

COMMUNITY UPDATE COVID-19

December 24, 2020:

The Town of Mansfield continues its community update on our website with our up to date information and important tips for the public as it relates to the COVID-19 pandemic. For more complete information, please see the town [coronavirus webpage](#).

- **As of today, please see the below chart that represents our communities COVID-19 relates cases:**

<i>Mansfield Covid-19 Workflow</i>	#	
Positive COVID-19 under isolation	161	(updated 12/24 08:00)
Positive Cases recovered	546	
Total tested positive since beginning:	727	
Mansfield Community Designation Level	Red	Red-higher risk Yellow- moderate risk Green- lower risk
Covid-19 Related Deaths	20	Last Covid death in Mansfield 12/17/20



- [December Holiday Guidance](#) from MA Department of Public Health

As we enter the December holiday season, residents are urged to follow the public health guidance that we know will help keep people safe. This year we ask residents to:

- **Limit** in-person celebrations to household members only
- **Postpone or cancel** travel this holiday season. If you do choose to travel, be aware of and comply with Massachusetts travel order [requirements](#).
- **Follow** the current state [gathering size limits](#) and [sector-specific workplace safety standards](#).

Lower-Risk Celebrations and Activities

- Limit in-person holiday gatherings to **only people you live with**.
- Host a **virtual** holiday dinner with extended family or friends.
- Prepare foods for family and neighbors and deliver them in a no-contact way.
- Virtually attend your traditional holiday activities, such as a visit with Santa.
- Consider virtual caroling or reciting. Provide a link to your virtual caroling to the people you want to sing to.
- View holiday lights from your car with those you live with.

Higher-Risk Celebrations and Activities

- Any time you gather with others outside of your household, you increase the risk of contracting or spreading illness. All residents are discouraged from gathering. Gatherings in Massachusetts are subject to [gathering size limits](#).
- You are risking your health and others health if you host or participate in any in-person festivities if you or anyone in your household:
 - has been diagnosed with COVID-19 and has not completed the isolation period;
 - has [symptoms of COVID-19](#);
 - is waiting for COVID-19 viral test results;
 - may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days; or
 - is at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19, such as older adults or those with certain medical conditions.
- If in-person caroling or reciting, stay more than 25 feet from the people you are reciting or singing for and wear a mask. Remain outdoors while caroling.
- If you visit Santa Claus in person, wear a mask, stay 6 feet from Santa and others while in line, and make a reservation for your visit where available.
- If viewing holiday lights outdoors, take a one-way walk with those you live with and maintain distance from others.

Other Recommendations and Guidance

- Always wear your mask and watch your distance. (Remove your mask only for eating and drinking.)
- For 10 days before and after holiday gatherings, monitor yourself closely for fever and other symptoms of COVID-19, minimize contact with other people, and leave home only for essential services like going to work, buying groceries, and appointments with doctors; OR,
- Obtain a negative result from a COVID-19 test, on a sample obtained within 72 hours of the celebration. Even with a negative test you must be vigilant about masking and distancing when you are around individuals you do not live with.
 - Testing only indicates whether a person may have COVID-19 at the moment of the test. You can still become sick with COVID-19 after your test and before your celebration.
 - Testing information can be found at www.mass.gov/GetTested
- Do not share food, drink, or any utensils, including serving utensils.
- Seat people with plenty of space (at least six feet) from one another while dining.
- Consider seating people at smaller tables in multiple rooms instead of around a large family table.
- Improve ventilation by opening windows and doors.
- If setting up outdoor seating under a tent, ensure guests are still seated with physical distancing in mind. Enclosed 4-wall tents will have less air circulation than open air tents and should be considered indoor spaces (check also fire codes for heating tents).
 - If outdoor temperature or weather forces you to put down the tent sidewalls, consider leaving one or more sides open or rolling up the bottom 12 inches of each sidewall to enhance ventilation while still providing a wind break.

Provide supplies to help everyone to stay healthy. These include extra [masks](#) (do not share or swap with others), [hand sanitizer](#) that contains at least 60% alcohol, and tissues. Stock bathrooms with enough hand soap and single use towels.

Holiday Shopping

In addition to observing store capacity limits, wearing a mask, staying at least 6 feet away from others, and following directions and place markings at stores, consider the following when holiday shopping:

Higher Risk: High-risk activities include in-person promotions or holiday activities that encourage large crowds. When shopping with a non-household member, make sure to wear a mask, including while driving together.

Medium Risk: If you choose to shop in-person, wear your [mask](#) and maintain 6 feet of distance from others. Try to shop at off-peak times when there are fewer shoppers.

Lower Risk: Shop online. Many retailers have options for online shopping and in-person, contactless curbside or drive-up pick-up. If using in-person pick-up, you and the retail personnel should wear masks.

Important reminders:

- Wear a [mask](#) (when not eating or drinking).
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or use hand sanitizer.
- Stay at least six feet away from other people.
- If you may be around others at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19, such as older adults or those medical conditions, take extra precautions to keep them safe.
- Get the flu vaccine.

For additional information, please refer to the [holiday guidance provided by the CDC](#).

- **Temporary Revisions to COVID-19 Measures- Saturday December 26**

The Baker-Polito Administration announced further restrictions to help stop the spread of COVID-19 in the Commonwealth, including new capacity and gathering limits. These measures will go into effect on Saturday, December 26 and will remain in effect until noon on January 10, 2021.

- Read a summary of the restrictions [here](#).
- Read the emergency order [here](#).

Capacity Limits

Effective Saturday, December 26, most industries in Massachusetts will be subject to a 25% capacity limit including:

- Restaurants (based on permitted seating capacity)
- Close Contact Personal Services
- Theatres and Performance Venues
- Casinos
- Office Spaces
- Places of Worship
- Retail Businesses
- Driving and Flight Schools
- Golf Facilities (for indoor spaces)
- Libraries
- Lodging (for common areas)
- Arcades and Indoor Recreation Businesses
- Fitness Centers and Health Clubs
- Museums, Cultural Facilities and Guided Tours

- Workers and staff will not count towards the occupancy count for restaurants, places of worship, close contact personal services, and retail businesses.
- All other rules and restrictions in each sector-specific guidance will remain in effect.

Gatherings Limit

Effective Saturday, December 26, the gatherings limits will be updated. Indoor gatherings will be limited to 10 people. Outdoor gatherings will be limited to 25 people outside. The gatherings limit applies to private homes, event venues and public spaces.

Elective Surgeries

The Department of Public Health released updated guidance to hospitals around nonessential, elective invasive procedures. To preserve health care personnel resources, effective 12:01am on December 26, all hospitals are directed to postpone or cancel all nonessential inpatient elective invasive procedures in order to maintain and increase inpatient capacity. Hospitals shall make every effort to preserve their inpatient capacity by cancelling nonessential electives and redeploying staff.

Patients are reminded to still seek necessary care at their hospital or from their health care provider.

- **Baker-Polito Administration Announces \$668 Million Small Business Relief Package**

The Baker-Polito Administration launched a \$668 million program to provide financial assistance to Massachusetts small businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The program in part relies on the pending federal COVID-19 relief bill recently passed by Congress. Regardless of the developments at the federal level, the Baker-Polito Administration will start releasing millions in new funding to restaurants, retailers, and other small businesses throughout the Commonwealth as soon as next week.

Earlier this week, the Administration announced nearly \$49 million in grants through the Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation (MGCC) COVID-19 Small Business Program to support over 1,158 small businesses. More than 10,000 applicants had sought relief in this grant round.

Additional grants will be made available to eligible small businesses through MGCC. The Small Business Grant Program was established in the fall, and currently has a pool of eligible applicants awaiting funding. This additional funding will allow the Administration to award more of those pending applicants. Eligible businesses that already applied to the program, but were not funded due to limited funds available, will be prioritized for funding first and do not need to reapply.

The funds will also be used to stand up an additional grant program at MGCC. This program will target the industries most hard-hit during the pandemic.

Eligible industries for the new program include:

- Restaurants, bars, caterers
- Indoor recreation and entertainment establishments
- Gyms and fitness centers
- Event-support professionals (photographers, videographers, etc.)
- Personal services
- Retail

The new business relief program would offer grants up to \$75,000, but not more than three months' operating expenses, to be used for employee wage and benefits costs, space-related costs, and debt service obligations.

The online application portal for the new program will open on Thursday, December 31, and will close on Friday, January 15. Awards are expected to be announced in early February.

More details on how to apply and eligibility requirements are available at www.empoweringsmallbusiness.org.

- **Support for Small Businesses Impacted by COVID-19 Recession**

On Monday, the Administration announced that nearly \$49 million in grants to small businesses will be awarded through the COVID-19 Small Business Grant Program administered by the Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation. In October, the \$50.8 million grant program was announced as a key component of *Partnerships for Recovery*, the Administration's [comprehensive plan](#) to get people back to work, support small businesses, foster innovation, revitalize downtowns, and ensure housing stability.

Of the businesses being notified of their successful applications, each meets the preferred criteria of being owned by women, minorities, veterans, individuals with disabilities, or that identify as LGBTQ. Additionally, every completed application received from a qualified minority-owned business that has not been able to receive prior aid from federal, state, or local programs established to support businesses during the pandemic will be receiving relief.

To increase applications from underrepresented groups, MGCC worked with a statewide network of local non-profits, small business technical assistance providers, and other organizations that support minority enterprises, including BECMA, Amplify LatinX, the Business Equity Initiative, Massachusetts Association of CDCs (MACDC), LISC and the statewide Coalition for an Equitable Economy, to reach businesses and entrepreneurs that would match the program's priorities.

The Small Business Grant Program received over 10,000 applications seeking funds totaling over \$500 million. Effective today, successful applicants will be notified that they have been awarded grants with further instructions on how to complete the process to receive funds. Nearly \$49 million will be granted to small businesses, with the remaining funding having been used to encourage applications from targeted communities and to prevent fraudulent applications.

The grant program's priorities, set forth in legislation, resulted in 1,158 small businesses being designated for an award. Among the successful applicants:

- 100 percent of all grantees are minority-, veteran-, LGBTQ-, or individuals with disabilities-owned businesses;
- 100 percent of qualified applications submitted by minority-women, minority-male, veteran-, LGBTQ-, and individuals with disabilities-owned businesses that have not received prior aid will be receiving funding;
- 95 percent of award recipients are minority-owned businesses; and
- 76 percent of award recipients are women-owned businesses.

Governor Baker recently [signed the FY21 budget](#), including an additional \$17.5 million for the Small Business Grant Program. This funding will be distributed using the same criteria, and MGCC will review applications already submitted. Small businesses that did not receive awards in the first round do not need to reapply, and no new applications will be accepted. The FY21 budget also includes \$17.5 million for community development financial institutions (CDFI) grants and loans, \$5 million for small business technical assistance, and \$3.9 million for technical assistance and grants, including for small business online and digital tools.

Additionally, the Baker-Polito Administration recently filed a \$107.4 million [supplemental budget bill](#) for Fiscal Year 2021. This bill proposes \$49.4 million to fully fund the economic recovery and small business relief plan included in the Administration's revised FY21 budget proposal and support the unique needs of small and minority- and women-owned businesses across the Commonwealth.

Finally, a comprehensive economic development bill currently pending before the Legislature includes additional substantial investments in small businesses. Beyond support for small businesses, *Partnerships for Recovery* includes substantial funding across both existing and new initiatives. In November, the 2020 Round of the [MassWorks Infrastructure Grant Program](#) was announced, investing nearly \$68 million in 36 projects to support housing, economic development and road safety projects across the Commonwealth. Community foundations received [\\$10 million for COVID-19 Relief](#), funds that can be used for vital services such as food security, housing and utilities support, emergency childcare and transportation. Last week, the first grants from the [Shared Winter Streets and Spaces Grant Program](#) were awarded, directing \$1.7 million to cities and towns to conceive, design, and implement tactical changes to curbs, streets, and parking areas in support of public health, safe mobility, and renewed commerce. In the coming weeks, the Administration will be announcing grants to support [cultural facilities](#) such as museums, new funding to support internet connectivity, and [local rapid recovery planning](#) support for communities.