



Jewish Federation OF GREATER HOUSTON

April 13 PM - Jran Email

Dear Jran Community:

Today, we will go over updates from the City of Houston, the Texas Paycheck Protection Program and the Harris County Forgivable Loan Program, paid leave and unemployment rules, a call to action for expanding Paycheck Protection Program funding, insight into when we can expect to go back to normal, a very special tribute, and resources.

City of Houston COVID 19 Updates

The City of Houston announced today that [both of their free COVID19 sites will be open to the public—regardless of symptoms](#). You must still call the City's COVID19 hotline, 832-393-4220, to get a unique code before receiving directions to the site. You can expect long lines as the sites gear up for increased capacity. The Texas Department of Health and Human Services has a [FAQ page](#) on drive-thru testing and how to get the results of your test.

Houston parks were ordered to close over the Easter weekend but are back in business today. Playgrounds, exercise equipment and benches are still off limits and the CDC is recommending that you wear a [cloth face mask](#) in public.

The City has a [website for people looking to help and for those seeking help](#) during these troubling times. Resources range from food to pets to childcare.

Texas Small Business Loans

Today, Governor Greg Abbott announced a partnership with Goldman Sachs and LifeFund for [\\$50 million in loans for Texas small businesses](#). This is part of the bigger Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) funds administered through the Small Business Administration. You can apply through [LiftFund's website](#). As with all these programs, funds are limited and it is first come, first serve.

Harris County Forgivable Loan Program

On Friday, Harris County released the applications for its version of the Paycheck Protection Program—the Harris County Forgivable Loan Program. The site was overwhelmed with applications and competition for the County's \$10 million program was higher than its

capacity. As a result, the Harris Galveston Area Council has [closed the program as it processes \\$151 million in applications](#).

Paid Leave and Unemployment Benefits During COVID19

The National Employment Law Project and Family Values Work released a [COVID19 Paid Leave and Unemployment flowchart](#) to help navigate benefits. This might be useful for institutions trying to figure out what their obligations are, especially when it comes to paid sick leave.

The Texas Workforce Commission has [expanded its call center hours](#) to 7 days a week from 7 a.m. – 7 p.m. You can call them at 800-939-6631. You can also [apply online](#), but keep in mind that the site is overwhelmed during the day. The best times to apply are from midnight to 5 a.m.

Jewish Federations of North America – Call to Action

The Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) is asking for your help to get the emergency supplemental appropriations bill passed that would allocate an additional \$250 billion for the PPL Program. Here are the four main points JFNA is asking for:

- ALLOCATE at least \$250 billion in additional funding for the PPL Program;
- ENSURE that nonprofits are able to access these funds on equal priority with for-profit businesses;
- ALLOW larger nonprofits (those with more than 500 employees) to participate in the PPL Program; and
- URGE Senators McConnell and Schumer to include these provisions in their next legislative initiative.

Here's who to contact:

Senator Ted Cruz

(202) 224-5922

Senator John Cornyn

(202) 224-2934



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SAMPLE CALL SCRIPT (from JFNA)

Senator, thank you for your leadership in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and for supporting the CARES Act which provides funds for hard-hit small businesses. It was a good start toward recognizing and addressing the needs nonprofits face now, but the reality is that more will be needed. Organizations such as Jewish Federations and Jewish human service agencies, that provide food, medicine, and other basic needs to hundreds of thousands of people every day, remain unable to access those funds and deliver the lifesaving services that people of all faiths and creeds need. I am calling to ask you to support at least \$250 billion in new funding that will replenish the oversubscribed SBA Paycheck Protection Loan Program; to set aside funds for nonprofits or take other steps to ensure that nonprofits can access these funds on an equal priority with for-profit companies; and permit larger nonprofits with more than 500 employees to access the program. I am counting on you to help sustain the vital work of our nonprofit agencies. Will you deliver this message to Senate leadership? Thank you for your time.

Going Back to the “Old Normal”

While it is difficult to grasp how long we will be living in our “new normal” we do know that at some point, we will be able to go back to our not-so-socially-distant life. The question at the top of everyone’s mind is: when? I do not know the exact answer, but [officials have recently indicated what needs to happen](#) before the Stay Home orders can be lifted.

First, Dr. Anthony Fauci stated that we can expect to see [rolling reentry](#) when we have the capacity to increase our testing abilities to identify infected individuals quickly. We also know that Harris County officials have indicated that when we have enough evidence to be able to determine that our curve has flattened for prolonged periods of time, we can begin lifting the Stay Home, Work Safe order. A good way to see where we are is from the [County’s COVID19 dashboard](#).

Last week, Rice University sent an email to all students indicating that they expect to open campus as early as July 1st. Subject to change, of course.

It is not a crystal ball, but we do know that the more seriously we take the Stay Home, Work Safe order and necessary precautions, like wearing cloth face masks when out in public, the better our chances are at flattening the curve, going to back to normal, and—most importantly—saving lives.

A Tribute to Rabbi Leibel Groner

Today's Jran email is dedicated to the life of [Rabbi Leibel Groner](#), grandfather to our very own Sarah Sandhaus. Rabbi Groner lost his battle with COVID-19 last week in Brooklyn, NY, just as we prepared for Passover. He was an important figure in the Chabad-Lubavitch movement, being a direct decedent of the founding Rabbi and serving as the Rebbe's secretariat. Listening to Sarah fondly remember her Zaidy and the impact he had is moving. His lasting influence on the Chabad community will be forever felt and his legacy in his children and grandchildren will continue to live.

Resources

Council Member Abbie Kamin is keeping a list of local resources [here](#).

Congresswoman Lizzie Fletcher has developed a small business resource guide. You can find it [here](#).

The University of Houston has developed a resource book for the Houston area. You can find it [here](#).

This week, as we stay home or put on our face masks when we venture out for essentials, let us remember Rabbi Groner. And let us pray that no more succumb to this illness and be taken from our lives too soon. May his memory truly be a blessing.

Warmly,

Jackie

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