



1001 E. Fayette Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21202  
*Bernard C. "Jack" Young, Mayor*  
*Letitia Dzirasa, M.D., Commissioner of Health*

March 15, 2020

Dear Community Leader:

In light of the continued global spread of COVID-19, the Health Department has heard from a number of community organizations throughout Baltimore regarding questions and concerns about this virus. I would like to take this opportunity to provide some information on COVID-19, as well as guidance for you to share with your neighbors.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has provided community guidance. This guidance, [available on the CDC's website for your review](#), is meant to help you and your neighbors adopt prevention strategies and mitigate the impact of COVID-19 if residents in your neighborhood are affected.

On Saturday, March 14, Baltimore City recorded its first positive case of COVID-19, via community transmission. There are still steps you can take right now to help your community prepare, in order to help slow the spread of COVID-19:

- We are asking residents to practice social distancing and avoid large gatherings. However, if your group must meet, please take a moment to review the [Health Department's event guidance](#), issued on March 12, 2020.
- If you must meet in person, please ensure key personal prevention strategies are utilized:
  - Practice everyday preventive actions, including staying home if you are sick, regularly washing your hands, and using a tissue if you need to cough or sneeze. For more tips, [go here](#).
  - Provide COVID-19 prevention supplies, including soap, hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol, and tissues.
- Consider the needs of older adults, persons with disabilities, and other individuals with access and functional needs in your community.
- Communicate information about COVID-19 and everyday preventive actions.
- Older adults (60 and older) are at a higher risk of developing severe illness. We recommend older adults avoid gatherings in large crowds.

Mayor Bernard C. "Jack" Young has taken numerous executive actions to protect the health and wellbeing of Baltimore City residents in preparation for a possible outbreak of COVID-19. Baltimore City now has its first case of the virus and we are entering a new phase of this emergency situation.

Mayor Young has canceled all events with 250 people or more, and released guidance for organizers of events for under 250 people, in line with the Governor Hogan's Executive Order.

Mayor Young has also suspended all turn-offs of water service, and helped enact a halt to evictions.

**Starting Monday, March 16, 2020 Mayor Young has instructed that:**

- All Senior Centers and Recreation Centers will suspend programs. These centers will be kept open as food distribution centers. Here is the [link](#) to review those locations. Baltimore City Public Schools will be opening [10 public schools](#) as food distribution centers.
- The City of Baltimore has activated sheltering in place for our homeless neighbors. City-funded homeless day centers will remain open and people experiencing homelessness are encouraged to remain in shelters and will not be forced out during the day. The Mayor's Office of Homeless Services, the Baltimore City Health Department, and the Department of General Services are working to identify a site for community quarantining should our city require it.
- The City of Baltimore will only accept payments online, by mail, or, in limited cases, by phone. We will suspend late fees through at least May 1st. Payment windows at the Abel Wolman Building will be closed. Please click [here](#) for detailed payment information.
- The City of Baltimore will only accept permit applications online, including those issued by Department of Transportation, Recreation & Parks, Health Department, Department of Public Works, and Department of Housing & Community Development. For information about a specific type of permit, please call 311.
- All licenses issued by the City of Baltimore that expire March 5, and after, are extended until 30 days after the end of the Governor's State of Emergency.
- The City of Baltimore will suspend all vehicle retrievals from its Pulaski Highway and Fallsway Impound Facilities. This suspension of vehicle retrievals will remain in effect until further notice. During this time, the main offices of the City's impound facilities located at 6700 Pulaski Highway and 410 Fallsway will be closed to the public, and vehicle storage fees will be frozen so that additional storage fees will not accrue.
- The City of Baltimore will suspend all in-person services and all walk-ins at Community Action Partnership (CAP) Centers. CAP Center staff will continue to report to the centers to field customer phone calls and process applications for energy assistance and the city's BH2O water discount program. Community members may apply for energy assistance online [here](#) or call 410-396-6406. Community members may download the BH2O application [here](#) and mail in their applications. For more information on how to contact a CAP Center, visit [our website here](#).
- The City of Baltimore is suspending in person services at the City's Career and Youth Opportunity Centers. Staff will provide services and appointments by telephone and can be reached at 410-396-3009. Customers may contact the centers directly during normal office hours. Please visit [moed.baltimorecity.gov/moed-service-locations](http://moed.baltimorecity.gov/moed-service-locations) to identify the nearest location's contact information.
- The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, MIMA, has prepared [multilingual resources](#) to increase awareness in Baltimore's immigrant communities and limit the spread of COVID-19.

Thank you for sharing this information with you neighbors and keeping our communities healthy. Remember – you are not in this alone! The entire Health Department staff, as well as our counterparts across local, state, and federal government agencies are working tirelessly to address this virus and protect residents from harm. For more information about the work that we are doing, visit our [COVID-19 webpage](#) for updates.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Letitia Dzirasa, M.D.  
Baltimore City Health Commissioner