

COVID-19 UPDATE: Gov. Justice tested live on-air as Aggressive Testing program continues to ramp up; all West Virginia counties out of Red status

9/23/2020

AGGRESSIVE TESTING EFFORTS CONTINUE TO RAMP UP

During Wednesday's briefing, Gov. Justice announced that he will provide additional CARES Act funding to the West Virginia National Guard and West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources in support of their efforts, working alongside local health departments, to continue ramping up the Governor's Aggressive Testing program across the state.

"We need to make provide the resources that our people need to be able to do all this testing, which is why I was happy to push this additional funding through," Gov. Justice said. "We're already ramping up our testing significantly. But somehow, somehow we've got to do even more."

Earlier this week, the Governor announced that any time a county moves to Red or Orange status, free COVID-19 testing sites will be set up in that county within 24 hours. Testing in these counties will be offered on a continual basis until their numbers improve.

Any time a county moves to Gold status, at least one free testing event per week will be held in that county until their numbers improve.

"I urge everyone to take advantage of the free testing opportunities all over our state," Gov. Justice said. "As we keep testing and testing, we might identify a few people who didn't know they had it and stop it from spreading. But more often than not we're going to get good results. You'll see the numbers in your county go down and we'll begin to move in a way to where our kids can go to school, play sports, and do all kinds of other things safely.

"For instance, in Kanawha County, our positivity rate is down to 5.6 percent," Gov. Justice continued. "If we can get you down below 5 percent, you'd be Gold. You see how close that is? We need to get you there. You have got to go get tested."



Click here to view photo album (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/govjustice/albums/72157716088209608>)

Also on Wednesday, Gov. Justice provided a look at West Virginia's latest mid-week County Alert System map update, which showed significant improvement with Aggressive Testing efforts underway in several regions.

For the first time since the map's debut, none of West Virginia's 55 counties were classified as **Red**.

Eight counties were classified as **Orange**: Boone, Fayette, Kanawha, Logan, Mingo, Monongalia, Putnam, and Wayne counties.

Three counties were classified as **Gold**: Nicholas, Summers, and Wyoming counties.

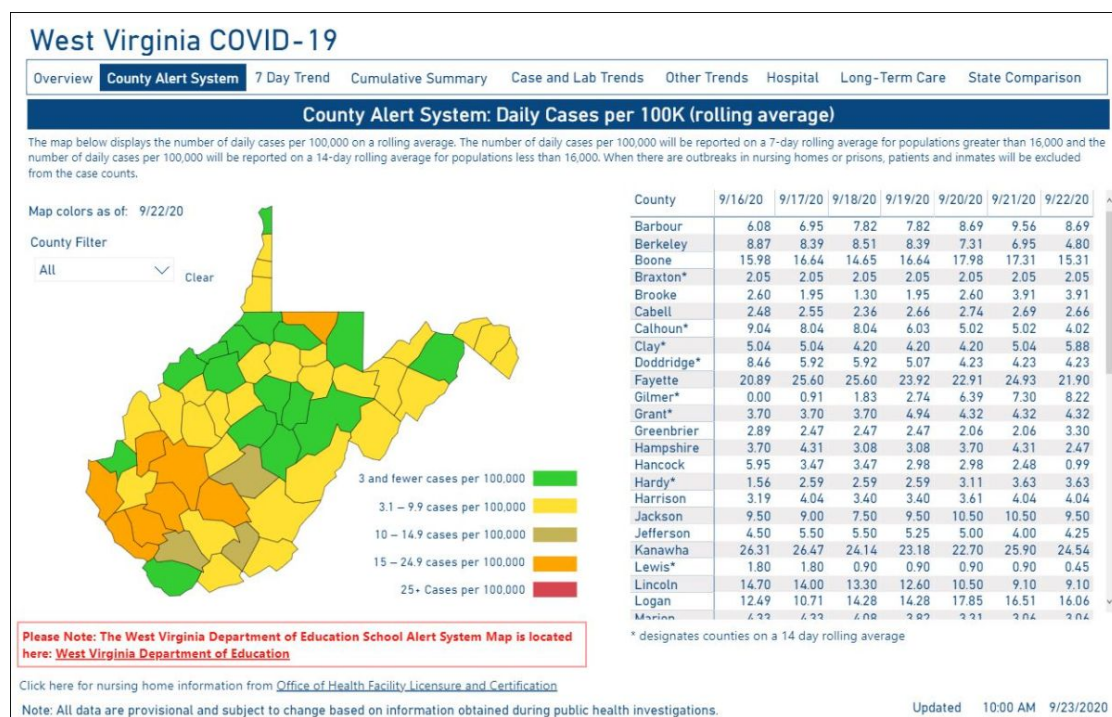
Of the remaining counties, 28 were classified as **Yellow**, while 16 were classified as **Green**.

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.

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.



To further encourage all West Virginians to get tested and to highlight how easy the testing process is, Gov. Justice was tested for COVID-19 live on-air at the end of Wednesday's briefing.

"Everybody, I hope you all get a lot of enjoyment out of this," Gov. Justice said as members of the West Virginia National Guard prepared to administer the test.

After finishing the test, Gov. Justice added, "That was great, there's nothing to it. It takes just about 10 seconds. There's no pain, just a split second where you might want to sneeze. But other than that, there's nothing to it. I would encourage everyone to go get tested."

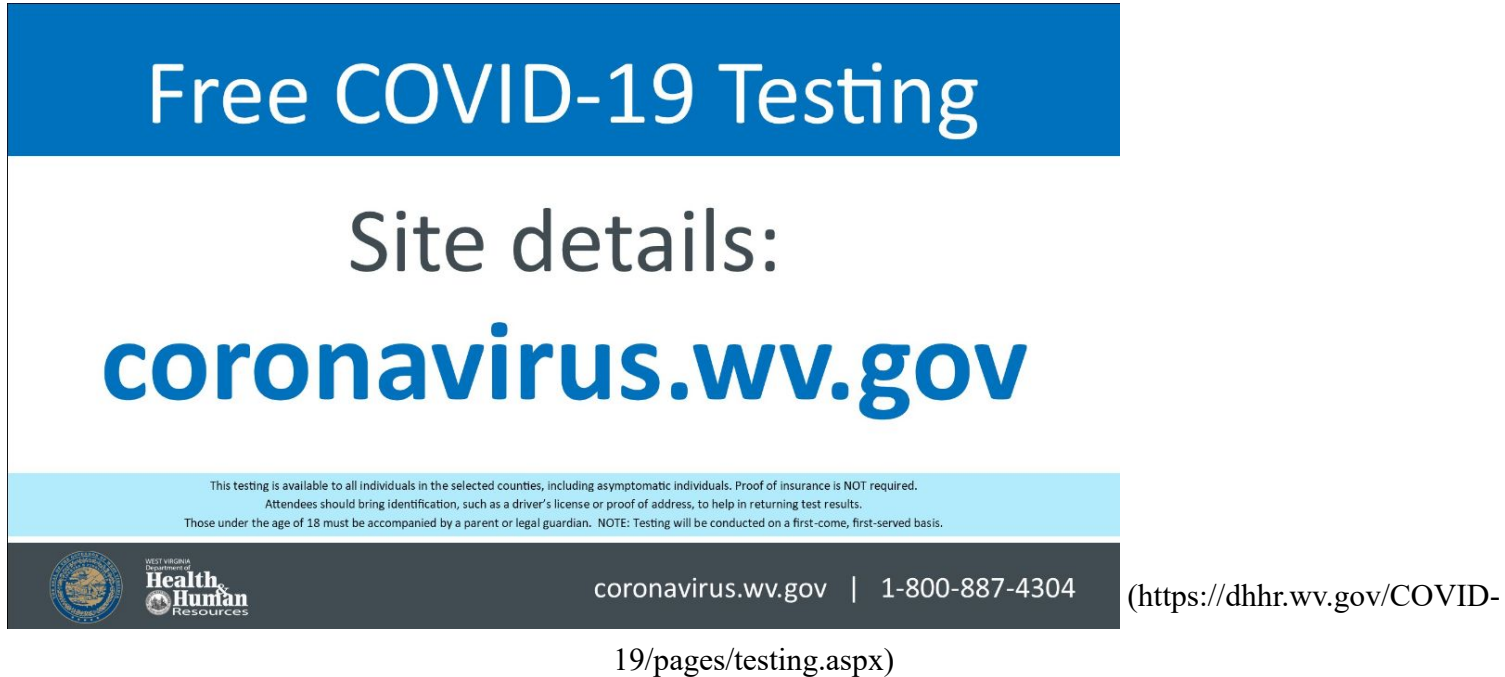


FREE COVID-19 TESTING SITES

Also on Wednesday, Gov. Justice provided an update on the schedule of upcoming free community COVID-19 testing events taking place over the next several weeks at various dates and times in multiple counties across the state.

This testing is available to all residents in selected counties, including asymptomatic individuals. Proof of insurance is not required. Attendees should bring identification, such as a driver's license or proof of address, to help in returning test results. Those under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.

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




The banner features a blue header with the text "Free COVID-19 Testing". Below this, on a white background, is the text "Site details:" followed by the website "coronavirus.wv.gov" in large blue font. A light blue bar contains fine print: "This testing is available to all individuals in the selected counties, including asymptomatic individuals. Proof of insurance is NOT required. Attendees should bring identification, such as a driver's license or proof of address, to help in returning test results. Those under the age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian. NOTE: Testing will be conducted on a first-come, first-served basis." The footer is dark grey and includes the West Virginia Department of Health & Human Resources logo, the website "coronavirus.wv.gov", the phone number "1-800-887-4304", and a URL in parentheses: "(https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/pages/testing.aspx)".

Free COVID-19 Testing

Site details:

coronavirus.wv.gov

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 coronavirus.wv.gov | 1-800-887-4304 (https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/pages/testing.aspx)

COVID-19 CASE NUMBERS UPDATE

Additionally Wednesday, Gov. Justice reported modest improvement in certain case metrics, announcing that the number of active COVID-19 cases across the state has dropped to 3,464, which is down from 3,544 on Monday.

Additionally, West Virginia's **statewide rate of COVID-19 transmission** (<https://rt.live/>) – also known as Rt – improved to 1.02 Wednesday morning; tied for the 28th-best such rate of any state in the country.

West Virginia continues to outperform 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.

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



PRIVATE AND CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS AGREEMENT

Additionally Wednesday, Gov. Justice announced that the state has reached an agreement with several private and Christian schools.

These schools have agreed to conduct a baseline test of all students and staff before they resume in-person instruction. Testing is scheduled this week at three schools.

These schools will also encourage all students and staff to consent to ongoing random testing in an effort to keep the community safe.

These testing efforts will be funded through CARES Act dollars – the same money that funds all of the free testing events being held across West Virginia every day.

The schools have also agreed to continue to follow all school-related safety procedures, such as the mandatory wearing of face coverings by students and staff.

"I'm really happy that we were all able to work together to get this agreement done," Gov. Justice said. "These schools have stepped up as good community partners to prioritize the health and safety of the people they serve."

The Governor signed an **executive order** (/Documents/2020%20Executive%20Orders/EO-71-20-September-23-2020.pdf) Wednesday reflecting this agreement.

"We want this to be an example and a model for our other private and Christian Schools to follow," Gov. Justice said. "This offer is on the table for all private and Christian Schools in West Virginia."



MONONGALIA COUNTY UPDATE

Additionally Wednesday, Gov. Justice reported that a lawsuit was filed against the state yesterday by several bar owners in Morgantown.

"Right off the get-go, I proposed a plan that involved strict safety measures for those bars to be able to expand their space and to be able to operate while maintaining safe social distancing and everything else and they rejected that," Gov. Justice said.

"Then, finally, we reopened because I am an absolute believer that, as these businesses are closed, it hurts employees because they need to have jobs. I get every bit of it," Gov. Justice continued. "But, as soon as we opened up, we got all kinds of pictures where there's people piled on top of one another, there's no masks, there's no social distancing – all in a county that we were already struggling with. So I said: 'I'm not doing that.'"

"At the end of the day, I made the decision to shut back down. I'm proud of that decision and I'm not backing down on that decision in any way."



OUTBREAK REPORT

Also on Wednesday, Gov. Justice reported that seven cases of COVID-19 remain active among inmates at Mount Olive Correctional Complex in Fayette County.

Across the entire Division of Corrections and Rehabilitation (DCR) system, there remain 11 active cases among employees, nine of whom work at Mount Olive.

The West Virginia National Guard continues sanitization efforts at Mount Olive.

No other corrections facilities currently have any known active cases.

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

Meanwhile, Gov. Justice announced that recent church-related outbreaks in Kanawha and Wayne counties are no longer considered active at this time.

As a result, there now remain four active church-related outbreaks in four counties across the state: Fayette, Harrison, Mingo, and Nicholas counties.

Additionally, there are now 41 outbreaks in long-term care facilities across the state, up from 38 on Monday.

GOVERNOR URGES WEST VIRGINIANS TO GET FLU VACCINE

Additionally Wednesday, Gov. Justice took time out of his remarks on COVID-19 to remind and encourage all West Virginians to get their flu vaccine.

"The flu vaccine is more important than ever this year," Gov. Justice said. "It helps protect you and your loved ones and reduces the burden on hospitals and healthcare systems."

According to health officials, everyone 6 months and older should receive this vaccine.



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

With only eight days left to respond to the 2020 United States Census, Gov. Justice asked all West Virginians to participate if they have not yet done so.

As of Wednesday afternoon, West Virginia is now alone atop the national standings with the #1 best Census response rate in the country.

To date, 99.9 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.

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.

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

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



A promotional graphic for the 2020 Census. The top half has a dark blue background with the text "8 days left to respond" in large, bold, yellow and orange font. Below this is the slogan "You matter. Be counted!" in white. To the right is a white clock face with yellow hands and a yellow border. The bottom half has a white background with the text "online 2020CENSUS.GOV" and "by phone 1-844-330-2020" in blue. To the right of this is the "United States Census 2020" logo.

8 days left to respond

You matter. Be counted!

online **2020CENSUS.GOV**
by phone **1-844-330-2020**

United States[®]
Census
2020

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

SMALL BUSINESS GRANTS: MORE THAN \$20 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 7,000 applications have been submitted, with more than \$20 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.

(<https://grants.wv.gov/en/flexible-page?>


pageId=1424)

CITIES/COUNTIES GRANT FUNDING: OVER \$116 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 \$116 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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