



## Jewish Federation OF GREATER HOUSTON

April 7 PM - JРАН Email

Dear JРАН Community,

Today we will go over the Harris County Commissioners Court's new small business forgivable loan program, Israel's Passover lockdown and the Orthodox Union's new rules for Pesach (hint: stay home), the closure of Texas State Parks, the Kinder Institutes assessment of the stay at home order, and a running list of resources as we navigate through our new normal.

### **Harris County Small Business Economic Assistance Loan Program**

BREAKING: The [Harris County Commissioners Court just approved a \\$10 million forgivable loan](#) for small businesses. This loan program is a partnership between Harris County and the [Houston Galveston Area Council](#) (H-GAC). Here is a breakdown of the Small Business Economic Assistance Loan Program:

- Loans are up to \$25,000
- 0% interest, potentially forgivable if all conditions are met
  - Must be used for essential business expenses like payroll, health benefits, and bills
- Eligible businesses must have:
  - A net worth less than \$15 million
  - Average net income of \$5 million or less for the preceding two years
  - Been operating for at least one year
  - Good standing with county property taxes
  - Proven financial impact as a direct result of COVID19
- The County will cover administration fees, but businesses must cover closing costs
  - Loans would be payable over 5 years, first 3 months would be a grace period
- A business can apply for both the Harris County loan and Federal loan programs (Paycheck Protection Program and the Economic Injury Disaster Loan)

More details to come in the next few days.

### **Israel's Passover Lockdown and the American Orthodox Community's New Passover Rules**

The Israeli Cabinet has approved a [nation-wide lock down](#) beginning at 7 p.m. IDT Tuesday – until 6 a.m. IDT Friday. Additional requirements mandate that all persons wear facemasks in public. These are some of the newest efforts by Israeli officials to help flatten the curve of COVID19 in the country.

In America, top [Orthodox Groups have cautioned against gathering outside your own home](#) this Passover. This overrules prior guidance that suggested those who self-quarantine for two weeks could join another family for the Passover meal. Current guidance from the Orthodox Union, the Agudath Israel of America, Igud HaRabbanim – Rabbinical Alliance of America, The Lakewood Vaad, National Council of Young Israel, and Rabbinical Council of America now are

asking that all Jews celebrate Pesach from their own homes this year to avoid spreading COVID19.

Here is [yesterday's statement from the OU](#): "Everyone **must** plan to celebrate Pesach where they are currently. Travel to other cities, or visits with family even within your city, should be cancelled. This applies to the entirety of Pesach, including Chol HaMoed and the last days."

### **Texas Parks Department – Temporarily Closed**

Today, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department announced that [all Texas parks will be closed](#) until further notice. Parks officials were having difficulty managing crowds, sanitizing parks, and complying with social distancing guidelines.

### **Kinder Institute – Stay Home to Save Lives**

The Kinder Institute for Urban Research at Rice University estimates that [4,533 lives have been saved](#) as of today by following the Stay Home, Work Safe order. Based on [their modeling](#), if we stay home through May 22, over 22,000 lives in Harris County will be saved. Although it is just an estimate, the Kinder Institute shows us that staying home matters.

### **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](#).

Governor Abbott stated that Texans can [expect their stimulus checks](#) as early as April 24<sup>th</sup>.

The City of Houston will be hosting a [PPE drive](#) at Minute Maid Park this Wednesday from 12 pm - 3 pm.

If you have anything to include in the resources section, please let me know.

### **In Other News...(volume up, ear buds in!)**

The COVID19 Stay Home order has inspired some pretty remarkable music this year. The Israel Philharmonic Orchestra has put together special a [musical Passover greeting](#) and the [Macaabeats](#) and [Six13](#) put together beautiful renditions of Vehi She'amda.



# Jewish Federation

OF GREATER HOUSTON

Or, if that's not your speed, you can prepare your Pesach meal to [Chris Mann's "Hello" parody](#).  
9.1 million people can't be wrong!

Take care this Passover. It will be difficult not to gather this year, which will only make next year's celebration that much more meaningful.

Chag Pesach Sameach,

Jackie

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