

# Beaver County Office on Aging COVID-19 Task Force Newsletter Volume 8, May 20, 2020

## Beaver County Moves into Yellow Phase May 22, 2020

Governor Tom Wolf will move Beaver County into the yellow phase Friday, May 22, 2020, which lifts the stay-at-home order. Some restrictions on work and social interaction will ease as the economy begins while keeping the spread of disease contained as much as possible. Restrictions will be adjusted as necessary based on public health indicators.

- Businesses with in-person operations must follow safety orders, as well as CDC/Department of Health guidelines for social distancing and cleaning
- Working remotely must continue where feasible
- Child care facilities can open but must follow safety orders, as well as CDC/Department of Health guidelines for social distancing and cleaning
- Large gatherings of more than 25 people prohibited
- Restaurants and bars remain limited to takeout and delivery only
- Indoor recreation, gyms, spas and entertainment facilities (including casinos and theaters) remain closed.
- In-person retail allowed, but curbside and delivery service is preferable
- Stay-at-home orders lifted

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## Property Tax/Rent Rebate Checks Will Be Mailed Early

The Pennsylvania Property Tax/Rent Rebate checks will be mailed early. Normally, rebates are mailed out beginning July 1 and continue to be mailed out. With the COVID-19 pandemic, the commonwealth has chosen to send out rebates starting six weeks early. A total of 110,000 rebates were mailed May 19, and then another 60,000 rebates will be mailed out each week. People who already have applied, should receive their check by July 1. There is still time to apply. The deadline has been extended through December 31, 2020. For an application, contact the Beaver County Office on Aging at 724-847-2262 or your state legislator's office.

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## Treasury and IRS Starting to Send Economic Impact Payments (Stimulus) by Prepaid Debit Card Instead of by Paper Check

Treasury and the IRS announced May 18 that they are starting to send nearly 4 million Economic Impact Payments (EIPs) by prepaid debit card, instead of by paper check. EIP Card recipients can make purchases, get cash from in-network ATMs, and transfer funds to their personal bank account without incurring any fees. They can also check their card balance online, by mobile app, or by phone without incurring fees. The EIP Card can be used online, at ATMs, or at any

retail location where Visa is accepted. This free, prepaid card also provides consumer protections available to traditional bank account owners, including protections against fraud, loss, and other errors.

Treasury has already delivered more than 140 million Economic Impact Payments worth \$239 billion to Americans by direct deposit to accounts at financial institutions, Direct Express card accounts, and by check. The Treasury-sponsored EIP Card is another method to provide money efficiently and securely to eligible recipients and their families. EIP Cards are being distributed to qualified individuals without bank information on file with the IRS, and whose tax return was processed by either the Andover or Austin IRS Service Center.

Treasury's financial agent, MetaBank, will mail EIP Cards to eligible recipients beginning this week. Each mailing will include instructions on how to activate and use the card. The EIP Card is part of Treasury's U.S. Debit Card program, which provides prepaid debit card services to federal agencies for the electronic delivery of non-benefit payments. MetaBank was selected as Treasury's financial agent for the U.S. Debit Card program in 2016, following a competitive selection process conducted by the Treasury's Bureau of the Fiscal Service.

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## LIHEAP Recovery Crisis Program Now Available

In response to the coronavirus (COVID- 19) health emergency, the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) began accepting applications for the Recovery Crisis Program May 18, 2020, and will run through August 31, 2020, or until funds are exhausted — whichever comes first.

This program includes two components that will aid Pennsylvania residents who may need assistance with their heating costs due to the pandemic.

- **Crisis Applications** — The 2019-2020 Crisis maximum benefit has been increased to \$800. Any LIHEAP Crisis-eligible household, including those that met the previous maximum of \$600, would be eligible for a Crisis grant under this program. You can find information about how to submit an application below.
- **Supplemental Benefits** — Many households who received a LIHEAP Crisis payment during the regular LIHEAP season will receive a one-time issuance of \$100. This payment will be sent to the vendor that received their most recent LIHEAP payment. Households who receive this issuance will be notified by mail. This \$100 issuance will count towards the new maximum Crisis benefit amount for the household. This benefit will be issued automatically and no application is needed.

### What are the Crisis Program Eligibility Requirements?

To be eligible for the Crisis Program, a household must:

- Be responsible for paying their primary or secondary heating source.
- Have a total household income at or below 150 percent of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines (FPIG)

#### Household Size

Household Size	Income Limit
1	\$18,735
2	\$25,365
3	\$31,995
4	\$38,625
5	\$45,255
6	\$51,885
7	\$58,515
8	\$65,145
9	\$71,775
10	\$78,405

- Be in jeopardy of having their heating utility service terminated, be without heating utility service or heating fuel, or be within 15 days of being without heating fuel.

- Under normal circumstances, a shut-off letter is needed to confirm a crisis for electric or natural gas providers. However, due to the extended moratorium, the Department of Human Services (DHS) will accept a past due balance if the amount would result in a shut-off notice were the moratorium not in effect.
- DHS will also issue Crisis to cover past-due deliverable fuel bills if the deliverable fuel company will not complete a new delivery due to the past-due balance.
- The Crisis funds available to the household must be able to remedy the crisis situation.

### **How Do I Apply?**

DHS will be accepting LIHEAP applications through the [COMPASS website](#) or by paper application. You may call 1-877-395-8930 to request a paper application be mailed to you. Paper applications can be mailed to the County Assistance Office (CAO) in your county.

- [Download LIHEAP Recovery Crisis Program Paper Application — English](#)
- [Download LIHEAP Recovery Crisis Program Paper Application — Spanish](#)

If you received LIHEAP Cash or Crisis during the regular 2019-2020 season (October 2019-April 2020) and have not moved or had a change in household members, you can request Recovery Crisis by calling 1- 877-395-8930. You do not have to go to the CAO in person to request benefits.

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### **Older Adult Protective Services**

If you feel an older adult is being abused, neglected, or exploited, call Older Adult Protective Services at 724-775-1786. The hotline is open 24 hours a day.

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### **Ombudsman Service is Available**

The Beaver County Office on Aging Ombudsmen are working full time, at home, and are available to accept calls and handle any complaints or questions related to nursing facility and personal care home resident rights and problem resolution. We will return your call by the end of the next business day. Ombudsman calls are considered and treated with highest confidentiality.

To contact the Ombudsman program you may: email [Ombudsman@BCOA.US](mailto:Ombudsman@BCOA.US); call the Ombudsman direct phone line 724-480-8589; or call the Office on Aging main phone 724-847-2262, identify your call as an Ombudsman issue, with no details, as these calls are highly confidential and leave your name and phone number only.

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May is Mental Health Awareness Month.

#COVID19 has impacted many people's mental health. I want you to know you're #NotAlone. Not now, and not ever. Take care of your mental health. Reach out if you need to.

## MENTAL HEALTH DURING COVID-19

**DISASTER DISTRESS  
HELPLINE**  
800-985-5990

**NATIONAL SUICIDE  
PREVENTION LIFELINE**  
1-800-273-8255

**PA'S SUPPORT  
HELPLINE**  
855-284-2494

**COPING WITH  
COVID-19 STRESS**  
[BIT.LY/COVID-COPING](https://bit.ly/covid-coping)

**GET HELP NOW  
FOR SUBSTANCE  
USE DISORDER**  
1-800-662-4357

**COVID-19  
RESOURCES**  
[MHANATIONAL.  
ORG/COVID19](https://mhanational.org/covid19)

**PREVENTING  
SUICIDE IN PA**  
[PREVENTSUICIDE  
PA.ORG/](https://preventsuicidepa.org/)

**CRISIS TEXT LINE**  
TEXT 'PA'  
TO 741741

**VETERANS  
IN CRISIS**  
[VETERANS  
CRISISLINE.NET](https://veteranscrisisline.net)