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April 16, 2021

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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 Issues

a. COVID-19 Weekly Update

This week New Jersey paused the administering of the J&J COVID-19 vaccine upon the recommendation, of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration pending further investigation into six reported incidences of severe blood clots following vaccinations. This pause will not delay the opening of vaccine eligibility to all New Jersey residents on Monday, April 19.

The Governor also noted that FEMA has begun offering funeral cost reimbursements, up to \$9,000, to financially help families who lost a loved one due to COVID-19. Anyone who lost someone to COVID-19 going back to the beginning of the pandemic may be eligible for assistance. [See more eligibility information](#). To apply, applicants must call 1-844-684-6333 as applications are only be taken by phone.

COVID Data for Thursday, April 15, 2021:

- 4,699 new positive cases for a total of 804,037 confirmed cases
- 30 new confirmed deaths for a total of 22,023 confirmed deaths
- The rate of transmission is at 1.08
- 1,002 cases linked to 221 school outbreaks since August 2020
- 4,350,920 vaccine doses have been administered, including 2,809,654 first doses and 1,630,837 second doses. 47% have been Moderna, 51% Pfizer, and 2% J&J.

Vaccine Information

This week out of an abundance of caution and following the guidance of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the U. S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the New Jersey Department of Health paused the administration of the Johnson & Johnson (Janssen) vaccine across all vaccination sites in the state. The CDC and the FDA are reviewing the data involving six reported cases of serious adverse effects—among nearly 7 million doses administered in the U.S.—in women between the ages of 18 and 48 who received the J&J vaccine. Symptoms occurred 6 to 13 days after vaccination. In these cases, a type of blood clot called cerebral venous sinus thrombosis was seen in combination with low levels of blood platelets. Both the CDC and FDA have said that these adverse events are extremely rare.

According to the FDA and CDC, individuals who have received the vaccine and develop abdominal pain, leg pain, shortness of breath, severe headache, or other unusual symptoms within three weeks after vaccination should contact their health care provider.

All New Jersey vaccination sites have been told to cancel or put on hold appointments for the J&J vaccine until further notice. For individuals scheduled to receive the J&J vaccine, the Department will work with all vaccination sites to make arrangements for administering an alternative two-dose vaccine. It was noted in New Jersey, just over 244,000 doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine were administered prior to hitting pause, and no similar adverse effects have been reported. The state will await further guidance from the federal government.

As previously reported, New Jersey has launched a [COVID-19 vaccine appointment finder](#) to assist in scheduling an appointment.

In addition, CVS, Walgreens, and Rite Aid continue to reserve appointments for/prioritizing educators and childcare workers. The State has also set aside a minimum of 10,000 doses each week for seniors aged 65 and older with Walmart. The State's call center has been reaching out to seniors on the waiting list to help them make appointments.

The State hotline 855-568-0545 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 235](#) – Extending the public health emergency for additional 30

days. This includes all Executive Orders issued under the Governor's authority under the Emergency Health Powers Act as well as all action taken by Executive Branch departments and agencies in response to the Public Health Emergency presented by the COVID-19 outbreak.

Contacts:

- Mike Cerra, Executive Director, mcerra@njlm.org, 609-695-3481, x120.
- Lori Buckelew, Assistant Executive Director, lbuckelew@njlm.org, 609-695-3481, x112.

b. Senate Committee to Host Hearing on Forest Stewardship and Prescribed Burning Legislation

On Wednesday, April 21, 2021 at 10:00 a.m., the Senate Environment and Energy Committee will host a remote hearing to take testimony from experts and interested parties on the topics of forest stewardship and prescribed burning, and the roles humans should play in managing the State's forests.

While no legislative action will be taken at the hearing, the committee will discuss these five bills:

- [S-2001](#), Establishes a forest stewardship program for State-owned lands. The League **opposes** S-2001 because the potential consequences outweigh the benefits. All State-owned land is within the border of a municipality. Commercial logging on these lands will inevitably impact roads, streams, and drainage systems on both State and municipal lands.
- [S-3547](#), Establishes a working group to evaluate coordination and cooperation between various government entities and private landowners with respect to forest stewardship in pinelands area.
- [S-3548](#), Sets minimum acreage goal and schedule for prescribed burns in pinelands area and statewide. The League **opposes** S-3548 because it sets an arbitrary goal for prescribed burns that is not based on leading science and fails to address other environmental concerns.
- [S-3549](#), Requires a forest stewardship plan for certain lands acquired for recreation and conservation purposes. The League **opposes** S-3549 because it imposes unnecessary burdens on municipalities and creates an unfunded mandate.
- [S-3550](#), Provides that municipal approval is not required for forest stewardship plans. The League **opposes** S-3550 because it violates the core principles of home rule by severely limiting municipal oversight of forested land, and eliminating important input from local communities surrounding the use and management of these lands.

League President and Clinton Town Mayor Janice Kovach will join League staff testifying at this hearing and we urge all interested to sign up to testify, or submit written testimony, in order to have your voice heard. Those wishing to testify must sign up to do so using the [Legislature's website](#) before 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 20. Written testimony should be submitted prior to hearing and be emailed to OLSAideSEN@njleg.org.

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

3481, x137.

c. Police and Fire Retirement (PFRS) Board Meeting

At the [April 12 Police and Fire Retirement \(PFRS\) board meeting](#), the PFRS Board's Investment Committee noted they were reviewing the illiquid assets in the portfolio and status of comingled accounts.

The Board favorably reported on the recommendation from Investment Committee. It adopted the resolution to Implementation of Asset Allocation which directed the Division of Investments to remove Home Mortgage Finance Agency (HMFA) investments from comingled accounts and that the Division of Investments separate PFRS assets in a stand-alone account by July 31, 2021.

The PFRS' Chief Investment Officer noted that the Division of Investments performance of illiquid assets was down 100 basis points over the past year and down 170 basis points over the past 3 to 5 years.

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

d. Cannabis Regulatory Commission Holds First Meeting

On Monday, the Cannabis Regulatory Commission held its first meeting. The Commission is tasked with creating rules and regulations regarding legalized and medical cannabis within the state. At this first meeting, the Commission took necessary procedural steps required to begin operating. With these procedural steps out of the way, the Commission can now focus on drafting regulations and setting up the application process for cannabis business. Under the recently signed cannabis legalization law, the Commission has 180 days from February 22, 2021 to promulgate regulations. The next meeting of the Commission will be held virtually, on April 22, 2021 at 10:30 a.m. Please monitor the Commission's [website](#) for more information on the next meeting.

Municipalities should also be reminded of their own deadline for action, which is rapidly approaching. As you should be aware, municipalities that fail to take action to prohibit cannabis operations within 180 days of February 22, 2021 will, by default, be locked into certain zoning rules allowing for cannabis operations for a period of five years. Please see the [League's cannabis information page](#) for additional information.

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- 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.

e. Local Government Ethics Law Financial Disclosure Statement Filing Deadline Update

At their April 14 meeting the Local Finance Board voted to extend the date upon which the Board would take enforcement action against non-filers of the 2021 Annual Financial Disclosure Statement until May 31, 2021 from the statutory deadline of April 30, 2021.

This extension was granted in light of the ongoing circumstances surrounding COVID-19 and the difficulties presented with COVID for the local government. The Division of Local Government Services will be issuing Local Finance Notice 2021-08, which contains the instructions on how to file the Financial Disclosure Statement, shortly. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the Financial Disclosure Statement filing process, please email LFB_FDS@dca.nj.gov or call 609-292-4537.

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

f. COVID-19 Survey of Municipal Recreational Programs

As municipalities continue to navigate COVID-19, we are conducting a survey on municipal summer recreational programs in the age of COVID as well as school operations. Please take a few minutes to complete this [brief survey](#).

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

g. Governor Murphy Signs New Legislation to Help Small Businesses and Non-Profits

On Monday, April 12, Governor Murphy [signed A-5446 into law](#). This legislation provides \$15 million in federal COVID-19 aid for small businesses and non-profits. The bill is part of a \$100 million relief plan that is aimed at helping New Jersey's small businesses recover from COVID-19.

The COVID-19 relief aid will be allocated by the New Jersey Economic Development Authority (NJEDA). The NJEDA will announce when the application for the aid will be available. There has been \$250 million in aid distributed to more than 55,000 businesses across New Jersey.

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

h. Working Group Issues Report on Police Body Worn Cameras and Reminder to Apply to Grant Program

Late last Friday, Governor Phil Murphy and State Attorney General Gurbir Grewal announced the release of a [report from the Interagency Working Group on Body Worn Cameras](#). The working group was created and tasked with identifying obstacles and providing recommendations in regards to the implementation of P.L. 2020, Chapters [128](#) and [129](#), which mandate the use of body worn cameras by all law enforcement officers within the state, by June 1, 2021. For more on the report, please see the League's recent [blog post](#).

The announcement also made note of a grant program being administered through the Attorney General's office, to assist law enforcement agencies with the costs associated with acquiring and use of body worn cameras. [Application packages](#) must be submitted to BWCGrants@njoag.gov, by **April 30, 2021**. Additional information and instructions for applying for the grant program can be found on the [Attorney General's website](#).

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

II. Federal Issues

a. Urge Congress to Restore Full SALT Deductibility, Congressional SALT Caucus Established

This week, New Jersey congressional members Bill Pascrell (D-9), Josh Gottheimer (D-5), Mikie Sherrill (D-11), and Tom Malinowski (D-7) joined with seven other congressional members from New York and California to establish the bipartisan Congressional SALT Caucus to advocate for removal of the deduction cap on State and Local Taxes (SALT) that was capped at \$10,000 in 2017.

Full deductibility is vital to the long-term economic health of New Jersey. In 2017, the League passed Conference Resolution [2017-02, Urging Congress to Protect the Deductibility of State and Local Taxes](#). It has remained among the League's Federal priorities since the cap was enacted in 2017 and the League adopted League Conference Resolution [2019-14 Urging Congress to Restore the Full Deductibility of State and Local Taxes](#).

The League supports [H.R. 946](#), the Stop the Attack on Local Taxpayers (SALT) Act, introduced by Congressman Pascrell, and co-sponsored by the other members of the New Jersey delegation that eliminates the property tax deduction cap.

Thank you if you are among the many municipalities that have passed a resolution in support of H.R. 946. If your municipality has not, please consider adopting the sample resolution, available in [word](#) or [pdf](#), supporting H.R. 946.

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

b. American Rescue Plan – Preparation for Municipalities that Will Receive Direct Payments

This week, the U.S. Treasury [sent a directive for entities with a population above 50,000 that are to receive direct payments of funds](#) stating they should prepare information including a [Data Universal Numbering System \(DUNS\)](#) number and an active registration with the [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#) database at SAM.gov to receive the payments. The DUNS and SAM registration process may take several business days to complete and Treasury recommends that eligible entities begin those registration processes if they have not already completed them.

Municipalities that qualify should also gather payment information including Entity Identification Number (EIN), name and title of authorized representative of the entity, and financial institution information (routing and account number, financial institution name and contact information).

For municipalities with a population under 50,000 residents, Treasury will allocate and pay funds to state governments, and the state will distribute funds to non-entitlement units of

local government in proportion to population. Non-entitlement units must have a valid DUNS number to meet reporting requirements under the program. If an entity does not have a valid DUNS number, please visit the [webform](#) or call 1-866-705-5711 to begin the registration process.

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. Local Government Week

Are you ready for NJ Local Government week, April 18-24, 2021? Need tips on how to celebrate? Visit the League's website for a ["how to" packet with ideas](#) ranging from basic, no-cost activities to some that are more complex.

Be sure to tag your social media posts with #njlocalgovt, and utilize the NJ Local Government Week logo that the League has provided by downloading from the League website.

Visit the League website for [tips, suggestions and a logo created to help promote your](#)

[events](#).

b. Cannabis Survey

With the new law creating a legal marijuana market in New Jersey, the League has worked with the Cannabis Advisory Group (CAG) to develop a survey for New Jersey mayors. The purpose of [this survey](#) is to identify the most pressing challenges and concerns facing their communities in preparation for the sale of both medical and adult-use cannabis and help inform and guide our work with the State Cannabis Regulatory Commission.

We thank CAG for their partnership on this initiative. The [survey is available online](#) should take no more than 10 minutes and we ask that be respond by April 30.

Any questions can be directed to Executive Director Mike Cerra at mcerra@njlm.org.

c. NJ Infrastructure Bank 2021 Webinar

The New Jersey Infrastructure Bank will be holding [webinars](#) on April 22, 2021 from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and April 29, 2021 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. The webinars will discuss program and financing changes coming in State Fiscal Year 2022 Program Financing Enhancements including utilization of WIFIA Program funds and introductions of blended interest rates as well as New Principal Forgiveness Loan Opportunities including small system lead remediation and harmful algal blooms.

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

d. Expanded Earned Income Tax Credit Program

On National Earned Income Tax Credit Awareness Day, the New Jersey Department of Treasury launched a statewide awareness campaign to encourage eligible taxpayers to take advantage of New Jersey's expanded program. Beginning with the 2020 tax filing New Jersey's Earned Income Tax Credit (NJEITC) is increasing to 40% of the federal credit an average of \$882 as well as lowering the minimum age eligibility for EITC from 25 to 21 years of age.

Treasury has created a wide range of [promotional materials that can be found online](#) for any partners looking to help raise awareness about the NJEITC. More information on NJEITC including eligibility is available at the New Jersey Earned Income Tax Credit [website](#).




New Jersey State League of Municipalities

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