

Lake County Updates

- As of September 22, **the United States has surpassed 200,000 deaths** from COVID-19, putting the disease on the trajectory of being the third leading cause of death in the country, behind heart disease and cancer.
- As of yesterday afternoon, **Lake County has had 16,488 COVID-19 cases and 463 deaths**. Over **237,000** tests have been administered. **Lake County's recovery rate is 96.2 percent**, slightly higher than the state's average. Visit our data hub for details: <https://covid19response-lakecountyil.hub.arcgis.com/>
- In Lake County, **people ages 20-29 have the highest prevalence of cases**, followed by the under 20 population, which recently surpassed the 40-49 age group. We are closely monitoring an uptick in cases in the 0-5 age group that started mid-September.
- The Health Department continues to work closely with long-term care facilities to prevent the spread of disease among this vulnerable population. Currently, **12 facilities have one active case each**, and **16 facilities have at least 2 active cases each**. In total, 80 long-term care facilities in Lake County have had at least 2 cases throughout the course of the pandemic, totaling 2,272 cases and 314 deaths.
- **Lake and McHenry counties make up Region 9** in the State's Restore Illinois Mitigation Plan. As of September 20, the Region 9 testing positivity rate is 5.0%, hospital admissions have decreased, and hospital bed availability remains stable. Metrics are updated daily. <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/regionmetrics?regionID=9>
 - If our region has a testing positivity rate of 8% or above for three days, or we see increases in hospitalizations and decreases in hospital bed availability, we would need to implement additional mitigation measures across our region.
 - Mitigation measures in the region would be chosen based on trends we are seeing in our counties, such as cases being linked to a specific industry, like bars and restaurants, or type of activity, like organized sports.
 - Enforcement of public health guidelines at bars and restaurants continues to be an issue, and we are working closely with businesses and municipalities to address concerns.
- **The Illinois Department of Public Health tracks county-level metrics weekly** and has a map indicating if a county is at an orange warning level, indicating increased COVID-19 risk, or blue – stable. <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/countymetrics?county=Lake>
 - Lake County reached warning level on Friday, September 4, due to increases in case prevalence and deaths in late August. We returned to blue the following week.
 - As of last week, our case rate is 83 cases per 100,000 residents. This is the only metric currently not meeting state targets. If another metric moves in the wrong direction, we will return to orange warning status.

- Lake County is holding its third live **Virtual Town Hall on Wednesday, September 30 at 7 p.m.** All interested Lake County residents are encouraged to tune in. Registration is required: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_1GEusWj4RiKTbJxmKT2eUA
- **The pandemic is far from over, but we know what to do to keep ourselves and our communities safe – follow the 3 Ws consistently:**
 - **Wear** a mask
 - **Wash** your hands
 - **Watch** your distance
- **As we enter the fall, it is very important to get your annual flu vaccination.** COVID-19 and influenza are caused by different viruses, and it is possible to get both, even at the same time.
 - The CDC recommends **every person over the age of 6 months** get their flu vaccine every year by the end of October.
 - The flu vaccine is available now at many doctor's offices and retail locations, as well as at the Health Department's Community Health Centers. Visit the Vaccine Finder website (<https://www.vaccinefinder.org>) to find a location near you.
- This week, **the Health Department is testing its drive-thru vaccination clinic plans** as we provide flu shots to our employees. We are testing the drive-thru mass vaccination process for when a COVID-19 vaccine becomes available.
- While **several potential COVID-19 vaccines are currently in clinical trials**, the Health Department is not expecting a vaccine to be available until early 2021, at best. Once a vaccine is available, priority will be given to first responders, followed by vulnerable populations such as long-term care facility residents and immunocompromised people. Mass vaccination is expected to be done via drive-thru clinics throughout the county, and the process is expected to take several months.
- **Contact tracing is a critical tool for slowing the spread of COVID-19.** As part of our case investigations, public health staff work to contact everyone who has COVID-19, along with their close contacts. Through these calls, they ensure that people have information and the necessary support to isolate or quarantine safely. **Please do your part; answer the call and provide our staff with all the information needed.**
- **The Health Department is still hiring Case Investigators and Contact tracers.** Interested applicants, particularly Lake County residents from communities most impacted by COVID-19, are encouraged to apply at www.lchdcareers.com. Contact Tracers work remotely and are equipped with a laptop and cell phone to conduct their work.
 - By the end of September, the Health Department will have hired over 70% of open positions for Contact Tracers. By mid-October, the Health Department anticipates filling all 150 positions for Contact Tracing and Case Investigation.
- **The Health Department continues to issue weekly email newsletters.** Please make sure you are signed up (English: <http://bit.ly/lccovid-19> or Spanish: <https://bit.ly/lccovid-19-es>)

- **In August, the Health Department launched a School Decision Dashboard** to help school districts make data-informed decisions about their learning model during the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Three learning models – 100% remote, hybrid (in-person and remote), and full in-person are possibilities based on the data. Incidence rate, hospitalizations, testing turnaround time, and zip-code level data are provided on the dashboard, which is updated Mondays through Fridays. View the dashboard here: www.lakecountyyil.gov/c19schools.
- **LCHD continues its work with two community partnership groups**—Asociacion Comunitaria Latina (ACL) and the African American Community Partnership Group (AACPG) to address COVID-19 disparities along racial and ethnic lines.
 - These groups represent over 50 local organizations and places of worship collaborating on educational awareness campaigns, distributing 83,000 PPE kits this fall, a worker outreach initiative, and efforts to address the digital divide.
 - If you're interested in getting connected to these groups, please contact Jon Ashworth (JAshworth@lakecountyyil.gov).
- **Going forward, these conference calls will be held the third Wednesday of every month. Our next conference call is scheduled for October 21, 2020.**
 - The key points, chat files, and audio recordings are posted to the Health Department's website. <https://www.lakecountyyil.gov/4428/Conference-Calls>

Policy

- **The self-response period for the 2020 Census ends on Sept. 30.** You can respond online, by phone, or by mail. Citizenship information is not collected. Visit 'my2020census.gov' to respond to the census today. <https://my2020census.gov>
- **The Illinois Commerce Commission has extended the moratorium on utility disconnections through winter 2021** for eligible low-income residential customers and those who are experiencing financial or COVID-19 hardship. <https://www2.illinois.gov/IISNews/22117-State-Regulated-Utility-Moratorium-Extended-through-Winter-2021-for-Eligible-Customers.pdf>
- **Beginning Sept. 24, Vote by Mail ballots will be sent to Lake County voters** who have already requested one, and ballots should start arriving in homes the following week. To request a ballot, or track the status of your ballot, log on to LakeVoterPower.info. Ballots include information on how to return it, including a list of 21 new postage-free drop boxes around Lake County.
- **In-person early voting** will be available from Sept. 24 to Oct. 16 at the Lake County Main Courthouse Lobby only, 18 N. County Street, Waukegan during regular business hours, Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. In-person early voting at other locations across the County will begin Oct. 19 and continue through Nov. 2. You can log in to LakeVoterPower.info to find voting locations closest to you.

Businesses

- **Thank you, businesses, for all you are doing to keep your staff and customers safe during the pandemic.** This is no easy task, and we are grateful for your efforts and for following public health guidance. **If you have questions about how to operate safely, or to report a business-related concern, please call the Health Department's Environmental Health division at (847) 377-8020.**
- More than 1000 local businesses applied for the **Lake County Government Small Business Assistance Grant Program**. Applications are still being processed and some checks have been distributed. More checks will be going out over the next few weeks as the review process is completed.
- The Health Department has a new **Lake County Businesses email subscription list** for sending updates about upcoming conference calls and other important news. You can also provide your phone number to receive text notifications. Invite your colleagues or anyone else who may be interested to sign up as well.
<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/ILLAKE/signup/18495>
- If a person with COVID-19 spent time at their workplace, school, or other facility, swift action may be needed to keep others safe. **The Health Department launched a new form for workplaces and facilities to use to report cases of COVID-19 and close contacts.**
<https://redcap.dph.illinois.gov/surveys/?s=NHECLHEHFP>
 - Information submitted is confidential and stored in a secure system. A member of our Communicable Disease team will follow up to provide guidance and perform contact tracing, as necessary.
- **We continue to receive questions about quarantine and isolation for COVID-19.** It is important to know the difference:
 - **Quarantine is required for a close contact to a positive COVID-19 case.** This person must remain at home and avoid all public activities for 14 days from the last date of contact with the positive case, even if they receive a negative test result.
 - During quarantine, people should not have visitors to their home. Children should not have playdates or attend parties or gatherings. People in quarantine also should not go shopping. The only time people in quarantine should go out is to seek emergency medical attention or a COVID-19 test.
 - Individuals identified as close contacts should get tested for COVID-19 5-7 days after contact with a positive individual.
 - **Isolation is required for someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.** Isolation must last a minimum of 10 days; however, other criteria may apply when the person is either symptomatic or asymptomatic.

- People in isolation should try to use their own bedroom and bathroom if possible, avoid shared living spaces, stay 6 feet apart from others in the household at all times, and wear masks when they must be around others in their home.
 - Case investigators provide detailed instructions to families. The LCHD Case Investigator identifies a release from isolation date.
 - Businesses should not require a negative test for an employee to return to work, as people may continue to test positive for COVID-19 for a few months after becoming ill.
- **The “Get Hired Illinois” online portal** connects job seekers and employers and currently has over 75,000 positions listed. <https://www2.illinois.gov/gethired/pages/default.aspx>. Also see the **Job Center of Lake County** website for opportunities - <https://www.lakecountyil.gov/167/Job-Center-of-Lake-County>.
 - The **Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity** has resources for businesses available in several languages. <https://dceocovid19resources.com/for-businesses/>
 - **The Health Department continues to update its guidance** for businesses in both English and Spanish. <https://www.lakecountyil.gov/4412/Community-Guidance-and-Resources>
 - **Lake County Partners continues to add to its COVID-19 Resources** for businesses on its website, <https://www.lakecountypartners.com/>.
 - The **Small Business Administration** website has information on business relief options: <https://www.sba.gov/>
 - **If you have concerns that your employer is not allowing for safe social distancing or that it is not maintaining a safe and sanitary work environment** to minimize the risk of spread of COVID-19, please contact the Workplace Rights Bureau of the Illinois Attorney General’s Office at 844-740-5076 or workplacerrights@atg.state.il.us.

Municipalities

- Yesterday, Lake County Government hosted a **training webinar for local municipalities and local government on how to submit for reimbursement to Lake County**, ensuring compliance with the new guidance from the U.S. Treasury on eligible uses of the Coronavirus Relief Funds provided through the CARES Act. The presentation and the video of the training will be available on www.lakecountyil.gov/forward later today.
- The CDC has released **guidelines for fall and winter holiday celebrations**. There are many factors to consider when planning events or gatherings, including the level of community spread, the behavior of people attending, and the size, location, and duration of gatherings. Find holiday-specific guidelines on the CDC website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/holidays.html>
- If a person with COVID-19 spent time at their workplace, school, or other facility, swift action may be needed to keep others safe. **The Health Department launched a new form for schools, workplaces, and facilities to use to report cases of COVID-19 and close contacts.** <https://redcap.dph.illinois.gov/surveys/?s=NHECLHEHFP>
 - Information submitted is confidential and stored in a secure system. A member of our Communicable Disease team will follow up to provide guidance and perform contact tracing, as necessary.
- The Office of the Attorney General Workplace Rights Bureau is using its hotline 844-740-5076 and email workplacerrights@atg.state.il.us to receive **complaints of employers failing to abide by the social distancing or sanitation guidelines.**

Faith-Based Organizations

- **Emily Gelber-Maturo is the Health Department's dedicated liaison for faith communities during COVID-19.** You can reach her by emailing egelber@lakecountyil.gov.
- The Health Department has a new **Lake County Faith Leaders email subscription list** for sending updates about upcoming conference calls and other important news. You can also provide your phone number to receive text notifications. Invite your colleagues or anyone else who may be interested to sign up as well. <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/ILLAKE/signup/18498>
- Many faith communities are making plans for the fall and winter. The Health Department has a new **Worshipping Together Safely guide** on its website: <https://www.lakecountyil.gov/DocumentCenter/View/36546/Worshipping-Together-Safely---English>
- If a person with COVID-19 spent time at their workplace, place of worship, or other facility, swift action may be needed to keep others safe. **The Health Department launched a new form for schools, workplaces, and facilities to use to report cases of COVID-19 and close contacts.** <https://redcap.dph.illinois.gov/surveys/?s=NHECLHEHFP>

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- **Guidelines for Places of Worship are available on the IDPH website** – <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/community-guidance/places-worship-guidance>
- **The CDC has a webpage dedicated to communities of faith** – <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/index.html>

Community Resources

- Anyone needing assistance finding food, shelter, rent or utility assistance, or other essential services can CALL 211 or TEXT your zip code to 898211 to speak with someone who can help. **211 is available 24/7.** <https://211lakecounty.org/>. This includes connections to two new programs:
 - **Lake County CATCH:** 2 weeks worth of free meals delivered to families who have to stay home due to quarantine or isolation
 - **Lake County CHRP** (Coronavirus Housing Relief Program): rental assistance for families experiencing financial hardship due to COVID-19
<https://www.lakecountyil.gov/4476/Lake-County-COVID-Housing-Relief-Program>
- **The Community-Based Testing Site at 102 W. Water St., Waukegan is open to everyone with or without symptoms.** The site offers drive-thru and walk-up testing. Testing offered at the site is the molecular PCR test done with a nasal swab to determine if you have an active infection of COVID-19.
 - The site is open 7 days a week from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. Tests are administered by testing site staff using a nasal swab, and results are provided by phone in 4-7 days. **Current turnaround time has been reported at approximately two to three days.**
 - Testing is free and available regardless of immigration status. A phone number and name are required in order to receive testing results.
 - For more details, visit our website: <https://www.lakecountyil.gov/4435/COVID-19-Testing>
- **The Lake County Health Department's Crisis Care Program** has a free, confidential hotline staffed by professional counselors for those experiencing a mental health crisis or substance use issue. Services are available 24/7 to anyone. Call (847) 377-8088 or walk in to 3002 Grand Avenue, Waukegan. People can also get connected to this line by calling 211.

- Lake County's **map of active food pantries** can be found on the Coronavirus Data Hub: www.lakecountyil.gov/COVID19data. <https://covid19response-lakecountyil.hub.arcgis.com/app/6990ca841cf74286ba7930e0fd9e4c6a>
- Employees can search for **childcare providers operating** by calling the Early Learning Helpline at (888) 228-1146 or by visiting this website: <https://emergencycare.inccrra.org/>
- **COVID-19 testing and treatment is available to all Illinois residents, including those without insurance.** Testing and treatment do not count towards Public Charge. Reach the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights by texting "HC4ALL" to 52886.
- People can apply for **public benefit programs** including healthcare (Medicaid), food (SNAP), and cash assistance at ABE, the state's Application for Benefits Eligibility. The state also launched the IDHS *Help is Here* toll-free line at 1-833-2-FIND-HELP to assist with public benefit applications. <https://abe.illinois.gov/abe/access/>
- **A Safe Place** is a local domestic violence resource for those in need: A Safe Place: 24-Hour Help Line (847) 249-4450 / Toll-Free Help Line 1-800-600-SAFE / TTY (847) 249-6557 <https://asafeplaceforhelp.org/>
- Illinois **Call4Calm** is a free **emotional support text line** for Illinois residents experiencing stress and mental health issues related to COVID-19. To speak with a local mental health professional, text "TALK" or "HABLAR" (for Spanish) to 552020.
- Individuals co-quarantined or isolated with an abuser can contact the **National Domestic Violence Hotline** 1-800-799-7233, or the **Illinois Domestic Violence Help Line** at: 1-877-TO END DV or 877-863-6338 (Voice), 1-877-863-6339 (TTY), Chat at thehotline.org.
- Mano a Mano has a **COVID-19 Tanda Emergency Fund** to help immigrant families directly, who are often excluded from government benefits. Learn more or donate on their website: <https://mamfrc.org/page-18194>
- United Way of Lake County, Lake County Government, Lake County Community Foundation, and the Lake County Municipal League **Lake County COVID-19 Community Response Fund** has disbursed many grants to community organizations providing relief to residents. For more information or to give, visit LIVEUNITEDlakecounty.org/covid19.
- **If someone loses their insurance** because they lost their job, they are eligible for a special enrollment period for health insurance. They can explore their options at healthcare.gov or GetCoveredIllinois.Gov. Additionally, people with low income may be eligible for **Medicaid**. People who are eligible can enroll in Medicaid at any time.
- The Illinois Commerce Commission **suspended disconnections for all electric, natural gas, water and wastewater services**. Late fees are waived. <https://www.icc.illinois.gov/home/covid-19>.
- Many providers and programs are offering **free or low cost internet**. <https://www.digitalinclusion.org/free-low-cost-internet-plans/>