



## CORONAVIRUS BRIEFING: FEBRUARY 26, 2021

THE CENTRAL COMMUNICATIONS BRIEFING FOR THE TOWN OF WELLESLEY

Visit Wellesley's COVID-19 Information Hub at [www.wellesleyma.gov/coronavirus](http://www.wellesleyma.gov/coronavirus)

**Total confirmed COVID-19 cases in Massachusetts:** 545,624 \*as of Feb. 25

[View the COVID-19 Interactive dashboard.](#)

**Total confirmed positive cases in Wellesley:** 1043 (70 new cases in past 14 days)

**Average Daily Incidence Rate/100,000 for Wellesley:** 16.8 (past 14 days)

**Percent Positivity of Testing:** 0.53% (past 14 days)

[View the Weekly COVID-19 Public Health Report.](#)

Wellesley has experienced a slight uptick in COVID-19 cases. This is most likely the result of gatherings with individuals outside of COVID pods and public school February break activities and travel. Health Department nurses continue to perform detailed contact tracing for all cases. Residents should remember to follow the recommended COVID-19 precautions – **wear a mask, watch your distance from others, and wash your hands.**

### Vaccine Update

Scheduling COVID-19 vaccine appointments continues to be difficult for [eligible groups](#) and newly added appointments are booked very quickly. Upgrades to the [Massachusetts vaccine finder](#) website have slightly improved the process, although individuals still report very long waits in the new digital waiting room on the site. Please continue to check the State website frequently for appointments. The mass vaccination clinic at Natick Mall is among the sites near Wellesley.

The [TripAdvisor clinic](#) in Needham resumes on Monday, March 1 for eligible individuals in the Mass General Brigham health care system ONLY. This clinic is operated in partnership with Newton Wellesley Hospital. Mass General Brigham is notifying patients directly about appointments at this clinic. CVS is adding vaccine clinics to 17 more retail pharmacy locations. Check [the CVS website](#) for appointment availability and booking.

The Council on Aging continues to provide scheduling help for residents at **781-235-3961**. Watch [this video from Wellesley Public Media](#) to learn more about the COVID-19 vaccine process and help available to residents.

Individuals without access to computers can also call the State call center at **2-1-1** for assistance, Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Housing Authority vaccination clinic.** Residents in federally subsidized senior housing on River Street, Washington Street, and Weston Road will be scheduled for COVID-19 vaccine shots next week. This clinic is a partnership between the Housing Authority and the Health Department and is specifically designated for those in low-income and age restricted housing locations. It is **not** a general Wellesley community clinic open to eligible groups.

**Vaccine Hesitancy Survey.** State officials are encouraging residents 18 and older to complete [a survey about vaccination attitudes](#). The results will help improve messages to increase confidence in the vaccine. The survey is anonymous and can be completed online by March 12.

### **Phase 3 Step 2 of Reopening Starts on Monday**

Massachusetts moves to the [next phase of reopening on Monday, March 1](#). The changes for Phase 3, Step 2 include reopening indoor performance and recreation venues and increasing capacity limits to 50 percent for most businesses including fitness centers, libraries, museums, and offices. Capacity percent limits at restaurants will be lifted, but tables must remain 6 feet apart with a maximum of only six people to a table, and dining limits of 90 minutes.

**If public health data continues to improve**, on Monday, March 22, the State will move to Phase 4 of reopening. This phase will allow indoor and outdoor stadiums (Gillette Stadium), ballparks (Fenway Park), and arenas (Boston Garden) to reopen at 12 percent capacity. Gathering limits at event venues and public settings will increase to 100 people indoors and 150 people outdoors. Private gatherings are still restricted to 10 people indoors and 25 people outdoors. Look for more details on this in the next few weeks.

### **PPP for Smallest Businesses**

The Federal government has changed its Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) to make it easier for very small businesses to apply. Now through March 10, businesses and nonprofits with under 20 employees can submit applications. [Details are on the U.S. Small Business Administration website](#).

### **American Express Offers ‘Historic’ Restaurant Grants**

Wellesley restaurants who’ve been part of the community for decades, like the Maugus Restaurant, or fans of these restaurants can submit nominations for American Express grants. The credit card company is awarding \$1 million in grants to ‘historic’ restaurants. [Nominate your favorite spot](#).

### **Free 2-Hour Parking Ends on March 1**

Parking fees resume on Monday, March 1 at all 2-hour on street parking meters in Wellesley. Pay for parking using coins or with your phone by using the [PaybyPhone](#) or [Passport Parking](#) app. Detailed information is available on the [Parking Clerk webpages](#).

### **2021 Town Election on March 2**



In-person voting for Wellesley’s Annual Election will take place on Tuesday, March 2 at specific polling locations. Polls are open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Residents who’ve opted to Vote-by-Mail must return ballots by 8 p.m. on March 2. Ballots returned at 8:01 p.m. will not be counted. Detailed election information and in-person polling locations are available on the [Town Clerk webpages](#).

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