



TOWN OF WESTPORT
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Westport Board of Health
COVID-19
January 15, 2021

Case Status:

Total number of confirmed COVID-19 positive cases of Westport residents on the state's weekly city & town report of January 14, 2021 was **1021- a whopping increase of 148 cases since last week.** Westport remains in the RED zone of higher risk. Although we continue to see household transmission as the main source of positive cases, the Contact Tracing Collaborative (CTC) is tracking one cluster event in town. We now have four (up from two last week) residents hospitalized. No additional resident deaths fortunately, so the total remains at 7 since the beginning of the pandemic. However, with the increased numbers we are once again sending all cases for follow up to the CTC and will no longer have updated health status data for the town. The rolling 14 day incidence rate of cases has risen sharply to **96.4/100,000**. The state has created an [interactive data dashboard](#), which combines statewide daily and city/town weekly COVID case and testing data, plus many more variables.

Testing Data:

17,130 COVID tests have been performed on Westport residents to date, based on the state's January 14th weekly report. There were **247** positive tests out of 1920 done in the last 14 days for a positivity rate of **12.86%** (up from 11.22% last week). This rate is has continued to climb steadily over the last few weeks. The statewide positivity rate is now at 7.99%.

Vaccine Update:

- We are currently in **Phase 1** of the [MA COVID-19 vaccine distribution timeline](#). Vaccinations for phase 1 priority groups continue until complete. So far vaccinations have begun for COVID-facing healthcare workers, Long term care facilities, First responders (EMS, Fire, Police) and Congregate care settings (inc. corrections & shelters).
- Next in line as part of Phase 1 will be home-based healthcare workers and non-COVID-facing healthcare workers.
- COVID-19 vaccine locations only for individuals currently eligible to be vaccinated can be found here: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-vaccine-locations-for-individuals-currently-eligible-to-be-vaccinated>
- **Phase 2** of vaccine distribution is expected to begin in early February. The first priority of Phase 2 now includes residents and staff of low-income and affordable **senior housing**, along with individuals age 75+ and persons of all ages with 2+ comorbidities.

Latest State Guidance:

As of Dec 26th, temporary public health guidance for lower gathering size and business capacity is in effect and **has been extended an extra two weeks through January 24th**. Read a summary of the restrictions [here](#).

Capacity Limits: Most industries in Massachusetts remain subject to a 25% capacity limit, including restaurants, places of worship, retail businesses etc. All other rules and restrictions in each sector-specific guidance will continue to remain in effect.

Gatherings Limit: Indoor gatherings remain limited to 10 people. Outdoor gatherings remain limited to 25 people outside. The gatherings limit applies to private homes, event venues and public spaces.

Updated Travel Order Guidance:

Some new guidance about the Massachusetts Travel Order is now available. At this time, vaccinated individuals must continue to comply with the Governor's Travel Order and related testing and quarantine requirements. However, individuals who are COVID-19-recovered, (i.e., tested positive more than 10 days but less than 90 days ago and who do not have symptoms) do not need to obtain a negative PCR test before traveling to, or quarantine upon arrival to, Massachusetts. Also, Hawaii remains the only lower risk state. <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-travel-order>

Flu Vaccine Requirement for school-aged Children dropped

The Mass. Department of Public Health is removing the requirement for flu vaccination for attendance in childcare/preschool, primary, secondary and postsecondary education. Preliminary data show that this has been a mild flu season to date, presumably as people have received their seasonal flu vaccine and have been adhering to mask-wearing and social distancing due to COVID-19. Given the intensive Commonwealth-wide efforts regarding COVID-19 vaccination, DPH wants to alleviate the burden to obtain flu vaccination and focus on continuing our COVID -19 vaccination efforts.

New Variant of COVID-19:

While not yet detected here, scientists expect the new variant of COVID-19 is in Massachusetts already. Since it is more contagious, the importance of following CDC's recommendations for slowing the spread—wearing masks, staying at least 6 feet apart from others, avoiding crowds, ventilating indoor spaces, and washing hands often—is even more vital. Learn more: [New COVID-19 Variants | CDC](#).

COVID Testing:

Stop the Spread: Has been extended to March 15th. Free testing of asymptomatic individuals. Local sites are in Fall River and New Bedford. The Whale's Tooth parking lot rapid test site in New Bedford, capable of handling 1000 tests a day, is operational. Register at app.beacontesting.com/.

All Test sites: Check the individual test sites for appointment, referral and insurance requirements.

NEW Resource:

Sector-Specific Small Business Relief Grant Program: Targets industries experiencing the most significant economic hardship and a loss of revenue, including restaurants, food trucks, personal services, independent retailers and others for grants up to \$75,000. The online application will close on **Friday, January 15**. Program details are at: <https://www.empoweringsmallbusiness.org/>

Town COVID Updates:

- **Westport First Responder Vaccine Clinic:** Westport has partnered with Dartmouth to conduct a Phase 1 Regional COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic for public safety employees, school nurses and first responders only. Three clinics have been held so far and the final one will be in Westport on Saturday morning.
- **Phase 2 of the vaccine rollout will begin in February to April,** and will include individuals with a high risk of COVID complications, teachers (early education, K-12), grocery, utility, food and agriculture, sanitation, public works and public health workers and adults 65+. We will provide information about available vaccination clinics as we learn more.
- **Town Hall and Annex** – Open to the public BY APPOINTMENT ONLY. Service by phone, mail, outdoor drop box, or online is recommended. Face masks are required for in-person appointments.
- **The Westport Food Pantry is at the Westport Grange, 931 Main Rd.** Next food pantry pick-up will be Monday, January 18 from 9 am to noon. Monetary donations can be sent to the Friends of the Westport Council on Aging (FWCOA) Attn. Food Pantry, PO Box 4228, Westport, MA 02790. Food and grocery gift card donations are accepted on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings.
- **NEW! Pet Food Pantry** – The Westport Animal Control Department is proud to join the efforts of the Westport Food Pantry by providing dog and cat supplies. Donations of dry or canned dog or cat food, (maximum weight 25#), as well as treats, toys, cat litter and puppy training pads are gladly accepted. Please drop off your pet supply donation at the Grange, during its regular donation times.
- **Schools** - The Westport Community Schools now reports weekly updates on COVID cases at <https://westportschools.org/covid-19/>.

In closing:

Stay safe everyone. Thank you for your continued cooperation.

Matthew J. Armendo, Director