

Thursday, March 25, 2021
COVID-19 Command Center
Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency

Situation Update

The Command Center Situation Report is published weekly. The next report will be published on Thursday, 4/1/21.



Today the Baker-Polito Administration made several important announcements including a new program to provide in-home vaccinations to homebound individuals, \$100 million in funding for several communities hit hard by COVID-19, and a modest increase in first dose vaccine this week. (See below for details.)

In This Week's Report:

- Latest Data: Public Health & Vaccine Data Update
- Week in Review: Key State Actions
 - Homebound Vaccination Program Launching 3/29
 - \$100 Million in Aid for Disproportionately Impacted Communities
 - \$14 Million + in Grants Awarded Businesses for COVID Relief
 - TDI Local COVID-19 Emergency Grants Awarded to Support Gateway City Businesses
 - Phase 4 Updated Guidance for Health & Human Service Providers
 - Health Connector to Provide New, Additional Financial Help for Health Insurance Premiums
 - DTA Tool to Connect Low Income Households with Local Produce
 - DPH, Emergency Management, and Disaster Recovery Updates
 - Holyoke and Chelsea Soldiers' Homes Weekly Update

Helpful Links:

- [COVID-19 Vaccine in Massachusetts](#)
- [Public Messaging Resources for Municipalities & Businesses](#)
- [Mass.gov/findfoodhelp](#)
- [Unemployment & COVID-19](#)
- [Reopening Massachusetts](#)
- [Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency](#)
- [COVID-19 Cost Eligibility and Tracking Guidance](#)



Situation in Numbers

Massachusetts current as of 3/25

586,298 Total Confirmed Cases ([click here for more information](#))

16,671 Deaths among confirmed cases

18,312,783 tests for the virus conducted to date by MA State Public Health Laboratory, hospitals, and commercial laboratories.

United States Last Updated 3/25

Case numbers are updated regularly at noon. Saturday/Sunday reports are preliminary and have not been confirmed with state/territorial health departments.

Total Cases Reported to CDC:

29,834,734 Total Cases

542,584 Deaths

57 Jurisdictions Reporting Cases (50 states, D.C., Puerto Rico, Guam, Northern Marianas, Marshall Islands, American Samoa, and US V.I.)

Social Distancing Basics:

- ✓ Stay Home
- ✓ Call/Facetime/online chat with friends and loved ones.

If you go out for essential needs:

- ✓ Avoid crowds
- ✓ Stay 6 feet away from others
- ✓ Don't shake hands or hug
- ✓ Wear a face covering or mask.

Latest Data: COVID-19 Public Health Update

Massachusetts Department of Public Health | COVID-19 Dashboard

Today at a Glance

Released on: March 25, 2021
Data as of: March 24, 2021
Caution: recent data may be incomplete

Navigation	Cases	Testing	Hospitalizations	Deaths
<p>Today's Overview</p> <p>Overview Trends</p> <p>COVID-19 Cases</p> <p>COVID-19 Testing</p> <p>Hospitalization</p> <p>COVID-19 Deaths</p> <p>Higher Ed & LTCF</p> <p>Patient Breakdown</p> <p>City and Town</p> <p>Resources</p> <p>Data Archive</p>	<p>Confirmed Cases</p> <p>Today there were 2,274 new, confirmed cases reported bringing the total to 586,298 total confirmed cases.</p> <p>Probable Cases</p> <p>Today, there were 136 new, probable cases reported bringing the total to 35,928 total probable cases.</p> <p>Estimated Active Cases</p> <p>There are an estimated 28,078 currently active COVID-19 cases.</p> <div style="margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Cases by age during the last two weeks <small>*Data updated weekly</small></p> </div>	<p>Tests Reported</p> <p>There were 111,753 new COVID-19 molecular tests reported, bringing the cumulative total to 18,312,783 tests.</p> <p>Turn Around Time</p> <p>The current turn around time for a molecular test is 1.27 days.</p> <p>Percent Positivity</p> <p>The 7-day average of percent positivity is 2.22%.</p>	<p>Hospitalizations</p> <p>There are 631 patients hospitalized for COVID-19.</p> <p>ICU & Intubated Patients</p> <p>There are 137 patients in Intensive Care Units (ICU) and 87 patients are intubated.</p> <p>Average Age of Patients</p> <p>The average age of patients who were hospitalized for COVID-19 was 63 years old.</p>	<p>Confirmed Deaths</p> <p>There were 39 new, confirmed deaths reported. There have been 16,671 confirmed deaths in total.</p> <p>Probable Deaths</p> <p>There were 1 new, probable deaths reported. There have been 339 probable deaths in total.</p>

For details on the definitions of each indicator hover over the box or graph. All data included in this dashboard are preliminary and subject to change. Data Sources: COVID-19 Data provided by the Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences and the Registry of Vital Records and Statistics; COVID-19 Hospitalization Data provided by the MDPH survey of hospitals (hospital survey data are self-reported); Created by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences, Office of Integrated Surveillance and Informatics Services.

Massachusetts Department of Public Health | COVID-19 Dashboard

Trends: 7-day Averages Over Time

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<p>Today's Overview</p> <p>Overview Trends</p> <p>COVID-19 Cases</p> <p>COVID-19 Testing</p> <p>Hospitalization</p> <p>COVID-19 Deaths</p> <p>Higher Ed & LTCF</p> <p>Patient Breakdown</p> <p>City and Town</p> <p>Resources</p> <p>Data Archive</p>	<p>7-day average of COVID-19 confirmed cases</p> <p>The lowest observed value was 156.7 on 7/4/2020.</p>	<p>7-day weighted average percent positivity</p> <p>The lowest observed value was 0.8% on 9/21/2020.</p>	<p>7-day average of hospitalizations</p> <p>The lowest observed value was 155.3 on 8/26/2020.</p>	<p>7-day average of confirmed deaths</p> <p>The lowest observed value was 3.7 on 9/9/2020.</p>

Date Filter

3/1/2020 3/24/2021

For details on the definitions of each indicator please see the corresponding tab for that indicator. All data included in this dashboard are preliminary and subject to change. Data Sources: COVID-19 Data provided by the Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences and the Registry of Vital Records and Statistics; Created by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Sciences, Office of Integrated Surveillance and Informatics Services.

COVID-19 RESPONSE COMMAND CENTER
WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT

Weekly Public Health Report:

The Command Center released the [Weekly Public Health Report, with town by town information, including the weekly listing of city and town risk levels](#) on Thursday, 3/25. The report also includes granular information on cases by county, biweekly testing rates, contact tracing information (including active COVID cluster information by Exposure Setting Type), hospitalization data, race and ethnicity data, information about cases in long term care facilities, and PPE distribution data.

Vaccine Update: For a more detailed weekly breakdown, [visit the MA COVID-19 Vaccination Data webpage](#).

	3/19	3/20	3/21	3/22	3/23	3/24	3/25
DOSES SHIPPED							
Doses Shipped to MA Providers (MIIS)*	2,396,925	2,404,825	2,404,825	2,404,825	2,562,455	2,564,795	2,716,765
Doses Shipped to Pharmacies and Directly by the Federal Government - Including FPPP Providers (Tiberius)	824,595	824,595	828,105	831,405	893,285	953,075	1,026,295
Grand Total Shipped to MA	3,221,520	3,229,420	3,232,930	3,236,230	3,455,740	3,517,870	3,743,060
DOSES ADMINISTERED (MIIS)*							
1st Moderna or Pfizer Doses Administered # of people with at least one dose	1,780,967	1,818,293	1,849,997	1,866,948	1,905,957	1,942,416	1,985,856
2nd Moderna or Pfizer Doses Administered # of people fully vaccinated	955,134	974,951	997,220	1,012,342	1,035,741	1,060,252	1,087,118
Janssen (J&J) Doses Administered (MIIS) # of people fully vaccinated	68,834	70,216	72,548	73,057	74,888	76,481	78,263
Grand Total Doses Administered (MIIS)	2,804,935	2,863,460	2,919,765	2,952,347	3,016,586	3,079,149	3,151,237
Grand Total Fully Vaccinated People with Existing COVID-19 Vaccines**	1,023,968	1,045,167	1,069,768	1,085,399	1,110,629	1,136,733	1,165,381
% of Total Doses Shipped That Have Been Reported as Administered	87.1%	88.7%	90.3%	91.2%	87.3%	87.5%	84.2%

*Data from the Massachusetts Immunization Information System (MIIS) are as of midnight the night before.

**Fully vaccinated people have 2 doses of Moderna or Pfizer vaccine or 1 dose of Janssen (J&J) vaccine

MA Dose Allocation Update:

This week, Massachusetts received a modest increase in supply of first doses, for a total of 172,000. This includes 7,900 doses of J&J vaccine.

In total, the Commonwealth received 330,000 first and second doses as part of the state allocation. These figures do not include doses provided directly from the federal government to the Federal Retail Pharmacy Program or to Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC).

This week, first doses and second dose state allocations (total doses), were distributed among providers as follows:

- Health systems and health care providers (excluding community health centers): 115,120
- Mass vaccination locations: 109,750
- Regional Collaboratives and Local Boards of Health: 55,850
- Community Health Centers: 28,820
- Retail pharmacies (non-CVS) state allocation: 10,350
- Mobile Clinics supporting long-term care facilities, congregate care, affordable/low-income senior housing, and homebound individuals: 9,800

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Weekly allocations are subject to change based on federal availability, demand from providers, and obligations to meet second doses. Providers have 10 days to use their doses and must meet specific performance thresholds.

The Administration has also been informed that the federal government will send a one-time allocation of 40,800 doses of J&J vaccine to the Commonwealth next week as well as a one-time allocation of 20,000 Pfizer first doses.

Federal Doses:

In addition to the state allocation, the federal government distributes vaccines to CVS Health sites as part of the Federal Retail Pharmacy Partnership as well as to certain Massachusetts federally qualified community health centers. These quantities fluctuate on a weekly basis and are not counted as part of the state's weekly allocation.

This week, 115,800 first and second doses were allocated to the retail pharmacy program.

15 FQHCs received 24,570 doses directly from the Federal Government.

Week in Review: State Actions

Homebound Vaccination Program Launching March 29:

Beginning March 29, the Administration will launch a homebound vaccination program to provide in-home vaccinations to individuals who cannot leave their homes, even with supports, to get to a COVID-19 vaccine appointment.

In-home vaccinations will be available to homebound individuals who:

- Have considerable difficulty and/or require significant support to leave the home for medical appointments
- Require an ambulance or two-person assistance to leave the home
- Are not able to leave home for medical appointments under normal circumstances.



Kelli Barrieau (left), vice president of clinical operations for Commonwealth Care Alliance, joined Governor Baker and Secretary Sudders to announce a new Homebound Vaccination Program.

168 local Boards of Health (representing about 40% of Massachusetts' population) will conduct homebound vaccination program for their community residents while homebound residents of 183 municipalities (representing 60% of Massachusetts' population) will receive vaccines through Commonwealth Care Alliance (CCA). CCA is a Massachusetts-based not-for-profit, community-based healthcare organization dedicated to improving care for individuals who are dually eligible for MassHealth (Medicaid) and Medicare with complex medical, behavioral health and social needs, including those with disabilities.

Health care providers, Aging Services Access Points (ASAP), Local Boards of Health, Councils on Aging (COAs) and other community organizations will be connecting individuals to the homebound program. In addition, homebound individuals or their loved ones can **call 1-833-983-0485** to register. The registration phone line is

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open Monday through Friday from 9 AM to 5 PM and has representatives who speak English and Spanish, as well as translation services available in 100+ languages.

\$100 Million in Aid for Disproportionately Impacted Communities:

The Administration announced today that a total of \$100 million in aid will be distributed to Chelsea, Everett, Methuen, and Randolph, four communities which were hit hardest by COVID-19 but are expected to receive disproportionately smaller amounts of federal funding through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. These four municipalities will be able to use this \$100 million in direct aid to support costs related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including direct response efforts, addressing negative economic impacts, replacing revenue lost during the pandemic, making investments in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure, as well as other eligible expenditures.



Based on preliminary estimates published by US House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Massachusetts is expected to receive a total of approximately \$7.9 billion in direct aid through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, including \$3.4 billion to counties, cities, and towns in Massachusetts. A portion of this \$3.4 billion is being allocated to municipalities based on the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program formula, while assistance to other communities is being allocated on a per-capita basis. The use of these two different allocation formulas creates disparities in distributions among cities and towns, and Chelsea, Everett, Methuen, and Randolph are the four designated hardest hit communities with disproportionately smaller levels of federal funding compared to other hardest hit communities.

The commitment announced today by the Administration includes distributing \$100 million to address disparities in funding allocations among these four hardest hit communities after the US Treasury publishes final payment figures in the coming weeks. The Administration will work with the Legislature to use existing or future sources of federal revenue to fund this commitment.

More Than \$14 Million in Grants Awarded to 295 Additional Businesses for COVID Relief:

Today, the Administration announced approximately \$14.6 million in awards for 295 additional businesses in the eleventh round of COVID relief grants administered by the Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation (MGCC). As in prior rounds, each grant recipient meets sector or demographic priorities set for the grant programs administered by MGCC.

With the addition of this round of grants, the Administration has awarded almost \$648 million in direct financial support to 14,351 businesses across the Commonwealth. Grants for this round were awarded to 107 minority-owned, and 107 woman-owned, businesses; 64 grantees are in the restaurant sector, 91 recipients are located in Gateway Cities, and 104 businesses have not received any prior aid.

Acknowledging the importance of restaurants and independent retailers to communities across Massachusetts, business owners of multiple locations that met demographic and sector priorities are receiving awards to support additional locations.

Additionally, MGCC this week announced the availability of funding to support non-profits that offer [technical assistance](#) designed to help existing small businesses recover and thrive post COVID-19, as well as [community](#)

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[development financial institutions](#) that will back the recovery, resiliency and growth of small businesses in underserved communities through matching capital.

TDI Local COVID-19 Emergency Grants Awarded to Support Gateway City Businesses:

Today, the Administration announced \$510,000 in funding for 10 organizations to provide relief for small businesses in Gateway Cities during the COVID-19 public health crisis.

Through MassDevelopment's [Transformative Development Initiative \(TDI\)](#) Local COVID-19 Emergency Grants program, developed in response to needs faced by small businesses during the pandemic, \$60,000 block grants will be awarded to fiscal agents in TDI districts in Chelsea, Chicopee, Fall River, Fitchburg, Lawrence, Springfield, and Worcester (Main South), and \$30,000 block grants will be awarded to fiscal agents in the areas of Attleboro, Barnstable, and Brockton served by TDI. Recipients can re-grant funds directly to small businesses to cover rent, payroll, or other business expenses, or create small-business stabilization programs specific to their city.



MassDevelopment's Transformative Development Initiative works with cross-sector partnerships in targeted commercial districts in Gateway Cities to engage community members, implement local economic development initiatives, and spur further public and private investment. During the program's first five years, MassDevelopment has invested \$18 million in TDI districts through tools such as technical assistance, real estate investments, grant programs, and fellows who work in the districts. That investment has directly influenced over \$78.7 million in public and private investments in the districts and assisted an additional \$84 million.

Created in 2017, [TDI Local](#) is a small-business grants program that supports local market development by fostering business, resident, and property-owner engagement, building community identity, and improving the public realm in TDI districts. In 2020, MassDevelopment redirected resources from the program budget to develop TDI Local COVID-19 Emergency Grants as a direct response to the emergency faced by Gateway City small businesses impacted by COVID-19-related closures or loss of business.

Today's awards mark the second round of the TDI Local COVID-19 Emergency Grants program since the start of the pandemic. In April 2020, the agency awarded \$545,000 in funding to 10 organizations; that funding assisted 192 small businesses, including 72 women-owned businesses and 94 minority-owned businesses, of which more than 180 are still operating.

MassDevelopment is currently accepting applications from organizations for a new [competitive round](#) of TDI Local; applications will be accepted until April 7, 2021.

Phase 4 Updated Guidance Released for Health Care & Human Service Providers:

As Massachusetts begins Phase 4, this week the Executive Office of Health and Human Services and respective agencies released a series of new guidance documents for health care and human service providers that supports the safe reopening of programs and provider sites and protects workers, patients, families, and the public.

Additionally, the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Department of Public Health (DPH), and Executive Office of Elder Affairs (EOEA) recently released updated guidance to long-term care facilities (nursing and rest homes), Assisted Living Residences (ALRs), and congregate care settings in response to the high rates of residents and staff that are now vaccinated against COVID-19 in these settings. These changes align with recent

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guidance published by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

[CLICK HERE for a full list of updated guidance to providers.](#)

Health Connector to Provide New, Additional Financial Help for Health Insurance Premiums:

The Massachusetts Health Connector will be able to provide hundreds of thousands of people with new and increased help paying for their health insurance premiums as a result of the recently enacted American Rescue Plan, starting for May coverage.



The new law will make federal premium subsidies, known as Advance Premium Tax Credits, more generous in two ways: It will increase them for many of the Massachusetts residents who already receive them, and it will make federal premium subsidies available to more people who have never qualified before.

Most of the Health Connector's 270,000 current members, along with new enrollees, will experience lower health premiums for 2021 and 2022 under the new law. Current members who are in ConnectorCare or who receive Advance Premium Tax Credits to reduce their premiums will see even lower premiums starting with their May premium payment. Many other people, both Health Connector members and those who don't currently purchase through the Health Connector, who previously did not get help paying their premiums will become newly eligible for subsidies and can start to access lower premiums during May, for June coverage.

The changes in federal premium subsidies create new savings for many people who are currently in Health Connector coverage or considering enrolling in coverage. For people who currently do not have health insurance and need coverage, the Health Connector is maintaining an extended Open Enrollment period through July 23. Current members and new applicants can find more information on the [Health Connector's website](#).

DTA Launches New Tool to Connect Low Income Households with Local Produce:

The Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) launched a new tool to help individuals and households who receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits find open Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) farm vendor locations near them and safe shopping options: [DTAFinder.com](#).



HIP puts money back on an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card when people use SNAP to buy healthy, local fruits and vegetables from HIP farm vendors, up to \$40-\$80 each month. Vendors include participating farmers' markets, farm stands, mobile markets, and community supported agriculture programs (CSAs).

DTA Finder is an interactive map that allows households to search for up-to-date HIP locations. The tool is mobile friendly and available in 5 languages, including Portuguese, Chinese, Spanish and Vietnamese.

Some of the main features on DTAFinder.com include:

- Search a location's "open" status by month, specific day of the week or "open today"
- Search locations by city, county, or your current location
- Search locations by order options, such as curbside pickup or delivery
- View the names of HIP vendors who sell at a farmers' market -- not all vendors at farmers' markets process HIP
- See information about the HIP vendor (description, contact info, products, picture)

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- Get directions to HIP locations using Google Maps

For more information on HIP and step-by-step instructions on how to use HIP, visit [Mass.gov/HIP](https://www.mass.gov/HIP). Tutorial videos on how to use DTA Finder on a mobile device and desktop computer are available on DTA's [YouTube channel](#).

This tool builds on the Administration's efforts to increase access to healthy, local food and strengthen our food system during the COVID-19 pandemic and into the long-term. The Administration [invested \\$5 million in additional funds](#) to expand HIP last spring, allowing DTA, in collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources and the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, to enroll 39 new HIP vendors into the program.

New farm vendors were selected based on their ability to respond to the needs of populations and communities most significantly impacted by COVID-19, including seniors and communities of color, and those that serve areas designated as food deserts. The majority of [new vendors](#) are local, small-scale farmers who live in or have close ties to the communities and populations they intend to serve. Once fully onboard these vendors will create 81 new access points across the Commonwealth, 16 in Gateway Cities, and 11 in new cities not previously served by the program.

Households who do not receive [SNAP benefits](#) are encouraged to check their eligibility and [apply online](#) or over the phone at (877) 382-2363. SNAP benefits received on behalf of others (e.g., your citizen child) are not considered in the public charge test. During the public health emergency, families are receiving additional monthly SNAP payments to bring them up to the maximum benefit level for their household size, which have [temporarily been increased by 15%](#). That is \$430 a month for a household of two and \$782 a month for a household of four.

Important Updates

COVID-19 Cases in Long-Term Care (LTC) Facilities (as of 3/25)	
Residents/Healthcare Workers of LTC Facilities	34,822
LTC Facilities Reporting at Least One Case of COVID-19	424
Deaths Reported in LTC Facilities	8,809

A graphic for the Nursing Home Family Resource Line. It features a smartphone icon with the number 617-660-5399. The text reads: NURSING HOME FAMILY RESOURCE LINE 617-660-5399. At the bottom, it says 'CALL US MONDAY THRU FRIDAY FROM 9AM-5PM' and includes the Massachusetts State Seal.

Department of Public Health Updates:

Please share this brief survey to inform the next phase of our state campaign.

Visit the [survey link](#) to help us:

- Measure changes in vaccine hesitancy
 - Capture campaign awareness/recognition
 - Test preferred messaging for priority communities
-
- DPH has been working with 'trusted sources' to promote COVID vaccination via video. The latest comes from Dr. Lloyd Fisher, president of the MA Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and his daughter who

A graphic with a blue background. The text reads: Trust the FACTS Get the VAX. There are icons for an information symbol, a face mask, and a syringe.

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took part in vaccine trials. They are helping us amplify the “Trust the Facts, Get the Vax” message. See the video here: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PiwXq1L0dG9yyzSIzbfGG34nvITvuNa_/view?usp=drivesdk

- DPH issued the [Weekly COVID-19 Vaccine Provider Bulletin](#), for the week of 3/21.
- DPH Epidemiology Line handled 392 COVID-19 calls and 59 non-COVID-19 calls for a total of 451 calls from 3/15 through 3/21.
- As of 3/23, the [Academic Public Health Volunteer Corps](#) has 303 volunteers supporting 43 local boards of health.
- MA211 received 5,453 calls from Monday 3/15 through Sunday 3/21 for a new total of 267,893. These numbers do not reflect calls to the new appointment assistance call centers.
- All HMCC Regions are at Tier 2 status, in accordance with the [DPH COVID-19 Resurgence Planning and Response Guidance for Acute Care Hospitals](#). DPH and the COVID-19 Command Center will continue to work closely with all regions to monitor hospital capacity statewide.
- For the date range of 3/12 – 3/18, 95 of 96 Massachusetts hospitals were 100% compliant in their COVID-19 data submissions to the DPH WebEOC portal which is submitted to the federal HHS Protect portal daily.
- There are currently 10 Rapid Response Teams, comprised of nursing staff, deployed to nursing homes across the Commonwealth. Teams are also administering second doses of Pfizer vaccine to nursing and rest home residents and vaccinating at nursing homes that have a high number of residents that are unvaccinated.

Emergency Management and Disaster Recovery Updates:

Mass Care

- 2 state contracted isolation/recovery hotels in the communities of Everett and Pittsfield continue to receive client placements: 54 individuals are currently housed in the program.
 - Top 5 referring cities:
 - Boston (398)
 - Worcester (194)
 - Springfield (175)
 - Quincy (123)
 - Cambridge (118)
 - To date, a total of 2,223 residents have been placed in these hotels for safe isolation and recovery, an increase of 41 since last week.

Community Food Box Program Update 3/19-3/25:

MEMA is partnering with the Salvation Army, and a vendor, to bring in shelf-stable food boxes each week to support communities in their effort to deliver food to individuals and families in quarantine and isolation who require assistance accessing food. Each week MEMA’s warehouse receives a delivery of shelf-stable food boxes. Distribution of food boxes is coordinated between MEMA and communities in need via a request through WebEOC. The table below reflects the current food box inventory, and number of food boxes distributed to communities during the weekly reporting period (data is updated every Friday).

Total Number of Food Boxes in MEMA’s Inventory	Total Number of Food Boxes Distributed to One or More Local Communities During the Reporting Period	Total Number of Communities that Received Food Boxes During the Reporting Period
2,731	216	2

Logistics (including Personal Protective Equipment and Supplies)

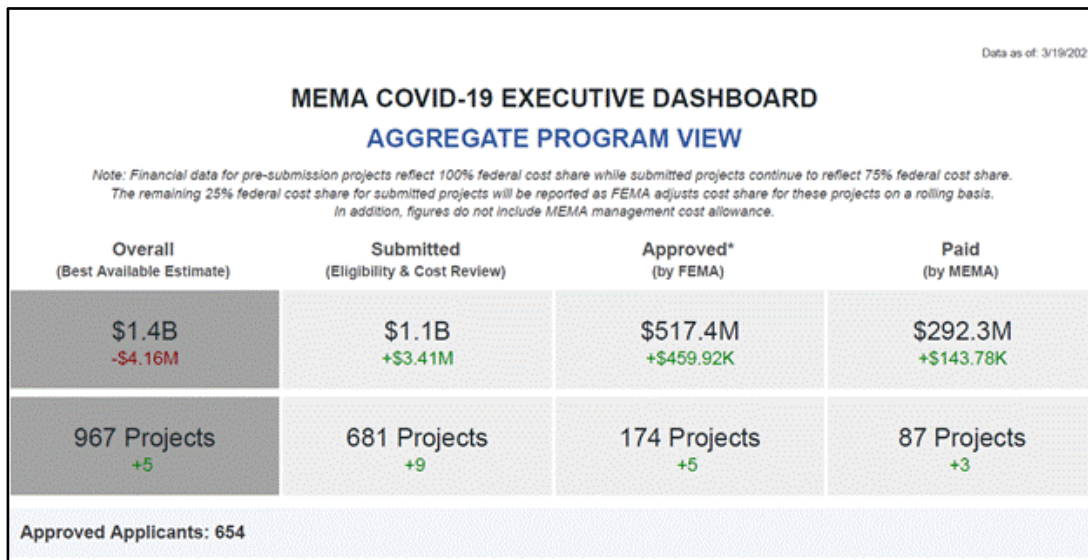
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- 20 orders prepared for pickup or delivery from the MEMA Statewide Logistics Warehouse from 3/19-3/25
- 130,000 KN95 masks were distributed to five Stop the Spread Sites on 3/19 and 3/22 (2 in Framingham, 1 each in Lynn, New Bedford, and Revere)
- DPH coordinated 15 deliveries to health care entities on Tuesday (3/23) (15 BinaxNOW kits); 18 deliveries were made on Thursday (3/25) (2 testing supplies, 13 BinaxNOW kits, 1 vaccine supplies and 2 therapeutic) and 9 deliveries have been scheduled for Friday (3/26) (1 PPE, 7 BinaxNOW kits and 1 therapeutic).

Disaster Recovery

On March 27, 2020, the President [declared](#) a Major Disaster Declaration for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts related to the COVID-19 pandemic response. Through this declaration, federal aid will be made available to cities and towns, state agencies, and certain non-profits in all Massachusetts counties to help pay for emergency protective measures (response costs) related to the COVID-19 pandemic. MEMA’s Recovery Unit has developed a [webpage](#) with information and guidance on, but not limited to, disaster declaration, eligibility criteria, and the application process. Highlights from the Disaster Recovery process include the following:



- FEMA Requests for Public Assistance (RPA): 664 (+1)
- Technical Assistance Requests: 518 (+2)
- Implementing coordinated regional approach to follow-up on all FEMA applications with outstanding Requests for Information (RFI)
- Continuing to schedule meetings with entities involved in regional COVID-19 vaccination sites to ensure applicants are aware of FEMA Public Assistance guidance
- New project obligations (16): \$34,547,367.20
- FEMA released [interim guidance](#) on how the Funeral Assistance Program under FEMA’s Other Needs Assistance will be implemented. The program is expected to go live in early April.
- Together with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Small Business Administration (SBA), and the Economic Development Administration (EDA), MEMA held a webinar last week for stakeholders in rural Massachusetts. The webinar highlighted economic recovery programs related to the COVID pandemic and updates to existing recovery programs from the new administration.

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Holyoke Soldiers' Home Weekly Update (current as of 3/23/21)

- The Soldiers' Home in Holyoke is in the midst of a search for a qualified permanent Superintendent, and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services is working with an executive search firm to find qualified candidates. The final candidates are being interviewed this month and will need Board of Trustee approval.
- The Baker-Polito Administration is moving forward on the expedited capital project to plan for the future of the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke, and the next step is passage of the [\\$400 million bond bill](#) which would provide capital authorization for the major project to reconstruct the long-term care facility at the Holyoke Soldiers' Home. Secretary of Veterans' Services Cheryl Lussier Poppe and EOHHS Assistant Secretary for Administration and Finance Alda Rego testified before the Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight in support of the bond bill last week, and it has since been reported favorably out of this committee.
 - The Commonwealth has been making capital investments to address the short and long-term needs of the Home, including a short-term Refresh Project, a \$6 million refresh of units to significantly improve infection control for the residents and staff, and this longer-term Rapid Planning Capital Project (www.mass.gov/HolyokeSHProject) for a future Soldiers' Home in Holyoke.
 - This bond bill is the next step of the expedited capital project, following the recommendations laid out in the [needs assessment report](#) that was released on Veterans Day, following the [Rapid Planning Phase](#). Payette Associates is the design firm leading the design and planning phase, building on the evaluation they previously completed, and developing a full project scope, refining the plan, confirming the budget, timelines, and ensuring conformity with the regulatory process. To meet the VA State Home Construction Grant's April 15, 2021 deadline, the bond bill must be enacted by mid-March, with a terms bill filed and enacted soon afterwards. The design development phase must be completed by August 1, 2021 to be eligible for this cycle of the grant program.
- The Soldiers' Home in Holyoke expanded in-person visitation hours into the evening on Wednesdays, now offering slots Tuesday – Saturday, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. and Wednesdays 9:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
 - The Home re-opened in-person visitation for veteran residents and their loved ones, starting February 10, 2021, and since then has hosted 485 visitors.
 - The Home is implementing updated guidance from DPH to ensure the safety and wellbeing of residents, staff, and those visiting. All visitors are screened and required to wear PPE and social distance, and negative test results are strongly encouraged before visiting. There is designated visitation space at each Home, and high touch surfaces are sanitized after each visit.
 - At least 24 slots will be offered each day, and visits are scheduled for at least 45 minutes. Visits can be scheduled by calling the Family Line at 413-552-4764. 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
 - The Soldiers' Home in Holyoke will also continue to offer and support virtual visitation. The Family Line is available for ad hoc updates with support from social work and clinical staff. Families can also request updates via email at CommunicationsMailbox-HLY@Mass.gov.
 - Note: The Soldiers' Home can only share medical information about a resident with the authorized health care proxy on file.
- The Soldiers' Home in Holyoke hosted 3 onsite vaccination clinics, the last on February 9. The first and second vaccination clinics were held on December 29 and January 19. Following the completion of the vaccination clinics:
 - 117 veteran residents and 220 staff have received both doses.
 - 1 veteran resident and 10 staff have received their first dose.
 - The Home is strongly encouraging all staff to receive the vaccine. On top of the efforts to provide educational information about the COVID-19 vaccine, including COVID-19 vaccine FAQ sheets, and vaccine informational forums with clinical staff, individuals who had not been

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vaccinated received individual outreach to provide education and encourage vaccination. All educational materials are available in both English and Spanish.

- Phase III of the Refresh Project continues on the 4th Floor. The Refresh Project is an important infection control initiative to improve the home in the immediate term for residents and staff.
- The Soldiers' Home continues to work with Home Base, a veteran support organization that is a partnership of the Red Sox Foundation and Massachusetts General Hospital, to help improve the quality of life, increase psychosocial interventions to address isolation during the pandemic. Home Base has linked us to interactive virtual concerts provided by professional and amateur volunteers, featuring musical performances and conversation between the Veterans and musicians. The concerts occur every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon. The team at Home Base is working with Social Work, Recreation and Nursing to provide other opportunities for virtual activities. Home Base has extended their free veteran counseling offerings to our Soldier's Home families and staff.
- The Soldiers' Home in Holyoke is taking every precaution to mitigate COVID-19 entering and spreading at the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke. Based on guidance from DPH, and in consultation with infection control experts, the Home is continuing mandatory 2 times per week testing for all staff and residents. Increased testing frequency will allow us to detect COVID-19 early and will continue.
- In addition to mandatory testing at state-operated 24/7 facilities, daily symptom checking and routine staff surveillance testing are important tools to protect staff, residents and visitors and will remain in place until such time there is a medical breakthrough or widespread vaccination for COVID 19. Staff who are not feeling well are instructed not to come to work and to contact their health care provider. If staff show any signs of COVID-symptoms, they are required to self-quarantine at home, per CDC guidance for health care workers.
- The Soldiers' Home in Holyoke has been intently focused on following infection control procedures and maintaining best practices for the safety of veteran residents and staff. All veteran residents' health is being monitored and retesting is being conducted for veterans both on- and off-site as clinically appropriate. The Soldiers' Home's medical team is making all clinical decisions following [the latest CDC guidance](#), which continues to evolve as the medical community learns more about this new virus.
- The Soldiers' Home leadership is committed to ensuring the safety of the Veteran residents and restoring the Home to its rightful place that treats them with dignity, honor, and respect, and continues to rebuild staff and leadership.
- In June, the Baker-Polito Administration released the independent report ordered by Governor Baker to investigate the COVID-19 outbreak at Holyoke Soldiers' Home, and announced a series of reforms to strengthen its governance and oversight of the Home, improving staffing processes, providing quality care for our Veterans, and planning for significant capital improvements.
- The status of all residents as of March 23 is as follows:
 - Status:
 - 0 veteran residents are positive and not clinically recovered
 - 3 veteran residents are negative
 - 43 veteran residents have a pending test. Please note that all veteran residents and staff are now being tested twice weekly, which will increase the number of pending tests.
 - 71 veteran residents have been determined clinically recovered
 - 0 veteran residents have refused testing
 - Resident locations:
 - 112 veteran residents are onsite
 - 5 veteran residents are receiving acute care offsite
 - Since March 1, 2020, there have been 77 deaths of veteran residents who tested positive
- Following the most recent staff surveillance testing
 - 0 are positive
 - All others who previously tested positive are clinically recovered

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Chelsea Soldiers' Home Weekly Update (current as of 3/23/21)

- The Soldiers' Home in Chelsea has re-opened in-person visitation for veteran residents and their loved ones, starting February 10, 2021, and has since hosted 175 in-person visits with veterans.
- Visitation is offered 7 days a week 9 AM to 7:30 PM. The Home is implementing updated guidance from DPH to ensure the safety and wellbeing of residents, staff, and those visiting. All visitors are screened and required to wear PPE and social distance, and negative test results are strongly encouraged before visiting. There is designated visitation space at each Home, and high touch surfaces are sanitized after each visit.
 - Eight visitation slots will be offered each day, and visits will be scheduled for at least 45 minutes long.
 - The Soldiers' Home in Chelsea also continues to offer and support virtual visitation.
 - Families can request updates on their loved ones by contacting their assigned social worker, or emailing the Home at CSH@mass.gov. Medical information can only be shared with an authorized health care proxy.
- The Soldiers' Home in Chelsea hosted 3 onsite vaccination clinics, the last on February 9. The first and second vaccination clinics were held on December 29 and 30, and January 19 and 20. Following the completion of the onsite vaccination clinics:
 - 159 residents and 208 staff have received both doses
 - 6 veteran residents and 67 staff have received their first dose.
- The Home remains vigilant in its infection control, including enhanced precautions throughout the facility and strict infection control protocols to keep veteran residents and staff safe, including continuing staff education, screening, and testing.
- Clinical staff closely monitor any changes in residents, and the Soldiers' Home's medical team is making all clinical decisions following [the latest CDC guidance](#), which continues to evolve as the medical community learns more about this new virus. The CDC recommends making medical decisions regarding when to end isolation and determine that the patient has recovered based on symptoms and time elapsed.
- The Soldiers' Home in Chelsea currently weekly staff surveillance testing.
- The Soldiers' Home in Chelsea monitors the PPE supply, and continues to receive shipments of PPE. The Incident Command team at the Chelsea Soldiers' Home continues to enforce staff use of personal protective equipment (PPE), as well as source PPE to ensure that residents and staff have access to critical safety equipment. The team continues to coordinate closely with the VA Health Care System.
- The status as of March 23 is as follows:
 - Residents
 - 0 veteran residents are positive
 - 126 veteran residents are negative
 - 48 veteran residents have recovered, meaning they previously tested positive and are now clinically recovered
 - 0 veteran residents have pending tests
 - Since March 1, 2020, there have been 31 deaths of veteran residents who tested positive
- Following the most recent staff surveillance testing:
 - 0 employees are positive
 - All other employees who previously tested positive have been determined clinically recovered

Communications Resources

Eligibility graphics

- Use these new [graphics](#) for your newsletters and social media showing COVID-19 vaccine eligibility dates for everyone who lives, works, or studies in Massachusetts.

Vaccine Equity Initiative website

- Visit [COVID-19 Vaccine Equity Initiative | Mass.gov](#) for the latest on the initiative in 20 of our hardest hit communities to increase equity in COVID-19 vaccine awareness and access.

FAQ for certain workers eligible in Phase 2

- Visit [COVID-19 vaccinations for certain workers | Mass.gov](#) for an FAQ and other COVID-19 vaccine eligibility requirements and information for workers in certain categories.

Guidance for people who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19

- Until more people are vaccinated, prevention measures will be necessary, even for individuals fully vaccinated. Review MA's [Guidance for people who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19](#).

CDC 'plain language' materials in multiple languages

- [Facts about COVID-19 Vaccines](#)
- [Communication Resources for COVID-19 Vaccines](#)
- [Myths and Facts about COVID-19 Vaccines](#)
- [Benefits of Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine](#)

Other Public Messaging Resources for Communities:

The COVID-19 Command Center and DPH have produced many communication resources aimed at helping communities inform and educate residents on recent executive orders and guidance related to COVID-19.

- [Trust the Facts, Get the Vax Campaign Materials | Mass.gov](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccine Posters | Mass.gov](#)
- [Preparing for your COVID-19 Vaccination Appointment flier | Mass.gov](#)
- [Guide to hosting a forum on the COVID-19 Vaccine | Mass.gov](#)

Visitors to COVID-19 resources for municipalities webpage will find these new resources, and additional flyers, posters, and digital resources in multiple languages on topics such as:

- [When can I get the COVID-19 vaccine?](#)
- [Vaccine Graphics](#)
- [Statewide guidelines, advisories, and orders](#)
- [Staying safe in the community](#)
- [Using local public alert systems for COVID-19 information](#)
- [Materials for Business](#), including:



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- Return to work guidance
- Employee Screening Questionnaire
- Business guidance – New, Temporary Capacity Limits
- Updated safe store tips for retailers

Resources

MassSupport

MassSupport is the Massachusetts Crisis Counseling Program funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and managed in partnership between the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health and Riverside Trauma Center, a program of Riverside Community Care. Contact MassSupport by phone at **888-215-4920** or by email at MassSupport@riversidecc.org

Red Cross Virtual Family Assistance Center

In order to provide support to families and communities who have suffered loss as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the American Red Cross has developed a Virtual Family Assistance Center (VFAC), staffed by a team of specially trained mental health, spiritual care, and health services volunteers who are:

- Connecting with families over the phone to offer condolences, emotional and spiritual support, and access to available resources
- Providing support for virtual memorial services for families, including connecting with local faith-based community partners
- Hosting online classes to foster resilience and facilitate coping skills
- Assisting families with access to national, state, or local resources such as grief counseling, legal resources, funeral information, financial information services, or veterans' assistance
- Additional state- and local-specific resources are available.

People can visit: <https://www.redcross.org/virtual-family-assistance-center/ma-family-assistance-center.html>

to access this resource with special virtual programs, information, referrals, and services to support families in need. People without internet access can **call toll-free 833-492-0094** for help. All Family Assistance Center support will be provided virtually and is completely confidential and free.

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) now reports on the number of positive COVID-19 cases as reported to the DESE by school districts (including charter schools), collaboratives, and approved special education schools. The data only represents what has been reported to DESE. For more information and to view the report people can visit: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/positive-cases/>

COVID-19 Test Site Locator

MEMA, in conjunction with the COVID-19 Command Center, has developed an [interactive tool](#) that shows the locations of COVID-19 testing sites around the Commonwealth.

Massachusetts COVID-19 Response Dashboard

MEMA has developed and maintains a public-facing COVID-19 ArcGIS Online dashboard, available [here](#). This dashboard is continuously updated and captures information about current COVID 19 case counts, cases by age, cases by county, hospital status, hospital bed status, death tolls, and deaths by age. Users should refresh the dashboard daily as enhancements are continuously being added.

Health care facilities can learn more about [requesting personal protective equipment here](#).

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Stay Informed

- Get information from trusted sources. Get notified by text, email, or phone call in your preferred language. Visit <https://member.everbridge.net/index/406686158291020/#/signup> to sign-up for **AlertsMA** for the latest news on the Commonwealth's response to COVID-19
- Take care of your emotional health:
- Call 2-1-1 and choose the "CALL2TALK" option.
- Samaritans is continuing operations 24/7, as always. During this unprecedented time, it can feel overwhelming to receive constant messages about COVID-19. Call or text their 24/7 helpline any time at 877-870-4673.
- The Disaster Distress Helpline, 1-800-985-5990, is a 24/7, 365-day-a-year, national hotline dedicated to providing immediate crisis counseling for people who are experiencing emotional distress related to any natural or human-caused disaster, including disease outbreaks like COVID-19. This toll-free, multilingual, and confidential crisis support service is available to all residents in the United States and its territories.

How to Help Out

- [Donate](#) to the Massachusetts COVID-19 Relief Fund

The Need for Blood Donations Continues, and Recovered COVID-19 Donors Can Help Save Lives

In coordination with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Red Cross is seeking people who are fully recovered from the new coronavirus to sign up to donate plasma to help current COVID-19 patients. People who have fully recovered from COVID-19 have antibodies in their plasma that can attack the virus. This convalescent plasma is being evaluated as treatment for patients with serious or immediately life-threatening COVID-19 infections, or those judged by a healthcare provider to be at high risk of progression to severe or life-threatening condition. Interested individuals can visit [RedCrossBlood.org/plasma4covid](https://www.RedCrossBlood.org/plasma4covid) to learn more. The Red Cross follows the highest standards of safety and infection control, and volunteer donors are the only source of blood for those in need. To make an appointment to donate, please visit www.RedCrossBlood.org