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FINDING FINANCIAL STABILITY DURING TURBULENT TIMES

Countless people across the US have been financially impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. LGBTQ people in particular are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, with LGBTQ people facing disproportionate poverty and unemployment rates compared to their straight and cisgender counterparts. Research has also found that LGBTQ people are more likely to have experienced a cut in work hours, are more likely to feel their personal finances are in worse shape due to the pandemic. If you're struggling to make ends meet due to COVID-19, this resource provides a few steps that may help you better navigate this turbulent time.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU LOST YOUR JOB

Millions of people in the US have lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Here are some initial steps you can take to help you stay afloat while facing unemployment and future job uncertainty.

- **File for Unemployment.** You should file for unemployment as soon as possible after you've lost your job. You should generally file in the state in which your job was located. Recent federal legislation has also expanded unemployment protections due to COVID-19. Learn more about your state's program [here](#).
- **Secure health insurance.** If your health insurance was provided through your employer, there are still options for you. [COBRA](#) can also help you extend the coverage you already had through your job. Those who have lost a job recently are also eligible to enroll in health insurance [through the federal and state marketplaces](#). In addition, some [state marketplaces have opened up](#) to those who were previously uninsured as well. [Medicare](#) (primarily for people age 65 or older), Medicaid (primarily for individuals and families with low income), and [Children's Health Insurance Program \(CHIP\)](#) are all programs that can help you secure much needed healthcare coverage. People without insurance may be able to access telehealth services through Federally Qualified Health Centers or similar community clinics. Learn more about your options [here](#). You can learn more about PrEP and insurance coverage (or lack thereof) [here](#), and assistance for HIV and AIDS medication access [here](#).

Black Trans Advocacy Coalition (BTAC) is the only national organization led by black trans people to collectively address the inequities faced in the black transgender human experience. blacktrans.org

The Human Rights Campaign Foundation improves the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people by working to increase understanding and encourage the adoption of LGBTQ-inclusive policies and practices. www.hrc.org/hrc-story/hrc-foundation



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- **Ensure you have enough to eat.** For those with lost or limited income due to COVID-19-related job loss, there are many options to help you put food on the table. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs (SNAPs) are being expanded across most states. Visit [this website](#) to learn more about and/or apply for SNAP. To learn more about food pantries and food distribution sites in your area, enter your zip code [here](#), [here](#), or [here](#). Many local schools and restaurants are also serving lunches to children who usually obtain their meals at school.

SEARCHING FOR EMPLOYMENT DURING COVID-19

If you are looking for employment during this crisis, please [see this resource](#) to learn more about what companies are hiring. Moreover, while some jobs may allow telework arrangements during the COVID-19 outbreak, many more involve commuting to a workplace. When evaluating the risks associated with those job opportunities, look at many factors including the frequency of contact you may have with others, the proximity with which you have to work near others, workplace conditions (ie - surfaces/bathrooms regularly sanitized), exposure you may have during your commute to/from work, and purposeful exposure to symptomatic individuals (ie - healthcare).

WHAT TO DO WHEN MONEY IS TIGHT

Even if you are able to retain your job during the pandemic, this global situation presents unique financial challenges that impact nearly everyone. Here are some ways you can stretch your budget in order to make it through the coming months.

Managing Expenses

- Contact your landlord. Some landlords [may defer or forgive payment](#). Evictions have [been frozen](#) in many states and municipalities.
- Contact your mortgage broker. Some mortgage brokers [may defer or forgive payment](#).
- Contact your utility companies. Many utility companies will defer or forgive payment. Utility shut-offs have been [frozen](#) in many states and municipalities.
 - ✚ Many internet providers have [low or no cost options](#) for those who need internet access for home-schooling and/or new telework needs. In addition, [many internet service providers](#) have committed to not terminate service or charge late fees for those who are unable to pay their bills due to the disruptions caused by COVID-19.
- Contact your credit card companies. Many are willing to [defer or forgive payment](#). Policies will vary by lender.
- Contact your student loan lenders. Many are willing to [defer or forgive payment](#). Policies will vary by lender.
- You may want to explore debt consolidation, which may allow you to roll multiple debts into a single, lower payment.

TRACK YOUR EXPENSES AND CREATE A BUDGET

Use one of many [budget tracking applications](#) or methods to help you track your spending and create a budget.



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Putting Money in Your Pocket

- Certain people are eligible for a \$1,200 one-time payment from the U.S. government. Learn more about your eligibility and submit direct deposit information [here](#). If you did not file a tax return in 2018 or 2019, you will need to enter your information [here](#) in order to be eligible for payment.
- The federal tax filing deadline for 2020 has been [extended](#) to July 15. If you are expecting a return, be sure to file your taxes as soon as possible. If you are expecting to owe taxes, wait until closer to the tax filing deadline to file and pay. The U.S. government also offers tax payment plans.
- Reach out to your community for assistance. Family, friends and other loved ones may be more helpful than you expect. Learn about [community relief programs](#) and local [mutual aid networks](#). You can also set up a collection for yourself or a loved one through a third party collector, such as [GoFundMe](#).
- If necessary, consider drawing from your 401(k) or IRA, which [may be penalty-free](#) if you have been affected by the coronavirus.

LOOK AT THE RESOURCES PREPARED BY YOUR BANK

Many banks are creating resources to respond to their clients' needs during the pandemic. You can find items like tips for managing money when you've lost your job, assistance programs for managing debt and options for accessing stimulus payments. You may also find options for accessing loans and other insights. Check out the resources created by HRC's National Corporate Partners: [Capital One](#), [Citi](#), [Goldman Sachs](#), [MasterCard](#), [PNC](#), [U.S. Bank](#) and [Wells Fargo](#).

WARNING ABOUT CREDIT CARDS AND PAYDAY LOANS

Payday loans and quick-approval credit cards can lead to serious long-term financial turmoil. Learn more about the risks of [payday loans](#) and [credit cards](#).

WARNING ABOUT SCAMS AND FRAUD

People in the U.S. have already lost millions of dollars due to COVID-19-related fraud. [Learn how you can protect yourself from coronavirus scams](#).

WHAT TO DO TO MAINTAIN YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

During a time of severe stress surrounding physical and financial health, one of the most proactive and helpful things we can do is take care of our minds. Below are some tips on how to preserve your mental and emotional well-being during this high-stress era.

- Visit a mental health professional. Many are offering video visits or other virtual options. Many health insurance plans also have a free on-demand non-emergency mental health service. You can start your search [here](#).
- [Cabin fever is real](#). Find a way to get out of your house or apartment that doesn't endanger yourself or others, be it going for a run, hike, or just sitting outside in the sun.



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- Maintain connections with your support network; set up phone or video calls with friends and family members. If you lack support, reach out to on-line resources such as virtual support or discussion groups. You can find many options through local and regional [LGBTQ centers](#).

WHAT TO DO TO PREPARE FOR CONTRACTION OF COVID-19

[Some scientists estimate](#) that between 40% and 70% of adults across the world will contract coronavirus by the end of 2020. Here's what you can do to financially prepare for if you or a loved one gets the virus.

- Find health coverage as soon as possible. You may need medical care if you contract COVID-19, and medical care costs can be extremely burdensome without health insurance. If you don't currently have health insurance, you can [start here](#).
- If you have health insurance coverage, review your benefits to learn if you will be covered if you need medical care due to COVID-19. Many insurers are waiving copays and deductibles for testing and treatment of COVID-19. Call the Customer Service number provided with your insurance to get the most accurate and up-to-date information for your plan.
- Many people are connecting with doctors and healthcare professionals virtually. Check out [these tips](#) for accessing healthcare virtually.
- Many LGBTQ people [do not have access to paid leave](#). Review your company's paid leave policies to learn if you are able to take time off if you or a loved one contracts COVID-19. You may also be able to access [paid leave for child care](#). You may also qualify for paid leave [through the Families First Coronavirus Response Act or CARES Act](#).
- [Learn the signs and symptoms](#) of COVID-19, and what to do if you think you or a loved one is becoming ill. This can help you care for yourself, and can help prevent the spread of the disease.
- Learn [how to care for someone at home](#) with COVID-19 and [learn the signs](#) that you or a loved one may be recovering from COVID-19.
- [Learn your rights](#) as a LGBTQ patient, especially if you're an [older adult](#), and learn [how to plan for worse case scenarios](#).

For more resources and information, please visit HRC's [COVID-19 resource page](#) and BTAC's [COVID-19 resource page](#). During this challenging time, please know that your community is here to support you.