



ALERTS

Indiana Governor Expands COVID-19 Executive Orders

March 20, 2020

Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb has taken profound steps through [executive orders](#) to combat the COVID-19 outbreak in the state. As the state and its local governments continue to operate in this new normal, the governor and his team have implemented numerous initiatives to help streamline the state's response and assist Hoosiers with the financial burdens caused by the pandemic.

Here is a review of the emergency actions instituted in Indiana from executive orders.

State of Emergency Extension

- When the current state of emergency expires on April 5, the Gov. Holcomb will extend it an additional 30 days.

K-12 Schools

- All K-12 public schools will remain closed until May 1. Nonpublic schools are also ordered closed. This date may be revised to extend through the end of the 2019-2020 school year, if circumstances warrant.
- All state mandated assessments will be canceled for the current academic year.

Economy

- The state of Indiana will align with the federal government to delay state income tax payments from April 15 to July 15.

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- Penalties will be waived for 60 days for property tax paid after May 11. The state will work with counties that may experience cash flow stress because of the delay.
- Providers of essential utility services such as gas and electric, broadband, telecommunications, water and wastewater services are prohibited from discontinuing service to any customer during the public health emergency.

Unemployment Insurance Benefits

- The state will interpret Indiana's unemployment laws to the broadest extent possible to cover Hoosiers who are out of work because of COVID-19.
- Benefits will still be paid to individuals who file their initial unemployment claims late.
- The Department of Workforce Development (DWD) will allow individuals to continue to accrue unemployment eligibility if they take work leave because of COVID-19.
- DWD will seek federal authorization to provide unemployment benefits for those who are not otherwise eligible for unemployment, such as individuals who have recently started a new job.
- For employers, DWD will not assess certain experience rate penalties because of employees who receive unemployment benefits due to COVID-19.

Housing

- No residential eviction proceedings or foreclosure actions may be initiated during the public health emergency.
- All public housing authorities are requested to extend deadlines for housing assistance recipients and required documentation to show eligibility for housing programs.

Social Services

- Participants in the Healthy Indiana Plan (HIP) and the Children's Health Insurance Program are not required to make premium payments during this time.
- Job search requirements are waived for those applying for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) benefits.
- The Family and Social Services Administration will seek a federal waiver to extend renewals for existing Medicaid and HIP recipients.
- Telehealth services for mental health, substance use disorder and prescribing for Medicaid covered services will be expanded.

Insurance

- The Indiana Department of Insurance commissioner will request that insurers institute a 60-day moratorium on policy cancellations for nonpayment of premiums.
- The commissioner will ask health insurers to cover COVID-19 testing without requiring prior authorization.
- The commissioner will also request that health insurers not increase prices or coverage costs that involve medical care for COVID-19.

Bureau of Motor Vehicles

- To limit the number of in-branch transactions, late fees will be waived for several driver's licenses and identification card renewals, vehicle registrations, titles and certain other transactions.

Veterans

- The requirements have been relaxed for veterans to qualify for awards from the Military Family Relief Fund.
- Awards in excess of \$2,500 may be approved by the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA) director during the public health emergency

Health and Professional Licensing

- Mental health professionals are permitted to practice via telemedicine.
- Advance practice registered nurses are allowed to provide services in multiple locations.
- The state health commissioner may waive requirements of the nursing home certificate of need statute to respond to COVID-19 issues for long-term care facilities.

Other Actions and Guidelines

- There are to be no in-person events of more than 50 people
- Bars, nightclubs and restaurants are required to close to in-person patrons and may provide takeout and delivery services through the end of March.
- Hospitals and ambulatory surgical centers should cancel or postpone elective and non-urgent surgical procedures immediately.
- The Indiana Office of Community and Rural Affairs (OCRA) can redirect block grant funds to assist with COVID-19 based on guidance from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).
- There is an automatic suspension of procurement rules as they apply to the purchase of goods, equipment and services by state and local governmental entities to respond

to COVID-19.

- Any state agency can extend any nonessential deadline of their agency for a period of no longer than 60 days.
- The head of any state agency is authorized to waive, suspend or modify any existing rule of their agency where the enforcement would be detrimental to the public welfare during this emergency.

For more information, contact the Barnes & Thornburg attorney with whom you work or Jake German at 317-231-7538 or jacob.german@btlaw.com.

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