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April 23, 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.

a. COVID-19 Weekly Update

This week COVID-19 continues to focus on vaccinations, gatherings, and the Restaurant Revitalization Fund.

COVID-19 Data for April 22, 2021

- New Confirmed Cases – 2,895
- New Probable Cases – 527
- Rate of Transmission .093
- New Lab-Confirmed Deaths 31
- Hospital-Reported Deaths 18
- Fully vaccinated individuals 2,622,120

Vaccination Eligibility

Currently, both the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines are still available to be administered, with Moderna currently at 44%, Pfizer at 52%, and Johnson & Johnson at 4% of New Jersey's

vaccinated population. As of this morning, the Johnson & Johnson vaccine is still paused by the federal government. A CDC advisory meeting is ongoing as this is being written, and there may be a determination regarding the vaccine as soon as today. We will keep you updated with all news surrounding COVID-19 updates.

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

Gathering Timeline

At his Wednesday briefing, the Governor noted that his administration will be providing guidance on outdoor and summer activities in the next week or two.

Restaurant Revitalization Fund

The American Rescue Plan Act established the [Restaurant Revitalization Fund \(RRF\)](#) to provide funding to help restaurants and other eligible businesses keep their doors open. This \$28.6 billion program will provide restaurants with funding equal to their pandemic-related revenue loss. For more information, [please visit our recent blog post](#).

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

b. Governor Signs 20 and Out Legislation

On Monday, Governor Murphy signed into law [P.L. 2021, c. 52](#) which permits police and firefighters to retire after 20 years of service regardless of age and receive a pension allowance equal to 50% of their final compensation. This benefit will only apply to police and firefighters currently enrolled in the Police and Fire Retirement System. The new law took effect immediately but will expire in two years. As we [previously reported](#) the League, along with New Jersey Association of Counties, opposed this benefit enhancement at a time when local governments can least afford it.

Contacts:

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

c. NJ Cannabis Regulatory Commission Holds Second Meeting

The Cannabis Regulatory Commission held its second public meeting on Thursday. The Commission took action on a number of procedural issues, including adopting a [meeting schedule](#) for the year. Although not mentioned during the meeting, the Commission is tasked with enacting regulations within 180 days of February 22, 2021.

Municipalities should also be reminded of their own deadlines 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.

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.

d. New Jersey's First Climate Change Resilience Strategy is Released

Yesterday, the Murphy Administration released a draft of the state's first [Climate Change Resilience Strategy](#) (strategy) for public review and comment. The strategy was developed in response to [Executive Order 89](#), issued by Governor Phil Murphy in October 2019. The strategy outlines six state priorities, each of which includes recommendations to guide state and local government efforts to protect vulnerable communities, infrastructure, business, and the environment from the effects of climate change.

The strategy includes over 100 recommendations designed to help strengthen New Jersey against climate impacts, including sea-level rise, chronic flooding, rising temperatures, and more frequent and intense storms. Some of the key outcomes sought by these recommendations include a statewide technical assistance program to support local climate resilience actions, and the inclusion of local government and community leaders and their expertise in state resilience decisions.

The draft strategy is available for public review and comment, and the Department of Environmental Protection (NJ DEP) will host two public webinars, on Tuesday, May 4, at 10:30 a.m., and on Wednesday, May 5, at 6 p.m. Those wishing to attend these webinars must pre-register at the [DEP website](#). To comment on the draft strategy please visit the [special DEP webpage](#).

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

e. League President Testifies at Senate Hearing on Forest Stewardship Issues

This week, the Senate Environment and Energy Committee [hosted a 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 was taken at the hearing, the committee focused its discussion on five bills which the League opposes. NJLM President Janice Kovach, Mayor, Clinton Town, [provided testimony](#) to the Committee on behalf of the League, expressing the importance for forests to local communities and the impact the bills would have.

The League is continuing to monitor this important issue and will continue to ensure that municipal concerns are addressed.

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

f. Governor Signs Law Allowing for Nonresident Municipal Emergency Management Coordinators

This week, Governor Murphy signed into law [S-551](#) (now, P.L.2021, c.50). This new law permits the appointment of a non-resident municipal emergency management coordinator in municipalities with populations under 5,000 persons, if a qualified municipal resident cannot be recruited for the position. The appointee must, however, be a resident of another municipality in the same county. Prior to the adoption P.L.2021, c.50, municipal emergency coordinators were required to be municipal residents unless the municipality was participating in a shared service agreement.

The League supported this legislation and we thank the sponsors for their attention to a problem faced by less populous municipalities.

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

II. Federal Issues

a. The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Announces Competitive Grant Opportunity

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) published a [Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\)](#) to apply for \$1 billion in Fiscal Year 2021 discretionary grant funding through the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grants. The League encourages municipalities to consider applying. For more information, including upcoming DOT technical application guidance webinars, please read the [League's recent blog post](#).

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. Conference Certificate Window Closes May 1

The tracking system from the 2020 NJLM Virtual Conference will close at the end of this month. 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 expect 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

Did you celebrate NJ Local Government Week this year? Thank you so much for connecting with your residents and showing off your municipal pride!

We hope you tagged your social media posts with #njlocalgovt, and utilized the NJ Local Government Week logo that the League has provided by downloading from the League website.

Please share your activities with the League for inclusion in social media and NJ Municipalities magazine by [filling out the activity log form](#).

Save the Dates! Next year's NJ Local Government Week will be celebrated April 3-9,

2022.

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. 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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