



Massachusetts COVID-19 Updates – May 26, 2020

- As of Monday night, DPH reported a total of 93,271 cases of COVID-19. The state has now confirmed a total of 6,416 deaths from the virus.
- This week sees businesses in the first wave of reopening cleared to relaunch while adhering to health & safety standards and industry-specific guidelines.
- Construction, manufacturing, religious services, some retail and offices, salons and barbershops, labs and car washes are included in phase 1.
- Massachusetts cities and towns have until June 5 to submit applications for their share of \$502 million in federal funds that the Baker administration is making available on a rolling basis to address eligible costs related to the COVID-19 response effort.
- At the time of the May 14 announcement, the administration said the distribution, plus funds allocated directly to Boston and Plymouth County, represented about 25 percent of the state's \$2.7 billion allocation from the Coronavirus Relief Fund.
- According to A&F Secretary Mike Heffernan, the funds can help cities and towns address deficits without drawing from their reserves, ease municipal cash flow pressures, and enable both the state and its municipalities to maximize available federal funds.
- Under federal law, the funds must be used to address spending incurred on or after March 1 and up to Dec. 30, 2020 and to address necessary expenditures incurred due to the COVID-19 public health emergency.
- The funds may not be used to substitute for lost revenue and may not supplant state or municipal spending.
- The A&F guidance memo can be [viewed here](#).
- The Massachusetts unemployment rate surged above 15 percent in April.
- State labor officials [announced Friday](#) that Massachusetts shed 623,000 jobs in April.
- From March to April, the unemployment rate increased 12.3 percentage points to 15.1 percent, the highest level since the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics began tracking seasonally adjusted unemployment rates at the state level in 1976.

- Both the House and Senate meet in informal sessions Tuesday at 11 a.m.
- The House is expected to take up a COVID-19 data reporting bill ([H 4672](#)) after it did not act on it in an informal session last Thursday.
- The Legislature sent to Gov. Charlie Baker's desk Thursday a bill dealing with unemployment insurance that would, in part, expand the maximum allowable benefit period for claims from 27 weeks to 30 weeks for any week where unemployment insurance claims exceed 100,000.

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