



NEWS

Nov. 10, 2020

For Immediate Release

Update on County Response to COVID-19: Safe Holiday Recommendations, Board Action on Digital Divide & Food Insecurity; and COVID-19 Testing and Case Count

Redwood City – The County of San Mateo continues to work to protect public health and safety in response to the novel coronavirus known as COVID-19.

The County of San Mateo’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC) remains open to coordinate countywide response and communications in response to the situation. The EOC’s Joint Information Center will provide status reports every Tuesday and Thursday until further notice. Today’s report:

Holiday Celebrations: “Be Outside.... It’s much, much safer”

That’s the message for celebrating the holidays from Louise Rogers, chief of San Mateo County Health.

Rogers, in an update today to the Board of Supervisors, said she expects the County to remain in the less restrictive orange Tier 3 in the state’s [four-tier, color-coded](#) plan for reducing COVID-19. Tier 3 allows certain [indoor activities with modifications](#) based on health and testing data that show the local threat from COVID-19 is “moderate.”

Rogers, however, said “vigilance and caution” are needed to keep the infection rates low, especially as the temperatures drop and families and friends come together to celebrate the holidays.

She outlined the [four-step guidelines](#) issued Monday by the Association of Bay Area Health Officials. Gatherings should be:

1. Safe – Outside is safer; gather outside and follow safety guidelines
2. Small: Limit gatherings to no more than 3 households

3. Short: Limit gatherings to no more than 2 hours
4. Stable: Do not participate in multiple gatherings with many different households

[Learn more](#)

Closing the Digital Divide; Connecting Students to Schools

At today's Board of Supervisors meeting, the County's Information Services Department announced the progress of an ambitious effort to connect students in rural communities and low-income households to their schools with high-speed internet access.

The County launched the "[Public Internet Connectivity Pilot Project](#)" after Shelter-In-Place orders closed schools to in-person learning. Many remote learners faced a challenge: They could not connect with their schools and teachers because they lacked high-speed internet connections.

Since the project launch this summer, the County has provided 275 portable mobile wireless hot spots for distance learning in the Ravenswood City School District and 50 hot spots in the La Honda-Pescadero School District. Also on the coast, the County and schools are working together to place mobile wireless access units on ranches and farms to create "Learning Centers."

The County is also working to bolster public internet access points in Daly City, Brisbane, South San Francisco, Millbrae, San Mateo and Foster City, among other communities. Learn more about the County's strategy to overcome the digital divide at <https://www.smcgov.org/smc-public-wifi-project>

Board Allocates \$2 Million to Relieve Hunger and Food Insecurity

The Board of Supervisors [today allocated \\$2 million](#) to Second Harvest Food Bank of Silicon Valley to expand food assistance for vulnerable populations in San Mateo County.

Second Harvest provides healthy food directly and through a network of local food pantries across San Mateo County. Since February 2020, an average of 500,000 people per month have received food from Second Harvest, double the number served before the pandemic.

Funding for Second Harvest comes from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES).

In response to the pandemic, the Board today also:

- Approved an [allocation of \\$998,000](#) in CARES funds to the [SMCU Community Fund](#) to benefit local nonprofit groups adversely impacted by COVID-19.
- Approved an [allocation of \\$1 million](#) in CARES funds to the [SMCU Community Fund](#) to benefit local small businesses adversely impacted by COVID-19.
- Approved an [additional \\$2 million](#) in CARES funds to the San Mateo County [Childcare Relief Fund](#) to provide grants to local child care centers and family child care homes adversely impacted by COVID-19.
- Modified the eligibility criteria for the Small Residential Rental Property Owner Assistance Program to potentially reach more property owners who have lost residential rental income due to the pandemic. The full changes and an application are available at www.smcstrong.org.

Accessible COVID-19 Testing Available for Adults and Children

Whether you're concerned because of your job or your living situation, or you're afraid you've been exposed, or if you're just worried about COVID-19, testing is a wise choice and is available in San Mateo County.

The COVID-19 diagnostic test is safe, easy, and available at various locations in San Mateo County at no-cost to you regardless of which testing site you choose. Adults age 18 and over can schedule a test Tuesdays through Saturdays at the [San Mateo County Event Center](#) or at a rotating series of neighborhood locations. Days and times are listed below.

Testing is now available for children ages 5 to 17. Learn more and register [here](#)

Adult Testing at Neighborhood Locations

Testing for COVID-19 is also available at mobile operations that rotate among five communities Monday through Friday for everyone 18 and older who lives or works in San Mateo County.

See the schedule below for Nov. 12 - 17 and make an appointment at least seven days in advance at [Project Baseline](#).

East Palo Alto, 8 a.m. – 3 p.m., Nov. 12 & 13

2160 Euclid Avenue

San Bruno, 8 a.m. – 3 p.m., Nov. 16 & 17

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
975 Sneath Lane

Remember: If you don't have access to the internet, an on-site volunteer may be able to help you register and get tested.

Information on testing options, including at the San Mateo Event Center and at neighborhood mobile sites in San Mateo County, can be found at <https://www.smcgov.org/testing>.

San Mateo County COVID-19 Case Count

San Mateo County Health has updated the number of positive cases to 12,049 as of Nov. 9, 2020.

County Health provides detailed information on cases by age group and date and deaths by age group. Learn more at <https://www.smchealth.org/coronavirus>

Call Center

Residents with non-medical, non-emergency questions about the coronavirus can call 211 or 800-273-6222 at any time, day or night. Callers from landlines and cellular telephones located within San Mateo County are connected with a trained service professional from 211, a confidential service available in 180 languages.

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