

Tennessee Reconnect Resource Guide



The latest COVID-19 updates from the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, as well as Tennessee college and university campuses, can be found [here](#).

If you think you may be **at risk of losing eligibility for the Tennessee Reconnect grant or Tennessee Promise scholarship** due to circumstances caused by COVID-19:

- *The Tennessee Higher Education Commission and Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation (THEC/TSAC) administer more than 20 different state student financial aid programs available to Tennessee students attending higher education institutions in our state. THEC/TSAC will be coordinating with colleges, universities, and community partners across the state as the situation surrounding the COVID-19 health crisis evolves. THEC/TSAC is currently reviewing all financial aid program regulations and considering next steps to help prevent students from losing eligibility for these essential scholarships and grants so they are not deterred in reaching their educational and career goals.*

If you are concerned about federal student loan repayment, you may be able to temporarily stop making payments. To provide relief to student loan borrowers during the COVID-19 national emergency, federal student loan borrowers can be placed in an administrative forbearance, which allows you to temporarily stop making your monthly loan payment. You can find more information on administrative forbearance and other topics related to your loans [here](#).

The federal government is **temporarily relaxing** some of the regulations around **defaulted student loans**. More information can be found [here](#).

If you **lost your job** or are **temporarily unable to work** due to circumstances caused by COVID-19 and would like to see if you qualify for unemployment insurance:

- **[Unemployment Insurance \(UI\)](#)** is a benefit program funded by Tennessee employers for workers who have lost their job by no fault of their own. Eligible claims may receive up to \$275 per week in benefit payments. Qualified applicants are only eligible for a maximum of 26 weeks of unemployment insurance in a year. Apply for Unemployment Insurance online [at this link](#).
 - **If you were affected by a recent closure due to COVID-19, please answer “Yes” to the question on the UI application that asks “Are you unemployed as a**

direct result of COVID-19” and then follow the prompts and enter all required information.

- **TANF Emergency Cash Assistance – Pandemic:** This Emergency Cash Assistance program will provide cash payments to families significantly impacted by the COVID-19 emergency. Beginning 10 A.M. CST Thursday, March 26, families can begin applying online, for up to two months of emergency cash assistance if they were employed as of March 11, 2020 and they’ve lost employment or at least 50% of their earned income as a result of the pandemic. This money is funded by the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program and provides between \$500 and \$1000, depending on household size, to qualifying families. This assistance is available in addition to any unemployment benefits individuals in the family may be receiving. Applicants can complete the [application process online here](#).

If you need assistance with **childcare**:

- [Families First](#) provides temporary cash assistance, transportation, child care assistance, educational supports, job training, employment activities, and other support services. Apply for services online [here](#).
- The [Child Care Certificate Program](#) provides child care financial assistance to families who are working or pursuing post-secondary education and who meet certain income eligibility requirements. Apply for Child Care Payment Assistance/Smart Steps online [here](#).
 - If you are already part of the Child Care Certificate Program, you will continue to receive child care services during this time.

If you need **financial assistance** to help your family during this time, you may be eligible for support from the following programs:

- The [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\)](#) provides nutritional assistance benefits to children and families, the elderly, the disabled, unemployed and working families. Apply for services online [here](#).
- [Families First](#) provides temporary cash assistance, transportation, child care assistance, educational supports, job training, employment activities, and other support services. Apply for services online [here](#).

If you **need assistance purchasing a laptop or any other required supplies** required to help you complete a postsecondary course that has transitioned to online classes, you may be eligible for assistance from the following programs:

- **Families First** provides temporary cash assistance, transportation, child care assistance, educational supports, job training, employment activities, and other support services. Apply for services online [here](https://faonlineapp.dhs.tn.gov/). <https://faonlineapp.dhs.tn.gov/>
- The **Workforce Investment Opportunities Act** authorizes financial support for supportive services for eligible participants. Funds can be used to pay for supports necessary to participate in eligible career and training activities. Please contact your [local America Job Center](#) to learn more.

If you need **affordable internet access**:

- You may be eligible to receive a discount on your phone or broadband service through [Lifeline](#), a federal program designed to help low-income Americans pay for vital telecommunications services. You can learn more about Lifeline and see if you are eligible [here](#).
- Several providers are temporarily offering free internet services, providing access to wi-fi hotspots, and taking other measures to help people at home access the services they need. You can find more information on these efforts [here](#).
- The [Access program from AT&T](#) provides internet and phone service at a special rate of \$10 per month for anyone receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. Apply for Access [here](#).

For additional resources and more information, please visit the websites of the [Tennessee Department of Human Services](#) and [Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development](#).