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COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Gov. Beshear Provides Update on COVID-19**

*Visit the Governor's [Facebook](#) page to watch today's news conference*

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (June 18, 2020)** – Gov. Andy Beshear on Thursday updated Kentuckians on the state's continued fight against the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19).

"We're going to address all the challenges that are in front of us and we're going to come out on the other side stronger, better, more compassionate people, better prepared for the future," said Gov. Beshear. "We're going to take the lessons we have learned and we are going to make sure that we make the changes that are necessary so that the next time we face a challenge, whether it's like this or something else, that we are ready."

Gov. Beshear also signed a [proclamation](#) recognizing tomorrow, June 19, as Juneteenth National Freedom Day. He will encourage the legislature to adopt it as a state holiday in the next regular session.

Juneteenth celebrates the events of June 19, 1865, when Major General Gordon Granger led Union soldiers into Galveston, Texas, to bring news that the Civil War had ended and to read General Order #3, which stated that in accordance with President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation all enslaved African-American people were free and entitled to absolute equality of personal and property rights.

"During these times when again we have heard voices and we have seen the frustration of hundreds of years of ramifications of slavery, discriminations, Jim Crow, of segregation, I think it's more and more important that we remind everybody of this dark chapter in our history and that its impacts continue to linger," said Gov. Beshear. "We should celebrate the dates that at least portions of that dark chapter ended."

#### **Case information**

As of 4 p.m. June 18, Gov. Beshear said there were at least 13,197 coronavirus cases in Kentucky, 234 of which were newly confirmed Thursday.

"Let's remember while these numbers are in an area where we still have reopening that is on track, where we still have the capacity in our health care systems to take care of people, that it's a very fragile place where we are," said Gov. Beshear. "We need to continue to follow the Healthy at Work rules. We need to continue to wear masks, and those that aren't out there, I know there's a number, we need you to reconsider."

Unfortunately, Gov. Beshear reported three new deaths Thursday, raising the total to 520 Kentuckians lost to the virus. After review, one death previously counted was determined not to be a COVID-related death and has been removed from the death count.

The deaths reported Thursday include a 91-year-old woman from Jefferson County, an 87-year-old man from Logan County and a 79-year-old man from Perry County.

"It's 520 individuals just since March and its 520 individuals whose families are reeling and need our help," said Gov. Beshear. "Let's make sure we continue to share the compassion we have, light our homes and our businesses up green, and ring those bells at 10 a.m. These are three families that need us."

At least 3,506 Kentuckians have recovered from the virus.

For additional information, including up-to-date lists of positive cases and deaths, as well as breakdowns of coronavirus infections by county, race and ethnicity, [click here](#).

### **FAFSA**

Today, Gov. Beshear urged all graduating high school seniors, parents and adult learners across Kentucky to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, also known as the FAFSA form. You can complete this form entirely online by visiting KHEAA.com, where you can find instructions for submitting a form, including videos, along with other details about the process.

Each year, the U.S. Department of Education provides more than \$120 billion in federal grants, loans and work-study funds to students.

“Kentucky’s overall FAFSA numbers are down 2.7% from this time last year. And for returning Pell-eligible students, the very students with the greatest financial need, the percent decrease is 3.8%,” said Gov. Beshear. “We can do better in Kentucky. These are dollars to help break often times generational cycles of poverty that are still there, that are still on the table, that we want to make sure people take advantage of.”

### **Voting Rights**

On his third day in office, Gov. Beshear [signed an executive order](#) restoring the right to vote to Kentuckians who have paid their debt to society by completing their sentences for nonviolent offenses.

Today, Gov. Beshear provided an update that 175,053 ex-offenders have regained voting eligibility since the order was signed. The number will continue to increase as more people complete their sentences. Each of these individuals still has to register to vote, and although the deadline has passed for the primary election, Gov. Beshear encouraged them to register for the general election.

“We’d love to see 175,053 people registered,” said Gov. Beshear. “This was a priority of ours, it was the right thing to do, it was something driven by my faith and belief that people deserve

second chances, that redemption is possible, and that by giving people not just the tools but the dignity to rebuild their lives that better outcomes are possible.”

### **Team Kentucky Fund**

Today, Lt. Gov. Jacqueline Coleman updated Kentuckians that 421 households have now been helped by the Team Kentucky Fund and the total value of the assistance given currently stands at \$350,215. There are currently 398 applications that are pending for approval. To apply, go to Community Action Partnerships’ website, [capky.org](http://capky.org).

“As an applicant, when you apply for the Team Kentucky Fund, you can have access to our funds if you qualify, but you now also have access to all of the services provided by Community Action, which helps with job placement, affordable housing, health care, child care, education and job training,” said Lt. Gov. Coleman. “So I would recommend for all Kentuckians who are in need of assistance to apply and take advantage of all of the resources from Community Action of Kentucky as well as the resources from the Team Kentucky Fund.”

### **Unemployment Insurance**

Today, Gov. Beshear announced that the state would continue to expand in-person services to help Kentuckians resolve unemployment insurance claims.

He also explained that the state’s unemployment office budget went from \$41 million in 2010 to \$25 million in 2018; in addition, in 2017, the state cut 22 out of 51 local unemployment offices and 95 employees. These financial, geographic and staffing challenges have made it more difficult to provide in-person services throughout the commonwealth, but the governor said he was determined to find a path forward.

“So we take offices that were cut almost 50%, an antiquated system that was designed to tell people no, and claims that went in 2019 from 190,000 unemployment claims all year long to having 900,000 claims in just three months and it is a perfect storm that results in so many people who have had to wait far, far too long that haven’t been helped and I know are at their wits end,” said Gov. Beshear. “And I’ve been saying it for weeks and I know it’s not a solace to those that are struggling, but we are working our hardest. We will continue to do better.”

For more information from the Labor Cabinet at the Kentucky Career Center portal, [click here](#).

### **Health Care Exchange**

Gov. Beshear announced Wednesday his intention to move the commonwealth back to the successful Kynect state health care exchange. For more information, [click here](#).

### **Testing Expansion**

Gov. Beshear reminded Kentuckians Thursday that the state's partnership with Kroger is bringing testing for coronavirus to several new locations.

Kroger will provide testing next week in Fayette County at Bluegrass Community and Technical College (500 Newtown Pike, Lexington); in Jefferson County at Southern High School (8620 Preston Highway, Louisville); in Shelby County at Milestone Academics (1361 Frankfort Road, Shelbyville); and Warren County at Basil Griffin Park (2055 Three Springs Road, Bowling Green).

Information on how to register at more than 180 sites throughout the commonwealth can be found [here](#).

### **Census Update**

Gov. Beshear reminded Kentuckians of the critical importance of filling out their U.S. Census forms. Those who have not can fill out the Census at [my2020census.gov](https://my2020census.gov) or by phone at [844-330-2020](tel:844-330-2020) (English) or [844-468-2020](tel:844-468-2020) (Spanish).

### **More Information**

Read about other key updates, actions and information from Gov. Beshear and his administration at [governor.ky.gov](https://governor.ky.gov), [kycovid19.ky.gov](https://kycovid19.ky.gov) and the Governor's official social media accounts [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).

Kentuckians can also access translated COVID-19 information and daily summaries of the Governor's news conference at [tinyurl.com/kygovspanol](https://tinyurl.com/kygovspanol) (Spanish) and [tinyurl.com/kygovtranslations](https://tinyurl.com/kygovtranslations) (more than 20 additional languages).

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