

COVID RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

Regional and National Practice Highlights

Issue 3 - July 15, 2020

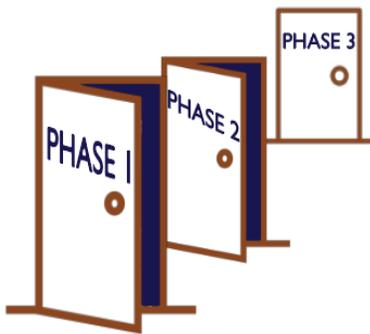


While Montgomery County's midsummer experience thankfully demonstrates case-count and Phase 2 stability, much of the USA's recovery resembles a revolving door without any power assist. Record-high COVID-19 cases are leading some states to pause or reverse reopenings, their residents retreating through prior door partitions. Masks on? As evidence grows of their effectiveness in reducing community spread, "broad adoption of cloth face coverings is a civic duty," CDC officials noted in a [July 14 editorial](#) in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

Despite July's often-alarming data trajectories, our team's search for innovative practices remained fruitful, such as partnerships to stand up [COVID testing at churches](#), to [expand farmers' markets](#) (AL), to redeploy idle college students for [public service internships](#) (NC), and more. Below, our Text-to-911 case study spotlights programs to better support people with disabilities.

This month, several large public school systems unveiled diverse Fall 2020 plans, reflecting the American Academy of Pediatrics' [July 10 declaration](#) that a "one-size-fits-all-approach is not appropriate for return to school decisions." All-virtual starts will occur in [Prince George's County](#), [Los Angeles](#), [San Diego](#), and [Atlanta](#); remote/in-person hybrid plans are on the books for [New York City](#), [Detroit](#), [Fairfax County](#) and [Montgomery County](#). Detroit (55,000 students) started summer school July 13; Chicago's (355,000 students) [new survey for families](#) asks about the effects on learning of both the pandemic and "the recent civic unrest."

The County Council, meanwhile, accelerated COVID recovery efforts through special appropriations for [artists and arts and humanities organizations](#) (\$3.25 million); and the \$14 million [Reopen Montgomery Business Assistance Program](#). Four months into this pandemic, we glean an optimistic note from a Takoma Park, MD Greenwood Terrace homework club sixth-grader, an "[If I Were Mayor](#)" [essay competition](#) awardee. Congratulations, A. Abarca! – *Lee Rucker Keiser, M.S.P.H.*

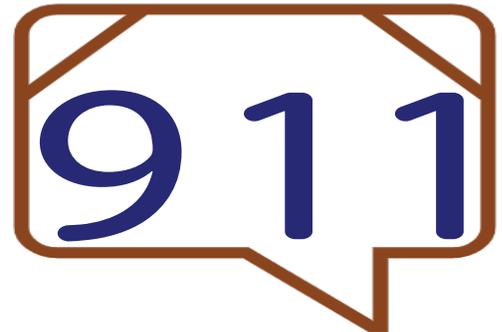


CASE STUDY: TEXT TO 911

Deaf advocates have long called for the ability to text to 911, so that emergency services are accessible to everyone. Others who have joined in the call have noted that the ability to text 911 will reduce demand on dispatchers – and make emergency service access more available to everyone. Prior to COVID, many jurisdictions were already upgrading technology to introduce the service.

The pandemic has accelerated existing plans for introducing "text to 911" service. Monroe County, NY, home to the country's largest Deaf community in Rochester, had already introduced [a text to 911 service by the start of the pandemic](#). During the pandemic, text to 911 made emergency care for COVID more accessible. The County now plans to invest [more resources in the text to 911 service](#). Similarly, the service already available [across Connecticut](#) has been helpful.

Many jurisdictions have introduced text to 911 during the pandemic. New York City, which had been sued by advocates for the inaccessibility of emergency services, [rolled out its text to 911 services](#) this month. Prince George's County launched [a pilot program this spring](#) to assist its many Deaf residents in accessing 911 services. Maryland also has [a text to mental healthcare service](#). Montgomery County does not yet have a text to 911 program, though it has been proposed. Such a system will not only help the County's Deaf population – one of the largest in the country – but also better distribute dispatch resources for future emergency surges. – *Jonathan Paul Katz, MSc*



IN THE REGION



To help address COVID-postponed **routine childhood immunizations**, especially by those who are eligible for free vaccines through a federal program, both Fairfax County and Montgomery County began offering school-related vaccines on July 6. The Fairfax County Health Department is administering them at locations [in Fairfax, Mount Vernon, and Reston](#). Montgomery County's venue is the Dennis Avenue Health Center in Silver Spring, by appointment Monday through Thursday.
[Learn more here.](#)

Mayor Muriel Bowser announced on July 13 that up to 850 District of Columbia households will be invited to receive free COVID-19 antibody testing, with free round-trip transportation, courtesy of a partnership between D.C. Health and the Centers for Disease Control.
[Learn more here.](#)



Fairfax County has created resources to **help parents build strong relationships with their children** during the pandemic. [Learn more here.](#)



Prince George's County has started a new campaign to **remind people to socially distance**. The campaign urges people to stay two shopping carts apart – even when they are not at a store. [Learn more here.](#)



In August, District of Columbia Public Schools will host a free, limited-enrollment “Summer Bridge” program for rising 3rd, 6th, and 9th-graders, to help them **reacclimate to a regular school environment**.
[Learn more here.](#)



Montgomery County offers **food assistance resources in six different languages**. [Learn more here.](#)

In June, the Montgomery County Council approved **\$10.3 million for a Food Security Fund** to enhance food security, working with the Greater Washington Community Foundation. The Council also set a goal of raising \$5 million through private donations. [Learn more here.](#)



The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) recently released a **“Return to Work” survey** about how commuting patterns might change for riders who have been working remotely. The survey is similar to the now-closed survey for RideOn. [Learn more here.](#)



Child Care



Health Care



Communications



Housing



Transit



Food Security



Education



Public Safety



Employment

Reopening Status (July 15)

Prince George's County: Phase 2

District of Columbia: Phase 2

Northern Virginia: Modified Phase 3

Editorial Team (Council Central Office)

Lee Rucker Keiser, M.S.P.H., *Senior Fellow*
Lee.Keiser@MontgomeryCountymd.gov

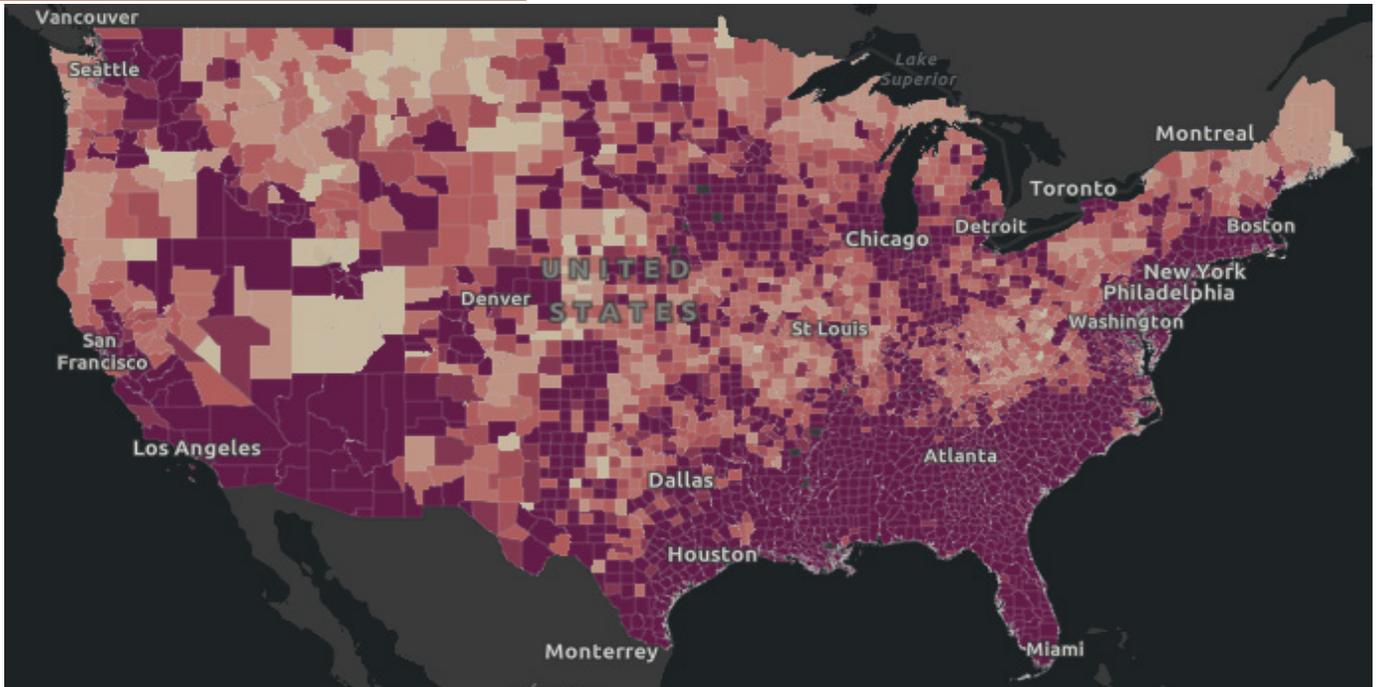
Summer Fellows:

Upneet S. Atwal
Upneet.Atwal@MontgomeryCountymd.gov

Jonathan Paul Katz, MSc (Layout Editor)
Jonathan.Katz@MontgomeryCountymd.gov

Mira Singhal
Mira.Singhal@MontgomeryCountymd.gov

FURTHER AFIELD



COVID-19 Cases by U.S. County; deep purple represents the highest case counts, lightest color the fewest. Johns Hopkins University, Coronavirus Resource Center, accessed July 15 at: <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/us-map>.



New Mexico's government has sponsored a **statewide collaborative** for sourcing and distributing protective equipment for healthcare. [Learn more here.](#)

Kansas City, Missouri restaurant employees received **advance notice for free COVID-19 testing** sponsored by the local health department, July 13-15 at a large sports facility. [Learn more here.](#)

In Detroit, Michigan, hair salon and barber shop employees were offered **free COVID-19 rapid tests** in advance of those shops reopening on June 15. Employees received a PPE care kit containing masks, gloves and a face shield. [Learn more here.](#)

Greater Cleveland Congregations, an interfaith social justice coalition, was awarded in June \$100,000 from the Greater Cleveland COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund to launch its "Color of Health Initiative." Eighteen predominantly **African American congregations will provide free COVID-19 testing**, through a partnership with the Cuyahoga County (Ohio) Board of Health, and MetroHealth Systems. [Learn more here.](#)



Community organizations in Ventura County, California have partnered with the county government to **disseminate information about coronavirus in indigenous Mexican languages**. Many farmworkers in the region primarily or only speak Mixtec, Zapotec, or Mayan languages. Similar [communities of indigenous language speakers](#) live in Long Branch and Silver Spring. [Learn more here.](#)

The Minnesota Department of Health **created "Masks Dos and Don'ts" videos** in twelve languages. [Learn more here.](#)

The Broomfield, Colorado library **reserves 9:00-10:00 a.m. Monday-Saturday for patrons over the age of 60** and other vulnerable groups. Since May, they have offered book-delivery services to residents older than 60, as well as a fabric mask and craft kits, if requested with book orders. [Learn more here.](#)



Indianapolis, Indiana, whose mandatory face-mask order began July 9, summarizes its “pausing” of reopening plans with a flyer, **“Keep Indy Open:Wear a Mask.”** The city is also providing free face coverings to residents who complete an online form; and free window clings to businesses, to encourage use of face coverings. [Learn more here.](#)



In Toronto, Ontario, the police department has begun offering **temporary shelter** to people experiencing homelessness. [Learn more here.](#)



Polk County, Florida **provided grants of up to \$2,000** for tenants who needed help covering housing costs. The application period ended July 10. [Learn more here.](#)

The City of Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Housing Development Corporation announced a **second phase of rental assistance** for tenants affected by COVID-19 starting July 6. Payments are made directly to landlords to help additional tenants. [Learn more here.](#)



The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), in California, published a **10-point plan to strengthen trust in transit.** [Learn more here.](#)

The Tri-State Transportation Campaign (representing New York, New Jersey and Connecticut) issued in June its “Back on Board” report, offering a **detailed transit guide** in the COVID-19 era. The report reflects results of their recent rider survey, including the need for new public awareness campaigns about transit systems’ enhanced cleaning procedures, as part of rebuilding public trust. The report also presents pandemic responses from several European and Asian transit systems. [Learn more here.](#)

In the Denver, Colorado metro area, Access-a-Ride bus transportation for people with disabilities **resumed fare collection** on July 1, as well as trip-booking up to five days in advance. [Learn more here.](#)

Across New York City in July, subway riders may see **vending machine-dispensed personal protective equipment** (PPE) for purchase in 10 subway stations. The machines sell face masks, gloves and hand sanitizer. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority is also prepared to give away up to 2 million single-use surgical masks; riders can request one from station booth staff. [Learn more here.](#)

Proposals are due July 30 for New York City’s COVID-19 Response Challenge, to **evaluate and deploy innovative technologies** to enhance transit’s pandemic health and safety objectives. Sponsors of the challenge are the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, and the Transit Innovation Partnership. [Learn more here.](#)



In Austin, Texas through July, Buford the Book Bus stops each week at schools to offer free, age-appropriate books to help **prevent students’ “summer slide” in learning.** COVID safety practices are deployed aboard Buford-the-Bus, now in its sixth year. This bus library is sponsored by the Austin (TX) Independent School District, which serves about half as many students as MCPS. [Learn more here.](#)



Colorado’s state government produced a **social distancing “space calculator”** to support employees’ and customers’ safety. Originally designed by Boulder County Public Health, the calculator appears on many local jurisdictions’ COVID-recovery websites, and governs “life rites” such as wedding and graduation ceremonies, and funerals. [Learn more here.](#)