

COVID RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

Regional and National Practice Highlights

Issue 4 - July 29, 2020

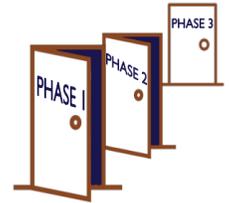


Closing out July, we enter month two of Phase 2 reopening with our masks up, hands washed, and fingers crossed. Although Maryland is one of over 25 states with rising case counts the past week, Montgomery County's 3.1% test positivity rate remains below the statewide rate. However, as Health Officer Travis Gayles, M.D., advised during his July 21 Council briefing, "We're not going to be complacent."

Accordingly, Montgomery County is fortifying – and clarifying – its COVID-19 testing strategy. Per the Council's/Board of Health regulation to provide free countywide testing, Dr. Gayles and his team unveiled their extensive plan. Further, on July 28 the Council approved a special appropriation of \$5.5 million for the Por Nuestra Salud y Bienestar (For our Health and Wellbeing) initiative to provide culturally-competent, targeted public health outreach to Latino residents in areas hardest hit by COVID-19.

Such a priority resource allocation is among the recommendations in the Rockefeller Foundation's COVID-19 National Testing & Tracing Action Plan, introduced in July with their \$50 million commitment for U.S. testing support. Other "hyper-local" testing initiatives were announced last week in New York City, including a request-for-proposals (RFP) for zip-code-specific contact tracing support from community-based organizations; and in North Carolina through its high-priority and marginalized population testing program and related RFP. Montgomery County's enhanced testing strategy will be stood up in good company.

Speaking of good company, I am indebted to Upneet, Jonathan and Mira for their biweekly newsletter contributions, an effort beyond their respective Summer Fellow research projects that were previewed for the Council on July 28. Join me in thanking them, and keep your feedback coming.– Lee Rucker Keiser, M.S.P.H.



TESTING HIGHLIGHTS

Below are examples from jurisdictions with advanced implementation of testing and/or contact tracing strategies.



Jurisdiction	Topic/Links to Learn More	Highlights
Philadelphia, PA	Testing Demographics	By age, race, testing count, incarceration status
Philadelphia, PA	Contact Tracer Demographics	Racial and ethnic status and languages spoken
San Francisco, CA	Priority Tiers for Testing	Tier 2A covers groups with historic barriers to care
San Francisco, CA	Diagnostic Testing Capacity	Announced by Mayor London Breed on July 22
San Francisco, CA	Contact Tracing Trends	Differentiates cases and named contacts reached
St. Louis, MO	Social Vulnerability by Zip Code	Measured along five separate measures of vulnerability
New York, NY	Contact Tracing Cumulative Progress	Six metrics along the contact tracing pathway
New Jersey	Community Contact Tracing Corps	Announced July 24, incorporates colleges and universities, demographics "reflects communities"
South Carolina	Statewide Testing Plan	In effect since May
Multnomah County, OR	Contact Tracing Overview	Bilingual video and graphics
Prince George's County, MD	Contact Tracing Graphic	Bilingual

Newsletter issues are online at: <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/COUNCIL/news/Covid19.html>

IN THE REGION



Prince George's County began an advertising campaign to **remind residents not to delay essential care**. Montgomery County has a similar campaign. [Learn more here](#).

The District of Columbia's Contact Trace Force launched its "Home Visit Team" to **assess COVID-positive individuals' social service needs**, such as alternative housing, food or medication. Montgomery County announced a similar "[Ready Responders](#)" program on July 23. [Learn more here](#).

Fairfax County Health Department [published a July 16 article](#) about their goal to **recruit an additional 400 contact tracers**. Fairfax County Emergency Information's blog featured an interview with a contact tracer who is a multi-lingual public health nurse and returned Peace Corps volunteer. [Learn more here](#).

Anne Arundel County is **hiring contact tracing and testing staff**. [Learn more here](#).



Fairfax County created a **rumor control page** to correct common myths about the coronavirus. The State of Maryland has a [similar page](#). [Learn more here](#).



On July 28 the Montgomery County Council appropriated \$20 million from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to expand **rental assistance for eviction and homeless prevention**. The Council and Executive have been working collaboratively on rental assistance and eviction prevention supports; this appropriation was introduced by President Katz at the request of the County Executive. [Learn more here](#).



In August, Metro will launch a "**rider reassurance**" campaign focused on their proactive measures to help reduce the spread of COVID-19, and to help inform riders' expectations. Service hours will be expanded on Metro trains starting Aug. 16; and on Metrobus starting Aug. 23. Further, to boost transportation options for late-night workers, in July Metro doubled its subsidy (from \$3 to \$6) for qualified workers who utilize Lyft between Midnight and 4:00 a.m. [Learn more here](#).



Montgomery County is now accepting applications for its **Food Assistance Provider Capacity Building Grant program**. The funding will be used to help food assistance providers improve infrastructure and increase their ability to provide food access to hard-to-reach communities in Montgomery County during the response to and recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and into the future. Nonprofit organizations can apply for up to \$85,000. [Learn more here](#).



Prince George's County Public Schools **created an equity toolkit** in response to the implementation of distance learning. [Learn more here](#).

The District of Columbia's Summer Bridge program, which helps students adjust to schooling during the pandemic, is now **completely virtual**. Families across the school system have been asked to complete [a short technology-access survey](#).



The District of Columbia created several **COVID-19 podcasts** for the local business community. [Learn more here](#).



Prince George's County created a **COVID-19 Ambassador Compliance team**, which will ensure that businesses and their patrons are complying with social distancing mandates. In Montgomery County's [similar program](#), redeployed housing inspectors have visited over 1900 businesses. [Learn more here](#).



Child Care



Health Care



Communications



Housing



Transit



Food Security



Education



Public Safety



Employment

Reopening Status (July 29)

Prince George's County: Phase 2

Anne Arundel County: Phase 2

District of Columbia: Phase 2

Northern Virginia: Modified Phase 3

RESOURCES

Montgomery County Office of Legislative Oversight

July's "Recovery Outlook" reports examined: **Child Care; Telework Disparities by Race and Ethnicity; Commercial Real Estate/Retail Sector; and Public Use of Facilities.** Further, OLO published a spotlight on **COVID-19 and Mental Health**, featuring an extensive resource list; and weekly unemployment updates. [Learn more here.](#)

National

Metro Recovery Index, an interactive tool assessing the COVID-19 recession and recovery path across three economic sectors, grouped by jurisdictions' population. Developed by the Brookings Institution, updated at least monthly. [Learn more here.](#)

COVID Racial Data Tracker, a collaboration between the COVID Tracking Project and Boston University's Center for Antiracist Research. State-specific data are updated daily. [Learn more here.](#)

FURTHER AFIELD



The Austrian province of Carinthia (population 561,000) is running **two-week summer camps** for children during the first two weeks of August. The provincial government is working with local non-profits to keep the camp safe and affordable. Austria, which has a federal government, has delegated many of these decisions to its federal provinces (*Bundesländer*). [Learn more here \(link in German\).](#)



Philadelphia's city government partnered with non-profits to create a **system of "digital navigators."** These workers help low-income people and residents with low digital literacy find low-cost computers, low-cost internet access, and build their computer skills. [Learn more here.](#)

The City of San Diego has proposed a partnership with the San Diego Futures Foundation to **remedy the city's digital divide.** The program will renovate computers for lower-income residents who do not have access to such technology. [Learn more here.](#)

Montréal's city government created a guide for **safely moving during the pandemic.** [Learn more here \(link in French\).](#)

The German government offers a **WhatsApp hotline** for residents to ask questions about the virus. [Learn more here \(link in German\).](#)

In Chicago, the University of Illinois at Chicago provides fact sheets in 15 languages, and **COVID testing decision trees** in 17 languages. [Learn more here.](#)



North Carolina's state government produced communication guides to help residents **communicate with Deaf and hard-of-hearing people** during the pandemic. [Learn more here.](#)

The Vermont state government partnered with MITRE to provide daily symptom check reminders for people who are self-monitoring. The **SaraAlert** system provides daily emails, texts, or phone calls to remind users to check their symptoms. [Learn more here.](#)

Boston's COVID-19 Health Inequities Task Force, created by Mayor Martin Walsh in March, helped direct Boston Resiliency Fund grants of over \$1.2 million to non-profit organizations to expand outreach and testing to the Latino community in July. [Learn more here.](#)



Santa Barbara County, California is shifting from providing temporary shelter to people experiencing homelessness to **providing permanent housing.** This program helps protect people from COVID-19, and sets the stage for other housing security policies. [Learn more here.](#)



Denver is using **electrostatic cleaners** to make vehicle disinfection faster and safer. Light-rail cars can now be sanitized in a quarter of the time. [Learn more here.](#)

The *Detroit Free Press* published an **in-depth investigation of bus service** during COVID-19. [Read it here.](#)



The State of Michigan **extended emergency food assistance** for 350,000 families through the month of July. [Learn more here.](#)

In North Carolina, No Kid Hungry NC has set up a program which allows parents to **find free summer meals for students** across the state. Parents can text a number to receive a list of the three closest drive-thru or pick up sites with meals for children. There is also a routinely updated map to find drive-thru or pick up sites for children's meals across the state, including contact information, start and end dates, and days of operation. [Learn more here.](#)

Boston parks, playgrounds, and public spaces are hosting **food trucks with socially-distanced spacing** for customers, in a pilot that took effect July 17. The City of Boston waived all site permit fees, but participating food trucks must have up-to-date approvals, certifications, and other permits. [Learn more here.](#)



The New York City Department of Small Business Services created a series of webinars to **guide the business community** on best practices for reopening. [Learn more here.](#)

Over 500 Boston young people enrolled in a five-week **“Learn and Earn” internship** to participate virtually in college-level courses “that lay the foundation for a career pathway.” Two local community colleges, plus two additional institutions, provide 26 classes for college credit. [Learn more here.](#)

The City of Birmingham, Alabama and over a dozen organizations collaborated to create “Rebound Bham,” which provides **virtual workshops to help small business owners** “achieve skillset milestones” to weather COVID-19. The program launched July 23. [Learn more here.](#)

In Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, the City Council created a COVID-19 Recovery Committee to **spur innovative and practical responses to the pandemic.** They highlight the recovery, restart, and rebuild goals for the city, under their Restart Smart Vancouver program. [Learn more here.](#)

A PERSONAL NOTE



The Editorial Team at a socially-distanced “team meeting” on July 9 in Cabin John. The Summer Fellows set off to other opportunities next week! They are grateful for the chance to work on this newsletter.

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