

State and Federal Assistance Programs and Public Health Emergency Resources

Call 2-1-1 or visit www.211.org for referrals and information to local help with food, housing, employment, health care, counseling, and more. This free and confidential service is available to anyone in the United States.

Benefits.gov is an online resource to help you find federal benefits you may be eligible for in the United States.

Check out United Way's Community Resource Guide for additional local resources available to you:
<https://www.keysunitedway.org/communityresourceguide>

Disaster Distress Helpline

1-800-985-5990

TEXT: "TalkWithUs" to 66746

DisasterDistress.samhsa.gov

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

What Is It?

"The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), called food assistance in Florida and formerly known as the Food Stamp Program, provides food benefits, access to a healthy diet, and education on food preparation and nutrition to low-income households. Recipients spend their benefits (provided on an electronic card that is used like an ATM card) to buy eligible food in authorized retail food stores."

APPLYING

Applications are available electronically, by paper, or phone.

A phone app is in the works

Online: <http://www.myflorida.com/accessflorida/>

File By Mail: Call 866-762-2237 or 850-300-4323 (TTY 1-800-955-8771) to request an application be mailed to you.

Phone: Call 866-762-2237 or 850-300-4323 (TTY 1-800-955-8771). *Please note, DCF says that this process is very time consuming and may take up to an hour and that customers are encouraged to utilize this only as a last resort.*

New flexibility during Public Health Emergency

- Temporary suspension of 3-month time limit for adults without dependents who aren't working more than 20 hours/week
- No one required to work 80 hours a month to keep benefits
- Additional time limits suspended
- Interview is waived provided the applicant's identity has been verified
- SNAP allotments of current recipients increased to maximum for families of the household's size for 2 months, March and April
- Emergency allotments distributed in March, staggered in April
- SNAP directed to families whose children are eligible for free and reduced-price school lunch
- If recertification is required in April or May, it has been extended 6 months
- Able to make purchases online, so far only through Walmart and Amazon.*

*On April 14, the Florida Department of Children and Families announced Florida will pilot a program for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients to purchase groceries online with the use of an EBT card. SNAP participants are automatically eligible to participate in this program and do not need to apply. In coordination with federal, state, and local partners will ensure Floridians can access nutritious food while also practicing social distancing and self-quarantining to reduce the spread of COVID-19. The pilot program will begin with an initial launch on April 16, expanding statewide on April 21. For FAQs, visit: <https://www.myflfamilies.com/covid19/accessPurchasingFAQs.shtml>

Disaster SNAP (D-SNAP) is in the works but hasn't been approved yet.

Contact Information:

Public offices are closed, but call center hours have been expanded. Expect long wait times.

Agents available

7 am to 6 pm Mon-Fri

1-866-762-2237 or 850-300-4323

Florida Relay 711 or

TTY 1-800-955-8771

For more contact information or answers to general questions, visit:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/contact-us>

For general information: visit: <https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/access/food-assistance-and-suncap.shtml>

Or for information directly related to COVID-19 visit:

<https://www.myflfamilies.com/covid19/access.shtml>

For program requirements and household allotments, visit: <https://www.benefits.gov/benefit/1244>

For the Food Assistance Program Fact Sheet, visit: <https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/access/docs/fafactsheet.pdf>

Women, Infant, Children (WIC)

What Is It?

“The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides federal grants to states for supplemental foods, health care referrals, and nutrition education for low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and to infants and children up to age five who are found to be at nutritional risk.”

Population Served:

The WIC target population is low-income, nutritionally at risk:

- Pregnant women (through pregnancy and up to 6 weeks after birth or after pregnancy ends).
- Breastfeeding women (up to infant’s 1st birthday)
- Nonbreastfeeding postpartum women (up to 6 months after the birth of an infant or after pregnancy ends)
- Infants (up to 1st birthday). WIC serves 53 percent of all infants born in the United States.
- Children up to their 5th birthday.

Benefits

The following benefits are provided to WIC participants:

- Supplemental nutritious foods
- Nutrition education and counseling at WIC clinics
- Breastfeeding counseling
- Screening and referrals to other health (such as immunizations), welfare, and social services
- Substance abuse referral

To learn about all their benefits and services, visit: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-benefits-and-services>

Examples of where WIC services are provided:

- County health departments
- Hospitals
- Mobile clinics (vans)
- Community centers
- Schools

- Public housing sites
- Migrant health centers and camps
- Indian Health Service facilities

Applying

To apply to be a WIC participant, you will need to contact your state or local agency to set up an appointment. Check out your state's website or call the toll-free number. When you call to set up an appointment, someone will tell you the location nearest your home and what you need to bring with you.

*During the COVID-19 Pandemic, all applications will be done by phone and necessary documents can be faxed or emailed, please do not go to the WIC office.

Contact Information:

Toll Free Florida: 1-800-342-3556

Monroe County Offices

Florida Department of Health Monroe County: 305-293-7500

Key West: 305-676-3852

Marathon and Tavernier: 305-676-3933

Florida Department of Health

4052 Bald Cypress Way, Bin A16

Tallahassee, FL 32399-1726

United States

Rhonda Herndon, Bureau Chief

Phone: 850-245-4202

Fax: 850-922-3936

Toll Free: 1-800-342-3556

VOC Contact: 850-245-4202 OR 1-800-342-3556

Rhonda.Herndon@flhealth.gov

New flexibility during Public Health Emergency

- *Department of Health (DOH) attained waiver allowing remote issuance.* This waives the requirement that participants pick up their EBT cards in person at recertification or during nutritional education appointments.
- *WIC participants allowed to substitute certain foods.* Under a waiver from USDA, WIC participants in Florida are allowed to substitute milk of any available fat content and whole wheat or whole grain bread in package sizes up to 24 oz. when 16 oz. packages are unavailable.

- *USDA waived physical presence requirements.* Although the scope and logistics are unclear at this time, USDA has given DOH permission to waive the requirement that persons be physically present at each certification or recertification determination in order to determine eligibility under the program through May 31, 2020.

For general information, visit: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic>

To view the USDA's fact sheet, visit: <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/wic/wic-fact-sheet.pdf>

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families

What Is It?

Otherwise known as Cash Assistance, it is a federal grant that is best known as the major source of funding for cash welfare for needy families with children, with federal requirements about work and time limits for families receiving assistance.

Purpose:

- To provide assistance to needy families with children so that they can live in their own home or the homes of relatives
- To end the dependency of needy parents on government benefits through work, job preparation, and marriage
- To reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies
- To promote the formation and maintenance of two-parent families

APPLYING

You can online

Online: <http://www.myflorida.com/accessflorida/>

Contact Info:

Florida Temporary Cash Assistance

General Information:

(866) 762-2237

State Office:

Department of Children and Families

1317 Winewood Boulevard Bldg. 1 Room 202

Tallahassee, FL 32399-0700

(850) 487-1111

Or find an ACCESS Service Center location near you: <https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/access/map.shtml>

For more program details, visit: <https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/access/temporary-cash-assistance.shtml#moe>

For an in-depth overview of the program and its requirements, visit:
<https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/access/docs/TANF%20101%20final.pdf>

Or visit: <https://www.tanfprogram.com/florida-tanf-application-ta9>

Medicaid

What Is It?

Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) provide free or low-cost health coverage to millions of Americans, including some low-income people, families and children, pregnant women, the elderly, and people with disabilities.

APPLYING

Online: through Marketplace at: <https://www.healthcare.gov/>
Or through your state Medicaid agency: <https://www.myflorida.com/accessflorida/>

For more information, visit:
<https://www.healthcare.gov/medicaid-chip/getting-medicaid-chip/>

New flexibility during Public Health Emergency

- *No Medicaid terminations.* Medicaid eligibility for current recipients will be maintained from March through the last day of the month of the state of emergency (unless no longer resident or voluntary terminations). This means no Medicaid recipient will lose Medicaid eligibility during the state of emergency.
- *Redetermination/recertification times extended 6 months* for beneficiaries due to recertify in April or May.
- *Application time extended 120 days.* During this state of emergency, individuals applying for Medicaid may be unable to submit all the documentation required to process their application. Beginning with applications received in February 2020, the timeframe for individuals to submit any necessary paperwork will be extended to 120 days from the date the application was received. If the Medicaid application is approved, the individual's Medicaid eligibility effective date will still be the first day of the month that the initial application was received.
- *Coverage of all medically necessary services due to COVID-19*, including testing and treatment.

- *No limits on services that must be exceeded to maintain the health and safety of recipients diagnosed with COVID-19 or when necessary to maintain a recipient safely in their home.*
- *No prior authorization requirements for hospital, physician, advanced practice registered nursing, physician assistant, home health services, and durable medical equipment and supplies.*
- *Waiver of copayment for all services.*
- *No limits on early prescription refills, except for controlled substances.*
- *Coverage of 90-day supply of maintenance prescriptions when available at pharmacy.*
- *Reimbursement of out of state providers providing medically necessary services to Florida Medicaid beneficiaries.*
- *120-day extension of time to request fair hearings.*
- *Delay of fair hearings only in those instances when the recipient is continuing to receive services pending the outcome of the hearing.*

Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

What Is It?

CHIP provides low-cost health coverage to children in families that earn too much money to qualify for Medicaid. In some states, CHIP covers pregnant women. Each state offers CHIP coverage, and works closely with its state Medicaid program.

APPLYING

Can apply online or call.

Phone: Call 1-800-318-2596 (TTY: 1-855-889-4325).

Online: Fill out an application through the Health Insurance Marketplace, <https://www.healthcare.gov/>

You can apply for and enroll in Medicaid or CHIP any time of year. There's no limited enrollment period for either Medicaid or CHIP. If you qualify, your coverage can start immediately.

CHIP benefits are different in each state. But all states provide comprehensive coverage, including:

- Routine check-ups
- Immunizations
- Doctor visits
- Prescriptions
- Dental and vision care
- Inpatient and outpatient hospital care
- Laboratory and X-ray services
- Emergency services

For more information, visit: <https://www.healthcare.gov/medicaid-chip/childrens-health-insurance-program/>

Unemployment Insurance (UI) / Reemployment Assistance (RA)

UI Benefits are administered by states. If you lost your job March 9th or after, your benefits will be retroactively distributed to you.

What Is It?

“Unemployment insurance payments (benefits) are intended to provide temporary financial assistance to unemployed workers who are unemployed through no fault of their own. Each state sets its own additional requirements for eligibility, benefit amounts, and length of time benefits can be paid. Generally, benefits are based on a percentage of your earnings over a recent 52-week period, and each state sets a maximum amount. Benefits are subject to federal and most state income taxes and must be reported on your income tax return. You may choose to have the tax withheld from your payment.”

- Provides temporary, partial wage replacement benefits to qualified workers who are unemployed through no fault of their own
- Supports economic stability for employers who depend on consumer spending
- Funded solely by employers who pay federal and state payroll taxes
- Provided at no cost to the workers who receive the benefits

APPLYING

Applications are available by phone, electronically, or paper.

Online: RA claims are handled through CONNECT at <http://www.floridajobs.org/RAApplication>

Or the DEO website, https://fldeo-flwork-prod1.pegacloud.net/prweb/app/default/tHGV_g6FQZMSYakWUervaQ%28%28*/!STANDARD

Phone: 1-800-204-2418, or for assistance with language translation, call 1-800-681-8102

File by Mail: Contact: holly.raschein@myflorida.gov to request a paper copy to be mailed to you

Or download the application at: FloridaJobs.org/Reemployment-Assistance-Service-Center/reemployment-assistance/claimants/rapaperapplication

Residents needing assistance with the paper application may email ApplicationAssistance@KeysUnitedWay.org and a United Way volunteer will be able to assist.

People who need assistance filing a claim online because of legal reasons, computer illiteracy, language barriers, or disabilities may call 1-800-681-8102.

Check out the Department of Labor's UI Fact Sheet:

https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/docs/factsheet/UI_Program_FactSheet.pdf

Or United Way's "Links and Tips": <https://www.keysunitedway.org/COVID-19ApplicationAssistance>

Or their FAQ's page at: <https://www.keysunitedway.org/sites/keysunitedway.org/files/unemployment-faqs-3-17-20-updates.pdf>

For an in-depth overview: State of Florida Department of Economic Opportunity Reemployment Assistance Program Reemployment Assistance Handbook http://floridajobs.org/docs/default-source/reemployment-assistance-center/unemployment/bri/bri_english.pdf?sfvrsn=8e8e78b0_4

ADDITIONAL CORONAVIRUS AID, RELIEF, AND ECONOMIC SECURITIES ACT (CARES) ASSISTANCE:

What Is The CARES Act?

"The CARES Act provides fast and direct economic assistance for American workers, families, and small businesses, and preserve jobs for our American industries."

Assistance for/focus in:

- American workers and families
- Small businesses
- State and local governments
- Preserving jobs for American industry

Economic Impact Payments

"Tax filers with adjusted gross income up to \$75,000 for individuals and up to \$150,000 for married couples filing joint returns will receive the full payment. For filers with income above those amounts, the payment amount is reduced by \$5 for each \$100 above the \$75,000/\$150,000 thresholds. Single filers with income exceeding \$99,000 and \$198,000 for joint filers with no children are not eligible. Social Security recipients and railroad retirees who are otherwise not required to file a tax return are also eligible and will not be required to file a return.

Eligible taxpayers who filed tax returns for either 2019 or 2018 will automatically receive an economic impact payment of up to \$1,200 for individuals or \$2,400 for married couples and up to \$500 for each qualifying child."

Find out more at: <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/economic-impact-payments-what-you-need-to-know>

Deadline to file taxes extended to July 15th, 2020.

Applying (for further assistance)

The same application process as UI/RA.

For more information on the CARES Act, visit: <https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/cares>

Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC)

What Is It?

FPUC is available for eligible applicants who are currently receiving regular state Reemployment Assistance benefits. FPUC is an additional \$600 distributed weekly in addition to state Reemployment Assistance benefits. Ends July 31st, unless extended.

Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC)

What Is It?

“Under the CARES Act states are permitted to extend unemployment benefits by up to 13 weeks under the new Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) program. PEUC benefits are available for weeks of unemployment beginning after your state implements the new program and ending with weeks of unemployment ending on or before December 31, 2020. The program covers most individuals who have exhausted all rights to regular unemployment compensation under state or federal law and who are able to work, available for work, and actively seeking work as defined by state law. Importantly, the CARES Act gives states flexibility in determining whether you are “actively seeking work” if you are unable to search for work because of COVID-19, including because of illness, quarantine, or movement restrictions.”

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)

What Is It?

In addition, if you have exhausted the 13 weeks of additional benefits available under the PEUC program, you may be eligible to continue receiving benefits under the PUA program. PUA benefits are available for a period of unemployment of up to 39 weeks, meaning that if you have exhausted regular UC and PEUC benefits in fewer than 39 weeks, you may be eligible to receive assistance under PUA for the remaining weeks within PUA’s 39 week period.

Covers workers not eligible for UI (including self-employed) who are unemployed for COVID-19 reasons. Some qualified examples include those who are quarantined, self-quarantined, caring for children who can’t attend school, place of business is closed, had to quit job, etc.

39 weeks, retroactive to January 27th through 2020

PUA’s weekly benefit is the same as the state’s UI, except there’s a higher weekly benefit

Does not cover those who can telework with pay or are receiving paid sick leave or paid leave benefits

At a Glance

Week 1-12: Claimants get regular RA **plus \$600**

Week 13-26: PEUC – Claimants get regular RA **plus \$600**

Weeks 26-39: PUA – Claimants unemployed due to COVID-19 get benefits in amount calculated based on previous earnings using a formula from the Disaster Unemployment Assistance program under the Stafford Act, but no less than 50% of the state’s average weekly UI benefit, **plus \$600**

The extra \$600 ends on July 31, 2020.

Common Questions

Q: Are undocumented workers covered?

A: No, they must be work authorized for UI or “qualified alien” for PUA

Q: Are workers eligible for PUA if they didn’t earn enough to qualify for UI or independent contractors?

A: Yes

Q: Does everyone receive the PUC \$600?

A: Yes, everyone on UI and PUA will receive the \$600 through July.

Q: Since FL only pays 12 weeks of UI, can workers still get 39 weeks in total federal and state benefits?

A: Yes, you can claim PUA after state UI and PEUC.

Q: My regular unemployment compensation benefits do not provide adequate support given the unprecedented economic challenges caused by the COVID-19 outbreak. Can I expect to receive additional relief?

A: Yes, depending on how your state chooses to implement the CARES Act. The new law creates the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation program (FPUC), which provides an additional \$600 per week to individuals who are collecting regular UC (including Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) and Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Service members (UCX), PEUC, PUA, Extended Benefits (EB), Short Time Compensation (STC), Trade Readjustment Allowances (TRA), Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA), and payments under the Self Employment Assistance (SEA) program). This benefit is available for weeks of unemployment beginning after the date on which your state entered into an agreement with the U.S. Department of Labor and ending with weeks of unemployment ending on or before July 31, 2020.

To read the entire CARES Act Bill, visit: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/3548/text?q=product+update>

FEMA Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA)

What Is It?

“The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) program is available to states, local, tribal, and territorial governments to provide unemployment benefits and reemployment services to individuals who have become unemployed as a result of a Presidential disaster declaration approved for Individual Assistance (IA) and who are not eligible for regular State Unemployment Insurance (UI).”

For freelancers who do not qualify for their state's unemployment insurance may apply for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) by using the form:

APPLYING

In the event of a disaster, the affected state will publish announcements about the availability of Disaster Unemployment Assistance. To file a claim, individuals who are unemployed as a direct result of the disaster should contact their State Unemployment Insurance agency. Individuals who have moved or have been evacuated to another state should also contact the state agency.

Applications for Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) must be filed by an individual within 30 days of the announcement of the availability of DUA in the state. Individuals must follow the instructions in the announcement and file for DUA based on the filing methods used by the state (i.e. in person, mail, telephone, or internet).

Florida Unemployment Insurance Contact Information:

File by Phone: 1-800-204-2418

Online: <https://covid19.floridajobs.org/>

File by Mail: <https://covid19.floridajobs.org/>

Duration of Assistance

DUA benefits are generally paid for up to 26 weeks beginning with the first week following the date the major disaster began, and ending with the 26th week following the date the major disaster is declared by the President, as long as the individual's unemployment continues to be a direct result of the disaster.

For more information, visit: <https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/1528984254955-49515ab3f8eeca0627f777a8abe4347a/DisasterUnemploymentAssistance.pdf>

Or: <http://floridajobs.org/office-directory/division-of-workforce-services/reemployment-assistance-programs/disaster-unemployment-assistance>

Or: <https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/disaster.asp>

Or contact the DOL for more on the DUA at: 1-866-487-2365 or your local state UI agency.
Or call: 1-877-872-5627 (TTY number: 1-877-889-5627)

Employment Assistance

Florida provides free reemployment services and assistance to unemployed workers, recent graduates, and those entering the job market for the first time. To search for work, please visit:

<http://www.EmployFlorida.com/>

Employ Florida Vets: <https://veteran.employflorida.com/>

Employ Florida Green Jobs: <https://greenjobs.employflorida.com/>

Employ Florida Silver Edition: <https://silver.employflorida.com/>

Florida Abilities Work: <https://abilitieswork.employflorida.com/>

Workplace Training: <https://workplacetraining.employflorida.com/>

Florida Department of Economic Opportunity: <http://www.floridajobs.org/>

Career Source Florida: <https://careersourceflorida.com/>

Career Source South Florida: <http://lcd.floridajobs.org/CareerSource/GetCareerSourceByRegion/23>

Enterprise Florida: <https://www.enterpriseflorida.com/>

Career One Stop: <https://www.careeronestop.org/>

Florida Department of Economic Opportunity: <http://www.floridajobs.org/Reemployment-Assistance-Service-Center/reemployment-assistance/job-assistance>
