



Congresswoman Abby Finkenauer *Iowa's First Congressional District*

Preparing Iowa Communities & Protecting our Families *Congresswoman Finkenauer's Response Plan for Coronavirus*

As Iowans work together to prevent the spread of coronavirus, Congress and the White House must also address any disruptions resulting from closures and the slow-down of our economy. Congresswoman Finkenauer's top priority is lifting up Iowans' voices in DC, which is why our office [created an online submission form](#) for our small businesses, families, and community leaders to share the effects of coronavirus they are seeing in Northeast Iowa.

The House of Representatives has already passed two packages to provide relief. The work is far from over and Congress must do more. Below are priorities — identified by Iowans across the First District — that Congresswoman Finkenauer will push to include in additional federal aid packages. These priorities fall into three broad categories: aid to workers, aid to responders, and aid to communities.

“The global coronavirus pandemic and the resulting economic disruption represent a challenge with few precedents or comparisons in modern history,” Congresswoman Finkenauer said. “Overcoming it while protecting the health and economic security of the American people demands meaningful action and close coordination between local, state, and federal authorities. I am committed to listening to Iowans and fighting for the services and relief they need. We will get through this, and we will get through it together.”

Protecting Iowa Families

Expand Unemployment Benefits: As states extend unemployment benefits to employees laid off or unable to work due to coronavirus, we must ensure that Iowans affected through no fault of their own do not fall through the cracks. The current unemployment benefits system requires a worker to earn a certain amount of wages or work a certain period of time in order to receive benefits. This could shut out part-time workers or those recently returned to the workforce — Iowans who are particularly vulnerable to lay-offs or slow-downs as a result of coronavirus. We need additional flexibility in our benefits system to ensure aid for these Iowans and their families.

Emergency Aid for Service Industry, Hourly, and Construction Workers: It is our duty to help vulnerable employees in the dining and retail industries, in construction and small businesses who are already feeling the effects of the economic slowdown associated with coronavirus. This assistance should include direct cash payments of \$1,000 or more as needed. We should also explore ways to stop landlords and creditors from acting against those who fall behind on payments and discount fees for utilities and other critical services.

Mental Health Services: During this time of crisis, we need robust mental health services in place. From the effects of social isolation to the stress associated with being laid off or caring for a loved one,





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additional support will be needed to help Iowans cope with the fallout of this outbreak. Furthermore, we should take steps to ensure that those living with or experiencing mental illness can access their usual treatment or therapy during this time without disruption or delay.

Serving our Frontline Workers

Child Care for Health Professionals, Frontline Iowans, and First Responders: As schools close and daycare facilities shut down, Iowans on the frontlines of responding to this crisis need childcare options. Communities need assistance in providing safe and high-quality childcare for healthcare professionals, first responders, utility workers, and others who are part of our critical response network. These needs are likely to be especially important in rural areas.

Address Shortages of Personal Protection and Key Equipment: One of the first issues we heard about from county public health officials was that health systems across Iowa are experiencing shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE) and have concerns about their ability to procure needed supplies with a nationwide shortage and high demand. Congress must work to increase production of needed PPE, increase access to ventilators, ensure guidance is clear on how to request supplies from any national stockpiles, and continue to press the President to invoke the Defense Production Act.

Workplace Safety: While our medical professionals are well-trained on how to manage and control for possible exposure, many Iowans who are needed to continue working throughout this crisis are not. Other frontline workers—like bus drivers, factory employees, grocery store clerks, and emergency plumbers for example—need to know that they are safe on the job. Clear guidance and additional resources will be needed to help protect these workers while they provide critical services.

Preparing our Communities

Support for Healthcare Providers and Testing Availability: Iowa's rural areas are already struggling to maintain healthcare providers and access to key services. We must ensure our hospitals, community health centers, and health care facilities across Iowa have the support, supplies, and capacity to treat critical coronavirus cases and help individuals seeking testing and treatment.

Assistance for Restaurants, Small Businesses, and Hotels: We all know how important Iowa's small businesses are to our main streets and the families they support around the state. Businesses relying on foot traffic and in-person sales will suffer the biggest financial hit from social distancing practices. We must provide temporary financial support to cover documented losses.

Assistance for Communities and Essential Services: Many communities rely on sales tax dollars to provide city services, service debt, and maintain favorable credit ratings. With a drastic slowdown in tourism, travel, and commerce, cities may need assistance to stay solvent and continue to provide critical public services like trash collection, police, fire and EMS services, and public transit.



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Congresswoman Finkenauer's Ongoing Response Efforts

Even before the first confirmed case in Iowa, Congresswoman Finkenauer pressed top federal health officials for ways to prepare our local communities and health systems and fought to make sure that federal resources reach our small businesses as quickly as possible. Congresswoman Finkenauer has helped pass two emergency relief packages to help those affected by coronavirus, which expanded access to paid sick leave for employees, provided small businesses with loans, and helped states offer more testing and purchase critical supplies.

Our office has been in contact with area hospitals, workers, business organizations, schools and colleges with respect to the virus to understand any ongoing concerns. The Congresswoman also [sent a letter](#) to Iowa families, community leaders, and institutions asking for their feedback and input. This information is critical as Congress works to minimize the ongoing economic and societal disruptions as we all work to keep our families and neighbors safe.

Congresswoman Finkenauer launched a [coronavirus information page](#) on her website and remains in contact with the Governor about how to get Iowans the information they need. She also held a tele-townhall with public health experts to answer questions and address Iowans' most-pressing concerns.
