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July 24, 2020

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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.

I. State

a. COVID-19 Update

Today Governor Murphy announced that there were 488 new positive results and an additional 36 confirmed deaths resulting from COVID-19. To date there have been 178,345 confirmed cases, and 13,845 confirmed deaths. There are also 1,920 probable deaths associated with the virus.

The rate of transmission (RT) decreased to 0.84. The Administration continues its objective to keep that number below 1.0.

Since last Friday, the Governor has taken the following actions:

[Executive Order 166](#): Creating Greater Oversight and Accountability for Federal COVID-19 Resources.

[Executive Order 167](#): Directing U.S. and New Jersey Flags to Fly at Half-Staff in Honor of U.S. Representative John Lewis.

[Executive Order 168](#): Allowing the Resumption of Contact Practices and Competitions for Certain Organized Sports in Outdoor Settings. **Please note that the Governor later clarified that this Executive Order pertains only to outdoor sports.*

[Executive Order 169](#): Which clarifies Executive Order No. 164 and states that the postponement of annual municipal and county party committee reorganization meetings is only applicable to municipal party committees and county party committees that held elections during the July primary elections.

The Federal Department of Labor reported that unemployment claims rose to 1.4 million last week.

In addition, the Department of Education will be updating guidance on parent availability to choose all remote learning for their child as part of the school district's reopening plan.

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

Contact: Michael F. Cerra, Executive Director, mcerra@njlm.org, 609-695-3481 x120.

b. Governor Murphy Announces Main Street Commercial Corridors Relief

Yesterday, Governor Murphy [announced a new relief program](#) for small businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Small Business Lease – Emergency Assistance Program (SBL-EAGP) will allow businesses in [64 eligible municipalities](#) to apply for grants of up to \$10,000 for lease costs. The SBL-EAGP is the first component of a broader Main Street Corridors Relief Package, funded by \$6 million in federal CARES Act money.

Grant eligibility is limited to tenants leasing commercial space in mixed-used buildings, space in commercial buildings, or space to operate a storefront business. Applications open August 10, 2020, online, and funds will be distributed on a first come first served basis. Eligible municipalities may want to make your main street business aware of this program.

Contact: Frank Marshall, Esq., Associate General Counsel, fmarshall@njlm.org, 609-695-3481 x137.

c. NJ Supreme Court Issues 'Action Plan for Ensuring Equal Justice'

Last week, the NJ Supreme Court released an [Action Plan for Ensuring Equal Justice](#). The Action Plan outlines a series of reforms that the Court will seek to accomplish within the next year in order to “eliminate disparities within the court system and remove institutional obstacles to justice.” The Plan includes general reforms aimed at the court system as a whole, but also includes specific municipal court reforms.

These municipal court reforms include enabling alternative methods of resolving municipal court matters with the goal of reducing the need for litigants to appear in person. This goal would be achieved through an expansion of the Statewide Bureau Schedule to allow payment without appearance for low-level statutory fines and penalties, and the Municipal Online Dispute Resolution applications, which enables persons charged with minor matters to negotiate a plea amount via an online portal for approval by a judge. The Action

Plan also calls for implementation of various recommendations such as the process for selecting municipal court judges, and court consolidation found in the Supreme Court Committee on Municipal Court Operations, Fines, and Fees, which the [League has outlined](#) in the past.

We will provide updates as the Supreme Court seeks to implement their Action Plan.

Contact: Frank Marshall, Esq., Associate General Counsel, fmarshall@njlm.org, 609-695-3481 x137.

d. Legislation Requiring Health Insurance Annual Assessment Advances

Legislation that would require certain entities authorized to issue health benefits plan to annually pay an assessment of 2.75% of the entity's net written premiums was amended and released from committee and now await consideration by the Assembly Appropriations Committee and Senate Budget Committee, respectively. [A-4389/S-2676](#) applies only to entities subject to section 9010 of the Affordable Care Act and may be subject to an assessment by the State. The assessment will be used to increase affordability in individual and small group markets and provide greater access to health insurance to the uninsured, including minors, through a number of ways including subsidies, reinsurance, tax policies, outreach and enrollment efforts, buy-in programs, such as the NJ FamilyCare Advantage Program, or any other efforts that can increase affordability for small employers and individual policyholders in those markets. As introduced, it appears that the bill does not apply to local governments. We are currently reviewing committee amendments to confirm if that is the case. We will continue to provide you with additional updates.

Contact: Lori Buckelew, Assistant Executive Director, lbuckelew@njlm.org, 609-695-3481 x112.

II. Federal

a. Negotiations Continue on the Second Federal Coronavirus Relief Package

Efforts in Washington continued this week as Federal legislators attempt to negotiate a second round of pandemic relief aid. While many were hopeful to have a Senate bill proposal released before the end of this week, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has indicated otherwise. A draft proposal is now expected early next week.

The League along with our national partners at the National League of Cities (NLC) continue to push direct financial aid to local governments in the next legislative response to the economic impact of the Coronavirus. Unfortunately, press reports indicate that lawmakers have not fully grasped the need for direct, substantial, and flexible local aid.

Instead, it is being reported that those negotiating a new relief package have been looking at direct aid to schools, and creating flexibility in how states can distribute Coronavirus Relief Funds (CRF). However, as most know aid to schools is not interchangeable with aid to local governments, especially in the Garden State where local governments do not control their school districts. And flexibility in how states can distribute existing CRF

money does not go far enough in providing municipalities with the aid needed.

Many of New Jersey's federal representatives have already indicated their support of direct municipal aid and we would like to once again thank them for their efforts. Other Senators from across the country have written to Senate Majority Leader McConnell, who is the key to any bill in the Senate, imploring him to include direct municipal aid in the next relief package.

We are urging our members to continue your efforts in contacting your representatives to ensure they understand the importance of direct local aid and thank them for their support.. And, although Senate Majority Leader McConnell is not part of the NJ delegation, it is important to [contact him](#) as he is key in any new relief package. It is also helpful for you to contact the Republican members of the [Senate Committee on Finance](#) to express your support for direct local aid.

Contacts:

- Jon Moran, Senior Legislative Analyst, jmoran@njlm.org, 609-695-3481 x121.
- Frank Marshall, Esq., Associate General Counsel, fmarshall@njlm.org, 609-695-3481 x137.

III. 2020 Annual League Conference

a. Delegate Registration

[Delegate registration](#) will open on August 1. We encourage everyone to preregister online and have their conference credentials mailed to them in advance. This avoids delays and lines onsite in Atlantic City.

b. League Code of Conduct

The League intends to maintain a welcoming professional atmosphere in all aspects of the Annual League Conference. To that end, conduct that violates the [League Code of Conduct](#) is not tolerated by the League, anyone who witnesses it, or is subjected to it. Everyone who participates in the Annual League Conference is required to adhere to this code.

c. Conference Center Preparations

We are busy making arrangements for this live event including education and exhibits with the full expectation that by November the State will permit important gatherings of government officials like the Annual League Conference. The League is taking measures along with our partners at the Atlantic City Convention Center and all related service providers to follow CDC and NJDOH guidelines to create a safe and healthy conference. A healthy conference environment is our top priority for 2020 and with that, we are dedicated to providing an educational, informative, productive, and collaborative conference. Sanitization protocols that comply with CDC guidance are ready for public spaces, meeting areas, food service, and transportation. Venue layout will take into account social distancing, and preregistration will eliminate waiting lines.

d. Unauthorized Hotel Reservation Services

Every year there are unauthorized firms soliciting housing and hotel reservations from attendees at the Annual League Conference. We assure you that the only firm authorized to handle our conference housing reservations is AC Central Reservations. This information is on the top of the official conference housing form sent to all municipal clerks and posted on [our website](#).

Using unauthorized reservation services creates real problems for you and the conference as a whole. You cannot be assured your credit card information is secure and your room reservation may not actually be made. Using unauthorized services means your room will not be part of the official conference housing block so you won't get emergency housing information (which happened in both 2011 and 2012), nor will there be adequate shuttle bus services to your hotel.

As always, the League is available to answer your questions on any aspect of the annual conference and we strive to make your participation both enjoyable and highly productive.

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