



Friend –

Below please find the Murphy office update on COVID-19.

As always, if you need assistance, please don't hesitate to contact our Hartford or Washington, D.C. offices.

Here's what you need to know this week:

- The deadline to enroll in health insurance coverage through Access Health CT is coming up on December 15<sup>th</sup>. Visit [AccessHealthCT.com](https://www.accesshealthct.com) to compare plans, find out if you qualify for financial assistance, and get covered.
- The Connecticut Department of Social Services announced that it will provide \$16.9 million in Emergency Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP) benefits to more than half of Connecticut SNAP-eligible households on Wednesday, December 16 – adding to the \$157.2 million in emergency benefits disbursed from April through November. To learn more about the SNAP program, visit <http://www.ct.gov/snap>.
- Governor Ned Lamont [signed an executive order that expands eligibility to the federal Lost Wages Assistance \(LWA\) program](#) for Connecticut residents who did not initially qualify for the program. Due to a federal rule requiring claimants receive at least \$100 per week in unemployment benefits to receive the additional LWA funding, approximately 38,000 residents were excluded from the program when it ran over six weeks last summer. Governor Lamont's executive order will retroactively and temporarily increase weekly unemployment benefits to \$100 for most of these 38,000 residents, allowing them to qualify for the program.
- Governor Ned Lamont [announced that 154 nonprofit arts organizations in Connecticut will be receiving \\$9 million in grants](#) this month under a program [initiated by his administration](#) to provide support to the state's arts community amid the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Qualifying organizations will receive a base grant of \$5,000. For organizations that have raised funds between March 10 and November 1, 2020, the program will offer a supplemental match of up to 50 percent of contributed income during that period. The program uses federal CARES Act funding from the state's Coronavirus Relief Fund.
- The enrollment period for farmers [to apply](#) to Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 (CFAP 2) ends today, Friday, December 11th. This program provides direct relief to producers facing market disruptions and associated costs because of COVID-19.
- [PURA has extended the enrollment period for programs to prevent heat source shut-offs for both residential and non-residential customers through at least February 9, 2021](#). Further, the Winter Protection Program, which protects eligible

households during the winter months, is also in effect from November 1, 2020 through May 1, 2021. If you are experiencing difficulty paying your utility bill, you can contact your utility company and ask if you are eligible to be “coded hardship” and enrolled in the Winter Protection Program. If you are ineligible for hardship status or a non-residential customer, ask to enroll in a COVID-19 Payment Plan. [Additional information regarding these programs and other assistance can be found here.](#)

- Please continue to do your part to get this virus under control and save lives by following public health measures such as wearing a mask and practicing social distancing.

For information on federal coronavirus relief, including help for small businesses, direct cash payments and more, visit [murphy.senate.gov/coronavirus](http://murphy.senate.gov/coronavirus). This page provides answers to frequently asked questions and gives a summary of available programs and funding.

For the latest information about keeping you or your family safe go to [cdc.gov/coronavirus](http://cdc.gov/coronavirus). For resources and information about Connecticut's response visit [ct.gov/coronavirus](http://ct.gov/coronavirus).

I hope you found this letter helpful. You can get the latest updates on Senator Murphy's work in the Senate by following him on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). If you have questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to our offices in Hartford or in Washington, DC.



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[If you would like to opt-out of future coronavirus updates, please click here.](#)