



Gov. Ricketts Thanks Legislature for Approving COVID-19 Emergency Funds, Temporarily Suspends Evictions for Impacted Nebraskans

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Gov. Ricketts signs LB 1198 into law, providing emergency funds to fight coronavirus.

Watch video of today's press conference by [clicking here](#).

LINCOLN – Today, Governor Pete Ricketts signed LB 1198, a bill that provides emergency funding to help the State of Nebraska combat coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19).

“I am grateful to State Senators for coming together to approve the emergency funding,” said Gov. Ricketts. “Nebraskans across the state have united in the battle against this virus. From Local Health Departments to frontline healthcare workers to volunteer organizations, winning the war will require a team effort from everyone. I also urge each and every Nebraskan to take direct action to support their neighbors and local businesses as we confront this public health emergency together.”

“I appreciate Governor Ricketts’ leadership in seeking the support necessary for our state to address COVID-19,” said Ted Carter, president of the University of Nebraska system. “Our world-leading health care professionals at UNMC and across the state are working around the clock to keep Nebraskans safe, and the additional funding will significantly aid their efforts. I thank members of the Legislature for moving quickly to make this critical investment in the health and safety of the people of Nebraska.”

“We at UNMC are very appreciative to Gov. Ricketts and to our state lawmakers for this emergency funding,” said UNMC Chancellor Dr. Jeffrey P. Gold. “It goes without saying it will be put to the best possible use. Increased testing helps Nebraska get a better picture of the spread of this disease to improve our preparedness and response—including whether individual health care workers are to stay at home or are safe to return to the frontlines. These funds will also help our state coordinate response and reuse precious personal protective equipment, thanks to a UNMC research innovation. This is why we are here. The university academic health center is proud to stand with the Governor and Legislature in this historic fight.”

In addition to approving emergency funding, Gov. Ricketts issued an executive order to prevent evictions of Nebraskans significantly impacted by COVID-19. The order prevents the eviction of renters unable to pay rent due on or after March 13th because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Governor indicated that the relief is intended for those who have become ill, lost income due to job loss or wage reductions, or missed work to care for a loved one (e.g., a child who cannot attend school or a sick family member) due to the pandemic. At the same time, he called on tenants to work to fulfill their contractual obligations. The executive order does not cancel any rent payments; it simply defers a landlord’s right to a trial in an eviction action—for unpaid rent—until May 31, 2020. Full text of the executive order suspending evictions can be found by [clicking here](#).

Jessica Kolterman, External Affairs Director for Lincoln Premium Poultry, joined the Governor at today's press briefing. She highlighted the health precautions being taken by Nebraska food processors to ensure the well-being of their teammates and the safety and quality of their food.

Weysan Dun, a community volunteer organizer with the American Red Cross, also took part in this afternoon's briefing. He appealed to Nebraskans to make appointments to donate blood, which is in short supply in the United States on account of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nebraskans are encouraged to host blood drives, provided they take prudent steps to encourage social distancing as donors register and wait in line to give blood.

ABOUT THE EMERGENCY FUNDING PACKAGE

- **Assistance for Nebraska Communities:** The largest portion of emergency funds will go towards purchasing much-needed personal protective equipment (PPE) to help Nebraska communities respond to COVID-19. These funds will also enable Local Public Health Departments (LHDs) to ramp up staffing and call center operations and to make essential IT expenditures—like laptops and servers.
- **State Public Health Division:** From epidemiologists who advise LHDs to robust public information campaigns, the State's Public Health team has been overseeing the statewide response. Emergency funding will help expand staffing to augment their team and will give them resources to carry out vital tasks like COVID-19 testing and contact tracing.
- **State Agency Overtime:** This part of the package will cover costs for overtime and additional staff to maintain healthcare coverage needs at veterans' homes and state care facilities. These funds are calculated to cover a 50% spike in staffing needs to prepare for the possibility that some teammates may be temporarily unable to provide care due to quarantine requirements.
- **University of Nebraska Medical Center:** Additional funding will pay for equipment and systems at the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC). Some of the funds will go toward the cost of the reagents, lab personnel, and equipment needed to expand COVID-19 testing.
- **Additional Flexibility:** The Legislature also appropriated \$25 million in flexibility for the Governor's Emergency Fund to ensure the State has the resources it needs as the pandemic unfolds.

Full video of today's press briefing is available by [clicking here](#).

[Governor's Original Press Release](#)