



## Jewish Federation OF GREATER HOUSTON

JRAN Email – March 16, 2020 – AM

Dear JRAN Community:

We are committed to providing you with the most up to date information in as comprehensive a way as possible. Here is a brief update on how things have evolved in Houston over the weekend at the city level and within our Jewish community. Yesterday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has recommended that for the **next 8 weeks**, all gatherings over 50 people be cancelled or postponed. This is an effort to increase social distancing to limit the spread of COVID-19.

Here's what you can expect:

- The [ERJCC has made the difficult decision to close all on-campus activities](#), they will move as much online as they can
- Community gatherings will be limited, streamed online or cancelled
- Grocery stores might limit the number of customers in-store
- In other areas of the country, bars and restaurants are being ordered to close and restaurants may turn to "to-go" only
- **You can expect delays in schools and programs to last the 8-week time frame**

The [President has declared a National Emergency](#) over COVID-19. Governor Abbot and Mayor Turner did the same last week. Here's what this means:

- Under the [Stafford Act](#), the President may activate certain powers during a crisis, mostly dealing with FEMA
- Allows the Executive Branch to free up around \$50 billion in federal aid
- Allows FEMA to direct local communities on response
- This is **not** the National Emergency Act, which gives the President a lot more powers
- The Governor and the Mayor needed to declare an emergency in order to activate FEMA's help and federal funding

At 11 am, Mayor Turner will hold a [press conference](#) with leadership from local grocery stores to address the status of food and other supplies. I will send a brief update after the press conference.

Currently, the City of Houston is not conducting COVID-19 tests unless someone shows obvious signs of respiratory distress or has severe symptoms **and** had direct contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19. Doctors are advising that if you have [mild signs of COVID-19 that you stay at home](#) and limit your contact with others, including pets, until you are better. If you must see a doctor, call in advance of your visit and tell them your reason for going in so they can prepare. Here are some [tips for caring for yourself at home](#).

Here are some things you can do during this difficult time of social distancing:

- Meals on Wheels (run by the J) needs your help delivering food to home bound seniors. You can sign up [here](#)
- The J will have [virtual programming](#) for those interested
- If you would like to speak to a counselor at Jewish Family Services, you can fill out their intake form [here](#)
- PJ Library has a great [guide on how to talk to your kids about scary situation](#)
- Here are some tips from the CDC about [how to talk about COVID-19 to children](#)

While we are still at a very early stage we want to begin to get some preliminary thoughts on how your organizations are navigating the COVID-19 pandemic and what your anticipated needs may be. If you can, please take a moment to reply to this email with your responses to these questions:

1. How is your organization supporting its members during this time? What are the individual needs that you are beginning to identify?
2. Are you offering online/livestreaming of programs and/or services? If so, we are happy to do some cross promotion through the Federation's online platforms.
3. While we begin staging a longer term response and triaging our community's greatest long-term needs – do you anticipate any unmet needs in the immediate next two weeks?

Stay healthy, take care of yourselves, and please do not hesitate to be in touch with questions as needs evolve.

Jackie

**Jackie Fisherman** | Director of Government Affairs

Jewish Federation of Greater Houston

5603 S. Braeswood Blvd. | Houston, TX 77096

Main: 713.729.7000 ext 325

[jfisherman@houstonjewish.org](mailto:jfisherman@houstonjewish.org) | [www.houstonjewish.org](http://www.houstonjewish.org)