



Mayor Brindle's COVID-19 Update April 1, 2020



CONFIRMED CASES

As of today, there are 22,255 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in New Jersey, which include three additional cases in Westfield. This brings the official total from the Board of Health to 42 cases. For a more detailed breakdown of statewide numbers, visit the NJ Department of Health COVID-19 Dashboard.

The statewide number has tragically doubled in four short days, demonstrating the widespread regional impact. Given the anticipated additional growth projections in positive cases in the coming days and weeks, the reality is that our Regional Health Department may not, in fact, be in a position each day to report the local case numbers. They are working tirelessly to verify every positive result, and will continue to provide accurate information as it becomes available.

FEDERAL, STATE, AND COUNTY UPDATES

- The deadline for REAL ID enforcement has been extended to October 1, 2021: [dhs.gov/news/2020/03/26/acting-secretary-chad-wolf-statement-real-id-enforcement-deadline](https://www.dhs.gov/news/2020/03/26/acting-secretary-chad-wolf-statement-real-id-enforcement-deadline).
- Governor Murphy announced the automatic extension of the New Jersey income tax filing deadline for both individuals and businesses to July 15, as well as an extension of the current fiscal year deadline to September 30.

- The Governor also signed an Executive Order authorizing NJ Division of Consumer Affairs to temporarily reactivate the licenses of recently retired health care professionals and grant temporary licenses to foreign doctors. The order also waives scope-of-practice requirements for advanced-practice nurses and physician assistants.
- The New Jersey Economic Development Authority's application window for its Small Business Emergency Assistance Grant Program will open at 9:00 AM on Friday, April 3rd. For the application, small business owners should visit cv.business.nj.gov.
- There is now a second number dedicated only for residents of Union County to call and set an appointment to receive a test at the Union County COVID-19 drive through test facility: 908-214-7107 (in addition to the main number: 908-373-5105). Please note this number is for Union County residents only.

LOCAL UPDATES

- Many thanks to the Senior Advisory Committee for their work in assisting the senior citizen community during the COVID-19 crisis. This group of volunteers phones the seniors on their outreach list to check in on them and advise them of community services available to them. To be added to this list, please email westfieldnjseniors@gmail.com.
- The We Love Local fund has raised \$145,000 to support Westfield's independent businesses! The Westfield United Fund began sending checks to 85 local businesses today, and any additional business applications for funding will be considered for the next distribution pool. It's not too late to donate: westfieldunitedfund.org.
- The annual sewer fee is due today, which is payable online, by mail, or in the drop box located in the Police Department. There is a ten day grace period which has been extended to Monday, April 13 due to the Easter holiday.
- On a similar note, we have received several questions about the May 1 payment date for quarterly property taxes, for which there is also a ten-day grace period. For those asking if there will be a COVID-related extension, that is something we do not have authorization to grant at the municipal level. We are awaiting guidance from the State, and will of course communicate any updates we receive on this issue.
- It has come to my attention that people are discarding protective gloves on the ground in various locations downtown, to be picked up by our DPW. This is both unacceptable and wholly unnecessary, as we have garbage cans easily accessible throughout the downtown area. Please do your part to ensure the safety of our Public Works team who continue to report to work as essential employees. We are extremely grateful for their dedication and professionalism during this very challenging days.
- I'd like to issue a reminder slightly unrelated to COVID-19 -- today is National Census Day! Westfield has traditionally had a very high rate of completion, and currently stands at 41% (as of March 29). This is a quick and easy way to make sure we are all counted, not just for our fair share of federal funding and government representation -- but potentially for an additional liquor license in Town. Our current count is approximately 31,500, and we are eligible for an additional license at 33,000 -- just something to think about as additional incentive. For more information on the census, visit 2020census.gov.

- Lastly, I'd like to address some questions I received around our decision to close the parking lots for the parks in Town, as I understand some Tamaques area residents are concerned about the potential parking impact on neighborhood streets. I want to clarify that the intent of the parking lot closures is to mitigate crowds in the parks by encouraging people to stay within their neighborhoods. If you are fortunate enough to be able to walk, bike or run to a nearby park, then you should do so. If not, your outdoor activity should be maintained in the vicinity of your local streets and neighborhoods.

As a reminder, the Governor's stay at home order means just that: stay at home. If residents are getting in their cars to drive to a park, it doesn't meet the definition of essential travel. While this might be temporarily inconvenient for many, it's a small price to pay for a potentially lifesaving measure.

I'm so sorry to be the unfun captain. I realize that many of these decisions are unpopular and believe me, it really stinks. As an avid tennis player, I'm still mad about my decision to close the courts :) -- but our small sacrifices are nothing compared to the daily stories I hear from the many doctors and nurses that live in our community who are putting their own health at risk. We can do this.

Thank you, and stay well!