

**MetroWest
Center For
Independent Living**

**People with Disabilities
Living in the Community**

Covid-19 Updates

2020 has been 5 years in 1 and it's only June! After multiple recent instances of race-based police brutality, Americans are fed up. Unfortunately, it's difficult if not impossible to maintain social distancing in a protest rally or march. Some experts anticipate that the protests will result in another uptick in Covid-19 illness.

MWCIL recognizes the dignity of all individuals as part of our mission. As a Center for Independent Living, we advocate for the right of all individuals to live free from prejudice and brutality. We do not tolerate discrimination regardless of race, color, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, or disability. MWCIL will stand up against racial violence and racism in all its forms. MWCIL stands in solidarity with the black community during these difficult times

As the Disability Policy Consortium pointed out, the civil rights movement and the disability rights movement overlapped when the Black Panthers brought supplies to the 504 supporters in San Francisco during their 26 day sit-in in 1977. We also have shared an article on Black Disabled Lives Matter that talks about the overlaps in discrimination by law enforcement. While our experiences are not the same, they have enough similarities that we understand the frustrations, and the need to fix the injustices.

MWCIL is ready to work with you on any important issues. We will resolve as much as possible remotely to protect both our staff and consumers. We understand that most services and safety nets have been disrupted, and we will try to help.

Visit our [Website Covid-19 page](#) and download our [Local Resources pdf](#).

Paul Spooner,
Executive Director



Tulips



Lady's Slippers

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MetroWest Resources

MWCIL.org has a Covid-19 page with local and national resources, information on the disease, and more. Visit mwcil.org.

MetroWest Center for Independent Living has compiled information from most of our service area towns. This file is updated weekly:
[MWCIL Service area resources.pdf](#)

We recommend Senate President Karen Spilka's page of resources available for MetroWest residents. Visit <https://karenspilka.com/covid>.

City of Framingham Resource Page: Framinghamma.gov/covid19

- Framingham has announced a financial relief program which will help provide assistance with rent, mortgage, and/or utility payments for a period of two months to alleviate the burden on households which have seen a loss of employment and their primary income as of 3/10/2020. Download the application:
 - www.framinghamma.gov/DocumentCenter/

Resources for elders in the community provided by [Baypath Senior Services](#):

[Senior Living Service during Covid-10.pdf](#).

MWRTA has launched the "4 Grocery" shuttle to run hourly between 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. to carry shoppers from the Framingham hub to the Market Basket in Ashland, Roche Bros. in Natick, and the Wegman's at the Natick Mall. Read more at www.mwrta.com/application/files/.

SMOC (South Middlesex Opportunity Council) continues to provide a wide

array of services. Visit their website for more information: www.smoc.org

MetroWest Testing Sites

Thank you to [MetroWest Daily News](#) for a list of local Covid-19 testing sites.

Sites are in Bellingham, Franklin, Framingham, Marlborough, Natick, Northborough and Westborough.

Download a MS Word copy of the article: [Covid-Testing-Metrowest.docx](#) or download a pdf copy: [Covid-Testing-Metrowest.pdf](#).

Visit this interactive, online map to find testing sites statewide: memamaps.maps.arcgis.com

Massachusetts Reopening

As Massachusetts reopens, each individual has to carefully weigh their own situation to determine which risks they can tolerate. Just because something has reopened doesn't mean one has to immediately visit it!

Visit Mass.gov to learn the details of reopening, including workplace protocols, and business safety standards. If you are not comfortable with a salon's cleaning protocols, then do not get your hair cut or find another salon.

This article from [Atlantic Magazine](#) outlines ideas like the "Double Bubble" from Canada. The Double Bubble concept is to connect with a limited group and reduce the isolation without being exposed to "everyone". This idea is not risk-free, but it does contain your risk.

#BlackDisabledLivesMatter

Why we need to talk about both race and disability when addressing police brutality by Britney Wilson

"Neither official statistics nor media tracking of police killings reports data according to race and disability. Just as we need more systemic tracking of police violence in general, we also need more data on police interactions with the disabled. But it is [estimated](#) that between a third and a half of all people killed by police have a disability. We also [know](#) that African Americans make up 13 percent of the population overall but 24 percent of people killed by police. The disproportionate representation of each group among those killed by police should be enough to make us focus on the overlap. It is not enough to separately state that police brutality affects

people of color or people with disabilities."

Read the whole article in [The Nation](#).

Face Masks for PCAs

Thank you to the Disability Policy Consortium for this information:

Consumers of the Massachusetts PCA program can get **free masks and gloves delivered for PCAs** from their union, [1199SEIU](#). PCAs can order the masks online using the [1199SEIU order form](#).

Town Elections

Visit the state website for more information on the changes to annual town meetings during covid 19, including an application that you can download and print: www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/covid-19.

If your town has a local election scheduled in the next few weeks, you should [contact your town clerk](#) about the status of that election. A new law has been passed to allow towns to postpone their local elections by a local vote. Some towns with upcoming elections have already obtained court orders to allow them to move their elections.

Whether or not your town has postponed your local election, a law has been passed to allow early voting by mail in local elections being held on or before June 30, 2020. You may [apply now for your mail-in early ballot](#).

If your town's election has been moved, ballots for the original election date will still be valid. If you have already submitted an absentee ballot, that ballot will be counted.

Health Connector Special Enrollment Expanded

Thanks to the [Disability Policy Consortium](#) for this story from **Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation**.

Massachusetts residents losing their jobs and job-based health coverage can get health coverage through the Health Connector. Massachusetts residents can apply for coverage at www.mahealthconnector.org. The ConnectorCare program connects qualifying Massachusetts residents with affordable health coverage with low or \$0 premiums and low co-pays and no deductibles. This special enrollment period will run through June 23.

A new webpage that includes all the information someone would need to get into coverage after having lost employment/employment-based coverage - including a detailed FAQ for people trying to understand their different coverage options

(e.g., COBRA, Health Connector, etc.). You can find that webpage here:
<https://www.mahealthconnector.org/the-right-plan-right-now>.

Shorter PDF flyers for individuals that have recently lost jobs and job-based health coverage. These are available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Chinese and are posted here:

<https://www.mahealthconnector.org/help-center/resource-download-center>

Reach out to the Health Connector with questions.

Mass.gov Resources

Main information page on the Coronavirus:

<https://www.mass.gov/resource/information-on-the-outbreak-of-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>

Mass Health:

- **Long Term Supports and Services including PCA information:**
<https://www.mass.gov/doc/ltss-provider-updates-for-covid-19/download>
- Expansion of **Home Health Aide Services:** [MassOptions.org](https://www.massoptions.org).
MassOptions hotline at 1-844-422-6277
- **Consumer Information:** <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/masshealth-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-applicants-and-members-0>
- **General MassHealth Information:** www.mass.gov/coronavirus-disease-covid-19-and-masshealth
- **90 Day Supplies of Medication for MassHealth Members:**www.mass.gov/doc/pharmacy-facts-141-march-12-2020-0/download

Attorney General: <https://www.mass.gov/guides/resources-during-covid-19>

Housing

The state is implementing a temporary moratorium on evictions and foreclosures due to Covid 19. If you are having trouble making rent, talk to your landlord and get everything in writing for proof of conversations later on.

- **Detailed information** (a little tough to navigate) -
www.mass.gov/lists/moratorium-on-evictions-and-foreclosures-forms-and-other-resources
- **RESIDENTIAL TENANTS:** In order to avoid having to pay late fees or receiving a negative credit report, the law requires tenants to send a form of hardship notice to their landlord within 30 days of every

missed rent payment. That means if a tenant missed paying rent due April 1, the tenant must send the form by April 30 (3 days from now). One form must be filled out for each month of missed payment. If a tenant is unable to fill out and transmit the form, they can also email or post a letter to the landlord with the same information. Direct link to form: www.mass.gov/doc/form-of-notice-and-documentation-covid-19-hardship-residential-tenant/download

- **HOMEOWNERS:** The Division of Banks has also put out a Frequently Asked Questions document regarding the moratorium on foreclosures. Direct link here: www.mass.gov/doc/chapter-65-dob-faq
- **SMALL BUSINESS TENANTS:** Similar to residential tenants, small businesses are also not subject to late fees or negative credit bureau reporting if they submit a form of notice to their landlord within 30 days of missed rent payment. Small businesses must submit two forms:
 - A certification of hardship: www.mass.gov/doc/form-of-notice-covid-19-hardship-small-business-tenant
 - Back up documentation: www.mass.gov/doc/documentation-of-financial-hardship-small-business-tenant
- **LANDLORDS:** The law allows the landlord to use last month's rent to pay for certain expenses including, but not limited to, mortgage payments, utilities, repairs and required upkeep. However the landlord must send a form of notice to the tenant when doing so. The form is here: www.mass.gov/doc/notice-to-tenant-use-of-advance-rent-payment
- **Help with Rent**
 - List of regional agencies, see www.masshousinginfo.org/regional-agencies.
 - Additional information about resources for tenants is available at www.mhp.net/news/2020/resources-for-tenants-during-covid-19-pandemic.
- You will not be subject to late fees or a negative report to a credit bureau if you certify to your landlord in writing within 30 days from the missed payment that your non-payment of rent is due to a financial impact from COVID-19. If possible, you should use the approved form at: <https://www.mass.gov/lists/moratorium-on-evictions-and-foreclosures-forms-and-other-resources>. If you cannot access the form on this website, you can ask your landlord to provide the form to you. You may also send a letter or email so long as it contains a detailed explanation of your household loss in income or increase in expenses due to COVID-19.

Department of Community and Housing Development (DHCD)

- Information including updates for Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) Program - [www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-dhcd-website#residential-assistance-for-families-in-transition-\(raft\)-program-and-covid-19-state-of-emergency-](http://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-dhcd-website#residential-assistance-for-families-in-transition-(raft)-program-and-covid-19-state-of-emergency-)
- [RAFT Policy Changes during COVID-19.php](http://www.mass.gov/info-details/raft-policy-changes-during-covid-19)

CHAPA has adapted operations and policy priorities. COVID-19 Affordable Housing Resources: www.chapa.org

Housing Consumer Education Centers - Download the [Covid-19-Housing-Resources.pdf](#) flyer.

Unemployment

Mass.gov has an online, virtual town hall that will teach you how to sign up for unemployment. Visit www.mass.gov/forms/massachusetts-department-of-unemployment-assistance-dua-virtual-town-halls.

Or visit the State Unemployment Insurance page for online application forms, as well as links to rules and exceptions during the Covid-19 pandemic. www.mass.gov/unemployment-insurance-ui-online.

Food

Visit foodpantries.org to see all of the food pantries in MA.

Senate President Karen Spilka's MetroWest Resource page has many local food sources: karenspilka.com/updates/2020/3/13/metrowest-covid-19-resources

Project Bread has additional food sources: www.projectbread.org/get-help.

Massachusetts residents can use SNAP benefits to purchase groceries online via Walmart and Amazon, with more grocery retailers hopefully joining the program soon. Visit Mass.gov for more information. The state's Online Purchasing Program Outreach Flyers are now available in Spanish.

MassHealth Food Assistance Flyers

- [Food Assistance.php](#) - English
 - [Asistencia alimentaria durante la emergencia por COVID-19.php](#)
Spanish
-

2020 Census

Complete your census! This information is completely confidential. Please let us know if you have questions.

Visit the Revupma.org page for more information and resources about the

Census.

To participate in the upcoming census, visit
www.censuscounts.org.

Activist Resources and Directories

National Contact Information

[Directory of House of Representatives](#)

[Directory of Senators](#)

Senator Edward J. Markey

Address:

255 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Phone:

(202) 224-2742

Contact:

www.markey.senate.gov/contact

Website:

<http://www.markey.senate.gov/>

Senator Elizabeth Warren

Address:

317 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Phone:

(202) 224-4543

Contact:

<https://www.warren.senate.gov/contact/shareyouropinion>

Website:

<http://www.warren.senate.gov/>

State Government Contact Information

[Directories of State Senators and Representatives](#)

[Contact Governor Baker](#)

WhereDoIVoteMa.com - Enter your address, and get a list of all of your elected officials.

National Resources

Save My Care - a movement to bring together families, advocates and health care providers to protect the health and financial security of all Americans. [Visit the website.](#)

National Council on Independent Living has Action Alerts for issues on the table in Washington. [Visit the Advocacy Monitor webpage.](#)

Join REV UP - Make the disability vote count!

For more information, visit www.revupma.org.

And follow our [Face Book page!](#)



MA Tales of Independence

Visit our video projects at: www.matalesofindependence.net.

The concept and history of Independent Living are complex. MA Tales of Independence is a collection of videos by people who are successfully living independently. Each person tells their story including things like: how they achieved independence, why independence is important to them and what barriers they had to overcome. Some of our videos have historical information about the struggle and others are about growing up today. Most have college degrees, jobs and families.





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