



**Michael Watson**  
SECRETARY OF STATE



## COVID-19 Tips, Resources and Relief Efforts

*Thursday, June 18, 2020*

### COVID-19 Prevention

## COVID-19

As the COVID-19 case numbers continue to fluctuate in our state, it is crucial for every Mississippian to take the necessary precautions to protect themselves and others. To flatten the curve, we must consistently educate ourselves and adapt to health guidelines set forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH).

One of the most important ways to protect yourself against the illness is to be well aware of how it spreads. According to the CDC, the virus spreads mainly from person-to-person, generally through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes or talks. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. Recent students have also suggested that COVID-19 may be spread by people who are not showing symptoms, so it's important to always protect yourself when out in public.

Help keep Mississippi safe by practicing good hygiene, social distancing whenever possible, staying home if you are sick, and getting tested if you think you've been exposed to COVID-19. By taking care of ourselves, we take care of each other.

[Click here to view a map of COVID-19 cases.](#)

[Click here to view COVID-19 testing sites.](#)

### Back to Business Mississippi Webinar

The Mississippi Development Authority (MDA) will host a **Zoom webinar at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, June 24, regarding the Back to Business Mississippi Grant Program.** Deputy Director for Governmental Affairs and Chief Innovation Officer for the Mississippi Development Authority, Jamie Miller, will be available to answer questions about the application process and eligibility requirements.



The program provides grants to small businesses that were forced to close as a result of COVID-19. Businesses with fewer than 50 employees are eligible for grants up to \$25,000. Out of the \$240 million available, \$40 million has been designated for minority-owned businesses.

MDA set up a website, [backtobusinessms.org](http://backtobusinessms.org), where small business owners can apply for these grants. The site also features step-by-step instructions on filling out the application, rules and regulations, required documents and FAQs.

[Click here to visit the program's website.](#)

[Click here to register for the Zoom webinar.](#)

## Scammers Targeting Retirement Savings



The CARES Act of 2020 provides significant relief for businesses and individuals affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes allowing retirement investors affected by the coronavirus to gain up to \$100,000 of their retirement savings without being subject to early withdrawal penalties. Unfortunately, deceitful promoters have used these CARES Act benefits to encourage investors to take money from their 401(k)s or traditional IRAs, not for current emergency financial needs, but to buy investments (often riskier ones) in an account at a firm the promoter recommends or in the investor's existing account.

If you are considering making an investment with retirement money, the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority urges you to consider these factors:

- You may pay high fees to the promoter. Ask if there are any up front or ongoing fees or commissions before investing.
- It may be difficult or costly to sell the promoted investment. Before investing, ask if there are fees or restrictions on early withdrawal or sale.
- Selling at low prices locks in your losses.
- You may lose out on compounding.
- You may significantly increase your risk because you are investing with borrowed funds from your 401(k).
- Eligibility and availability are designed to address hardships, not increase investment options. People who are eligible are those whose spouse or dependent is diagnosed with COVID-19, and who has experienced financial consequences from COVID-19.

[Click here for more tips and resources.](#)

## Executive Orders

### [Executive Order 1498](#)

Executive Order 1498 orders the State Flag to be flown at half-staff on all buildings and grounds of the State of Mississippi until sunset on Wednesday,

June 17, 2020 in memory of Deputy Sheriff James E. Blair.

[Executive Order 1497](#)

Executive Order 1497 amends Executive Order 1471 to extend its duration until 11:59 p.m. on July 1, 2020. EO 1471 creates additional protections from civil liability for healthcare workers and facilities assisting outside their normal operations in the response to COVID-19.

[Executive Order 1496](#)

Executive Order 1496 extends the Safe Return order until Monday, June 29, 2020 at 8 a.m. with a few amendments.

[Executive Order 1495](#)

Executive Order 1495 rescinds provisions from prior Executive Orders which authorized the board of supervisors of any county, the governing authority of any municipality, and any local school board to grant certain employees administrative leave with pay to prevent the risk of transmission of COVID-19.

[Click here to view all Executive Orders.](#)

## **Emergency Contact Information**

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