

# *COVID-19 UPDATE: Gov. Justice: “West Virginia Model” continues to set national standard*

9/18/2020

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.

### **"WEST VIRGINIA MODEL" SETTING NATIONAL STANDARD; CDC RELEASES SIMILAR COLOR-CODED SYSTEM**

During Friday's briefing, Gov. Justice reported that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **recently adopted their own color-coded system** (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/indicators.html#thresholds>) to assist states in determining whether children should be in-school or they should be utilizing a remote learning model of instruction.

"Their color-coding system looks tremendously close to our system," said Gov. Justice, who officially dubbed the State's color-coded system as the **"West Virginia Model"** during Friday's briefing.

Gov. Justice noted that White House Coronavirus Response Coordinator Dr. Deborah Birx **praised the West Virginia Model as "remarkable"** (</News/press-releases/2020/Pages/COVID-19-UPDATE-Gov.-Justice-hosts-Dr.-Deborah-Birx%2c-White-House-Coronavirus-Response-Coordinator%2c-to-West-Virginia.aspx>) during her recent trip to West Virginia, **highlighting the plan as a leading practice nationwide** (</News/press-releases/2020/Pages/COVID-19-UPDATE-Gov.-Justice-announces-updated-County-Alert-System-for-school-status%2c-nursing-home-visitation.aspx>) for all states to emulate.

"Earlier this week we were delighted to see the Kentucky basically mimicked our color-coding system," Gov. Justice said. "We think we're on to something really, really good."

Like the West Virginia Model, the CDC uses a five-color system to represent community spread for particular regions. Like the West Virginia Model, the CDC's colors are based on metrics such as the number of new cases per 100,000 population on a 14-day rolling average as well as the overall percentage of positive tests.

"I've said so many times how, in West Virginia, we have been the leaders across the nation with the ways we've responded to this pandemic," Gov. Justice said. "Whether it be how we were the first state in the country to fully test our nursing homes and assisted living communities or now what we've done as far as developing a color-coding system."

The Governor also noted that the new CDC system has looser restrictions than the West Virginia Model when it comes to when children should be permitted back into schools.

"From our standpoint, we have been extremely cautious," Gov. Justice said. "We all want our kids back to school. But, first and foremost, we need to move in a way that's as safe as possible for our teachers, service personnel, communities, and our kids themselves."

"Considering that our state has one of the most vulnerable populations and that our numbers are way down when you look at West Virginia compared to other states, I know we are doing the right thing," Gov. Justice continued.

Later during Friday's briefing, the Governor was asked to compare West Virginia's color-coded map to the Harvard Global Health Institute's COVID Risk Level Model, which served as the original inspiration to West Virginia's system.

"We're not just sitting on our butts, we've got great people working on this to make it better and better," Gov. Justice said. "That's why you now see Kentucky and the CDC looking to the West Virginia Model for inspiration."

"'West Virginia grown: the West Virginia Model.' Doesn't it have an incredible ring to it?" Gov. Justice continued. "I want to see the West Virginia Model everywhere."



**Click here to view photo album** (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/govjustice/albums/72157716021177856>)

### **CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT WITH UNEMPLOYMENT IN WEST VIRGINIA**

Also on Friday, Gov. Justice mentioned an editorial in ***The Exponent Telegram***

(<https://www.wvnews.com/theet/>) newspaper in Clarksburg, which highlighted West Virginia's unemployment numbers as some of the most improved in the nation.

"Our unemployment rate has dropped month after month," Gov. Justice said. "That's great news to us in West Virginia and we're going to continue to try to get more and more people back to work."

"I salute WorkForce West Virginia for also sending out more than \$1.5 billion in benefits to those who have been unemployed since the start of the pandemic," Gov. Justice continued. "There is good stuff going on."



## **GAME CHANGER VIRTUAL SUMMIT PREVIEW**

Additionally Friday, Gov. Justice provided a reminder that the Game Changer initiative's virtual summit on opioids and substance use disorder will premiere live next Monday, Sept. 21, 2020, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Game Changer – one of the largest public-private coalitions of its kind in the nation – is aimed at tackling opioid and substance use, along with other issues impacting West Virginia's youth.

**Click here to read more details about the summit** (</News/press-releases/2020/Pages/Gov.-Justice-announces-Game-Changer-virtual-summit-to-premiere-live-Monday-morning.aspx>), including additional dates and times to watch.

"This is another avenue where we are trying to attack the terrible drug epidemic that impacts all of our lives," Gov. Justice said. "We've also done work with Jobs & Hope and Communities in Schools. We are trying to address this problem in lots of ways. But now, the Game Changer people have come to me and asked me to be the head coach on this."

The summit, which will feature live on-location performances from across the country by several nationally known trauma-informed speakers and one of the country's most engaging youth and teen emcees, will be available to all of West Virginia's 157,000 middle and high school students.

"I absolutely salute all of the people that are working on this," Gov. Justice continued. "There are many, many thousands of kids we're going to be able to reach and hopefully we're going to impact their lives for the better and move them toward being leaders in their communities."



## **DISCUSSIONS CONTINUE WITH WEST VIRGINIA HOSPITALS**

Also on Friday, Gov. Justice announced that yesterday, members of his administration met with the West Virginia Hospital Association to discuss continued efforts to ensure proper staffing and bed capacity at hospitals across the state.

In early August 2020, Gov. Justice directed Cabinet Secretary Bill J. Crouch of the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR) to work with Thomas Health, the parent company of Saint Francis Hospital, to stand up a COVID-19 surge hospital in Charleston. Fifteen beds are available for COVID-19 patients with the expansion up to 30 beds.

There have been news reports that the request from Charleston Area Medical Center was for a field hospital, which is an entirely different thing. "There has been a significant exaggeration and miscommunication of our needs and request to the State," said David Ramsey, CEO of CAMC. "Our Emergency Medicine physicians were trying to plan ahead for the virus season. The request was for a conditioned tent to be used as a triage facility to test and triage patients before they would be sent into the ER waiting room."

The West Virginia National Guard has reached out to CAMC to meet their needs. DHHR and the Guard follow the numbers of hospitalizations daily across West Virginia and are on top of this issue.



## **COVID-19 CASE NUMBERS UPDATE**

Additionally Friday, Gov. Justice reported that the state had once again reached a record high in active COVID-19 cases with 3,375.

Meanwhile, West Virginia's **statewide rate of COVID-19 transmission** (<https://rt.live/>) – also known as Rt – dropped to 1.20. Despite the improvement, this number is still tied for 48th in the country.

However, 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>)

## **FRIDAY MAP UPDATE**

Also on Friday, 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 Friday morning, Fayette, Mingo, and Putnam counties were each elevated to red status. This triggers an immediate suspension of all in-person instruction and all school-related activities.

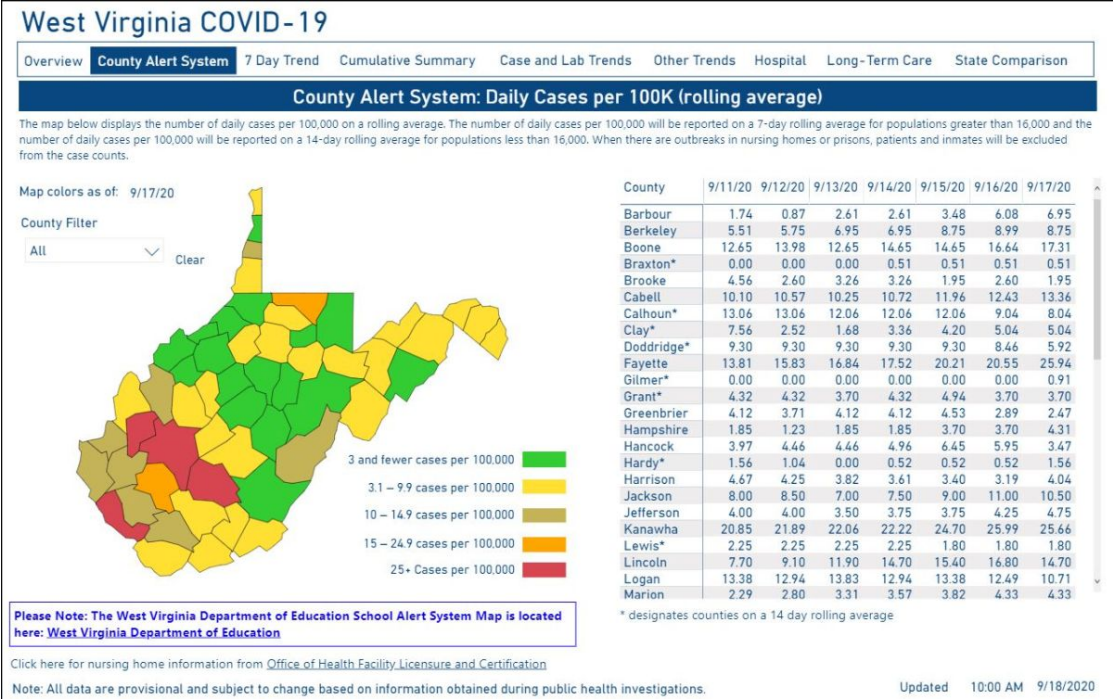
In contrast, Monongalia County dropped out of red status and back into orange status.

Four counties are currently red: Fayette, Kanawha, Mingo, and Putnam counties.

Two counties are currently orange: Boone and Monongalia counties.

Eight counties are currently gold: Cabell, Jackson, Lincoln, Logan, Ohio, Pocahontas, Wayne, and Wyoming counties.

Twenty-four counties are currently yellow. Seventeen counties are currently green.



**FREE TESTING IN ALL RED, ORANGE, AND GOLD COUNTIES**

Additionally Friday, Gov. Justice offered a reminder that he has directed the West Virginia National Guard to stand up free testing sites in all red, orange, and gold counties immediately.

Testing locations are available today, Sept. 18, 2020, in Harrison, Kanawha, Monongalia, and Putnam counties.

Additional sites will be open, over the course of this weekend, in Kanawha and Monroe counties.

Further sites will open in Cabell, Jackson, Kanawha, Lincoln, Marion, Mingo, and Ohio counties next week.

Testing is available to everyone, including asymptomatic individuals.


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

# Free COVID-19 Testing

## Site details:

# coronavirus.wv.gov

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.



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

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

## **OUTBREAK REPORT**

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

Across the entire DCR system, there remain 18 active cases among employees, 13 of whom work at Mount Olive.

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

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

Meanwhile, Gov. Justice announced that the recent church-related outbreak of COVID-19 in Wyoming County is no longer considered active at this time.

There remain a total of seven active church-related outbreaks in six counties: Fayette, Harrison, Kanawha, Mingo, Nicholas, and Wayne counties.

Additionally, there are now 30 outbreaks in long-term care facilities across the state, down from 36 on Wednesday.

## **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 boasts the 2nd-best U.S. Census response rate in the country.

To date, 99.6 percent of West Virginians have been counted. This trails national leader Idaho by merely 0.1 percent.

For perspective, during the last Census in 2010, West Virginia's final response rate was only 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 \$18 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 6,600 applications have been submitted, with more than \$18 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?](https://grants.wv.gov/en/flexible-page?pageId=1424)

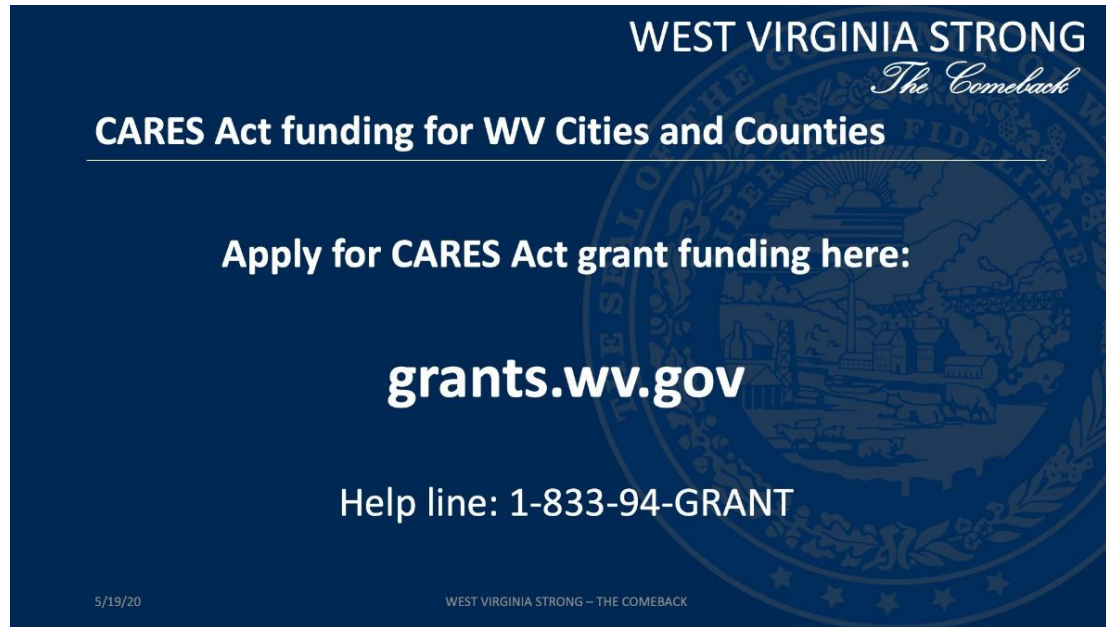
[pageId=1424](https://grants.wv.gov/en/flexible-page?pageId=1424))

## **CITIES/COUNTIES GRANT FUNDING: OVER \$112 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 \$112 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>).



(<https://www.flickr.com/photos/govjustice/albums/72157716021177856>)

## *Contact Information*

Jordan Damron, [jordan.l.damron@wv.gov](mailto:jordan.l.damron@wv.gov)