Order 20-52 declaring a state of emergency in Florida.
- Find more information on OIR's COVID-19 response [here](#).

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

- The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice has issued an emergency order that will suspend visitation at all state-operated juvenile detention centers and juvenile residential commitment programs until April 15, 2020.
- DJJ has also instituted additional screening measures for outside vendors who work within juvenile facilities.
- Pandemic plans have been developed and disseminated for all state-operated juvenile detention centers and juvenile residential commitment programs.
- Find more information on DJJ's COVID-19 response [here](#).

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

- FDLE and ESF-16 partners are working with the Florida Sheriffs Association to provide support for FHP at the I-95 screening point.
- Find more information on FDLE's COVID-19 response [here](#).

FLORIDA LOTTERY

- To protect players and employees during COVID-19, Florida Lottery Headquarters and district offices closed to the public on Monday, March 23, and remain closed until further notice.
- The Lottery continues to evaluate mission critical positions that have the ability to telecommute and is preparing accordingly to keep Lottery operations running should further social distancing be needed in the future.
- Find more information on Lottery's COVID-19 response [here](#).

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT SERVICES

- At the Governor's direction, DMS Secretary Jonathan Satter issued an emergency order to ensure federal benefits granted through The Families First Coronavirus Response Act

are available to employees. The order provides emergency paid sick leave at the full rate of pay rather than subjecting employees' pay to federal caps, ensures full allotment of Emergency Family and Medical Leave without federal caps and ensures healthcare providers and emergency responders have access to full benefits.

- As directed by Governor DeSantis in Executive Order 20-52, DMS has amended the state employee health plan benefits plan documents to include delivery of covered benefits through telehealth at no additional cost to the employees and to ensure all state employees have access to telehealth through the state's contracted HMO and PPO organization plan without cost sharing during this public health emergency.
- As directed by Governor DeSantis in Executive Order 20-52, DMS has amended the state employee health plan benefits plan documents to cover immunizations at participating in-network retail pharmacies at no cost to the member during this public health emergency.
- Find more information on DMS' COVID-19 response [here](#).

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AFFAIRS

- The Governor activated 2,093 Florida National Guardsmen to support Florida's response to COVID-19.
- The Florida National Guard (FLNG) continues to support the State's COVID-19 response through operational support of Community Based Testing Sites (CBTS), augmentation to airport screening measures, statewide logistics support, coordination, planning and operational mission sets. To date, the FLNG has assisted in the testing of over 23,606 individuals for the COVID-19 virus.
- The Florida National Guard continues to support the Florida Dept. of Health and airport authorities in application of the Governor's order to conduct screenings at airports.
- The Florida National Guard has activated medical professionals, Army Combat Medic Specialists and Air Force Medical Technicians in support of the Florida Department of Health's (DOH) Community Based Testing Sites.
- The Florida National Guard has activated Guardsmen to augment the State Logistics Readiness Center (SLRC), the State's Logistics Branch, as well as facilitate statewide logistics needs of the Florida National Guard formations on mission. The FLNG support to the SLRC remains at 24-hours-a-day operations.
- The Florida National Guard has activated Guardsmen to augment the State Emergency Operations Center and local emergency management offices across the state.
- Find more information on DMA's response to COVID-19 [here](#).

AGENCY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

- Sunland Center in Marianna is receiving personal protective equipment from the state Emergency Operations Center for staff to use as a precaution to prevent the possible exposure to COVID-19. Sunland serves 300 residents with developmental disabilities in Jackson County.
- APD licensed group homes in Broward County will be receiving assistance from the Broward County Health Department this week. The Health Department will be providing masks for both the staff and the residents of the group homes as a precaution to prevent the possible spread of COVID-19.
- APD has posted information important to its customers, providers, and Waiver Support Coordinators its new COVID-19 webpage on the agency's website at <https://apd.myflorida.com/covid19>.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE

- The Department of Revenue encourages taxpayers with questions about the sales tax due date extensions to visit our designated [taxpayer COVID-19 information webpage](#).
- The Department has a dedicated COVID-19 webpage for child support customers at [com/childsupport/coronavirus](#). The page provides comprehensive information for alternative options for handling many routine child support case activities without visiting a local child support office.
- Find more information on DOR's response to COVID-19 [here](#).

CAREERSOURCE FLORIDA

- CareerSource Florida distributed a survey on April 5 to all local workforce development boards, requesting information on plans for implementation of Executive Order 20-93, requiring support for distribution and collection of Reemployment Assistance claims.
- CareerSource Florida has launched a digital advertising outreach campaign directing employers statewide to small business loans and resources via CareerSource Florida's [COVID-19 webpage](#).
- Additionally, the CareerSource Florida Network is continuing to provide career and business services virtually or by appointment to minimize risk of the COVID-19 pandemic to customers and employees. Recruiting, hiring and training services are being provided via phone, online and email, as well as by appointment in some locations.
- Find more information on CareerSource Florida's response to COVID-19 [here](#).

STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA

- The SUS has directed all state universities to continue remote instruction through the end of the spring semester.
- The SUS has directed that traditional on-campus commencement ceremonies will not be held in May. Instead, each university is directed to develop an alternate schedule or method of delivery.
- Find more information on SUS' response to COVID-19 [here](#).

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF STATE

- The Florida Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs supports grantees that have had to cancel or modify their programming, events, and everyday operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The department welcomes the opportunity to work with its grantees on a case-by-case basis. In recognition of the arts' \$877 billion contribution to the U.S. economy and a source of 5.1 million American jobs, the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) will distribute [\\$75 million in funding](#) provided by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. As additional details become available from the NEA, the department will be using data from the [Americans for the Arts Survey](#) as part of the process to determine how funds should be equitably distributed throughout the state.
- Additionally, the department provided the following resources compiled from South Arts, the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies and Miami-Dade Division of Cultural Affairs that arts and culture organizations may find particularly useful:

- Americans for the Arts [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Resource and Response Center](#)
- National Assembly of State Arts Agencies [Coronavirus Resources](#)
- [Arts Ready Alert - South Arts](#)
- ArtsReady has circulated practical examples of measures being implemented by cultural organizations, including this March 6 [New York Times article](#).
- American Alliance of Museums [Information for the Museum Field](#)
- American Association of Community Theatre [COVID-19 Response](#)
- [National Coalition for Arts' Preparedness and Emergency Response current crises page](#)
- [Cultural Facilities Check List](#) from Miami-Dade Cultural Affairs
- [Sample Marketing Statement](#) from Miami-Dade Cultural Affairs
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention main COVID-19 information page](#)
- CERF+ [The Artist's Safety Net](#)
- [COVID-19/Coronavirus Resources & Information for the Museum Field](#), from the American Alliance of Museums, contains advice applicable to museums and other cultural venues.

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

- FDOT is leading the coordination of DOH and the Florida Highway Patrol to implement Executive Order 20-86. To date, more than 3,100 traveler forms have been collected at the I-10 and I-95 checkpoints.
- FDOT continues to coordinate with seaports across the state to monitor port activity.
- FDOT continues to coordinate with public use airports, DOH and law enforcement to implement Executive Order 20-80. To date, more than 10,200 traveler forms have been collected at public use airports across the state.
- Find more information on FDOT's response to COVID-19 [here](#).

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

- FDVA has restricted visitor access to its state veterans' homes until further notice, with the exception of essential visitors. In addition, admissions in our network of state veterans' homes are temporarily suspended.
- Veterans who are concerned they may have symptoms of COVID-19, flu or cold should contact the VISN 8 Clinical Contact Center toll free at (877) 741-3400 before coming to a VA facility. Clinicians are available to provide 24/7 virtual care and support, including nurse advice and triage. Veterans who are concerned they may have symptoms should contact the center first before coming to a VA facility.
- To contact a teleworking FDVA Veterans' Claims Examiner, call (727) 319-7440 and they'll return your call within 24 hours. You may also contact them via e-mail at VSO@fdva.state.fl.us.
- Find more information on FDVA's response to COVID-19 [here](#).

FLORIDA HOUSING FINANCE CORPORATION

- As the Florida Housing Finance Corporation (Florida Housing) continues to be committed to the health and well-being of all Floridians, we have compiled a list of resources with relevant information for homeowners, residents, developers, apartment

owners, management companies, participating lenders, Realtors and SHIP administrators regarding COVID-19.

- Find more information on Florida Housing's response to COVID-19 [here](#).

VISIT FLORIDA

- As a part of VISIT FLORIDA's immediate response to COVID-19, the four welcome centers have been closed until further notice.
- 16 VISIT FLORIDA welcome center employees are assisting DEO with following up on the influx of inquiries and calls impacted businesses throughout the state.
- VISIT FLORIDA has launched a data dashboard on VisitFlorida.org to track the impact of COVID-19 on Florida's tourism industry.
- Find more information on VISIT FLORIDA's response to COVID-19 [here](#).

VOLUNTEER FLORIDA

- As the lead agency for volunteerism and service, Volunteer Florida is working to support voluntary organizations across the state and nation by [sharing resources](#), surveying needs and requesting that continuity of operations plans be created to avoid any service delivery disruption.
- Find more information on Volunteer Florida's response to COVID-19 [here](#).

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