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COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Gov. Beshear Provides Update on COVID-19

Visit the Governor's [Facebook](#) page to watch today's news conference

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (Sept. 16, 2020)** – Gov. Andy Beshear on Wednesday updated Kentuckians on the state's continuing efforts to fight the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19).

"In general, what we are seeing is we still have higher case numbers than we would like to see, but we don't at the moment see those accelerating from last week or the week before," the Governor said. "We see our positivity rate coming down, and that is a good thing."

#### 'The Fast 4 at 4'

Gov. Beshear on Wednesday highlighted a variety of issues of importance to Kentuckians and the commonwealth.

#### 1. **CARES Act Funding for Eastern Kentucky**

Today, Gov. Beshear announced 18 Eastern Kentucky governments were approved for \$2,789,546 in reimbursements from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act for local governments with expenses related to COVID-19.

“Our local governments have been important partners during our fight against COVID-19,” said Gov. Beshear. “They have helped enforce guidelines, share information and keep Kentuckians safe. This funding ensures they can continue to do so while we remain diligent in our fight.”

The governments approved for reimbursement are: Bath, Estill, Floyd, Harlan, Knox, Leslie, Menifee, Owsley and Wolfe counties; Barbourville, Camargo, Clay City, Elkhorn City, Grayson, Manchester, Pineville, South Shore and West Liberty.

This funding will be used to reimburse payroll expenses for public safety officials, PPE, cleaning and sanitizing supplies, teleworking equipment and other expenses necessary to combat COVID-19.

For more information and to view the full news release, [click here](#).

## 2. **Direct Support Professionals Week**

Today, Gov. Beshear put a spotlight on Direct Support Professionals Week, which began Sept. 13 and runs through Sept. 19.

“Today, we pause to honor the dedication of a very special group of front-line heroes. We recognize the important work direct support professionals, or DSPs, provide every day of the year to Kentuckians with disabilities,” the Governor said. “This year our direct support professionals have been called upon to meet the challenge of COVID-19. DSPs across the commonwealth have made personal sacrifices to both support and protect those they serve.”

He said DSPs have volunteered to move into residential homes to avoid multiple staff coming and going and increasing the risk of coronavirus exposure.

“We extend a sincere thank you to Kentucky’s direct support professionals whose dedication has saved countless lives during this pandemic,” Gov. Beshear said. “We know that with you as part of Team Kentucky, we have a much better chance of all getting through this, and getting through this together.”

### 3. **Voting**

Gov. Beshear is encouraging all Kentuckians to make a plan to vote, either by mail, in person during early voting or in person on Election Day. On Wednesday, he highlighted those whose voting rights have been newly restored.

“Remember you have more ways to vote than ever before,” the Governor said. “If you’re concerned about COVID-19, you can go online right now to request an absentee ballot at [GoVoteKy.com](https://www.govoteky.com).”

More than 170,000 Kentuckians have had their voting rights restored because of the executive order Gov. Beshear signed days after taking office. These Kentuckians, convicted of non-violent and non-sexual felonies, who have repaid their debts to society through completed sentences, can participate fully in our democracy.

Visit [CivilRightsRestoration.ky.gov](https://www.CivilRightsRestoration.ky.gov) to check your eligibility.

The deadline to register online to vote in the 2020 General Election is 4 p.m. local time on Oct. 5. Kentucky residents can register by visiting the state’s [Online Voter Registration webpage](#).

### 4. **Mask Up Kentucky**

Gov. Beshear also stressed the continued importance of everyone wearing face coverings, calling it the single most important thing all of us can do to fight COVID-19.

“This is our greatest and most important tool for getting back to everything we want to do,” the Governor said. “Do the right thing: Mask up.”

He also encouraged Kentuckians to spread the word on social media using #MaskUpKY and #MaskUpKentucky hashtags.

### **Case Information**

As of 4 p.m. Sept. 16, Gov. Beshear said there were at least 58,764 coronavirus cases in Kentucky, 776 of which were newly reported Wednesday. Ninety-one of the newly reported cases were from children ages 18 and younger, of which 13 were children ages 5 and under. The youngest was only 3 months old.

“We continue to see this trend, where more and more kids are testing positive. They are becoming a bigger percentage of our positivity rate for a couple of

reasons,” the Governor said. “One, thankfully, kids are being tested more often, and two, they are out doing more. But remember as we are making these decisions, our belief is that kids can transmit this virus as easily as anybody else.”

Unfortunately, Gov. Beshear reported eight new deaths Wednesday, raising the total to 1,082 Kentuckians lost to the virus.

The deaths reported Wednesday include a 49-year-old woman and a 76-year-old man from Christian County; a 66-year-old man from Fayette County; an 84-year-old woman from Greenup County; a 74-year-old man from Jackson County; two men, ages 68 and 83, from Montgomery County; and an 88-year-old man from Union County.

“Remember, COVID-19 doesn’t care about your county line or whether you are rural or urban,” the Governor said.

As of Wednesday, there have been at least 1,090,160 coronavirus tests performed in Kentucky. The positivity rate was 3.89%, and at least 11,043 Kentuckians have recovered from the virus.

For additional information, including up-to-date lists of positive cases and deaths, as well as breakdowns of coronavirus infections by county, race and ethnicity, [click here](#). To see all recent daily reports, [click here](#).

Information about COVID-19 and schools is also being made available. To view the reports, [click here for K-12](#) and [here for colleges and universities](#).

### **Contact Tracing Update**

Mark Carter, a former health care industry executive chosen by Gov. Beshear to lead Kentucky’s contact tracing efforts, provided an update Wednesday on the initiative.

He noted that contact tracing information and other material is now available at [\[kycovid19.ky.gov\]](http://kycovid19.ky.gov)kycovid19.ky.gov in English, Spanish, Burmese, Somali and Chinese.

“In addition to those materials, we also recommend downloading and sharing the temporary [Medicaid Presumptive Eligibility One Pager](#), which is also available on the website,” Carter said. “This includes important and timely information for residents about who can, and where to, apply for this type of Medicaid assistance.”

He said nearly 400 more workers have been added to the staff since July, including contact tracers, disease investigators, regional team members and social support coordinators.

“This brings our total to 1,240 staff members who are not only trained to trace the spread of COVID-19, but to also help our local communities with the support and resources needed to successfully quarantine and monitor their symptoms,” he said.

Carter again went through process that people can expect if they are determined to have been in contact with someone with COVID-19, including initial contact by their local health departments. He asked that everyone do the right thing and provide the information requested and take the steps suggested to keep themselves and those close to them safe.

“Our public health professionals at the state, regional and local levels are working nonstop to protect you. This is not easy. This is not fun. We are working through this pandemic to save as many Kentuckians as we can,” Carter said. “It’s on all of us to do the right thing – wear your mask, social distance as much as possible, get a test if you feel sick and if you’re asked to quarantine or isolate, do it. If you need help with that, our contact tracing teams are prepared to help you.”

### **More Information**

Read about other key updates, actions and information from Gov. Beshear and his administration at [governor.ky.gov](http://governor.ky.gov), [kycovid19.ky.gov](http://kycovid19.ky.gov) and the Governor’s official social media accounts [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).

Kentuckians can also access translated COVID-19 information and summaries of the Governor’s news conferences at [teamkentuckytranslations.com](http://teamkentuckytranslations.com).

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