



The [statewide COVID-19 website](#) is a one stop shop that consolidates information from state agencies, and provides up-to-date information and guidance regarding COVID-19. DHS has also offered information on their website on [How and Where to Get Tested](#).

If you're not busy, please make a call, send a card, or write a letter to someone you know who lives alone or may need assistance.

Please, let them and your family know that you are thinking of them, and that we are here for each other.

Bless each of you during this difficult time of uncertainty and suffering. Take good care!

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## SafeVote Program Passes Committee

Yesterday, the [Milwaukee Common Council Committee on Judiciary and Legislation](#) met and approved a proposal from [Alderman Marina Dimitrijevic](#) and the Milwaukee Election Commission to implement the SafeVote program for the city. This plan would provide City of Milwaukee households with information about how to vote safely from home during the upcoming August and November elections.

Besides informational mailings, the plan includes:

- Libraries would serve as complementary outlets to assist those who want a physical absentee ballot application, don't have access to internet, need help navigating the MyVote website or need assistance scanning a photo ID.
- Additional absentee ballot drop-off sites would be created.
- Additional capacity would be added to the City's Unified Call Center to support incoming

questions.

- Revamped educational material around absentee voting would be created.
- Multiple, safe in-person voting opportunities for residents
- Convene a task force of members of the Milwaukee Health Department and other departments to again establish best practices for safe in-person voting and to pursue interdepartmental collaborations whenever possible.
- Purchase and provide recommended PPE to all election workers.
- Expand pre-election in-person absentee voting options for the August Primary (three sites, for two weeks prior to the primary)) and November General Election (eight sites, with three opening six weeks prior to the election, and an additional five opening three weeks prior).
- Re-establish the department's election workforce (a minimum of 1,000 for August; 2,000 for November) by providing assurances around voting site safety.
- Develop a plan for consolidating polling places to a number that would reduce the demand on election workers, but would not fall below 45 centers citywide, or three voting centers per aldermanic district.

[Download a copy of the proposal.](#) See attachments

## **Milwaukee County and the City of Milwaukee are Moving Forward towards Reopening**

On Friday, the City of Milwaukee [moved into Phase 3](#) of its reopening plan, bringing the City closer in line with the [current restrictions being observed at the County level](#) that took effect on May 22nd.

County Executive David Crowley announced that the [Milwaukee County Zoo will begin its own phased reopening](#) plan this Saturday, June 13th.

Milwaukee Public Schools has also begun its registration for [Milwaukee Recreation 2020](#), offering programs for people of all ages, in accordance with safety recommendations such as restricted class sizes, and the provision of protective equipment for instructors and participants.

This is welcome news for residents who have been staying safe at home over the last 3 months. However, a [recent poll conducted by the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association](#)

[of Commerce](#) (MMAC) shows that Wisconsinites are still in favor of a cautious reentry into public settings.

If you have questions about COVID-19 in our communities, safe ways to participate in public events, and updates on community guidelines, the Milwaukee Health Department has recently launched [ASKMHD](#) to help you get answers or put you in touch with the appropriate department.

## **All Levels of Government are Considering Policies to Address the Concerns of the Black Lives Matter Movement**

House Democrats, led by the Congressional Black Caucus, announced a bill including reforms to prosecute police misconduct. Among other reforms, the 136 page bill is intended to improve accountability and transparency for law enforcement departments by creating a National Police Misconduct Registry, provide structural reforms within the Department of Justice by granting the department's Civil Rights Division subpoena power, and ban no-knock warrants in drug cases. [Read more.](#)

Governor Evers has called upon the State Legislature to update "use of force" policies for local law enforcement by adopting [Assembly Bill 1012 / Senate Bill 892](#) which would standardize restrictions on "use of force" policies across the state and require the use of deadly force to be a last resort.

State Senator Van Wanggaard, who chairs the [Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety](#), declined to give this legislation a public hearing this past session and has rejected Governor Evers' recent call to take up the legislation, saying that "Assembly Bill 1012 and Senate Bill 892 were clearly written by liberal activists who have never served with law enforcement, and apparently never even talked or listened to them." Senator Wanggaard has said that he is working on an alternative that would change the way that officer-involved deaths are investigated. [Read more.](#)

The City of Milwaukee's Judiciary and Legislation Committee yesterday also [approved a resolution](#) directing the Department of Administration - Intergovernmental Relations Division to seek introduction and passage of State legislation ensuring greater accountability and transparency for police officers involved in homicides whether on- or off-duty. And Mayor Barrett [has announced the creation of a City Commission](#) on Police Accountability and Reform, to make changes to the Milwaukee Police Department's "use of force" policies and work with the Community Collaborative Committee to assess progress in implementing the recommendations of the community.

## **Number of Weekly Unemployment Insurance Claims is Declining**

For the 9th week in a row, the number of initial applications for Unemployment insurance has declined from a high of 116,129 to 22,835 as of May 24th, and weekly total claims have reduced from 338,838 to 301,058 over the month of May.

The Department of Workforce Development has been transferring and hiring additional staff to help address the current backlog of unpaid claims. DWD has temporarily assigned 44 external agency staff, 140 internal DWD staff, and hired 245 new staff to

the department. They have also contracted with vendors to provide additional call reception, currently those centers stand at:

- Benefit Call Center – 258 additional agents taking calls, with 500 total agents by 6/30/2020
- PUA Call Center – 30 agents taking calls, with 40 agents total the week of 6/08
- Claims Processing – 59 in training, 100 to be trained by 6/15/2020
- Adjudication – 94 in training, 200 to be trained by 6/29/2020

A new Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Hotline **608-318-7100** has been established to help with questions about the PUA program, which is designed to provide benefits to workers who would normally not qualify for traditional unemployment. The hotline is only available to take questions about PUA.

Approximately 144,000 individual claimants are still waiting for the DWD to make a determination for their case.

To begin the process of filing for unemployment, start at [DWD's Unemployment Benefits for Claimants](#) webpage, and click on “Apply for Benefits Online.”

If you do not qualify for standard unemployment, [Pandemic Unemployment Assistance](#) is meant to provide benefits to many of those who are not eligible for regular Wisconsin Unemployment Insurance.

For more information about this process see the [Unemployment FAQs](#) and the [Handbook for Claimants](#).

If you are suffering economic hardship at this time, there are more programs available to help afford or gain access to services. Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service has developed a text tool that can be used to access resources, ask questions, or share information with reporters. Send a text to **73224** with the following codes for more info:

Text 1 for food

Text 2 for mental health/violence

Text 3 for jobs/money/debt

Text 4 for housing

Text 5 for health/safety

Text 6 for self & community advocacy/civil rights

Text 7 for anything else or if you have info that you would like to share.

Governor Evers has established economic assistance programs for people who are currently facing hardship:

If you need help with paying the rent, the [Wisconsin Rental Assistance Program](#) can provide up to \$3,000 per household in direct financial assistance for owed rent and security deposits. Eligible applicants must be an adult Wisconsin resident with a household income at or below 80% of the county median income in the month of or

prior to the application date. Milwaukee County residents can contact the [Social Development Commission](#) at **414-326-2888**

The income restriction for the Emergency Food Assistance Program has also been increased to 300% of the federal poverty level to help Wisconsin families gain access to health foods. For more information, visit the [Hunger Task Force](#) or call **414-777-0483**

If you are a business owner, and your business has been affected, the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation has a webpage for [COVID-19 Business Insights and Relief Information](#) with information about local, state, and federal resources, such as the [Small Business 20/20 Program](#) for business with 20 or fewer employees, the [SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program](#) for businesses with fewer than 500 employees, and the the [We're All In initiative](#) to provide \$2,500 cash grants to assist small businesses with the costs of business interruption, health and safety improvements, wages and salaries, rent, mortgages, or inventory

## Milwaukee County Virtual Series on Understanding Medicare

The Milwaukee County Department on Aging will be hosting a Virtual Series titled Medicare 101. Each session will include an objective overview of the options and benefits offered through Medicare, including:

- Understanding the A, B, C, and D of Medicare
- How to enroll and free enrollment assistance
- Helping with Medicare costs
- Free Medicare counseling and legal assistance

Event Dates:

### **Wednesday, June 10**

1 - 2 p.m.

Hosted by Franklin Public Library

Meeting Link: <https://zoom.us/j/91902245489> Meeting ID: 919 0224 5489

To Dial in by Phone: (312) 626-6799 and use Access Code: 919 022 454 89#

### **Wednesday, June 24**

1 - 2 p.m.

Hosted by Milwaukee Public Library

Meeting Link: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/911166389>

To Dial in by Phone: (872) 240-3212 and use Access Code: 911-166-389#

### **Wednesday, August 5**

1 - 2 p.m.

Hosted by Wauwatosa Public Library

Meeting Link: <https://teams.microsoft.com/l/meetup-join/>

To Dial in by Phone: (414) 436-3530 and use Access Code: 561 924 898#

### **Wednesday, September 9**

1 - 2 p.m.

Hosted by Milwaukee Public Library

Meeting Link: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/952807189>

To Dial in by Phone: (646) 749-3112 and use Access Code: 952-807-189#

If you have any questions concerning the event, please visit the [Milwaukee County Department on Aging Medicare 101 website](#) or their [Facebook page](#).

## **Wisconsin Department of Corrections Increases COVID-19 Testing at Two Facilities**

As of May 7, 20 individuals under the care of the Wisconsin Department of Corrections have tested positive for COVID-19. Of those 20 cases, 14 have fully recovered. The greatest numbers of cases have been identified at Felmers O. Chaney Correctional Center (FCCC) and Marshall E. Sherrer Correctional Center (MSCC).

On May 12th, these two sites will be the first facilities to undergo DOC's expansive testing plan to broadly test staff and persons under care through the institutions. All persons under care and staff at these facilities will be tested. This increase may result in an increase in the number of identified positive cases, but will help the Department identify asymptomatic carriers and reduce the spread within their system. [Read more](#)

## **Potential Changes to Redistricting Rules**

Last Wednesday, former Republican Assembly Speaker Scott Jensen filed a request to change state court rules related to redistricting, the process of drawing the boundaries for the political districts of a region.

Since the last redistricting in 2011, when Republicans controlled both chambers of the Legislature and the Governor's office, Wisconsin has been the subject of multiple lawsuits seeking to overturn the maps as a "political gerrymander." Which would be when the maps are drawn to with the intention of disadvantaging a group of people based on their political preferences.

The U.S. Supreme Court ultimately decided that it would not be able to rule on whether states engage in this practice, claiming that they could not determine definitively when such intentions were presented by a set of maps, and leaving the decisions about that whether political gerrymandering has happened to state courts.

When Governor Evers won his election in 2018, it meant that once again, no single party would be in control of the process for 2021, the next time that maps will be drawn. When there is disagreement in Wisconsin about the maps, the responsibility to resolve the dispute falls on the courts.

[The motion](#) filed by Scott Jensen and the Wisconsin Institute for Law and Liberty seeks to create new rules to ensure that the Wisconsin Supreme Court, rather than a federal court, decides any potential redistricting litigation.

In 2001, the Wisconsin Supreme Court said that it should normally handle redistricting litigation, but that it would defer to federal courts because at the time there were no

rules for such a process in the Wisconsin courts. Scott Jensen is calling on the court to produce such rules before the next round of redistricting begins, which is believed to give the Republicans a favorable audience when the arguments are heard over the disputed maps. Should the case come to them, the balance of the court will be 4 conservatives and 3 liberals.

[Read more](#)

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