

Nebraska State and Legislative Actions:

Business Response Survey

On Wednesday, Gov. Pete Ricketts announced the launch of a business recovery survey, which will allow business owners and nonprofits to submit their input and suggestions regarding economic recovery. The survey was created in conjunction with the State of Nebraska, Nebraska Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the University of Nebraska. If you would like to participate in the survey, you can do so [here](#).

Childcare Relief

Gov. Ricketts issued an [executive order](#) on Wednesday, which will expand childcare options for families while providing relief for childcare centers that participate in the DHHS Child Care Subsidy Program. Included in the order:

- Licensed childcare providers can bill DHHS for days when a child is absent from care because the child's parent or legal caretaker chooses to keep the child home, or is unable to utilize care, due to the COVID-19 emergency.
- Families participating in the Childcare Subsidy Program may obtain in-home childcare when other childcare options are unavailable.
- A childcare program or center is eligible for this provision if they remain open, or reopen, and can bill for absent days.

ACA Enrollment

A group of Nebraska state senators wrote a letter to Nebraska's congressional representatives on Wednesday, asking them to work with the Trump administration to offer a special enrollment period through the Affordable Care Act. "We are facing a record surge in unemployment," the letter stated. "The administration must reopen the Affordable Care Act enrollment period to ensure that everyone who needs it has access to health insurance."

The letter was introduced by Lincoln Sen. Kate Bolz, alongside 10 Democrats and 2 Republicans. You can view a copy of the letter [here](#).

Governor Update

Thursday's press briefing began with Gov. Ricketts announcing that Google data shows Nebraskans are staying home. Residence numbers are up 11%, which is higher than last week. The governor also said that Nebraska has received \$625 million from the CARES Act, which is half of the expected \$1.25 billion

Nebraska is set to receive. Gov. Ricketts said the state is waiting further guidance on how the funds can be used but expects the Treasury to provide direction in the coming days.

Q&A

Q: Is a stay at home order needed considering Nebraska Crossing Outlet Mall is reopening?

A: Ricketts: Our current plan of action is working; the state has below 1,000 cases with our first case being reported March 1.

Q: What happens at the end of the 21-day stay home guideline?

A: Ricketts: I've begun having conversations, and I don't expect all guidelines to be lifted at once. The focus is to not burden or overwhelm the health care system.

Q: Have you asked Nebraska Crossing to delay reopening?

A: Ricketts: No, we are asking Nebraskans to exercise their personal responsibility to stay home.

Q: Omaha Tribe says the state withdrew an offer of aid to them, why?

A: Ricketts: The federal stimulus bill provides aid directly to tribes.

Q: Why did you reject to put Grand Island under a stay-at-home order, since the number of cases per capita there is higher than in New York?

A: Ricketts: Our plan is working as the health care system is not stressed, and we are offering help in Grand Island with testing and contact tracing.

Federal:

SBA Loans

On Thursday, the Small Business Administration announced it had officially run out of money for the Paycheck Protection Program. Banks received notice Wednesday evening that the funds had been nearly exhausted. "Once the authorization limit is reached, SBA will not be able to accept any new applications for the Paycheck Protection Program," the notice stated. "SBA is unable to maintain a queue for PPP applications." ¹

Negotiations for additional funds to the program continue, with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi insisting additional funding is needed for state and local governments and hospitals.

Emergency Funding

On Wednesday, Senate Democratic leadership unveiled a new proposal that would expand coronavirus testing across the United States. Sen. Patty Murphy of Washington, alongside Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, revealed a new plan to provide \$30 billion in emergency funding that would expand testing efforts, while building a system to administer the tests. In addition, the funding would go

¹ <https://www.cnn.com/2020/04/16/politics/small-business-loan-fight-congress-negotiations/index.html>

toward “optimizing the national supply chain for manufacturing tests and developing different types of tests for monitoring and controlling COVID-19.”²

“Testing is the best tool we have to fight the virus today,” Schumer said. While Congress is out of session until May 4, Schumer said he hopes this proposal can be included in a possible fourth emergency relief bill.

Remote Voting

On Thursday, House Rules Committee Chairman Jim McGovern recommended pursuing a rule change pertaining to. The change would allow lawmakers to let other members vote on their behalf if they are unable to vote in person. This could be done by allowing lawmakers to choose another member to vote on their behalf, which would trim down the number of members present in the chamber and allow lawmakers who are unable to be there to still vote. McGovern said the change would be temporary and only last throughout the coronavirus pandemic.

The measure would require overall support from both parties in order to be approved. In addition, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi would have to reach an agreement with House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy confirming the change could be implemented by unanimous consent or voice vote to keep members from coming back to Washington.³

² <https://thehill.com/homenews/senate/492945-senate-democrats-unveil-30-billion-emergency-funding-plan-to-ramp-up>

³ <https://www.cnn.com/2020/04/16/politics/proxy-voting-house-of-representatives/index.html>