Dear Friend:

We are facing an urgent situation with COVID-19, but I am confident that our strong, resilient community will meet the challenge together.

Many cities and counties in SD 29 and across the state have issued orders restricting all but essential personal errands and business to slow the spread of COVID-19.

This is an effort to "flatten the curve," or to slow the rate of infection, so that our health care system is not overwhelmed.

Elected officials, health authorities, and members of our community are working at all levels to ensure that we protect public health and respond to the financial needs of workers and businesses. It will be difficult, but we will be able to rebuild our local, state, and national economy.

Enclosed you will find information and links to local and state resources. This includes information on COVID-19 and your health, financial support for small businesses and workers, City and County orders prohibiting non-essential social and business interaction, housing and food support, volunteer opportunities, and even educational and fun things to do with your children.

As always, please contact my office directly at (915) 351-3500 or (512) 436-0129 if you need assistance.

Sincerely,
Senator José Rodríguez

COVİD-19 IN OUR COMMUNITY

The novel corona virus has spread across the world rapidly. There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. The best steps you can take is to prevent contracting the virus. Wash your hands thoroughly, for at least 20 seconds. Avoid touching your face, especially your eyes, nose, and mouth. Practice social distancing to the greatest extent possible. Stay informed and understand what’s needed from YOU.

If you are sick or have symptoms of COVID-19, stay at home! For info on what to do if you’re sick, call your primary care physician or the City of El Paso Department of Public Health at (915) 212-6843 or (915) 21-COVID or visit http://www.epstrong.org.

The hotline is open from 7 am to 8 pm on Monday to Friday, and from 10 am to 6 pm from Saturday to Sunday.

For a comprehensive local guide on health, education, and economic services, visit Paso del Norte Health Foundation.
Community spread means spread of an illness for which the source of infection is unknown. Avoid public places to prevent community spread and wash your hands frequently.

GOVERNMENT RESOURCES

State of Texas

If you need info from state agencies or resources related to COVID-19, visit https://texas.gov/#covid19.

For daily reports from the TX Dept. of Emergency Management, visit https://tdem.texas.gov/situation-reports/

Effective April 2nd, Governor Greg Abbott renewed and expanded his previous executive order, which includes following federal social distancing guidelines for COVID-19 until at least April 30th and keeps schools closed through May 4th.

El Paso Stay Home, Work Safe orders

The City and County of El Paso have issued additional restrictions in an amended Stay Home, Work Safe order. Generally, all residents are required to stay at home, and all public and private gatherings are prohibited. No one may congregate in any recreational area or facility, park, pool, or golf course. Travel is restricted to approved activities. Anyone returning from travel of 100 miles or more outside the City must self-quarantine for 14 days.

Put simply, everyone should limit their contact to those in their household (or in their workplace if they work at an essential business) and only travel outside their home for basic necessities like food, medications, gas, and banks.

County of El Paso Order
City of El Paso Order

If you are stopped by the police for compliance, KNOW YOUR RIGHTS.

Cd. Juarez

Stay up to date on measures that have been taken in Ciudad Juarez to slow the spread of the virus there.

Trans Pecos

Get updates and resources from the Big Bend Sentinel. Shelter in Place Orders have been issued in the City of Marfa, City of Presidio, Presidio County, Jeff Davis County, Culberson County, and Brewster County.

City of El Paso

For info and updates on COVID-19, visit www.epstrong.org or the City of El Paso Dept. of Public Health.

To report or inquire about COVID-19 compliance, call 311 or email COVIDCompliance@elpasotexas.gov

All public and private recreational areas and facilities, parks, pools, libraries, museums, golf courses, and the El Paso Zoo are closed until further notice.

El Paso County

The General Assistance Division provides resources to El Pasoans through community and social service programs. Call (915) 775-2700 to apply over the phone or click here to apply online for help with emergency rent/mortgage payments, utility assistance, food baskets/meals, and burial services.

El Paso County Courthouse

Facilities are limited to essential services only. Call (915) 546-2000 or visit www.epcounty.com with any issues or concerns relating to business with the County.
Flattening the curve ensures that our hospitals and healthcare system will be able to manage the spread of COVID-19.

GOVERNMENT RESOURCES (cont.)
El Paso Consolidated Tax Office
The El Paso Consolidated Tax Office is closed to the public for in-person services until further notice. Taxpayers can still conduct business with the office by mail, phone or online.

Taxpayers are encouraged to pay their property taxes through the following methods:

Mail: City Tax Assessor Collector, PO Box 2992, El Paso, TX 79999-2992
Phone: (915) 212-0106
Online: www.elpasotexas.gov/tax-office

For additional information, visit elpasotexas.gov/tax-office.

El Paso Sun Metro
Read EPSM news here. Highlights: free public transportation until further notice; implemented safety protocol; Streetcar service has been suspended.

HEALTHCARE RESOURCES
The Texas Department of State Health Services has extensive information about the virus and what you can do to prevent its spread. For that and other state information about the virus you may visit the Texas Department of State Health Services by clicking here.

The Senate Committee on Health and Human Services has compiled a comprehensive document with information for providers.

For the latest state waivers, visit Texas HHS COVID-19 Information for Providers.

Local Providers and Testing:
If you develop symptoms or feel sick, call your primary care physician to see if you should be screened for COVID-19.

If you do not have a primary care physician or are uninsured, call:
- (915) 212-6843 or (915) 21-COVID from 7 am to 8 pm on Mon-Fri, and from 10 am to 6 pm from Sat-Sun
- 2-1-1 and select option six for referral to a health care provider.

As of April 1st, the following criteria will be used to identify those who qualify for drive thru testing:
- First responders and health care workers with symptoms
- Persons 65 years of age or older with symptoms
- Persons any age with symptoms and an underlying medical condition
- Individuals evaluated by their medical provider and provided with a lab order through Quest Diagnostics

If you qualify, call (915) 212-0783 to make an appointment. You will not be asked for your citizenship or immigration status. Drive thru testing is available Mon-Sat from 7 am to 5 pm.

Texas Tech Physicians of El Paso and Centro San Vicente provide integrated primary and preventive care, including behavioral health, and are currently providing COVID-19 screening and testing.
HEALTHCARE RESOURCES (cont.)

NON-COVID-19 Healthcare Resources

Community Health Centers:
For non-COVID-19 health services, contact your primary care physician by phone. If you do not have one, you may contact Project Vida or University Medical Center by phone to make an appointment.

Behavioral Health Services:
Texas Health and Human Services Commission has launched a 24/7 statewide mental health support line to help Texans experiencing anxiety, stress or emotional challenges due to COVID-19. The service is available to everyone in Texas. Call toll-free at (833) 986-1919.

Emergence Health Network provides services for mental health, developmental disability, and related conditions for the people of El Paso County.

The El Paso Child Guidance Center continues to accept children (ages 2 and older) and families for mental health services and has openings available. EPCGC accepts Medicaid, some private insurances, and offers sliding scale. Call toll-free at (915) 562-1999 to schedule an appointment or for more info.

Aliviane continues to offer SUD services for individuals in recovery. For assistance you may call (915) 782-4000.

Project Vida is providing tele-health services for behavioral health with a sliding scale and on-line registration. LPC’s and LCSW’s are available as is support from their staff Child and Adolescent and Adult Psychiatrists. Medications are available for home delivery for patients. Substance Use Disorder Peer Recovery Services are available to insured and uninsured alike without regard to ability to pay. Call (915) 533-7057 to schedule.

Victims of Domestic Violence:
Center Against Sexual and Family Violence / Centro en Contra de la Violencia Sexual y Familiar will not turn away clients who are seeking shelter during this time of social isolation. Call (915) 593-7300 if you are facing sexual or family violence require support or assistance.

Reproductive Health Services:
Planned Parenthood currently offers urgent health services. Schedule pain/infection exams, suspected breast mass exam, emergency contraception, Depo Provera birth control and PrEP/PEP HIV prevention. Birth control is available via PPDirect telemedicine for patients 18 and older for pills/patch/ring. STI screening and treatments, and transgender patient appointments are also available.

You may also contact Project Vida for reproductive health services, excluding abortion and referrals for abortion. Project Vida is a Title X grantee and provides fully confidential family planning services to youth and adults, with on-demand visits. Confidential services are available for teens 15 years of age and older under Title X, at no cost depending on a person’s income. Testing, family planning, pre-natal and gyn services available. Insurances accepted but not required. Call (915) 533-7057 to schedule an appointment.

Diabetes Management Assistance:
The American Diabetes Association is providing support and guidance to constituents impacted by diabetes, who are at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19. You can access helpful resources, understand your risk, know your legal rights, and connect with community at diabetes.org/coronavirus. In addition, many people are now facing unexpected financial hardships.
HEALTHCARE RESOURCES (cont.)

If you are struggling to pay for insulin, the ADA has resources to help - visit InsulinHelp.org. Click here or call their center for Information at 1-800-DIABETES (800-342-2383).

HOUSING

Evictions

The City of El Paso has passed an ordinance prohibiting evictions during this state of emergency. Should you or someone you know be threatened with an eviction, whether residential or business, contact COVIDcompliance@elpasotexas.gov or the El Paso Police Department’s non-emergency line at (915) 832-4400.

You may also contact Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid, Inc. through their legal intake system at 1-888-988-9996.

“Self-help evictions are not allowed in Texas. This means landlords have to allow a legal process to remove their tenants. Evictions begin with a notice, followed by a lawsuit in Justice Court, a hearing and an appeal to county court, if necessary, and finally, a writ of process if the tenant has not moved out. The writs involve the constable and sheriff physically removing people and their belongings from the property. On March 19, 2020, the Texas Supreme Court paused all eviction proceedings until April 19, 2020 and writs until April 26, 2020, with the exception of cases involving a threat of harm or criminal activity. We hope this brings some peace of mind to tenants, but are aware that this does not waive their obligation to pay the rent - it only delays how quickly they can be removed from the home. This underscores the importance of emergency funds for tenants and their landlords.” -Veronica Carbajal, Attorney, TRLA, Inc.

El Paso County provides assistance for renters who qualify. The General Assistance Division provides resources through community and social service programs. Call (915) 775-2700 to apply over the phone or click here to apply online.

UNEMPLOYMENT AND SMALL BUSINESS RESOURCES

Unemployment Support

The 10-day investigation period for people applying for unemployment benefits has been waived. If your employment has been affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19), apply for benefits either online at any time using Unemployment Benefits Services or by calling TWC’s Tele-Center at 800-939-6631 from 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Central Time Monday through Friday.

Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid has provided a web page with resources, including questions employees may have about their legal rights and other questions regarding time off from work.

If you have been impacted by COVID-19, locate information and resources for employers seeking workers or as a jobseeker seeking employment or other support services when you sign-up for TWC COVID-19 updates.
Practice social distancing by keeping at least SIX FEET between you and the people around you.

UNEMPLOYMENT AND SMALL BUSINESS RESOURCES (cont.)

Small Business Resources
The programs and initiatives in the CARES Act aim to assist business owners. For a COMPLETE LIST of SBA programs click here.

Texas small businesses eligible for an SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan can directly apply for assistance. The online application is the fastest method to receive a decision about loan eligibility.

If you have questions about SBA resources call 1-800-659-2955 or disastercustomerservice@sba.gov.

If you are a small business and need capital to cover the cost of retaining employees, learn about the Paycheck Protection Program.

If you need a quick infusion of a smaller amount of cash to cover your business, consider applying for the Emergency Economic Injury Grant when you apply for an SBA loan.

If you might benefit from free counseling to help you navigate economic challenges related to COVID-19, consult with SBA resource partners who might help.

The Texas Senate Committee on Business and Commerce has compiled a comprehensive list of federal, state and other resources.

The Texas Comptroller’s office is providing assistance in the form of short-term payment agreements, and, in most instances, waivers of penalties and interest. Contact the Enforcement Hotline at 800-252-8880 to learn more or visit COVID-19 emergency response webpage for access to online tools, tutorials and other resources for tax services, and to establish 24/7 online account access with Webfile.

County and City of El Paso have partnered with LiftFund to bring relief to small businesses that are being impacted by COVID-19. LiftFund is offering 0% interest loans and grants to businesses who qualify.

Find additional grants here.

Microenterprise Support
Project Vida provides microenterprise technical assistance to help people understand and apply for the emergency federal funding. Learn more about microenterprise services here.

PUBLIC UTILITIES

El Paso City Council unanimously approved an ordinance that prevents utilities, including water, electricity, cable, internet and gas from being disconnected for late payment during the city’s coronavirus emergency.

The Public Utilities Commission, which regulates power, water, and sewer utilities across the state, has prohibited utilities from disconnecting services or charging late fees during the COVID-19 emergency.
PUBLIC UTILITIES (cont.)

If your service is in danger of being disconnected or are getting charged late fees for non-payment, please file a complaint via phone, web, or email: 888-782-8477, customer@puc.texas.gov, www.puc.texas.gov/consumer/complaint/Complaint.aspx

El Paso Electric
El Paso Water
El Paso Gas
AT&T
Spectrum

**While this ordinance prevents disconnection of services, it does not forgive outstanding balances or cancel your obligation to pay for service.**

Project BRAVO’s Comprehensive Energy Assistance Program (CEAP) assists low-income households in meeting their immediate energy needs through utility bill assistance and energy education that encourages consumers to control energy use and costs. The organization offers various resources for those who qualify.

FOODS, MEALS AND PROVISIONS

Special Shopping Hours for Vulnerable Populations

Special hours are offered for those aged 60+, pregnant women and those with compromised immune systems across El Paso:

- Walmart- 7am-8am every Tuesday
- Albertsons- 7am-9am every Tuesday and Thursday
- Whole Foods Market- 7am-8am each day
- Target- 8am-9am every Wednesday
- Vista Supermarket- 6:30am-7am each day
- Dollar General- 8am-9am each day

Food Assistance

WIC (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children)

There are additional options for certain food items WIC participants can buy. These food items include more options for milk, bread, rice, pasta and eggs. In addition, Texas WIC is permanently adding canned fruits and vegetables to the food package. Items at the grocery store with a pink sticker that says “WIC Approved” are products eligible for shoppers to purchase using WIC.

WIC participants can find detailed information on the Texas WIC website. WIC participants can also download the latest version of the MyTexasWIC shopping app on the Google Play Store or Apple App Store, which informs families what the allowable food items are on their benefit package.

Texas WIC is operating under modified services throughout the state to help keep clients and staff safe. Families may call their local WIC clinics to learn more about how they can receive services. Visit the Texas WIC website or call 800-942-3678 to find how your local clinic is handling local services.

For Students:

School Districts are offering free meals to all students under 18, regardless of which district you live in. Find a distribution site nearest you.
FOODS, MEALS AND PROVISIONS (cont.)

Use the TEA Meal Finder to locate school meals across Texas.

For Community:
One Grub Community offers free meals on a “Pay it Forward” basis. Contact to see if there are meals available at (915) 588-7078 or visit 901 Arizona St. Wed-Fri 8am-7pm/Sat 10am-2pm.

Food pantry services are available to the community. Make sure to call before visiting.

UTEP students may access pantry services at Memorial Gym beginning at 9am on March 23, 2020.

FAMILY RESOURCES

Child Care and Day Camps:
The YWCA offers educational camps at six YWCA locations from 6:30 am to 7:30 pm. Child Care Services participants are accepted for these camps and YWCA also offers scholarships for households with an income of $38,000 or less. Information on scholarships is available.

YWCA Locations and contact info:
West Side: 313 Bartlett Dr. - 915-519-0108
Central: 1600 Brown St. - 915-519-0107
Northeast: EPCC Transmountain Campus, 9570 Gateway N, 915-831-5832
Lower Valley: 115 N. Davis - 915-519-0105 & EPCC Valle Verde Campus, 919 Hunter Dr. - 915-931-2123
Eastside: 10712 Sam Snead - 915-519-0106

Child Care and Day Camps:
The YMCA has extended day camps during school closures. Locations and contact info:
Eastside: 2044 Trawood - (915) 590-9622
North East: 5509 Will Ruth - (915) 755-9622
Westside: 7145 N Mesa - (915) 584-9622

Educational and Recreational Activities

The Intercultural Development Research Association is an independent, non-profit organization that provides training; useful research, evaluation, and frameworks for action; timely policy analyses; and innovative materials and programs.

Visit the IDRA Learning Goes On COVID-19 for free webinars for teachers, administrators, and families. Explore a free online Community of Practice for educators, families, and communities to connect, share information about best practices, and access resources to address the new educational realities due to COVID-19. Browse guides with research-based tips on Ensuring Equity in Online Learning (English | Spanish) and Best Practices for Online Instruction (English | Spanish). IDRA also releases weekly COVID updates, including analyses of the latest federal, state, and local policy decisions. The first, related to testing waivers, is here.
FAMILY RESOURCES (cont.)

Browse this complete list of resources, compiled by parents for children who are learning at home during school closures.

Google Arts and Culture has partnered with 2,500 museums and galleries around the world to offer virtual tours of their spaces. Some of the options include New York’s Museum of Modern Art and Amsterdam’s Van Gogh Museum. The Louvre, based in Paris, is also offering its own virtual tour online for free.

National parks are also providing virtual tours. Virtual visitors can travel through the trails of Yellowstone National Park, as well as the Yosemite National Park. Families can tour zoos and learn about animals without leaving home, as well. The San Diego Zoo, the Georgia Aquarium and the Monterey Bay Aquarium are offering live webcam viewings of pandas, penguins and beluga whales.

PBS offers resources for school aged children, to include educational activities, games, tools and materials for those learning from home during school closures.

All City, County and State Parks have been closed temporarily, including the Franklins Mountains State Park, Hueco Tanks, Big Bend Ranch State Park and Davis Mountains State Park.

STUDENT RESOURCES

UTEP
For updates on UTEP’s response to COVID-19 and related resources for students click here.

EPCC
For updates on EPCC’s response to COVID-19 and related resources for students click here.

K-12
Schools across Texas remain closed by Executive Order of the Governor. Find information and resources through the Texas Education Agency.

Special Education and Special Populations
If you or your child receive SPED services, the Texas Education Agency has outlined specific guidance to serve the special education population.

This Questions and Answers document outlines states’ responsibilities to infants, toddlers, and children with disabilities and their families, and to the staff serving these children.
**STUDENT RESOURCES (cont.)**

Annual academic assessment requirements (STAAR tests) for the remainder of the 2019–2020 school year have been suspended.

Information about internet service for students during school closure can be found here.

Information for AP Students affected by COVID-19 can be found here.

**RESOURCES FOR IMMIGRANTS**

**Unemployment**

The Texas Workforce Commission has released their website in Spanish. If you are not a U.S. citizen, you may be eligible for unemployment benefits if you are:

- Legally residing in the U.S.
- Authorized to work in the U.S.:
  1) At the time you earned your base-period wages
  2) When you apply for benefits
  3) While requesting benefits
- Able to satisfy the requirements of Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification

DACA recipients and people with Employment Authorization Documents can apply for unemployment as long as they have a valid work permit.

**Financial Assistance**

The Betancourt Macias Family Scholarship Foundation provides emergency funding for immigrants who qualify. Those who are undocumented or know someone who is undocumented and have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, can fill out the scholarship request form.

**Healthcare**

University Medical Center and Centro San Vicente provide integrated primary and preventive care, including behavioral health, and are currently providing COVID-19 screening and testing.

You may also contact Project Vida to schedule an appointment for NON-COVID-19 services.

**Planned Parenthood** currently offers urgent health services. Schedule pain/infection exams, suspected breast mass exam, emergency contraception, Depo Provera birth control and PrEP/PEP HIV prevention. Birth control is available via PPDirect telemedicine for patients 18 and older for pills/patch/ring. STI screening and treatments, and transgender patient appointments are also available.

**Center Against Sexual and Family Violence / Centro en Contra de la Violencia Sexual y Familiar** will not turn away clients who are seeking shelter during this time of social isolation. Call (915) 593-7300 if you are facing sexual or family violence require support or assistance.
RESOURCES FOR IMMIGRANTS (cont.)

Relief Bills

Important updates on federal resources for immigrants are available through United We Dream.

For help understanding the impact of key provisions of COVID-19 Relief Bills on immigrant communities.

VETERAN’S RESOURCES

The Texas Veteran’s Commission and Texas Veterans Land Board will provide services virtually to protect veterans and staff. The TVC may be reached by phone at (512) 463-6564. The VLB may be reached at 1-800-252-VETS.

The Veteran’s Administration asks veterans who think they may have COVID-19 to please call their local VA clinic BEFORE going to a clinic or emergency room. Some non-urgent surgeries may be rescheduled until after quarantines are lifted and all prescriptions normally delivered by mail will continue. For those veterans who pick up prescriptions at a VA clinic, the VA recommends a minimum of ten days of medication and to contact your local clinic prior to arriving in-person.

VA Education Line: 1-888-442-4551
VA Health Line: 1-800-827-1000
The Veteran’s Crisis Line is operational 24/7 at 1-800-273-8255.

VOLUNTEER AND SUPPORT

The State of Texas is seeking critical equipment and capacity for medical providers, such as personal protective equipment (PPE), alternate care sites, and infection-control products. If you have products, sites, or equipment available for the state to consider procuring, please click the appropriate links found here.

If you are an active or retired health care provider, a medical or nursing student, or just a Texan who wants to help, you may volunteer here.

If you are healthy and understand how to practice precautions, volunteer at the El Pasoans Fighting Hunger food bank. Register for a shift here or donate here.

If you are healthy and able, donate blood at Vitalant. Make an appointment here.

To support local non-profits in the region, consider donating to the Paso del Norte Community Foundation’s El Paso COVID-19 Response Fund

If you have the means and would like to support local food and beverage workers you may do so through the Food and Beverage Workers Fund.