



EMPLOYEE WELLBEING at CORNELL

April 12, 2020 - Weekly Update

Information and services provided by Cornell Work/Life, Cornell Wellness, and the Faculty and Staff Assistance Program. Repeated information is limited from week to week to allow space for time-sensitive news and resources. Visit the [HR website](#) for details and past weekly updates.

The majority of information is applicable to all Cornell employees, regardless of location. Additional resources specific to those who live outside of Tompkins County is toward the end.

We are here to help you! Email us at wellbeing@cornell.edu to ask questions and request assistance.

Emotional/Mental Wellbeing

Sometimes we can be quick to dismiss reminders of self-care, perhaps responding with, “There’s no time for that.” Those who are juggling homeschooling or caring for their children may be doing all they can to simply hold on during this bumpy ride. Those who live alone may be feeling pretty lonely at this point, and perhaps extra worried about their wellbeing. We’re hearing from folks that are exhausted no matter how much they sleep. And tragically, some employees are dealing with the horrible loss of family or friends due to COVID-19.

If you find yourself judging your emotions or responses around the pandemic, remind yourself that they are normal and justified. Studies have found that pathologizing your responses by viewing them as “something wrong with you for reacting so strongly” actually increases your anxiety. Instead, say something to yourself like, “You are going through a crisis, and you are reacting in a normal way to an abnormal situation.”

Remember that self-care doesn’t necessarily mean setting aside long periods of time for yourself (though it is wonderful if you can). Self-care could look like:

- Opting out of virtual Happy Hour because your Zoom Fatigue is high or you have different needs.
- Giving your sight and hearing senses a break and delighting in other senses – touch and smell. Bake, wrap yourself in a cozy blanket, feel the softness of your pet’s fur. Spend an extra five minutes in the shower under warm water.
- Allowing yourself to cry when you need to and possibly calling a friend to talk about how you’re feeling.



These little things – done throughout the day – are ways that we can take care of ourselves. Of course, ask for help from a professional when you need it.

Get Help

- [Cornell’s Counseling Services & Insurance Coverage for Teletherapy](#) – for benefits-eligible employees
- Child Development Council Warm Line – get help with parenting (607) 273-0259
- [Suicide Prevention & Crisis Services](#) of Ithaca – call 607-272-1616 or 800-273-8255
- New York State Emotional Support Helpline 8am-10pm, 7 days per week – 1-844-863-9314

- National Crisis Text Line - Text TALK to 741741 to text with a trained counselor for free.
- [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- [Tompkins County Mental Health Resources](#) including virtual support groups and substance use services

Tell Your Story & Participate in Cornell Research

Do you enjoy writing? From around the world, contributors have shared reflections on life during the pandemic through [“Telling our Stories: in the Age of COVID-19,”](#) a journaling project created by [Janis Whitlock](#), research scientist at the Bronfenbrenner Center for Translational Research in the College of Human Ecology. Participants are chronicling hopes, fears and daily routines in written, voice or video journal entries. Consider contributing and writing to process your experiences and feelings amid COVID-19.



Free Mindfulness and Meditation App

New York State is partnering with [Headspace](#), a global leader in mindfulness and meditation, to offer free meditation and mindfulness content for all New Yorkers as a mental health resource for residents coping with the unprecedented public health crisis. Access a collection of evidence-based guided meditations, along with at-home mindful workouts, sleep and kids content to help address rising stress and anxiety at [headspace.com/ny](#).

Articles & Resources

- [How to Keep Quarantine from Ruining Your Marriage](#) (Ted.com)
- [Working Remotely with ADHD](#) (ADHD at Work)
- [Baking to reduce stress and increase comfort](#)
- [Support your mental health while navigating change](#) – American Foundation for Suicide Prevention
- Yale University’s Happiness Class: Participate in a [free class](#) from Yale University about the Science of Wellbeing or listen to the [Happiness Lab Podcast](#).

Adjusting Your Schedule/Work

If you are struggling to find a work/life fit that works for you – speak to your supervisor and/or your [HR representative](#) about your current tasks and schedule. There may be ways to adjust your time to help you be more effective and feel better. For instance:

- **Flexibility in start and stop times** – this could mean getting up early in the morning and putting in several hours before assisting others (children, elders) and then getting back online for work after that, potentially splitting shifts between caregiving partners, if possible. It could mean working later at night. Flexibility is required on both sides to be able to accommodate important meetings, but working a constant, consecutive 8+ hour schedule may not be feasible at this time.
- **Part-time or reduced workload** - this involves a reduction in the number of hours worked and a corresponding reduction in pay. This may allow you to continue to earn an income and still be able to attend to the needs of others. If earning a lower income is not possible, perhaps using intermittent days/hours of Vacation/HAP could fill in some of the gaps.
- **Compressed/Expanded work weeks** - putting in a longer day for a lesser number of days to accomplish your work responsibilities and goals in a compressed format. For some, putting in four 10-hour days and having the fifth day off may be the way to balance needs. Or conversely, putting in fewer hours over more days (working 6 days a week for a shorter number of hours each day).
- **No Meeting Fridays** or another selected day during the week - this allows employees to schedule concentrated time for themselves to get work done without interruptions or to be able to attend to other responsibilities on that day and then make up their work at another time.

To learn more about various options, you may also contact Work/Life in Human Resources at worklife@cornell.edu.

Wellbeing Community Chats

Let's get together in our virtual offices and homes to support one another through all that we are trying to manage right now. We'll chat about how you are right now, what challenges are coming up for you, and what creative practices you have put in place that supports you, your team, your home life, and your community. During each of the chats there will be a themed topic and guest experts. [Participate by Zoom](#). Sponsored by Cornell Organizational Development & Effectiveness.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Guest Experts</i>
April 14, 1-2pm,	Recharging and Refocusing	Ruth Merle Doyle, Kerry Howell
April 15, 9-10am	Fueling Yourself Healthfully	Jeremy Stewart, Kerry Howell
April 22, 9-10am	Recharging and Refocusing	Ruth Merle Doyle, Kerry Howell
April 28, 1-2pm	Fueling Yourself Healthfully	Jeremy Stewart, Kerry Howell

Cornell Wellness – Daily Programming

- *Take a Break Tuesday* - April 14, 11-11:30am, Lower Body Stretching | [Participate by Zoom](#)
- *Workout Wednesday* - April 15, 12-1pm, Agility and Plyometrics Workout | [Participate by Zoom](#)
- *Thoughtful Thursday* - April 16, 9-9:30am, Meditation For Listening To Your Body | [Participate by Zoom](#)
- *Fuel It Fridays* - April 17, Everyday Superfoods to Help Boost Immunity & Recipes (watch the [Cornell Wellness Facebook Page](#) for details!)

Past Sessions

- [Healthy Green Smoothie](#)
- [Take5: 5 Ideas for 5 Minute Breaks](#)
- [Functional Fitness Routine](#)
- [Creek-Side Meditation](#)
- [Meal Planning Essentials](#)



Jaw Clenching & Teeth Grinding

If you're experiencing jaw tightness or pain, it may be due to jaw clenching or grinding. A person may clench their jaw or grind their teeth without noticing it, especially when stressed. Learn about [jaw joint exercises](#) to release tension.

Keep Your Immune System Healthy (adapted from [ThriveGlobal](#) articles)

- Keep fruit-infused water around the house
- Try the 20-minute challenge – before reaching for a treat, drink water and wait 20 minutes to see whether you are genuinely hungry
- Separate your meal space and your workspace to encourage mindful eating
- Balance comfort food with healthy sides at meals
- If you find yourself reaching for unhealthy comfort foods, find a delicious snack that still feels like an indulgence — without the sugar.

Cloth Face Coverings – Guidance was updated by the CDC on April 4, 2020

- [Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19](#)
- [Cloth Face Coverings: Questions and Answers](#)

DIY Hand Sanitizer

Although washing your hands is the best way of eliminating germs, you can also use hand sanitizer in a pinch. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that you choose an alcohol-based option with at least 60 percent alcohol for maximum effectiveness. Parents.com has a kid-friendly [recipe](#) with just a few ingredients.



Need transportation to a COVID-19 Testing Site? (Tompkins County)

Register for a test at <http://cayugahealth.org> or by calling 607-319-5708. Then, call 2-1-1 to schedule a safe and free ride with ASAP Cab Company.

Articles

[Is it Allergies or COVID-19?](#) (Weill Cornell Medical)

Safety of Adults and Children Amid COVID-19

The pandemic has prompted an increase in instances of [domestic violence and child abuse](#) and subsequent requests for help. If you are concerned about your safety, or the safety of a family member, help is available. Contact any of the following resources:

- Call 911 or your local police department if you or someone you know is in immediate danger.
- [Advocacy Center of Tompkins County 24/7 hotline](#): 607-277-5000
- [New York State 24/7 hotline](#): 1-800-942-6906
- [New York City 24/7 hotline](#): 1-800-621-4673
- [National Domestic Violence 24/7 Hotline](#): 1-800-787-3224



Cornell University has a variety of resources to support victims. Learn more about these resources and workplace matters pertaining to domestic violence at the [HR website](#).

- [Cornell Victim Advocate](#): 607-255-1212 victimadvocate@cornell.edu
- [Cornell Office of Institutional Equity and Title IX](#): 607-255-2242 titleix@cornell.edu

Rave Guardian App

This app, free to the campus community, can enhance the user's personal safety both on and off-campus by [turning any smartphone into a personal safety device](#).

Articles & Resources

[New York State Courts Remain Open](#)

[Find Free Legal Help](#)

[Cornell Tech NYC Domestic Violence Support](#)

[Signs That An Adult May Be At-Risk To Harm A Child](#)

[Don't Shake: Preventing Shaken Baby Syndrome](#)

Building & Maintaining Connections

Cornell Employees Working Remotely (Campus Group)

Launched last week, this campus group is open to all Cornell employees to learn and share experiences, insights, tips, and tricks related to remote work. And, hopefully have a few laughs. [Join the 100+ employees that have already signed up!](#)



Find a Quarantine Buddy

Cornell students created [this site](#) to help people foster connections during the quarantine. Read more at [Cornell Chronicle](#).

Cornell Department of Inclusion and Workforce Diversity (DIWD) services available

If you are interested in learning more about programming and services, including how to be a part of a Colleague Network Group, email owdi@cornell.edu.

- [Colleague Network Groups \(CNGs\)](#) are available for men of color, women of color, LGBTQ, veterans, and those with disabilities. Participate in virtual gatherings offered regularly.
- Listen to new episodes of our [Inclusive Excellence Podcast](#) (19 episodes!).
- Request individualized trainings and facilitated discussions on topics related to diversity and inclusion for department and units. Trainings are also available via Zoom through the [Inclusive Excellence Academy](#).

Maintain Friendships During Social Distancing (adapted from [ThriveGlobal](#))

- Schedule a virtual date or party. Social isolation can have powerful negative effects on your health but spending time with others – even virtually – helps us stay connected.
- Write a letter or email to someone you haven't spoken to in a while (if you are burned out on video activities!).
- Ask someone what they're doing to take care of themselves. Bridge the distance with a simple question – you might learn something, or find you have something in common.

Positive News and Inspiration

Check out these Cornell Chronicle articles about the amazing work of caring Cornellians.

- [Cornell Dining teamed up](#) with the Food Bank of the Southern Tier and the Greater Ithaca Activities Center to collect and distribute much needed food to community members
- Cornell faculty have organized [iPad/tablet donations](#) for those hospitalized
- [3-D printing machines](#) are running non-stop to make protective gear parts
- [Sewers in Bartels Hall](#) continue producing medical care grade masks.



Want to lend a hand to these efforts and others? Visit the [Help Others](#) section to learn about opportunities.

“And the people stayed home...”

Kitty O'Meara's untitled prose poem has been shared countless times since its first posting. It was most widely popularized by Deepak Chopra. The poem has become shorthand for a silver-linings perspective during the coronavirus outbreak—the hope that something good can come out of this collective state of "together, apart." Learn more about O'Meara and the poem in this [Oprah.com article](#).

*And the people stayed home.
And read books, and listened, and rested,
and exercised, and made art, and played
games,
and learned new ways of being, and were
still.
And listened more deeply.
Some meditated, some prayed, some
danced.
Some met their shadows.
And the people began to think differently.
And the people healed.*

*And, in the absence of people living in
ignorant,
dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways,
the earth began to heal.
And when the danger passed, and the
people joined together again,
they grieved their losses, and made new
choices, and dreamed new images,
and created new ways to live and heal the
earth fully,
as they had been healed.*

@SomeGoodNews with John Krasinski

A [Twitter feed](#) started by John Krasinski, who invites followers to share some good news, which he then broadcasts to the world. Krasinski also collects the responses and shares videos from his new [“Some Good](#)

[News” YouTube channel](#). Highlights this week include Parisian neighbors holding nightly trivia contests from their balconies, a “surprise car parade” for a 13-year-old’s birthday, and [Lin-Manuel Miranda and the cast of “Hamilton”](#) coming together, virtually, to surprise a young fan whose long-awaited trip to see “Hamilton” was canceled.

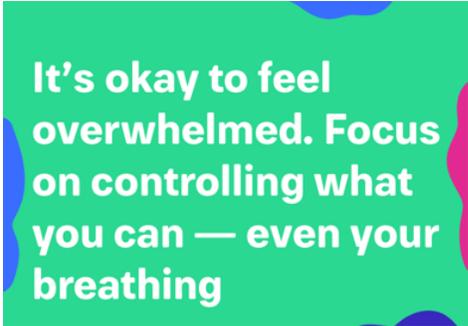
[Good News Network](#) – App, Blog, Podcast, Newsletter

Parenting

Check out the Cornell Parenting Newsletter ([latest version](#) | [sign-up here](#)) for a weekly summary of news, events, and resources.

Cornell Parenting Community Chat

April 21, 1-2 p.m. Let’s get together in our virtual offices and homes to support one another through all that we are trying to manage right now. Guest expert Diane Bradac, Cornell Work/Life Consultant, will participate in a facilitated conversation about family life amid-COVID. [Participate by Zoom](#). Sponsored by Cornell Organizational Development & Effectiveness.



It's okay to feel
overwhelmed. Focus
on controlling what
you can — even your
breathing

Child Care for Essential Personnel

Cornell Child Care Center

The Cornell Child Care Center is closed for normal operations. However, the center is authorized to provide limited child care to parents who are deemed essential personnel, required to work at the Ithaca campus, and have no alternative care. Full-time and part-time care options are available at the normal rate of fees. Each employee is also eligible for 10 days of Emergency Back-up Care, which may be used by essential personnel. Pre-registration is required. To request details about care for essential personnel, email cornell@brighthorizons.com.

Community-based Child Care Programs

Two community-based Child Care Centers have reopened to serve essential personnel. Registered and licensed family and group family child care remain open with spaces to care for additional children. These programs are receiving regular updates and have been given screening and disinfecting protocols to be implemented every day to keep children and staff safe. Contact the Child Development Council at info@childdevelopmentcouncil.org or (607) 273-0259.

In-Home Child Care Providers

Are you looking for a private caregiver to come into your home? Do you need overnight care, or flexibility for a changing work schedule? The Child Development Council has a list of individuals who have had background checks and worked in child care or schools. Contact info@childdevelopmentcouncil.org or (607) 273-0259.

Parenting Can Be Tough – Help is Available

Being at home full-time with children during social distancing and with many other responsibilities can be very stressful. If you’re having a difficult time coping or would like advice on dealing with specific child behaviors, call the Child Development Council’s Warm Line to get advice and support. (607) 273-0259

Virtual “Babysitting”

Many parents are finding ways to have their children virtually occupied by another teen or adult. This can be a great way to keep your child entertained and engaged while also providing you with time to focus. It is important to note that virtual entertaining is not sufficient at keeping a child safe. Check out this [SitterCity.com article](#) about this type of care and important considerations.

- Use your [Care@Work by Cornell.com](https://care@work.cornell.edu) benefit to search for babysitters who are interested in being hired to occupy children virtually during social distancing.
- Find college students to tutor K-12 children virtually by using [GoPeer.org](https://gopeer.org).

Hearts over Hands

Pairing currently-enrolled university students with children from families who are adversely impacted. Volunteers (also called "Big Sibs") meet with kids via virtual video sessions. Video sessions are intended to break the sense of social isolation that children may be experiencing, provide homework help, tutoring, and general mentorship/guidance. [Learn more.](#)



Child Care Financial Assistance (Tompkins/Cortland)

Available for Essential Personnel in need. To receive a referral or to request a scholarship, Contact the Child Development Council at info@childdevelopmentcouncil.org or (607) 273-0259.

Baby Supplies Available (Tompkins/Cortland)

Formula and Diapers are available to those who have lost income or resources. To access supplies, please [complete and submit this form](#). You will receive a call to schedule a pick up at a central location. For questions or support, contact us at babysupplies@childdevelopmentcouncil.org

Lactation Consultation and Postpartum Support Group

Staff are still available to assist you with breastfeeding support by phone or video chat. The Postpartum Group continues to meet via ZOOM every 2nd and 4th Tuesday from 12-1pm. [Participate by Zoom.](#)

Cornell Kids@Home Activities & Events

Check out [videos and activities](#) designed for kids! Cornell experts will be sharing fun and fascinating knowledge tailored just for kids, plus activities to entertain and engage.

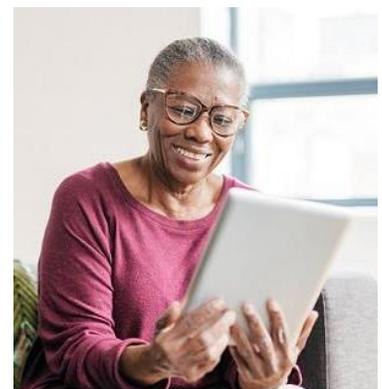
Articles & Resources

- [Prenatal Community Zoom Event: April 18](#) 10-11am
- [Zero to Three: Early Childhood Development and Wellbeing](#)
- [Parenting Children with Special Needs Amid COVID-19](#) (American Psychological Association)
- [The Parents Are Not Alright](#) (Blog Post)

Older Adults & Elder/Adult Care

Cornell Elder/Adult Care Community Chat

April 29, 9-10am. Let's get together in our virtual offices and homes to support one another through all that we are trying to manage right now. Guest expert Diane Bradac, Cornell Work/Life Consultant, will participate in a facilitated conversation about elder/adult care amid-COVID. [Participate by Zoom.](#) Sponsored by Cornell Organizational Development & Effectiveness.



Cornell Caregiver Support & Education Network

Virtual meeting Thursday, April 30, 12-1pm [via Zoom](#)

Tips for Caring for the Mental Health of Older Adults (adapted from [ASPF](#))

The stress and uncertainty of COVID-19 and the potential for older adults to be more susceptible to the virus can exacerbate any underlying risk for depression or anxiety. Social distancing can create further isolation, and the current crisis is affecting almost everyone's routines. This means that the usual social support and contacts older adults have with others may be diminished.

- Call or video-chat with them, since texting and social media may not be the best method of connecting.
- Ask how they are doing during this period of time, how their routines might have had to change.
- Encourage them to keep doing the activities that are allowable during COVID, and that they identify as being most helpful for them, such as daily exercise or a walk, listening to music, reading, games, and meditation or prayer.
- Help them seek medical advice or care if they are experiencing symptoms of physical or mental decline.
- Offer to bring them a meal, run an errand, or walk their dog, if allowable.
- Seek advice from them based on their experience and wisdom and express gratitude and appreciation for any support you get from your relationship with them.

Shopping Hours for Senior Citizens (Ithaca)

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| - Walmart – Tuesday, 6-7am | - CVS – Tuesday and Wednesday, 7-8am |
| - Tops – Tuesday and Thursday, 6-7:30am | - Walgreens – Tuesday 8-9am |
| - Target – Tuesday and Wednesday, 8-9am | - BJ’s Wholesale Club – Daily 8-9am |
| - Green Star – Daily 9-10am | - Dollar Tree – Daily 9-10am |

Financial Resources

Federal Stimulus Checks

Federal Economic Impact Payments have started being distributed automatically to most people. By April 17 a tracking tool called “Get My Payment” will be available to give people an idea on when they can expect a deposit or a check in the mail (if they haven’t received it by then). Learn more about [eligibility and processing](#) at the IRS website.

[Ithaca Free Food Resources](#)

Grocery stores, restaurants, and pantries providing free food.

TCAT Bus (Tompkins)

TCAT is on a reduced schedule until further notice. The [new schedules](#) will be in effect tentatively through end of spring service period May 23, but they are subject to change. A “fare free” policy is in place.



AT&T – [COVID Update](#)

AT&T has pledged not to charge late fees or disconnect service because of inability to pay through May 13, 2020. They are also waiving domestic wireless plan overage charges for data, voice, and text for residential and small business wireless customers. Alternative payment plans are also available. Visit website for details on other COVID specific guidelines. Remember, Cornell employees are [eligible a discount](#).

Verizon – [COVID Update](#)

Verizon is automatically adding 15GB of data across nearly all plans, to be used through April 30, under qualifying circumstances. If you are experiencing a hardship because of COVID-19 and cannot pay your bill in full, Verizon will not charge a late fee or terminate service. This policy is in effect through May 13. To qualify, you must complete a form at the Verizon website. Verizon is also waiving activation and upgrade fees under certain conditions. Remember, Cornell employees are [eligible a discount](#).

See Parenting section for financial resources with child care, diapers, and formula.

Working Remotely

As many employees enter another week of remote work, hopefully you are adapting and making adjustments to the best of your ability. Even without the stressors of social distancing and family care, adjusting to remote work usually takes 3-6 months! So, it is ok to feel challenged by this new way of working.

We are seeing some pretty creative workstation set-ups. In this one, an adjustable height ironing board is used to rest the keyboard, allowing the employee to stand while the computer rests on chest of dresser drawers. Send us photos of your unique set-up that you find is working well for you (wellbeing@cornell.edu). Remember, if you are experiencing new aches and pains due to your remote work set-up, remember the [Cornell Musculoskeletal Injury Prevention Program \(MIPP\)](#) is providing virtual consultations.



Check out the new Cornell [Group for Remote Workers](#).

Articles & Resources

- [Find Your Focus When Working from Home](#) (Virgin Pulse)
- [Elevate Your Presence in a Virtual Meeting](#) (Harvard Business Review)
- [Time Management during Remote Work](#) (LinkedIn Learning Class)

Helping Others

Volunteer Gigs in Workday

Use Workday to connect with [volunteer opportunities](#): the links below will take you to Workday's landing page; click the red "login to Workday" button and 2-step authentication, and you'll be redirected to the volunteer gig.

- [Serving To Go Meals](#)
- [Send A Smile](#)
- [Food Pantry Volunteers](#)
- [Shopping Angels](#)
- [Sewing Surgical Masks](#)
- [Dig in the Dirt, Grow Food, Feed the Hungry](#)
- [Virtual Bring A Child To Work Day](#)
- [Storage Shed Construction](#)

Cornell Public Service Center

Visit the [Cornell Public Service Center Hot List](#) webpage to learn about local and other volunteer activities that can be done on-site or virtually. Volunteer activities focus on food insecurity, supporting seniors, making masks, and many others. Information on places to give financially in the community is also available.

[Cornell Emergency CARE Fund](#) – donations needed

The "CARE" Fund stands for "Cornellians Aiding and Responding to Emergencies." The program was created by employees, for employees. It provides financial assistance awards up to \$1,500 to employees in crisis. Donors may opt to contribute one-time by Payroll or PayPal, or make a reoccurring donation via Payroll.



Build and Stock a Neighborhood Open Food Party

The first Neighborhood Open Food Pantry has been placed in Ithaca's Northside neighborhood across from the Permaculture Park! Read about building a Neighborhood Food Pantry [here](#).

Additional resources for those located outside of Tompkins County/Ithaca

All NYS locations

- [Find your Cornell Cooperative Extension Office](#), many of which offer resources on food pantries and other needs
- [Call 2-1-1](#) to be connected to local agencies and support resources available
- [Domestic Violence Support](#) 1-800-942-6906

NYC-based employees

- [CornellTech's directory of resources](#)
- [Child Care Connect](#)

- [Department for the Aging](#)
- [Domestic Violence Support Services](#) 1-800-621-HOPE
- [Free meals for children and child care for essential workers](#)
- [Food Banks](#)

Geneva-based employees

- [Domestic Violence Resources](#)
- [Food Pantries](#)
- [Office for the Aging](#)

State & Federal News

Absentee Ballots for June 23rd Elections

Governor Cuomo will issue an Executive Order to ensure New Yorkers can vote by absentee ballot in the June 23rd elections. Previously, one needed a reason to request an absentee ballot, such as being away from your county on election day, permanent illness or disability, or incarceration. This executive order will waive that legal requirement and allow anyone to avoid voting in-person. While it hasn't been updated to reflect the executive order, you can get information and apply for an absentee ballot at the [NYS Board of Elections website](#).

United States Census

To date the about 1/3rd of Tompkins County residents have been officially counted. If you have not sent in your form or filled it out online there is still time. New Yorkers' share of federal funds for programs essential to health care, education, housing, economic development and transportation, as well as our congressional representation in Washington, all depend on an accurate and fully counted census response. It only takes a few minutes, but your impact will last for years. Learn more about the census at the [official NYS website](#).

Tax Deadline Extended

Both federal and New York State Tax Filing deadlines have been extended to Wednesday, July 15, 2020.

Questions or suggestions for future Weekly Updates?

Email wellbeing@cornell.edu