



Governor Closes State Offices for Non-Essential Personnel

State Employees Directed to Work Remotely When Possible

On Monday, Governor Mike Parson announced state office buildings and the Capitol will be closed to non-essential personnel starting March 24. The order extends to April 6. He said state employees would work remotely when possible. The closure will not apply to prisons, veterans homes, and other state-run facilities that are already operating with limited public access. Governor Parson's memo to state employees is available [here](#).

The Governor also issued an [Executive Order](#) to suspend any prohibitions on the sale of unprepared food by restaurants. He said this would help address increased demand for food and assist restaurants in selling some of their inventory.

Several groups have issued letters to Governor Parson recommending a statewide stay-at-home order. St. Louis City and St. Louis County were the first Missouri jurisdictions to direct residents to stay at home, with exceptions for essential activities. Others have issued similar orders, including [Boone County](#) and the [Kansas City area](#). During Monday's press conference, Governor Parson said a statewide stay-at-home order was not appropriate at this time. Rather, he exhorted residents to follow the statewide [social distancing order](#), which directs Missourians to avoid gatherings of over ten people.

During Tuesday's press conference, Department of Public Safety (DPS) Director Sandra Karsten said Parson redirected \$18 million from department budgets in order to acquire personal protective equipment (PPE). This money largely came from the Department of Social Services, the Department of Health and Senior Services, and DPS. Karsten said the state has placed orders for \$17.3 million worth of PPE.

State agencies' responses to the COVID-19 pandemic are continuing and rapidly changing. Below are recent updates from Missouri departments:

- According to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, schools will not be required to make up the days/hours lost due to COVID-19 this school year. Missed calendar hours will not affect the calculation of average daily attendance. Additionally, Missouri is cancelling statewide-required assessments for the remainder of this school year.
- The Department of Social Services received a waiver from the federal government to

extend Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) certification periods by six months for re-certifications due in March, April, and May. This will prevent SNAP benefits from ending during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- As part of the federal Families First Act, Missouri will issue Pandemic Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (P-SNAP) benefits. This means all households currently eligible for SNAP will receive the maximum amount for the household size. Additionally, since school districts are closed, families with children eligible for free or reduced lunch will receive an additional benefit for March, April, and May. This is meant to help make up for the meals that otherwise would have been provided in school.
- Mo HealthNet released guidance that Medicaid providers do not have to receive approval to provide services to eligible participants in different facilities or at different sites.
- All Missouri Job Centers will be closed to in-person services through March 27. Services can still be accessed by calling 1-888-728-JOBS or online at jobs.mo.gov.