



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## GOVERNOR NED LAMONT

March 26, 2020

The Honorable Donald Trump  
The President of the United States  
The White House  
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Through: Mr. W. Russ Webster  
Regional Administrator  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
Region 1  
99 High Street, 6<sup>th</sup> floor  
Boston, MA 02110

### **Re: Major Disaster Declaration for COVID-19**

Dear President Trump:

Under the provisions of Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5207 (Stafford Act), and implemented by 44 CFR §206.36 (major disaster declarations requests), I request that you declare a major disaster for all eight Connecticut counties as a result of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) beginning on January 20, 2020, and continuing.

Specifically, I am requesting Public Assistance (PA) category B<sup>1</sup>, including direct federal assistance and four supplemental assistance programs under the Individual Assistance (IA) Program: Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA), Crisis Counseling Program (CCP), Disaster Case Management (DCM) and Disaster Legal Services (DLS). Additionally, I am requesting the Individuals and Households Program Other Needs Categories of Child Care Assistance and Funeral Assistance. I am requesting these programs for all Connecticut Counties: Fairfield, Hartford, Litchfield, Middlesex, New Haven, New London, Tolland, and Windham.

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<sup>1</sup> Public Assistance Program, Category B, is currently covered under the existing COVID-19 Emergency Declaration EM 3439, but is included here as a safeguard.

United States Health and Human Services Secretary Alex M. Azar II declared a public health emergency for the United States on January 31, 2020, pursuant to Section 319 of the Public Health Service Act. The World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic on March 11, 2020. A National Emergency was declared by President Trump on March 13, 2020, pursuant to Section 201 and Section 301 of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C § 1621), as well as an Emergency Declaration for all states pursuant to Section 501(b) of the Stafford Act.

As of March 25, 2020, the total number of residents that have tested positive in the State is 875. Cases have been confirmed in all eight Connecticut counties. Nineteen (19) residents have died as a result of COVID-19; 113 are currently hospitalized. A total of 5898 tests have been conducted in both state and private laboratories. The number of confirmed cases continues to rise exponentially daily, both because of increased testing and also as the spread of contagion increases. Over the last two days, we have had 400 new cases.

As a neighboring state to New York, with thousands of residents who work in or travel to New York daily, Connecticut is within the epicenter of infection. The virus knows no state boundaries, as demonstrated by the hundreds of positive cases in Fairfield County.

Also, on March 20, 2020, I requested federal authorization and funding to activate the Connecticut National Guard pursuant to 32 U.S.C. 502(f) to conduct operational missions to preserve life and property within the state in response to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). On March 22, 2020, the President approved Major Disaster Declarations for New York, California and Washington, and provided additional Federal Support for the Governors' Use of the National Guard to Respond to COVID-19. I request inclusion of this additional authority for federal support to provide for the use the National Guard under the authority of 32 U.S.C. 502(f) with broad mission authority to respond to COVID-19 including the use of logistic, medical, transportation, security, rotary and fixed wing aviation, cyber, incident assessment and awareness, and engineering assets to support to civil authorities.

### **Implementation of the State Emergency Operations Plan and Actions Taken by the State**

The unusual severity and magnitude of this event has required the state to take unprecedented measures to save lives, protect public health and safety and to lessen the spread of COVID-19. In accordance with 44 C.F.R. §206.36 and in order to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, I took appropriate action under state law. I directed the execution of the State Emergency Operations Plan in accordance with Section 401 of the Stafford Act and the activation of the State Emergency Operations Center, beginning on January 31, 2020. On March 10, 2020, I declared a public health emergency and civil preparedness emergency throughout the State pursuant to §§ 19a-131a and 28-9 of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS). Under this declaration, additional measures have been taken to protect public health and safety through 14 Executive Orders, Executive Order 7A-7M. Additional Executive Orders follow daily in an effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19 by, among other actions, instituting aggressive social distancing measures, closing schools and non-essential businesses, and waiving and modifying laws, regulations and policies to enable rapid and nimble medical and operational response.

Over the last two weeks, the daily lives of all Connecticut residents have been entirely altered. In anticipation of temporary school closures by local and regional boards of education, I issued Executive Order No. 7 on March 12<sup>th</sup> – modifying §§ 10-15 and 10-16 of the Connecticut General Statutes, which require mandatory minimum days and hours for public schools. In addition, gatherings of 250 people or more were prohibited until April 30, 2020, and then modified to 50 or less by a subsequent Executive Order. Limitations were set on visitation at nursing homes, residential care homes, §19a-550(b)(12) of the Connecticut General Statutes was modified to authorize the Commissioner of Public Health to issue restrictions on the number, category and frequency of outside visitors.

Under Executive Order No. 7A, issued on March 13<sup>th</sup>, I authorized the Commissioner of Public Health to issue orders restricting entrance into nursing home facilities, residential care homes or chronic disease hospitals that she deems necessary to protect the health and welfare of patients, residents, and staff. I expanded restrictions and modified sections of the CGS to suspend requirements for in-person open meetings, waived face-to-face interview requirements for Temporary Family Assistance, and provided flexibility to maintain Adequate Childcare Resources.

In accordance with the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Connecticut Department of Public Health recommendations for cancellation of large gatherings and social distancing in smaller gatherings I took further actions under Executive Order No. 7C. On March 15<sup>th</sup>, I ordered the cancellation of all public school classes effective March 17, 2020, until March 31, 2020. Again, by subsequent Executive Order, that cancellation has been extended to April 20, with the likelihood of further cancellation. I directed the State Agencies of Education, Public Health, Children and Families and the Office of Early Childhood to implement measures to provide for the health, nutrition, safety, educational needs and well-being of children during the class cancellation period. I expanded the limitation of visitors to facilities operated by the Department of Developmental Services, as deemed necessary by their Commissioner and the State Department of Public Health.

As COVID-19 continued to spread, I partnered with Governor Andrew M. Cuomo of New York, Governor Phil Murphy of New Jersey and Governor Tom Wolf of Pennsylvania to develop consistent strategies to slow the transmission of the virus. Expanding existing Executive Orders, closures were enacted in all four states. I issued Executive Order No. 7D, prohibiting social and recreational gatherings of 50 or more people through April 30, 2020. Effective at 8 p.m. on March 16, 2020 through April 30, 2020, all restaurants, eating establishments and bars were closed to all service except takeout and delivery. Additionally, I ordered the closure of gyms, sports, fitness and recreation facilities and movie theaters. I also coordinated with Connecticut's two tribal nations on temporary closure of their casino operations. Under Executive Order No. 7E, I further suspended in-person requirements and extended the time period for various permits.

Under Executive Order No. 7F, I enacted further measures due to the accelerating spread of disease in Connecticut. On March 18, I ordered the closure of the common areas of large shopping malls. Under this directive, stores with exterior entrances could remain open as long as they used exterior entrances and exits. Public Amusements, which include amusement parks,

aquariums, zoos, bowling alleys, etc., whether indoors or outdoors were closed as of March 18 through April 30.

I issued Executive Order No. 7G on March 19<sup>th</sup>, which, among other measures, suspended non-critical court operations and requirements and further clarified limits on restaurants, bars and private clubs. Additionally, I ordered the closing of barbershops, hair salons, tattoo or piercing parlors, estheticians and related businesses effective 8 p.m. on March 20<sup>th</sup>. This order also extended flexibility for certain medical providers to perform telehealth services.

As the COVID-19 continued to spread rapidly throughout the State, additional, more aggressive actions were taken. I enacted the “Stay Safe, Stay Home” initiative. This initiative includes guidance for residents on canceling or postponing non-essential gatherings, staying at least 6 feet away from each other whenever possible, limiting outdoor recreational activities or sports to non-contact, using precautionary sanitizer practices such as washing hands with soap and water for at least twenty seconds, using hand sanitizer, etc.

Under Executive Order No. 7H, I prohibited all in-person functions of all non-essential businesses starting at 8:00 p.m. on March 23 through April 22, 2020, unless extended. Under this order, all businesses and not-for profit entities in the state shall employ, to the maximum extent possible, any telecommuting or work from home procedures that they can safely employ, reducing their in-person workforce by 100%. Essential businesses or entities providing essential goods, services or functions shall not be subject to these in-person restrictions. Guidance on essential businesses, which shall include but not be limited to the 16 critical infrastructure sectors as defined by the Department of Homeland Security was provided by the Department of Economic and Community Development. Under Executive Order No. 7I, I suspended additional requirements, moving most municipal meetings to remote access, and extended deadlines for various municipal functions. Additional Executive Orders continue to build on the system of distancing and public health response that we are implementing.

We continue to provide Connecticut residents with information and guidance through the use of United Way 2-1-1, a dedicated state coronavirus website ([ct.gov/coronavirus](http://ct.gov/coronavirus)) and frequent press releases and conferences. Residents have been urged to sign up for CTAAlert, Connecticut’s emergency alerting and notification system to receive updated information and alerts. The current CTAAlert messaging delivered to over 4 million phone numbers in Connecticut reminds residents to “Stay Safe, Stay Home” and provides a link to the State’s coronavirus website, [www.ct.gov/coronavirus](http://www.ct.gov/coronavirus). Additionally, coordination continues with our municipal and tribal leaders through regular conference calls. Of our 169 towns and 2 tribal nations, 129 have issued local emergency declarations. Our State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) has received requests for personal protective equipment, durable medical equipment, and supplies. Emergency Support Function taskforces have been stood up, allowing for coordination amongst state agency partners and non-governmental organization partners including CT Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (CT VOAD) to address the needs of residents.

State agencies, municipalities, private sector, volunteers, and non-governmental organizations are working together, along with federal partners, to try to mitigate some of the effects of this unprecedented pandemic. We have asked for assistance from the US Army Corps of Engineers

to help evaluate and inspect sites for possible retrofitting as medical surge locations. We are seeking Federal Medical Stations to supplement our acute care hospitals. The Connecticut Military Department is helping in myriad ways, including setting up our state mobile field hospital units, delivering supplies, and helping with planning and implementation of medical surge locations, including the planned deployment of Alaskan shelters.

The first case to affect Connecticut was announced on March 6<sup>th</sup> when a New York resident employed by a Connecticut hospital tested positive. The first COVID-19 positive test of a Connecticut resident was confirmed on March 8, 2020. At this time, the total number of residents that have tested positive in the State is 875. Nineteen residents have died as a result of COVID-19, another 113 are hospitalized. A total of 5898 tests have been conducted in both state and private laboratories. The number of confirmed cases continues to rise by the hundreds daily.

### **Local Declarations:**

As of the date of this letter, 129 out of 169 local governments have declared states of emergency and 114 have activated their Emergency Operations Centers in response to COVID-19.

### **Individual Assistance Declaration Factors:**

44 C.F.R. 206.48(b) establishes six factors for individual assistance requests. These include:

#### State Fiscal Capacity and Resource Availability

According to State and Federal Treasury reporting the State of Connecticut has total taxable resources of \$333.1 billion (US Treasury, 2017) and a gross domestic product of \$275,726.9 million (current-dollar GDP, BEA 2018)

#### Uninsured Home and Personal Property Losses

COVID-19 will not damage homes and property as in a natural disaster, but temporary housing and medical surge sites are going to be required to maintain isolation for high-risk individuals.

#### Disaster Impacted Population Profile

According to the Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) Program, 10.3% of Connecticut residents live below the poverty level. The table below provides additional demographic information for the State. It is important to note that, although the median household income is higher than the national average, the cost of living in Connecticut is also higher (107.8, compared with 100).

	<b>Average of Persons below Poverty Level<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Median Household Income<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Percentage of Elderly (65 and older)<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Percent Disabled<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Pre-Disaster Unemployment Rates<sup>3</sup></b>
<b>National Average</b>	13.1	60,293	15.2	12.6	3.6
<b>State Average</b>	10.3	76,366	16.4	11.0	3.7

<sup>1</sup> 2018 Poverty and Median Household Income Estimates, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) Program

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2018: ACS 5-year Estimates, percent 65 years and over

<sup>3</sup> CT Department of Labor, Labor Market Information January 2020

Additionally, Connecticut’s pre-disaster unemployment rate for January 2020 exceeded the national average. January 202 Labor Data showed 3.6% for the United States and 3.7% for the State of Connecticut. Over the last two weeks, however, as we continue to direct strict distancing rules, the State has received more than 100,000 unemployment compensation claims and the number continues to soar. The filings are over 20 times the normal volume. During the 2008 financial crisis, the average weekly claims received were in the order of 5,000. The attached chart gives a sense of the spike, but does not even capture the most recent surge.

Impact to Community Infrastructure:

The impact to the community infrastructure, to the entire fabric of the community, includes the following:

- Closure of schools requiring additional childcare and student meal solutions for students;
- Social distancing, isolation and quarantine measures directly impacting the community networks, including schools, churches, etc.;
- Isolation and self-quarantine measures impact the supply chain, including food and medical supplies;
- Restaurants, bars, clubs, malls, libraries, hair salons, barbershops, gyms, and myriad other places of entertainment, refreshment and are all closed;
- Fear and anxiety over the spread of COVID will require additional resources for crisis counseling.

The impact the COVID-19 outbreak will have on school systems and students across the state is immeasurable. Prolonged school closings will create additional challenges for students including those with special needs and economically-disadvantaged students. Connecticut has identified 16 priority school districts based on measures of educational and economic need, including eligibility for free and reduced-price school lunches, concentration of students on welfare and poor performance on state mastery tests. The absence of school services during and following this public health emergency, to these districts in particular, is likely to have significant and long lasting impacts on all students. As a state, we are pulling together to address these issues. Over 128 school districts are handing out meals at over 400 locations. Laptops have been donated for

schools to hand out to students who would not otherwise have this resource. But the challenges remain.

Additionally, mandatory closures and social distancing measures have interrupted the normal flow of support services upon which residents rely. Many of the support networks that exist in our communities, schools and churches have been suspended in a time of heightened anxiety and uncertainty. United Way 2-1-1, has received over 6500 calls to attendants and over 12,000 callers opting to listen to pre-recorded messaging. Call topics include: what can I do to protect myself, what should I do if I get sick, and do I need to be tested. But the individual calls for assistance are increasing. United Way 211 is also collecting offers of donations related to Personal Protective Equipment. Volunteer management systems are being put into operation. We have established ESF 6 Mass Care and ESF 14 Recovery groups to match needs with resources. But those needs are growing as exponentially as the illness. In order to provide additional support to residents, I am requesting the Crisis Counseling Program (CCP) to supplement our resources.

I am requesting Disaster Legal Assistance to provide resources for residents that may require help with a variety of legal issues that may arise from this pandemic, including insurance claims for doctor, hospital or loss of life claims. Additionally, I am requesting Disaster Case Management to assist residents in connecting to resources.

#### Casualties

As of March 25, the total number of residents that have tested positive in the State is 875. Nineteen residents have died as a result of COVID-19, another 113 are hospitalized. More cases will be identified as testing increases and the virus spreads across the state.

#### Disaster Related Unemployment

With the mandatory closures of non-essential business, unemployment insurance claims in the State have spiked to ten times over the normal rate. The effect of COVID-19 on our residents, business and non-profit communities is unprecedented. Due to the mandatory closures of schools and non-essential businesses, unemployment rates have surged in recent weeks. In January of 2020, Connecticut's employment rate was 3.7% with 72,273 residents reported as unemployed. Following the COVID-19 outbreak and the mandatory closure of non-essential businesses, the Department of Labor reported the submission of more than 100,000 unemployment claims in one week, more than ten times the average weekly total. This spike in claims is demonstrated in the *Status of Pending Unemployment Insurance (UI) Claim Activity* chart (enclosed). This trend is expected to continue as additional non-essential businesses close, requiring the need for federal Disaster Unemployment Assistance under Section 410 of the Stafford Act.

In order to support our business community, I requested a Small Business Administration Declaration (SBA), under the provisions of Title 13 C.F.R. Part 123.3, on March 16, 2020. SBA approved my request and released the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) Program in all eight Connecticut Counties on March 17<sup>th</sup>. The state Department of Economic and Community

Development continues to develop and offer programs to assist businesses, particularly small businesses that are suffering from the closure of their doors.

A secondary impact of business closures, is continuing daycare costs. The majority of daycare center and provider contracts utilized in the state include a provision requiring regular payment when the center/provider is closed or if the family opts not to bring their children into the center. Families employed by non-essential businesses and non-profits across the state are not only unable to work to support their families but they must continue to pay their childcare provider. Additionally, members of our first responder and health care community have additional childcare needs due to their extended hours during COVID-19 response. Again, we have received some donations to keep day care facilities open, particularly for the children of our first responders and healthcare workers. But there are many other families facing child care challenges. I am requesting the Child Care Assistance program to assist families with these standard child care services fees and additional child care costs.

### **Disaster History**

The State of Connecticut has managed Public Assistance, Individual Assistance and the Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grant Program for several disasters over the past ten years.

DR-4410, Severe Storms and Flooding with an incident period of September 25-26, 2018. Total Public Assistance Grant funds obligated \$1,007,827.

DR-4385, Severe Storms, Tornadoes, and Straight-line Winds, with an incident period of May 15, 2018. Total Public Assistance Grant funds obligated \$16,727,174.

DR-4213, Severe Winter Storm and Snowstorm, with an incident period of January 26-28, 2015. Total Public Assistance Grant funds obligated \$9,603,757.

DR-4106 Severe Winter Storm and Snow Storm, with an incident period of February 8-11, 2013. Total Public Assistance Grant funds obligated \$31,099,393.

DR-4087 Hurricane Sandy, with an incident period of October 27-November 8, 2012. Total Public Assistance Grant funds obligated \$60,439,706. Total Individuals and Households Program funds approved \$15,411,911.

Additionally, our State and local agencies, including non-governmental organizations worked together with FEMA Region 1 to address the needs of the over 1,200 families (FEMA registrants) that self-evacuated to Connecticut following Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017. The estimated number of American citizens assisted by Connecticut after those storms is about 15,000.

In summary, I am requesting a major disaster declaration for all eight Connecticut counties, based on the impact of COVID-19, to include: Public Assistance (PA) category B and three supplemental assistance programs under the Individual Assistance (IA) Program: Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA), Crisis Counseling Program (CCP), and Disaster Legal



Services (DLS). Additionally, I am requesting the Individuals and Households Program including the Other Needs Category of Child Care Assistance, and Funeral Assistance.

I have determined that COVID-19 will be of such severity that effective recovery is beyond the capabilities of state and local governments and supplemental federal assistance is necessary.

I certify that for this major disaster, the state and local governments will assume all applicable non-federal shares of costs required by the Stafford Act.

I have designated Regina Y. Rush-Kittle as the Governor's Authorized Representative (GAR), William J. Hackett as State Coordinating Officer (SCO) and Brenda Bergeron as the alternate GAR and alternate SCO. They may provide further information or justification on my behalf, as requested or required.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Ned Lamont  
Governor, State of Connecticut

cc: James C. Rovella, DESPP Commissioner  
Regina Y. Rush Kittle, DESPP Deputy Commissioner  
William J. Hackett, State Emergency Management Director

Enclosures

Department of Labor Unemployment Claims Chart  
OMB No. 1660-0009/FEMA Form 010-0-13