

RPC+ | WE+

One church. *Three locations.*

Currently, there are a number of measures being considered to help families financially over the coming weeks. So far, most larger companies that are closing are committing to pay employees. Retail and service industries like restaurants, movie theaters, etc., will be the hardest hit, especially in areas that are requiring those establishments to eliminate in-person service or shut down completely. People who anticipate having trouble making payments should review the “Steps to Take” list below. They should also seek financial assistance options in their areas (see “Food and Financial Assistance Resources” section below).

Steps to Take If You’re Concerned About Paying Bills

- If you haven’t looked at a budget in a while, now’s the time to do so. [Every Dollar](#) is a great free app to use to get a budget together.
- Get clarity, where possible, from your income sources as to what the reality will look like over the coming weeks.
- Cut spending to bare necessities. If you can’t pay all of your bills, [Dave Ramsey](#) recommends you spend your money on these four items first and in this order:
 - Food
 - Utilities
 - Shelter
 - Transportation
- If you’re still not able to cover all of your expenses, identify payments that can be deferred:
 - Call creditors to explain your situation. You can ask for temporary relief on your monthly payments. If you offer to still send some money, even if it’s a smaller amount than your typical payment, they might be more willing to work with you.
 - If you have federal student loans, you can forbear (interest accrues) or defer (interest doesn’t accrue on subsidized federal loans) your loan payments.
- If you’re paying extra on debt(s) right now and have less than one to two months’ worth of expenses in an emergency fund, it might not be a bad idea to temporarily stop extra payments and then restart them once things settle down.
- [Enroll for health insurance](#), if you can.
- Use this time to get a game plan together and gather information, as there may be more changes coming.

National Relief Measures

- Effective Immediately:
 - Interest is being waived on federal student loans. Details are still being finalized, but it sounds like monthly payments won’t be reduced. Instead, more of the minimum payment will go to principal, since they won’t be charging interest. In short, this won’t result in short-term relief.
 - The IRS has said tax payments will be deferred with no interest or penalties for a designated time.
 - Foreclosures and evictions will be suspended on all HUD-owned properties until the end of April.

- Foreclosures will be suspended for a designated period on mortgages backed by the FHA, Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac.
- Free COVID-19 testing to anyone, regardless of insurance status
- Emergency paid leave for up to three months if you are sick, quarantined, or taking care of a sick family member. It would be 2/3 of your normal salary and doesn't apply if you receive unemployment compensation (employers with fewer than 500 employees).
- Paid sick leave for two weeks (employers with fewer than 500 employees).
- Proposed Ideas/Not in Place:
 - Potential payroll tax cut for employees through the end of 2020 (Social Security 6.2% and Medicare 1.45%). This would mean eliminating these tax deductions out of paychecks moving forward.
 - Stimulus checks sent directly to American households in two rounds. The first round would begin April 6 and the second would be May 18. Amounts could vary based on income and family size.
 - \$300 billion small business loan program to provide companies with 500 or less employees access to funds to continue paying employees.

Local Relief Measures

- Rent
 - Various housing authorities in the area are halting evictions for a designated period.
- Utilities
 - [Certain Texas retail providers](#) have instituted a late fee and disconnection suspension for electricity and natural gas customers.
- Cell Phone/Internet
 - [Xfinity](#) will not disconnect or add late fees for customers who contact the company. Customers will also have added benefits, including free Wi-Fi hotspots for a designated period.
 - [AT&T](#), [Verizon](#), [Sprint](#) and [T-Mobile](#) are providing resources to their customers, which include leniency on late payments.
- Unemployment Insurance
 - Go to: [Texas Workforce Commission](#)
 - For people that don't qualify for traditional unemployment, like freelancers, [here's another option](#).
- Small Businesses
 - Contact a [Small Business Development Center](#) for free guidance.
 - [Small Business Administration](#)

Food and Financial Assistance Resources

- Sites to Find Financial Assistance Resources
 - [auntbertha.com](#)
 - [unitedwayhouston.org](#) or dial 211 from any phone
- Food Pantries, Rent and Utility Assistance
 - [Second Mile Mission Center](#)
 - [Attack Poverty](#)
 - [Katy Christian Ministries](#)
- [Student Meals](#)



**LOVE YOUR
NEIGHBOR**

CARING FOR THE RPCIWE FAMILY & COMMUNITY