

# **Chicago Stay at Home FAQ**

*As of March 20, 2020*

## **THE BASICS**

### **What should I do?**

To ensure the protection all residents during the unprecedented pandemic, the State of Illinois issued statewide order for Illinois residents to stay at home. The order requires all residents to stay home, unless traveling for essential needs, and requires businesses not engaged in essential activities to cease all activities except for minimum basic operations.

The order will remain in place until the Disaster Proclamation issued by the Governor expires, which is on April 7th. If the Governor reissues the Disaster Proclamation, the order may go back into effect. The order is effective as of Saturday, March 21, 2020 at 5pm CST.

We know that there will be a lot of questions and concerns; this is a significant action taken to protect public health. Please be mindful of your neighbors and act with decency in your communities. Together, we will get through this, and our community's health will be protected.

**To view the Governor's Executive Order, click [here](#).**

### **Why are we taking this action?**

This is a critical intervention to reduce the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019/COVID-19. This action is part of the City's and State's exhaustive response to the COVID-19, which is intended to keep the public safe, contain the spread of the virus, and provide relief to the healthcare system.

While this news may feel alarming, it is a necessary action to prevent a worsening situation. The patterns of the virus around the world, and in our own state and city, tell us that moving right now to maximize social distancing and restrict people gathering is the best way to fight the virus and save lives.

### **How long will we stay home?**

The order will remain in place until the Disaster Proclamation issued by the Governor expires, which is on April 7th. If the Governor reissues the Disaster Proclamation, the order may go back into effect. The order is effective as of Saturday, March 21, 2020 at 5pm.

The City of Chicago and the State of Illinois will be closely monitoring the situation every day in order to determine what adjustments make sense.

### **Where does the Stay at Home order apply?**

The Governor's executive order includes the entire state. Unless you work for an essential business or are doing an essential activity, you should stay home.

**Is this mandatory or just guidance?**

This order is mandatory. To help prevent the further spread of COVID-19 in Illinois and protect our friends, neighbors, and vulnerable populations, please stay home.

**If I leave my home for essential business or essential needs, do I need to bring any documentation or ID? How will the police or others know I'm allowed to travel?**

Adhering to the order will save lives – and it is the responsibility of every Chicagoan to do their part to help. The City is counting on residents to exercise good judgment and common sense when deciding to leave their residence. Law enforcement will not stop residents who are on their way to and from work or who are out for necessities like going to the pharmacy or getting groceries, but this order remains a legal requirement of all Chicagoans. Chicagoans should abstain from all non-essential activities. Adhering to the order will save lives and it is the responsibility of every Chicagoan to do their part.

**What if my home is not a safe environment?**

The order does not require you to remain at home if you live in an unsafe environment. If it is not safe for you to remain home, please reach out so we can help.

The City's Domestic Violence Help Line is a 24-hour, toll-free confidential number that functions as a clearinghouse for domestic violence services and information. You are encouraged to contact the Help Line at:

- Phone: 1.877.863.6338
- TTY: 1.877.863.6339

You may also contact local law enforcement.

Additionally, the order encourages resident to shelter in a location other than your primary residence—including a hotel or shelter—if your primary residence is unsafe.

**What is the difference between the Stay at Home order and social distancing?**

Social distancing is an important first step in preventing the spread of a disease like COVID-19 that allows people to go about their daily activities while taking extra health and safety precautions. Social distancing requirements in the order call for residents to maintain at least six-foot social distancing from other individuals, washing hands with soap and water for at least twenty seconds as frequently as possible or using hand sanitizer, covering coughs or sneezes (into the sleeve or elbow, not hands) regularly cleaning high-touch surfaces, and not shaking hands.

The Stay at Home order requires people to remain in their homes unless they have an essential job or are doing an essential task like going to the grocery store or walking a pet.

**WHAT CAN I DO? WHAT CAN'T I DO?**

All essential services will remain open, including:

- Emergency City services and other essential government services (see below)
- Gas stations
- Pharmacies
- Grocery stores, food banks, convenience stores, take-out and delivery restaurants
- Hardware stores/plumbers
- Banks
- Community benefit organizations on a case-by-case basis
- Laundromats/laundry services
- Transportation, including CTA and private transportation
- Essential infrastructure, such as utilities and public transportation

What's closed?

- Dine-in restaurants
- Bars and nightclubs
- Entertainment venues
- Gyms and fitness studios

**Is the City going to keep parks, libraries, and senior centers open?**

All Parks will close in the City of Chicago effective March 20 at 5p.m. All Chicago Library branches will close in the City of Chicago effective March 21 at 12 noon. All DFSS administered Senior Centers at non-Park District locations will remain open for one more week to provide pick-up meals, closing by March 27.

**Can I order food/groceries?**

Yes, grocery delivery will be available as well as meal-delivery, drive through, and take-out options.

**What City of Chicago services will still be operating during the stay at home order?**

The City of Chicago's essential emergency and support services will continue to be fully staffed and operational during this crisis, including: the Chicago Police Department, Chicago Fire Department, 911, 311 call center, Public Health, Sanitation, Water, CTA, airports, and other emergency responders and essential support staff.

CPS will continue to provide packages of food to families in need. CPS will offer free packages of food that contain three days-worth of meals for every child in a household. Dedicated CPS staff are supporting this effort in our schools, food can be picked up between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. every weekday during the stay at home order at the CPS location nearest to each student.

**Do employees of the City of Chicago have to come to work?**

Earlier this week, Mayor Lightfoot announced new temporary workforce policies that will protect City workers and workplaces while maintaining the continuity of essential city services.

These new temporary policies permit all eligible employees, as authorized by their departments, to telework from home.

**What City of Chicago services will not be operating during the stay at home order?**

The City's Senior Centers, Public Libraries, Community Centers, Park District locations including facilities and parks, and other city services and locations may be closed during this time. All Parks will close in the City of Chicago effective March 20 at 5p.m. All Chicago Library branches will close in the City of Chicago effective March 21 at 12 noon. All DFSS administered Senior Centers at non-Park District locations will remain open for one more week to provide pick-up meals, closing by March 27.

The City of Chicago's essential emergency and support services will continue to be fully staffed and operational during this crisis, including: the Chicago Police Department, Chicago Fire Department, 911, 311 call center, Public Health, Sanitation, Water, CTA, airports, and other emergency responders and essential support staff.

CPS will continue to provide packages of food to students in need.

**Will roads in Illinois be closed?**

No, the roads will not be closed in Illinois, but you should only travel if it is essential to your work or health.

**Will CTA continue to operate? Will private transportation providers continue to operate?**

Yes, public transportation is vitally important for our health care workers and first responders. These workers depend on public transportation to get to work, so it will continue to operate.

Other private transportation providers such as ridesharing, taxis, and Divvy will continue to operate. These should be used for essential travel only. When possible, walk or drive yourself.

**Can I take a flight out of state?**

Planes and any other form of travel should only be used for essential purposes.

**Can I visit friends and family?**

For your safety, as well as the safety of those in your community, you should remain at home to help fight the spread of COVID-19.

**What about my pet?**

You are allowed to walk your dog and seek medical care for your pet should they require it. Be sure to practice social distancing while out on walks, maintaining at least 6 feet from other neighbors and their pets.

**Does the Stay at Home order mean I can't take my kids to the park?**

Parks will be closed during the Stay at Home order. Families will still be able to go outside and

take a walk but should continue to practice social distancing by remaining 6 feet away from other people.

### **Can I leave home to go to religious services?**

Large gatherings, such as church services, should be cancelled to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

### **Can I leave home to exercise?**

Yes. Outdoor exercise like running or taking a walk is perfectly acceptable; however, exercise gyms, fitness centers and associated facilities will be closed to reduce the spread of coronavirus. While exercising outside, you should still practice social distancing by running or walking at least six feet away from other people.

### **Can I pick up meals being provided by my child's school?**

Yes. CPS will continue to provide packages of food to families in need. CPS will offer free packages of food that contain three days-worth of meals for every child in a household. Dedicated CPS staff are supporting this effort in our schools. Food can be picked up between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. every weekday during the stay at home order at the CPS location nearest to each student. Any changes made to the food distribution plan will be posted on the CPS website: <https://cps.edu/oshw/Pages/HealthyCPS.aspx>

However, if you are experiencing symptoms or are currently in isolation, you should stay at home and follow the guidelines provided by your physician.

### **Can I go out to do laundry?**

Yes. Laundromats, dry cleaners and laundry service providers are considered essential businesses that will remain open. However, if you are experiencing symptoms or are currently in isolation, you should stay at home and follow the guidelines provide by your physician.

## **I'M STILL WORKING, WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR ME?**

### **What businesses are allowed to operate?**

The following is a list of the types of businesses that are able to stay open:

- Hospitals and pharmacies
- Grocery stores, food banks, pet supply stores, convenience stores
- Take-out and delivery restaurants
- Hardware stores and plumbers
- Banks
- Mailing and shipping stores
- Laundromats and laundry services
- Home-based care for seniors, adults or children.
- Community-based organizations that provide food, shelter or social services.

### **What if I still have to go to work?**

Unless your work is an essential function (i.e. healthcare provider, grocery store clerk, first responder), you should stay home. If you have been designated essential by your employer, you should continue to go to work and practice social distancing. Employees should communicate directly with their employers.

**I work in an essential service. How will the police know I'm allowed to be outside my house?**

Law enforcement officials will not stop residents who are on their way to or from work or who are out for necessities like going to the pharmacy or getting groceries. Illinoisans should abstain from all nonessential activities. Adhering to the order will save lives and it is the responsibility of every Illinoisan to do their part.

**My business is not able to stay open; what relief is the City of Chicago providing to small businesses during this time?**

The City of Chicago is committed to easing the pressure that many businesses are facing due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Mayor Lightfoot announced a new \$100 million economic relief package to help small businesses that are experiencing a temporary loss of revenue as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

To further provide relief for businesses over the coming weeks, the City is also extending due dates for tax payments until April 30, 2020 for the following City taxes:

- Bottled Water tax
- Checkout Bag tax
- Amusement tax
- Hotel Accommodation tax
- Restaurant tax
- Parking tax

**ENFORCEMENT**

**How will the City enforce the stay at home order? Is this mandatory?**

This order is mandatory to help prevent the further spread of COVID-19 in Illinois and the City of Chicago and to protect our friends, neighbors, and vulnerable populations. All residents should stay home except for essential travel.

Staying homes is critical to reducing the spread of COVID-19 in our City of Chicago. The Illinois State Police is working with the Chicago Police Department to enforce this order.

Adhering to the order will save lives and it is the responsibility of every Chicagoan to do their part.

**Can I be punished for violating the stay at home order? What are the punishments?**

The State of Illinois issued this order under the powers it holds to respond to a public emergency, and it is a legal requirement that individuals stay at home and non-essential businesses reduce their operations. The City of Chicago and the Chicago Police Department will

assist in enforcing this order, but we are counting on the good judgment of residents in deciding when to go out – the intention of this order is not penalize individuals but to keep everyone safe during the pandemic.

**Will the Illinois National Guard be enforcing this order?**

No. The Illinois National Guard will be supporting logistics, transportation, and medical response efforts. The Guard will not be enforcing this order.

**FOOD SECURITY**

**What is the City doing to secure its food supply?**

Chicagoans can be confident that our food supply is robust and that our distribution system will continue to operate and remain responsive to the needs of the City. Rest assured, we have plenty of food that will continue to reach grocery stores on a regular basis. We encourage residents to practice normal grocery buying habits.

Related to sourcing of food for the traditional emergency food network (community pantries and food access programs), the Greater Chicago Food Depository is actively receiving food, through its donation and vendor channels to supply its network of food pantries and other nonprofit distributions. The Food Depository is capable of meeting the current need of individuals who are food insecure. We continue to monitor utilization of emergency food services by the community and all food access channels are being monitored for possible disruption of access.

**What are we doing for residents who aren't receiving a steady paycheck anymore and might not be able to afford the grocery store?**

The Greater Chicago Food Depository's network of community partners and programs remains open, with some exceptions. Anyone who is struggling to afford food can find a food pantry or mobile distribution near them by visiting <https://www.chicagosfoodbank.org/find-food/> We recommend calling before you go to confirm hours of operation.

The Food Depository's benefits outreach team is also available to help people apply for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. Their Benefits Hotline is available Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.: 773-843-5416 or you can apply directly with the Illinois Department of Human Services at [abe.illinois.gov](http://abe.illinois.gov).

**What options are out there for residents who cannot physically go to the grocery store for whatever reason?**

If residents have physical challenges accessing food, especially those who cannot leave their home due to age, disability or quarantine, they should call 311.

**Is the City concerned that those on food stamps are going to be put at further risk based on food shortages/lack of food programming?**

Federal legislation signed into law this week includes provisions to ensure that families

receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) have adequate resources to purchase food. Under this legislation, Illinois may seek approval to provide increased benefits to SNAP households with school aged children who are not receiving school meals because schools are closed. Illinois may also seek approval to provide temporary, emergency benefits up to the maximum monthly allotment so recipients can stock up at the grocery store before any quarantine.

## **CHILDCARE SERVICES**

### **What alternatives is the City providing for those who lose access to childcare?**

Day care centers are still permitted to operate under this order. As a result, many childcare centers will continue to operate and provide services for the families who need it.

The Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) is working closely with Chicago Early Learning partners to provide childcare options for essential workers and first responders.

## **SENIOR SERVICES**

### **What meal services will be available for seniors?**

All DFSS administered Senior Centers at non-Park District locations will remain open for one more week to provide pick-up meals, closing by March 27.

Vulnerable, homebound seniors aged 60+ will receive home-delivered meals instead of box lunches. Meals will be home-delivered instead of provided on site and information and guidance about public benefits and assistance now will be provided over the phone at 312-744-4016. Seniors who find themselves in need of such supports can call that number any time between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Home delivered meals will continue to be provided to the seniors over 60 that DFSS serves.

### **How are nursing homes and long-term care facilities impacted?**

The State monitors nursing homes through the Illinois Department of Aging. The Department's Senior HelpLine is toll-free at 1-800-252-8966, 1-888-206-1327 (TTY), or can be reached via email, [aging.ilsenior@illinois.gov](mailto:aging.ilsenior@illinois.gov). More guidance and information on long-term care facilities from the State of Illinois can be found here: <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/diseases-a-z-list/coronavirus/long-term-care-guidance>.

## **HOMELESS SERVICES**

### **Will shelters be closed?**

The Department of Family and Support Services (DFSS) has no plans to close shelters. DFSS will work with the City's Office of Emergency Management Office is working with partners to identify alternative locations to provide emergency shelter to homeless individuals. Shelters have already begun to embrace distancing in accordance with public health guidelines during the COVID-19 crisis.



**If someone experiencing homelessness is showing symptoms and needs to be isolated, where do they go?**

The protocol for homeless individuals in shelters is the same. The individual or shelter employee should call a hospital or doctor, advise them of symptoms and wait for direction. For an encampment/unsheltered person, call 911 and asked to be connected. Or tell an outreach worker about their symptoms.

DFSS has been working directly with partners to advise them on how to institute this practice.

**MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

**Will the city's mental health services continue? What services will be provided at the City's mental health centers?**

The vast majority of the City's mental health services are delivered by telephone, with the exception of services for patients who need injectable medication or for patients who have unique vulnerabilities or clinical needs that require an in-person visit. If there is a walk-in client at any of the city's Mental Health centers, a clinician will perform assessments for suicidality or potential hospitalization, and then set up phone sessions thereafter.

At present, all five CDPH Mental Health Centers remain open with adequate on-site staffing. If staffing needs were to change, it is possible that sites would need to consolidate down to a smaller number for on-site services while continuing to offer telephonic services. The following mental health centers run by CDPH all currently offer telephonic therapy, telephonic psychiatry, in-person services for injections and case-by-case special needs from 8:30am – 4:30pm Monday – Friday:

**Englewood Mental Health Center**

641 W. 63rd Street  
Phone: 312.747.7496

**Greater Grand Mental Health Center**

4150 West 55th Street  
Phone: 312.747.1020

**Greater Lawn Mental Health Center**

4314 S Cottage Grove  
Phone: 312.747.0036

**Lawndale Mental Health Center**

1201 S Campbell Street  
Phone: 312.746.5905

**North River Mental Health Center**

5801 North Pulaski Road  
Phone: 312.744.1906

### **DISABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES**

#### **Is the Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities?**

The Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD) will continue with essential services, by phone remotely. With the exception of school-based substance abuse programs, non-exterior work through the HomeMod programs, and trainings, MOPD is continuing all other basic services virtually. Residents with disabilities in need of services may contact Phone: 312.744.7050 (TTY: 312.744.4964).

### **EDUCATION SERVICES**

#### **What programming are we providing for CPS students out of school?**

Grade-level activity packets are available to PreK-12th grade students that include non-digital and digital activities for students. Parents can download the grade-level packets at [cps.edu/enrichmentresources](https://cps.edu/enrichmentresources). Copies of the packets are available at food distribution sites.

In the coming days, Chicago Public Schools will be providing additional guidance and resources to educators and families.