



COVID-19 and SENIORS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

NOTE: The Frequently Asked Questions below were written to help answer questions we have heard because of the COVID-19 emergency. It is important to have reliable information when dealing with a public health emergency. However, the situation is changing very rapidly and the information below may not be up-to-date. Under normal circumstances, many of the answers may be different. The information that follows is based on Illinois and US laws, regulations, and emergency orders. This information is intended only to be an overview of your rights. Since every case is different, you should not rely on this information as a substitute for an attorney.

Are senior centers open?

Generally, yes but with limited capacity and hours of operation. Some locations may require a mask and/or a health screening prior to entering. Some centers may offer virtual services instead of in-person services. You should call your local senior center about protocol, hours, and services.

Can my loved one still get services at an Adult Day Center?

As of June 17, 2020, the Illinois Department of Public Health continues to recommend the closure of Adult Day Programs. Check with your local Adult Day Center to see if they are open otherwise.

Can I still get help with tax preparation and benefit assistance?

Possibly, but appointments will likely be done over the telephone. Call your local senior center to verify whether you should come in for your appointment, or if you should call in only.

TAX DAY was July 15, 2020 (not April 15th). All federal and state filing and payments were due July 15, 2020. No additional penalties or interest accrues if you pay on or before July 15, 2020. If you are getting a refund, file as soon as possible.

Can I visit loved ones in the nursing home?

Yes, but under certain conditions. Long-term care facilities may allow outdoor visits, but the visits are limited to two visitors at a time per resident, and visitors must schedule an appointment to visit a resident. Visitors *and* the resident must be wearing a face covering for the entire visit.

Are nursing home residents having issues with their facility?

The Illinois Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program is still open and available to advocate for the rights and protections of those living in long-term facilities. The Long-Term Care Ombudsman can be reached through the Senior Help Line at 1-800-252-8966.

Will I continue to receive my Social Security benefit?

Yes. You will continue to receive your monthly benefit amount.

Are Social Security Administration offices open?

No. Social Security Offices are closed and are not taking walk-in appointments. However, you can call the SSA National 800 Number with your questions, or you can go online for assistance at www.ssa.gov.

Can I still visit my local Department of Human Services a.k.a public aid office?

No, DHS has closed all of their offices.

If you need to talk to DHS, you can call IDHS Help is Here toll-free line at 1-833-2-FIND-HELP or 1-800-843-6154. Or you can try to access your case though the online portal at <https://abe.illinois.gov/>.

What is the Economic Impact Payment?

The federal CARES Act includes economic impact rebate payments to millions of people. The maximum amount is \$1,200 per qualifying adult and \$500 per child under 17 years old. The amount of the Impact Payment is based on your 2018 or 2019 income tax return. If you did not file an income tax return for 2018 or 2019, you can still do so.

However, people who receive Social Security retirement or disability benefits will receive a payment even if they have not filed a tax return. At this time, it is not clear whether people who receive SSI only or VA-only benefits will receive an Impact Payment unless they filed an income tax return.

If someone else claimed you as a dependent on their taxes, you aren't eligible to receive the Impact Payment.

The Impact Payment cannot be intercepted for student loans, unemployment overpayments, or other non-federal debts. The Impact Payment can be intercepted for child support.

The Impact Payment will be directly deposited into the bank account you put on your income tax return. If the IRS does not have your bank account information, the IRS is supposed to set up a web-portal that you can use to give them your banking information. Otherwise, the IRS will mail you a paper check. Direct deposits are expected to occur in April. Paper checks are expected to be mailed in May.

Be alert for Coronavirus Scams!

The IRS, Social Security, and other government agencies will never call you, text you, or email you and ask for personal information like your Social Security number or your banking information.

Even if your caller ID looks like the IRS or Social Security, it is probably a scammer. The IRS or Social Security will never call you and ask you to verify your Social Security number or threaten to arrest you or threaten to take your benefits. They will also never ask you to send cash or ask for your banking information.

Learn more about Coronavirus Scams at <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/>

Are there other legal resources available besides Land of Lincoln?

The Public Interest Law Initiative PILI has set up the COVID-19 Illinois Free Legal Answers Task Force. [Illinois Free Legal Answers](https://il.freelegalanswers.org) is a secure website (il.freelegalanswers.org) where low-income Illinoisans can ask a lawyer a question about a civil legal issue.

You can also call or email the Illinois Lawyer Finder Service. The telephone number is 800-922-8757 and the website is www.isba.org/public/illinoislawyerfinder.

Illinois Legal Aid Online also has a lot of legal information at www.illinoislegalaid.org.

**Land of Lincoln Legal Aid
Legal Advice & Referral Center
Phone: (618) 394-7300
1 (877) 342-7891**

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