



CORONAVIRUS BRIEFING: JANUARY 8, 2021

THE CENTRAL COMMUNICATIONS BRIEFING FOR THE TOWN OF WELLESLEY

Visit Wellesley's COVID-19 Information Hub at www.wellesleyma.gov/coronavirus

A Message to the Community.

All of us have experienced a difficult and very emotional week and need to continue to support one another. In this new year filled with both hope and uncertainty, please reach out if you need it. Your elected officials, Town staff, and many local mental health experts are here for everyone – to help, to listen to and understand your concerns, and to offer counseling and comfort.

Join a virtual chat with the Health Department Social Workers on **Thursday, January 28th from 1:00-2:00 p.m.** We encourage you to practice self-care; please take part, share your concerns and get some tips for dealing with stress. To register, please email your name and phone number to Senior Community Social Worker Joyce Saret at jsaret@wellesleyma.gov

Total confirmed COVID-19 cases in Massachusetts: 400,823

[View the COVID-19 Interactive dashboard.](#)

Total confirmed positive cases in Wellesley: 684 (81 new cases in past 14 days)

Average Daily Incidence Rate/100,000 for Wellesley: 19.5 (past 14 days)

Percent Positivity of Testing: 2.34% (past 14 days)

[View the Weekly COVID-19 Public Health Report.](#) *from January 7, 2021

Capacity and Gathering Restrictions Extended Until January 24.

Wellesley continues to see a surge in positive COVID-19 cases but remains in the yellow (moderate risk) category, as do most of our surrounding communities. However, 219 cities and towns are now red (high risk). As a result, the [State capacity and gathering restrictions are extended](#) until Sunday, January 24.

- Capacity is limited to 25% at restaurants, offices, places of worship, retail locations, grocery stores, gyms, and more.
- Gatherings are limited to **25 people outdoors** and **10 people indoors**.

Read [a summary of the restrictions](#).

PPE "Fatigue." It continues to be critical for everyone to adhere to the current rules and protocols to help control the spread of COVID-19. Health officials are keenly aware that everyone is frustrated with the continued restrictions and is experiencing PPE fatigue, but we all need to cooperate. Please stay vigilant, wear masks, remain 6 feet apart when interacting with others, limit gatherings, and wash hands and practice good hygiene.

If you are concerned or have questions about situations that could increase the risk of exposure to COVID-19, please [email questions](#) or call the Health Department at 781-235-0135.

More Relief for Small Businesses.

Local businesses have until **January 15** to apply for a new round of grants from the State, administered through the Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation. This money is part of the \$668 million relief fund; applicants could receive up to \$75,000 but not more than three months of operating expenses. The fund targets the smallest businesses that have an exceptional need for cash relief. [Read specific details here.](#)

Businesses eligible to apply include:

- Restaurants, bars, caterers, food trucks;
- Indoor recreation and entertainment establishments (movie theaters, performing arts organizations, bowling centers, trampoline parks, etc.)
- Gyms and fitness centers, sports facilities;
- Nail and hair salons, barber shops;
- Independent pharmacies and retailers, and more.

***Businesses that have already submitted applications for first round grants do not need to apply again. Applications in the existing program are currently being reviewed.**

Paycheck Protection Program. More details continue to be announced for the second round of the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), a forgivable loan program established by the CARES Act, that is part of the \$900 billion stimulus package from the Federal government.

PPP funds give those that weren't approved for the first round another chance to apply, and allows businesses that have exhausted previous PPP money and have been significantly impacted by the pandemic to apply for funding again. The PPP application portal will re-open the week of January 11. [Read details from the Small Business Association here.](#)

COVID-19 Vaccination Update.



The Health Department continues to receive questions about the COVID-19 vaccine, the tiered phases, and vaccination lists. The vaccine rollout is managed by the State and Wellesley Health officials currently DO NOT have doses of the COVID-19 vaccine available for public distribution, and are not maintaining any vaccination lists.

The [Health Department website](#) has links to the State vaccine plan and phases; residents can also email questions directly to COVID-19-Vaccine-Plan-MA@mass.gov.

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