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## April 24, 2020

- I. State Issues
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**Municipal Clerks:** Please forward to your Mayor, Governing Body and Department Heads.

To assist in providing guidance and information we have created a [COVID-19 resource page](#). We will continue to update the page as we get pertinent information and include announcements in our Daily Updates.

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### I. State Issues

#### a. COVID-19 Update

Yesterday the Governor announced that there were 4,247 additional positive results since the day before, and 307 deaths attributed to COVID-19. That brings the statewide totals to 99,989 positive results and 5,368 COVID-19 related deaths.

The Governor reported that about 46,000 of the total statewide positive test results were now outside the two-week incubation period.

The Governor also reported yesterday that 7,240 state residents were hospitalized due to COVID-19, with 91 at field medical stations.

Since March 15, over 858,000 New Jersey residents have filed for unemployment benefits.

This week, a potential “game changer” saliva-based test developed at Rutgers should expedite statewide testing.

In case you missed it:

The Federal Department of Treasury [issued guidance](#) and a [FAQ](#) regarding Coronavirus Relief Fund direct payments.

Also made available this week was information concerning [FEMA public assistance grants](#).

Information from the [New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission \(NJMVC\)](#).

See the League [COVID-19 page](#) for all our resources and communications.

In light of the current pandemic, we remind you NJ Mental Health Cares, the state's behavioral health information and referral service, offers assistance to people dealing with anxiety and worry related to the COVID-19 outbreak. Residents can call 1-866-202-HELP (4357) for free, confidential support. NJ Mental Health Cares will be answered from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. seven days a week by live trained specialists.

**Contact:** Michael F. Cerra, Assistant Executive Director, [mcerra@njlm.org](mailto:mcerra@njlm.org), 609-695-3481 x120.

### **b. NJ Supreme Court Order to Allow Municipal Courts to Resume Operations**

Today, the New Jersey Supreme Court issued an [Order](#) that allows municipal court sessions to resume, to the extent possible based on facilities, technology, and other resources. Municipal court sessions had been suspended through April 26, 2020, consistent with a March 27, 2020, issued in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Today's order authorizes municipal court session to be conducted starting April 27, 2020, with the consent of all parties, and effective May 11, 2020, all sessions can proceed but only with virtual (video or phone) format.

**Contact:** Frank Marshall, Esq., Associate General Counsel, [fmarshall@njlm.org](mailto:fmarshall@njlm.org), 609-695-3481 x137.

### **c. Pension Payment Reminder**

The Division of Pensions and Benefits sent a reminder [notice](#) to all Certifying Officers reminding them that the annual pension contribution grace period for payment for both Public Employee's Retirement System (PERS) and Police & Fire Retirement System (PFRS) ends May 1, 2020. Any payment received after May 1, 2020 will have the statutorily set interest rate of 10% per annum levied. We suggest you review this payment with your Chief Financial Officer and Administrator.

**Contact:** Lori Buckelew, Senior Legislative Analyst, [lbuckelew@njlm.org](mailto:lbuckelew@njlm.org), 609-695-3481 x112.

## **II. Federal Issues**

## **a. Locals Need Support and Flexibility in Next Federal COVID Bill**

When Congress passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act - \$2.2 Trillion CARES Act - it included a \$150 Billion State and Local Stabilization Fund. Minus funding for U.S. Territories, and autonomous Tribal Governments, about \$139 Billion is being distributed to the States, for their own use (55%) and for redistribution to 'qualifying' local governments (45%).

The State of New Jersey is slated to receive \$3.444 Billion. Of that total, a minimum of \$1.894 Billion is earmarked for State use. The balance - \$1.550 Billion - COULD be distributed to 'qualifying' local government.

On Wednesday, the U.S. Treasury released [official guidance](#). These funds can only be used to fund extraordinary costs, caused by COVID-19. These must be costs not anticipated in each entity's current operating budget. They cannot be used to cover revenues not collected, as a result of the financial impact of the Coronavirus on taxpayers. And, they cannot be used to supplement other federal funding to be delivered to states and localities, through FEMA, pursuant to declared states of emergency.

Yesterday, noting these limitations, Governor Murphy lamented the minimal value of the stabilization aid.

Our federal partners at the National League of Cities (NLC) have been hard at work to secure support for funding for all of America's municipalities, and for greater flexibility in the use of that aid. We detail the problems and the prospects for solutions in ([this Town Crier blog post](#)).

**Contact:** Jon Moran, Senior Legislative Analyst, [jmoran@njlm.org](mailto:jmoran@njlm.org), 609-695-3481 x121.

## **b. IRS Notice on Economic Impact Payment Scams/ NJ Homeland Security Disinformation Info**

The individual and family 'economic impact payments' that come as a part of the CARES Act are going out to Federal Income Tax payers and others, all around the country. Inevitably, scammers see this as a once in a lifetime opportunity.

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) wants to make citizens aware of the danger, alert them to be on guard, provide information on what to watch out for, and let the IRS know if they have been targeted or victimized by any lowlifes. The [U.S. Treasury's Inspector General for Tax Administration has posted a notice online](#).

This includes a portal that can be used to report scamming and the scammers. You may want to share this with your citizens.

Also to share, and closer to home, [the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness hosts the webpage](#), which features unclassified intelligence products on COVID-19 disinformation, details about scams that New Jersey residents and visitors might be susceptible to, and cybersecurity alerts regarding potential threats to individuals and businesses caused by the pandemic

**Contact:** Jon Moran, Senior Legislative Analyst, [jmoran@njlm.org](mailto:jmoran@njlm.org), 609-695-3481 x121.

### **c. FCC Broadband Funding Opportunities and Webinar**

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is moving ahead with its [Rural Digital Opportunity Fund \(RDOF\)](#) and [Rural 5G Fund](#) proceedings. The purpose of these programs is to encourage the development of infrastructure necessary within rural areas to ensure access to adequate broadband service.

Combined, these programs will offer nearly \$30 billion to internet service providers to assist them with deploying broadband to rural areas that do not currently have adequate high-speed internet service. To view more about these programs and their importance for your community, please see the League's recent [blog post](#). You may also wish to attend a webinar hosted by the FCC for state, local, and tribal officials on May 20, 2020, regarding the RDOF program. More information on the webinar can be found in the [FCC's public notice](#).

**Contact:** Frank Marshall, Esq., Associate General Counsel, [fmarshall@njlm.org](mailto:fmarshall@njlm.org), 609-695-3481 x137.

## **III. Annual League Conference**

### **a. Claim Your CEUs from the 2019 League Conference**

Attention Municipal Officials! Do Not Forget to Claim Your CEUs from the 2019 NJLM Annual Conference! Visit the [Conference Tracking page](#) to claim your credits.

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Please continue to communicate, locally, the need for discipline and compassion until our State can get back to normal. New Jerseyans are being asked to stay at home, whenever possible, to practice social distancing when they need to go out, to wear face covering when they come in contact with others, and to avoid the gatherings that mean so much to all of us. They're being asked to make these sacrifices, not only to protect themselves - not even mainly to protect themselves. These things promote the common good and protect the most vulnerable among us. Their older neighbors. Their physically weaker neighbors. Their poorer neighbors. Their neighbors who are out there delivering essential services. And to ease the burden and limit the danger to our EMTs, our nurses, our doctors, other health care workers, our fire and police.

And if they're willing and able to do a little more, let them know they can help Team Jersey by donating to the [New Jersey Pandemic Relief Fund](#) or by mail to: New Jersey Pandemic Relief Fund at P.O. Box 338, Morristown, NJ 07963. The Fund provides grants to organizations with a track record of caring for vulnerable communities. One hundred percent of donations received online by NJPRF will be used to fight the medical, social, and economic impact of COVID-19 on New Jersey's most vulnerable, supporting organizations that provide essential services, and aiding those on the front line of the pandemic.



222 West State Street, Trenton, NJ 08608  
Phone: 609-695-3481 Web: [www.njlm.org](http://www.njlm.org)

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