

ELDER NEWS



A PUBLICATION OF THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF ELDERLY AFFAIRS

IN THIS ISSUE....

GOEA Welcomes New Executive Director Shirley Merrick!

Around Town: Helping Seniors Amid the COVID-19 Crisis

Staying Connected to Nursing Home Patients In Quarantine

Around Town: Helping Seniors Amid the COVID-19 Crisis

Scams Aimed and Seniors and How to Avoid

Stand up and be counted! 2020 Census Underway Now!



HURRICANE SEASON IS AROUND THE CORNER

ARE YOU

PREPARED?

IF DISASTER STRIKES, WILL YOU BE READY?

WWW.GETAGAMEPLAN.ORG

WWW.GOEA.LOUISIANA.GOV/GETPREPARED

GOEA Welcomes Shirley Merrick as Executive Director

We would like to welcome new Executive Director Shirley Merrick to the GOEA Family! A 40-year veteran in the Aging Network, Ms. Merrick comes to us from Capital Area Agency on Aging, where she served most recently as its Executive Director. We recently sat down and interviewed Ms. Merrick to get to know our new Director:

“

"The passion i have for seniors comes from all the time I spent with my grandmothers growing up. I value to this day the lessons I learned from them.

I believe that seniors have earned the right to live dignified, safe, and age-friendly lives in their own homes and communities for as long as they want to.

I was shocked when Dr. Wilson told me that I was on the "short list" for Executive Director of the Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs, and humbled when the Louisiana Executive Board on Aging (LEBA) unanimously approved by recommendation. I have worked in the field of aging for 40+ years. The journey included working at the East Baton Rouge Council on Aging, and then on to Capital Area Agency on Aging.

I will not try to fill [retiring Executive Director] Karen's shoes. I will walk boldly in my own shoes to see that the seniors and adults with disabilities live in their own homes and communities for as long as they want to. The staff I inherited are incredible, and with their support, I know we will continue to enhance the services we provide to the seniors in the great state of Louisiana.

The passion I have for seniors comes from the time I spent with my grandmothers growing up. I believe seniors have earned the right to live in their homes and communities, for as long as they want to. I will walk boldly in my own shoes, and with [staff] support, to continue to enhance the services provided to all seniors in this great state of Louisiana.



Shirley Merrick,
GOEA Executive Director

STAYING CONNECTED TO NURSING HOME PATIENTS IN QUARANTINE

U.S. nursing homes, assisted living centers and other long-term care facilities have closed their doors to outsiders due to the Coronavirus pandemic, making it difficult for residents and their families to stay connected.

"Right now, families across the country cannot visit their relatives in long-term care settings, and while they can't be there with them in person, they can, and should, still be there for them."

CHARLES J. FUSCHILLO JR.,
AFA PRESIDENT

The Alzheimer's Foundation of America (AFA) advises alternative methods of reaching out that can make difficult situation better, reminding everyone that in-person visits are only one way to connect with loved ones quarantined in a nursing home during this crisis, and that phone, postal mail, and technology are all safe ways to let your loved one know that you care during this difficult time.

Keep in Touch



Contact the facility to get regular updates on your loved one and make sure they're safe.

Use technology



There are many new ways to keep in touch with your loved one. Some care facilities are offering families the opportunity to video chat, such as FaceTime, Skype, or Zoom. Phone calls, emails, and letters are also good ways to stay in touch.

Send care packages



Wrap up some of your loved one's favorite snacks, trinkets, lotions, or activities. Check with the care facility before sending packages to see if there are any items they don't allow for health reasons.

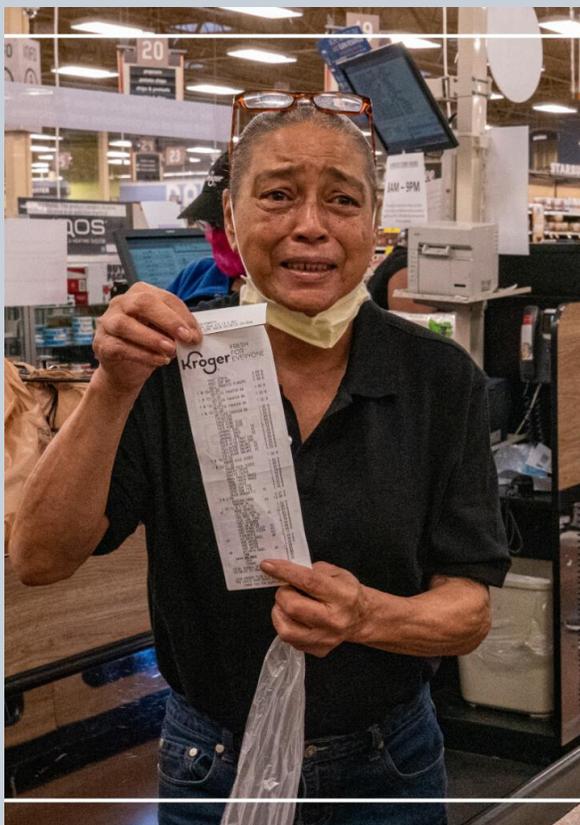
NATIONAL GUARD HELPING TO DELIVER FOOD TO OUR SENIORS DURING THE CRISIS

The Louisiana National Guard (LANG) continues to offer assistance to those impacted by the national health crisis. The Guard announced on April 22, 2020, that ten of its members with the 1022nd Engineer Company, 225th Engineer Brigade would be working with Grant Parish Council on Aging to distribute food to elderly residents of Colfax.

"It's nice to finally put a face to the people that we are helping. It gives us a sense of fulfillment," said Sgt. Richard Garcia. **"We had to leave Ruston at around four in the morning to get here on time, but it was worth the trip to be able to help people out."**



Members of Louisiana's National Guard load boxes of food and supplies into seniors' cars on April 24, 2020



@tylerperry paid it forward and purchased groceries for senior shoppers. You can see how much this means by the look on their faces. Thank you, Tyler, for your generosity!

TYLER PERRY SURPRISES THOUSANDS OF SENIORS BY PAYING FOR THEIR GROCERIES

Tyler Perry surprised thousands of shoppers by picking up their grocery tabs during senior shopping hours on April 8, 2020. The media mogul paid for groceries at 29 Winn-Dixie Stores, and 44 Kroger Stores across Louisiana during at-risk senior hours.

Perry, who was born and raised in New Orleans, asked to remain anonymous.

Overwhelmed by his generosity, stores and patrons alike took to Twitter to thank Perry for giving back to his community.



SCAM ALERT



CORONAVIRUS SCAMS AND HOAXES TARGETING THE ELDERLY

HOW CAN YOU HELP A LOVED ONE AVOID A COVID-19 SCAM?

Older adults need to know that government agencies will never ask them to provide personal or payment information via phone, text, or email. Seniors should also be aware they can protect themselves from scams by following these FCC recommendations:

Don't answer calls or respond to text messages that come from unknown or suspicious numbers.

Don't share personal or financial information via phone, email, or text.

Be suspicious of any caller who pressures them to make an immediate payment or share personal information.

Refrain from clicking suspicious links in text messages or emails, even if they appear to come from a friend or family member.

Verify charities by calling or checking the organization's website before giving money.



If you're a caregiver for an older adult, you may have heard about telemarketing and online scams targeting seniors and have taken appropriate steps to protect your senior loved one.

But as the U.S. and the rest of the world grapple with the effects of COVID-19, scammers have taken advantage of the pandemic and developed new coronavirus hoaxes that prey on fears of the virus. Older adults — especially those who are experiencing cognitive decline and are isolated from loved ones due to social distancing — are at higher risk for falling victim to COVID-19-related phone or internet scams.

6 Scams to Watch Out For:

Vulnerable seniors are being preyed on by scammers using a broad range of coronavirus cons to harm them financially and emotionally. Your best defense to protect your senior loved ones is to be aware of these deceptions.

1. HOME TEST KITS FOR COVID19

Information from these three disciplines can be combined to conduct a risk assessment for specific chemicals, mixtures of chemicals or other risk factors to determine whether an exposure poses significant risk to human health (exposure would likely result in the development of pollution-related diseases).

2. BOGUS COVID-19-RELATED PRODUCTS/SERVICES

Several text and phone scams are falsely advertising products, such as fake drugs, vaccines, and devices, that claim to prevent or cure COVID-19. Some of these scams prey on fears of shortages and encourage older adults to “stock up” and purchase items at drastically higher prices.

Other scams are offering services, such as in-home HVAC cleaning or mosquito abatement, that falsely claim to protect people from contracting COVID-19. Fake gift-card emails are also being sent to vulnerable older adults to offer “assistance” during the crisis or “reward” people for following public health guidelines.

3. IMPERSONATING GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Scammers pose as someone from the Social Security Administration and contact elderly recipients to tell them their benefits will be suspended or decreased due to COVID-19 unless they provide personal information or payment.

4. INSURANCE SCAMS

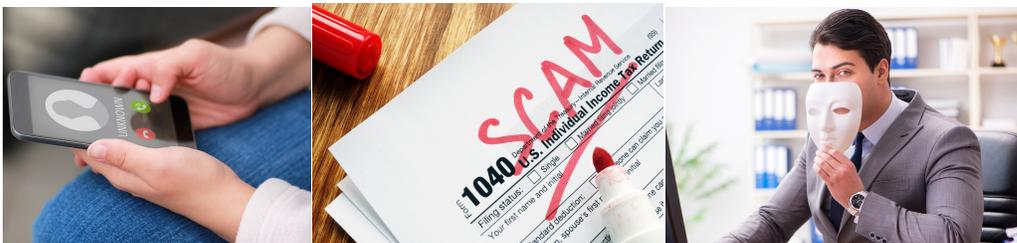
Several scams are offering low-cost health and life insurance, often in conjunction with at-home COVID-19 test kits or other products that are being presented as “free gifts.”

5. STIMULUS-RELATED SCAMS

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is aware of several scams related to the stimulus payments and loans that are being offered as part of the federal government’s response to COVID-19. These scams ask consumers to provide bank account information so funds can be “released” or loan applications can be approved.

6. CHARITY SCAMS

Charity scams prey on the good nature of many older adults by aiming to collect money for bogus COVID-19 relief charities.



WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOUR SENIOR LOVED ONE IS A VICTIM OF A COVID-19 SCAM?

If your senior loved one receives a suspicious text, call, or email related to COVID-19, or if you think they might be a victim of a COVID-19 hoax, you should file a complaint with the FCC immediately and contact local law enforcement. You should also report any compromised financial information to the bank or credit card issuer and report compromised personal information such as Medicare, Social Security, or health insurance ID numbers to the appropriate organization.

REPORT SCAM



If your loved one is a victim of a COVID-19 scam, they may feel embarrassed to tell you or report the incident. However, encouraging your loved one to be honest about what happened will help you and the appropriate authorities take steps to minimize any potential damage and prevent future fraud from occurring.

It's Time For You To Stand Up and Be Counted!

The 2020 Census Is Underway,
and is Critically Important For the Aging Population and Your Community



Why is responding to the 2020 Census important?

Federal funding

Federal, state, and municipal lawmakers make decisions about how billions of dollars in public funds are allocated for schools, roads and bridges, fire and emergency services, healthcare, and more based on census statistics. Programs informed by census statistics include those for:

Older people and low-income populations:

- > Medicare
- > Medicaid
- > Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP)
- > Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

College students:

- > Federal Pell Grants
- > Career and technical education grants
- > Adult education grants

Young children:

- > Head Start
- > National School Lunch Program
- > Title IX funding



Congressional representation

2020 Census results will determine the number of seats each state receives in the U.S. House of Representatives. Results also impact congressional and state legislative districts.

Business decisions

Businesses owners use census statistics to create economic and employment opportunities. The statistics help determine where to hire new employees, open new locations, and more.

Important dates

After completing the 2020 Census count, the U.S. Census Bureau must deliver the results by two deadlines:

- > **December 31, 2020:** The Census Bureau will announce the total population count for each state. These totals determine the number of seats each state receives in the U.S. House of Representatives.
- > **April 1, 2021:** The Census Bureau will release 2020 Census statistics used by state and local officials to redraw boundaries for congressional and state legislative districts and public school districts.



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For more information:

2020CENSUS.GOV

Don't miss your chance to be counted! If you cannot access or complete your 2020 Census, contact us at JARoss@goea.la.gov so we can help!