



# CARIBE CORNER

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## COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

ISSUE #18: SPRING 2020

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- CDC: Stop the Spread of Germs

### Dear Neighbors,

Spring has arrived with a surge of intensity that has affected people across the globe. In these uncertain times, HACE is here to share clear guidance and information about available resources for Philadelphia as we navigate the COVID-19 outbreak, the 2020 Census, and Tax Day.

Please share this information widely to mitigate community spread and help all of us work together to navigate the challenges of the times.

### COVID-19 Information & Resources

#### **What is COVID-19?**

COVID-19 is an illness caused by a coronavirus, which has manifested as a pandemic of respiratory disease spreading rapidly person-to-person. While the complete clinical picture with regard to COVID-19 is not fully known, reported illnesses have ranged from very mild (including some with no reported symptoms) to severe, including illness resulting in death.

Common symptoms include a dry cough, fever, and difficulty breathing. However, many cases of asymptomatic spread have occurred. This means that the virus affects people in different ways and we all have a role to play in reducing spread of this highly contagious and potentially deadly virus.

#### **How do I protect myself from COVID-19?**

Scientists are studying COVID-19, but no cure has been established to date. The virus is easily transmitted person-to-person. Thus, everyone is encouraged to practice rigorous hygiene, intensive social distancing, and stay-at-home measures to the greatest extent possible until further notice.

See Page 4 to review best practices from the CDC on how to prevent the spread of germs.

#### **How do I prevent the spread of COVID-19 in my community?**

To help mitigate community spread, Philadelphia has enacted an [Emergency Order](#) with Stay-at-Home measures effective as of March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2020. Until further notice, all Philadelphia residents must remain home or at their place of residence unless they are engaged in *Essential Personal Activities*, such as:

- Obtaining essential goods and services
- Seeking medical attention or seeking assistance from law enforcement or emergency services
- Caring for family members, friends, or a pet in another household
- Delivering essential goods or services
- Reporting to or performing a job related to an essential business
- Moving in or out of a home or apartment
- Certain outdoor activities such as walking, running, cycling, or operating a wheelchair while using appropriate social distancing rules
- Education, religious, or political activities

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If you must be outside, maintain social distancing. This means you should:

- Avoid close contact with others
- Distance yourself at least 6 feet from other people
- Don't arrange to meet up with other groups
- Avoid an area if it looks busy; walk elsewhere
- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after contact with others. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if no soap is available.

### ***What should I do if I feel sick?***

If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop a fever and symptoms, such as cough or difficulty breathing, call your healthcare provider for medical advice.

Unless it is an emergency, to reduce your risk of catching or spreading illness, stay home if you feel sick, even if your symptoms are mild. Do not go to work, school, or public places, and avoid public transportation.

### ***Greater Philadelphia Coronavirus Helpline***

Call the 24/7 helpline to speak with a health care professional and receive guidance: 1-800-722-7112

### ***What resources are available for my household?***

#### **Essential Businesses & Services**

While the stay-at-home order is in effect, many essential businesses are open, such as grocery stores and pharmacies. Essential City services are also operating. For more about City services and essential businesses, visit the City's webpage for the latest information: [phila.gov/COVID-19](https://phila.gov/COVID-19)

#### **Meals for Youth**

Meal distribution for all Philadelphia youth is being coordinated at select sites. Visit [phila.gov/COVID-19](https://phila.gov/COVID-19) and click on "Youth meal sites" for the latest information.

#### **Food Pantry Finders**

The following organizations have tools to help you search for food pantries near you:

#### ***Coalition Against Hunger***

Call (215) 430-0556 or visit [www.hungercoalition.org](https://www.hungercoalition.org)

#### ***WhyHunger***

Call 1-800-5-HUNGRY(486479), text your zip code to 1-800-548-6479, or visit <https://whyhunger.org/find-food/> to find a local emergency food provider and other support services.

#### ***FoodPantries.org***

Visit [www.foodpantries.org](https://www.foodpantries.org) to search for sites throughout the nation.

#### **Free Internet through Comcast (up to 2 months)**

Comcast is helping connect low-income families to the Internet at home during the pandemic. New Internet Essentials customers will receive two free months of Internet service, after which you can either cancel the service (which you can do at any time) or keep it as a regular paying Internet Essentials customer for \$9.95/month plus tax. There is no contract, so customers can disconnect their Internet Essentials service at any time without penalty.

Apply by April 30, 2020. Households can apply at <https://www.internetessentials.com/> or call 855-846-8376 (English) or 855-765-6995 (Spanish).

#### ***How can I stay informed about COVID-19?***

Information is rapidly changing as the situation continues to develop. Below are important sources for ongoing information about COVID-19 and how to respond.

#### **CITY OF PHILADELPHIA**

Text Alerts: Receive updates regarding Philadelphia's response by texting COVIDPHL to 888-777.

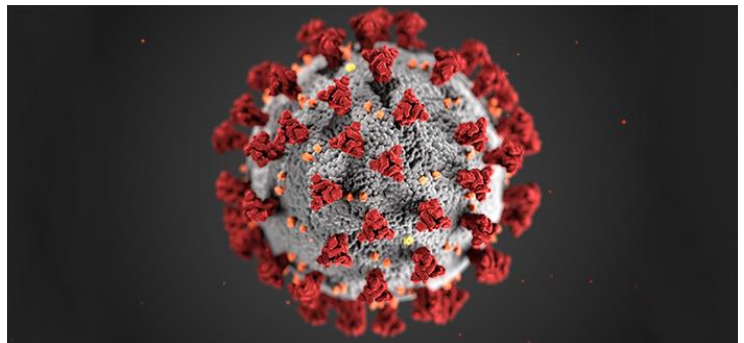
Website: Visit [www.phila.gov/covid-19](https://www.phila.gov/covid-19) daily for the latest updates.

#### **CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL & PREVENTION**

Website: Visit <https://www.cdc.gov/> for the latest CDC information or to subscribe for the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) newsletter.

#### **WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION**

Website: Visit <https://www.who.int/> for the latest WHO updates or to subscribe to their newsletters, including Health Emergency Highlights.



## The 2020 Census is Underway



Every 10 years, the federal government conducts the Census with the goal of counting every person living in the U.S. – regardless of citizenship or immigration status. The 2020 population numbers will shape how political power and federal tax dollars are distributed in the U.S over the next 10 years. They guide how an estimated \$880 billion a year in federal funding is distributed for schools, roads and other public services in local communities.

Census Day is April 1<sup>st</sup>, though most households can participate now – letters with instructions were sent to most homes in the U.S. You can participate using the paper form, online, or by phone.

Visit Philly Counts website for more information:

<https://www.phila.gov/programs/philly-counts-2020/>

Online: Visit [my2020census.gov](https://my2020census.gov) to get started

Phone: Call 1-844-330-2020 to complete with a Census Questionnaire Assistance representative

By Mail: Complete the paper questionnaire sent to your residence using blue or black ink ONLY (no pencil)

If you have any issues completing the questionnaire, you should email [census@phila.gov](mailto:census@phila.gov)

## Tax Day Extension & FREE Tax Filing Online

Due to the coronavirus outbreak, the Federal government has extended the Tax Day filing deadline to July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

The Campaign for Working Families has been a leading coordinator of free tax filing services in Philadelphia. In the wake of the pandemic, they are promoting free online tax filing options.

Visit <https://cwfphilly.org/freefile/> to learn which options are right for you and begin filing.

## Coronavirus Stimulus Bill

The Federal government recently passed an historic \$2 trillion stimulus package, to include direct payments to individuals, couples, and families with children as well as expansion of unemployment benefits. Please see below for answers to some frequently asked questions.

### ***How large will direct payments be?***

Individuals earning less than \$75,000 annually are to receive a one-time payment of \$1,200; if you earned more than \$75,000, your payment will be reduced by \$5 for every \$100 of income that exceeds the limits (ex: if you made \$80,000 in 2019, you will receive \$950).

The formula is doubled for couples who filed jointly.

Families with children should receive an additional \$500 for each child under the age of 17.

The formula is adjusted for individuals who filed as "head of household" and earned \$112,500 or less; they should receive \$1,200.

Please Note: You must have a Social Security Number to receive a payment.

### ***How will payment amounts be determined?***

Payment amounts are based on your "adjusted gross income" documented in 2019 tax filings. If you did not file in 2019, payments will be calculated from your 2018 tax returns.

### ***When and how will payments arrive?***

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said on March 25<sup>th</sup> that checks will be sent out "within three weeks" to people for whom the IRS has information (i.e. if you've been working and paying taxes since 2018). Taxpayers who have previously submitted direct deposit information will receive payments fastest while others will receive checks at their last known address.

### ***How can I apply for food assistance, unemployment, and other benefits?***

New Applicants: Apply online through Compass or call Benephilly: 844-848-4376. The County Assistance Offices are closed to the public, but they are accepting applications.

Current Recipients: If you've lost income, you may be eligible for an increase in SNAP or TANF. Submit change in income information in one of the following ways:

Online through *Compass*

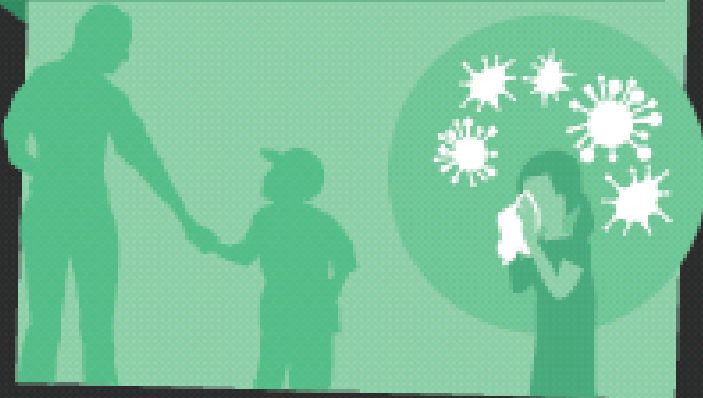
By mobile app *MyCompassPA*

By calling the Customer Service Center at 215-560-7226

# STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick.



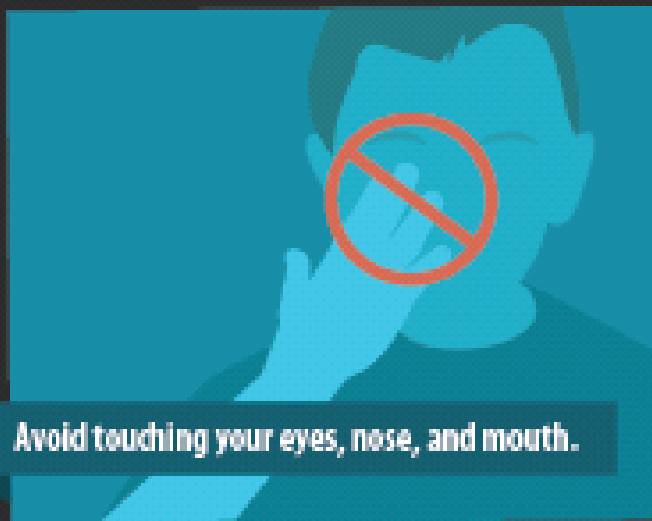
Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.



Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.



Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.



Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.



[cdc.gov/COVID19](https://www.cdc.gov/COVID19)