

**Senator Gray-Jackson's Notes
Spenard Community Council
May 6, 2020**

Dear friends and neighbors,

I hope you and your family are doing well. I know it has been a stressful road in moving ahead to recovery from this pandemic, and I know that everyone is staying safe and doing their part in slowing the spread of Covid-19. I shared quite a bit of news with you in last month community council notes concerning the Covid-19 Emergency Legislation Plan, Expansion of Unemployment Benefits, and the Federal Stimulus Plan. This month I want to share with you some of the latest happenings in our great State of Alaska and the Municipality of Anchorage.

Pioneer Homes Bill – HB96

On Wednesday, April 29th, Governor Mike Dunleavy signed into law this Bill which lowers rates and limits future increases.

The Governor also signed Senate Bill 120 which grants Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs) and Physician's Assistants (PAs) the authority to prescribe psychotropic medication, without consent, to patients in court-ordered inpatient care during an acute behavioral health crisis.

As an alternative to arrest, the bill also authorizes police officers to take individuals to crisis stabilization centers.

CARES Act

The Legislative Budget and Audit Committee voted to authorize \$125 million in federal funding from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

Follow-up action is expected soon to get additional Federal funds out to Alaskans and organizations that need help, but the first wave of money will go toward a variety of programs adversely impacted by COVID-19.

Food Bank of Alaska

The Food Bank of Alaska shared the following operational updates that may be a helpful resource:

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They are seeing an average of a 75% increase in need and only six of their approximately 125 partners throughout the State have suspended their operations. They are instituting temporary agreements with new partners throughout the State to help get food out to the community.

- The supply chain is running smoothly but lead times from their vendors have grown to as much as one per month. Their current vendors are running short on many staple commodities, so they are looking for alternatives for food sourcing.
 - They continue to run seven volunteer shifts each week to put together boxes of Federal commodity food. They have secured additional needed warehouse space at the old Sam's Club at Tikhatnu Shopping Center and are now receiving support from the National Guard.
 - FBA's SNAP Outreach Team continues to be very busy - they have seen a 42% increase in assistance comparing March 2019 to March 2020. They have also brought on additional temporary staff to help with the call volume.
1. Those in need of food assistance can always call 2-1-1 for information on getting help.
 2. Those in need of SNAP Application Assistance can contact the SNAP Outreach team by calling (907) 222-3119, texting "SNAP" to (907) 891-8913, or emailing snap@foodbankofalaska.org.
 3. For information on Food Distribution please reference the resources below:

Anchorage and Mat-Su Areas:

4. **Food Bank of Alaska Website**
 1. **Updates on SNAP and COVID-19 & SNAP Application Assistance**
 2. **Anchorage Mobile Food Pantries**
 3. **Anchorage Food Pantry and Hot Meals Schedule**
 4. **Mat-Su Food Pantry and Hot Meals Schedule**
 5. **Info on School Meal distribution across the state**
 6. **Emergency Food Distribution (TEFAP) (NEW!)**

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Travel Restrictions

Governor Dunleavy extended the health mandate governing international and interstate travel until May 19th.

- **All visitors to Alaska are required to self-quarantine for 14 days and monitor for symptoms of COVID-19.**
- **Travelers are required to sign a form with their contact information and the address where they will self-quarantine.**
- **Violators are subject to a \$25,000 fine or jail time.**

Alaska Airlines is requiring all travelers to wear face masks starting May 11th.

- **The company is requiring employees to wear masks starting Monday, May 4th.**
- **Includes pilots, flight attendants, and customer service agents.**