

COVID-19 BULLETIN

Thursday, October 1, 2020

Contact: Public Information Desk
doh-pio@doh.wa.gov

Recap of Recent COVID-19 News and Updates

Statewide Response Updates

Newest numbers. The Department of Health reported a total of 88,116 confirmed cases as of 11:59 pm on September 30. There have been 2,132 COVID-19 deaths in Washington.

For the most recent tally of cases by county, demographics, and more, visit the [Department of Health's dashboard](#) and the state's [COVID-19 risk assessment dashboard](#).

Antigen test results now being reported weekly. The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) started publishing a weekly report of positive antigen test results. Antigen tests can provide results in minutes, compared to much longer wait times for most molecular test results. Some antigen testing is already happening across the state, and that will only increase in the coming months, [with more than 2 million Abbott BinaxNOW™ tests reportedly on the way](#) from the federal government.

For now, the DOH weekly report will include positive antigen results at the state level only. This report will remain separate from the molecular test results on our [DOH dashboard](#), or on the governor's [Risk Assessment dashboard](#). Read the full news release [here](#).

Washington State Department of Health prepares to deploy new rapid COVID-19 tests. Within the next five to ten days the Washington State Department of Health will receive and distribute the first batch of Abbott BinaxNOW antigen test kits for COVID-19 from the federal government. These are rapid tests that can return results in as little as 15 minutes. The first batch will include 149,000 kits, and the state anticipates receiving nearly 2.3 million total tests between now and December.

These rapid tests work best for and are approved for people with symptoms. This first batch will be distributed to community health centers, tribal clinics and critical access hospitals to increase access to COVID-19 testing in the communities they serve across the state. A plan for distribution of future shipments is in development. Read the full news release [here](#).

COVID-19 vaccine update from the Washington State Department of Health. The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) continues to make progress with our COVID-19 vaccine distribution planning efforts.

On Friday, October 2, the National Academies will release the final Framework for Equitable Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine. This report will help guide equitable allocation of a limited initial supply of COVID-19 vaccine. DOH will be looking at that report and using it to inform our planning and thinking for how the agency prioritizes vaccine until there is sufficient supply for demand. The agency has received \$5 million in federal funding for COVID-19 vaccine response preparation. Read the full news release [here](#).

COVID-19 long-term care report. As of September 28, a total of 7,410 COVID-19 cases (9% of total cases) and 1,167 deaths (55% of total deaths) have been identified as associated with a long-term care facility (i.e., nursing home, assisted living facility or adult family home).

- These cases include residents as well as employees and visitors. Not all of these cases were exposed at a LTC facility.
- Many cases visited multiple places during their exposure period, and some individuals may have visited a LTC facility after disease onset.

Read the full report [here](#).

Recording of Gov. Inslee's press conference available. The governor was joined virtually by Secretary of Health John Wiesman and Dept of Commerce Director Lisa Brown. A recording of the press conference is available from TVW.org [here](#).

K–12 Internet access program allows more students to learn from home. This week, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) finalized contracts with three internet service providers — Zply, Presidio, and Comcast — to provide the service to up to 60,000 students and their families through the end of the 2020–21 school year at no cost to the family. The program is reserved for students who are low-income and did not have internet access before August 2020.

To participate in the program, potentially eligible families should receive information, including a promo/offer code from a provider, from their local school district. Families may also contact their district to request information. More information from OSPI is available [here](#).

Grants available for art and cultural organizations. The Washington State Department of Commerce and the Washington Arts Commission have partnered to provide federal CARES Act funding to [art and cultural organizations impacted by COVID-19](#). Grants are available up to \$10,000 each, no funding match is required.

Department of Licensing (DOL) tacks on extensions for driver licenses, instruction permits. Due to the ongoing pandemic and limited capacity at driver licensing offices, the DOL is continuing to extend the expiration dates of valid Washington state driver licenses and instruction permits.

Automatic extensions apply to driver licenses and learner permits expiring March 1 through April 30, 2020, as well as those expiring Oct. 1 through Dec. 31, 2020. This gives licensed

drivers extra time to [renew online](#) or [schedule an appointment](#) for in-person service, if required, without incurring penalties or late fees. Permit holders can continue to practice driving. More information available in DOL's blog post [here](#).

Technical assistance for minority and non-English speaking business owners. Non-English speaking and other multi-ethnic small business owners are closing at disproportionately higher rates due to COVID-19. These business owners now have more places to seek help. Commerce has [partnered with 20 organizations](#) across the state to providing targeted technical assistance to help with access to funding and other help.

Resources

Latest COVID-19 reopening guidance for businesses and workers. A full list of current reopening guidance is available [here](#).

Find a COVID-19 testing location near you. To make it easier to find a test near you, the Department of Health has created a webpage to help people find [COVID-19 testing locations](#) throughout the state.

Guidance and resources for employers and business owners. Sign up for the weekly business and worker newsletter [here](#).

Washington 211 COVID-19 call center is a general information line related to COVID-19. If you need information or have a general question, call 1-800-525-0127 or text 211-211 for help. You can also text the word "Coronavirus" to 211-211 to receive information and updates on your phone wherever you are. You will receive links to the latest information on COVID-19, including county-level updates, and resources for families, businesses, students, and more.

Washington Listens helps people manage stress and anxiety they may be experiencing because of COVID-19. If you or anyone you know is having difficulties managing stress, call the [Washington Listens](#) support line at 1-833-681-0211. Hours are from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays. TTY and language access services are available by using 7-1-1 or their preferred method. Resources and self-help tips are available on [walistens.org](#).