

## USVCC members, affiliates, and friends:











As we all closely monitor the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) we want to ensure our members and community are informed, have access to the resources they need, and receive support and assistance to make it through this period with as little interruption as possible.

USVCC is a trusted veteran non-profit organization that is included in the DoD's National Resource Directory. As such, we are able to refer members of our community to the resources for further information about healthcare and overall resilience during these difficult times. We've outlined information here along 3 of our 5 pillars: Wellness, Employment, and Business.

We would like to thank the Veteran's Administration, the Wisconsin Veterans Chamber of Commerce (WVCC), the Small Business Administration (SBA), and Gartner Advisors as key sources of portions of the information shared here. For extended resources and information, the USVCC is listed in the National Resource Directory which has additional resources available at [nrd.gov](http://nrd.gov), as does Military Onesource at <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/coronavirus>.

### Wellness

Before sharing resources, a quick reminder for veterans and their families, the most common symptoms can be similar to the common cold and flu, but this chart helps draw some important distinctions:

Symptoms	Coronavirus <small>Symptoms range from mild to severe</small>	Cold <small>Gradual onset of symptoms</small>	Flu <small>Abrupt onset of symptoms</small>
 Fever	Common	Rare	Common
 Fatigue	Sometimes	Sometimes	Common
 Cough	Common* (usually dry)	Mild	Common* (usually dry)
 Sneezing	No	Common	No
 Aches and pains	Sometimes	Common	Common
 Runny or stuffy nose	Rare	Common	Sometimes
 Sore throat	Sometimes	Common	Sometimes
 Diarrhea	Rare	No	Sometimes for children
 Headaches	Sometimes	Rare	Common
 Shortness of breath	Sometimes	No	No

Sources: World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

A University of Massachusetts-Amherst study dated March 17th 2020 indicates that the incubation period is 5 days, and that 97.5% of people that develop symptoms do so in 11.5 days. Keep in mind that most people infected with COVID-19 have mild disease and recover.

However, it is very important that we all take responsibility to prevent the spread of this illness to our most vulnerable population who are age 60 and over and any individuals whose health is already compromised.

The Veterans Administration has issued information and guidance should you be concerned that you may be experiencing the symptoms of COVID19. To maintain social distancing, and still seek assistance, you can sign in to [My HealtheVet](#) and send a secure message. In fact, you may be able to get diagnosed and receive care through [VA telehealth](#) without having to visit a VA facility at all.

For the latest updates on VA assistance, and an update on Veteran diagnosed cases of COVID19 visit <https://www.visn8.va.gov/coronavirus.asp>.

### **Employment**

We are aware of the potential for spiking unemployment among veterans and veterans and military spouses and encourage you to utilize our robust resume and hiring platform in Be a Hero Hire a Hero. Additionally, the Senate has passed the Families First Act, which will go into effect 15 days after the President signs the bill, which he has promised to do. The Act will bring \$100 million in relief for employees and employers in the form of paid sick leave, relief for childcare, and protection of vacation and sick leave time off during the quarantine period.

<https://www.inc.com/suzanne-lucas/what-senates-passage-of-families-first-coronavirus-response-act-means-for-you.html>

### **Education –**

Many colleges, universities, and credentialing schools have moved to online instruction for the foreseeable future - there is some risk of the GI Bill window of eligibility shutting out some veterans. We understand Congress is considering action to bring relief to Post-9/11 GI Bill students. We are supporting extending/waiving the window of eligibility for those veterans currently using their GI Bill benefit. Until action is taken by Congress, the current rule-set stands as below:

- If your school temporarily closes because of an emergency situation, VA may continue benefit payments (including the Monthly Housing Allowance under the Post-9/11 GI Bill) for up to 4 weeks during a 12-month period.
- If your school remains open (virtually, rather than physically), and you are now taking online classes, then your benefit payments will be impacted as follows:
  - If the change from training in-residence to online classes happens during the term, and your program has been approved by the State Approving Agency for delivery through an online modality, your benefit payments will remain the same for the rest of the term.

- For any future terms that are solely online, your housing allowance will be reduced to one-half of the national average of DoD's Basic Allowance for Housing rates for an E-5 with dependents.
- The most important thing you need to know is if your program has not been approved by the State Approving Agency for an online modality, all of your education benefit payments will stop when you begin your training online.

Stay attuned to Congressional action which might change these rules in recognition of the likelihood of extended online presence for students, and stay in contact with your State Certifying Official for your benefits.

### **Business**

For strategies to minimize the spread of the virus in the workplace, and some pointers on insuring business continuity in the midst of this pandemic, see the information sheet from the United States Chamber of Commerce Foundation and consider enrolling in the Gartner seminar being held online tomorrow, March 19<sup>th</sup> at 1pm. To seek information about how to apply for Disaster assistance, visit the SBA website provided below, and specifically see the Disaster Loan program approved by the SBA at [disasterloan.sba.gov](https://disasterloan.sba.gov).

#### **[United States Chamber of Commerce Foundation Information](https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/coronavirus)**

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#### **[Gartner Pandemic Preparedness Webinar: Business Continuity Management](#)**

Business continuity management (BCM) is a well-established process to help your organization weather a crisis. But a pandemic such as COVID-19 puts new strain on BCM initiatives at any organization.

**[Register for complimentary webinar](#)** and join Gartner analysts as they dive into:

- How to best organize for business continuity management

- Key practices for successful business continuity management
- How you can leverage BCM to support pandemic preparedness activities

**Live session:** March 19 at 9:00 a.m. EDT, 13:00 GMT or [Register](#) to be notified when the replay is available and watch it on-demand.

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Finally, on behalf of the SBA Office of Veterans Business Development, we're passing along a link to SBA's latest news release related to the Economic Injury Disaster Loans that the agency has implemented in response to Coronavirus (COVID-19). We encourage you to help us spread the word to your networks by sharing the release on your respective channels.

**[SBA Criteria on States Requests for Disaster Assistance Loans for Small Businesses Impacted by Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#)**

<https://www.sba.gov/about-sba/sba-newsroom/press-releases-media-advisories/sba-updates-criteria-states-requesting-disaster-assistance-loans-small-businesses-impacted>

<https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/Account/Login>

Be well, stay healthy, follow the social distancing norms!

**The Team at USVCC**