



**ISLAND COUNTY COVID-19**  
**Updated Community Guidance**  
**October 27, 2020**

Island County Public Health wants to make sure that the citizens of Island County have access to reliable guidance surrounding COVID-19. We update guidance bi-weekly and hope that you use this to help inform and empower yourself and our community.

**Numbers and Data**

At the time of this writing, Island County has 380 confirmed COVID-19 cases, including 12 deaths. A case rate of 43.62 COVID-19 cases per 100,000 was calculated for the two-week period of 10/11/20-10/24/20. A [data edition](#) of the community guidance is released between bi-weekly comprehensive community updates, as appropriate.

**Stay Safe – Vote Safe**

Gov. Jay Inslee issued a [proclamation](#) and guidance [memo](#) temporarily suspending any COVID-19 related orders that could be interpreted to restrict access to voting centers and student engagement HUBS by persons intending to register to vote, obtain a ballot, receive assistance with a ballot, deposit a ballot or use other voting-related services. "The right to vote is one of the cornerstones of our democracy," Inslee said. "Even in the middle of a pandemic, it's vital that everyone's voices are heard. We are dedicated to ensuring that anyone can cast their ballot in a safe manner and we are protecting the crucial election personnel and volunteers that make this democratic process possible." All elections personnel and voters should practice physical distancing and use face coverings, as recommended by the Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control.

**Fall Celebrations!**

From beautiful changing foliage to delicious comfort foods, many of us are embracing the joys that the fall season brings. While participating in seasonal activities, please be sure to continue following [modified Phase 3 guidance](#) in support of the health and safety of yourself and fellow community members. In addition to mask-wearing, frequent hand washing/sanitizing, and physical distancing, DOH offers [helpful tips](#) for celebrating this Halloween weekend:

- Choose lower-risk activities, such as online costume or pumpkin carving contests, Halloween movie marathons with household members, and at-home scavenger hunts. Should you choose to trick or treat, stick with members of your own household. If you hand out treats, consider placing individually wrapped treat bags on a table to reduce the number of people who would typically touch items in a communal bowl.
- If you attend or plan a small gathering, visit the [WA State Safe Gatherings](#) webpage for helpful COVID-19 resources including planning tips, communication strategies, and a safety checklist!
- Avoid confined spaces and indoor gatherings (outdoors is best).
- Stay home if you are sick or were recently exposed to someone with COVID-19.

## **Grant Relief to Address Disproportionate COVID-19 Impact**

Historical inequities in funding for Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) organizations could deepen as COVID-19 response and recovery continues. [Recent data](#) also shows that communities of color in Washington State are experiencing disproportionately higher percentages of COVID-19 cases and [unemployment](#). Several groups have case and hospitalization rates from seven to 10 times higher than for white people and death rates two to over three times higher. Regional analysis indicates this is true across rural, urban and suburban communities.

The Washington State Department of Commerce is collaborating with Philanthropy Northwest to provide \$2 million of relief funding from the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act with a focus on community-based nonprofits and Tribal organizations most impacted by COVID-19. Grant applications from eligible organizations are due by Nov. 6. Find all information and application materials [here](#). [Free technical and language assistance](#) is available to help with the application process, as well as an [information session](#) on Oct. 29, 7 - 8 p.m.)

## **The Importance of Consistency**

A [recent study](#) released by the Institute for Disease Modeling suggests that consistency among COVID-19 mitigation policies is an important component to reducing spread across populations and geographic areas. Lack of consistent policy can lead to increased travel between counties, resulting in increased movement of disease to areas with lower COVID-19 activity. This phenomenon can have a greater impact on vulnerable populations.

## **Embrace available resources**

- The Eviction Rent Assistance Program (ERAP) intends to prevent evictions that would contribute to the spread of the virus by paying past due, current due and future rent. The ERAP is targeting limited resources to those with the greatest needs while working to distribute funds equitably. To request assistance, please complete the [online application](#) or call before December 31, 2020 (Whidbey Residents – (360) 678-8284; Camano Residents – (360) 629-5257 ext. 1009). If you are struggling with Homelessness, call the Housing Support Center at (360) 678-8284.
- Recent closures and mandates for social distancing can have an impact on you and your family. If you are feeling anxious, scared, or are in need of resources related to mental health, please call the Island County Helpline at 360.678.2346 (M-F 10am – 6pm) or complete the online [referral form](#).
- As the economic impacts of COVID-19 continue, more families are taking advantage of free meals provided by school districts. While all students may be provided free meals through the end of December, families are strongly encouraged to complete a School Meal Application now. This application determines a student's eligibility for free and reduced-price meals. Read more [here](#).
- The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) has been awarded \$1 million in CARES Act funding to support housing stability for youth who exited the Extended Foster Care Program at age 21 between March 1, 2020 and Dec. 31, 2020. [Apply for a stipend](#) before November 13, 2020.
- The WA State Department of Commerce is collaborating with organizations to provide support through the [Small Business Resiliency Assistance](#) program. Support is available for small businesses and nonprofits in a variety of ways, including recovery and re-opening planning, employee retention, [and translation services](#).

If you have questions or concerns about COVID-19 in Island County, start by visiting our [website](#) or our [Facebook](#) page. The Island County call center may be reached at **360.678.2301**; Monday through Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm.