

Nebraska State and Legislative Actions:

Governor Update

Gov. Ricketts began his Tuesday press briefing by proclaiming April as 'Child Abuse Prevention Month.' He said teachers play an important role in identifying abuse or neglect, and without students at school and nearby teachers, we need to pay extra close attention to children across the state.

Child Welfare

Stephanie Beasley, children and family services director for the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, joined Gov. Ricketts to discuss expanded SNAP benefits. She announced that Nebraska will extend the SNAP certification period for six months and provide for emergency allotments. Beasley also said that work requirements will be waived for the time being. SNAP applications increased significantly in March, up 35% from February.

Beasley also spoke more about child abuse prevention. She reported that the calls to the Child Abuse Hotline have decreased in the past few weeks, and school officials are concerned by the drop. She said one-third of calls normally come from schools, and reminded Nebraskans to report any concerns about child abuse or neglect by utilizing the Child Abuse Hotline (800-652-1999).

Partnerships

Gov. Ricketts took time to thank Omaha-based Werner Enterprises, a major trucking company, for bringing PPE and other needed supplies to Nebraska. He also thanked insurance provider Allstate for committing to refund portions of motor vehicle insurance premiums in Nebraska. Data show that travel in Nebraska is down 28%, and Allstate will be refunding part of insurance premiums due to reduced risk of accidents.

Q&A

Q: Is the 35% increase in SNAP applications unusual?

A: Beasley said that it is unusual to see that kind of increase. She said when looking at a year difference, applications are up 30% compared to March 2019.

Q: What is the increase to maximum allotment in SNAP benefits?

A: Beasley said that it could be substantial in April and May, but that the increase is extremely common when facing national emergencies or natural disasters.

Q: Where do we see the peak in Nebraska right now?

A: Gov. Ricketts said that we continue to predict the peak will occur around late April.

Federal:

Small Business Funding

In a [statement](#) issued Tuesday, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell announced that he would work to approve more funding for \$350 billion loan program passed in the CARES Act to aid small businesses amid the COVID-19 outbreak. ¹ McConnell said the \$350 billion loan program needs more funds due to the high demand for the federal assistance. The Treasury Department is expected to request at least \$200 billion more for the program on Tuesday, and McConnell will need the consent of Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer to pass the funding this week. With Congress in recess, McConnell said he hoped to pass the measure through unanimous consent or a voice vote.

“It is quickly becoming clear that Congress will need to provide more funding, or this crucial program may run dry. That cannot happen,” McConnell wrote.

¹ https://www.wsj.com/articles/mcconnell-says-small-business-loan-program-needs-more-funding-11586275489?mod=hp_lead_pos4