



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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SUMMER 2020



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COVID-19: Working to recover and reopen

I'm grateful for our community's cooperation and patience in the past few months, as we have worked together to slow the spread of COVID-19.

The past few months have required sacrifices none of us ever expected to make. Delaware County was hit hard by this virus. We've lost far too many neighbors, and I know many community members have struggled with the economic impacts from the pandemic.

But it's because of your efforts to slow the spread of the virus that we've been able to move forward in the Governor's reopening phases. While we are reopening our economy, we must remain vigilant to keep the spread of COVID-19 to a minimum. Please, keep washing your hands, practicing social distancing, and wearing a mask when you are out.

In recent months, I've worked to put your needs first as we made our way through this crisis. I've fought for additional funding to support small businesses, volunteer fire and EMS companies, health care workers and more. As we move forward, it will be critical that we protect those most vulnerable to the virus and support the front-line workers who have continued to work every day to keep us healthy.



Information has changed rapidly during the pandemic, and I've worked to keep you informed through my weekly e-mails and social media channels. You'll find more helpful resources in this newsletter.

My physical office closed to in-person visitors when the Stay-at-Home order started on March 16th, but my staff and I continued to work remotely – assisting over 4,000 neighbors over the past three months – with everything from unemployment and food assistance to help with small business loans.

We are following CDC guidance and have set up new safety measures in our Ridley and Brookhaven offices. We are now accepting in-person visits through appointment only. Please call our office to make your appointment.

To stay informed, you can sign up for my emails by visiting www.RepLeanne.com or follow [Facebook.com/RepLeanne](https://www.facebook.com/RepLeanne) or [@RepLeanne](https://twitter.com/RepLeanne) on Twitter.

Stay up to date!

For the latest on COVID-19 in Pennsylvania and our community, please check out the following resources.

Health Department: www.health.pa.gov

Delaware County: www.delcopa.gov

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention: www.cdc.gov

My website: www.RepLeanne.com

Greater Philadelphia Coronavirus Helpline: 1-800-722-7112

Partnership with Chester County Health Department

Because Delaware County does not have a health department, the PA Department of Health approved a partnership with Chester County's Health Department to make sure Delaware County is able to respond to COVID-19. Chester County has provided data and contact mapping on cases, expanded testing and more. In late May, Delaware County Council voted to hire a firm to assist with a strategic plan for a county health department, with a goal of opening one by the end of 2021.

Find more information on COVID-19 data for Delaware County at www.chesco.org or by calling the Chester County Health Department at 610-344-6225.

Reopening phases: What 'green' means

Delaware County was moved to the "green" phase of Governor Tom Wolf's three-phase plan for safely reopening our economy on June 26.

In the green phase, we must still be cautious – masks are still required for entering a business, and it's important to keep practicing social distancing and wash hands frequently.

While most restrictions are eased in the green phase, some remain in place and there will be continued efforts to monitor public health indicators to ensure we keep each other safe and healthy.

For more information on the reopening process, visit www.governor.pa.gov/process-to-reopen-pennsylvania.

COVID-19 REOPENING PHASES		
	WORK & CONGREGATE SETTINGS	SOCIAL SETTINGS
RED PHASE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LIFE-SUSTAINING BUSINESSES ONLY RESTRICTIONS IN PLACE FOR PRISON + CONGREGATE CARE SCHOOLS CLOSED FOR IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION MOST CHILD CARE CLOSED 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> STAY AT HOME ORDERED LARGE GATHERINGS PROHIBITED RESTAURANTS/BARS LIMITED TO CARRY-OUT + DELIVERY ONLY TRAVEL FOR LIFE-SUSTAINING PURPOSES
YELLOW PHASE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TELEWORK MUST CONTINUE WHERE FEASIBLE BUSINESSES WITH IN-PERSON OPERATIONS MUST FOLLOW SAFETY ORDERS CHILD CARE OPEN COMPLYING WITH GUIDANCE RESTRICTIONS IN PLACE FOR PRISON + CONGREGATE CARE SCHOOLS CLOSED FOR IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> STAY AT HOME ORDER LIFTED FOR AGGRESSIVE MITIGATION LARGE GATHERINGS OF MORE THAN 25 PROHIBITED IN-PERSON RETAIL ALLOWED, CURBSIDE/DELIVERY PREFERRED INDOOR RECREATION, HEALTH AND WELLNESS FACILITIES REMAIN CLOSED OUTDOOR DINING PERMITTED BEGINNING JUNE 5
GREEN PHASE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TELEWORK STRONGLY ENCOURAGED BUSINESSES WITH IN-PERSON OPERATIONS MUST FOLLOW UPDATED BUSINESS AND BUILDING SAFETY REQUIREMENTS ALL BUSINESSES OPERATING IN THE YELLOW PHASE UNDER THE 50% LIMITATION MAY INCREASE TO 75% OCCUPANCY PRISON AND HOSPITAL RESTRICTIONS DETERMINED BY INDIVIDUAL FACILITIES CONGREGATE CARE RESTRICTIONS IN PLACE CHILD CARE MAY OPEN COMPLYING WITH GUIDANCE CONSTRUCTION BACK TO FULL CAPACITY WITH SAFETY MEASURES IN PLACE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CHANGING BEHAVIOR FOR A NEW NORMAL LARGE GATHERINGS OF MORE THAN 250 PROHIBITED RESTAURANTS AND BARS OPEN AT 50% OCCUPANCY PERSONAL CARE SERVICES (INCLUDING HAIR SALONS AND BARBERSHOPS) OPEN AT 50% OCCUPANCY AND BY APPOINTMENT ONLY INDOOR RECREATION, HEALTH AND WELLNESS FACILITIES, AND PERSONAL CARE SERVICES OPEN AT 50% OCCUPANCY WITH APPOINTMENTS STRONGLY ENCOURAGED ALL ENTERTAINMENT OPEN AT 50% OCCUPANCY

*Graphic shows reopening phases as of 6/26/20

Unemployment Compensation claims surge

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a historic surge in the number of people seeking unemployment compensation in Pennsylvania.

Since mid-March, more than 2 million people filed for unemployment benefits, more than ever before in history.

In addition to regular unemployment, the federal CARES Act expanded unemployment benefits through new programs, including:

- Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, for gig workers, self-employed workers and independent contractors.
- Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation, an additional \$600 per week for unemployment recipients for eligible weeks through July 25.
- Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation, which provides an additional 13 weeks of benefits for those who have exhausted their regular 26 weeks of coverage.

In May, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill called the Heroes Act (HR 6800) that would extend some of these programs past the current July deadline, but the U.S. Senate has not yet taken up that bill. The Heroes Act would extend both the additional unemployment funds to traditional unemployment insurance, as well as PUA through the rest of 2020 (and in some cases beyond, if the recipient does not use all of their benefits before the end of the year). Call your U.S. senators if you would like to see the Heroes Act become law.

For the latest updates, visit the state's Unemployment Compensation website at www.uc.pa.gov to find out if you are eligible for benefits. The site has been updated regularly and contains answers to frequently asked questions.

My office has helped over a thousand community members navigate the UC process since the pandemic started, and we continue to offer assistance in any way we can. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to my office.

Emergency Assistance Program extended until July 12

The Emergency Assistance Program, offered through the Department of Human Services, helps low-income families who have lost wages and are experiencing financial challenges due to COVID-19. The program application deadline was extended by one month, to July 12.

The program is open to families with a child under the

age of 18 or woman who are currently pregnant. Families who qualify for EAP will be eligible for a one-time payment equal to two months of TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) benefits.

You can apply at compass.state.pa.us or call 1-877-395-8930.



Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program
LIHEAP Recovery Crisis Program

LIHEAP Recovery Crisis benefits may be available if a household:

- Has their main or secondary energy source completely shut-off
- Is notified that their utility service will be shut off in the next 60 days
- Has broken energy equipment or leaking lines that must be fixed or replaced
- Is in danger of being without fuel in 15 days or less
- Owes funds to a utility provider that would constitute a service termination if not for the Public Utility Commission's moratorium on terminations

More information available at compass.state.pa.us

Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Recovery Crisis

LIHEAP provides assistance with home energy bills and normally runs from November through March, but the Recovery Crisis Program is a special program to help with Pennsylvanians' current energy costs, including critical air conditioning during the summer months. Assistance is available for both renters and homeowners.

The LIHEAP Recovery Crisis Program runs through August 31 or until all budgeted funding is expended. More information about the LIHEAP Recovery Crisis Program, including income limits, can be found at dhs.pa.gov/providers/Providers/Pages/LIHEAP-Recovery-Crisis-Program.aspx.

Call 1-877-395-8930 for more information.

Safe summer: Recreation and sports guidance

Pools and summer programs that provide care and enrichment for children are allowed to operate in yellow and green phase counties, provided that they follow CDC and Health Department guidance.

Guidance has also been issued for all levels of sports, which can be found at www.governor.pa.gov/covid-19/sports-guidance.

Please remember that information is always subject to change, so watch for updates at governor.pa.gov/process-to-reopen-pennsylvania or health.pa.gov. I'll continue to share important changes in my weekly email and on social media.

**Graphic shows guidance as of 6/22/20*

Summer Recreation Guidance

-  Children and youth programs can operate without a waiver if located in a yellow/green county. Must follow CDC guidance.
-  Overnight camps and organized team sports may begin or resume operations once in the green phase.
-  Programs must have a written health and safety plan that follows CDC guidance. Must post publicly on their website.
-  Activities can be held both indoors and outdoors.
-  The same kids and adults should be together daily, keeping groups separate.
-  Consider staggering playtimes, drop-offs, and arrivals.
-  All staff should wear cloth face coverings. Children do not need to. Older youth can when indoors or in crowded areas.
-  There is no restriction on enrollment based on where a child lives.
-  Public playgrounds may be used but follow CDC guidance.
-  Public bathing places and outdoor community pools are allowed to operate in the yellow and green phase counties.

Reopening schools and child care facilities

When school buildings closed early in the pandemic, it had a very real impact on our kids and families.

In early June, the Department of Education issued preliminary guidance for the reopening of K-12 schools as well as colleges and universities.

K-12 schools are allowed to resume in-person instruction and activities on July 1, following development of health and safety plans. The state's preliminary guidance is meant to be a starting point for schools, expected to change as circumstances continue to evolve.

For the latest updates, visit education.pa.gov.

Child care centers were allowed to reopen, while adhering to certain restrictions and CDC guidelines, in the yellow phase. The Department of Human Services compiled answers to frequently asked questions for parents and caregivers, which you can find at dhs.pa.gov.

If you are looking for child care, visit www.findchildcare.pa.gov.

Watch for COVID-related scams

Scammers will sometimes use a crisis, like the COVID-19 pandemic, to take advantage of consumers.

The PA Attorney General's office offered the following tips for protecting yourself.

- Check the websites and email addresses offering information, products, or services related to COVID-19. Be aware that scammers often employ addresses that differ only slightly from those belonging to the entities they are impersonating. For example, they might use "cdc.com" or "cdc.org" instead of "cdc.gov."
- Be wary of unsolicited emails offering information, supplies, or treatment for COVID-19 or requesting your personal information for other purposes.
- Do not click on links or open email attachments from unknown or unverified sources. Doing so could download a virus onto your computer or device.

The Attorney General's Office has also been investigating reports of price-gouging during the pandemic. You can report price-gouging by emailing pricegouging@attorneygeneral.gov. More than 5,000 tips had been received as of early June.

Rent/Mortgage Assistance available

In the state budget process, we allocated \$175 million in federal CARES Act money to provide rent and mortgage assistance.

The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency recently announced that renters and homeowners financially impacted by COVID-19 will be able to access applications for rent and mortgage relief starting June 29. Completed applications will be accepted starting July 6.

Full details on eligibility and more are available at www.phfa.org.



Property Tax/Rent Rebate deadline extended

The deadline for the 2019 Property Tax/Rent Rebate program has been extended until Dec. 31.

The program benefits eligible Pennsylvanians age 65 or older; widows and widowers age 50 or older; and people with disabilities age 18 or older. The income limit is \$35,000 a year for homeowners and \$15,000 annually for renters, and half of Social Security income is excluded. The maximum standard rebate is \$650, but supplemental rebates for qualifying homeowners can boost rebates to \$975.

This year, because of COVID-19, the Department of Revenue and the Treasury began distributing rebates early, and on a first-come, first-served basis.

For more information, visit revenue.pa.gov. Call my office at 610-534-6880 if you need assistance with your application.

It's OK to reach out for help

This health crisis has created additional stress for many. Please know that it's OK to ask for help.

Crisis Text Line: Text 'PA' to 741741 for help 24/7.

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: If you or someone you care about is experiencing thoughts of suicide, please call the Lifeline at 800-273-8255. [Español: 888-628-9454]

PA's new support helpline: Run by the Department of Human Services - 855-284-2494

Disaster Distress Helpline: Experiencing emotional distress due to COVID-19? Call 800-985-5990 or text 'TalkWithUs' to 66746 to connect with a trained crisis counselor.

Get Help Now for substance use disorder: Reach out for support from the Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs by calling 800-662-4357.

Veterans Crisis Line: Are you a veteran in crisis or concerned about one? Connect with caring, qualified responders, many of whom are veterans themselves, by calling 800-273-8255 and pressing 1.

ChildLine: The toll-free hotline, 800-932-0313, is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to receive reports of suspected child abuse.

Domestic Abuse Project of Delaware County Hotline: 610-565-4590

Delaware County Crisis Connection Team Warm Line: 855-464-9342
Certified peer specialists can provide support to individuals who struggle with mental and emotional challenges.

DCCCT Mobile Crisis Service: 855-889-7827 – a trained crisis response team, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Resources for small businesses

I know that small businesses – the backbone of our community – have struggled during this economic crisis. My staff and I have spoken to many small business owners who have faced very challenging circumstances.

I've pushed for more funding opportunities to help small businesses navigate the pandemic, and I'll continue to fight for ways to support them.

Here are some helpful business resources.



COVID-19 Relief Small Business Assistance grant program

I was proud to vote for a bill to allocate \$225 million in federal CARES Act funding to a new grant program for small businesses. This program will award grants of up to \$50,000 to small businesses that have been economically impacted by COVID-19.

There will be multiple application windows for this program. The first round opened June 30 and was anticipated to be open for 10 business days; applications will continue to be accepted after that for future rounds of funding.

A website has been set up to help small businesses with their applications. Businesses must apply through a Community Development Financial Institution. Visit <https://pabusinessgrants.com> for resources including an application preparation checklist, eligibility details, and a full list of participating CDFIs.

U.S. Small Business Administration

sba.gov

Find information on federal funding and resources, including the PPP loan program.

Department of Community and Economic Development

dced.pa.gov

Find resources including detailed

guidance for businesses, information on funding and state and federal programs, and more.

Bringing Back Delco Task Force

delcochamber.org/coronavirus

This partnership between Delaware County Council, the Delaware County Chamber of Commerce, and Delaware County Commerce Center is offering many resources for businesses navigating the reopening process. The task force has offered webinars and supply kits, as well as the state-issued guidance for various industries.

DelcoStrong Small Business Support program

delcostrong.delcopa.org

Delaware County has started a new grant program to assist local businesses who have been impacted by COVID-19.

A second round of this program, open to for-profit businesses and nonprofits, was slated to open July 7.

For for-profit businesses, the application period ends July 9. For nonprofits, details are still being released but the application will open July 7 and proposals are due July 21.

Future rounds of funding could be possible, so check delcostrong.delcopa.org for the latest information.



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Food assistance in the community



In May, I was happy to host a drive-thru food drive outside my Brookhaven office to allow community members to reach out and help their neighbors in a safe manner!

We were pleased to be able to help several local churches restock their food pantry shelves. In June, my office also assisted with several food drives hosted by Delaware County Council and the Delaware County Labor Council.



If you are in need of food assistance, you can find help in a list of community resources posted on my website, www.RepLeanne.com.

My office is reopening for in-person appointments!

My staff and I have worked remotely to serve you during this pandemic. With Delaware County in the green phase, my office will reopen with new safety precautions recommended by the CDC.

Our offices are open for in-person visits by appointment only. Please call the Folsom office at 610-534-6880 or the Brookhaven office (open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday) at 610-447-3297 to make an appointment.

Staff will be wearing masks, and we'll be practicing social distancing – and we ask that you do, too.

