

COVID-19 UPDATE: Gov. Justice commits \$6 million to support child care providers and families; announces plan for testing and monitoring college students

9/16/2020

Gov. Justice holds press briefing on COVID-19 response - S...



CHARLESTON, WV – Gov. Jim Justice joined West Virginia health leaders and other officials today for his latest daily press briefing regarding the State’s COVID-19 response.

\$6 MILLION COMMITTED IN SUPPORT OF CHILD CARE PROVIDERS AND FAMILIES

During Wednesday’s briefing, Gov. Justice announced that he has committed \$6 million of CARES Act funding to ensure the continued support of child care providers and families through the end of the year.

“I’m delighted that we solved the riddle on this,” Gov. Justice said. “West Virginia received a total of \$23 million from another bucket of CARES Act money, specifically to provide support for our state’s essential workers and our child care network. But these funds were depleted and this program was set to end on September 30th.

“We’ve been working really, really hard to try to find a way, through the DHHR, that we could continue this on if the federal funding drops off, because we feel like this is really important,” Gov. Justice continued.

This new funding will aid essential workers across the state, providing support to 3,400 families each month through the end of December 2020.



Click here to view photo album (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/govjustice/albums/72157715997123823>)

EDUCATION, HEALTH EXPERTS DISCUSS PLANS TO TEST AND MONITOR COLLEGE STUDENTS GOING FORWARD

Also on Wednesday, Gov. Justice announced that the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission and West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources have worked together on a proposal for how to count college students that have COVID-19 and are in isolation.

Part of the plan involves making sure students are being properly tested and, if positive, monitored to ensure the safety of their communities, while also providing a pathway to improving case numbers in those same communities.

"We've got to come up with a way that we can better serve our people and count the people properly from the standpoint of West Virginia University, as well as throughout our state with our colleges and universities so our numbers aren't so skewed in counties with large institutions," Gov. Justice said.

"In a lot of ways, especially in Mon County, because they've been red for awhile now, a lot of people are losing some degree of hope," Gov. Justice said. "That's the worst possible thing that can happen to us."



"State and national health experts tell us that the safest way to deal with positive test results on campuses is to keep those students on the campus to address their needs, to care for them, and isolate them within our community until we know that they can't spread the virus any further," said Dr. Sarah Armstrong Tucker, Chancellor of both the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission and West Virginia Community & Technical College System. "And so our colleges and universities have prepared to set up isolation housing for students who test positive."

Dr. Tucker went on to announce that WVU is working together with the Monongalia County Health Department to establish a facility, with appropriate security and monitoring in place, where COVID-positive students who live on-campus can be safely isolated.

Additionally, Dr. Tucker said that the WV HEPC is recommending that incentives be given to COVID-positive students who live off-campus, encouraging them to utilize this same facility.

"We're not going to go around and make students go into one of these secure dorms," Dr. Tucker said. "But, if an off-campus student feels comfortable moving into one of these on-campus facilities, we would like to be able to provide that opportunity for them."



"West Virginia University has stepped up and has provided a secure and monitored location for their students," said Monongalia County Health Officer Dr. Lee Smith in his remarks during Wednesday's briefing.

Dr. Smith and other health experts participating in Wednesday's briefing said that, under the proposed plan, all of the COVID-positive students utilizing these safe and secure facilities would be able to be counted as a single case for the purposes of the color-coded County Alert Map system.

"Our data shows that these cases that are congregated into this environment do not result in community spread and, therefore, we feel that these people should be considered as a single outbreak because they're within a congregate setting," Dr. Smith continued "I think it's of note that it's Morgantown that is seeing the positive cases, meaning that we're not seeing positive COVID cases in the western part of our county and some of the more rural areas."



Dr. Tucker added that the plan, which would also involve surveillance testing of samplings of students and staff members as well as providing mental health resources for any students in quarantine, could be implemented on college and university campuses across West Virginia.

UNEMPLOYMENT NUMBERS CONTINUE DECLINE; WORKFORCE WEST VIRGINIA PROVIDES UPDATE

Additionally Wednesday, Gov. Justice announced that West Virginia's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for the month of August dropped more than one full percentage point to 8.9 percent.

August marked the fourth consecutive month of improving unemployment numbers in West Virginia.

During additional remarks Wednesday, WorkForce West Virginia Acting Director Scott Adkins reported that West Virginia has now dispersed more than \$1.5 billion dollars in unemployment benefits since mid-March.

"This week we're going to disperse \$100 million more in unemployment benefits through the FEMA Lost Wages Assistance Program," Adkins said. "As I mentioned last week, West Virginia has been approved for six weeks of payments and so, for folks who are eligible, you stand to gain an extra \$400 in benefits."

Click here for more information on different types of unemployment benefits (<https://workforcwv.org/>)



(<https://workforcewv.org/>)

WEDNESDAY MAP UPDATE

Also on Wednesday, Gov. Justice provided a look at West Virginia's latest mid-week map update.

The map is updated live on the **DHHR's COVID-19 Dashboard** (<https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx>) (**Click "County Alert System" tab**) throughout the week for informational purposes and to provide an indication of how each county is trending ahead of each Saturday at 5 p.m.; the time when each county is assigned its official color designation for the next week, which determines the level of scholastic, athletic, and extracurricular activities permitted in each county for that particular week.

As of Wednesday morning, Kanawha County was elevated to red status. This triggers an immediate suspension of all in-person instruction and all school-related activities.

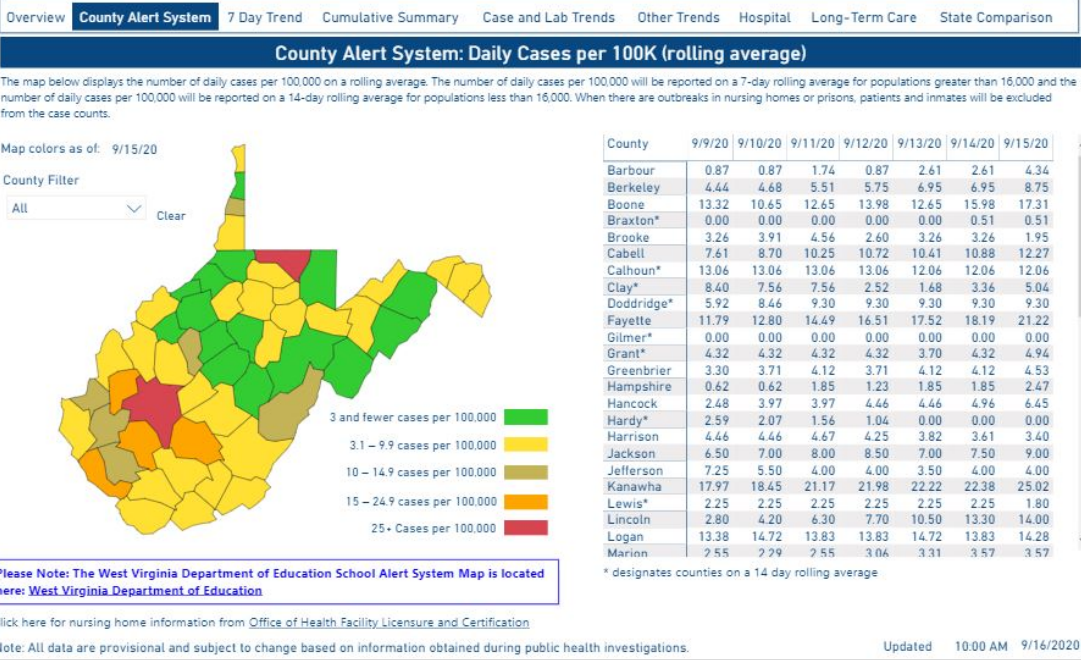
Kanawha County joins Monongalia County as the only two red counties in the state.

Today's map also shows that four counties are orange: Boone, Fayette, Mingo, and Putnam counties.

Six counties are in the new gold status level: Cabell, Calhoun, Lincoln, Logan, Ohio, and Pocahontas counties.

A total of 28 counties are yellow, while 15 counties are green.

West Virginia COVID-19



COVID-19 CASE NUMBERS UPDATE

Additionally Wednesday, Gov. Justice reported that the state had once again reached a record high in active COVID-19 cases with 3,236.

Meanwhile, however, West Virginia's **statewide rate of COVID-19 transmission** (<https://rt.live/>) – also known as Rt – dropped to 1.22, tied for the third-worst such rate in the country.

West Virginia has outperformed the national average, as well as the rates of all of its bordering states, in percentage of population tested, percentage of population positive, and percentage of positive test results. West Virginia has also outperformed the national average in case fatality rate.

Click here to view the latest COVID-19 data (<https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx>)

FIRST RESPONDERS AND ESSENTIAL WORKERS ENCOURAGED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF FREE TESTING WEDNESDAY EVENING

Also on Wednesday, Gov. Justice announced that, at his direction, the West Virginia National Guard is holding a free testing event today at the Kanawha County Health Department until 8 p.m. The testing is available to everyone, but the Governor specifically encouraged first responders and essential workers to attend.

The Governor also announced that he has directed the National Guard to stand up free testing sites in all red, orange, and gold counties immediately. Additional times and locations will be announced as soon as they are available.

Meanwhile, additional free testing events are still scheduled to take place all across the state in the coming weeks.



Click here to view all locations, dates, times and more details (<https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/pages/testing.aspx>)

Free COVID-19 Testing

FIRST RESPONDERS AND ESSENTIAL WORKERS
encouraged to attend. Open to General Public.

Sept. 16

Kanawha County
1:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Kanawha-Charleston Health Department
108 Lee Street, East
Charleston, WV



coronavirus.wv.gov | 1-800-887-4304

(<https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/pages/testing.aspx>)

GOVERNOR RECOGNIZES APPALACHIAN POWER FOR ASSISTANCE

Additionally Wednesday, Gov. Justice took time to thank Appalachian Power for recently lending a helping hand to the National Guard.

"We have a huge warehouse and maintenance facility near Nitro that the National Guard operates. It's where we store our PPE and it's also a food bank that supports thousands of West Virginians," Gov. Justice said. "Yesterday, the power went out and AEP worked throughout the night to replace underground lines to get the power up and going this morning.

"We want to send out a special thanks to them for stepping up and doing that great work," Gov. Justice continued.



BIBLE CENTER SCHOOL MEETING

Also on Wednesday, Gov. Justice reported that he and his staff have had discussions with the Bible Center School about their decision to reopen while Kanawha County Schools were closed due to heightened community spread.

"I think the Bible Center is stepping up and going to be able to do good stuff," Gov. Justice said. "We're working through our concerns without confrontation. We have different beliefs, but we are working well together to get to a solution. We're really close to having that situation resolved in a really positive way that will be beneficial to Kanawha County, to our state, as well as the Bible Center."



GOVERNOR REVIEWS EXECUTIVE ORDER

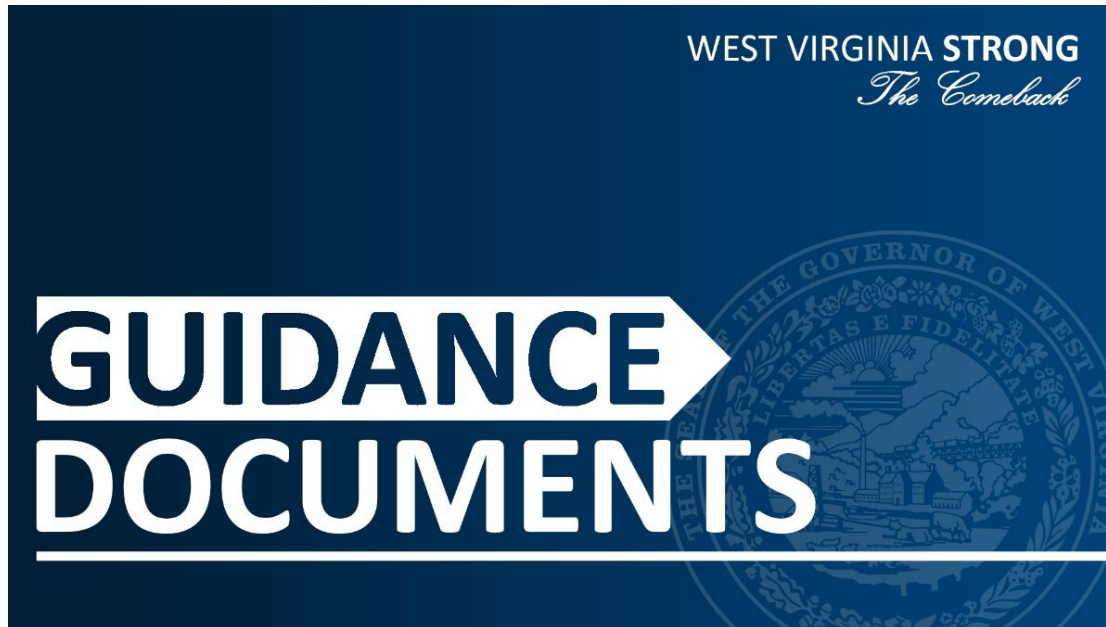
Additionally Wednesday, Gov. Justice went back over his latest **executive order**

(/Documents/2020%20Executive%20Orders/EO-70-20-September-15-2020-Travel-Sports-Teams-Leagues.pdf), signed yesterday, which prohibits travel sports teams from participating in practices, games, or other competitions within counties designated as gold, orange, or red in the County Alert System. This restriction does not apply to teams and leagues that play in defined, relatively small geographic areas, such as within a single county or a few counties in the state of West Virginia.

Additionally, the order decreases the social gathering limit for outdoor activity gatherings in gold, orange, or red counties from 25 people to 10 people.

The Governor announced Wednesday that the **guidance document**

(/Documents/Covid%20Week%209/2020.06.03%20Guidance%20on%20Low%20Contact%20Sports.pdf) related to low-contact sports on the **West Virginia Strong – The Comeback webpage** (/The-Comeback/Pages/default.aspx) has been updated to reflect these changes.



(/The-Comeback/Pages/default.aspx)

SECOND INMATE DEATH BELIEVED RELATED TO COVID-19

On Wednesday, Gov. Justice announced that the West Virginia Division of Corrections and Rehabilitation has confirmed its second inmate death linked to COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic.

A 73-year-old male inmate at Mount Olive Correctional Complex in Fayette County died on July 18. At that time, the cause of death was believed to be his underlying medical condition. However, the death certificate was received yesterday and shows that the underlying condition was complicated by COVID-19.

Additionally, Gov. Justice announced that another inmate from Mount Olive died on Sunday at an outside hospital. This inmate, a 54-year-old male, was hospitalized earlier this month after testing positive for COVID-19 and also had an underlying health condition.

The hospital's preliminary finding was that COVID-19 complications contributed to this death. The DCR is awaiting findings from the medical examiner before confirming this as an additional COVID-19 death.

OUTBREAK REPORT

Gov. Justice went on to report Wednesday that Mount Olive Correctional Complex now has 24 active cases of COVID-19. No other corrections facilities currently have any known active cases.

Across the entire DCR system, the number of active cases among employees has decreased to 14.

Click here to view the latest corrections facility update (<https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/Correctional-Facilities.aspx>)

Meanwhile, Gov. Justice announced that two new church-related outbreaks of COVID-19 has been identified in Harrison and Nicholas counties. There are now a total of eight church-related outbreaks in seven counties: Fayette, Harrison, Kanawha, Mingo, Nicholas, Wayne, and Wyoming counties.

Additionally, there are now 36 outbreaks in long-term care facilities across the state, up from 35 on Monday.

WEST VIRGINIA REMAINS AMONG NATIONAL LEADERS IN CENSUS RESPONSE RATE; ALL URGED TO PARTICIPATE

Once more today, Gov. Justice asked all West Virginians to participate in the 2020 United States Census.

West Virginia currently is tied with Idaho for the #1 best U.S. Census response rate in the country.

To date, 99.4 percent of West Virginians have been counted. For perspective, during the last Census in 2010, the state's final response rate was just 74 percent.

West Virginians are able to complete the Census until Sept. 30, 2020.

Every West Virginian who does not respond to the Census represents a loss of \$20,000 in federal funds over the next 10 years for the state and its local communities. The funds can go toward things like healthcare, education, infrastructure, school lunch programs, and more.

Be counted in minutes: **2020census.gov** (<https://2020census.gov/>).



(<https://2020census.gov/>)

SMALL BUSINESS GRANTS: OVER \$15 MILLION HAS NOW BEEN AWARDED

Also today, Gov. Justice provided an update on small businesses that have applied for funding through the Governor's **West Virginia CARES Act Small Business Grant Program** (<https://grants.wv.gov/en/flexible-page?pageId=1424>), reporting that over 5,100 applications have been submitted, with more than \$15 million being awarded to date.

The initiative is providing \$150 million of West Virginia's CARES Act funding to qualifying businesses across the state. Any West Virginia-based small business, in existence on March 1, 2020, with 1-35 employees, is able to apply for up to \$5,000 in grant funding.

Gov. Justice has also opened up the West Virginia CARES Act Small Business Grant Program to sole proprietorships and self-employed individuals in West Virginia.

Any sole proprietor or self-employed person, in operation on or before March 1, 2020, is now able to apply for up to \$2,000 in grant funding.

Businesses planning to apply must first be registered as a vendor with the State to be eligible. Guidelines for the grants and instructions on how to apply are available at **Grants.wv.gov** (<https://grants.wv.gov/en>).

The application will remain open until Sept. 30, 2020.

WV.gov

State Grants CRVF Grants Map Funding Sources Grant Application Guidelines

APPLY NOW!

JULY 15, 2020
Small Business Grant Application Now Open
Click to apply!

JUNE 24, 2020
New Coronavirus Relief Fund Grants Map
West Virginia launched a new interactive map that displays a...

APRIL 17, 2020
West Virginia receives \$625 million in federal funding
Gov. Jim Justice announced that West Virginia received the f...

Available State Grants
Find all available State funded grants related to the Coronavirus Disease 2019.

Federal Grants
Learn what types of Federal Grants and other resources are available due to the pandemic.


(<https://grants.wv.gov/en/flexible-page?pageId=1424>)

CITIES/COUNTIES GRANT FUNDING: OVER \$111 MILLION HAS NOW BEEN AWARDED

Also today, Gov. Justice provided an update on cities and counties throughout West Virginia applying for funds through the federal CARES Act, reporting that more than \$111 million has now been awarded all across the state. To date, 191 cities and counties have applied for this grant funding.

A **web portal** (<https://grants.wv.gov/en>) is available for city and county government officials to apply. Interested parties can also call the helpline: **1-833-94-GRANT**.

Each of the recipients of CARES Act funding, along with grant amounts, are now available to view through the West Virginia State Auditor's Office **COVID-19 transparency website** (<https://stories.opengov.com/westvirginia/published/mnOzKr2wB>).



WEST VIRGINIA STRONG
The Comeback

CARES Act funding for WV Cities and Counties

Apply for CARES Act grant funding here:

grants.wv.gov

Help line: 1-833-94-GRANT

5/19/20 WEST VIRGINIA STRONG – THE COMEBACK

(<https://grants.wv.gov/en>)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Click here to view all Executive Orders and other actions (<https://governor.us15.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d525ab9ade4d860d2b5772468&id=3029d4fcc4&e=5c140b96bc>) taken by Gov. Justice to combat the spread of COVID-19 in West Virginia.

For more information about COVID-19 prevention and more, call the State's toll-free hotline at **1-800-887-4304** or visit **Coronavirus.wv.gov** (<https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx>).



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