



*Congresswoman*  
**VERONICA ESCOBAR**  
*Texas' 16th Congressional District*

Updated March 31, 2020

## Coronavirus Resource Guide

### Coronavirus Disease 2019

For updates on the number of confirmed and pending cases in El Paso and across Texas, please visit the [DSHS website](#). This is an emerging, rapidly evolving situation, and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) will provide updated information and guidance as it becomes available.

Haga clic [aquí](#) para recomendaciones e información acerca de cómo prevenir el coronavirus, sus síntomas conocidos y qué hacer si usted cree que ha estado expuesto al coronavirus. Para información específica de Texas, por favor visite el sitio web del [Departamento Estatal de Servicios de Salud de Texas \(DSHS\)](#).

### What Congress is Doing

Congress is moving forward quickly and in a bipartisan fashion to address the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) in a smart, strategic, and serious way. We are working to provide the resources and authorities our federal agencies need to track, combat, and mitigate the virus, treat Americans with the disease, and develop a vaccine and additional treatments.

On March 27, Congresswoman Veronica Escobar voted for the third coronavirus response bill, the bipartisan H.R. 748, the [Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security \(CARES\) Act](#). The CARES Act, which was signed into law by President Trump, secures critical provisions for El Paso workers and their families and invests \$2 trillion to help our public health systems, state and local governments, and small businesses in the face of the coronavirus pandemic.

A summary of the CARES Act is available [here](#), and an overview of the major components Congresswoman Escobar fought to include for El Paso's hard-working

families is available [here](#). The CARES Act builds on top of the swift action that House Democrats have already taken to move two critical pieces of coronavirus response legislation into law.

On March 4, Congresswoman Escobar and House Democrats took a first step by passing an [\\$8.3 billion emergency response supplemental package](#), which included funding for vaccine development, support for state and local governments, and assistance for affected small businesses. This legislation was followed up by H.R. 6201, the bipartisan [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#), which the President also signed into law, which guaranteed free coronavirus testing, established paid leave, enhanced Unemployment Insurance, expanded food security initiatives, and increased federal Medicaid funding.

For more information about how these three sweeping pieces of legislation that have been signed into law support you and your family, read the implementation guidance available below:

[Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Questions and Answers](#)

[Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Employer Paid Leave Requirements](#)

[Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Employee Paid Leave Rights](#)

[CARES Act: Unemployment Insurance and Emergency Leave](#)

[CARES Act: 2020 Rebates](#)

[CARES Act: Small Business Owner's Guide](#)

## Hotlines and Testing

### COVID-19 Testing

Your doctor will help make the decision if you should get tested for COVID-19. If you do not have health insurance, you can still get tested for COVID-19 if your doctor or healthcare provider recommends it.

The City of El Paso Department of Public Health (DPH), the Border Regional Advisory Council (BorderRAC), and other public health partners are collecting specimens to test for COVID-19. The drive thru COVID-19 samples are being collected for first responders, healthcare workers, seniors 65 years of age or older who have a temperature of 99.6 F or higher, and patients with a doctor's order. For more information, visit the city's website [here](#).

For information about testing, you just need to call your doctor and/or access care the way you usually do. If you need help finding a doctor or accessing medical care, click [here](#) or call 2-1-1 and they can direct you to low- or no-cost providers in El Paso.

The City of El Paso Department of Public Health (DPH) is now offering information about COVID-19 via (915) 212-6843 or (915) 21-COVID. The hotline will be operational effective immediately from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

## **Hospitals in Texas' 16<sup>th</sup> Congressional District**

### **El Paso Children's Hospital**

Anyone younger than 18 years of age is not allowed in the facility.  
Number of visitors limited to 1 person per room.

### **University Medical Center**

### **The Hospitals of Providence**

### **Las Palmas Del Sol**

Please be advised that on March 23, Hospitals of Providence, Las Palmas Del Sol Healthcare and University Medical Center of El Paso sent a joint statement announcing an immediate "no visitors" policy until further notice.

## **El Paso's "Stay Home, Work Safe" Order**

In an ongoing effort to suppress the spread of COVID-19, the City and the County of El Paso have issued a "Stay Home, Work Safe" order for the area that went into effect at 11:59 p.m. on March 24, and will be in effect until further notice.

The order directs the public to remain at their residence except to obtain essential services or engage in essential activities and work for essential business and government services. The order will continue until further notice and those who are found violating it could face a fine of not more than \$1,000.00, or be jailed for up to 180 days. Learn about what you can do during the "Stay Home, Work Safe" order [here](#).

## **Fraud**

### **Social Security**

The Office of the Inspector General of Social Security Administration is warning the public about fraudulent letters threatening suspension of Social Security benefits due to COVID-19 or coronavirus-related office closures. The Social Security Administration (SSA) will not suspend or discontinue benefits because their offices are closed. For more information about Social Security and COVID-19, visit [here](#).

## **Coronavirus Scams**

Scammers are taking advantage of fears surrounding the coronavirus pandemic. The FTC and FDA have jointly issued warning letters to sellers of unapproved and misbranded products, claiming they can treat or prevent coronavirus. The companies' products include teas, essential oils, and colloidal silver.

The FTC says the companies have no evidence to back up their claims — as required by law. The FDA says there are no approved vaccines, drugs or investigational products currently available to treat or prevent the virus.

These scams may also come through emails and web links with unscrupulous individuals claiming to represent the CDC or other health authorities. Read the FTC tips on how to avoid all types of coronavirus scams [here](#).

## **File a Complaint**

El Pasoans who believe they have encountered disaster scams, including price gouging, should call the Office of the Attorney General of Texas' toll-free complaint line at (800) 621-0508 or [file a complaint online](#).

## **Small Businesses**

Health and government officials are working together to maintain the safety, security and health of the American people. Small businesses are encouraged to do their part to keep their employees, customers and themselves healthy.

The Small Business Administration launched a page dedicated to providing [Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus](#).

The U.S. Small Business Administration is offering designated states and territories low-interest federal disaster loans for working capital to small businesses suffering substantial economic injury as a result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19).

El Paso small businesses who believe they may be eligible for an Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program loan, should visit [www.sba.gov/disaster](http://www.sba.gov/disaster) where they can directly apply for assistance. The online application is the fastest method to receive a decision about loan eligibility.

SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loans offer up to \$2 million in assistance per small business and can provide vital economic support to small businesses to help overcome the temporary loss of revenue they are experiencing.

These loans may be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable, and other bills that can't be paid because of the disaster's impact. Loans are available at extremely low-interest rates. The interest rate is 3.75% for small businesses without credit available elsewhere; businesses with credit available elsewhere are not eligible. The interest rate for non-profits is 2.75%. Additionally, the first payment is due one year after the loan is closed.

SBA offers loans with long-term repayments in order to keep payments affordable, up to a maximum of 30 years. Terms are determined on a case-by-case basis, based upon each borrower's ability to repay.

SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loans are just one piece of the expanded focus of the federal government's coordinated response, and the SBA is strongly committed to providing the most effective and customer-focused response possible.

If your small business has been impacted, consider applying for a low-interest disaster loan from the Small Business Administration here. To locate your local satellite office, click [here](#).

For additional information, please contact the SBA disaster assistance customer service center. Call 1-800-659-2955 (TTY: 1-800-877-8339) or e-mail [disastercustomerservice@sba.gov](mailto:disastercustomerservice@sba.gov).

**Additional Resources:**

[El Paso Covid-19 Business Survey](#)

[WorkForce Solutions Borderplex](#)

[Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Employer Paid Leave Requirements](#)

[CARES Act: Small Business Owner's Guide](#)

## Travel

### **US-Mexico Joint Initiative to Combat the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Starting March 21, the United States and Mexico are temporarily restricting all non-essential travel across its borders for a period of 30 days subject to extension upon review. According to the Department of Homeland Security, non-essential" travel includes travel that is considered tourism or recreational in nature. Essential travel" includes:

- U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents returning to the United States
- Individuals traveling for medical purposes
- Individuals traveling to attend educational institutions

- Individuals traveling to work in the United States (individuals working in the farming or agriculture industry who must travel between the U.S. and Mexico to work)
- Individuals traveling for emergency response and public health purposes (government officials or emergency responders entering the U.S. to support Federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial government efforts to respond to COVID-19 or other emergencies)
- Individuals engaged in lawful cross-border trade (truck drivers supporting the movement of cargo between the U.S. and Mexico)
- Individuals engaged in official government travel or diplomatic travel
- Members of the U.S. Armed Forces, and the spouses and children of members of the U.S. Armed Forces, returning to the United States
- Individuals engaged in military-related travel or operations.

### **Governor Greg Abbott's Order Mandating 14-Day Quarantine for Travelers**

Starting March 26, [Governor Greg Abbott has issued a series of executive orders](#) mandating 14-day self-quarantine for air and road travelers arriving to Texas from designated areas.

**Air travel:** Individuals traveling to Texas, with Texas being their final destination, through an airport from the areas below will be subject to a mandated self-quarantine of 14 days and must complete the [Form for Arrivals from Areas Designated for Mandatory Self-Quarantine](#) and abide by the [Mandatory Terms of Self-Quarantine](#).

- State of New York
- State of New Jersey
- State of Connecticut
- State of Louisiana
- State of California
- State of Washington
- City of Atlanta, Georgia
- City of Chicago, Illinois
- City of Detroit, Michigan
- City of Miami, Florida

**Road travel:** Effective Monday, March 30, every person who enters the state of Texas through roadways from Louisiana will be subject to the mandated 14-day self-quarantine and must complete the [Form for Arrival for Road Travelers from Areas Designated for Mandatory Self-Quarantine](#). DPS has been tasked with enforcing GA-12, and the public can expect to see an increased law enforcement presence along the Texas/Louisiana border.

## **DHS Notice of Arrival Restrictions on China, Iran and Certain Countries of Europe**

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued a [Notice of Arrival Restrictions](#) outlining the process for American citizens, legal permanent residents, and their immediate families who are returning home after recently visiting certain European countries (listed below), China, and Iran. Americans returning from the affected countries will now be required to travel through 13 airports, including Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport (DFW), Texas.

Upon arrival, travelers will proceed to standard customs processing. They will then continue to enhance entry screening where the passenger will be asked about their medical history, current condition, and asked for contact information for local health authorities. Passengers will then be given written guidance about COVID-19 and directed to proceed to their final destination, and immediately home-quarantine in accordance with CDC best practices.

## **Global Level 4 Health Advisory**

The Department of State [advises](#) U.S. citizens to avoid all international travel due to the global impact of COVID-19. In countries where commercial departure options remain available, U.S. citizens who live in the United States should arrange for immediate return to the United States, unless they are prepared to remain abroad for an indefinite period.

Travelers are strongly encouraged to enroll in the State Department's [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#) to receive alerts and make it easier to locate them in an emergency.

## **Unemployment**

If you lost your job because of the coronavirus pandemic, you may be eligible for Unemployment Insurance benefits. In Texas, unemployment benefits claims are evaluated by:

- Past wages
- Job Separations
- Ongoing Eligibility Requirements

If your claim is accepted, your weekly benefit amount may be between \$69 and \$521. For more information about unemployment benefits in Texas, please visit the [Texas Workforce Commission's website](#) or call TWC's Tele-Center at 800-939-6631 from 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Central Time Monday through Friday.

**Additional Resources:**

[CARES Act: Unemployment Insurance and Emergency Leave](#)

[CARES Act: 2020 Rebates](#)

[COVID-19 Resources Job Seekers](#)

[State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry \(STEAR\)](#)

[WorkForce Solutions Borderplex](#)

## Veterans

Before visiting local VA medical facilities, community providers, urgent care centers, or emergency departments in their communities, veterans experiencing COVID-19 symptoms—such as fever, cough, and shortness of breath—are encouraged to call the El Paso VA at (915) 564-6100 or call MyVA311 (844-698-2311, press #3 to be connected). General information on the VA and COVID-19 can be found [here](#).

Veterans can also send secure messages to their health care providers via [MyhealthVet](#), VA's online patient portal. VA clinicians will evaluate veterans' symptoms and direct them to the most appropriate providers for further evaluation and treatment. This may include referral to state or local health departments for COVID-19 testing. The El Paso VA is working to expand video health appointments during the COVID-19 crisis. A video explaining how to use VA Video Connect (VVC) services can be found [here](#).

The VA will also be using [waiver authority](#) to rehire interested retired VA healthcare providers. Retired VA clinicians who are interested in returning to the VA can register [here](#).

The significant impact COVID-19 has on daily routines may cause unanticipated stress on some veterans in crisis. Help is available for veterans in crisis by calling the Veteran Crisis Line at 1 (800) 273-8255 and pressing 1, at [VeteransCrisisLine.Net/Chat](#), or by texting 838255.

## Service Members

As of March 30, Fort Bliss had a total of six positive cases of COVID-19. That same day, the Department of Defense (DOD) announced that out of a concern for operational security, the aggregate number of individual service member cases at individual unit, base or Combatant Commands won't be reported. DOD will continue to offer a public daily update of the full number of cases. Learn more [here](#).



On the evening of March 25, Fort Bliss escalated to Health Protective Condition Charlie requiring only mission essential personnel to physically report for their duties.

Mission essential personnel are determined by individual unit chains of command, supervisors, and leadership. As of now, essential services, such as the PX, Commissary, DFACs, and other food service facilities, remain unaffected. All other personnel are being told to telework from home where possible for the safety of themselves, our Soldiers and families, and the local community. As of March 27, Fort Bliss Child Development and School Age Centers will be restricted to mission essential personnel. For daily COVID-19 updates, and periodic Fort Bliss virtual Town Halls on these issues, visit [here](#).

Additionally, the Department of Defense is closely monitoring the impacts of the coronavirus disease outbreak on service members, their families and survivors. Resources and services are available through Military OneSource, the Military and Family Life Counseling program, and the Spouse Education and Career Opportunities. These services include:

- A dedicated section is available on [Military OneSource](#) to keep service members and their families informed about the impacts of COVID-19 on the military community.
- Beginning March 24, Military OneSource will offer [non-medical counseling video sessions](#) for children and youth who may feel overwhelmed by the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Military OneSource will be live on [Facebook](#) Monday through Friday at noon Eastern Time to highlight available resources. All videos will be available for on-demand viewing.

## Students

### **Federal Student Loan Relief**

The federal government has announced that all federally held student loans will automatically have their interest rates set to 0% for a period of at least 60 days. Additionally, borrowers are given the option to suspend their payments for at least two months. To learn more about this development, click [here](#).

### **Texas' 16<sup>th</sup> Congressional District School and Colleges Closures**

Below please find a list of school districts, universities, and colleges across Texas' 16<sup>th</sup> Congressional District that have suspended face-face classes.

#### **[Anthony ISD](#)**

Schools will be closed for students until April 6. All activities and practices have also

been postponed. Breakfast and lunch will be available at Anthony MS and Anthony HS cafeterias.

### **Canutillo ISD**

The district will reopen to students on Monday, April 6. Free breakfast and lunch will be served at participating campuses for any child ages 1-18 during the declared weeks of Emergency Preparedness of March 23 - April 3.

### **Clint ISD**

Students will return from spring break on April 6. Lunch will be available for students at all cafeterias during the week of March 23 - April 3. Lunches will be staggered to prevent large gatherings in the cafeterias.

### **EPISD**

Students will return from spring break on April 6. The weeks of March 23-27 and March 30-April 3 have been declared Emergency Preparedness Weeks. During this period, EPISD will be offering take-home meals for any child ages 1-18 at 50 campuses, to be announced later.

### **Socorro ISD**

Classes and school are suspended until April. From March 23 through April 3, SISD will offer breakfast, lunch and supper service. Details for the adapted program will be forthcoming.

### **Ysleta ISD**

Classes will resume April 6. During the week of March 23-27, 2020, ten YISD schools will continue to offer weekday breakfast and lunch meals to school-aged children between ages 1-18 on a drive-by basis.

### **University of Texas at El Paso**

Face-to-face classes for the week of March 23-29 are canceled. UTEP will remain open for faculty and staff. Starting March 30, UTEP will move to remote delivery of course content wherever possible.

### **El Paso Community College**

Classes for the week of March 23-27 are canceled. Minimester II courses will begin on March 30 and will be seven weeks long. On March 30, classes will resume via online instruction for the duration of the semester.

## [Western Tech](#)

Classes will resume on Monday, March 30. Over the next two weeks, both campuses will be open from 8 am-5 pm with some administrative support.

## [Southwest University](#)

Southwest University will transition all courses to remote instruction until March 27. Southwest University plans to resume normal operations on March 30.

## Housing

### **Texas Supreme Court Halt Evictions**

On March 19, the Texas Supreme Court [issued an order](#) halting eviction proceedings statewide until April 19, effective immediately. This Order is effective immediately and expires April 19, 2020, unless extended by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

According to the order, landlords may proceed with eviction cases only if the actions of the occupants “pose an imminent threat” of physical harm to the landlord, the landlord’s employees or other tenants, or if the occupants are engaging in criminal activity.

### **National Moratorium on Evictions and Foreclosures**

To help renters and homeowners remain stably housed during and after a Coronavirus outbreak. [HUD announced](#) a short-term moratorium on evictions in public housing, and [Freddie Mac](#), [Fannie Mae](#), and the Federal Housing Administration announced a moratorium on foreclosures for homeowners.

## Mental Health

### **Resources from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides guidelines for coping with a disaster or traumatic event which can be found [here](#). Tips include:

- Take care of your body
- Connect with others
- Take breaks
- Stay informed
- Avoid too much exposure to news
- Seek help when needed

### **Additional Resources:**

[CDC - Coping with a Disaster or Traumatic Event: CDC - Helping Children Cope with Emergencies](#)

[CDC - Resources for State and Local Governments](#)

[CDC - Resources for Community and Religious Leaders](#)

[CDC - Emergency Responders: Tips for taking care of yourself](#)

### **Resources from Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA)**

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) has a Disaster Distress Helpline dedicated to providing immediate crisis counseling for people who are experiencing emotional distress related to any natural or human-caused disaster. **You can call 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66746. (TTY 1-800-846-8517)**

Callers to the hotline can also connect with counselors in over 100 other languages via 3rd-party interpretation services: to connect with a counselor in your primary language, simply indicate your preferred language to the responding counselor and she/he will connect to a live interpreter (interpretation in less commonly-spoken languages may require calling back at an appointed time). [Learn more and download information](#) about the Disaster Distress Helpline in 30 of the most commonly-spoken languages in the U.S.

### **Additional Resources:**

[UNICEF guidance for teenagers during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)

[National Alliance on Mental Illness' \(NAMI\) Coronavirus Resources and Information Guide](#)

## **Additional Resources and FAQs**

### **FAQs**

Congresswoman Veronica Escobar has heard from many El Pasoans who are concerned about the coronavirus and wants to answer some of your frequently asked questions. Click [here](#) to read frequently asked questions on the coronavirus.

### **Additional Resources**

The [City of El Paso](#) provides a list of closures, cancellations, and suspensions that can be found on the COVID-19 information and status banner. In addition, for more information on COVID-19, visit, [EPHealth.com](#) and [EPSalud.com](#). Additionally, the 2-1-1 Texas Information and Referral Center is available 24/7. Caller can dial 2-1-1 and select option 6.

[El Paso County](#) provides the latest information on the level of activation the city/county is in, further information on COVID-19 prevention, emergency preparedness for your pets, and printable resource information about COVID-19.

### **Day Care Options**

The City of El Paso has partnered with the YWCA Paso del Norte Region to provide service to the families affected by closure of the Galatzan and Veterans Recreation Centers childcare programs. Parents can find a YWCA in their neighborhood by contacting the YWCA online at [www.ywcaelpaso.org](http://www.ywcaelpaso.org) or calling (915) 519-0000.

### **Utilities**

#### **[El Paso Electric](#)**

Will continue normal business hours. Suspended service disconnections for non-payments until further notice.

#### **[El Paso Water](#)**

Suspended service disconnections for non-payments until further notice.

#### **[Texas Gas Service](#)**

Suspended service disconnections for non-payments through April 15.

#### **[Comcast](#)**

Will not disconnect a customer's internet service or assess late fees if during this bill period. Xfinity WiFi hotspots in El Paso will be available to anyone who needs them for free.

#### **[Charter](#)**

Provides free Spectrum broadband and Wi-Fi internet for the next 60 days to households with K-12 students or college students who don't already have a subscription. Spectrum WiFi hotspots in El Paso will be available to anyone who needs them for free.

### **Transportation**

Sun Metro is waiving all bus fares on Fixed Route, BRIO and LIFT services until further notice. Effective Wednesday, March 25, 2020 Sun Metro will implement service modifications in response to COVID-19, including the suspension of the streetcar service. For more information about the service modifications, visit [www.sunmetro.net](http://www.sunmetro.net).

### **National, State, and Local Park Closures**

During the ongoing public health threat, park superintendents have been given

authority to close areas within national parks. Please [check with individual parks](#) for specific details about park operations.

Starting Thursday, March 19 at 12 p.m., some Texas State Parks will have reduced operations or closures. Check the [Texas State Parks Alert Map](#) for the latest information about parks.

All City of El Paso Parks and Recreation facilities remain closed until further notice as a precautionary response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Parks and trails remain open to the public with some recommendations that include:

- Maintaining at least 6 feet of social distance from others
- Choose less populated parks and trails
- Do not park in a crowded parking lot or use a crowded trail
- Wash hands before and after each visit

### **FEMA Major Disaster Declaration**

On March 25, President Trump granted a Major Disaster Declaration for the State of Texas triggering the release of federal funds to help people and communities recover from COVID-19 that occurred January 20, 2020, and continuing. For a list of programs available under this declaration, please check [here](#).