



[Click to view newsletter archives](#)

View a Featured Ad at the End of this Email.

March 5, 2021

- I. State Issues
- II. Federal Issues
- III. 2020 Annual League Conference
- IV. Also of Interest

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 Issues

a. COVID-19 Weekly Update

This week in Trenton on the COVID-19 front: March 4 marked the one-year anniversary of the first confirmed case of COVID-19 in New Jersey. During his March 3, COVID briefing Governor Phil Murphy reviewed the steps New Jersey has taken in response. In addition, the Governor announced the expansion of eligibility for vaccinations. Executive Orders were issued, expanding capacity for weddings and extending utility shut-off moratoriums.

For March 5, 2021:

- 3,347 new positive cases for a total of 715,889 confirmed cases
- 35 new confirmed deaths for a total of 21,124 confirmed deaths
- The rate of transmission is 1.04

- 737 cases linked to 152 school outbreaks since August
- 2,333,723 vaccine doses have been administered, including 1,544,835 first doses and 788,782 second doses. 53% have been Moderna, 47% Pfizer, and 0% J&J.

Vaccine Information

On Monday, the Governor [announced the expansion of eligibility for the COVID-19 Vaccination](#) program to include educators, including support staff, in Pre-K through 12th grade; childcare workers in licensed and registered settings; public and local transportation workers/public safety workers who are not sworn law enforcement or fire professionals; migrant farm workers, members of tribal communities, individuals experiencing homelessness, and those living in shelters. Effective March 29, those in the following fields will be eligible for the vaccine: food production; agriculture and food distribution; eldercare and support; warehousing and logistics; social services support staff; elections personnel; hospitality; medical supply chain; postal and shipping services; clergy; and judicial system.

In addition, the second phase of community-based vaccination sites has been expanded to include Camden, Jersey City, Orange, Newark, and Pleasantville. These sites will provide vaccine access to members of the immediate community. A vaccination support team from the Department of Defense will provide the clinical staffing at the sites, and FEMA will provide non-medical support. Each site will be able to vaccinate approximately 1,800 people per week, and vaccinations at each location will take place over a two-week period, followed by a return to administer second doses.

It was also announced that Johnson & Johnson will be partnering with New Jersey-based Merck to produce the J&J vaccine.

The State continues to assist residents, with live agents from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., in getting information on how to register, as well as how to schedule vaccine appointments as people become eligible. The agents remind residents that there is no out-of-pocket expense to get vaccinated and that the two vaccines are not interchangeable.

The state continues to encourage the general public to [pre-register for eligibility for the vaccine online](#). Individuals will be permitted to input their personal, contact, health insurance, and demographic information. Those who are immediately eligible based on screening questions will be able to schedule an appointment.

Executive Orders

[Executive Order 228](#): Increasing capacity limits for indoor wedding receptions to 35% room capacity but no smaller than 10 and no larger than 150. In addition, outdoor wedding receptions can be no larger than 150. The reception venue staff is excluded from the capacity limit. The order took effect March 5 at 6:00 a.m.

[Executive Order 229](#): Extending the moratorium on utility shut-offs to June 30, 2021. The moratorium applies to residential gas, electric, and water utilities, both public and private. Utilities will not be permitted to charge late fees or reconnection fees for services that have been disconnected. In addition, cable and telecommunication providers are prohibited from disconnecting internet service in households that have one or more school-age child that may be using the services for educational purposes.

Unemployment Information

The Department of Labor announced for the week ending February 27, the [initial weekly unemployment claims](#) total was 10,384, the lowest in a year and a 3.5% decline week over week. This is the third straight week of decline. In addition, the Department of Labor plans to process a new batch of FEMA Lost Wages Assistance payments for claimants who have become eligible for this federal benefit retroactively since the last time the payments were processed. Eligible claimants can expect to receive separate payments in their direct deposit accounts or debit cards early next week.

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

b. Cannabis Legalization

Earlier this week we sent out a [special update on guidance on cannabis legalization](#) as well as a [full opt-out ordinance template language](#). On March 3 we held a [legislative briefing session](#) on the legalization of recreational use of cannabis and based on that briefing and subsequent questions we are preparing a FAQ document that will be posted to the League's [Cannabis page](#). In the coming week we will be providing additional sample ordinance language.

Contacts:

- Lori Buckelew, Assistant Executive Director, lbuckelew@njlm.org, 609-695-3481, x112.
- Frank Marshall, Esq., Associate General Counsel, fmarshall@njlm.org, 609-695-3481, x137.

c. Executive Order 227 – Age-Friendly State Advisory Council

On Tuesday, Governor Murphy [announced the creation of an Age-Friendly State Advisory Council](#) and signed [Executive Order No. 227](#), which will work to identify opportunities for creating livable communities for people of all ages, recommend best practices for age-friendly work, promote community inclusion across the state, and develop and deliver to the Governor a blueprint of best practices for advancing age-friendly practices across the state based on by the advice of the Advisory Council.

For more information, please read the League's [recent blog post](#) on this issue.

Contact: Paul Penna, Legislative Analyst, ppenna@njlm.org, 609 695-3481, x110.

d. Local Finance Notice 2021-05

On March 1, The Division of Local Government Services released [Local Finance Notice 2021-05](#), addressing budget certification, Consolidated Municipal Property Tax Relief Aid (CMPTRA), Energy Tax Receipts (ETR), Watershed Moratorium Offset Aid, Garden State Trust Fund Aid, and the Payment Schedule. LFN 2021-05 builds off the February 23 FY 2022 proposed budget. For more information, please see our [blog post on LFN 2021-05](#).

Contact: Andrew LaFevre, Legislative Analyst, alafevre@njlm.org, 609-695-3481, x116.

e. A-4297 - Remote Bingos and Raffles

The League supports [A-4297](#), which permits remote bingos and raffles and directs the Legalized Games of Chance Control Commission to adopt regulation permitting the conduct of raffles using technology, to the extent it is not inconsistent with the NJ Constitution.

The Assembly Tourism, Gaming and the Arts Committee will hear this legislation this Monday. The Senate companion bill, S-2631, unanimously passed the Senate last August.

During these trying times, governments must do what they can to be flexible to work with our community organizations. Most community organizations will use bingos and raffles to fundraise. This is a common sense measure to permit organizations to host bingos and raffles remotely will not only allow residents to participate but provides the organizations to continue fundraising efforts during the pandemic.

Contact: Paul Penna, Legislative Analyst, ppenna@njlm.org, 609 695-3481, x110.

f. Your Action Needed: PFRS 20 and Out Legislation on Governor's Desk

The full Assembly passed A-2562/[S-1017](#), which permits a PFRS employee who is enrolled before or after the bill's effective date to retire, regardless of age, upon attaining 20 or more years of service credit, and would allow that employee to receive a retirement allowance equal to 50% of the member's final compensation. This benefit will expire two years after enactment by a vote of 66-0-3. As we previously [reported](#), public safety unions are pushing this legislation in response to what they believe is a misinterpretation of the [1999 law](#). The public safety unions have argued that the costs of this enhanced benefit will be offset by potential healthcare savings. The League joins the New Jersey Association of Counties in opposing this legislation as the additional cost for the enhanced benefit will be borne by taxpayers at a time when local governments can least afford it.

Please contact the Governor and urge him to veto A-2562/S-1017.

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

g. Recap of Assembly Voting Session

On Monday the full Assembly held a voting session. In addition to passing A-2562/S-1017 as noted above, The Assembly passed the following legislation of municipal interest:

[A-2562/S-1017](#), which permits Police and Fire Retirement System (PFRS) employee who is enrolled before or after the bill's effective date to retire, regardless of age, upon attaining 20 or more years of service credit and would allow that employee to receive a retirement allowance equal to 50% of the member's final compensation. The legislation passed by a vote of 66-0-3 and awaits the Governor's consideration.

[A-4397/S-2606](#), which would allow solar energy providers to construct and install

residential solar projects on single-family homes prior to obtaining a construction permit during the duration of the public health emergency caused by COVID-19. This legislation passed the Assembly 68-0-1 and awaits consideration by the full Senate to concur with the Assembly amendments.

[A-4850](#), which establishes an alternate inspection process, under the State Uniform Construction Code Act, for property owners willing to pay a premium fee to expedite inspections. In addition a property owner to retain a private agency to perform construction code inspections if the local code enforcing agency is unable to complete an inspection within three business days of the time the owner requests the inspection to be performed. The legislation unanimously passed the Assembly and now awaits consideration by the Senate.

[A-850](#), which creates a “Broadband Access Study Commission” was amended on the Assembly floor to expand the Commission to 13 members by adding a representative of the New Jersey Library Association. The bill passed the Assembly 66-0-3 and was sent back to the Senate to concur with the Assembly amendments.

[A-1057/S-551](#), which permits a municipality with a population under 5,000 to appoint a nonresident as its municipal emergency management coordinator if a qualified resident cannot be recruited. The legislation unanimously passed the Assembly and now awaits consideration by the Governor.

[A-4830/S-3203](#), which establishes in-person early voting for certain elections. The legislation passed the Assembly 58-11-1 and awaits consideration by the Senate to concur with the Assembly amendments.

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

h. Local Finance Notice 2021-06: Transitional Aid Application

On March 3, The Division of Local Government Services [released Local Finance Notice 2021-06](#) addressing the Transitional Aid Application Process. Municipalities that intends to apply for CY 2021 Transitional Aid to Localities must notify the Department of Local Government Services no later than March 15. For more information, please see our [blog post](#).

Contact: Andrew LaFevre, Legislative Analyst, alafevre@njlm.org, 609-695-3481, x116.

II. Federal Issues

a. American Rescue Plan Moves to Senate for Consideration

Very early last Saturday morning, the House passed the American Rescue Plan along a party-line vote. The Senate voted to start consideration of the legislation on Thursday and the 600-page bill was read into the record, because unanimous consent was not granted to waive the reading of the bill. The bill reading concluded at 2 a.m. Later today the Senate returns and [will consider amendments](#), which are not expected to gain a majority of votes necessary to pass.

The [Senate version of the legislation](#) has made the following changes to the House passed bill including items that affect municipalities:

1. The amount of money provided to municipalities was reduced by \$5 billion. (Overall fund for local governments reduced by \$10 billion)
2. The Senate bill still allows the funds to be used for revenue replacement but is different language than the House bill.
3. In the Senate bill, entitlement and non-entitlement municipalities will receive their money in two tranches: 2021 and 2022. The CDBG distribution formula included in House version still holds.
4. The Senate bill prohibits contributions to pension funds or to cut taxes.
5. The bill includes the creation of a \$10 billion Critical Infrastructure Projects program for broadband.

The Senate is expected to stay in session over the weekend to consider full passage of the legislation. Since it differs from the House version, the Senate legislation will need to be sent to and considered by the House.

This situation is constantly changing and we will keep you informed.

Contact: Paul Penna, Legislative Analyst, ppenna@njlm.org, 609 695-3481, x110.

b. FCC Establishes Rules for New Low-Income Emergency Broadband Benefit

On February 26, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) announced through a Report and Order the [rules for a new Emergency Broadband Benefit](#) (EBB), funded for a one-time amount of \$3.2 billion. The funds will be available until expended or until six months after the COVID-19 emergency declaration expires.

The EBB provides eligible low-income households with a monthly \$50 discount for broadband service from participating providers, as well as a one-time \$100 discount on an internet-enabled device.

For more information, please read the League's [recent blog post](#) on this issue.

Contact: Paul Penna, Legislative Analyst, ppenna@njlm.org, 609 695-3481, x110.

III. 2020 Annual League Conference

a. Print Your CEU Certificates from the 2020 NJLM Virtual Conference

The tracking system from the 2020 NJLM Virtual Conference is now open. To print your certificates visit the [Tracking System webpage](#).

The system will be available until **May 1, 2021**.

b. It's Not Too Late!

We hope that the NJLM Virtual Conference allowed you to look back and forward on the challenges of the day, be it the COVID-19 pandemic, social and restorative justice or how to balance the competing interests in preparing for your 2021 budget. While we hope to be back in-person in Atlantic City in 2021, the virtual conference offers a unique benefit. The content of the approximately 80 programs and 145 virtual exhibitor booths will be available on-demand through October 31, 2021.

Anyone who is registered can simply log in to [the Conference website](#) to view any of the programs or visit any of the exhibitor booths. And for those who did not attend, it's not too late. We will continue to accept [registrations](#) for access to the Conference site. Those who register now will not be able to apply for CEUs but will have full access to all programs and exhibit booths. And please continue to visit the exhibitors who chose to support the 105th Annual Conference by stopping by their booths. You can contact exhibitors directly with any questions or comments by simply using the "Request Information" button on each booth. This will generate an automatic email to the exhibitor and they will contact you with a reply.

IV. Also of Interest

a. Wear Your Pearls for WIMG Movie Night

Join the Women in Municipal Government Committee Friday, March 12 at 6:30 p.m. to celebrate Women's History month with a special movie screening of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg's 2018 biopic, "On the Basis of Sex."

Elected and appointed women in municipal government are invited to bring their daughters to the Zoomcast. Celebrate the struggles and successes of women by putting on your pearls and logging in for an introduction by League President Clinton Town Mayor Janice Kovach and a livestream of the film.

This true story of Ruth Bader Ginsburg's fight for equal rights focuses on her early cases that built the career that led to her nomination and confirmation as a U.S. Supreme Court Justice and features Felicity Jones and is directed by Mimi Leder.

To register please send an email to administrator@njlm.org subject line "WIMG Movie Night" to receive the link to the free event.

b. Women at Work Virtual Conference

On Thursday, March 25, [GFOA of NJ](#) is holding its [Women at Work Virtual Conference](#) from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. It is an interactive workshop designed to inspire and empower women with actionable strategies to: Communicate with Confidence, Build A Network of Allies and Advocates, and Evict Their "Imposter" and Realize Their Potential. CEUs have been approved. Businesses can showcase their goods and service in between sessions.

[Details can be found on the registration page.](#) This event is hosted by Jennifer Willey,

CEO, of Wet Cement and sponsored by Primepoint HRMS & Payroll.






c. Sustainable Jersey Virtual Awards Luncheon

Sustainable Jersey is celebrating sustainability excellence, innovation and leadership at the Sustainable Jersey Virtual Awards Luncheon honoring the December 2019 and 2020 Sustainable Jersey certified municipalities and the special award recipients.

Although this event normally takes place during the New Jersey League of Municipalities Conference, this year it will be streamed live on the Sustainable Jersey Facebook page (@SustainableJersey) on Thursday, March 11, from 12:00 p.m. – 1:15 p.m. The municipal awards to be distributed are the Sustainability Champion Awards, the Mayor Art Ondish Leadership Award, the Creativity and Innovation Award, the Rookie of the Year Award, the Collaboration Award and the Sustainable Business Leadership Award. A video of the Virtual Awards Luncheon will be made available after the event.

Advertiser Spotlight

Real Estate • Environmental • Finance and Tax • Corporate and Business • Litigation Services • Debtor/Creditor • Government Services. Visit us to learn more at www.msbnj.com	 McMANIMON • SCOTLAND • BAUMANN
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

 New Jersey State League of Municipalities	222 West State Street, Trenton, NJ 08608 Phone: 609-695-3481 Web: www.njlm.org	
NJLM on Social Media: Facebook Twitter LinkedIn YouTube		
 Share on Facebook	 Share on Twitter	 Share via Email
Copyright 2021 NJLM. All Rights Reserved. 222 West State Street, Trenton, NJ 08608		Powered by 
If you no longer wish to receive emails from us, you may Unsubscribe .		

Email not displaying correctly? [View it in your browser.](#)