

# The Prince George's Post



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## Prince George's County Implements Updated Phase 2 Guidelines in Response to Increase of COVID-19 Cases

By GINA FORD  
Office of the County Executive

LARGO, Md. (November 12, 2020)—Prince George's County Executive Angela Alsobrooks announced today that the County will implement updated phase 2 guidelines for businesses and large gatherings in response to recent increases in key COVID-19 metrics. This decision was made under the advice of County health officials after analyzing COVID-19 data and trends over the past few weeks.

"Similar to other jurisdictions across our State, we have seen concerning increases in the number of new COVID-19 cases in our community, which requires us to take actions that will limit the spread of this virus and save lives," said Alsobrooks. "I know that we are all growing weary, but we must continue to take all necessary safety precautions like wearing a mask, exercising restraint and avoiding crowds to protect ourselves and others from this virus."

Starting Sunday, November 15 at 5 p.m., all indoor public businesses or establishments that are already open under the County's phase 2 of reopening, with the exception of essential businesses and retail

stores, must reduce capacity limits to a maximum of 25% capacity. Restaurants will be limited to 25% capacity indoors and 50% capacity outdoors. Essential businesses (grocery stores, specialty food stores, big box stores) and retail stores may operate at 50% capacity but with all safety protocols adhered to.

In addition, large gatherings indoors are limited to one person/family unit per 200 square feet or a maximum of 10 persons, whichever is lower. Outdoor gatherings are limited to one person/family unit per 200 square feet or a maximum of 25 persons, whichever is lower, unless otherwise specified in the Health Order. Finally, face coverings are now required outdoors in any public location in Prince George's County. Face coverings are still required for all indoor public locations and on public transportation.

These new guidelines were developed based on data from contact tracing and in response to continued increases in key COVID-19 metrics. The County's positivity rate is now above the 5% threshold, sitting at 6.4% for last week. The County's infection rate is sitting at 1.15 as of November 3, which places the County in the "high risk" category.

In addition, last week the County saw the highest number of new cases in one week since the end of May, with 1,309 new COVID-19 cases for the week of November 1. The County's average daily case rate for last week was 20.6 new cases per day per 100,000 residents, which places the County in the "high risk" category. The average daily case rate for the County has almost doubled since the first week of October.

Data that County health officials have obtained from contact tracing show that some of the highest risk activities for the spread of COVID-19 transmission include family gatherings, indoor dining, gyms and bowling alleys. The updated guidelines are a targeted response to this data to help limit the spread of COVID-19 in Prince George's County.

The County Executive also announced details of the \$6 million Restaurant Resiliency Fund. This program will provide grants up to \$25,000 to County-based restaurants and food service establishments. These grants can be used for COVID-related expenses such as purchasing PPE, winterization for outdoor seating, interior

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## Sponsorship Unites Nonprofit and Local Business in Honoring Community Heroes

By PRESS OFFICER  
CASA/Prince George's County



When the pandemic struck, volunteers throughout Prince George's County sprang into action to make sure that children in foster care were safe.

Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)/Prince George's County's more than 100 trained volunteers are appointed by the Prince George's County Juvenile Court to provide best interest advocacy for children in foster care due to abuse and neglect. Knowing these vulnerable youth have already experienced so much trauma and upheaval; CASA staff and volunteers knew it was essential to pivot quickly to serve as a source of stability.

Most CASA volunteers grew up before the advent of the internet, yet quickly became experts in video chatting and got very creative in their approaches to staying connected with their assigned kids and the relevant adults in their lives.

"Our volunteers are truly heroes," says Executive Director Ann Marie Binsner. "Like all of us, they had to figure out where they could buy toilet paper and face masks, adjust to working from home or caring for sick relatives. But at the same time, they were also helping kids in foster care figure out distance learning, sourcing virtual therapy, making

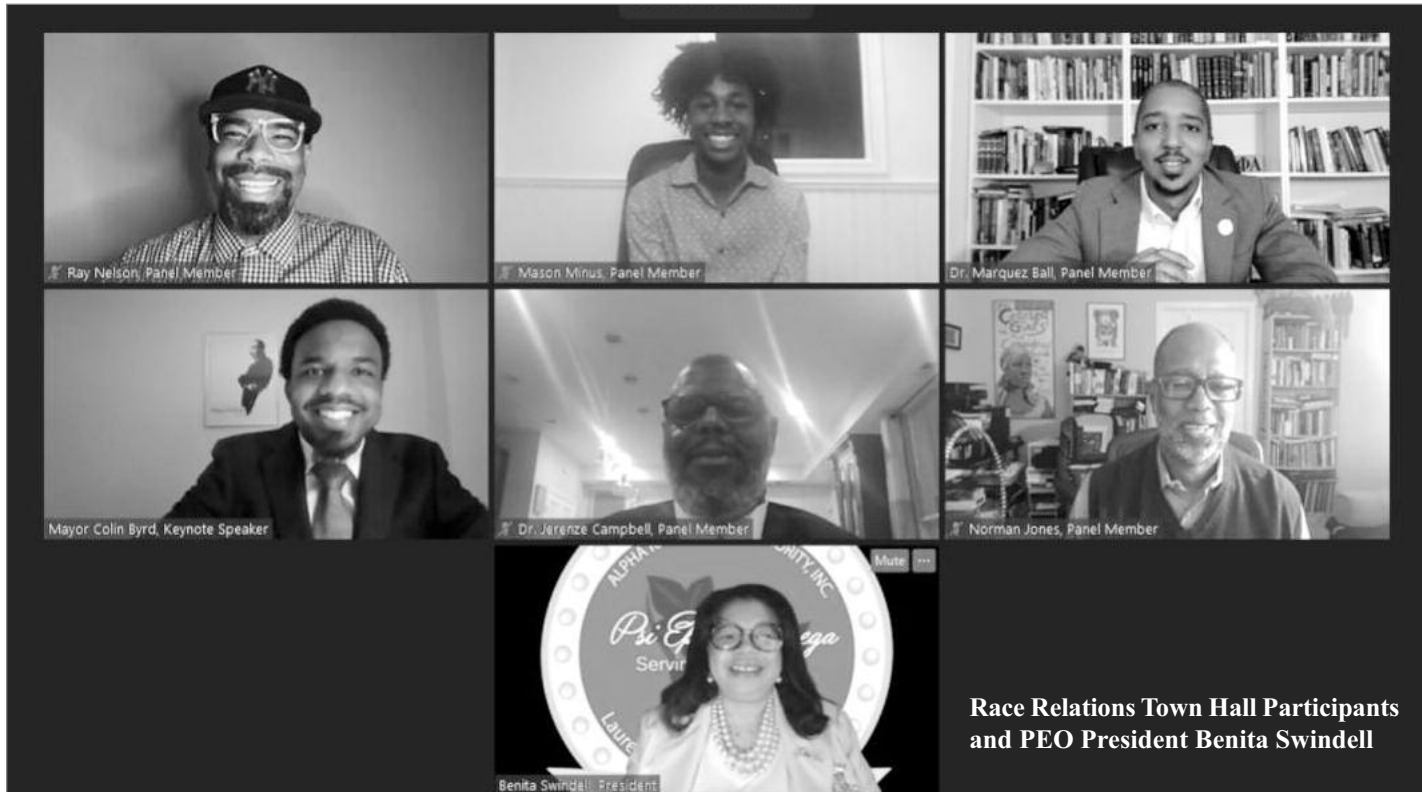
sure kids had enough to eat and calming the nerves of frazzled foster families."

Council Member Sydney Harrison, District 9, knows from personal experience that kids in foster care have experienced a lot of trauma in their young lives. That is why he wanted to find a way to thank and honor CASA volunteers for protecting the best interests of children in foster care and for being a source of stability amidst a terrifying pandemic.

"I was that kid in foster care. I know what it's like. That's why my hat goes off to these incredible volunteers. They're changing lives and we need more people, like them, to help children living in foster care in our County," says Council Member Harrison.

Council Member Harrison stepped up to sponsor a volunteer appreciation effort, which in turn led to a great partnership between one of Prince George's County's prominent nonprofits and a local

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Race Relations Town Hall Participants and PEO President Benita Swindell

IMAGE COURTESY PSI EPSILON OMEGA CHAPTER OF AKA

## Local Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated® Holds Town Hall on Race Relations and Young Black Men

By RACINE TUCKER-HAMILTON  
Psi Epsilon Omega Chapter of AKA

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, Md. (November 10, 2020)—Psi Epsilon Omega Chapter (PEO) of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. in partnership with Pearl Elegance Foundation (PEF) sponsored a virtual town hall discussion titled, "Where Do We Go From Here: A Holistic Approach to Race Relations In The Age of Black Lives Matter." The Oct. 29, 2020 event aimed to help educate young men and boys about race relations and give them an opportunity to be a part of these important conversations about Black Lives Matter.

"We've experienced a lot this year when it comes to race relations in America and we want our young men, boys, and children to be encouraged," said Benita Swindell, president of Psi Epsilon Omega. "So many of our ancestors have worked hard to ensure

that our children can live with a spirit of pride and brotherhood."

The forum keynote speaker was the City of Greenbelt, Md. Mayor Colin Byrd. He reminded the audience how special Black boys are to society. "Black Boys need love in a world filled with hate—hate that is especially targeted at black boys. Black boys need love from everybody willing and capable of loving them."

The virtual discussion specifically targeted young black adolescent men and their parents, also directly addressed a wide audience of concerned citizens that included educators, clergy, and activists. A panel of local community leaders also participated in the discussion and included Dr. Marquez Ball, Dr. Jerez Campbell, Norman Jones, Ray Nelson, and James Hubert Blake High School senior, Mason Minus. "When I think about All Lives Matter, I think about the fact that we live in a society where we have

diverse people and we are united as the United States, but we are not taking enough steps to ensure that certain people are safe. We need to focus on a certain group of people to ensure their survival," said Minus.

Audience questions centered around the Black Lives Matter movement and its identity, leveraging the energy and activism of our youth, and making lasting changes for people of color within a systematically racist system. You can view the entire event on Facebook. The town hall discussion is the first in a series of virtual discussions that PEO will be holding on the issue of race relations in America.

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Incorporated®, Psi Epsilon Omega Chapter was chartered in 2007. Since its founding, the chapter has been aggressively implementing its programs of service in Laurel, Bowie, and Greenbelt Maryland.

## M-NCPPC, Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George's County Announces Thanksgiving Community Events

By ANGEL WALDRON  
Prince George's County Department of Parks and Recreation

RIVERDALE, Md. (November 9, 2020)—The Department of Parks and Recreation in Prince George's County today announced two donation programs for local families around Thanksgiving. They include "Trot for a Turkey" and "Sustainable Giving".

November 21, 2020

The Department is hosting its 8th Annual Trot for a Turkey in Watkins Regional Park from 5–8 p.m. Share the gift of giving this season and help families in need by running or walking through the beautiful Winter Festival of Lights. For more than 30 years, visitors to the annual Winter Festival of Lights have been dazzled by twinkling light displays as they drive through Watkins Regional Park. This year, register to walk or run through the almost 3-mile course and see the dazzling displays up close.

The event supports hundreds of families each year and 100% of the proceeds support families in need by purchasing turkeys and hams. Many families kick off the fall/winter season by participating in this magical event and once-a-year opportunity to walk through the Festival of Lights. For more information, please contact the Park Ranger Office at 301-627-7755 or register at PARKS DIRECT.

November 23, 2020 and December 1

The Department is partnering with Amerigroup for Sustainable Giving at Seat Pleasant Activity Center from 3–7 p.m., providing families with traditional thanksgiving meals or a crockpot and gift card to help prepare their own meal. Amerigroup has donated 50 traditional family meals through the Share program as well as funds for the purchase of crockpots, dry goods and gift cards to provide to families.

In the season of giving, the Department partnered with Amerigroup to donate items that can support families for years to come. Families can choose between a traditional Thanksgiving meal with all the fixings on November 23 or a crockpot with dry goods for a holiday inspired meal and gift card for perishables on December 1. Registration open at ParksDirect.

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Our goal is to provide 50 families within Prince George's County and the surrounding areas.

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# COMMUNITY

## Coping With COVID-19: Grief During the Holidays

By SUSAN M. COALE, LCSW-C  
Chesapeake Life Center Director

For griever, there are many significant dates throughout the year, such as birthdays and anniversaries, that others may not notice or acknowledge. But the special days ahead are shared by the community around us. Whether Thanksgiving, Hanukkah, Kwanza, Christmas, or bringing in the new year, the focus is on family, love and togetherness. Traditions and rituals are important touchstones of our lives that ground us, especially in the face of difficulties such as loss and the COVID-19 crisis.



PHOTO CREDIT:  
ELYZABETH MARCUSSEN

**Susan Coale LCSW-C,**  
director of Chesapeake  
Life Center.

The pandemic will impact many traditions this year. We generally suggest that griever decide what traditions they may want to keep the same, modify, or even skip, giving them some control over how, or if, they celebrate. Now, a sense of control is lacking for many. Gatherings will be challenging due to safety restrictions on travel and inside gatherings. The national conversation is already abuzz with how difficult this will be for everybody. Imagine now that you are also dealing with the loss of someone dear. Grief is naturally isolating, and current circumstances increase this isolation. The inability to gather to tell stories and share comforting hugs

adds to the grief. Also, many griever feel that the pandemic has upstaged their grief, as all conversations turn to the coronavirus. Their grief seems forgotten by others.

So, what to do? How to both grieve and celebrate during a pandemic? These times require us to think deeply about what we most need and find ways to meet those needs. It is hard to put an effort into the whirlwind of holiday ideas and events that are shared through media and social media, but perhaps there is one ritual or tradition that is especially meaningful to you that can be adapted during COVID-19 restrictions. Here are some ideas:

- With recommendations against even small indoor family gatherings, perhaps set up a video conference with your family and together you can talk while preparing small batches of a special family dish. Or make a large batch and deliver some to a nearby friend or neighbor.
- Send a card or text to family members and share a special memory or photo of the loved one you are all grieving.
- Try making a collage about your loved one that you can take a picture of and then share with others.
- Many find comfort in writing a letter to their deceased loved one about how they are faring and placing it somewhere special—on a mantel, next to the menorah or kinara, in a basket of holiday cards.
- If one of your holiday traditions is tree trimming, invite your family to join you outdoors and decorate a tree in your yard or purchase a potted tree that can stay outdoors.

With events getting canceled and many people wanting to limit the many seasonal errands that take us in and out of public places, the pandemic may be a good time to quietly reflect on your feelings, on memories of holidays with your loved one or even on things you would like to be sharing with them now. Write in a journal, look at pictures or take a moment to shed a few tears. All of these are healthy ways to experience and reflect on your feelings.

Above all, communicate: Communicate what you can handle comfortably during this time to your friends and family. Tell them whether or not it's alright for them to talk about your loved one. Make them aware if you need to make changes in your role in family holiday responsibilities. Each person requires something different when grieving, and that could include not talking about COVID-19. By relating your needs, you minimize the chances for misunderstandings and hurt feelings.

## Strong Attitudes Supporting Sistahs, Inc. and Women Offering Wealth Host 4th Annual Christmas Event for Fifty Families Throughout Prince George's County and Surrounding Area, December 22, 2020

*Through partnership(s), sponsorship(s) and community member(s), we can successfully spread hope and joy this holiday season.*

By JERRE' SMITH

**Strong Attitudes Supporting Sistahs, Inc.**

TEMPLE HILLS, Md. (November 5, 2020)—Strong Attitudes Supporting Sistahs, Inc. is getting in the holiday spirit by partnering with Women Offering Wealth to host two amazing Christmas events, the first being a Coat Drive on December 13, 2020 and a Christmas Giveaway on December 22, 2020. It is our hope this year to gift 50 families in PG County, MD and the surrounding areas with a Christmas Package including inside a personal message from Santa and Santa, groceries/produce, stocking stuffers, and gender and age specific toys to families that would otherwise not be able to afford a holiday meal and children that may not otherwise receive toys during the holiday season.

For the Coat Drive, we are seeking gently used or new items. We will be accepting the following: Coats (women, men, and children) Hats, Scarves, and Gloves, and Blankets. We encourage any gently worn item(s) to be dry cleaned before donating.

*\*If you intend to wash and dry items please follow the suggestion according to the CDC. Please make sure that the items are in new and unused garment bags and or*

plastic bags when dropping off.

Registration for the Christmas Giveaway opened on November 15, 2020. This year due to the pandemic we wanted to continue to spread holiday hope and joy for this upcoming holiday season while continuing to promote social distance. Our goal is to provide 50 families within Prince George's County and the surrounding areas. To reach our goal, we are asking our friends, partners, and businesses in the community to contribute to our efforts in the following ways:

- Adopting a Family (On registered list)
- Donation of Gifts (List will be given with age and gender of all registrants)
- Donation of Food (Produce and or Grocery Gift Cards)
- Monetary Donations (Donation direct link will be provided on Flier)
- Volunteer (Sign-Up via sending email to [volunteer@womenofferingwealth.org](mailto:volunteer@womenofferingwealth.org))
- Businesses (with products and or services) offering coupons, free products, and services are appreciated.

Strong Attitudes Supporting Sistahs, Inc. (S.A.S.S.) is a 501 (c) nonprofit dedicated to improving the lives of new and expecting Mothers of low-income households through holistic

peer support and providing access to the essential resources in their community they feel they need to thrive. We believe that with the proper resources and stronger support, Mothers will improve their overall wellness and raise healthier productive lives for their children. S.A.S.S. Inc. offers a free virtual support group called Vent with S.A.S.S. The purpose of the Vent With S.A.S.S. is to foster social connections with other mothers, reduce the mother's isolation, increase the mother's parental knowledge and encourage the sharing of information and skills among mothers within local communities on issues related to motherhood.

Women Offering Wealth (W.O.W) Incorporated is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that provides education, training, and resources to the community with an emphasis on women to reach their full potential in every area of life through our W.E.A.L.T.H. principles. Our W.E.A.L.T.H. principles i.e. (Wellness, Endurance, Activism, Leadership, Teamwork, and Health) is the heart and forefront of our organization, and it is our way that we can give back to the community. To learn more about our Christmas events, including ways to get involved visit please contact 202-601-0333 if you have any questions or for sponsorship or volunteer opportunities.

## Prince George's Community College Recognizes National First-Generation College Celebration Day

*Students who are first in their families to attend college recognized as trailblazers*

By COURTNEY DAVIS

**Prince George's Community College**

LARGO, Md. (November 12, 2020)—Prince George's Community College (PGCC) joined colleges and universities across the country in observance of National First-Generation College Celebration Day, held annually on Nov. 8. Founded by the Council for Opportunity in Education and the Center for First-Generation Student Success, the celebration recognizes students, faculty, and staff who are the first in their families to attend college or earn a college degree.

"To be the first in my family to graduate from college is important because it created an expectation for generations to follow that a post-secondary education is indeed possible," said Michael Walker, director of TRiO Student Support Services at Prince George's Community College. "The generous support the College receives for our TRiO students who need it the most really

is a make or break in their ability to be successful," he added.

On Nov. 12 at 3 p.m., Prince George's Community College host[ed] National First-Gen College Day Live. Prince George's Community College, which serves the greatest percentage of non-white credit students in the state of Maryland, has a rich history of providing affordable, high-quality learning experiences for diverse populations, including first-generation students. Specifically, 51% of PGCC students identify as "first-generation."

"My biggest advice to high school students who are going to be first-generation college students is to join a program like Upward Bound," said Kelaiah Wheelan, a current PGCC first-generation student and TRiO Upward Bound alumna. "The program allowed me to find people to help me and also meet people who were like me, experiencing the same financial and mental struggles. While many first-generation students believe they may feel isolated at col-

lege, programs like Upward Bound bring you together," she added.

Each of Prince George's Community College's TRiO programs, including Upward Bound, Student Support Services, and Veterans Upward Bound, serve first-generation populations. Approximately 460 students are currently enrolled in Prince George's Community College's TRiO programs.

These students often encounter increased academic challenges and educational stressors, which impact their ability to complete an academic program successfully and in a timely manner. TRiO programs provide counseling, tutoring, career guidance, exposure to cultural events, and non-academic support such as resources to address food insecurity or homelessness.

To learn more about TRiO programs at Prince George's Community College, visit <https://www.pgcc.edu/student-life-support-services/support-services/trio-student-support-services/>.

## CSM Student Life Team Delivers 5th Mobile Hawk Feeder Event; Distributes 1,140 More Pounds of Food to Students

By ANGELA WALTERS SMALL  
College of Southern Maryland

LA PLATA, Md. (November 9, 2020) The College of Southern Maryland (CSM) Student Life team continued its efforts to help CSM students who are struggling financially and experiencing food insecurities by hosting its fifth drive-thru food distribution event—this time at CSM's Leonardtown Campus.

Approximately 1,140 pounds of food

were given to students who expressed a need and pre-registered to come to campus Wednesday, Nov. 4. The contactless "Mobile Hawk Feeder" events have been going on since the pandemic began and to date, the CSM Student Life team has distributed 4,745 pounds of food to CSM students.

The CSM drive-thru events have been supported by LifePoint Church of Wal-

dorf's Pastor Michael and Angela Rogalski; Pastor John Lewis with the Servants of Christ Church; New Life Church and the Charles County Department of Social Services, who all donated food. In addition, the CSM Foundation supported the effort through funding from its "Help a Hawk" emergency fund.

Since 2017, CSM has offered food provided through Hawk Feeders at each of its four campuses. Hawk Feeders help address the short-term basic food needs any student may be experiencing. Built by a CSM faculty member Bill Luyster, the Hawk Feeders are stocked through individual donations by faculty, staff and

students as well as through food drives, under the adage, "Give what you can, take what you need."

You may also be interested in reading: <https://news.csm.edu/all-news/student-life-team-distributes-800-pounds-of-food-to-csm-students-during-fourth-mobile-hawk-feeder-event/>.



Members of the CSM Student Life team prepare bags of food for distribution to CSM students at the Leonardtown Campus.

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# COMMENTARY

## Marion Wright Edelman

President Emerita,  
Children's Defense Fund



### ChildWatch:

## Vice President-Elect Kamala Harris: Forging a New Path for Our Girls

*"Brecklynn, when you think about the future, I do believe the future is bright. And it will be because of your leadership, and it will be because we fight for each person's voice through their vote and we get engaged in this election—because you have the ability through your work, and through, eventually, your vote, to determine the future of our country and what its leadership looks like."*

—Vice President-Elect Kamala Harris, responding to a question in the Vice Presidential debate from Utah eighth grader Brecklynn Brown

When Senator Kamala Harris stepped onto the Vice Presidential debate stage she made history simply by showing what our country's leadership can and will look like. A ceiling has been lifted for every little girl in America and especially every little girl of color in America. During the Vice Presidential debate many watchers cheered on her self-assured retort: "Mr. Vice President, I am speaking!" Now, as Vice President-Elect of the United States alongside President-Elect Joe Biden, she is an inspiration

for Black children, Asian American children, children of immigrants, and every little girl who has the chance to see someone who "looks like me" as our nation's Vice President. It's also a special source of pride and joy for all alumni of historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) like me and members of Black sororities and fraternities who recognize our own experience in hers as a Howard University graduate.

For decades HBCUs (and the "Divine Nine" historically Black Greek institutions) have worked to produce a pipeline of community and political leadership. Shirley Chisholm (a Delta Sigma Theta member) and Jesse Jackson (a North Carolina A&T graduate and Omega Psi Phi member) helped blaze the path towards the highest political offices in the land. Vice President-Elect Harris became the first HBCU graduate on a major party's presidential ticket carrying a long and proud legacy of struggle and achievement on her shoulders.

Vice President-Elect Harris has spoken often about the impact of Howard University on her life:

"The beauty of Howard [was that] every signal told students that we could be anything—that we were young, gifted, and black, and we shouldn't let anything get in the way of our success." HBCUs gave this signal to all students even when the rest of our nation tried to send relentless messages saying otherwise. I am so proud I went to Spelman College. As an all-Black women's college it gave me the latitude, confidence, historical knowledge, and safe space—one not defined by male or White folks' expectations, habits of competition, or the need to preen and prove myself to anyone beyond myself, my family, and God. I learned to dream my own dreams and search for and forge my own path. While I hated forced segregation or forced anything, Spelman College provided me the incubation I needed to stand on my feet confidently with anyone anywhere. Our cloistered shared community, great role models and speakers like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and rituals strengthened us inside and prepared Spelman women to do battle outside its gates. HBCUs have produced so many great artists, thinkers, and scholars including Langston Hughes, Thurgood Marshall, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Toni Morrison, and Spelman sister Stacey Abrams, whose relentless, strategic leadership fighting voter suppression and increasing voter registration and turnout in Georgia is making history today.

How fitting it is that Vice President-Elect Kamala Harris was formally nominated as the Democratic candidate for Vice President during the week our nation celebrated the Nineteenth Amendment's centennial prohibiting states and the federal government from denying citizens the right to vote based on sex. Her candidacy was possible because of our brave women forebearers who fought relentlessly to assure that amendment's passage. Like President Obama

she stands on the shoulders of all those who fought and died to ensure the same voting rights for Black women and men and everyone.

Kamala Harris draws on these rich inheritances as she sets a new example of leadership today. In her November 7 victory speech she said she was thinking "about the generations of women—Black women, Asian, White, Latina, and Native American women who throughout our nation's history have paved the way for this moment tonight. Women who fought and sacrificed so much for equality, liberty, and justice for all, including the Black women who are too often overlooked, but so often prove that they are the backbone of our democracy. All the women who have worked to secure and protect the right to vote for over a century: 100 years ago with the 19th Amendment, 55 years ago with the Voting Rights Act, and now, in 2020, with a new generation of women in our country who cast their ballots and continued the fight for their fundamental right to vote and be heard. Tonight, I reflect on their struggle, their determination, and the strength of their vision—to see what can be, unburdened by what has been. And I stand on their shoulders."

Vice President-Elect Harris added: "But while I may be the first woman in this office, I will not be the last. Because every little girl watching tonight sees that this is a country of possibilities. And to the children of our country, regardless of your gender, our country has sent you a clear message: Dream with ambition, lead with conviction, and see yourselves in a way that others may not, simply because they've never seen it before. But know that we will applaud you every step of the way." And I and millions of women and girls applaud you every step of your way as you join President-Elect Biden in leading our nation to new heights.

## Marc Morial

President and CEO, National Urban League



### To Be Equal:

## National Urban League Offers the Biden-Harris Administration an Agenda for Racial and Economic Justice

*"Now is when the real work begins. The hard work. The necessary work. The good work. The essential work to save lives and beat this pandemic. To rebuild our economy so it works for working people. To root out systemic racism in our justice system and society. To combat the climate crisis. To unite our country and heal the soul of our nation. The road ahead will not be easy. But America is ready. And so are Joe and I."*

—Vice President-elect Kamala Harris

The 77 and a half million votes for President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect Harris are the most ever cast for a presidential ticket, breaking the previous record set in 2008 for President Obama.

In this election, as in 2008, Black voter turnout made the difference. They were not voting for a symbolic victory. The nation is in crisis. They want action. And so does the National Urban League.

This week, we sent a letter to President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect Harris outlining what needs to be done.

As they prepare to enter the White House, more than 10 million Americans have been infected with coronavirus. A record 65,000 are currently hospitalized, and nearly a quarter-million have died. Our fellow citizens are standing in food lines, missing mortgage and rent payments and trying to keep the lights on. This pandemic has upended their lives. For them, relief now is imperative.

That's why our first demand is an immediate stimulus response package of no less than \$3 trillion. We support a stimulus

that aligns with the provisions of the Heroes Act passed by the House early in the summer.

Additionally, we're calling for a \$2 trillion economic recovery and infrastructure package to build an inclusive economy that eliminates structural inequality and opportunity gaps.

This economic recovery plan must not only rebuild the nation's roads, bridges, and railways, but it also must address water systems, parks, community facilities, affordable housing, and broadband. Such an initiative would create millions of jobs as well as business opportunities for all Americans.

Central to this is a specific emphasis on providing job opportunities for Black and Brown workers who have been particularly left out and battered by the COVID recession.

It must also include a commitment to invest in affordable housing, given the looming housing crisis that could derail a fragile economic recovery.

The last four years have seen a dramatic rollback of civil rights protections, a surge in racially motivated hate crimes, a deterioration of trust between police and the communities they serve, and the stark exposure of entrenched health and economic disparities.

We have offered the Biden administration a set of fundamental principles on racial justice and equity to guide the first 100 days and beyond. These are:

- Fundamentally transform the criminal justice system
- Protect and defend voting rights
- Achieve economic parity for African Americans
- Advance equity in educational opportunities

- Promote a healthier nation by prioritizing testing, treatments, and cures for COVID in communities of color.

The 100-day plan must include a new Voting Rights Advancement Act, comprehensive criminal justice reform, and a vaccine distribution plan that emphasizes outreach to the hardest-hit communities.

The current plan for vaccine distribution relies almost entirely on chain pharmacies, a plan which failed dismally when it came to the distribution of testing supplies in the spring.

A national plan to bring the virus under control must not only direct supplies to the poor and urban communities that have been hardest hit, but also address the longstanding health and economic disparities that allowed infections and death to skyrocket among Black Americans. A fair and effective vaccine plan must maximize the use of community-based sites such as schools, community centers, churches, and local Urban League affiliate headquarters.

Finally, the administration will need a cabinet, senior advisors, and a federal workforce that reflects American diversity, excellence, and competence. The current cabinet is the least diverse in 50 years, and there is no doubt that limitation has contributed to its failures on many levels.

Both President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect Harris have a long history of collaboration with the National Urban League, and we stand ready to partner with the new administration in the fight for racial justice, voting rights, fair housing, health care, education, and employment which have always guided our work.

## Anthony Brown

Maryland Congressional District 4



## President Trump Has Needlessly Endangered Secret Service Agents, Their Families, Himself and Our Country

WASHINGTON (November 13, 2020)—House Armed Services Committee Vice Chair Anthony G. Brown (MD-04) released the following statement on reports that more than 130 Secret Service agents have recently been ordered to isolate or quarantine because they tested positive for the coronavirus after traveling with the president for election rallies:

"I wish these Secret Service

agents a quick and speedy recovery. As public servants, the brave men and women of the United States Secret Service are sworn to protect the presidency. However, that does not excuse President Trump's routine disregard of critical public health precautions. By refusing to be transparent and to practice the advice of his own public health officials, the president has need-

lessly endangered these agents and their loved ones, and once again made himself, White House staff, the presidency and this country less safe. President Trump will always put himself before the American people. His selfish actions continue to put people at risk and his refusal to do anything to stop the spread of this virus is costing American lives by the day."

## Maryland Congressional Delegation Members Announce Nearly \$2.4 Million for Maternal and Child Health Services

WASHINGTON (November 13, 2020)—Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (MD-05), a founding member of the Black Maternal Health Caucus, joined Senators Ben Cardin and Chris Van Hollen, and Congressmen Dutch Ruppersberger, John Sarbanes, Kweisi Mfume, Anthony G. Brown, Jamie Raskin, and David Trone today in announcing \$2,337,908 in federal funding to improve maternal and child health care services across the state. The funding comes from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and will help the Maryland Department of Health's Maternal and Child Health Bureau

lower maternal mortality, reduce infant mortality, and enhance the delivery of maternal care.

"The alarming rise in maternal and infant mortality across the country—especially among communities of color—demands swift and urgent action," the lawmakers said. "This critical federal funding will help to both improve the delivery of care to expecting mothers and newborns, and address some of the glaring inequities in our health care system. Team Maryland will continue working tirelessly to secure federal resources that improve the quality of health care for every family in our state."

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# BUSINESS AND FINANCE

## Social Security Matters

### Ask Rusty:

## About "Registering" for Social Security & Medicare

By RUSSELL GLOOR,  
AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor  
Association of Mature American Citizens

**Dear Rusty:** I have a big 65th birthday coming up mid-March and would like your advice on registering for Social Security and Medicare. I am now unemployed, but I am seeking another gig to get me to age 67 before taking Social Security. **Signed: Wondering Senior**

**Dear Wondering:** You do not need to "register" with Social Security in advance. You don't need to do anything with Social Security until you are ready to claim your benefits. Since you were born in 1956, your full retirement age (FRA) for Social Security purposes is 66 plus 4 months, and that is when you will be entitled to 100% of the benefit you've earned from a lifetime of working. But you can, if you wish, also wait beyond your FRA to get an even bigger benefit. For each month you delay after your FRA you'll earn Delayed Retirement Credits of .667%, which is 8% additional benefit for each year you wait. That can continue up to age 70 when your maximum benefit will be reached. In your case that would mean an age 70 benefit 29% more than your FRA benefit amount. But whenever you're ready, you can apply for Social Security online at [www.ssa.gov/retire](http://www.ssa.gov/retire) (you must first create your "My Social Security" account to apply online).

Medicare is an entirely separate program and, unless you have "creditable" employer healthcare coverage from a new job, you should enroll in Medicare a bit prior to your 65th birthday ("creditable" coverage is a group plan with at least 20 participants). This would be during your Medicare Initial Enrollment Period (IEP), which is a 7-month window starting 3 months before the month you turn 65 and ending 3 months after the month you turn 65. If you don't enroll in Medicare during your IEP and enroll later, and if you didn't have creditable employer healthcare coverage after age 65, you will be subject to a late enrollment penalty, which will permanently increase your Medicare Part B (and Part D) premiums.

Medicare Part B is coverage for doctors & outpatient services, and Part D is prescription drug coverage, both of which require a premium; Medicare Part A is hospitalization coverage which is free if you're eligible for Social Security. If you have "creditable" employer coverage when you turn 65, you can simply delay enrolling in Medicare Part B until your employer coverage is about to end, or until after it ends during an 8 month Special Enrollment Period during which you can enroll in Medicare Part B without penalty. But for Part D prescription drug coverage, you must enroll in a private plan within 63 days of your 65th birthday, or the end of your employer drug coverage, or you will incur a Part D late enrollment penalty for enrolling later. And remember that Medicare late enrollment penalties never go away—they are recurring for the rest of your life.

The bottom line is this: you don't need to pre-register for either Social Security or Medicare. You can simply enroll when you are ready for benefits to start (keeping in mind that for Medicare, you must have "creditable" alternative coverage after age 65 to avoid late enrollment penalties).

*The 2.1 million member Association of Mature American Citizens [AMAC] [www.amac.us](http://www.amac.us) is a vibrant, vital senior advocacy organization that takes its marching orders from its members. AMAC Action is a non-profit, non-partisan organization representing the membership in our nation's capital and in local Congressional Districts throughout the country. And the AMAC Foundation ([www.AmacFoundation.org](http://www.AmacFoundation.org)) is the Association's non-profit organization, dedicated to supporting and educating America's Seniors. Together, we act and speak on the Association members' behalf, protecting their interests and offering a practical insight on how to best solve the problems they face today. Live long and make a difference by joining us today at [www.amac.us/join-amac](http://www.amac.us/join-amac).*

*This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA). NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website ([amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory](http://amacfoundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory)) or email us at [ssadvisior@amacfoundation.org](mailto:ssadvisior@amacfoundation.org).*

## Maryland State Police Aviation Command to Host Virtual Open House for Potential Trooper Flight Paramedics

By PRESS OFFICER  
Maryland State Police

MIDDLE RIVER, Md. (November 10, 2020)—Paramedics interested in pursuing a rewarding career will have an opportunity to get a glimpse into the everyday life of a Trooper Flight Paramedic from the safety of their computer screens.

On Dec. 2, from 5 to 6:30 p.m., tuning into the Maryland State Police Aviation Command virtual open house will provide a look into the operations and training necessary to be a part of the team. The Aviation Command's newest Rescue Technicians will offer an insight into their experiences since joining

the department.

Viewers will have an opportunity to ask operational and training-related questions at the end of the presentation. This virtual open house is for practicing (National Registered and/or Maryland-certified) paramedics with the desire to advance their career horizons.

For more information, please email [msp.medics@maryland.gov](mailto:msp.medics@maryland.gov) with the subject "Open House" in the subject line. In the body of the email, include your paramedic certification number, jurisdiction and brief biographical information. Space is limited on the call, so submit your application early. The 35 best-qualified individuals will be selected for this open house with more opportunities to

follow in the future.

The Maryland State Police Aviation Command operates a fleet of 10 AW-139 helicopters from seven bases throughout the State on a 24/7/365 basis. The Command has served Maryland's citizens since 1970 through medevac, law enforcement, search & rescue, homeland security, and disaster assessment missions. The success of rescues performed by the Aviation Command depends a great deal on the cooperative partnerships with local fire, rescue, EMS, law enforcement agencies, as well as the United States Coast Guard.

For more information, visit [mdsp.maryland.gov](http://mdsp.maryland.gov) or email [msp.medics@maryland.gov](mailto:msp.medics@maryland.gov).

## Governor Hogan Announces Maryland Awarded Over \$6 Million to Continue Expanding Apprenticeships

State Continues to Be A National Leader in Workforce Development  
Record 11,000+ Apprenticeships

By SHAREESE CHURCHILL  
Office of the Governor

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (November 13, 2020)—Governor Larry Hogan today announced during National Apprenticeship Week that the Maryland Department of Labor has received a \$6,012,924 award from the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) for a State Apprenticeship Expansion Grant. This grant is the fourth in a series of expansion grants awarded to the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program (MATP) and will be used to further invest in the state's Registered Apprenticeship sponsors, employers, and apprentices.

"Maryland is a national leader in workforce development, job training, and apprenticeships, and it is critical that we continue to invest in the future of our skilled workforce," said Governor Hogan. "As our state and nation continue our economic recovery, this federal grant award will help Maryland continue to grow a steady pipeline of talented, well-trained workers to meet the increasing demand for essential skilled jobs."

With the latest State Apprenticeship Expansion Grant from USDOL, Maryland has now competitively secured nearly \$13 million to ex-

pand Registered Apprenticeship programs since 2016. These funds have allowed Maryland to increase the scope of services offered to Registered Apprenticeship sponsors, employers, and apprentices. As a result of the department's targeted investments, Maryland has reached a record-breaking milestone of 11,000 registered apprentices currently working, earning, and learning in the Maryland Apprenticeship and Training Program, which represents the highest participation rate in state history.

"Even in the midst of the challenges facing our state during COVID-19, Maryland's apprenticeship program has remained a vibrant part of our workforce system," said Secretary of the Maryland Department of Labor Tiffany Robinson. "This record funding for a single award will enable our team to continue expanding the reach and improving the quality of the state's programs, while also supporting the evolving needs of our businesses and Marylanders seeking career opportunities."

This fourth round of funding will be used to improve Maryland's ability to serve, improve, and strategically scale its Registered Apprenticeship program as well as fund innovative approaches aimed at using apprenticeships as a tool for developing the economy. More specif-

ically, the state will:

- Modernize its existing apprenticeship web presence
- Further align employment, training, education, and support services for adults and youth, and other underrepresented populations to enable them to more readily enter apprenticeships
- Initiate a robust, multimedia statewide outreach and marketing campaign to illustrate the value of apprenticeship as a dynamic career pathway that benefits both employers and job seekers alike
- Establish an Employer Incentive Program to assist with the costs associated with related instruction for newly Registered Apprentices
- Strengthen MATP's presence in key economic hubs by supporting partnerships with community colleges and conduct outreach that emphasizes the value of connecting youth apprenticeship to the formal Registered Apprenticeship system

For more information about apprenticeship opportunities in Maryland, please contact the Department of Labor's Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning by visiting [MDApprenticeship.com](http://MDApprenticeship.com), emailing [info@mdapprenticeship.com](mailto:info@mdapprenticeship.com), or calling 410-767-2173.

## BGE and the Maryland Public Service Commission Join Together To Warn Customers of Scams During the Holiday Season

By TASHA JAMERSON  
BGE

BALTIMORE (November 16, 2020)—With the holiday season quickly approaching, BGE is recognizing Utility Scam Awareness Day, Nov. 18, by reminding customers to be on the lookout for imposters using energy-related scams to steal money and personal information.

While scams occur throughout the year, the company sees an increase in scam reports during the holiday season. Additionally, imposters are taking advantage of the economic challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and pressuring families and businesses who may be struggling with past-due balances.

This year, BGE is partnering with the Maryland Public Service Commission to help educate Marylanders about the need to stay vigilant against scammers during these challenging times. So far in 2020, BGE customers have re-

ported losing close to \$170,000 to scammers and imposters.

"Utilities United Against Scams Day continues to be very important opportunity for BGE to reach out to our customers," said Tamla Olivier, chief customer officer and senior vice president of customer operations for BGE. "Unfortunately, scammers are constantly changing their tactics and it's extremely important that our customers have the most up to date information on these scams in order to help them avoid becoming victims."

"Scam artists are using the threat of electric or gas service termination to trick customers into giving them money over the phone," said Jason Stanek, Chairman of the Maryland Public Service Commission. "The Commission and BGE are warning customers not to fall for this trap. Utility customers should never provide any credit card number or bank account information over the phone. If you have questions about

your account, contact your utility directly with information found on your bill or on the utility's website."

Currently, the most prevalent scam calls are robo-calls where customers are asked to "press 1" to hear about their bill and make a payment. Once the number 1 is pressed, a live person gets on the line and demands immediate payment or personal information.

BGE is also aware of calls where scammers claim, "Your meter needs to be switched out immediately or your power will be turned off." These claims are followed by a demand for immediate payment using Cashapp, Bitcoin, Zelle or Green Dot with some of those calls ending with the scammers texting a barcode to the customer for immediate payment. As a reminder, utilities will never send a single notification to a customer within one hour of a service interruption, and they never will ask customers to make payments with pre-paid debit or gift cards, or any

form of cryptocurrency.

Here are some tips to help identify scams

1. BGE will never come to a customer's home or business to:
  - Demand a payment.
  - Ask for immediate payment with a prepaid cash card.
  - Ask for their BGE account number or other personal information, such as a driver's license number.
2. BGE will never call a customer to:
  - Ask for their account number.
  - Ask for personal information such as their Social Security number or bank information.
  - Ask them to make a direct payment with a prepaid cash card.
3. To identify an actual BGE employee, remember:
  - All BGE field employees wear clothing with the BGE logo, including shirt and safety vest.
  - BGE employees and contractors

See SCAMS Page A6

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## Community from A1

minority-owned business that knows a thing or two about supporting the community.

In A Minute Cafe, which not only held a rare successful launch during the pandemic but has already expanded as a result of early success, is co-owned by Chef Steven Wilson who is a long-time community leader and supporter.

"I am committed to bringing not only delicious food to our community but also jobs to residents in Prince George's County," says Chef Wilson. He also believes in constantly giving back.

In a Minute Cafe initiated an effective outreach program committed to helping those that have been affected by COVID-19. In September they provided dinners and backpacks to over 100 families. The first Wednesday of every month, senior residents eat free at In A Minute Cafe. Next month they are providing Free Chili Dinners to local Firemen. In December they'll extend that same gratitude to the nurses at local Prince George's County hospitals.

Says Chef Wilson of CASA, "I have known about CASA for a long time but really got invested in their mission after an event I

hosted for them where they showed a video about what happens with kids who transition out of foster care to adulthood. I was just amazed and realized how important CASA's work is for our community."

Through the sponsorship from Council Member Harrison, CASA was able to purchase gift certificates to In a Minute Cafe to send to their volunteers as a token of gratitude for their amazing dedication and the countless hours they have put into helping kids in foster care get through the chaos and stress of a pandemic.

Thanks to Council Member

Harrison, the volunteers will not only be able to pick up a meal for themselves and their foster youth but will be honored with a Proclamation and Certificate of Appreciation.

"It is my honor to be able to support these incredible CASA heroes," concludes Council Member Harrison.

Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)/Prince George's County is a volunteer-based organization that partners with the juvenile court to improve the lives of children living in foster care who have suffered from abuse and neglect. With a strong

commitment to diversity, CASA trains and supervises volunteers from the community who advocate for the best interest of children, recognizing and respecting each child's individual needs. By providing a voice to children in the foster care system, CASA's goal is to help children and promote the timely placement of those we serve in safe, permanent homes. To volunteer with CASA, call 301-209-0491 or go to [www.pgcasa.org](http://www.pgcasa.org). In A Minute Cafe, 9244 E. Hampton Dr. #203, Capitol Heights is open Monday-Saturday with a rotating menu, serving fresh seafood every day. [www.inaminutecafe.com](http://www.inaminutecafe.com) or [www.minuteevents.com](http://www.minuteevents.com).

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## Guidelines from A1

improvements for social distancing, and more. Applications will be accepted between November 13, 2020 and December 18, 2020, and will be reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis. Restaurants can apply at [pgcedc.com/restaurantfund](http://pgcedc.com/restaurantfund).

In addition, the County Executive announced that Employ Prince George's is launching the COVID-19 Rapid Re-Employment Grant program. Businesses that hire Prince George's County residents before December 15 will qualify for grants up to \$15,000 per new employee hired. Grants will supplement 50% to 90% of an employee's salary during an agreed upon period. Businesses are eligible for up to \$50,000 in grants for this program. Businesses can apply for this program at <http://www.employpg.org/covid-19-workforce-development-recovery-program/>.

Finally, Employ Prince George's is expanding the COVID-19 Hourly Employee Relief Fund. Since July, Employ Prince George's has raised over \$700,000 and distributed over \$380,000 to residents who have lost their jobs in the form of \$200 visa gift cards. Employ Prince George's is now allowing previous applicants to reapply if they remain unemployed and is increasing the visa gift card amount to \$300. Residents can apply at [employPGedge.com](http://employPGedge.com).

For the latest COVID-19 updates from Prince George's County, including previously released guidance from the County Health Department for the upcoming holiday season, visit [health.mypgc.us/coronavirus](http://health.mypgc.us/coronavirus).

## WSSC Water from A2

during the same billing period. WSSC Water is asking customers that received an estimated bill, and have an inside water meter, to provide the actual reading so the account can be updated. Customers can learn how to locate their water meter and submit the actual reading to WSSC Water at <https://www.wsscwater.com/meter>. An actual meter reading allows customers to better manage their water use and determine if they have a leak. Undetected water leaks can lead to very high bills.

### Here to Help: Water-Saving Tips

For months, WSSC Water also has been providing water-saving tips to customers knowing their in-home usage would increase.

Here are several ways customers can save water now and save money on their bill:

- Turn off the faucet to lather and scrub when washing hands
- Take shorter showers
- Use the dishwasher instead of washing dishes by hand
- Find and repair any leaks\*

\*Toilet leaks are the most common cause of high water bills. Check out this video at <https://www.wsscwater.com/leaks> to learn how to detect one of these silent, but expensive leaks.

### The Budget Impact of COVID-19

The sudden economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has had a major economic impact on WSSC Water's budget. Due to decreased water usage from commercial customers and increased unemployment impacting residential customers, WSSC Water experienced \$31.4 million in lost revenue in FY20 and projects a \$31.7 million revenue loss in FY21. To offset these losses, WSSC Water has identified more than \$130 million in one-time targeted budget cuts (\$57.4 million in FY20; \$72.7 million in FY21), while ensuring mission-critical functions remain fully funded. This includes fully funding the purchase of personal protection equipment to ensure the continued safety of front-line employees. WSSC Water is closely monitoring the financial impact of COVID-19 to determine if more budget reductions will be necessary.

—Luis Maya, WSSC

## Scams from A5

visibly display a company ID badge with the BGE logo, employee's name, and photo.

If any customer is unsure whether a visitor or caller is a BGE employee or believes he or she has been a target or victim of a scam, call 1-800-685-0123 immediately. To learn more, visit [bge.com/MyAccount](http://bge.com/MyAccount).

### Tips for business customers

BGE and the PSC are also seeing an increase in energy-related scam attempts targeting businesses. Offenders impersonate the names of BGE and other trusted organizations in email or other communications. Their intention is to deceive businesses into providing personal and financial information or acting on urgent requests for payment.

To help protect a business from cyber-scams:

- Carefully review emails originating from outside your organization's network.
- Check the name of the sender and business and make sure it matches the name and business in the email address. Look for misspellings or slight alterations.
- Make a call to verify the email was sent from a trusted source. Use a phone number from the business' records or the sender's official website and not the number provided in the email.
- Confirm that everything looks legitimate especially when a request can have major effects for your company, such as transferring large amounts of money.
- Hover over website links before clicking to confirm the legitimacy of the site.

### Bill-payment assistance to help customers and avoid scam attempts

BGE understands that COVID-19 continues to create economic hardship for many of our customers and is offering a number of bill-payment assistance programs, including flexible payment options, financial assistance for past-due balances and usage alerts for current bills. Any customer who is experiencing a hardship or difficulty with their bill should call BGE immediately at 1-800-685-0123 to learn more about our payment plans and programs. For more information, visit [bge.com/MyAccount](http://bge.com/MyAccount).

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