



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrea Stewart-Cousins

Update from Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins

ANDREA STEWART-COUSINS March 25, 2020

| ISSUE: **COVID-19; WESTCHESTER UPDATE**

As our state continues to respond to the coronavirus pandemic, I am working closely with my colleagues in government to address this crisis. I also want to keep you informed and up-to-date with what is being done to protect our community and state from the spread of COVID-19. As of 8:00 PM Sunday, March 22, New York was put on “PAUSE” as a way to combat the coronavirus and help protect all New Yorkers’ health. Under this new PAUSE directive from Governor Cuomo, all non-essential businesses across the state will remain closed and all New Yorkers are urged to stay indoors unless attending to urgent needs.

Here is more detailed information on the Governor’s New York State on PAUSE Executive Order:

- 100% closure of non-essential business statewide, effective 8:00 PM, Sunday, March, 22, 2020.
- Essential services such as pharmacies, grocery stores, and utilities will remain open.
- Matilda’s Law provides new protections for most vulnerable populations, including those over 70, and those with underlying illnesses.
- This group of New Yorkers must stay home and are limited to home visitation of immediate family members or close friends.
- Pre-screen all visitors by taking their temperature and seeing if a person has flu-like symptoms.
- Can go outside for solitary exercise.
- Wear a mask when in the company of others.
- Do not take public transportation unless urgent and absolutely necessary.

- 90-Day moratorium on any residential or commercial evictions.

For further information on businesses that qualify as essential services and FAQ click here:
<https://esd.ny.gov/guidance-executive-order-2026>

Additional updates regarding COVID-19:

- The NYSDOH is currently reporting that there are 25,665 confirmed cases of coronavirus in New York State and 3,891 in Westchester County.
- These numbers are large because New York has been testing aggressively and has conducted 91,270 tests to date.
- On Monday, March 23, New York State government started distributing protective personal equipment to localities across the state. Westchester County will be receiving the following supplies:
 - 16,988 N-95 masks
 - 301,595 surgical masks
 - 17,675 gloves
 - 72,561 surgical gowns
 - 3,926 face shields
- The State has acquired 70,000 doses of hydroxychloroquine, 10,000 doses of zithromax, and 750,00 doses of chloroquine to implement clinical drug trials beginning today, Tuesday, March 24.
- Health officials believe these drugs have the potential to combat COVID-19.
- All elective, non-critical surgeries cancelled, effective tomorrow, Wednesday, March 25.
- DMV in-office transactions are temporarily closed, online transactions are still available.
- As per recommendation by the Army Corp of Engineers, four temporary hospital sites will be built in New York:

- These sites include SUNY Stony Brook, SUNY Westbury, Westchester County Center, and Jacob K. Javits Center
- FEMA will erect federal hospitals within Javits Center - four 250-bed fully-equipped and fully-staffed facilities
- When out in public, New Yorkers will be required to practice social distancing of at least six feet from each other.
- All non-essential gatherings of individuals of any size for any reason are temporarily banned.

Westchester-Specific Updates:

- Since this past Monday, March 23, drivers will not enforce fare payment on Bee-Line fixed bus routes, and all passengers must now enter and exit buses from the rear-door (though special accommodations will be made for handicapped passengers).
- Additionally, the first three rows of seats on all fixed route transit buses will be roped off in an effort to further distance passengers from drivers.
- Westchester County Department of Social Services (DSS) Offices remain open for emergency walk-in assistance as needed, using appropriate social distancing.
- Whenever possible, in-person contact has been eliminated, and instead there is a greater focus on phone and internet communication
- Westchester residents in need of benefits can apply online through [here](#). For more information, please call 914-995-3333, Monday through Friday from 8:30 AM to 5:00 PM.
- Westchester County's support shelters are fully operational, and emergency housing units have been set aside.
- All housing is maintained following CDC guidelines and clients are screened and moved to isolation or hospitalization if necessary.
- Additional safety measures undertaken by the Westchester County DSS include:

- Providing support to residents through greater utilization of available technology instead of person-to-person contact.
- Waiving non-essential regulations and cutting red tape where possible.
- Taking food requests through telephone and online options.
- Reducing in-office staff levels, rotating schedules, and focusing on internet and phone options for coordinating with residents in need of support.
- Supporting food requests and deliveries by phone or online.

Information on Testing:

- Testing is free for all eligible New Yorkers as ordered by a health care provider.
- A mobile testing center has been set up in New Rochelle to serve all parts of Westchester County. Residents who would like to be tested can make an appointment by calling 888-364-3065.

Additional Resources:

- State government has set up a dedicated phone hotline for information and updates on the coronavirus epidemic: 1-888-364-3065 as well as a dedicated website:
<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/home>
- Westchester County government has a dedicated webpage on the County's Department of Health site <https://health.westchestergov.com/component/content/category/155-news> and residents can call 211 for information.
- Additionally, people under self-quarantine or who were exposed to a confirmed case, can call: (866) 588-0195
- For information on paid sick leave click here: <https://www.governor.ny.gov/programs/paid-sick-leave-covid-19-impacted-new-yorkers>
- For information on Governor Cuomo's executive order on claiming unemployment insurance due to COVID-19 click here: <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/during-coronavirus-briefing-governor-cuomo-announces-department-financial-services-will-require>

- For information on the Department of Financial Services requirement that insurers waive copayments for any telemedicine visits in an effort to help our emergency rooms click here: <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/during-coronavirus-briefing-governor-cuomo-announces-department-financial-services-will-require>

Ways You Can Help Local Small Businesses:

- Buy a gift card. This will provide owners with immediate cash and it will show your commitment to return to the store.
- Order out. Many restaurants still offer take-out and delivery services.
- Purchase a Virtual Fitness Class: If your gym is closed- take a virtual fitness or yoga class.
- Shop Local, but online. Many local small businesses have online stores and this will allow them to keep revenue flowing.

I will continue to send regular updates to keep you informed and up-to-date. Although our district office remains closed, you can contact us by phone: (914) 423-4031 or by email: scousins@nysenate.gov. You may also access information about COVID-19 through the state's 24-hour hotline: 1-888-364-3065.