

Update - June 17, 2020

Dear seniors-serving community organization,

The City of Toronto recognizes that access to information is one of many challenges faced by seniors and their caregivers, along with access to food, essentials and technology, isolation and loneliness, the need for mental health supports, financial challenges, and more.

The City continues to provide resource updates on the [Seniors COVID-19 web page](#). You may also refer to the attached summary when speaking to seniors and caregivers, to help them access the support they need.

Please also remember that for those that require information in a language other than English:

- There is a Google translate function on all toronto.ca pages (available in 51 languages)
- 311 services are available in more than 180 languages
- 211 and the Toronto Seniors Helpline offer information and referrals in multiple languages
- TCHC's client care centre offers support in multiple languages.

The City is also developing a Flyer for seniors, available in different languages, to be released shortly.

So many of the initiatives referenced on the web page and in this summary are thanks to the ongoing work and dedication of community-based seniors-serving agencies and other organizations, housing providers, and all orders of government.

Thank you for your continued support of vulnerable seniors, especially as we navigate the COVID-19 pandemic together.



HEALTH

If seniors have questions about COVID-19 or are feeling sick:

- Access the most up to date information from the City's [COVID-19 webpage](#), including what to do if they have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 or if they have symptoms.
- If they have difficulty breathing or other severe symptoms, they should call 911.
- If seniors are unsure if they should get tested, they should:
 - call Telehealth at 1-866-797-0000,
 - call their health care provider, or
 - call an [assessment centre](#), to enquire about testing.

For seniors-serving organizations interested in mobile COVID-19 testing:

- Ontario Health Agency Toronto Region has created a centralized email for community organizations and agencies to submit mobile testing requests: TRTestingIntake@tc.lhins.on.ca.

For help understanding how to self-isolate, or to care for someone with COVID-19:

- The Government of Ontario has released [guidance](#) on what self-isolation involves.
- Visit [How to Care for Someone with COVID-19](#) if you live with/ care for a senior with COVID-19.



FOOD AND ESSENTIALS

If seniors need help accessing food:

- Ask a neighbour or family member bring their shopping to them, or try online delivery services.
- For low-income seniors, there are organizations and volunteer groups that will deliver groceries to seniors at home with no delivery fee. Call 211 or the Toronto Seniors Helpline (416-217-2077) for referral to a free grocery delivery service.
- For seniors residing in Toronto, who are in self-isolation, do not have alternative access to food and are not currently receiving such assistance from another program, the City and the Red Cross have partnered to provide food hamper delivery free to qualifying seniors. Call 1-833-204-9952 for eligibility and registration information.
- To apply for Meals on Wheels (home delivery of prepared fresh or frozen meals), call 211 or the Toronto Seniors Helpline (416-217-2077) or visit www.OntarioCommunitySupport.ca.

If seniors need help accessing prescriptions:

- Many pharmacies/drug stores offer free home delivery of prescriptions, and in some cases, over-the-counter medicine and supplies. There is also the online pharmacy www.Well.ca.
- To arrange prescription delivery, seniors should call their local pharmacy. They can refer to the label on their current medication for their pharmacy's phone number. A list of pharmacies can be found at torontocentralhealthline.ca.
- Seniors can also call 211 or the Toronto Seniors Helpline (416-217-2077) to be connected to a community agency offering prescription and medication delivery to seniors during COVID-19.

For seniors who are pet owners:

- Visit the City's [Pet Owners](#) page for information and advice, and help with supplies.
- Funded by PetSmart Charities of Canada, Toronto Animal Services will be providing assistance to pet owners from low income households (for purchase of pet food and supplies).

This summary is intended to support community organizations in their discussions with seniors and caregivers. Please refer to the City of Toronto's [COVID-19 Seniors web page](#) for updated information and auto-translation.



ACCESS TO SUPPORT

If seniors require support services like transportation to medical appointments, Meals on Wheels, personal care or other supports:

- Encourage them to call 211 (available 24/7 in 150+ languages) or the Toronto Seniors Helpline (416-217-2077, in multiple languages) for referral to services in their area.
- The Toronto Seniors Helpline can also connect seniors to government-funded LHIN services (or seniors can call their local LHIN directly at 310-2222, no area code).

If seniors need support with mental health:

- The City has launched a mental health support strategy, which offers free mental health support by telephone. Seniors or caregivers can call 211 for a warm referral to a mental health service provider. Culturally relevant supports are available to Indigenous and Black Seniors.
- In case of mental health crisis, seniors can call the Toronto Seniors Helpline (416-217-2077), Distress Centres of Toronto (416-408-4357) or Gerstein Crisis Centre (416-929-5200).

If seniors need someone to talk to or someone to check in on them:

- There are many friendly phone call check-in services (including in different languages) for seniors who want someone to talk to, either regularly or just once in a while.
- Call 211 or the Toronto Seniors Helpline (416-217-2077) for referral.

If seniors have a question about City services (e.g. libraries, waste, Wheel Trans, etc.):

- Use information on the [Changes to City Services](#) page or call 311 (available in 180 languages).



ACTIVITIES AND VOLUNTEERING

For those interested in volunteering to support seniors:

- Visit [Volunteer Toronto](#) and [Spark Ontario](#) to find volunteer opportunities available.
- Neighbours are also encouraged to check in on and support their senior neighbours.

Virtual resources to keep busy inside:

- The [Stay, Play & Learn at Home](#) webpage is a listing of many free virtual activities (including activities specifically for seniors) such as dance classes, book clubs, discussion groups, fitness, language classes, art, museums, live music, caregiver circles and more.
- The YMCA offers a range of free video workouts, including low-impact and chair workouts for people with reduced mobility at [YThrive Home](#) (see "[Gold](#)" page for low-impact options)
- The Alzheimer Society of Toronto offers a [wide range of free virtual programs](#) for seniors with dementia and their caregivers, including meditation, gentle fitness, jazz concert, and more.
- Toronto Public Library offers [38 ways to use the library from home](#) & free digital library cards.



HOUSING & BENEFITS

If seniors have questions related to housing, evictions, paying rent and more:

- Visit the City's [Tenants and Property Owners](#) page to learn more about paying rent (and financial support for renters), property and utility bill relief, the suspension of all eviction-related activity by the Ontario Government, tenants' rights and responsibilities, and more.
- The [Toronto Rent Bank](#) can provide interest-free loans to low-income Toronto residents who are behind in their rent or need to move to more suitable housing.
- For tenants in TCHC Seniors Housing buildings, TCHC is increasing supports to tenants including phone call and in-person checks and connection to further supports.
 - TCHC Client Care Centre is available 24/7 (416-981-5500 or help@torontohousing.ca).

If seniors have questions about income support and taxes:

- Visit the City's [Income Support](#) page to learn more about different forms of Income support including the Hardship Fund (for medical/health expenses), and funeral expenses.
- The [Government of Ontario](#) has announced a temporary automatic six-month increase to GAINS (Guaranteed Annual Income Support) for low-income seniors, among other initiatives.
- In addition to the Canada Emergency Response Benefit, the [Government of Canada](#) has also announced a one-time automatic payment of \$300 to all seniors receiving Old Age Security (OAS) and an additional \$200 for seniors receiving Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS).
- The Government of Canada is also offering [Free Virtual Tax Clinics](#) and other initiatives.



OTHER

In case of scams and fraud, and elder abuse:

- In case of elder abuse, call the Seniors Safety Line: 1-866-299-1011.
- One COVID-19 related scam involves calling seniors, offering to buy their groceries, and asking for credit card details. Calling 211 to request referral to a legitimate initiative can help avoid this.
- To report fraud, call the Toronto Police Service non-emergency number at 416-808-2222, or anonymously contact Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477(TIPS) or crimestoppers.com.

For information in multiple languages:

- There is a Google translate function on all toronto.ca pages (available in 51 languages).
- 311 services are available in more than 180 languages.
- 211 and the Toronto Seniors Helpline offer information and referrals in multiple languages
- TCHC's client care centre offers support in multiple languages.
- There are COVID-19 posters/ resources available in multiple languages, about topics such as:
 - [Staying Safe](#)
 - [Basic Facts](#)
 - [Advice for Caregivers](#)
 - [Physical Distancing](#)