



## COLORADO'S RESPONSE TO THE CORONAVIRUS

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### Governor Polis' Actions

The first two cases of COVID-19 in Colorado were detected in early March. Since then, there have been dramatic increases in the number of cases in Colorado and throughout the U.S. As of March 26, Colorado had a total of 1,430 confirmed or suspected cases. There have been a number of measures that the state agencies and the governor have taken in recent weeks to mitigate the wide range of health, economic, and social impacts stemming from the COVID-19 crisis.

On March 10, the Governor declared a state of emergency to expand testing and provide assistance to those most vulnerable to the virus. This was followed by the closure of ski areas on March 14 and the closure of bars, restaurants, movie theaters, casinos, and gyms on March 16. Two days later, schools in Colorado were closed and Centers for Disease Control guidelines were adopted prohibiting gatherings of 10 or more people – the latter included sports events, parades, concerts and church gatherings. On March 19, Governor Polis ordered the suspension of “non-essential” surgeries and medical procedures in order to free up equipment and personal protection items for staff. On March 25, he issued a statewide stay-at-home order to deal with the spread of the coronavirus. Unless extended or otherwise modified, the order is valid until April 11.

In his statement on the stay-at-home order, the Governor said, “Reducing contact with others will help to slow the spread of the virus and will help to ensure that our health care system will have enough doctors, nurses, beds, ventilators and other crucial equipment to care for every patient that needs crucial medical attention. If too many people get severely sick at once, our health care system won’t be able to handle it, and without proper treatment, many more of our family members, friends and neighbors will succumb to this deadly virus. This is why we need to take these drastic actions.”

In calls with the Trump Administration or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Polis has made efforts to ensure that Colorado receives more protective equipment for health care workers and more coronavirus tests. The limited availability of tests prevents us from understanding how widespread the virus is and impairs our ability to combat it. Polis was the first governor in the U.S. to establish a mobile testing site, with the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment opening a drive-through testing lab in the Lowry neighborhood of Denver on March 11.

A Colorado COVID-19 Relief Fund has been established to accept donations with the funds to be used for medical supplies, cleaning supplies, food services, child care for emergency workers, behavioral health support, and much more. Donations can be made here: [www.HelpColoradoNow.org](http://www.HelpColoradoNow.org).

The Colorado COVID Relief Fund also seeks to raise and coordinate allocation of funds to address the needs of community-based organizations in Colorado. This Fund is organized to ensure that the most acute community needs across the state are being addressed and that community voice is reflected in all funding decisions made over time. Through this Fund, eligible community-based organizations across Colorado may receive a general operating grant of up to \$25,000. Grant application information can be accessed here: <https://covrn.com/covid-relief-fund/>

Governor Polis has also recreated the Colorado Emergency Child Care Collaborative to provide emergency child care to essential workers during the COVID-19 crisis. Information on and services can be accessed [here](#).

### **Colorado State Agency Actions**

The **Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment** and the **Colorado State Emergency Operations Center** have created an extensive resource library with information on the following topics:

- Colorado coronavirus case data, general information about COVID-19, and information on testing
- Telehealth and nurse lines
- Prevention and community spread
- Isolation and quarantine
- Recommendations for schools, workplaces, and the community
- Guidance on closures and cancellations
- Links to and explanations of public health orders and executive orders
- Resources for local public health agencies and health care providers

This information can be accessed through the [CDPHE website](#).

Similarly, the **Colorado Department of Labor & Employment** has also compiled various resources for both employers and employees impacted by the coronavirus. The CDLE website has information on unemployment benefits, paid sick leave, wage claims, and employment resources. Employers experiencing workforce reductions can access supports relating to alternatives to employee layoffs, employee transition workshops, job placement assistance, and guidance on unemployment benefits.

These resources can be accessed through the [CDLE website](#).

The **Colorado Department of Human Services** provides a variety supports to Coloradoans which are even more critical during the COVID-19 crisis. The [CDE website](#) has information on benefits including TANF, child care assistance, energy assistance, food assistance, and disability assistance. There are also resources on [behavioral health](#), resources for those experiencing [domestic violence](#), services for [older adults](#), and supports for [refugees](#).

Critical services including housing, food assistance and help with utilities can be accessed [here](#) or by calling 2-1-1 on your phone.

Finally, the coronavirus pandemic has had an immediate impact on many Colorado businesses and the full scope of the economic downturn is unknown. The **Colorado Office of Economic Development & International Trade** website has a Colorado [COVID-19 Business Resources Center](#) with information on programs and resources to support Colorado business. This includes information on how small businesses can access loans of up to \$2 million as part of the Small Business Administration's Economic Injury Disaster Loan program. Funding was appropriated through the U.S. Congressional Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act. Small businesses, private non-profit organizations, small agricultural cooperatives, and small agricultural enterprises impacted by COVID-19 can seek federal loans to pay for key needs such as fixed debts, payroll, and accounts payable.