



# **A Plan to Reopen Pike County, Pennsylvania**

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## Introduction

The Pike County Commissioners are working hard on behalf of Pike County residents, businesses, visitors, municipalities, first responders, and nonprofits to support Pike County's reopening and recovery. The Commissioners' goal is to provide information and support to the community to monitor the number of COVID-19 cases, support the needs of the residents, and support the reopening and recovery of businesses and non-profit organizations.

The reopening plan includes [seven action areas](#):

1. Continue government operations
2. Coordinate with state, county, and local government officials
3. Monitor the virus
4. Promote state and federal safety guidelines
5. Establish and promote partnerships
6. Create new and promote existing programs that assist with reopening and recovery
7. Communicate

The Pike County Commissioners will continue to evaluate and add to their actions to support the reopening and recovery of Pike County.

### 1. Continue Government Operations

Pike County government agencies continue to operate. The health and safety of the county employees is a priority for the Commissioners. They also want to ensure continuity of government operations so that the residents and community members continue to receive the invaluable services provided by the County. The Commissioners have instructed the county office directors and all employees to follow state and federal health and safety COVID-19 guidelines for County operations, to include the following:

- A. **Health and cleaning:** provide PPE, provide hand sanitizer, encourage employees to stay home when they are sick, and regular cleaning of high-touch areas.

The County Emergency Management Director will monitor PPE supplies and continue to replenish the supplies, as needed.

- B. **Social distancing:** prevent large groups from entering or leaving the building at the same time, limit the number of employees in common areas, conduct virtual meetings, and allow teleworking.
- C. **Actions for when there is a COVID-19 exposure in the building:** secure and clean the exposed areas, take employees' temperatures before entering the building, and encourage employees to notify their supervisors if they have symptoms.
- D. **Additional actions:** public access by appointment only, limit the number of people in the building, and remove shared coffee pots and water coolers.

## 2. Coordinate with State, County, and Local Government Officials

Pike County leadership is coordinating with the Governor's Office, the Pennsylvania Department of Health, the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, and other state agencies to communicate Pike County's COVID-19 response actions and advocate to reopen Pike County. Pike County leadership is communicating with neighboring county officials and local municipal officials to coordinate response actions and messaging.

A communications plan has been developed and implemented to ensure consistent and clear communication among government agencies.

## 3. Monitor the Virus

Pike County Commissioners are committed to supporting actions that assist Pike County with moving into the Green Phase of reopening as soon as possible and staying in the Green Phase. This includes monitoring the virus for situational awareness regarding any future outbreaks.

### A. Limited new COVID-19 cases

Pike County Commissioners are monitoring the number of new cases in the county. They are pleased that the number of new cases has been consistently trending downward, with very few new cases being recently reported in Pike County and the surrounding counties.

### B. Sufficient testing center capacity

Pike County has three COVID-19 testing centers: Pike County Training Center, Dingmans Medical Center, and Walmart. The testing center at the Pike County Training Center was a direct result of the Commissioners and the Pike County Emergency Management Director initiating conversations with Wayne Memorial Hospital to provide additional testing in Pike County.

Pike County Commissioners, through the County Emergency Management Director, will monitor the number of tests completed at each site and the testing capacity on a weekly basis. If it is determined that more testing capacity is required to meet the needs of the residents, then the Pike County Commissioners will work with partners to increase testing capacity. As of June 1, the current testing capacity in the County is meeting the needs of the residents requesting tests at the three testing centers.

### C. Organizational leadership and volunteer support for contact tracing

Pike County Commissioners are committed to providing organizational leadership and volunteer support for contact tracing. To date, the Commissioners have encouraged residents to register to volunteer at [SERV.PA.GOV](https://SERV.PA.GOV). When the Governor's office releases its plan to train and deploy volunteers to assist the PA DOH with contact tracing, the Commissioners are prepared to manage the County volunteer training and deployment operations, as directed by the PA DOH.

### D. Protecting the inmate population

Pike County leadership took measures earlier during the pandemic to protect the population at the jail, including the following: reduced the jail population based on defined criteria, isolated inmates and staff who tested positive for the virus, tested every inmate, implemented a no visitor policy, and implemented temperature checks for staff coming to work. They will continue to monitor the staff and inmates at the jail for the virus to quickly detect and isolate infected staff and inmates to prevent an outbreak.

#### **4. Promote State and Federal Safety Guidelines**

Pike County Commissioners strongly encourage all members of the community to follow the state and federal safety guidelines found at [www.pikeforward.org](http://www.pikeforward.org). Guidance is available for residents, businesses, visitors, municipalities, first responders, and nonprofits. The Commissioners understand the importance of promoting and following these guidelines to keep the Pike County community safe and to keep the businesses open.

#### **5. Establish and Promote Partnerships**

The Pike County Commissioners support the Pocono Promise, a program of the Pocono Mountains Visitors Bureau that gains the commitment of local businesses to reopen safely, found at [www.poconomountains.com](http://www.poconomountains.com). Through this program businesses pledge to follow guidelines to protect residents, employees, and customers. As of June 1, over 300 businesses signed the pledge.

The Pike County Commissioners are thankful for the testing services provided by Wayne Memorial Laboratory Services, Dingman Medical Center, and Walmart.

#### **6. Create New and Promote Existing Programs to Assist with Reopening and Recovery**

The Pike County Commissioners recognize that residents, businesses, and non-profit organizations need financial assistance to sustain their families and reopen and recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Commissioners are working to create new programs and promote existing programs.

The Pike COVID-19 Planning Team was established by the Commissioners to manage the newly available funding to support Pike County's recovery efforts. The Planning Team will meet on a regular basis to create, implement, manage, and monitor the funding programs. The Planning Team members include the following: Pike County Commissioners, Pike County Communications Director, Pike County Clerk, Pike County Emergency Management Director, Pike County Human Services/Transportation Director, Pike County Finance Director, and Pike County Treasurer.

The following programs have been or are being created to support the community:

- A. Using Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding, including CDBG-CARES Act funding, the Commissioners are working to establish non-profit public service grants, business forgivable loans, and rental assistance grants.

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- B. The Commissioners will launch new programs shortly with the recently approved federal CARES Act County Block Grant funding through the Department of Community and Economic Development.
- C. The Commissioners extended the tax deadline for the 2% discount period on county taxes to August 31, 2020. They waived the fee or penalty otherwise associated with the late payment of county taxes if those taxes are paid in full by December 31, 2020.

## 7. Communicate

Pike County leadership understands the need for ongoing communication with the Pike County community regarding Pike County's response to COVID-19, state and federal health and safety guidelines, and available funding and programs. They are communicating frequently using several forums:

- A. Press releases
- B. Press conferences
- C. County Commissioner virtual meetings
- D. County website updates
  - Pike County website, [www.pikepa.org](http://www.pikepa.org).
  - The Pike County Commissioners launched the PikeForward.com website, [www.pikeforward.com](http://www.pikeforward.com), which is dedicated to sharing COVID-19 resources.
- E. Survey

A survey was launched on the [www.pikeforward.com](http://www.pikeforward.com) website to identify community needs to inform and direct policies and programs.

**Internal Communications Plan**

Communicate To	Communicate From	Frequency	Notes
Pike COVID-19 Planning Team	Pike COVID-19 Planning Team	As needed (at least weekly)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement plan for available funding to support the COVID-19 response and recovery</li> </ul>
Office Directors	Commissioners	Bi-weekly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update on the Yellow/Green phase</li> <li>Update on the number of COVID-19 cases</li> <li>Update on County policies/procedures for employees</li> <li>Update on County actions to support reopening/ recovery</li> </ul>
County Employees	Commissioners	Monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employee newsletter</li> </ul>
		As needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update on the Yellow/Green phase</li> <li>Update on the number of COVID-19 cases</li> <li>Update on County policies/procedures for employees</li> <li>Update on County actions to support reopening/ recovery</li> </ul>
Commissioners	Office Directors	On-going	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Questions/comments re. staffing and operations plan</li> </ul>

### External Communications Plan

Communicate To	Communicate From	Frequency	Notes
Governor's Office, Northeast Regional Director	Commissioners	As needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share Pike County accomplishments</li> <li>Obtain information</li> </ul>
PA Department of Health, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs	Commissioners	As needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share Pike County accomplishments</li> <li>Obtain information</li> </ul>
PA Emergency Management Agency	Pike County Emergency Management Director	As needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share Pike County accomplishments</li> <li>Obtain information</li> </ul>
Municipal leaders	Commissioners, Pike County Emergency Management Director	As needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share/obtain information about government operations and residents, businesses, and visitors' needs</li> <li>Answer questions</li> <li>Ask partners to link to <a href="http://www.pikepa.org">www.pikepa.org</a> and <a href="http://www.pikeforward.com">www.pikeforward.com</a></li> </ul>
Partners / Businesses	Commissioners / Office Directors	As needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share/obtain information about residents, businesses, and visitors' needs</li> <li>Answer questions</li> <li>Ask partners to link to <a href="http://www.pikepa.org">www.pikepa.org</a> and <a href="http://www.pikeforward.com">www.pikeforward.com</a></li> </ul>
Public	Commissioners	As needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Press release</li> <li>Press conference</li> <li>Website</li> <li>Survey (via the website)</li> <li>Social media</li> <li>Virtual Commissioner meetings</li> <li>Radio</li> <li>Newspapers</li> </ul>