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January 8, 2021

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Municipal Clerks: Please forward to your Mayor, Governing Body and Department Heads.

To assist in providing guidance and information we have created a [Covid-19 resource page](#). We will continue to update the page as we get pertinent information and include announcements in our Daily Updates.

I. State Issues

a. Covid-19 Update

Today, Governor Murphy announced that there were 5,791 new positive cases and an additional 112 confirmed deaths resulting from COVID-19. To date, there have been 516,608 confirmed cases, and 17,697 confirmed deaths. The rate of transmission is 1.02. Since August, there have been 557 cases linked to 111 school outbreaks.

Earlier in the week, the Governor announced that the general public can [pre-register for eligibility for the vaccine online](#). Individuals will be permitted to input their personal, contact, health insurance, and demographic information. For those who are immediately eligible based on screening questions will be able to schedule an appointment. Please note that during peak times, there may be capacity issues that result in a message to try later. We ask that you share this information with your community.

On Wednesday the Governor announced that uniformed police and firefighters, including volunteers, are now eligible to receive the COVID 19 vaccine under Phase 1A. Phase 1A individuals can get vaccinated by [registering for a vaccine on the NJ Vaccine Scheduling System](#), or by making an appointment at one of the designated [COVID-19 Vaccine locations](#).

The State continues to ask residents to download and use the new [Covid Alert NJ](#), the State's exposure notification smartphone app.

Since our last update, Governor Murphy has issued no COVID-19 related Executive Orders.

The Department of Labor [announced](#) that unemployed workers would begin receiving \$300 in supplemental unemployment benefits early next week, for the first week of eligibility under the expanded CARES Act. For the week ending January 2 the initial weekly unemployment claims total 20,986, a 2.6% increase from the prior week.

Contact: Lori Buckelew, Assistant Executive Director, lbuckelew@njlm.org, 609-695-3481 x112.

b. Governor Signs Tax Incentive Legislation

Yesterday, Governor Murphy signed into law [A-4](#), the "New Jersey Economic Recovery Act of 2020." The new law provides for administration of programs and policies related to; jobs, property development, food deserts, community partnerships, small and early stage businesses, State procurement, wind energy, and film production, and makes an appropriation. P.L. 2020, 156 took effect immediately. The League, through a series of [blog posts](#), will be providing greater detail on the various programs authorized under this law.

Contact: Lori Buckelew, Assistant Executive Director, lbuckelew@njlm.org, 609-695-3481 x112.

c. Cannabis Clean Up Legislation Held

Initially both the Assembly and Senate were scheduled to consider legislation to clarify the recent cannabis legislation, A-5211/[S-3320](#), on Monday. However, as of this afternoon it appears the deal to legalize and decriminalize cannabis collapsed reportedly amid concerns with the decriminalization component.

This legislation is intended to clarify some issues of concern apparently raised by the Governor's office with A21/S21. We note that [A21/S21](#), which legalizes adult use of cannabis, passed previously and the Governor has until early February to act on these bills.

As currently drafted A-5211/S-3320:

- Establishes civil but not criminal penalties for underage residents caught with small amounts of cannabis and marijuana;
- Updates definitions in the New Jersey Compassionate Use Medical Marijuana Act to mirror the definitions in the cannabis legalization legislation;

- Amends New Jersey Controlled Dangerous Substance Act to exclude medical marijuana;
- Changes the training provided for the Drug Recognition Expert program from the Police Training Commission approved school to the New Jersey State Police; and
- Provides that current certified Drug Recognition Experts will need to receive training in the new program.

We will continue to monitor this legislation and keep our members informed of any relevant updates.

Contact: Lori Buckelew, Assistant Executive Director, lbuckelew@njlm.org, 609-695-3481 x112.

d. Governor signs PFRS Enhanced Benefits for Surviving Spouses Act

Yesterday, Governor Murphy signed [S487](#), the “Dominick Marino PFRS Enhanced Benefits for Surviving Spouses Act”. This legislation expands accidental death benefits provided to widow of a PFRS member. The benefit paid will now be either 70% of the compensation, based in the last year of creditable service, or a pension of \$50,000, whichever is greater. This new law took effect on January 7, 2021.

Contact: Andrew LaFevre, Legislative Analyst, alafevre@njlm.org, 609-695-3481 x116.

e. Right to Farm Act Amended to Allow Employees to Live on Horse Farms

Governor Murphy, yesterday, signed [A-2768/S-1245](#), which amends the “Right to Farm Act” to allow housing for equine-related farm employees.

The new law requires that, notwithstanding any local health code or zoning ordinance to the contrary, the rules and regulations and agricultural management practices authorize full-time, year-round, equine-related farm employees to be housed in the same building as horses under certain circumstances. The housing must be in a separate area that qualifies as a separate building under the State Uniform Construction Code (UCC), or on a separate level from where horses are boarded or housed, provided that the floor provides sufficient separation to meet UCC fire rating standards.

In addition, the employee living area on a different floor or in a separate area must have its own ventilation system that is separate from the ventilation system for the horses. Compliance with all other UCC and Department of Community Affairs standards or requirements is still necessary.

The League opposed this bill as it provides unnecessarily broad exemptions from important local review and community input. With the bill now signed into law the League anticipates working with the State Agriculture Development Committee as they begin the process of developing and adopting rules and regulations to implement the new law, to ensure the health and safety of our residents are protected.

Contact: Frank Marshall, Esq., Associate General Counsel, fmarshall@njlm.org, 609-695-3481 x137.

II. Federal Issues

a. U.S. Department of Treasury Announces Emergency Rental Assistance Program

The U.S. Department of the Treasury has published [information](#) for state and local governments about the new \$25 billion Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) program that was enacted as part of the most recent COVID-19 emergency relief package. In general, funds under this program may be used for housing and utility payments, and emergency payments can be made to either the landlord or utility, or directly to the household/resident in need.

Under the program, the U.S. Treasury will make funding directly available to state and local governments with more than [200,000 residents](#) that apply by January 12, 2021. Local governments that cannot access ERA funds directly will need to negotiate with the state and county governments to gain access to aid for residents.

Contact: Paul Penna, Legislative Analyst, ppenna@njlm.org, 609 695-3481, x110.

b. Presidential Inaugural Committee (PIC) Announces Activities

On Wednesday, January 20, 2021, President-elect Biden and Vice President-elect Harris will be sworn in as the next President and Vice President of the United States. The scaled back inaugural activities will include a National Day of Service, COVID-19 Memorial Event and the Inaugural Day Parade will be virtual this year.

National Day of Service

A National Day of Service will be held on Monday, January 18, in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. For more on the Day of Service or to sign up please visit the Inaugural [Day of Service website](#).

COVID-19 Memorial Event

A memorial to remember and honor the lives lost to COVID-19 in cities and towns across the country will be held on Tuesday, January 19, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. ET. The Washington, D.C. ceremony will feature a lighting around the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool. The Committee is asking local elected officials to light up public buildings, clergy to ring bells and individuals to light a candle in their window. To confirm your participation please complete this [form](#).

Inaugural Day Virtual Parade

In lieu of an in-person parade down Pennsylvania Avenue, the President will participate in a Pass in Review at the Capitol and a Presidential Escort at the White House, followed by a virtual parade. Any group can [submit](#) a concept for the virtual parade, but please note that a submission does not guarantee usage.

Please feel free to share this information with members of your community.

Contact: Paul Penna, Legislative Analyst, ppenna@njlm.org, 609 695-3481, x110.

III. 2020 Annual League Conference

a. Print Your CEU Certificates from the 2020 NJLM Virtual Conference

The tracking system from the 2020 NJLM Virtual Conference is now open. To print your CEU certificates, the system will be available until **May 1, 2021**.

b. It's Not Too Late!

We hope that the NJLM Virtual Conference allowed you to look back and forward on the challenges of the day, be it the COVID-19 pandemic, social and restorative justice or how to balance the competing interests in preparing for your 2021 budget. While we hope to be back in-person in Atlantic City in 2021, the virtual conference offers a unique benefit. The content of the approximately 80 programs and 145 virtual exhibitor booths will be available on-demand through October 31, 2021.

Anyone who is registered can simply log in to [the Conference website](#) to view any of the programs or visit any of the exhibitor booths. And for those who did not attend, it's not too late. We will continue to [accept registrations](#) for access to the Conference site. Those who register now will not be able to apply for CEUs but will have full access to all programs and exhibit booths. And please continue to visit the exhibitors who chose to support the 105th Annual Conference by stopping by their booths. You can contact exhibitors directly with any questions or comments by simply using the "Request Information" button on each booth. This will generate an automatic email to the exhibitor and they will contact you with a reply.



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