

State of Florida COVID-19 Update

March 27, 2020

This report provides an overview of the State of Florida’s response to the COVID-19 crisis including state agency actions, updates from the Executive Office of Governor Ron DeSantis, and any pertinent Federal or local government actions. You may find additional resources linked throughout and listed at the end of this report. **New updates are signified in red text.**

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FEDERAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSES

- **The Trump Administration will be issuing guidelines** categorizing all counties as high-risk, medium-risk, or low-risk in order to assist state and local officials in making the decision to either increase or relax the social distancing measures needed to combat the virus. The categorization is made possible by the Trump administration’s growing testing

capabilities that enable it to publish criteria for classifying counties. This new development comes as the president continues to express his desire to reopen the economy in the next couple of weeks. However, the U.S. is currently not conducting enough testing to truly track the virus's path, which is necessary to relax social-distancing guidelines.

CARES Act – The Coronavirus Economic Relief Plan

- The [CARES Act](#) is the Senate's \$2.2 trillion Coronavirus economic relief plan. [Details the CARES Act can be found here.](#) There are six main groups that would see the widest-reaching impacts:
 1. **Individuals:** The CARES Act includes direct cash payments for families, expanded unemployment benefits, and new rules for things like filing your taxes and making retirement contributions. The bill also provides funding for child nutrition, SNAP and food banks.
 2. **Small businesses:** The main features for small businesses are emergency grants and a forgivable loan program for companies with 500 or fewer employees. There are also changes to rules for expenses and deductions meant to make it easier for companies to keep employees on the payroll and stay open in the near-term.
 3. **Big corporations:** The bill sets aside roughly \$500 billion in loans and other money for big corporations. These companies will have to pay the government back and will be subject to public disclosures and other requirements.
 4. **Hospitals and public health:** Provides \$100 billion for hospital; \$1.32 billion for community health centers; \$11 million for diagnostics, treatment and vaccines; \$4.3 billion for CDC programs; \$20 billion for veterans' health care; and \$16 billion for the Strategic National Stockpile.
 5. **state and local governments:** The legislation designates \$339.8 billion for programs that will go to state and local governments. It is divided up to put \$274 billion toward specific COVID-19 response efforts, including \$150 billion in direct aid for those state and local governments running out of cash due to high numbers of cases. It also includes \$5 billion for Community Development Block Grants, \$13 billion for K-12 schools, \$14 billion for higher education and \$5.3 billion for programs for children and families, including immediate assistance to child care centers.
 6. **Education:** In addition to the funding for Education that is being distributed through state and local governments, the bill also includes relief for college students and graduates with outstanding federal student debt.
- The CARES Act has passed the Senate and House of Representatives and President Trump signed it on March 27th.
- [Florida TaxWatch released a statement](#) on March 26th stating that the CARES Act is expected provide more than \$8 billion in federal aid to Florida state and local governments. Governments may only use these funds for "necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency with respect to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)."

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

- On March 9th Governor DeSantis issued [Executive Order 20-52](#) declaring a State of Emergency for COVID-19.
- [Executive Order 20-68](#) was issued on March 17th and outlines mandates for restaurants, bars and beaches. New regulations for restaurants have since been release in EO 20-71. Beaches remain capped at 10 per group with groups kept separated, however many local governments have acted to close beaches in their areas.
- [Executive Order 20-69](#) was issued March 20th and relates to Local Government Public Meetings.
- [Executive Order 20-70](#) was issued on March 20th and provides Broward and Palm Beach County Closures.
- [Executive Order 20-71](#) was issued on March 20th and relates to statewide alcohol sales, restaurants, and gyms.
- [Executive Order 20-72](#) was issued on March 20th and requires that all non-essential elective medical procedures be cancelled to conserve PPE.
- [Executive Order 20-80](#) was issued on March 24th and directs all persons traveling to Florida through airports from an area outside of Florida with substantial community spread to isolate or quarantine for 14 days from the time of entry or the duration of the person's presence in Florida, whichever is shorter. This includes the New York Tri-State area (Connecticut, New Jersey and New York).
- [Executive Order 20-82](#) was issued on March 24th and directs all persons who enter the State of Florida from an area with substantial community spread, to include the New York Tri-State Area (Connecticut, New Jersey and New York),

to isolate or quarantine for a period of 14 days from the time of entry into the State of Florida or the duration of the person's presence in the State of Florida, whichever is shorter.

- [Executive Order 20-83](#) was issued on March 24th and directs the State Surgeon General and State Health Officer to issue a public health advisory to all persons over 65 years of age urging them to stay home and to take such other measures as necessary to limit their risk of exposure to COVID-19.
 - [Executive Order 20-86](#) was issued on March 27th and expands travel restrictions on visitors to now include anyone who is coming from Louisiana to self-quarantine for 14 days. It also orders that checkpoints be installed along Interstate 10 to account for traveling drivers.
 - [Executive Order 20-87](#) was also issued on March 27th and suspends all new vacation rentals in the state for the next 14 days. Vacation rentals are prohibited from making new reservations or bookings and shall not accept new guests for check-in for the duration of this order.
 - On March 22nd Governor DeSantis sent a [letter](#) to President Trump requesting that he declare a Major Disaster for the State of Florida. The letter requested the inclusion of the following Individual Assistance Programs in the declaration: Disaster Unemployment Assistance, Crisis Counseling, Community Disaster Loans and the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Program. The letter also requests additional resources and support from FEMA.
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DIVISION OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

- Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) has activated to [Level I](#) (the highest level) to coordinate the state's response to COVID-19. The National Guard has been mobilized to help with coronavirus response.
- FDEM releases updates every afternoon. To view their updates, go to the [FDEM News site](#) or [click here to access the update on March 26th](#).
- After a thorough assessment of needs, Director Moskowitz requested supplies through Direct Federal Assistance that are being delivered on a rolling basis, and inventory is being distributed throughout the state 24 hours a day.

FEMA Public Assistance (PA) Grants

- FEMA will provide Public Assistance (PA) Grants to communities recovering from a declared disaster or emergency.
 - Since Florida has declared a State of Emergency, all counties have been designated Category B under the PA Program. [FDEM has created a flyer](#) to answer questions about this designation and eligibility for the program.
 - The first step in participating in the FEMA PA Grant program is to complete an RPA. Directions on how to submit this form can be found [here](#). The deadline to submit a Request for Public Assistance is currently April 12th, but it is best to submit your RPA by April 10th.
 - If you wish to learn more about the PA program, FDEM and FEMA are offering several [training sessions](#) for potential applicants via webinar beginning March 23rd.
 - FDEM Director, Jared Moskowitz is also expediting the delivery of more than \$170 million in Hurricane Irma reimbursement to cities that have now reached the 50% auditing threshold to receive funds.
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BUSINESSES

State-wide Closures

- **Restaurants** may only operate their kitchens for delivery and take-out services. Restaurants may sell alcoholic beverages in sealed containers, but they must be accompanied by a food purchase. No food or alcohol may be consumed on-site.
- **Bars and Nightclubs** were closed statewide beginning at 5 PM on March 17th and will remain closed for 30 days.
- **Gyms and Fitness Centers** in the state closed on March 20th and will remain closed until further notice.

Regulations & Licensing

- All agencies have been directed to suspend for 30 days licensing and registration renewal requirements for existing professional licenses (e.g. realtors).
- The Office of Insurance Regulation has published a [resource page](#) on its website emphasizing its direction to insurers and will continuously update the page with important insurance resources.

Critical Infrastructure Workforce

- The US Dept of Homeland Security Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) released a [statement](#) on March 19th. Certain critical infrastructure industries have a special responsibility in these times to continue operations.
- CISA identified the following sectors as essential critical infrastructure workers: Healthcare/Public Health; Law Enforcement, Public Safety & First Responders; Food & Agriculture; Energy; Water & Wastewater; Transportation & Logistics; Public Works; Community-Based Government Operations & Essential Functions; Critical Manufacturing; Hazardous Materials; Financial Services; Chemical; and, Defense Industrial Base.

Financial Assistance

- Currently, there are two financial assistance options available to small businesses in Florida:
 - 1. Bridge Loan Programs – offered through the State**
 - The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) will administer the [Bridge Loan Program](#) in partnership with the Florida SBDC Network and Florida First Capital Finance Corporation to provide cash flow to businesses economically impacted by COVID-19. The short-term, interest-free loans help bridge the gap between the time the economic impact occurred and when a business secures other financial resources, including payment of insurance claims or longer-term Small Business Administration (SBA) loans. Up to \$50 million has been allocated for the program.
 - For-profit, privately held businesses with 2 to 100 employees are eligible to apply. [More eligibility info here.](#)
 - The application period is open from March 17th – May 8th.
 - 2. Small Business Administration Loans – offered through the Federal Government**
 - The Small Business Administration (SBA) has approved Florida's declaration for disaster loan assistance.
 - Businesses interested in learning more should visit the [SBA Disaster Loan Assistance site](#) and check out this informational [one-pager from SBA](#).
 - SBA provides low-interest disaster loans to businesses of all sizes, private non-profit organizations, homeowners, and renters. There is no cap on number of employees.
 - If applying for Coronavirus (COVID-19) disaster declarations, please only select *Economic Injury* when inquiring about your business losses.
- Florida DEO is offering **Unemployment Support** (now called [Reemployment Assistance](#)) for those whose employment has been negatively impacted because of mitigation efforts to stop the spread of COVID-19. These Floridians may be eligible to receive Reemployment Assistance:
 - Those who are quarantined by a medical professional or a government agency,
 - Those who are laid off or sent home without pay for an extended period by their employer due to COVID-19 concerns; and
 - Those who are caring for an immediate family member who is diagnosed with COVID-19

Business Damage Assessment Survey

- The Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) is currently surveying businesses and non-profits throughout the state of Florida who have been impacted by COVID-19.
- Businesses and non-profits can access the Business Damage Assessment survey at [FloridaDisaster.BIZ](#). Select "COVID-19" from the drop-down menu on the [survey page](#).
- Response to the Business Damage Assessment survey is not an application for assistance.

EDUCATION

General Guidelines for Schools

- On March 23rd Commissioner Corcoran filed an [Emergency Order](#) which waives strict adherence to the Florida Education code.
- Schools are implementing strategies to continue education and related supports for students. Currently, we are seeing the implementation of e-learning plans, such as digital and distance learning options. Schools also must continue to offer meals and essential medical and social services to students.
- Commissioner Corcoran urges the cancelling of any mass gatherings, community events and extracurricular activities, including sports of more than 10 people in a single occupied space at any educational program, school readiness, voluntary prekindergarten, public and private K-12, career and technical centers, and public and private colleges and universities.
- District School Board and State College Board of Trustees meetings through June 30th, are postponed and may only be scheduled for emergency purposes by the respective school district superintendent or college president.
- All school readiness, voluntary prekindergarten, K-12, career and technical centers and state college programs will receive their full allocation of funding, and therefore staff and contractors can be paid fully, through June 30th, as though there was no disruption in education.
- The following must be determined in consultation with school district officials or other relevant state or local partners:
 - If a waiver is needed for state requirements of a minimum number of in-person instructional hours or school days (seat time) as a condition for funding;
 - How to convert face-to-face lessons into online lessons and how to train teachers to do so;
 - How to triage technical issues if faced with limited IT support and staff;
 - How to encourage appropriate adult supervision while children are using distance learning approaches; and
 - How to deal with the potential lack of students' access to computers and the Internet at home.

K-12 Public, Private & Charter Schools

- [All public and private K-12 and career and technical center campuses are closed through April 15, 2020.](#)
- All districts are on extended spring break until **March 30th**. The exceptions are Collier, Duval, Sumter and Union county School Districts, who completed their break on **March 20th**. These counties began their distance learning instruction on March 23rd, while the remaining districts will begin distance learning instruction on **March 30th**.
- School districts should be prepared to extend their educational calendars through **June 30th** to the extent feasible.
- All remaining assessments for school readiness, voluntary prekindergarten and K-12 assessments are cancelled for the 2019-2020 school year. Requirements for graduation and promotion, and final course grades will be evaluated as though those assessments which were cancelled did not exist.
- K-12 school grades will not be calculated for 2019-2020 and schools in turnaround may continue their current status for 2020-2021 to avoid disruption to school leadership and operations.
- FDOE and K-12 school districts are instructed to redirect unspent 2019-2020 funds from Reading Scholarship Accounts, the Reading Instruction Allocation, the Digital Classroom Allocation and the Teachers Classroom Supply Assistance Program to help low-income students purchase digital devices and establish Internet services.
- In order to facilitate the remote connection between teachers and students, K-12 school districts are further permitted to redirect unspent Title 2 funds to help low-income students purchase digital devices and establish Internet services.
- K-12 school districts are permitted to redirect unspent 2019-2020 funds from the Safe Schools and Mental Health allocations to virtual and telephonic mental health counseling services for students who need emotional support due to COVID-19.

Universities and Colleges

- While the Board of Governors is not currently providing financial relief for students affected by COVID-19, they have encouraged state universities to develop a plan to provide a refund, rebate, or credit to students who can no longer in

their dorms or use their meal plan. Some universities are discussing this possibility, such as USF, the University of Florida, and FAMU. Florida Gulf Coast University has agreed to reimburse up to \$1200 to residential students depending on the size of their dorm.

- The Florida College and State University Systems are providing virtual or other remote learning to students for the remainder of the 2020 spring semester. Campuses are closed to regular activities, and institutions are following the CDC's guidelines for mass gatherings and community events.
- Colleges and universities should be prepared to extend their educational calendars through **June 30th** to the extent feasible and necessary.
- Traditional on-campus commencement ceremonies will not be held in May, and each university must find an alternate schedule or method of delivery.
- Though not required at this time, colleges and universities are considering virtual or remote learning for early summer terms. After confirmation of a COVID-19 case on campus, UCF has already opted to move their courses online for summer terms beginning May 11th. UF has also announced that Summer A and C courses will be online.
- All students who can return home should. Several schools have chosen to shut down dormitories and on-campus housing.

Office of Early Learning

- Voluntary prekindergarten and public K-12 will be fully funded as though there was no disruption. School readiness and voluntary prekindergarten providers will be paid or reimbursed for additional absences and for temporary closures.
- If you have any questions and concerns, please call their office at **1-866-447-1159**.

Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services Offices

- Services will be provided solely through virtual and telephonic methods to the extent possible. FDOE will work with appropriate federal authorities to seek waivers for any federal requirements that may be impacted.

HEALTH

Current State Numbers

- For current COVID-19 numbers in Florida, please visit the [DOH COVID-19 Data and Surveillance Dashboard](#)
- More Information on a case-by-case basis can also be found [here](#), or by visiting the DOH COVID-19 website and clicking "see the report" at the bottom of the page. An updated report is released daily.
- **Currently, 47 counties in Florida have confirmed cases of COVID-19.** Almost half of those cases are concentrated in Broward and Miami-Dade Counties. See the report above for more info.

Testing

- If you think you have COVID-19, call your health care provider or County Health Department **before you go**. They will decide if you need to be tested and coordinate your testing. If you do not have a health care provider, [contact your local health department](#).
- FDOH has implemented testing at all three State Public Health Laboratories and has authorized testing at private laboratories around the state (i.e. Quest and LabCorp). Testing criteria was also expanded to allow physicians to order a test based on their clinical judgement. This is in line with CDC recommendations.
- **Governor DeSantis announced that the State ordered an additional 2,500 test kits to supplement the resources already available to test for COVID-19. These additional test kits will enable testing of up to an additional 625,000 individuals. FDOH continues to coordinate efforts to obtain lab testing supplies.**
- **Drive-Thru Testing** is available in the following areas: Broward County, Collier County, Duval County, Escambia County, Hillsborough County, Lee County, Leon County, Manatee County, Martin County, Marion County, Miami-Dade County, Monroe County, Orange County, Pasco County, Pinellas County, Polk County, Sumter County, and West Palm Beach. [Click](#)

[here for more information from FMA.](#) The Florida National Guard has been deployed to assist with drive-thru testing efforts throughout the State. At many locations, testing criteria must be met so please check before you go.

- **On March 24th the CDC updated their guidance on [Priorities For Testing Patients With Suspected COVID-19 Infection](#).**
- If a patient has previously tested positive for COVID-19, they must have **two** negative tests separated by 24 hours before they can be transferred to an acute or subacute setting. If the patient did not previously test positive but is exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 (i.e. fever, pneumonia), they must receive **one** negative test result before they can be transferred to an acute or subacute setting.
- On March 21st, the FDEM sent collection kits out to the following areas:
 - Baptist health in Jacksonville: 600
 - Orlando health: 600
 - City of Tampa test site at Raymond James Stadium (partnership with County and city): 900
 - Martin County Cleveland Clinic: 300
 - Duval County Health Department: 300
 - Miami-Dade County Health Department: 1,200
 - Volusia County Health Department: 300
 - Johns County Health Department: 600
 - Collier County Health Department: 600
 - Manatee County Health Department: 600
 - Okaloosa County Health Department: 300
 - Brevard County Health Department: 600
 - Citrus County Health Department: 300

Shortages

- **PPE:** The Governor expressed repeatedly in press conferences that one of our biggest supply issues is PPE. The state is working diligently to acquire more and has requested federal aid. Surgeon General Dr. Scott Rivkees and FDOH have instructed health care facilities to cancel all elective procedures to conserve crucial PPE. On March 20th the Governor also signed an executive order mandating this.
- **Hospital Beds:** Surgeon General Dr. Scott Rivkees and AHCA Secretary Mary Mayhew have expressed concerns of shortages of hospital beds and ICU hospital beds. Ambulatory Care Centers have been instructed to convert their facilities to provide more hospital beds. Hospitals should also prepare to convert other wings to provide more ICU beds.
- **AHCA expanded its event on the [Emergency Status System \(ESS\)](#) requesting hospitals to enter information on PPE and ventilator counts.** The ESS continues to track census information, emergency room status updates, isolation beds, and nursing home and assisted living facility bed capacity. Please report daily at 10 AM ET and 7 PM ET.
- If your center is running low on supplies, call your county [Emergency Management Office](#) (EM) so that a Mission Request can be added on your center's behalf. Fill out this [Emergency Requisition Request Form](#) to submit to your EM office to receive a mission number. Resource requests must be initiated through the county Emergency Support Function and the request must be based on a defined need that represents an urgent shortage. If you are unsure how to complete the request, FHA has prepared a [resource request process document](#) with further information.
- Once supplies become available, facilities will be contacted to pick them up. Be aware that it is possible that only a portion of your requested PPE will be available.

Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) Waiver

- On March 16th Florida became the first state to receive [CMS approval](#) of its 1135 Medicaid Waiver giving AHCA more flexibility for its COVID-19 response efforts. This federal action lifts Medicaid prior authorization requirements for critical health care services and allows for expedited provider enrollment.
- AHCA released a [statement](#) on March 16th confirming that Florida Medicaid covers and will cover all medically necessary services required to facilitate testing and treatment of COVID-19.
- Florida Medicaid is waiving prior authorization requirements for medically necessary hospital services, physician services, advanced practice registered nursing services, physician assistant services, home health services, and durable medical equipment and supplies. In addition to the services listed above, Florida Medicaid is waiving prior authorization requirements for all services (except pharmacy services) necessary to appropriately evaluate and treat Medicaid recipients diagnosed with COVID-19. Please refer to [official diagnosis coding guidelines](#) that have been published by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).
- Florida Medicaid will waive limits on services that need to be exceeded in order to maintain the health and safety of recipients diagnosed with COVID-19 or when it is necessary to maintain a recipient safely in their home. When service

limits have been exceeded for recipients receiving services through the fee-for-service delivery system, providers must submit paper claims through the Agency's [exceptional claims process](#).

- Florida Medicaid lifted all limits on early prescription refills for maintenance medications, except for controlled substances. Florida Medicaid will reimburse for a 90-day supply of maintenance prescriptions when available at the pharmacy.
- Florida Medicaid is waiving co-payment requirements for all services.
- CMS has issued a set of blanket waivers that states may utilize in response to COVID-19. The Agency has already received authority for many of these waivers related to health care facilities and licensure requirements. The Agency is actively working to receive the federal authority needed for many of the items listed. For a full list of the blanket waivers issued by CMS, [click here](#).

Telehealth

- The Federal and State governments have recommended use of Telehealth services during the COVID-19 crisis to alleviate the burden on health care facilities and to avoid unnecessary face-to-face contact.
- On March 19th, Florida Medical Association asked the state's insurance commissioner to require insurance companies to reimburse health care providers the same rates for providing telehealth services as in-person health care. The letter was also sent to Governor DeSantis and AHCA Secretary Mary Mayhew. [Read more here](#). This issue remains unresolved.
- Florida Medical Association has also published [Florida COVID-19 payment resources here](#).
- On March 17th CMS Waived Medicare Telehealth Reimbursement Restrictions Due to Coronavirus. [Read more here](#).

Nursing Homes

- On March 15th, at the direction of Governor Ron DeSantis, Florida Division of Emergency Management Director Jared Moskowitz issued an [Emergency Order](#) tightening the temporary restrictions for all individuals entering residential and long-term care facilities.
- For the next 30 days, all individuals will be prohibited from entering nursing homes and assisted living facilities. There are exceptions for end-of-life situations.
- Employees that have traveled through any airport or have been on a cruise ship in the last 14 days are not allowed entry.
- 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.

OTHER STATE AGENCY RESPONSES

- **Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles** suspended drivers' license renewal requirements for 30 days.
- **The Department of Revenue Child Support Program** is working to reduce when customers are required to visit a local child support office and is providing new connect/customer service options.
- On March 26th the **Department of Revenue** issued an [Emergency Order](#) extending the property tax deadline in all Florida Counties. The deadline is extended from March 31st to **April 15th**. A separate [Emergency Order](#) extended sales and use tax reporting deadlines for the February and March reporting periods.

State Facility Closures

- The Florida **Department of Environmental Protection** closed all **Florida State Parks** to the public effective March 23rd.
- On March 19th, the **Department of Management Services (DMS)** will temporarily close all DMS-managed facilities. The facilities are set to open April 19th. The agencies affected are:
 - the Department of Education,
 - the Department of Children and Families,
 - the Department of Corrections,
 - the Department of Transportation,
 - the Agency for Health Care Administration, and
 - the Department of Law Enforcement.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTIONS & LOCALIZED RESPONSES

County Closures

- **Alachua County** filed [Emergency Order 20-07](#) on March 23rd which bans the burning of yard waste, leaves, or other material that may be burned. They later filed [Emergency Order No. 20-09](#) ordering all residents to remain at home unless they need to leave for “essential” activities. They also closed all non-essential businesses. This order goes into effect at 12 AM on March 24th. [The City of Gainesville filed a similar order.](#)
- **Broward County** issued [Emergency Order 20-01](#) on March 22nd closing nonessential retail and commercial business locations until the expiration of the existing State of Local Emergency. Also, Coconut Creek and Hallandale beach have put curfews in place. [Click here](#) for more information. The Broward County Administrator later filed [Emergency Order 20-02](#) to clarify 20-01. The second Emergency Order closed Broward County Libraries to in-person public access, all parks operated by Broward County, and implemented new safety measures for the Broward County Transit system. The Emergency Order also amends portions of the original order. Per Executive Order 20-70, all beaches in Broward County remain closed and all public gathering spaces such as movie theaters and concert venues are also closed. [Emergency Order 20-03](#) went into effect at 12:01 AM on Friday, March 27th. This order asks Broward residents to remain home unless they must get food, go to work, or have an emergency.
- **Palm Beach County** closures were also put into effect by Executive Order 20-70. All beaches and public gathering spaces remain closed per the Governor’s orders.
- **Orange County** theme parks opted to close through March 31st. Orange County Mayor Jennings has put a curfew in place from 11 PM until 5 AM, effective March 20th. [On March 24th, Orange County issued a new order, ordering all non-essential retail and commercial businesses to close and all residents to stay and avoid non-essential travel. This will go into effect Thursday, March 26th at 11 PM. For more information, click here.](#)
- **Osceola County** filed an [executive order](#) on March 20th to impose a county-wide curfew from 11 PM to 5 AM. [On March 26th, Osceola County approved another order requiring all non-essential retail and commercial businesses to close and all residents to remain home and avoid non-essential travel. The order will take effect at 11PM on Thursday, March 26th. It is to remain in effect until April 9 at 11 PM.](#)
- **Miami-Dade County** released [Emergency Order 10-20](#) on March 24th and orders that no group of 10 or more shall gather in public and urges individuals to remain home other than to travel to and from essential businesses as outlined Emergency Order 07-20 (like grocery and pharmacy). [Emergency order 09-20](#) orders that all hotels, motels and short-term vacation rentals shall not accept new reservations for persons other than “essential lodgers.” [Emergency order 08-20](#) prohibits rafting. [Emergency Order 06-20](#) was issued March 19th and closes all beaches, parks and recreation facilities. [Emergency Order 07-20](#) was released on March 19th and closes all non-essential retail and commercial establishments. To view all Miami-Dade County Emergency Orders and amendments, [click here](#). A curfew remains in effect for Key Biscayne, Miami Beach, North Miami Beach, Sunny Isles Beach, and Miami-Dade County Juveniles (anyone under the age of 17). The City of Miami Beach also issued a [“Safer at Home” Emergency Order](#) on March 23rd ordering all persons living in the City of Miami Beach to remain in their homes. The City of Miami issued their own [shelter in place order](#) effective on March 24th at 11:59 PM. [Golden Beach, Surfside, Bal Harbour Village, Aventura, and Doral are other Miami-Dade cities that have passed their own stay at home orders. Read more here.](#)
- **Duval County’s** [Emergency Order 2020-3](#) was issued by Jacksonville Mayor Lenny Curry on March 23rd and the order went into effect at 8 AM on March 24th. Anyone who can work from home is now mandated to do so. [Emergency Order 2020-2](#) was issued on March 20th and closes all public beaches in the City of Jacksonville. [Emergency Order 2020-1](#) limits crowd capacity to 50 people and suspends alcohol sales between midnight and 8 AM.
- **Hillsborough County’s** Emergency Policy Group extended the state of local emergency in response to COVID-19. The County administrator ordered the suspension of alcoholic beverages on premises that derive more than 50% of its gross revenue from the sale of alcoholic beverages for thirty days. The administrator is also limiting gatherings at public beaches and occupancy at restaurants. Moreover, this Administrator Order requires restaurants, private clubs, or any other establishments that serves food or drink shall operate between 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. daily. [Read more here.](#) [Going](#)

into effect at 10 PM on Friday, March 27th, is a ["Safer at Home" Emergency Order](#) approved by the Hillsborough County Emergency Policy Group. This order requires residents and businesses to follow CDC guidelines.

- **Leon County** and the City of Tallahassee have issued a shelter-in-place order that bans gatherings of 10 people or more and requires residents to remain at home, except for when performing essential activities like going to work, going to the gas station, dropping your kids at daycare or going to the grocery store. You may still responsibly engage in outdoor recreation, observing all social distancing guidelines by the CDC. A county curfew will begin at 11 PM on March 25th and will continue from 11 PM to 5 AM daily. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).
- **Lee County** has drafted a stay at home order but will not be voting on it until at least Monday.
- **Collier County** is working with Lee County to develop a stay at home order for the whole region. They will be discussing this matter on March 27th.
- **Pinellas County**, on Wednesday, March 25th, issued a safer at home directive that urges residents to stay home unless they must perform essential activities such as trips for groceries, medical needs and essential jobs. The order will go into effect at 11:27 AM on Thursday, March 26th. It will last at least seven days and allows residents to exercise outside as long as they continue to practice social distance and avoid gatherings of 10 or more. The directive also allows for non-essential businesses to remain open as long as they are following CDC guidance. Violating this order is a second-degree misdemeanor and may result in 60 days in jail and a \$500 fine. [Read more here.](#)
- **Gadsden County** issued a stay-at-home order and curfew on March 27th. Residents are being asked to remain home except for when performing essential tasks. Curfew will run from 9 PM until 6 AM. [Read more here.](#)
- **Charlotte County** closed all county facilities to the public starting 5 PM on March 24th. This includes county government building, playgrounds, dog parks, sport courts, and park amenities. They also closed county pools, libraries, recreation centers, and beaches. Boat ramps and parks remain open. [Read more here.](#)
- **Polk County** closed parks and natural resource facilities. All county facilities are closed to public walk-ins.
- **Manatee County** closed county-owned boat ramps, and parks. County libraries are also closed for walk-ins. On March 18th, government public buildings closed to the public for walk-in services for 15 days.
- **Parks and Libraries:** Several counties have closed parks and libraries. These include Pasco, Sarasota and Hernando County.
- **Beaches:** Most local governments have opted to close or limit public beach access. These include Broward, Palm Beach, Miami-Dade, Bay, Okaloosa, Walton, Florida Keys (closed to visitors), Pinellas, Duval, Lee, Sarasota, Gulf, Santa Rosa, Manatee, and Collier. [Read more here.](#)
- **Executive Order 20-70** allows municipalities to impose stricter standards if desired. It also gives the Broward County Administrator and the Palm Beach County Administrator the ability to enforce, relax, modify or remove the closures.

Local Government Meetings

- **Executive Order 20-69** suspends any Florida Statute that requires a quorum to be present in person or requires a local government to meet at a specific public place. The order above also authorizes local governments to use communication media technology, such as telephonic and video conferencing, as provided in section 120.54(5)(b)2., Florida Statutes.
- This Executive Order does not waive any other requirement under the Florida Constitution and "Florida's Government in the Sunshine Laws," including Chapter 286, Florida Statutes.
- This Executive Order shall conclude at the expiration of Executive Order 20-52, including any extension.

Zoning, Permitting and Planning Procedures

- **Palm Beach County**
 - **Zoning:** A [News Release with revised zoning procedures](#) came out on March 20th. Development Review Officer (DRO) and Community Development (CD) – Submittals and Resubmittals will be accepted via ShareFile File Transfer Protocol Site (FTP). Refer to [Zoning Division FTP Site Instructions](#) or contact Lindsey Walter, (561)233-5229 or Nancy Frontany, (561)233-5575 if you have any questions. Fees can be paid through the [online payment portal](#).
 - **Planning:** On March 20th PBC put out a [News Release addressing new Planning Division procedures](#). The next Future Land Use Atlas (FLUA) amendment application intake date scheduled for May 6th will be extended by two weeks to **May 20th**. If there are office closures, the staff will re-evaluate and may extend further. Any changes will be reflected on the [Planning Division website](#). Call Planning Division – General Inquiries with any questions, (561)233-5300.

➤ **City of West Palm Beach**

- **Permits:** Beginning March 25th the Building Division will not be processing or issuing permits at the front counter. Visit [WPB Permits page](#) for more information. The following alternative options have been offered:
 1. **Pick up only:** pay fees online [here](#). Enter permit number only and click search. Follow the prompts for payment. Visa or Mastercard only. Once paid in full, email permits@wpb.org and request the approved permit get issued via email. Include your permit number in the subject of the email.
 2. **Apply online.** For options and instructions, [click here](#). Use the [Quick Start Guide](#) to submit permits and plans digitally.
 3. **Email** the Building Division at permits@wpb.org if you have questions or need help. A building division team member will respond with options for your specific request.
 4. **Call** them at **(561)805-6700**
 5. **City Hall Drop Off Mailbox** is available for those who submit their permits in person.

Public Transportation, Utilities, Housing Payments, and Communication Companies

- **Sarasota, Manatee, Hernando, Pasco and St. Lucie have all waived bus fares for their residents.**
- Several utility companies are coming together to provide financial relief:
 - NextEra Energy has told customers they will not be disconnecting services due to overdue bills.
 - FPL has also suspended disconnections, at least through the end of March.
 - The City of Tallahassee announced on March 12th that over the next 60 days, residents and businesses would not be disconnected from utility services for non-payment. **The city also announced the Utility Relief Program, which gives customers facing financial hardship the option to defer payment of their utility bill until this fall. This covers utility bills issued between March 12, 2020 and May 12, 2020.**
 - In Melbourne and Cocoa, water will not be disconnected if residents are unable to pay their bills until further notice.
 - **Polk County Utilities will not interrupt service nor charge late fees for the next 60 days.**
 - [Click here](#) to see which utility companies have suspended disconnections amid the Coronavirus pandemic.
- Homeowners who are facing a temporary hardship have options to postpone mortgage payments, according to the Federal Housing Finance Agency. [Read more here.](#)
 - The President ordered the Department of Housing and Urban Development to halt foreclosure proceedings involving FHA-backed loans through April.
 - Chief Judge Lisa Davidson in Brevard County issued an administrative order suspending foreclosure sales, hearings, and eviction notices through April 15th.
- Several internet and telecommunication providers are also providing relief:
 - AT&T will suspend termination of wireless, home phone & broadband services; waive late fees; and provide free access to its public Wi-Fi hot spots. They will provide certain customers with unlimited data.
 - Verizon is waiving late fees and suspending service termination for customers impacted by the Coronavirus.
 - T-Mobile is providing current customers with unlimited data for next 60 days.
 - Charter Communications will offer free access to Spectrum broadband and Wi-Fi for 60 days to households with college and K-12 students. This will have a significant impact in Brevard County.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Florida Division of Emergency Management \(FDEM\) COVID-19 Website](#)
- **COVID-19 Data – Case-By-Case Daily Report 3/27/2020** (To access the new reports, go to the FDEM COVID-19 website linked above and click “COVID-19 Data – Daily Report” listed under the “COVID-19 Information and Resources” header)

- To contact the **FDOH COVID-19 Call Center**, please call **1-866-779-6121** or email COVID-19@flhealth.gov
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) COVID-19 Website](#)
- [Florida Department of Education \(DOE\) COVID-19 Website](#)
- [Agency For Health Care Administration \(AHCA\) – COVID-19 Alerts](#)
- [Drive-Thru Testing Information – Florida Medical Association \(FMA\) Website](#)
- **ExcelinEd** provides an [online map and database](#) that includes a state-by-state update on actions taken by each education system in response to COVID-19
- [State University System of Florida – News & Updates](#)
- [Miami-Dade County COVID-19 Website](#)
- [City of Jacksonville COVID-19 Website](#)
- [Palm Beach County COVID-19 Website](#)
- Workplace Guidance from the CDC [can be found here](#) and [from OSHA here](#)
- [Cyber Readiness Institute \(CRI\) Guide for Remote Work Safety](#)