



COVID-19 FAQ

June 3, 2020

GENERAL

Is it safe to travel to Destin-Fort Walton Beach? Can I still come to Destin-Fort Walton Beach for my vacation?

At this time there are no domestic travel advisories or warnings in place related to Destin-Fort Walton Beach. As COVID-19 is an evolving situation, it's important to follow the guidelines set forth by the CDC before making a travel decision that is right for you and your family.

I heard there's a state of emergency. What does that mean?

Okaloosa County declared a local state of emergency as a preemptive measure that would allow us to more-easily seek additional resources and apply for federal and state aid to address the economic impacts of COVID-19.

Is the destination on any sort of curfew or restrictions?

There are currently no travel advisories or curfews in place for Destin-Fort Walton Beach. On Friday, June 5th the state of Florida will enter into Phase II of the Governor's "Safe. Smart. Step-by-Step. Plan" to re-open. In addition to restaurants and retail, bars and entertainment facilities will re-open on Friday, with limited capacities and enhanced cleaning procedures. Vulnerable individuals should continue to avoid close contact with people outside the home, and everyone is advised to continue maximizing physical distance from others.

Are there health advisories in place?

The State Surgeon General Scott Rivkees issued a health advisory for people 65 and older and those with serious "underlying medical conditions" asking them to stay in their homes. The serious conditions include such things as chronic lung disease, moderate to severe asthma, serious heart conditions, severe obesity, and people in cancer treatment.

We were planning on staying in a vacation rental but heard they are now all closed. Is that true?

As of Tuesday, May 19th, short-term vacation rentals were approved to welcome back guests.

Are hotels also closed?

No, hotels, motels and inns remain open. For specifics on how an individual property may have modified procedures and operations in place we recommend contacting your accommodations directly.



We've decided not to travel and the hotel/rental will not issue a refund. Who should I call?

Our tourism community is making every effort to work with our visitors to reschedule their upcoming travel or issue a refund. Each individual property has their own cancellation policy so our best recommendation would be to work directly with them to facilitate.

Have the welcome centers re-opened?

Yes, Destin-Fort Walton Beach Welcome Centers have now re-opened.

Can we still drive to Destin? Are the state borders closed?

On April 29th, the Governor extended an Executive Order that called for roadside checkpoints on interstates to screen for potential COVID-19 cases coming into the state from Louisiana, New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. The checkpoints are installed along I-10 and I-95. Motorists who are traveling from areas with substantial community spread are required to isolate for a period of 14 days upon entry to Florida or for the duration of their visit. When a traveler arrives, each passenger or responsible family member (if traveling as a family) will be required to complete a traveler form with key information, including each traveler's contact information and trip details. Failure to complete the form and follow any isolation or quarantine order from DOH are violations of Florida law.

Are there any roadway changes I should be aware of?

To help reduce the spread of COVID-19 and protect toll collectors, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), Florida's Turnpike Enterprise (FTE) will temporarily not accept cash as a form of payment for tolls including the Mid-Bay Toll Bridge. Tolls will still be required, but they will be collected either via SunPass or toll-by-plate. Administrative fees are waived at this time.

AIRLINES

Will there be upcoming flight cancellations coming this summer? What is the latest update coming from the airport?

At this time, the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Airport (VPS) is operating as normal. However, given COVID-19's impact on the industry and individual carriers we recommend you continue to check directly with the airline.

We're flying in. Is there a chance I may be stuck there with my family and not able to get home?

Conditions are changing rapidly and therefore we recommend that you check with your airline before traveling.

We're flying in from (LA, NY, NJ or CT). How does this impact our visit?

Per the Governor, all visitors arriving by plane from the New York Tri-State Area (Connecticut, New Jersey and New York) and Louisiana, must enter a period of quarantine for 14 days from the time of entry, or for the duration of their stay, whichever is shorter.



VACATION RENTALS

What are the requirements for a vacation rental to re-open?

Okaloosa County presented Governor DeSantis and the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) with a Short-Term Vacation Rental Safety Plan outlining additional measures to enable vacation rentals to begin taking reservations and accepting check-ins.

For owners, please review the plan found [here](#) and ensure your rental business is compliant with all measures. There are no additional re-opening requirements.

Does the re-opening apply to VRBO and Airbnb?

Yes, VRBO and Airbnb can now rent properties as long as they abide by the Short-Term Vacation Rental Safety Plan outlined by the County.

Is there a time requirement between rentals?

The County Safety Plan does not mandate a specific time period between rentals. However, owners and managers must allow for flexible time between stays based upon the use of CDC cleaning and sanitization procedures. Rentals are all different, and some will take more time or less time, depending upon the size of the unit being sanitized.

Am I allowed to accept reservations from Louisiana, New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut?

While vacation rental reservations can be accepted from high-risk areas the County advises against it. Guests from high-risk areas will need to quarantine for a period of 14 days from the time of entry into the State of Florida or the duration of the person's presence in the State of Florida, whichever is shorter. Guests occupying those vacation rentals must adhere to the quarantine restrictions or be subject to established criminal and civil penalties.

What are the out of state travel restrictions for visitors staying with family and friends, in hotels or resorts or vacation rentals?

For all visitors, whether staying with family and friends, in hotels or in short term vacation rentals, the Governor's Executive Orders specific to travelers entering the state of Florida from areas with substantial community spread apply as follows:

- Executive Order 20-82 directs all visitors arriving from the New York Tri-State Area (Connecticut, New Jersey and New York) to isolate or quarantine for a period of 14 days from the time of entry into the state or the duration of the person's presence, whichever is shorter.
- Executive Order 20-86 directs all visitors who enter from an area with substantial community spread, to include the State of Louisiana, inclusive of those entering by roadways, to isolate or quarantine for a period of 14 days from the time of entry or the duration of the person's presence, whichever is shorter.



Per the State of Florida's Office of the Governor's executive order 20-80, any person who violates any isolation or quarantine directed by the Department of Health commits a misdemeanor of the second degree, which is punishable by imprisonment not to exceed 60 days, a fine not to exceed \$500, or both.

Are guests required to stay/book for 14 days?

No, vacation rental reservations for guests are not required to stay/book for 14 days. However, even if the stay is shorter, if the guest has entered the state of Florida from a high-risk area they must adhere to the quarantine requirements as stated above which means they would need to quarantine for their entire stay.

How long is this in place for?

Guidance and restrictions will remain in effect, and be enforced, until further notice is given by the Governor. The duration of the Governor's applicable Executive Orders and Full Phase I re-opening of the state is not known at this time.

Are there screenings in place at the airport and state borders?

Screenings are taking place at both Destin-Fort Walton Beach Airport (VPS) and via roadside checkpoints that are installed along I-10 and I-95. When a traveler arrives, each passenger or responsible family member (if traveling as a family) will be required to complete a traveler form with key information, including each traveler's contact information and trip details. They will also be given a traveler card, which has contact information and guidance in case the traveler begins exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. Failure to complete the form and follow any isolation or quarantine order from DOH are violations of Florida law.

Is the order limited to New Orleans or is it all of Louisiana?

The order applies to all Louisiana residents.

Will vacation rentals be notified if a visitor who is screened provides their property's address as their accommodations?

No, it is the responsibility of the traveler to inform accommodations where they are arriving from.

Are vacation rentals required to give people from the identified states a refund?

While there is no requirement in place that specifies you must refund guests who are arriving from states that fall under the mandated quarantine, we do encourage you to make every effort to refund or rebook guests during this difficult time.



Will vacation rentals be provided with the materials specified in the guidance including signage or will we be required to create our own?

You will be responsible for posting signage that highlights your property's cleaning protocols between stays. Additionally, the guidance states that owners share the following resources with confirmed guests:

- [County Updates and Resources](#)
- [CDC Resources](#)
- [CDC Guidance for Animals \(as necessary\)](#)

If a vacation rental has a guest coming from a state that falls under the quarantine rule what responsibility do they have?

The primary responsibility is to follow all guidelines set forth by the County's Approved Safety Plan, including adhering to the following recommendation, "For the safety of all residents and visitors, we will encourage our tourism partners not to rent to guests from high-risk areas."

Outlined responsibilities to uphold the Safety Plan include the following:

- Provide COVID-19 guidance of any local restrictions that are in place during the guest stay and other related local information. All current information related to such restrictions are posted on the County's website and is easily accessible to lodging operators and guests 24/7 (<http://www.co.okaloosa.fl.us/bcc/covid-19>).
- Adhere to all Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) sanitation guidelines already in place as addressed under 61C-3.001 Sanitation and Safety Requirements of the transient lodging statutes. Additionally, the May 1st COVID-19 guidelines issued by the Vacation Rental Housekeeping Professionals (VRHP) and the Vacation Rental Management Association (VRMA) <https://www.vrma.org/page/vrhp/vrma-cleaning-guidelines-for-covid-19> shall be adhered to and are included herein by reference.
- Follow the CDC related guidelines applicable to public spaces, businesses, schools and homes which expand upon the State of Florida & DBPR requirements already in place for safety and sanitation for all lodging.
- Allow flexible time between stays based upon the use of CDC cleaning and sanitization procedures.
- Place signage at each property highlighting the cleaning protocols between stays.
- Supply any and all employees or contractors with CDC related safety guidance.
- Supply guests with CDC guidance for guests traveling with pets and service/assistance animals if the property is pet friendly.
- Share CDC resources to any guest while staying in their units.

However, the responsibility to self-isolate or quarantine is the responsibility of the individual(s) coming in from the high-risk areas. At any time, if you believe an individual is in violation of the quarantine requirements, please notify law enforcement.

**What does it mean to self-isolate or quarantine?**

Quarantine is used to keep someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others. Isolation is used to separate people infected with the virus (those who are sick with COVID-19 and those with no symptoms) from people who are not infected.

People in quarantine should stay home, separate themselves from others, monitor their health, and follow directions from the Florida Department of Health. People who are in isolation should stay home until it's safe for them to be around others.

Both quarantine and isolation:

- protect the public
- help limit further spread of COVID-19
- can be done voluntarily or be required by health authorities

Guests arriving from high risk areas are required to self-quarantine or isolate when arriving in the state of Florida per Executive Orders. In both instances this means limiting any out-of-home activity to medical care. You must also avoid public transportation, ride-sharing, and taxis. In the event you require groceries, the recommendation is to utilize meal or grocery delivery service where deliveries can be left outside of the door. Recreation inclusive of beaches, attractions and dining out is not permitted. For more information please see the CDC Guidance [here](#).

Do vacation rentals have a responsibility to communicate with other guests if they have a guest coming in from one of the identified states?

With regards to responsibilities and liabilities as it relates to guest services and relations, our recommendation is to consult a legal advisor to confirm the language within rental agreements and communication that addresses the topic.

What's the responsibility of restaurateurs if they know someone is in the restaurant is visiting from an identified state?

We recommend restaurateurs review the DBPR mandatory and recommended guidance and FAQ for restaurants and food establishments. Additionally, they should consult with their legal advisors to ensure all potential issues have been addressed for both guests and employees.

Are vacation rentals required to notify guests who are already booked that they will be required to self-quarantine?

The County strongly recommends property owners and managers notify guests from high risk areas in advance of their arrival that they will be required to self-quarantine for a period of 14 days. The County Safety Plan states, "Property owners and managers will provide COVID-19 guidance of any local restrictions that are in place during the guest stay and other related local information." All current information related to such restrictions are posted on the County's website and is easily accessible [here](#). Additionally, it's advisable to consult with your legal advisor to ensure verbiage in your rental agreement addresses concerns.



Do these rules also apply to the hotels?

Hotels, motels, and inns are not affected by Vacation Rental Orders or subject to the County's Safety Plan. However, the guidance within specifies good business practices to be engaged and should be reviewed by lodging management and legal advisors.

Legally are vacation rentals expected to report instances where a guest is not self-quarantining?

We recommend seeking clarification from a legal advisor to ensure rental agreements address guest responsibility. A guest's violation of the Executive Order is a Second-Degree Misdemeanor which carries a penalty of 60 days imprisonment, a \$500 fine, or both. DBPR may also take action against the vacation rental license if the owner/management is found to be operating outside the scope of the order or in a way that is contrary to the County's Safety Plan.

Are vacation rentals required to have the names and destination origins of all guests within a rental? For example, in a larger home with guests gathering from multiple locations will everyone present identification?

Please remember to follow the guidance set forth in the Safety Plan and the resources cited within. We also advise you seek counsel from your legal advisor to determine ways in which you can best protect your business and employees.

OPENINGS/CLOSURES

Are the beaches open?

Yes, Okaloosa County and Destin beaches are now open from dawn until dusk. This includes public and private beaches; restrooms; beach accessways; parking areas solely for accessing beaches; county and city beachfront parks; trails; Marler Park; and the Okaloosa Island Fishing Pier. The Okaloosa area of the Gulf Islands National Seashore has also re-opened as has Henderson Beach State Park's beach access and parking. The park's day use areas and camping site remain closed.

Eglin Air Force off-base beaches have also re-opened under the following guidelines, with the exception of the East Pass access point:

- Princess Beach, Matterhorn and White Point are open for normal operations from dawn to dusk.
- Eglin Beach Park will open at 10 a.m. Parking is \$5 at the gate with credit card payments only. Beach park hours of operation through May 21st, are Thursday – Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The park will be closed Monday – Wednesday. Beginning May 22nd, the beach park will be open seven days a week from 10 a.m. – 7 p.m.
- Beach park pavilion reservations will not be accepted at this time. Rental equipment will also not be available at this time.

Is this limited to only residents?

No. The beach re-openings are not limited to residents.



What are the hours the beaches will be open?

The beaches will remain open from dawn to dusk in Okaloosa County and the City of Destin.

Beach park hours of operation specific to Eglin Air Force off-base beaches will also be dawn to dusk with the exception of Eglin Beach Park which will operate Thursday – Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., through May 21st. The park will be closed Monday – Wednesday. Beginning May 22nd, the beach park will be open seven days a week from 10 a.m. – 7 p.m.

Will the beaches be open 7 days a week?

Yes, Okaloosa County and City of Destin beaches will be open 7 days a week.

Beach park hours of operation specific to Eglin Air Force off-base beaches will also be dawn to dusk with the exception of Eglin Beach Park which is open seven days a week from 10 a.m. – 7 p.m. The Eglin AFB property at the base of the Marler Bridge is permanently closed.

What data did the Board consider when they decided to go from a limited beach opening to a full beach opening?

The Board evaluated the data presented by the Department of Health and the Department of Public Safety, and accounted for individual behavior during the limited hours the beach was operating. It confirmed the County has been moving in the right direction, slowing the spread of the virus. While the beaches are now operating without restricted hours, it's imperative the community continues to practice personal responsibility inclusive of social distancing.

Will parking and restroom facilities be open at beach accesses?

Yes, restrooms, parking areas solely for accessing public and private beaches, and beachfront parks will be open from dawn to dusk.

Are beach vendors permitted to operate?

Yes, beach vendors have been reauthorized to resume business.

Is the Okaloosa Island Fishing Pier included reopening?

Yes, the Okaloosa Fishing Pier is operating without restriction.

Does this include both private and public beaches?

Yes, the re-opening applies to both private and public beaches.

Are there restrictions on what can be done on the beach?

No, there are no activity restrictions, however, beach goers are instructed to practice social distancing and limit gatherings to no more than 10 persons.

Can I sit and sunbathe?

Yes, you are permitted to sunbathe.



Can I walk on the beach?

Yes, you are permitted to walk on the beach.

Can I fish from the beach? What about the Okaloosa Island Fishing Pier?

Yes, you are permitted to fish from the beach or the Okaloosa Island Fishing Pier.

Will there be lifeguards on duty?

Yes, public safety officials and lifeguards will be present during the beaches operating hours.

Are weddings permits being issued?

At this time there are no restrictions to activities on the beach and permits are being issued. While gathering sizes are no longer limited to 10, attendees are instructed to follow CDC guidelines and practice social distancing and limit gathering sizes.

Is Norriego Point open?

Yes, beaches in the City of Destin, which includes Norriego Point, are open from dawn to dusk.

Are the state and national parks open?

Yes, Henderson Beach State Park's beach access and parking have re-opened. The park's day use areas and camping site remain closed. The Okaloosa area of the Gulf Islands National Seashore has also now re-opened.

Are the County parks open?

Yes, the County parks are now open. Please remember to practice social distancing and limit gatherings to no more than 10 persons.

Does the declaration revoke vendor permits on Crab Island including rental boats that send guests out there?

Commercial Use Authorizations for Crab Island were permitted to resume operation on Saturday, May 16th. All other licensing will remain in effect and those renting pontoon boats to go out to Crab Island are instructed to continue practicing social distancing, by limiting their gatherings to no more than 10 persons and maintaining at least 50-feet from other vessels.

Does the declaration to temporarily close beaches include Crab Island?

No, Crab Island has always remained open and remains open at this time.

Are the pools at the hotels and condo rentals closed?

There are currently no declarations in place mandating that all swimming pools must close. However, whether or not to remain open is at the discretion of management. We recommend contacting your accommodations directly for details.

**Can I take my boat out?**

Yes, boating is permitted, and boat ramps are currently open. However, please note that local law enforcement and the Florida Wildlife Commission will be enforcing social distancing orders including staying 50 feet apart from other vessels.

Are restaurants open?

Yes, restaurants are operating at 50% capacity within their dining rooms and offering outdoor seating with tables spaced six feet apart. As the state enters Phase II of re-opening on Friday, June 5th, bars and bar-seating in restaurants will also re-open at limited capacity. A number of local restaurants are also continuing to offer curbside pickup and delivery services as well.

Are bars open?

On Friday, June 5th, bars and bar seating within restaurants will be permitted to re-open. Bars will be operating at 50% capacity indoors, and at full capacity outside with proper social distancing of six feet between tables.

Are the restaurants still offering curbside, pickup or delivery services?

A number of local restaurants have been offering curbside pickup and delivery services and will continue to do so.

Are activities and major attractions such as HarborWalk Village, Destin Commons and The Okaloosa Island Boardwalk open?

Yes, attractions, such as HarborWalk Village, Destin Commons and The Okaloosa Island Boardwalk have begun operating in a limited capacity under Full Phase I of the Governor's plan to re-open the state. A number of fishing charters and water sports rental companies are also welcoming guests with heightened attention to sanitation processes. On Friday, June 5th, businesses such as movie theaters, bowling alleys and concert halls will be permitted to re-open at 50% capacity, with social-distancing restrictions. For the most recent information and temporary hours, we recommend calling the attraction directly.

Are the charter boats/dive boats still operating?

Charter boats are continuing to operate daily upon booking, pending the number of people on board, including crew, does not exceed 10.

Is the Destin Harbor open?

The Harbor is currently open, and several charters are operational if booked.

Are stores open?

Many stores are currently open and operating at a reduced capacity. On Friday, June 5th, retail operations will be permitted to return to full capacity. For information on a specific outlet we recommend that you reach out directly as they re-open.



Are there supplies in your grocery stores?

Our local grocery stores are open and restocking as products become available. However, select items such as paper goods, hand sanitizer, cleaning products, and some household items are limited. Some stores have also adjusted their hours and operations including:

- Whole Foods: Serving people who are 60 years old and older for an hour before opening to the rest of the public. Stores will close up to two hours early to give workers more time to restock shelves, sanitize stores, and rest. During this time, you can still pick up items if the store offers it.
- Target: All Target stores are closing by 9:00 p.m. Stores are opening as scheduled except for Wednesdays, when Target dedicates the first hour of business to vulnerable populations only, such as the elderly and immunocompromised.
- Publix: Store hours have now expanded to 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. for all, and the pharmacy has returned to regular operating hours.
- Winn-Dixie: All stores will be open 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., the 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. period from Monday through Friday is reserved for senior citizens and those most at-risk. Also, 9:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. on Monday and Tuesday will continue to be for healthcare professionals and first responders.
- Walmart: Stores are open 7:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Each Tuesday, those age 60 and older can shop in the store and Pharmacy one hour before opening.

What are the restaurants and attractions doing to keep us safe?

Restaurants are currently limiting dining room capacity to 50% and spacing outdoor tables six feet apart to maintain proper social distancing. To ensure the safety of customers and team members they will also continue practicing sanitary measures above and beyond standard business practices.

PARTNERS

What assistance is available to small businesses in Okaloosa County?

On May 5th the Board of County Commissioners created the Okaloosa County Small Business COVID-19 Grant Program in partnership with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC). These grants, not to exceed \$2,500, may be eligible to businesses that meet the following parameters:

- Must be the majority owner of an established private business active in Okaloosa County prior 1/1/2019.
- Must have 20 employees or less.
- Must have a storefront in Okaloosa County.
- Must have reduction in sales/revenues of 25% or greater due the loss of business income related to COVID-19.
- Must not have received another Assistance Program from SBDC from another County in the Panhandle or through the Gulf Power funding.
- 1099 Employees aka "Independent Contractors" shall count as employees.



The website is live now (myokaloosa.com/covid-grant) and eligible businesses will be able to submit their application beginning at 8:00 a.m. on May 26, 2020. Applications will be closed on May 29 at 5:00 p.m.

How do I know if I qualify for a loan under the CARES Act?

Review the [CARES Act Guide of Eligibility](#) which includes a detailed list of resources available broken out by business classification including: small businesses, 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4), 501(c)(6), 501(c)(7), 501(c)(9), 501(c)(19), states, nonprofits, franchises, corporations, airports and more.

IF YOU ARE A: Small Business that meets SBA size standards (any businesses that have 500 or less employees, including tribe-owned businesses)

- SBA Business Interruption Loans
- SBA Coronavirus Economic Injury Disaster Loans
- SBA Express Loans
- Relief on Existing SBA Loans
- Emergency Stabilization Fund

IF YOU ARE A: Mid-sized Business or Nonprofit (generally 500-10,000 employees)

- Emergency Stabilization Fund (see specifically Loans for Mid-Sized Businesses)

IF YOU ARE A: 501(c)(3) Nonprofit

- SBA Business Interruption Loans
- SBA Coronavirus Economic Injury Disaster Loans
- Emergency Stabilization Fund

Do Vacation Rental companies qualify under the CARES Act?

If you file a 1099 you are eligible for consideration for business resources. If you do not, you could still be eligible for the individual/contractor benefits in CARES.

Where do I apply for each type of grant or loan? Are they all available to apply for now?

Some of the new loan features are available. To find the most up to date information, please visit the SBA [here](#). You can use the site to find where to apply for the loans, but in general: SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan: Apply with the SBA [here](#).

Paycheck Protection Program (Business Interruption Loans): Apply through an authorized Bank or Credit Union beginning either April 3 or April 10, depending on your eligibility category. More information is available [here](#). You can find the list of SBA-approved lenders in each state or region [here](#).

SBA Express Loan: Apply through an authorized Bank or Credit Union. You can find the list of SBA approved lenders in each state or region [here](#).



Economic Stabilization Fund: To be determined. The Treasury Department, the Federal Reserve, or financial institutions will issue guidance regarding applications for loans or loan guarantees under this program.

Community Development Block Grants: Funding opportunities are not yet available, but funding will be provided to eligible local municipal or county governments within 30 days and on a rolling basis thereafter. Individuals, businesses, and nonprofits are not eligible for direct CDBG grants, but may receive subgrants through states, cities or counties. If you are interested in receiving a grant under this program, you will need to contact your local municipal or county officials to find out how the program operates in your area.

Economic Development Assistance Program (EDAP) Grants: A notice of funding opportunities and information on how to apply will be posted on the Economic Development Administration's website, which you can [find here](#). While these grants are not yet available.

What is the cap on each different type of loan?

Actual loan amounts are based on need (e.g. expenses, payroll, etc.) and other requirements (e.g. collateral, risk, etc.), but the maximum size for each loan is:

- SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan: \$2 million
- Paycheck Protection Program (Business Interruption Loans): \$10 million
- SBA Express Loan: \$1 million
- Exchange Stabilization Fund: To be determined. The Treasury Department, the Federal Reserve, or financial institutions will issue information regarding the maximum loan amounts available. However, maximum loan amounts are likely to consider the amount of economic losses incurred as a result of COVID-19, credit worthiness, collateral pledged, and ability to repay.
- Community Development Block Grants: You will need to contact your local municipal or county officials to find out how the program operates in your area. Participation requirements may differ from one grantee to another.
- Economic Development Assistance Program (EDAP) Grants: A notice of funding opportunities and information on how to apply will be posted on the Economic Development Administration's website, which you can find here. The notice of funding opportunities will provide information on the maximum grant amount under this program.

What will the new CARES ACT provide me for Reemployment Assistance?

The CARES ACT provides eligible individuals with \$600 per week in addition to the weekly benefit amount determined under Florida law.

This additional funding expands unemployment benefits and covers more applicants beyond those who are traditionally covered. Through July 31, 2020, the federal government will provide a temporary Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) of \$600 per week for any worker eligible for state or federal unemployment compensation (UC) benefits. The FPUC would be paid in addition to and at the same time (but not necessarily in the same check) as regular state or federal UC benefits.



What are the limits on the minimum/maximum someone can earn in order to be eligible for partial unemployment?

The best way to determine eligibility is to apply. To qualify:

- You must have lost your job through no fault of your own, so you must not have quit for personal reasons or been terminated for malicious misconduct (poor job performance does not disqualify you);
- You must be totally or partially unemployed;
- You must have a minimum amount of wages earned in what is called the "base period," which is the first four complete quarters beginning 18 months prior to your claim;
- You must be able to work, available to work, and actively seeking work. This includes being able to get to a job and have child care if necessary.

For more information please see the attached Reemployment Assistance FAQ in your partner resource documents or click [here](#).

Where should I direct my employees who have been laid off?

Floridians who may be eligible to receive Reemployment Assistance should visit the following:

- [Reemployment Assistance information](#)
- [Reemployment Assistance FAQ](#)

Where should I/my team apply for unemployment?

Representative Ponder has been in communication with DEO Executive Director Ken Lawson regarding state unemployment and shared there are multiple ways to apply including:

- Online through FloridaJobs.org
- Through CONNECT
- Online through DEO's Mobile Website
- Download a paper application

Please note when the portal is closed it is processing the claims from that day. It was previously closed for updates, but now it closes in the evenings to process. If you find that it is closed the recommendation is to apply through the mobile site.

Are there programs that are specific to Florida?

Yes, please see below. We also encourage you to complete the Business Damage Assessment survey to assess the impact of COVID-19 on Florida's local business operations. The survey, managed by DEO, will evaluate businesses affected by COVID-19 and the impacts the virus has had on the local economy so actions to implement appropriate relief programs can begin. The survey can be taken online at www.floridadisaster.biz.

Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan Program

On March 16th, Governor DeSantis activated the Florida Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan Program to support small businesses impacted by COVID-19. The bridge loan program,



managed by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO), provides short term, interest-free loans to small businesses that experienced economic injury from COVID-19.

- [Bridge loan program information](#)
- [Bridge loan application](#)
- [Bridge loan program webinar recording \(3/18/2020\)](#)
- [Bridge loan FAQ](#)

The Rebuild Florida Business Loan Fund

The Rebuild Florida Business Loan Fund offered by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity provides eligible businesses with up to \$500,000 in state and federal funds to help with long term economic recovery and rebuild following a disaster.

- [Rebuild Florida Business Loan program information](#)
- [Rebuild Florida Business Loan application](#)

Are there additional resources I should be aware of?

In addition to the partner resource documents, Commissioner Nathan Boyles has teamed up with the [Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce](#) to assist small business owners seeking assistance. In the first of a three-part series, Commissioner Boyles sits down with Tony Hughes from Hughes Consulting and Stephen Perkins, CPA, Warren Averett to review the Paycheck Protection Plan. Click [here](#) to view.

What are you doing to promote those of us that are open and operating?

We are committed to helping both the visitor that is in market today and our local community, practice social distancing. How we treat people today will influence the business tomorrow. Given the situation we have paused all paid social promotions, but we are committed to providing resources for businesses who are looking to promote social distancing and what they are doing to assist. If you are doing something that helps people practice social distancing, we will spread the word via social media and <https://www.destinfb.com/connect/faqs/covid-19-faq/>.

Additionally, on April 13th we launched Adventure Anywhere - a virtual resource for parents, teachers and kids. This online bank of daily activities ties water adventures to everyday life with virtual lessons, videos, recipes featuring our chefs and interviews with experts, our tourism partners. These ideas will teach kids about the water and get them outside and exploring at home, even in complicated times. We will be reaching out to our tourism community to gather content and encourage all to participate and share content on your individual channels. If you think you would like to participate in this program, please email: marketing@destinfb.com.

What are your recommendations for handling our social media channels to avoid negative backlash?

We recommend keeping up a social media cadence you feel comfortable with and believe serves your audience. In the weeks ahead it's possible followers will be experiencing COVID-19 fatigue from the media and perhaps look for a respite from this topic of content. People are seeking out wanderlust and hope, and our tourism partners are uniquely positioned to help them



still believe in travel and plan for the time it is available again. We have seen trends on social evolving around “Armchair Travel” - looking at images and dreaming of travel from the comfort of your home. Perhaps there’s a way someone can experience a small taste of the restaurant via a recipe until it’s safe to return. We are also still seeing pushes for local business (is your restaurant offering carry-out or delivering services?) as well as encouraging travelers to buy gift certificates in anticipation of returning as well as pre-paying for future trips. There is space to share in the current climate, but we advise doing so with full acknowledgement of the current situation - and offering hope and inspiration.

Will we be able to rearrange funds to put toward remarketing campaigns that are specifically focused on peak season?

We are working diligently to create those plans and understand that our messaging may be shifting. As shared during our partner meeting on April 15th we have conceptual approval from the BOCC on a tourism business plan, “Venture Out.” A more detailed version will be presented for adoption at next week’s meeting, and shared with partners upon approval. We are acting quickly and will share with you all as soon as it’s complete.

Are we required to wear masks?

The CDC and Board of County Commissioners recommend wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies). For additional guidance please visit the CDC’s recommendation found [here](#).

I’m (or a guest or employee) is experiencing symptoms related to COVID. What do I do?

DOH-Okaloosa has set up a local call center for COVID-19 inquiries from the public. The number is 850-344-0566, Monday- Friday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. The state’s call center is 1-866-779-6121, 24 hours a day, seven days a week; or email COVID-19@flhealth.gov.

If you suspect that you, a guest or a team member has been exposed to COVID-19 and develop a fever and symptoms, such as cough or difficulty breathing, call your primary care physician or the county board of health and tell them about your symptoms and your exposure.