

# Supports for lowans during Covid-19

**W**hen we face tough times, we all need help. Here's what you should know about the array of public benefits to help lowans make ends meet during this crisis. **Eligibility for these programs varies by immigration status;** please see our forthcoming piece for more specifics.



## Unemployment

*Financial help if you've lost your job or can't work*

- Many workers who didn't qualify for unemployment before the crisis now do. That includes workers who are self-employed, "gig" workers (like Uber drivers), independent contractors (whose pay is reported on a 1099 tax form rather than a paystub) and workers who are new to the labor market.
- You should apply for unemployment if you:
  - lost your job, were furloughed or had your wages or hours reduced
  - had to quit your job to take care of your children or cannot get to work due to the virus
  - have health conditions or exposure to the virus make it unsafe for you to be at work
  - your employer has failed to adopt necessary safety measures
- People who qualify for unemployment will get an extra \$600 per week through July 31.
  - The \$600 **may** reduce your SNAP benefits.
  - The \$600 **will not** be counted when determining whether you qualify for Medicaid or Hawki.
  - The \$600 **may** reduce your subsidy if you purchase insurance through the Marketplace (Obamacare) and could even make you ineligible.
- All unemployment benefits are taxable.
- Questions about unemployment?
  - [Iowa Workforce Development main unemployment information page](#)
  - [COVID-19 and Unemployment Insurance for workers Q&A](#)
  - [Video instructions for applying online \(English\)](#)
  - [Video instructions for applying online \(Spanish\)](#)



## Medicaid

*Health insurance for you and members of your family*

- You cannot be kicked off Medicaid during the Covid-19 crisis.
- Testing and treatment of Covid-19 is covered by Medicaid. You should not have to pay anything to receive the test or treatment.
- You can ignore any notices you received about losing your Medicaid coverage in April.
- Your dental benefits will not be reduced.
- If you're a Dental Wellness Plan member who was scheduled to go to reduced benefits on April 1, 2020, you are being reinstated to the full benefit level.
- Questions? Call Iowa Medicaid Member Services at 800-338-8366.



## Food Assistance (SNAP)

*Funds put on an electric card you can use to buy groceries*

- Households receiving SNAP will receive the maximum amount for their household size in May.
- Adults without dependents who can work are now able to access SNAP without time limits.
- Households receiving SNAP who were up for recertification in March, April or May now have their cases automatically recertified for the next six months.
- SNAP participants will not lose benefits for failure to meet work requirements.
- Questions about SNAP, or need help filling out the application? Call the Iowa Food Assistance Hotline: 855-944-3663 for assistance available in many languages.



## Child Care Assistance

*Help paying for child care while you are working or going to school*

- If you're currently getting CCA, continue communicating with your child care provider to maintain your slot.
- If you're an essential worker and need child care, visit the Iowa Department of Human Service's [Temporary Emergency Childcare resource page](#).
- Questions about child care? Visit the Iowa DHS [Childcare Resources in Response to COVID-19](#)



## Utility Payment Assistance and Shutoff Protection

*Assistance paying your heating bill*

- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP) application deadline has been extended to June 30 (from April 30). **Households are encouraged to apply since there is now more money for the program.**
  - Homeowners and renters are eligible for LIHEAP within the [federal poverty guidelines](#).
  - Community Action Agencies have taken steps to make the LIHEAP application easier, no signatures required.
  - Contact your local [Community Action Agency](#) for assistance in applying.
- All electric and natural gas utilities are restricted from disconnecting any customers through end of public health emergency (this also applies to investor-owned water utilities).
- All other water utilities are encouraged not to disconnect customers.



## Eviction Moratoriums and Rent

*Legal protections for renters*

- You cannot not be evicted for non-payment of rent through May 27, 2020 by proclamation of the Governor.
- Federal law has established a moratorium on evictions and late fees. There can be no new eviction filings for unpaid rent before July 25, 2020 and no charging of late fees or anything like a late fee for unpaid rent.
- Once the moratorium is over, tenants cannot be evicted for nonpayment of rent until their landlord gives them a 30-day notice.
- **This does not mean you don't have to pay rent. Eventually, all the rent you validly owe under the lease will be due.**
- Questions about your rent? Visit Iowa Legal Aid's [Coronavirus webpage](#).