



Addressing COVID-19 in the District



The *COVID-19 Response Emergency Amendment Act of 2020 (Bill 22-718)* is our immediate response to the public health emergency that has been declared in the District of Columbia. The bill is a consensus document that contains suggestions from many Councilmembers as well as the Mayor. That is why it is co-introduced by all Councilmembers. Almost every suggestion has been included in the bill. Its fiscal impact has been worked out with the Chief Financial Officer. The bill includes 26 substantive sections addressing a broad array of challenges related to the public health emergency. Overall, the bill provides a small measure of financial relief to businesses and individuals, prohibits utility cut-offs and evictions during the emergency, extends numerous deadlines, delays until May our consideration of next year's budget, and gives us flexibility where and how to hold necessary Council meetings during the emergency. More specifically the bill:

- Extends unemployment compensation to include individuals who are temporarily unemployed due to the emergency or the pandemic;
- Expands employment protections under the District's Family and Medical Leave Act;
- Delays by roughly 3 months real property tax payments by hotels, and sales tax payments from all other businesses that collect sales tax. This is not an abatement of taxes, but it is, in essence, a short-term interest-free loan to businesses totaling about \$266 million. We looked at larger or longer tax deferral and did not go further because of the District government's need for liquidity
- Authorizes the Mayor to establish a small business grant program, including grants to non-profits and also to independent contractors who cannot qualify for unemployment insurance. The Mayor may delegate administration of the grant program to a third party;
- Allows for carryout or delivery of beer and wine (in sealed containers), when together with food, from restaurants;
- Expands certain authorities for the Mayor under the Public Emergency Act and

extends the emergency to 45 days;

- Gives DISB related flexibility for health insurance and other matters regulated by DISB;
- Authorizes extension of public benefit programs such as the Healthcare Alliance, TANF, and SNAP. The intent is to give everyone flexibility as to deadlines for renewals and minimize in-person visits for renewals or initial applications;
- Prohibits price gouging and stockpiling during this public health emergency;
- Prohibits disconnection of electric, gas, and water utilities, and prohibits evictions during the public health emergency for both residential and non-residential tenants.
- Allows for prescription drug refills before the end of any waiting period;
- Authorizes the Mayor to extend licenses and registrations that may be due for renewal during the public health emergency, including professional licenses and drivers licenses;
- Amends the Homeless Services Reform Act, primarily to give flexibility to the Mayor with regard to the potential spread of the coronavirus;
- Extends deadlines under TOPA and prohibits landlords from charging late fees;
- Gives the Department of Corrections discretion to award additional good time credits for misdemeanants to reduce the jail population;
- Provides DCPS flexibility with its summer school calendar, and extends a deadline related to the research practice partnership;
- Allows ANC's to meet remotely, and reduces their annual meeting requirement this year; also, allows boards and commissions to suspend their meetings unless ordered by the Mayor;
- Tolls the FOIA clock during the public health emergency; also, permits remote meetings under the Open Meetings Act;
- Extends the date for the Mayor to submit the FY 2021 budget. It will be May 6th;
- Allows for the Council to meet virtually; and
- Affirmatively approves any grant budget modifications that have been submitted to the Council as of today. It also creates an expedited process for Council approval of grant budget modifications.

This bill is very broad in its reach. I am well aware that the potential economic damage facing individuals and businesses is far greater than the relief this bill provides.

I do not expect that this bill is the final and last act; we will continue to look for relief. But I have to caution that when our revenues are expected to plummet, we have our own limitations in what we can do. Everybody agrees that it's too early to say what the full economic impact will be but we are absolutely utilizing our financial strength and the reserves we have in order to help address the situation. I am very concerned that the national response to the pandemic has provoked a severe recession, in my view, and a great many businesses and individuals will be hurt.

I know the Council will continue to work with the Mayor, and that we all want to minimize the economic harm as much as we can.

F.A.Q. About the Council's COVID-19 Emergency Bill

- Unemployment Insurance will eventually be available for those out of work due to COVID-19. For more information, contact DOES at 202-724-7000 or online. The phone lines are experiencing high call volumes so applying online will be much quicker than calling in. To apply, complete the online [DOES unemployment process](#). Workers should err on the side of caution and apply if they are out of work due to the health emergency
- Businesses will be able to defer their February/March sales tax until July 20, 2020 (all businesses other than hotels and motels).
- The bill authorizes the Mayor to create a new program to push grants out the door to small businesses, self-employed individuals, and non-profits. However, we're not certain when she will have that up and running, what the benefits will be, or how much money she will put into it.
- Restaurants and Taverns are allowed to deliver food or you can pick it up. You can buy beer/wine/spirits with the food order to-go.
- No utility shutoffs (gas, water, electric). If you experience problems with this you should contact the the [Public Service Commission](#) or the [Office of the Attorney General](#).

Please Visit [Coronavirus.DC.Gov](https://www.coronavirus.dc.gov) for More

The Chief Financial Officer, Jeff DeWitt, spoke of the financial implications this public health emergency will have on the District's finances. He said that while the city currently is in a good financial situation, that could change rapidly.
WATCH his briefing to the Council



CHAIRMAN MENDELSON'S STAFF

The majority of the Chairman's Staff has shifted to telework during this public health emergency. Should you need to contact them, use the following information:

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The Ward 2 Staff remains available for Ward 2 constituent services.

Please direct all inquiries to ward2@dccouncil.us or call 202.724.8058.

STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS!

Stay home
when sick



Cover your
cough or sneeze
with a tissue



Dispose of
tissue after use



If you don't have a
tissue, cough or
sneeze into your
upper sleeve



Wash hands with
soap and water for
at least 20 seconds



Avoid touching
eyes, nose, and
mouth with
unwashed hands



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DC HEALTH
GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

GOVERNMENT OF THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DC MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

FREE MEALS FOR STUDENTS IN NEEDS:

A reminder that Monday through Friday, from 10AM to 2PM, the following free meal centers are open to all kids in need

Meal Locations for All Students from March 16 to March 31

School Name	Address	Ward
Anacostia High School	1601 16th Street SE	8
Ballou High School	3401 4th Street SE	8
Banneker High School	800 Euclid Street NW	1
Brookland Middle School	1150 Michigan Avenue NE	5
Cardozo Education Campus	1200 Clifton Street NW	1
Columbia Heights Education Campus	3101 16th Street NW	1
Coolidge High School	6315 5th Street NW	4
Eastern High School	1700 East Capitol Street NE	6
Jefferson Middle School	801 7th Street SW	6
Kelly Miller Middle School	301 49th Street NE	7
Kimball Elementary School	3375 Minnesota Avenue SE	7
LaSalle-Backus Education Campus	501 Riggs Road NE	4
McKinley Education Campus	151 T Street NE	5
Stanton Elementary School	2701 Naylor Road SE	8
Walker-Jones Education Campus	1125 New Jersey Avenue NW	6
Woodson High School	540 55th Street NE	7

ALL STUDENTS

GOVERNMENT OF THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DC MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

SYMPTOMS OF CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

Patients with COVID-19 have experienced mild to severe respiratory illness.

Symptoms can include:

If you have been in an area affected by COVID-19 or in close contact with someone with confirmed COVID-19 in the past two weeks and develop symptoms, call your doctor before going to a healthcare facility.



Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure.



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