

WEEKLY UPDATE

May 17, 2021



Gov. Whitmer Lifts Mask Requirement for Fully Vaccinated Michiganders

Governor Gretchen Whitmer announced on Friday the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) is updating the Gatherings and Mask Order to align with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's latest guidance on face coverings. The new order took effect on Saturday, May 15 at 9AM.

Last Thursday, the CDC released updated guidance recommending “fully vaccinated people no longer need to wear a mask or physically distance in any setting, except where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations, including local business and workplace guidance.”

Under the updated MDHHS Gatherings and Mask Order, Michiganders who are outdoors will no longer need to wear a mask regardless of vaccination status. While indoors, fully vaccinated Michiganders will no longer need to wear a mask, but residents who are not vaccinated, or have not completed their vaccinations, must continue to wear a mask or face covering to protect themselves and others. After July 1, the broad indoor mask mandate will expire.

Nearly \$1 Billion More Expected from Federal COVID Funds

The U.S. Department of Treasury announced Monday that Michigan will receive \$885 million more than originally expected from the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. Cities will receive \$1.82 billion, and counties will receive \$1.94 billion and non-entitlement units – townships – will receive \$644 million, which is approximately \$40 million less than originally estimated. Further, townships will receive the funds through state appropriations and other local governments will receive the funds directly.

Local governments should expect to receive funds in two steps, with half provided in May 2021 and the balance 12 months later. States that have experienced a net increase in the unemployment rate of more than 2 percentage points from February 2020 to the latest available data as of the date of certification will receive their full allocation of funds in a single payment; other states will receive funds in two equal parts.



The funds can be used in the following ways:

- Support public health expenditures and address negative impacts caused by the public health emergency.
- Replace lost public sector revenue by using the funding to provide governmental services.
- To provide premium pay for essential workers and invest in water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure.
- Support small business and speed up the recovery in tourism, travel, and hospitality sectors.
- Replace unemployment trust funds to pre-pandemic levels.

States are prohibited from using the funding to directly, or indirectly, offset a reduction in net tax revenue due to a policy change implemented after March 3, 2021, and cannot use the funding to make a deposit to a pension fund. The federal government is also prohibiting the funding from being used for debt service, legal settlements or judgments and deposits into rainy day funds. Further, general infrastructure spending is not allowed outside of water, sewer, and broadband investments.

Department Budgets Move to Next Chamber

The House and Senate have each passed its respective departmental budgets and work continues as they are discussed in the second chambers. The budgets have largely come in under the Governor's recommended spending recommendations and so far in many instances the legislature has taken a very different policy approach to what the Executive recommended. Significant work continues, but at this time, the legislature intends to have a budget on the Governor's desk by the July 1 deadline established in 2019.

It does not appear that the Governor and legislative leaders have begun serious discussions on the FY 2021-22 budgets at this time. It is expected that the budget process will continue to be a priority focus of the legislature in the coming weeks.



House Republicans Add \$80 Million for Law Enforcement Support

The House passed HB 4420, a \$3.6 billion supplemental that included \$80 million for various programs directed at recruitment and retention of local law enforcement officers. Over the past several years, local governments across the state have struggled to fill many vacancies not only with law enforcement but firefighters and EMS support as well.

Prior to the vote on Thursday afternoon, Speaker of the House Jason Wentworth, Rep. Mike Mueller (R-Linden), Rep. Ryan Berman (R-Commerce Twp.), Rep. TC Clements (R-Temperance), along with representatives of law enforcement including Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police President Chief Ron Wiles, held a press conference announcing the proposed amendments which included the following:

- \$5 million for police officer signing bonus.
- \$10 million for community policing grant programs
- \$10 million for law enforcement job shadowing programs
- \$2.15 million for recruitment marketing programs
- \$30 million in grants and scholarships for assisting attendees of police academy programs.
- \$10 million grants for body cameras
- \$7.5 million for mental health services targeted for first responders.



Speaker Wentworth and MACP President, Chief Ron Wiles talking with reporters about proposed funding to improve local police recruitment and retention in our cities and townships.



State Senate Taking a Lead Regarding COVID Passport Ban

The senate adopted a last-minute amendment prohibiting the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) from using funds to create a COVID-19 vaccination passport. Sen. Tom Barrett (R-Charlotte) offered the amendment to SB 79 after being made aware of 2 states that have authorized a vaccination passport and rumors of other states possibly following suite. The House has taken up a similar bill, HB 4667 sponsored by Rep. Sue Allor (R-Wolverine).

The Governor has stated that a vaccination passport is not being considered by the state.

Broadband Tax Exemption Bill Vetoed by Governor

SB 46, sponsored by Sen. Aric Nesbitt (R-Lawton) to exempt broadband internet equipment in underserved areas from property taxes was vetoed by Governor Whitmer. The governor vetoed a similar bill last month, HB 4210, which would have exempted this equipment from the personal property tax.

The governor stated that SB 46 did not provide a mechanism for assessors or the Department of Treasury to determine whether the equipment claimed is eligible under the requirement that it resolve a lack of broadband service. Further, she stated the bill fails to include National Telecommunications Infrastructure Administration grantees, businesses primarily focused on serving tribal communities and minority-serving institutions.

ICRC Holds First Public Hearing

The Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (ICRC) has held its first public hearing on May 11, 2021. A total of 125 residents from Jackson and surrounding communities attended the hearing both in-person and via Zoom and 72 citizens provided public comment before the commission. Constitutionally, the commission is required to hold 10 hearings across the state, and presently the commission has scheduled 16 hearings.



Some of the comments shared at the hearing expressed interest by participants in keeping library and school districts intact within newly drawn maps. People also expressed support for considering diversity that not only includes racial and ethnic diversity but also urban and rural.

For a list of upcoming public hearings, click on the following link:
[MICRC – Meeting and Hearing Schedule \(michigan.gov\)](#)

2nd Republican SOS Challenger Announces

Metro Detroit area lawyer Kristina Karamo has announced she is running as a Republican for secretary of state. “Running to be secretary of state is not a ‘career move’ for me”, she said in a statement Thursday. “I am running to remove corruption from our elections and from the Michigan SOS office. That corruption is a real threat to our survival as a state and as a nation. A secure election is how we the people, give our consent to be governed.”

Ms. Karamo currently serves as a Michigan Republican Party State Committeewoman and as a member of Michigan’s 14th District Republican Executive Committee.

The other Republican to file a campaign committee for Secretary of State is Cathleen Postmus, the Plainfield Township (Kent County) clerk.

In Person Work Returns May 24

The restrictions on in-person work will be lifted beginning May 24 as the state hit 55 percent of those 16 and over being vaccinated. The next threshold to hit is 60 percent. Two weeks after reaching that marker, the state will increase indoor capacity at sports stadiums to 25 percent as well as conference centers, banquet halls and funeral homes. The capacity limit on gyms and exercise facilities will rise to 50 percent, and the curfew for restaurants and bars will end.

Further, the state has adopted the new CDC guidelines on mask wearing, meaning that Michigan’s nearly year-long requirement that people wear masks to slow the spread of the coronavirus has been rescinded for residents who have been vaccinated as well as for the unvaccinated when they are outdoors.

In a news release, DHHS said the mask requirement would end for everyone regardless of vaccination status July 1 although that has not been included in the most recent order.





Khoury
Johnson
Leavitt

kjlteam.com
124 W. Allegan, Suite 1700
Lansing, MI 48933

Social Media

-  [Khoury Johnson Leavitt](#)
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Additional Resources

- www.michigan.gov/coronavirus.com
- www.michigan.gov/ag
- www.cdc.gov/coronavirus.com
- www.michiganbusiness.org

KJL Team Contact Information

Ron Khoury
ron@kjlteam.com
(517) 881-6356

Stephanie Johnson
stephanie@kjlteam.com
(517) 648-1602

Andy Leavitt
andy@kjlteam.com
(810) 625-0861

Marcy Lay
marcy@kjlteam.com
(517) 282-3295

Ryan Burtka
ryan@kjlteam.com
(313) 605-3878

Karen Currie
karen@kjlteam.com
(616) 706-2282

Mike Zimmer
mike@kjlteam.com
(517) 285-4126

Brian Clark
brian@kjlteam.com
(517) 410-3430

Lauren Bunn
lauren@kjlteam.com
(616) 826-1262