

FAQ on Support Services for GEO Members

Q: Where can I find accurate information on how to avoid being infected with COVID 19?

A: Visit the Center for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC](#)). They have excellent and up-to-date information on COVID 19. Currently, they are recommending avoid gatherings of 50 or more people and avoid going outside if you are elderly or have a compromised immune system. The Illinois Department of Public Health is also operating a 24-hour COVID-19 Hotline. You can contact them at 1 (800) 889-3931 or through email at DPH.SICK@ILLINOIS.GOV.

Q: I have been severely hurt financially by the crisis. How can I apply for state assistance?

A: To apply for state assistance you must contact the Illinois Department of Human Services ([IDHS](#)). Forms of assistance include Manage Cash, Food Stamps, Medicaid, and the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP).

Q: I am unemployed because of the crisis. Are there specific services for me?

A: You if recently became unemployed because of the crisis, you can apply for [unemployment benefits](#). The restaurant and services industry, particularly workers who rely on tips, have been especially hit hard by the crisis. If you are a restaurant worker, you can contact the Restaurant Opportunity Center ([ROC](#)) for more information. They provide services specifically for restaurant workers and other tipped professions.

Q: I am having trouble paying my utility bills. Will my utilities be shut off?

A: It depends. The city of Chicago has ended all shut offs for water and Commonwealth Edison (ComEd) has agreed to not shut off electrical utilities during the crisis, but other utility might cancel services due to lack of payment. If you need help paying your bill electrical and gas bills you can apply for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program ([LIHEAP](#)).

Q: I am nervous about not being able to pay my rent and being evicted during the crisis. What are my rights as a tenant?

A: If you have trouble paying you rent, you can apply for [Emergency Rental Assistance](#) through the city. You also can contact the Metropolitan Tenants Organization ([MTO](#)) to find out about your rights as a renter.

Q: What should I do if I am an international student?

A: GEO and all of us at the International Caucus are committed to building a collective action plan during this global health crisis. We are truly in an uncharted territory, but we will navigate this together. As you well know, the guidance on COVID-19 and how to best diminish its impact is dynamic and fast-moving. Since we are in an environment of evolving information, please make sure to regularly check the UIC [OIS COVID-19 Information page](#).

At the moment, GEO international Caucus is putting together a list of demands pertaining to the unique (and currently unmet) needs of international students at the time of crisis in order to communicate it to the UIC Office of International Services (OIS) and administration. In order to help us prepare a more comprehensive list of these demands, please write a short description of what you have in mind here: **Covid-19 International Students concerns**. Should you be facing a situation that is not covered by OIS or not mentioned on the GEO web-site, please reach out to us at geo.international.caucus@gmail.com or Covid-19 International Students concerns.