

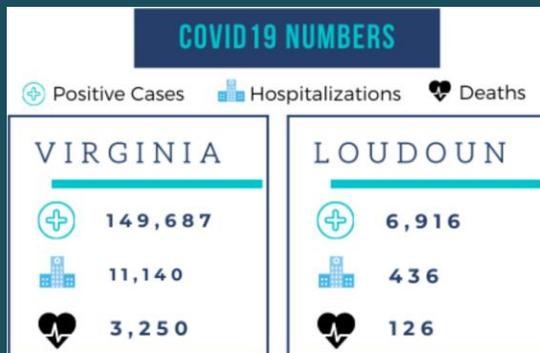


# All About Algonkian

Juli E. Briskman | Algonkian District Supervisor



## COVID-19 Update



### Local and State COVID-19 Trends

A model used by the Loudoun County estimates that cases are expected to increase an average of 18 cases per day over the next six days. Statewide, Virginia continues to experience a steady decline in its seven-day moving average of cases.



### Election Officials Remind Loudoun Residents of Proper Voting Procedures

said Loudoun County General Registrar Judy Brown, who provides the following information:

“There are three things that appear to be causing some concern and confusion among voters right now: absentee ballot witness signatures, which envelopes are required for return and how to participate in early voting,”

### **Absentee Ballot Witness Signature Requirement Waived**

Due to health and safety concerns brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, the previous long-standing requirement in Virginia that voters casting absentee ballots must have a witness was recently waived. However, the witness requirement is still listed in the instructions, with the provision that people may opt out of the requirement if they cannot safely obtain a witness signature. "We are accepting absentee ballots without a witness signature as long as everything else on the 'B' envelope is filled out correctly," said Brown. The deadline to apply for an absentee ballot by mail is October 23, 2020, at 5:00 p.m.

### **Follow Instructions and Use the Return Envelope**

Brown reminds voters who have received an absentee ballot to make sure they follow the instructions for filling it out. When completed, they should seal the ballot in the 'B' envelope and complete the required information and then seal the 'B' envelope in the return envelope, which is the one with the purple stripe. "If people use the return envelope with the purple stripe down the side, that will speed up our ability to get their ballot into the system," she said.

### **Early Voters Do Not Have to Apply in Advance**

Anyone who would like to vote early in person may do so without an appointment or application. Early voting is available at the Office of Elections in Leesburg during normal business hours, with extended hours and additional early voting sites opening beginning October 17, 2020. The last day to vote early in person is Saturday, October 31, 2020.

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### **Metro Opens Public Comment Period on Service Cuts**

Metro today officially opened the public comment period and announced the many ways the public can make their voice heard regarding the impact of Covid-19 budget cuts that must be considered as federal funding support ends. Due to the pandemic's impact on ridership and revenue, Metro is heavily dependent on CARES Act funding that will run out by the end of the year. As a result, Metro's Board of Directors must prepare to cut more than \$200 million from the transit agency's annual operating budget, something that is only possible through a combination of service cuts, reduced hours, layoffs, furloughs, and internal cost-cutting measures.

**Metro is encouraging anyone impacted by these changes to make their voice heard as part of the official Public Comment period, which runs through 9 a.m. October 19, 2020.**

**Proposals being considered by the Metro Board include:**

- Cutting Metrorail service (longer time between trains)
- Closing Metrorail earlier
- Continuing reduced Metrobus service levels and hours

Details on the proposals are available at [wmata.com/budget](http://wmata.com/budget).

**How to provide feedback**

- In writing: Visit [wmata.com/budget](http://wmata.com/budget) to take a survey and provide written comment. The deadline to provide feedback is 9 a.m. on Monday, October 19, 2020.
- Via audio/video: Metro will conduct a "virtual public hearing" that will be livestreamed on [wmata.com](http://wmata.com) and [YouTube.com/metroforward](http://YouTube.com/metroforward) on October 13, 2020. Individuals have several options for submitting audio or video testimony for the public hearing, including:
  - Recording an audio statement by voicemail
  - Submitting an audio file via email
  - Sending a video selfie
  - Participating in a Zoom meeting on October 13, 2020. (Registration required at [wmata.com/budget](http://wmata.com/budget) by 12:00 p.m. on the day of the hearing.)

The deadline for submitting audio or video comments is 12:00 p.m. Tuesday, October 13. All audio and video comments received will be streamed publicly for the Metro Board and the public beginning at 3 p.m. that day.

**By mail:** Comments sent by mail must be received by 9 a.m. on Monday, October 19, 2020. Submit to:

Office of the Board Secretary  
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority  
600 Fifth Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001

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**Census**  
**2020**

## Federal Judge Extends Census Deadline

A federal judge has issued an order to clarify that the U.S. Census Bureau must continue counting for the 2020 census through Oct. 31 after finding the bureau made multiple violations of an earlier order that extends the national head count's schedule. If you haven't already, ensure

that our community has the resources it needs and take the census safely online.



## Guidance for Having a Safe Halloween

Loudoun County officials recommend that residents do not engage in traditional door-to-door trick-or-treating this Halloween or other activities that risk transmission of

COVID-19.

Activities that are considered high-risk and are not recommended include:

- Traditional trick-or-treating where treats are handed to children who go door to door.
- Trick-or-treating at houses where individuals are not wearing a face covering and where 6 feet of physical distance is not maintained between individuals.
- Trunk-or-treating where treats are handed out from trunks of cars lined up in large parking lots.
- Events that involve large gatherings, such as crowded costume parties held indoors and any events where social distancing is difficult to maintain.
- Indoor haunted houses where people may be crowded together and screaming.

For those who are planning to participate in Halloween events, officials urge these precautions:

- Stay home and away from others when sick.
- Stay at least 6 feet from others at all times.
- Wash your hands before and during trick-or-treating or handing out candy. Use hand sanitizer when soap and water aren't available.
- Wear a cloth face covering under costume masks. Halloween masks may not fit snugly and may not protect against inhaling respiratory droplets from other people.

- If you choose to offer candy, hand out candy outside and from a distance. Consider setting up a table and placing individually-wrapped treats so that multiple people do not have to reach into the same bowl. For trunk-or-treating, create distance between cars by parking in every other space.

The Health Department considers haunted houses to be particularly risky for spreading COVID-19 because they typically involve people screaming, which is known to increase the production of respiratory droplets. Haunted houses that choose to operate must strictly follow [Phase 3 Guidelines for Entertainment and Public Amusement settings \(PDF\)](#).

For more detailed information, including suggestions for low-risk Halloween activities for families, visit [loudoun.gov/safehalloween](http://loudoun.gov/safehalloween).



## VDH Launches New Dashboard

Today, the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) launched a new [Pandemic Metrics Dashboard](#), which shows a visualization of COVID-19 community transmission by region. Updated weekly, this dashboard will show: data trends for COVID-19 in specific communities; where the COVID-19 virus is spreading; and assist local and state governments in determining additional mitigation measures.

A [CDC School Metrics](#) tab will also be available within the dashboard. This tab uses [metrics described by the CDC](#) to guide decisions by school officials, taking into consideration the school's ability to implement and adhere to key mitigation strategies to decrease transmission of COVID-19. VDH recommends local government and school officials work with local health districts to evaluate epidemiologic and other data to assess the extent of COVID-19 transmission within their region, its effect on the Commonwealth, and the ability of the healthcare system to function. These data should then be interpreted within the context of the local jurisdiction. VDH recommends that decisions to alter K-12 school programming, including decisions about in-person instruction, school dismissals or closures be handled at the most local level possible, considering both regional and local epidemiology, community characteristics, and local capacity.

The education setting outbreaks dashboard will include aggregate outbreak data that breaks out the current "Educational" category of outbreaks for K-12, childcare and higher education setting sub-categories.

These dashboards will help communities measure the extent to which the COVID-19 virus is spreading in their localities and guide possible responses to mitigate that spread. However, each community is unique and appropriate mitigation strategies should consider the impact to the community and be based on the best available

data. Decisions will vary on how and when to increase community mitigation and the following information is intended to guide decisions.



## Governor's Updates

Governor Ralph Northam announced more than \$1.7 million in Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) for three projects in James City and York counties and the city of Williamsburg that will assist local governments and community partners in meeting the needs of Virginia families and small businesses impacted by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

DHCD reallocated existing CDBG funding to assist with COVID-19 response and recovery activities. Funding can be used for:

- Construction or rehab of structures for shelters
- Testing or equipment manufacturing
- Training programs for healthcare workers or service industry jobs transitioning to food or pharmaceutical delivery systems
- Acquisition costs for telework or telemedicine services
- Job creation or business development for manufacturing of COVID-related materials
- Business assistance for job training or re-tooling business services to reopen and adapt in a new environment
- Small business recovery funds for rent and mortgage assistance
- Personal protective equipment, sanitization, dining equipment, and barrier devices to meet social distancing requirements

Governor Northam also announced more than \$8.4 million in CDBG for 14 projects that will help rural communities across Virginia respond to recover from the public health and economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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- Testing or equipment manufacturing
- Training programs for healthcare workers or service industry jobs transitioning to food or pharmaceutical delivery systems
- Acquisition costs for telework or telemedicine services
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- Business assistance for job training or re-tooling business services to reopen and adapt in a new environment
  - Small business recovery funds for rent/mortgage assistance
  - Personal protective equipment, sanitization, dining equipment, and barrier devices to meet social distancing requirements
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Seen any message of hope and inspiration? Do you know someone making a difference in your community? Share with us at [zachary.harris@loudoun.gov](mailto:zachary.harris@loudoun.gov) and we'll put them in our updates and newsletter.

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If you are having trouble paying your utilities because of COVID-19, visit the County's webpage on [COVID-19 Utilities](#). You will find program information on:

Columbia Gas  
Dominion Power  
Loudoun Water  
NOVEC  
Washington Gas  
Wi-fi Connectivity

### **For More Current COVID-19 Information**

Visit: [www.loudoun.gov/CoronaVirus](http://www.loudoun.gov/CoronaVirus)

Call: (703) 737-8300

Email: [Health@Loudoun.gov](mailto:Health@Loudoun.gov)

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