10 Tips from FaithAction to Help During the Coronavirus

1) Help from FaithAction - While our office may be closed to the public, we are still working every day and are here to help with anything you may need. Please call us at 336-379-0037, and please leave a message with your name, contact number, and what you need help with, and we will call you back by a “336” work cell phone number as soon as possible. We can help with any of the recommendations below, so please call if you need help.

2) Health - Please practice social distancing - stay at home as much as possible, avoid gatherings of more than 10 people, remain 6 feet from others, wash your hands regularly and disinfect surfaces. North Carolina Governor Cooper has issued a "stay at home" order through April 29th for everyone in the state, which requires people to stay home except for essential needs (including going to the grocery store, health centers, or to visit loved ones in need). Visit ncdhhs.gov/news/press-releases/governor-cooper-announces-statewide-stay-home-order-until-april-29 for more details on the order. Call your doctor if you have any concerning symptoms. If you don't have a primary health care provider, you can call FaithAction and we can put you in touch with our nurse for a telephone health screening. Most hospitals are only admitting those with serious conditions, and allowing a limited number of visitors. We also recommend you call your pharmacy to see if there are any new rules for receiving prescription medicine. For more on how to protect yourself, visit the CDC website - cdc.gov, and for more on immigrant rights to health services, visit ncjustice.org/immigrant-health. Additionally, if you are experiencing distress or mental health concerns, visit ncdhhs.gov/divisions/public-health/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-response-north-carolina/managing-health, and call 1-800-273-TALK for confidential support from the National Suicide Prevention Hotline.

3) Food - There are many places that can provide help with food, including schools, houses of worship, and nonprofits (including FaithAction). Here is a helpful link for free food resources in Greensboro - http://bit.ly/GSOfoodDoc and High Point: http://bit.ly/HPfoodDoc. You may need to travel to some places to pick the food up, while other places may be able to deliver to your home. You can also text FOODNC to 877-877 for a list of nearby free food for children pick up or drive-thru locations closest to you!

4) Housing - We understand that many people are not able to work at the moment, but most are still required to pay monthly rent or mortgage payments. While there is no policy suspending these payments at the moment, there has been an official court order in NC suspending all "non-essential" court proceedings, including evictions and foreclosures at least until April 17th. We recommend speaking with your landlord or mortgage company if you have questions, and making at least some payments to show your intention to pay everything once the spread of the virus has stopped. For more on these executive orders,
visit nccourts.gov/covid-19-coronavirus-updates. If you are facing any housing discrimination or conflicts with your landlord (in Greensboro) you can call the Greensboro Human Relations Department at 336-373-2038.

5) Bills – Similar to rent, you are still required to pay your bills. Even if you can't pay it all, we still recommend you pay some of the bills each month if possible to make sure they don't become too much of a burden once this is all over. Thankfully, NC Governor Cooper recently signed an executive order to prohibit utility companies from shutting off electricity, gas, and water bills or collecting any late fees for the next 60 days. Phone and internet service companies have been encouraged to do the same, though you may want to call your company to check if you can’t make the full payment.

6) Unemployment Benefits/Taxes/CARES Act - Under federal law, immigrants must have legal authorization to work in the United States in order to qualify for unemployment insurance, including: permanent lawful residents, those with refugee and asylee status, TPS holders, DACA beneficiaries, and others. They must also be unemployed through "no fault of their own," and have earned enough wages in their prior job to establish a claim. Visit des.nc.gov for more information and to apply if you are eligible. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is also extending the deadline for filing state and national taxes to July 15th. Additionally, the US government recently passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to provide economic relief and health care options amidst the growing COVID-19 pandemic. For a good overview of how the bill affects the immigrant community, visit - nilc.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/COVID19-relief-bills-understanding-key-provisions.pdf.

7) Immigration Courts/ICE - ICE has publicly announced it will temporarily postpone most arrests, and will primarily focus on pursuing people with criminal records who are a public safety risk. ICE also said it will not conduct any operations at or near health care facilities. Trust is low with ICE however, and it is not clear whether this policy will be followed or how long this policy will last. Be sure to know your rights - informedimmigrant.com/guides/know-your-rights/#. Immigration (USCIS) offices are also temporarily closed, at least through May 3rd, and the Charlotte immigration court is suspending all hearings through at least April 10th. They will issue notices for new appointments by mail. You should also call or email your attorney if you have any questions. Visit uscis.gov for more information and updates (*look for the translation/language resources links at the top of this and all other homepage).

8) Schools - All NC schools are closed at least through May 15th, and standardized exams are suspended for this school year as well. Students are still expected to participate in online learning platforms established by public and private schools. In Guilford County, public schools are using the Canvas e-learning platform. For more information on this and many other ways public schools are helping (including grab and go meal locations and access to computers and tablets), visit gcsnc.com, and call your child's school to ask for help.

9) City Services/Police – The City of Greensboro has put together a great resource for immigrants and refugees in English, Spanish, French, and Arabic – visit: greensboro-
While most public city services are temporarily closed, residents can still contact city departments by email and phone. Public transportation (GTA buses and SCAT) in Greensboro is currently free of charge. If you are a victim of a crime, you should call your local police or sheriff's department, and call 911 in case of an emergency. The Greensboro Police Department and many others have stated publicly that they are there to serve and protect the entire community. If you are uncomfortable calling law enforcement and you need to report something that is not an emergency, you can first call FaithAction at 336-379-0037 for help.

For more on information, updates, and resources on navigating the COVID 19 virus in North Carolina, visit the NC Department of Health and Human Services at ncdhhs.gov/divisions/public-health/coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19-response-north-carolina and you can also dial 211 for any questions you might have!

10) Scams – Finally, look out for people pretending to be health experts or government officials calling or coming to your door to sell coronavirus testing kits, cleaning supplies, or miracle cures. Stick to trusted sources of information. Learn more and report scams and price gouging to the NC Department of Justice at ncdoj.gov/complaint or call 1-877-5NO-SCAM.

For additional resources for immigrants across the United States, please visit - informedimmigrant.com/guides/coronavirus/.