

# CITY FOCUS

Highlighting issues important to Dubuque residents

FALL 2020



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THE CITY OF  
**DUBUQUE**  
*Masterpiece on the Mississippi*

## A MESSAGE FROM THE CITY MANAGER



// Michael C. Van Milligen //

The purpose of this publication is to provide an update on the City of Dubuque's response to the COVID-19 pandemic that continues to impact the Dubuque community.

With policy direction and support from the Mayor and City Council, City staff and partner organizations continue to concentrate on programs and services to assist residents, businesses, and organizations that have been negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. While the pandemic continues to impact the community in a myriad of discouraging ways, I am encouraged daily by the hard work and dedication of City staff and partner organizations as they respond to the challenges created by COVID-19. Those efforts will continue as long as needed.

Local governments across the country are facing major revenue reductions due to the pandemic and Dubuque is not immune. However, revenue reductions from local option sales tax, property taxes, gaming, hotel/motel tax, franchise and utility fees, and more are not as severe as predicted in March. Nonetheless, the City lost \$3.4 million in revenue in the last fiscal year and expects to lose \$2.1 million in the current fiscal year. Critical decisions made by the Mayor and City Council have put the City in a strong financial position to weather these challenging times with over \$17 million in general reserves and additional reserves in the City's enterprise funds, like sewer and water. Details on these pandemic-related losses and how the City will deal with these losses are provided in this publication.

We realize Dubuque residents and businesses are hurting and our efforts include the development and identification of assistance programs for those in our community facing financial and health challenges related to the pandemic. We continue to work with public and private sector partners to meet the needs of those most impacted. Details on these programs and how to access them are provided in this publication.

It is important to acknowledge that COVID-19 is not affecting us all to the same degree. The pandemic is having a disproportionate impact on those already struggling due to existing health conditions, low incomes, systemic racism and other forms of discrimination, and other challenges. This fact and racial disparities were emphasized by the Mayor and City Council during their annual goal-setting sessions in August when they had a robust discussion emphasizing that, until black and brown individuals are welcomed and can succeed, we have not reached our vision for Dubuque to be an inclusive and equitable community where ALL are welcome.

**I am also grateful for the leadership shown by the Mayor and City Council in their unanimous adoption of a face covering ordinance to limit the spread of the virus.** City staff will remain focused on responding to COVID-19 while providing the highest possible level of service to residents and stakeholders. Please use this publication as a resource for details and share with those who can benefit.

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**Cover photos:** Eagle Point Park in the Fall  
**Contributed by:** Kelly Goossen, City of Dubuque Horticulturalist

## A Message from Mayor Roy D. Buol



// Mayor Roy D. Buol //

Public health is public safety. Identifying risk, protective factors, and developing policy is the greatest responsibility of any elected official and we will continue to do all we can to protect our community.

The City of Dubuque's response to the public health and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic remains a City Council top priority. We continue to monitor local, state, and national conditions and receive information and guidance daily.

As the community spread of COVID-19 accelerated in early August, the City Council unanimously adopted a city ordinance requiring face coverings in public, with some exceptions, within the city limits. We realize that not all agree with this decision, however we made this policy decision based on guidance and recommendations from the nation's top public health officials and infectious disease experts.

COVID-19 is impacting some people more severely than others and I am reminded that the saying, "we're all in the same boat" is not an accurate analogy for the challenges created by the pandemic. It is more accurate to say, "we're all in the same storm," and to acknowledge that, figuratively, some of us are weathering the storm in large, safe boats, and some are in less safe, small boats, and some are clinging to life preservers, and some have nothing at all and are struggling to keep their heads above the water. The City Council is committed to responding to the pandemic in an equitable and inclusive way so that everyone has a fair opportunity for a healthy life.

And, while it is true that many people who get COVID will not become seriously ill, it is likewise true that every new case increases the chances of someone with underlying health conditions getting COVID and experiencing severe symptoms, hospitalization, or death. And, as we have learned, some recovered patients are experiencing a range of symptoms for months, including difficulty breathing, fatigue, and joint pain, damaging their quality of life and productivity. To help limit the spread of the virus and protect those in our community who are most at risk, we believe face coverings and/or social distancing in public places are a temporary, minor inconvenience.

Therefore, our message to our citizens remains consistent ... we respectfully ask that you follow the guidance of our local, state, and national public health officials, as well as our local healthcare professionals and other credentialed experts...and look out for one another.

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed some of the ways we connect and support each other. Until the "storm" passes, each of us has a part and a responsibility in this journey. In closing, I again offer the community's collective and ongoing gratitude to our health care workers, first responders, essential workers, and all our residents and businesses honoring Dubuque's face covering ordinance.

Stay safe and stay well,

## Dubuque City Council Representatives



RIC W. JONES  
AT-LARGE



DAVID T. RESNICK  
AT-LARGE



KEVIN J. LYNCH  
1ST WARD



LAURA J. ROUSSELL  
2ND WARD

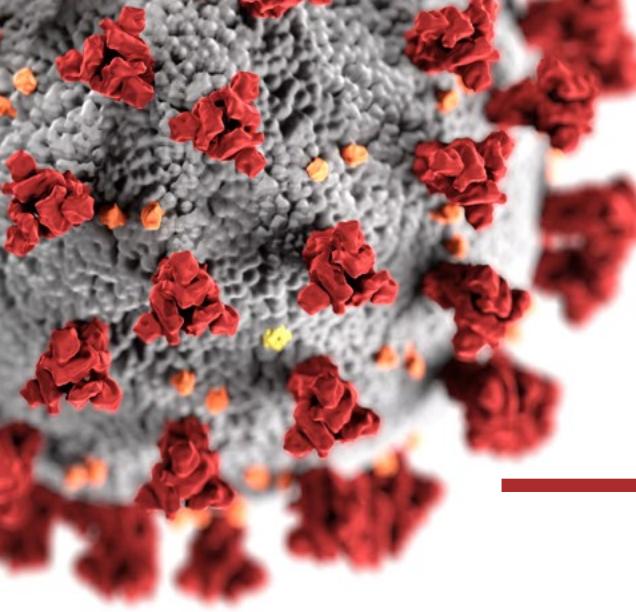


DANNY C. SPRANK  
3RD WARD



BRAD M. CAVANAGH  
4TH WARD

For City Council contact information and ward maps, visit [www.cityofdubuque.org/citycouncil](http://www.cityofdubuque.org/citycouncil) or call 563.589.4100.



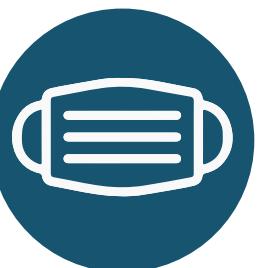
# COVID-19 Information

## TIPS FOR STAYING SAFE

### What You Can Do To Protect Yourself and Others

Even if you are young or otherwise healthy, you are at risk and your activities can increase the risk of others. It is critical that you do your part to slow the spread of COVID-19.

- Stay home as much as possible, only going out for essentials like food, medicine, and health care.
- Stay at least six feet from other people, even when you wear a face covering. Remember that some people without symptoms may be able to spread virus.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around others. Everyone should wear a cloth face cover when they have to go out in public, for example to the grocery store or to pick up other necessities. Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2 or anyone who has trouble breathing. See CDC guidelines at [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html)
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds especially after you have been in a public place, or after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your elbow/inside of arm. Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, clean your hands with a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily.



Wear a face covering in public spaces



Frequently wash your hands



Stay at least 6 feet apart from other people



Stay home when you're sick

## SYMPTOMS TO WATCH FOR

A wide range of symptoms are associated with COVID-19 – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with any of these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea



Source: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html)

## WHEN TO BE TESTED

According to the CDC, here's who should get tested for COVID-19:

- People who have symptoms of COVID-19
- People who have had close contact (within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes) with someone with confirmed COVID-19
- People who have been asked or referred to get tested by their healthcare provider or local or state health department.

If you do get tested, you should self-quarantine/isolate at home pending test results and follow the advice of your health care provider or a public health professional.

### COVID-19 Hotlines:

Dubuque Visiting Nurses Association:  
563.556.6200

Iowa Department of Public Health 24/7 Public Hotline:  
2-1-1 or 1-800-244-7431

### Free COVID-19 Testing Options

1

#### TestIowa Clinics

- Epic Health & Wellness
- Grand River Medical Group

By appointment only.  
Visit [TestIowa.com](http://TestIowa.com) for details.

2

#### Local Pharmacies

- Hartig Drug
- Union Family Pharmacy

By appointment only.  
Visit [DoINeedACOVID19test.com](http://DoINeedACOVID19test.com) for details.

3

Your healthcare provider may also provide testing services.

# WHAT TO DO IF YOU WERE EXPOSED TO A PERSON WITH COVID-19

Anyone who has had close contact with someone with COVID-19 should stay home (quarantine) for **14 days** after their last exposure to that person. Close contact is defined as being within six feet for more than 15 minutes.

**It can take 2-14 days for COVID symptoms to show**, so you may not know for up to 14 days if you are infected or not. You are asked to self-quarantine in case you are infected so that you do not pass on the infection to anyone else. It may turn out that you are not infected, but it will be too soon to tell.

# HAVING CONTACT WITH OTHERS AFTER BEING DIAGNOSED WITH COVID-19

If you are tested, a negative test result within the 14-day period means you are only negative *at that time*. You can still become positive later in the 14-day period. **You must stay in quarantine for the entire 14-day period.**

However, anyone who has had close contact with someone with COVID-19 and who meets the following criteria does **NOT** need to stay home.

- Had COVID-19 within the previous three months AND
- Has recovered AND
- Remains without COVID-19 symptoms (for example, cough, fever)

When you can be around others (end home isolation) depends on different factors for different situations.

## If you had symptoms, you can be around others after:

- 10 days since symptoms first appeared AND
- 24 hours with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications AND
- Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving\*

\*Loss of taste and smell may persist for weeks or months after recovery and need not delay the end of isolation.

## If you tested positive for COVID-19, but had no symptoms:

If you continue to have no symptoms, you can be with others after 10 days have passed since you had a positive viral test for COVID-19. If you develop symptoms after testing positive, follow the guidance above for "If you had symptoms."

# WHAT TO DO IF YOU TEST POSITIVE

If you test positive for COVID-19, take proactive steps to help protect other people in your home and community. These recommendations apply to both persons with symptoms and persons without symptoms (asymptomatic) who test positive.

## 1 Separate yourself from other people.

As much as possible, stay in a specific "sick room" and away from other people and pets in your home. If possible, you should use a separate bathroom.

## 2 Tell your close contacts that they may have been exposed to COVID-19.

An infected person can spread COVID-19 starting 48 hours (or two days) before the person has any symptoms or tests positive. By letting your close contacts know they may have been exposed to COVID-19, you are helping to protect everyone.

## 3 Avoid sharing personal household items.

Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels, or bedding with other people in your home. It is important these items are washed thoroughly with soap and water (or put in the dishwasher or washing machine).

## 4 Clean all "high-touch" surfaces every day.

Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces in your "sick room" and bathroom. High-touch surfaces include phones, remote controls, counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables. Someone else should clean and disinfect surfaces in any common areas.

If a caregiver or other person needs to clean and disinfect a sick person's bedroom or bathroom, they should do so on an as-needed basis. The caregiver/other person should wear a mask and disposable gloves while cleaning.

# COVID-19 Vaccine: What We Know So Far

The Dubuque County Public Health Incident Management Team is receiving information and vaccine planning tools from the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH). Local health care providers were recently surveyed to assess their interest in being a vaccination site and a local vaccination distribution plan is being developed.

Public health officials have been informed that limited COVID-19 vaccine doses may be available as soon as November 2020. However, a specific date for vaccine delivery has not yet been determined. When the vaccine is first distributed to the state and local health departments it will be restricted for priority groups such as health care workers, first responders, and long-term care facilities.

As vaccine production increases it will continue to be delivered and administered to other priority groups such as those in specific age categories, those with underlying health conditions, and critical or essential workers. Then, it will be distributed to the general public as supplies allow.

To date, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has provided technical specifications and requirements for two possible vaccines. Both vaccines will require two doses for full protection either three or four weeks apart depending on the manufacturer. Also, it has been announced that a study is being conducted on a possible single-dose COVID-19 vaccine.

Information regarding COVID-19 vaccines is constantly evolving and scenarios may change as more information becomes available. All vaccination distribution will depend on successful phase three clinical trials by the manufacturers.

# COMMUNITY RECOVERY & SUPPORT

The City of Dubuque has compiled resources to assist individuals, families, and businesses during this difficult time. Below are many, but not all, examples of resources available. For more detailed information, visit [www.cityofdubuque.org/COVID19support](http://www.cityofdubuque.org/COVID19support) or call 563.589.4100.

## FOR INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES

### Short-Term Assistance Program for Rent, Mortgage, and Utilities

The City of Dubuque Housing & Community Development Department is offering financial assistance to qualified Dubuque renters and homeowners whose income has been reduced due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This program is funded by a federal grant and includes income and property eligibility requirements.

This is a short-term assistance program and can assist with a portion of an approved households' rent or mortgage and/or utility bills for up to \$1,000 for three months. Residents who qualify and receive the assistance will not have to pay back any funds they receive.

To apply for the Short-Term Assistance Program for rent, mortgage, and utilities, please call 563.564.7489, email [go@cityofdubuque.org](mailto:go@cityofdubuque.org), or visit [www.cityofdubuque.org/housing](http://www.cityofdubuque.org/housing).

### Utility Bill Payment Plan Option

The City understands many people are facing difficult times. We are now offering payment plan options to help residents who have fallen behind on paying their monthly bill. For details on applying for a payment plan, call 563.589.4144 or email [utilityb@cityofdubuque.org](mailto:utilityb@cityofdubuque.org).

### Discounts on City Utilities

The City offers discounts on water, sanitary sewer, refuse collection, and stormwater fees to income-qualified customers. Residents who apply for and are approved for this program may receive a discount of up to 50 percent of the established base or minimum rate for each utility. For more information, or to apply for this program, visit [www.cityofdubuque.org/utilitybilling](http://www.cityofdubuque.org/utilitybilling) or call 563.589.4144.

### 2-1-1 Information and Referral

The United Way offers help (in multiple languages) finding assistance for food, bills, or other essential services. Visit the [www.211.org](http://www.211.org), call the COVID-19 hotline by dialing 2-1-1 from a landline or 800.244.7431 from a cell phone, or text your zip code to 898211.

### COVID-19 Eviction and Foreclosure Prevention Program

Administered by the Iowa Finance Authority, this program provides short-term relief to income-eligible renters and homeowners who are at risk of eviction or foreclosure due to a documented COVID-19 related loss of income. For more information on eligibility and to apply, visit [www.iowafinance.com](http://www.iowafinance.com) or call 800.432.7230.



### Homeless Hotline

If you are experiencing homelessness or housing instability, please call the Homeless Hotline at 1.833.587.8322 to speak to a regional coordinator who may be able to help.

*Please note that the CDC has temporarily halted residential evictions (not including foreclosures on home mortgages) until Dec. 31, 2020 to prevent the further spread of COVID-19. For more detailed information, visit [www.cityofdubuque.org/COVID19support](http://www.cityofdubuque.org/COVID19support).*

### Unemployment Benefits & Assistance

In addition to traditional unemployment benefits, Iowa Workforce Development offers several unemployment assistance/compensation programs for people impacted by COVID-19, including Pandemic Unemployment Assistance and Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation. Call 866.239.0843 or visit [www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/COVID-19](http://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/COVID-19) for information. Call volume is high so please check the website first if you have access.

### Local & State Resources for Food & Necessities

A list of local food pantries, free meal sites, shower locations, and other necessities is available at [www.cityofdubuque.org/COVID19support](http://www.cityofdubuque.org/COVID19support) or by calling 2-1-1.

### Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral

Connect to child care openings or temporary child care at Community Support & Recovery Resources. For more information, call 855.244.5301 or visit [www.iowacrr.org/families](http://www.iowacrr.org/families).

### Phone and Internet Assistance

Many cell phone and internet companies are offering assistance to residents. More information is available at [www.cityofdubuque.org/COVID19support](http://www.cityofdubuque.org/COVID19support).

### Low-Income Energy Assistance Program

Individuals who have received a disconnection notice or who have difficulty paying a utility bill can apply for the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) that can help pay a portion of an eligible household's utility bill. For more information visit [www.hacap.org/what-we-do/energy-conservation/apply-liheap](http://www.hacap.org/what-we-do/energy-conservation/apply-liheap) or call 563.556.5130.

### Mental Health and Addiction

The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) website, <https://yourlifeiowa.org>, has resources for persons experiencing challenges with alcohol, drugs, gambling, suicide, and mental health. Call the crisis hotline at 855.581.8111 or text 855.895.8398.

Continued on page 16

# COMMUNITY RECOVERY & SUPPORT

## (FOR INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES, CONTINUED)

### COVID Recovery Iowa

COVID Recovery Iowa offers free virtual counseling and assistance for all Iowans affected by COVID-19. Counselors are available 24/7. For more information, visit [www.covidrecoveryiowa.org](http://www.covidrecoveryiowa.org) or call 844.775.WARM(9276).

### COVID-19 Resources for Underserved Populations

Some populations are more at risk for coronavirus or impacts of social distancing. Visit the IDPH's website at [www.idph.iowa.gov/Health-Equity](http://www.idph.iowa.gov/Health-Equity) for resources and information for people facing additional risk.

### Free COVID-19 Legal Information Hotline

This is a free service available to Iowans who are experiencing legal issues due to COVID-19. Call 800.332.0419 or visit [www.iowalegalaid.org](http://www.iowalegalaid.org) for more information.

# FOR BUSINESSES & NON-PROFITS

### Employer/Business Resources

For information on federal and state relief, grants, loans, guidance, and other resources, visit [www.greaterdubuque.org/covid19](http://www.greaterdubuque.org/covid19) or call 563.557.9049.

### COVID-19 Business Helpline

A service offered by Greater Dubuque Development Corporation and Northeast Iowa Community College to help employers apply for the Small Business Relief Funding and connect them to additional financial resources. Call 563.588.3350 between 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, or email [sbhelpline@nicc.edu](mailto:sbhelpline@nicc.edu)

### Small Business Utility Disruption Prevention Program

The Iowa Economic Development Authority's Small Business Utility Disruption Prevention Program provides short-term relief to eligible small businesses and nonprofits that face significant hardship in the payment of utility bills for service provided during the months of disruption to their business. For more information, visit [www.iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/Business/energy-recovery](http://www.iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/Business/energy-recovery)



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Masterpiece on the Mississippi

**BEHIND ON BILLS DUE TO COVID-19?**

Apply for the City of Dubuque's Short-Term Assistance Program for Rent, Mortgage, and Utilities.

+

Get back on track with a utility bill payment plan.

[www.cityofdubuque.org/utilitybilling](http://www.cityofdubuque.org/utilitybilling)  
563.589.4144

# Pandemic Impact on Communities of Color

As states and cities across the U.S. are tracking the impact of COVID-19, studies are revealing that communities of color are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. People of color get sick and die of COVID-19 at rates higher than Whites and higher than their share of the population.

On Aug. 18, the CDC released data showing that Blacks, Latinos, and American Indians/Alaskan Natives are experiencing hospitalizations at rates 4.5 to 5.5 times higher than non-Hispanic whites. Hispanics and Native Americans are dying about 1.5 times the rate of White people. Black Americans are dying at 2.4 times the rate of Whites.

Communities of color are at increased risk of serious illness related to COVID-19 due to higher rates of underlying health conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, asthma, and upper respiratory conditions. These health disparities exist in large part because of more regular exposure to environmental hazards and limited access to healthcare.

A lack of financial resources resulting from years of structural racism affects health through a variety of pathways, including reduced access to employment, housing, and education; increased environmental exposures; trauma from chronic exposure to discrimination; and increased participation in unhealthy behaviors as coping mechanisms.

In addition, people facing these risk factors are less likely to have insurance to pay for COVID-19 testing and are more likely to avoid using the health care system because of high costs.

**Structural Racism: A history and current pattern of policies and actions from social institutions, such as government organizations, schools, banks, non-profits, and courts of law, that disproportionately perpetuate negative treatment toward a group of people based on their race. Institutional racism leads to inequality in opportunity and inequity of life outcomes.**

People of color are also disproportionately impacted by the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nearly a quarter of Black and Latinx people are employed in service industries compared to 16 percent of White people, putting them at increased risk for job loss and loss of income.

Because the average net worth of White families is 10 times higher than that of Black families, they generally lack the savings and wealth to absorb unanticipated events such as job loss or emergency medical expenses. Similarly, communities of color are disproportionately rent-burdened and at more risk of being evicted during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Racial disparities in health, income, and housing have exacerbated the toll of COVID-19 on communities of color. Long-standing, systemic conditions are putting Blacks, Latinos, and American Indians/Alaskan Natives at risk of the most severe outcomes of the pandemic.

The City of Dubuque recognizes the struggles of all of our residents during this difficult time and as we recover we will continue to be mindful of the unique experiences of the communities that we serve.

If you are in need of assistance, please call 211 or 1.866.469.2211.

### Sources:

The Aspen Institute: "The COVID-19 Eviction Crisis: an Estimated 30-40 Million People in America Are at Risk" - August 7, 2020

Forbes: "Systemic Racism Makes Covid-19 Much More Deadly For African-Americans" - June 18, 2020

Brookings: "Racial economic inequality amid the COVID-19 crisis" - August 13, 2020

Marketplace: "How homeowners have gained a financial advantage during the pandemic" - September 10, 2020

NPR: "As Pandemic Deaths Add Up, Racial Disparities Persist — And In Some Cases Worsen" - September 23, 2020

# DUBUQUE COUNTY PANDEMIC DATA

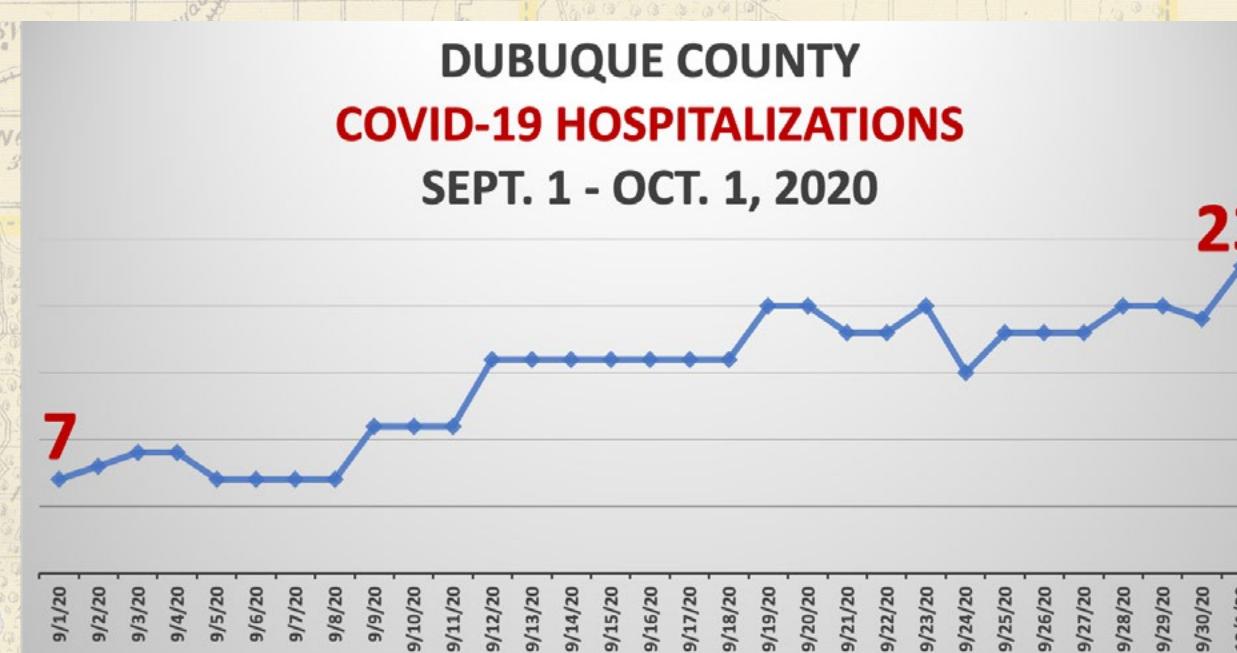
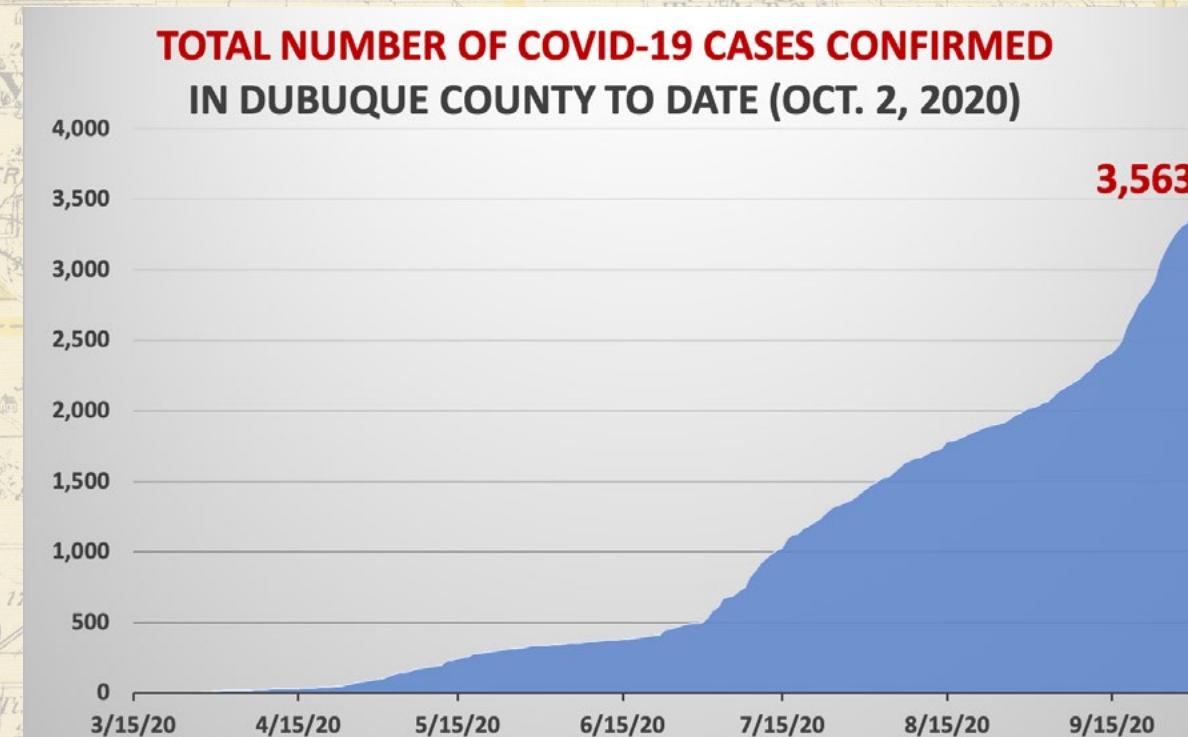
Local elected officials, public health officials, and healthcare providers are closely monitoring data and metrics related to the spread of COVID-19 in our community. While the data shown here indicates increased spread of the virus, the situation would be worse had the mayor and city council not adopted a face covering ordinance for Dubuque.

Trends are more important and better indicators than a single point in time or daily numbers. It's also

important to note that data may look slightly different depending upon the source.

Accurate data is important to drive decision-making around community policy, planning, strategies and actions, and resource allocation.

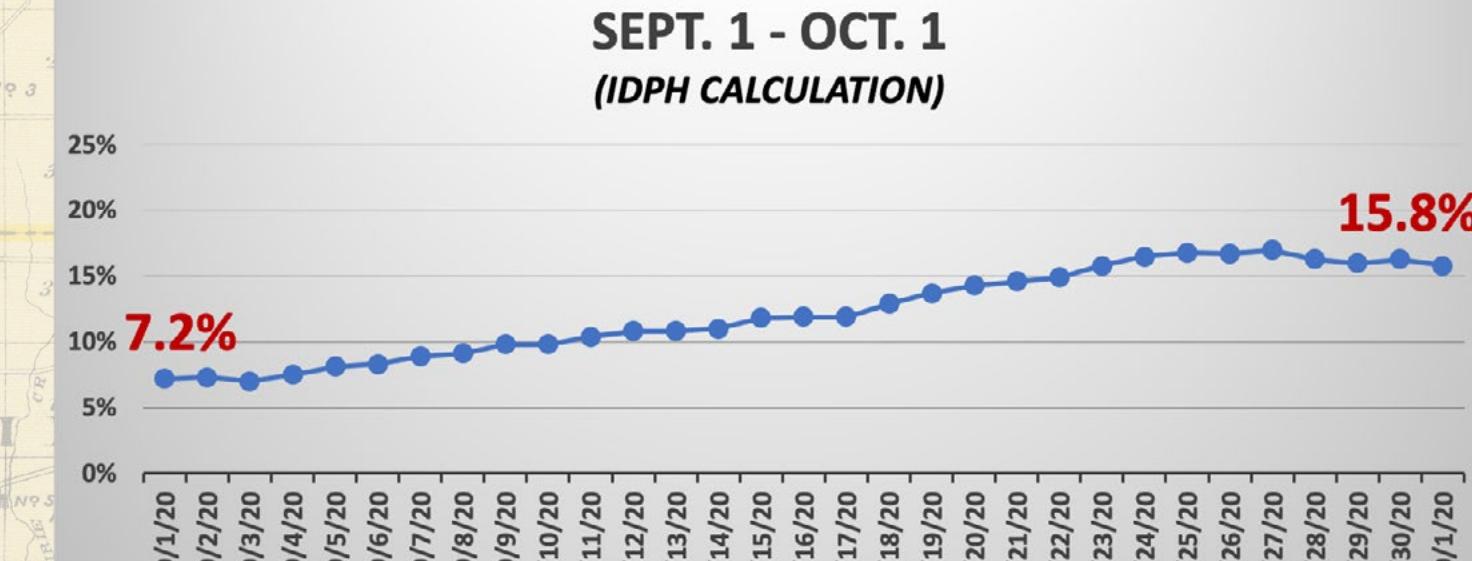
To receive daily updates on COVID-19 in Dubuque County, visit [www.cityofdubuque.org/notifyme](http://www.cityofdubuque.org/notifyme) and subscribe to the "Coronavirus(COVID-19)" Notify Me.



## SEPTEMBER TRENDLINE OF NEW COVID-19 CASES PER DAY IN DUBUQUE COUNTY



## DUBUQUE COUNTY PAST 14-DAY AVERAGE COVID-19 TEST POSITIVITY RATE



# Incident Management Team Coordinating Countywide Response

A countywide public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic is being coordinated by the Dubuque County Public Health Incident Management Team (IMT), which consists of staff from the Dubuque County Health Department (Executive Director Patrice Lambert, RN, MSN), City of Dubuque Health Services Department (Public Health Specialist Mary Rose Corrigan, RN, MSN), Dubuque Visiting Nurse Association (Director Stacey Killian), and Dubuque County Emergency Management Agency (Director Tom Berger).

The team is coordinating response efforts in conjunction with the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) and with guidance from U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) through daily updates, weekly webinars, and direct contact with a regional epidemiologist.

The IMT works collaboratively with the Dubuque County Health Care Preparedness Coalition, which consists of representatives from county hospitals, clinics, schools, law enforcement, emergency medical services, American Red Cross, and a variety of other community-based organizations while meeting quarterly on public health preparedness issues and response.



// Patrice Lambert //



// Mary Rose Corrigan //



// Tom Berger //



// Stacey Killian //



## >> Dubuque County Update

Dubuque County continues to keep public health at the forefront during the pandemic. The County has helped to facilitate the opening of Dubuque County's first Testlawa Clinic in June, and we are pleased that a second Testlawa Clinic opened in late September. We also appreciate and support the other free testing locations at local pharmacies and clinics.

The County has worked closely with area nursing homes and assisted living or group living facilities to make sure their staff and residents get testing. Through our contract with the Visiting Nurse Association, we are the first to contact individuals who test positive for COVID-19 and initiate the contact tracing to help limit the community spread of the virus.

Dubuque County is developing a plan with our partners for distributing a COVID-19 vaccine whenever it arrives, to ensure its timely and equitable distribution. We are also working our plan to get regular health immunizations for children back on track, and to promote flu shots this fall.

This has been a very challenging year for Dubuque County but we are working hard to keep the public safe.

**Dave Baker, Chairperson, Dubuque County Board of Supervisors**



// Dave Baker //

## Public Health's Role in a Pandemic

Public health is the science of protecting and improving the health of people and their communities through policy development and environmental change.

Public health strives to improve the quality of life for all Iowans by assuring access to evidence-based population-health programs, services and activities in the following areas:

- Prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies
- Protect against environmental hazards
- Promote healthy living
- Prevent epidemics and the spread of disease
- Prevent injuries and violence
- Improve and support public health performance
- Assure access to quality health services

The Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic is a public health emergency and public health's role is critical in protecting the health of communities by:

- Collaborating with local healthcare providers to share information, support testing options, slow the spread, and investigate the source of infections through contact tracing.
- Working with healthcare providers, service agencies, residents, and elected officials to recognize health trends, make policy recommendations, and implement solutions to support the overall response to the pandemic.
- Sharing science-based information with the public to respond to misinformation, rumors, and the rapidly changing nature of the pandemic.

The City of Dubuque Health Services Department works with the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH), the Dubuque County Health Department, the Dubuque Visiting Nurse Association (VNA), and local healthcare providers to ensure local resources are available to respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

# PERSONAL REFLECTIONS on the COVID-19 Pandemic

Mary Rose Corrigan, RN, MSN  
City of Dubuque Public Health Specialist

In the year 2000, I attended a presentation with other public health colleagues learning about ricin, anthrax, mustard gas, and other biological agents used as terrorist weapons. That was the beginning of public health preparedness as I know it today and we all know what happened soon after: the 9/11 attacks, followed by an intense national effort to prepare against future acts of terrorism of all kinds.

Simultaneously, we were experiencing more and more newly emerging infectious diseases like resistant tuberculosis, MRSA, West Nile, Ebola, Zika, cyclospora, E.Coli 0157:H7, SARS, MERS, H1N1 influenza, Toxic Shock Syndrome, and others. (This trend began early in my career with the emergence of HIV AIDS more than 30 years ago and has continued.) Additionally, outbreaks of diseases we thought we'd conquered such as mumps, measles, and whooping cough were occurring, along with outbreaks from new sources or ways of spread from pathogens such as cryptosporidium, giardia, salmonella, shigella, and Hantavirus.

Public health professionals quickly realized the need to be prepared for all types of hazards including terrorist agents, diseases, natural disasters (don't forget the six presidential disaster declarations Dubuque experienced between 2002 and 2011) and their effects. So, for the past 20 years, we've been creating, refining, updating, and adding to the Dubuque County Public Health Emergency Preparedness Response Plan (PHEPRP.)

Today, our response to the COVID-19 pandemic is utilizing all those years of planning, updating, collaborating, training and education, and building community partnerships and coalitions. We've also tried to keep policy makers and our communities informed of these plans and the need for them. Did we practice and drill for outbreaks, epidemics, and pandemics? We sure did. Did we think anything like the COVID-19 virus could affect the world the way it has? Scientifically, we knew it was possible but, realistically, most of us probably did not expect it to happen.

Since February 2020, the Dubuque County Public Health Incident Management Team (IMT) has responded



to the pandemic by providing education, guidance, recommendations, and information to the community and our policy makers. A typical day for the IMT involves at least one daily meeting, monitoring of positive cases and initiating contact tracing, reviewing local state and national data in a variety of formats, becoming familiar with changes and updates in the CDC/IDPH guidance, along with virtually attending IDPH updates and briefings and meetings with local schools, colleges, long-term care facilities, health care providers and hospitals, and community partner organizations. Plus, we respond to multiple interview requests from media, prepare a daily county update, and answer a multitude of questions from all of the above and the public. This has been EVERY WEEK since March.

One of the more difficult things to deal with, both for healthcare, public health, and most of all the public, is the ever-changing guidance and information we're all bombarded with on a daily basis. I welcome questions about clarifying isolation, quarantine, or exposure guidance because the more the public understands these, the more equipped we'll all be to continue to live with COVID-19 (or other illnesses that come along) in the safest way possible. We all need to remember that SARS-Co-V-2 (COVID-19) is a "novel" infection, meaning it's brand new. Therefore, we have to learn not only the facts about this virus, but also how to manage it, treat those infected, and prevent the spread while trying to keep our communities and our residents safe and able to carry on with their lives.

You see, despite this virus, not everything else in the world has stopped. Life goes on with deaths, births, accidents, anniversaries, birthdays, illness due to other causes, building and maintaining our city's infrastructure, retirements, lay-offs, graduations, job searches and career changes, elections, stock market lows and highs – they all keep happening. The CDC, IDPH, and the Dubuque County IMT strive to create policies and guidance to help us maneuver through all of these things during the pandemic but the only way we can do so safely is for everyone to pitch in and do their part. I'd like to think the public has gained a lot of knowledge about health through this, particularly

testing for viruses, immunity, infection control, and disease transmission.

I am thankful for the Mayor and City Council's proactive decision to adopt a face covering ordinance for Dubuque and I appreciate their confidence in the incident management team's ability to provide information and direction for them and the community.

I've been asked, "Where can I get good, scientific, factual information on this virus?" Personally, I most frequently look to these sources:

- CDC and IDPH
- Dr. Fauci (who, by the way, has been a tremendous public health leader long before COVID-19)
- The Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy (CIDRAP) lead by Dr. Michael T. Osterholm, an Iowa-born (Waukon), long-time infectious disease expert and public health leader, colleague, and friend.
- Local healthcare and hospital-based professionals (too many to list)
- The Dubuque County IMT and my Health Services Department co-workers.
- Some national newspapers and other media outlets

As we anxiously await a COVID-19 vaccine, remember that we will have to wait our turn to receive it. Although vaccine manufacturers are moving as quickly as they can and, due to technology, lessons learned, and national policy modifications, they can produce vaccines faster than years past, the scientists and researchers behind that production and the phase one, two, and three trials cannot and will not cut corners to risk vaccine safety. The actual production of vaccine also takes time and its initial doses will be prioritized for those at highest risk, namely health care providers, emergency service workers, and those in long-term care settings. These will most likely be followed by elderly, those with co-morbidities and underlying health conditions, and then the general public.

Distributing and administering a limited vaccine supply is one area public health has recent experience. In 2009, H1N1 influenza emerged and the world was not prepared. Vaccine was in very limited supply. People who never before sought a seasonal flu shot were asking me, "Where can I get a flu shot? Can you get me one?" Unfortunately, most had to wait their turn while the prioritized groups were given the initial doses. H1N1 was a lesson in the severity and unpredictability of novel viruses that resulted in businesses, schools, and many other sectors preparation and policies for preventing the impacts of seasonal influenza. Unfortunately, over time, we forgot about that flu or the 9/11 attacks and our preparedness and prevention got sloppy and public health got defunded.

This fall and winter will bring ongoing and new challenges. Living in the Midwest, without the luxury of weather to allow

outside socializing and activities, along with general cold and flu season, reminds us to prepare ourselves mentally and physically to improve and maintain healthy and COVID-19 safe lifestyles. Get some good outdoor gear so you can maintain those daily walks and outdoor physical activities. Let's make additional efforts to check on our isolated family, friends, and neighbors. Even a phone call or virtual visit can brighten one's day or let others know you care.

The COVID-19 pandemic is far and above any public health challenge I've faced. I'm confident this is true for my fellow IMT members, the Health Services Department, and the rest of city staff and our local, state, and federal policy makers and leaders. With this challenge, I believe some good things have happened. We've focused on equity and inclusion in a serious and urgent way to improve the lives of all our citizens and lessen the impact of the pandemic on citizens' vulnerabilities. Another benefit is more appreciation for the simple things we've taken for granted, such as being with other people, hugs, restaurant dining, family, friends, healthcare workers, law enforcement and fire fighters, shopping, Farmer's Market, past 4th of July celebrations and other special events, attending school, travel, and shopping local etc. I could go on and on.

Like many of you, adapting to life during the pandemic has not been easy for me and the work side has been challenging and grueling. If it weren't for the occasional visit to the golf course, my bike, and so many kind words and gestures of appreciation from many people, I would not be able to stay focused and keep fighting this fight. I realize now more than ever the importance and value of physical, emotional, and spiritual wellness.

Also, like many of you, I have worries beyond my professional responsibilities. I worry about my young adult sons attending college in a "red zone." I worry about the fact that, as an older adult, if I get infected I may not be able to fight off this virus or its effects as well as younger folks. I worry that the vaccine may not be "perfect" and may have a sub-optimal efficacy. Then I think about the note from my son that came with a bouquet of flowers: *"Mom, thank you for continuing to be an inspiration to the community... I remember when you were shocked that I "wanted the pressure" of having the basketball in my hands at the end of the game and you replied, "That couldn't be me." Well, it is you! Our team is down, players are hurt, we're about to lose the game. You've been called on to step up...."*

We're all on the same team. Many of us will continue to lose sleep, wake up early, put in extra hours, and do good for others in our community as this marathon pandemic presses on. Let's continue to support each other. ♦

# COVID-19 IMPACT ON CITY BUDGET

The financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been devastating for many, including local governments. The City of Dubuque has seen critical revenue sources such as local option sales tax, gaming tax, and others decrease, while the need for public services the City provides remains vital. These are the realities the City faced when closing out Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 (June 30, 2020) and designing a FY2021 budget.

The City acted swiftly, taking the following measures to address the sudden loss of revenues:

- a hiring freeze on most positions vacant in FY2020 and on most new positions recommended in FY2021;
- most travel budgets (conferences, education and training, city business travel) for all departments are frozen;
- equipment purchases are delayed;
- most capital improvement projects are delayed and some maintenance projects are delayed;
- planned wage increases for City employees (non-bargaining and bargaining unit employees) in FY2021 were eliminated;
- multiple employee work groups were formed (Capital Improvement Projects & Equipment Team, Operating Budget Team, Purchase of Services & Contracts Team, Grants and Contracts Team, and Staffing and Vacant Position Review Team) to assist with the review of FY2021 projections.

Because of these actions and others, the City was able to lessen the financial burden for the remaining portion of FY2020 and better position itself for FY2021.

The City of Dubuque was also awarded some federal funds to assist in the pandemic response costs, including:

- Federal Transportation Administration CARES Act Section 5307 Funds (\$3,641,599);
- Community Development Block Grant Coronavirus Funds (\$965,256);
- Housing and Urban Development Housing Choice Voucher administrative funds (\$112,800);
- Federal Aviation Administration CARES Act (\$1,159,773);
- Police Federal Bureau of Justice Coronavirus Emergency Supplemental Funding (\$68,679); and
- Ambulance Public Health and Social Services Emergency Fund (\$44,663)

In addition, Governor Kim Reynolds allocated \$125 million to the Local Government Relief Fund for reimbursements to local governments for direct expenses incurred in response to the COVID-19 emergency. \$100 million for reimbursement will be divided between eligible cities and counties. \$25 million will be used to cover the local government portion of the FEMA

match through the Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. The

City of Dubuque's allocation is \$1,375,656 which will be used to reimburse 25% of the City's public health and public safety employee salaries.

The City of Dubuque is also submitting COVID-19 related expenses to FEMA because of the disaster declaration related to the pandemic. Due to the estimated size of revenue losses, the City is advocating for additional federal assistance to be passed.

As of Sept. 2, the City's estimated FY2021 revenue loss is \$2.1 million, which is \$3 million less than previously projected due to revised local option sales tax projections from the State of Iowa.

The City's adopted budget for FY2021, which began July 2020, addresses these fiscal realities caused by the pandemic while continuing to provide essential services to residents, businesses, and stakeholders. The budget aims to minimize the costs of services as those groups are also experiencing hardships as a result of the pandemic.

The City's FY2021 budget was developed to minimize increased costs for residents and businesses during the pandemic and features:

- A decrease in property taxes for the average residential, commercial, and industrial properties.
- A decrease in refuse/trash collection fees.
- No increase in City water, sanitary sewer, and stormwater rates.
- No increase in pay for City employees.

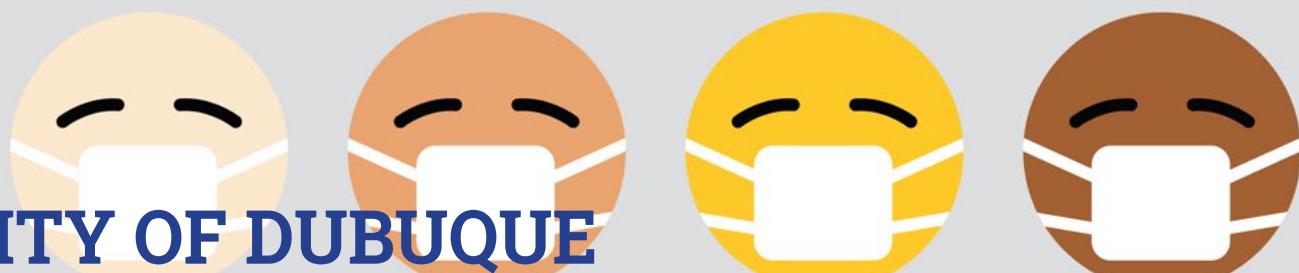
Property Type	Average Property Tax Cost Change from FY2020	Percent Property Tax Cost Change from FY2020
Residential	\$1.09 less	0.14% decrease
Commercial	\$104.45 less	3.30% decrease
Industrial	\$132.61 less	2.81% decrease
Multi-Residential	\$158.73 more	9.13% increase

Current Property Tax Rate	% Change
\$10.1440	1.8% Decrease

The adopted FY2021 Budget continues to reflect the City's vision and mission statements and is responsive to the goals and priorities established by the Mayor and City Council.

	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023	FY2024	FY2025
City's Spendable General Fund Cash Reserve Fund Balance	\$17,119,065	\$17,119,065	\$17,119,065	\$17,119,065	\$17,119,065
% of Projected Revenue	24.00%	24.38%	23.67%	23.41%	23.35%



# CITY OF DUBUQUE FACE COVERING ORDINANCE

On Aug. 6, the Dubuque City Council adopted a city ordinance that requires everyone within the city limits to wear a face covering over the mouth and nose, with some exceptions.

## Frequently Asked Questions About the Ordinance

### Where are face coverings required?

- Face coverings are required outdoors whenever one cannot stay at least six feet away from others.
- Face coverings are required inside any indoor public setting.
- Face coverings are required when using public transportation or a private car service, including taxis, ride sharing, or carpooling.

### When and where are face coverings NOT required?

- Face coverings are not required while traveling in a personal vehicle alone or with household members.
- Face coverings are not required while a person is alone or in the presence of only household members.
- Face coverings are not required while outside, if keeping six feet away from others is possible
- Face coverings are not required while exercising at moderate or high intensity, such as jogging or biking.
- Face coverings are not required while seated at a food establishment in the process of eating or drinking.
- Face coverings are not required while obtaining a service that would require temporary removal of the person's face covering.
- Face coverings are not required when federal or state law prohibits wearing a face covering or requires the removal of the face covering.

### Who has to wear a face covering?

Every person in the city of Dubuque three years of age or older is required to wear a face covering that covers their nose and mouth when in a public place, unless they qualify for one of the exemptions.

### Who is exempt from wearing a face covering?

Those who are exempt from wearing a face covering under the mandate include:

- Persons two years of age and younger.
- Anyone who has difficulty breathing or is on oxygen therapy or a ventilator.
- Anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the face covering without assistance.
- Anyone who has been told by a medical, legal, or behavioral health professional not to wear face coverings.
- Anyone actively engaged in a public safety role, including but not limited to law enforcement, firefighters, or emergency medical personnel, although a face covering should be worn if possible.
- A student participating in co-curricular activities when participating according to the Iowa High School Athletic Association rules for wearing face coverings.

The ordinance will remain in effect until rescinded by City Council. The City Council is provided information about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our community at every City Council meeting and the mandate will be reviewed as part of these meetings.

To view more frequently asked questions and read the full ordinance, visit [www.cityofdubuque.org/COVID19](http://www.cityofdubuque.org/COVID19).

