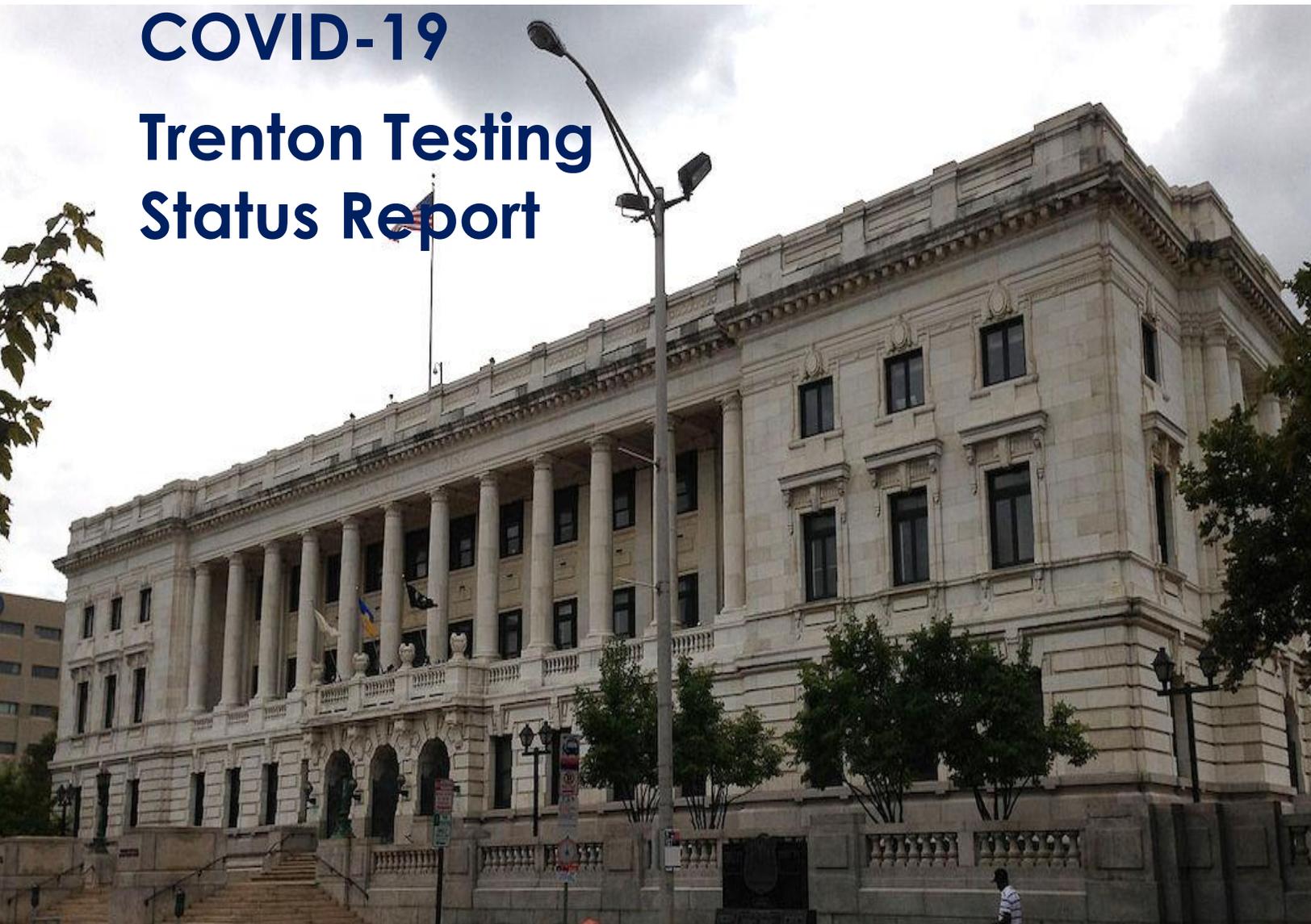




COVID-19 Trenton Testing Status Report



June 9, 2020
City of Trenton, NJ





OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

June 9, 2020

Dear Trenton residents,

The purpose of this report is to provide the public information regarding testing guidelines the City of Trenton has followed in its effort to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. What can one City and one administration do to protect its residents from the health and economic consequences of COVID-19? Our administration has collaborated with charitable partners, governmental agencies, and residents to do everything that we can to save lives and businesses.

As of the date of this report, there have been 3,705 confirmed cases of COVID-19 within the City of Trenton, and sadly, our community has lost 103 of our neighbors to the pandemic. In the State of New Jersey, there have been 162,530 confirmed cases and 11,970 confirmed deaths due to COVID-19. Comparatively speaking, the fatality rate of COVID-19 has been 2.8% in the City of Trenton, whereas it has been 7.4% in the State of New Jersey. What explains the difference? While I know our city residents are more resilient than residents of other municipalities, our administration began preparing the City before most municipalities, and we committed substantial resources throughout our effort. This letter is, in part, an announcement: Our early local efforts made a difference.

I would like to thank Trenton's Health Officer Yvette Graffie-Cooper for providing daily updates on testing statistics. Next, I would like to thank Director Derrick Sawyer for his leadership as Trenton Office of Emergency Management Coordinator and his strategic planning throughout this pandemic. In collaboration with the Executive Leadership Team, Director Maria Richardson deserves commendations for securing testing sites for the City and spearheading innovative efforts to get services to residents. Finally, I would like to thank Executive Director of the Trenton Health Team, Greg Paulson, for his leadership along with Dr. Rachel Evans of the Henry J. Austin Health Center, Dan Moen of St. Francis Medical Center, and Dr. Eric Schwartz of Capital Health. And, many thanks to Mercer County Executive Brian Hughes and his team for helping to fund and setup the COVID-19 testing sites in the city. Because of these individuals, the City of Trenton has saved residents' lives.

Yours very truly,

Mayor W. Reed Gusciora

cc: Judy Persichilli, New Jersey Department of Health
Kristin Reed, Mercer County Division of Public Health



I. Introduction

The purpose of this “COVID-19 Testing Report” " is to provide a detailed outline of what the City of Trenton has done to prepare for and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 or coronavirus. The following sections will clarify key definitions related to our public health response, make distinctions between intergovernmental roles and responsibilities, and address critical City actions. The City’s response has been driven by our adherence to guidelines published by the World Health Organization (WHO), Centers for Disease Control (CDC), New Jersey Department of Health (NJ DOH), the Office of the Governor of New Jersey, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), New Jersey Department of Education (NJ DOE), and the City of Trenton’s Department of Health and Human Services.

Through regular meetings and discussions with Trenton Health Team, Capital Health Regional Medical Center, Saint Francis Medical Center, and the Henry J. Austin Health Center, and Mercer County officials, we've been able to develop a coordinate response and thereby reduce the burden placed on our local healthcare providers. Moreover, the City of Trenton has followed and must continue to follow the public health and emergency management directives of Federal and State Agencies. Our preparedness plan has allowed us to adapt to new developments in information, changes in the supply of tests and personal protective equipment (PPE), and actions taken by key local, state, and federal stakeholders. In short, as information and resources change, our plan can accommodate those changes. The principal objective of the City's response is to reduce the spread of the pandemic. This report describes the actions that the City of Trenton has taken to save lives, save businesses, and stop the spread of COVID-19.



II. Executive Summary

There have been 3,705 confirmed cases of COVID-19 within the City of Trenton and 103 confirmed deaths. In the State of New Jersey, there have been 162,530 confirmed cases and 11,970 confirmed deaths due to COVID-19.¹ Comparatively speaking, the fatality rate of COVID-19 has been 2.8% in the City of Trenton whereas it has been 7.4% in the State of New Jersey.²

The City's response has been driven by our adherence to guidelines published by the World Health Organization (WHO), Centers for Disease Control (CDC), New Jersey Department of Health (NJ DOH), the Office of the Governor of New Jersey, and other relevant agencies. The City of Trenton has been proactive and aggressive in acquiring Personal Protection Equipment (PPEs) and supplies from private and public sources, as well as providing testing to the public as soon as resources and testing were available. The availability of testing was and still is largely dependent upon funding and access to test kits as well as PPEs, which continue to remain in short supply.

The City did secure PPEs in the form of masks, gloves, gowns, sanitizers from various sources, and continues to obtain such PPEs. Donations of PPEs have also played an important and continuing part in our response to the pandemic. Those PPEs have been distributed to City employees, particularly First Responders, and the City has distributed over 100,000 masks to Trenton residents. The City wants everyone who wants a test to be able to receive one, but limited test kits and funding are constrained to contribute only our available resources. Testing every City resident would require the subsidization of thousands of test kits, tens of thousands of Personal Protection Equipment (PPEs) for staff and technicians, and would incur operational costs associated with conducting high-volume testing.

¹ These numbers, updated as of June 4, 2020, are posted on the City of Trenton's COVID-19 Community Impact Dashboard on the City's webpage, trentonnj.org.

² This rate is inclusive of those under State care who lived at the City's four (4) long-term care facilities when they died.



The City, in conjunction with the County and the Trenton Health Team, is currently operating four rotating testing sites, one in each City ward, as well as the City/County joint site located across from **640 South Broad Street**. The program is being expanded to test all individuals who want one (even those who are not symptomatic) to the limit of our existing supply of tests. It should be noted that anyone who wants to be tested must still adhere to the data gathering requirements and make an appointment to be tested.

The cost of a single test (inclusive of the PPE, and testing costs) is approximately \$100. If the City subsidized 5,000 tests each day, it would cost the City \$500,000 daily (not including the cost of staffing). Over sixteen days, the City could administer 80,000 tests (assuming the City could procure these tests and meet the staffing requirements). This testing scheme, for sixteen days, would cost the City \$8,000,000 (not including the cost of staffing and PPE). At this point in time, the City has neither the financial resources or the tests and equipment to implement this testing scheme. Once State or County funding and resources become available, the City plans to first offer expanded testing, beyond what is already being provided, to concentrated housing sites (i.e., senior towers, public housing, senior or recreation centers). As funding and equipment availability improve, the program will expand to include as many other individuals as can be accommodated. Any testing plan not based on the actual availability of funds, staff and equipment inaccurately represents what is feasible.



III. Overview

The United States has not suffered a global pandemic on this scale since 1918.³ The threat presented by the COVID-19 virus (to the United States) was recognized as early as January⁴, but coordinated government action was slow in coming, especially at the Federal level.⁵ As the scientific community determined that aggressive testing is the most effective means to combat and control a pandemic of this size⁶, the Federal government chose to leave the pandemic response to the individual States. This lack of coordination at the federal level caused a rush by cities and states to compete with one another to obtain limited medical supplies.⁷ The City of Trenton has been proactive and aggressive in acquiring Personal Protection Equipment (PPEs) and supplies from private and public sources, as well as providing testing to the public as soon as resources and testing were available. The availability of COVID-19 testing was and is largely dependent upon access to test kits as well as PPEs, which continue to remain in short supply on a national level.⁸

Initially, the State and Federal government had minimal access to testing kits. They determined that the tests were to be distributed to the counties hardest hit by the pandemic, those closest to New York City. Due to a national shortage of PPEs and supplies made available to the City from either the County and State, the City had to secure its sources of PPEs from the marketplace or generous donors and reliable vendors. Donations of PPEs from the CDC Foundation, the Chinese-American

³ Mills, Christina E., James M. Robins, and Marc Lipsitch. "Transmissibility of 1918 pandemic influenza." *Nature* 432, no. 7019 (2004): 904-906.

⁴Peeri, Noah C., Nistha Shrestha, Md Siddikur Rahman, Rafdzah Zaki, Zhengqi Tan, Saana Bibi, Mahdi Baghbanzadeh, Nasrin Aghamohammadi, Wenyi Zhang, and Ubydul Haque. "The SARS, MERS and novel coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemics, the newest and biggest global health threats: what lessons have we learned?." *International Journal of Epidemiology* (2020).

⁵ Lipton, Eric, "He Could Have Seen What Was Coming: Behind Trump's Failure on the Virus," *The New York Times*: April 11, 2020.

⁶ Engelberg, Stephen, "The Coronavirus Testing Paradox," *Propublica.org*, March 23, 2020.

⁷ Audio Version, "Social Distancing Is Working; Why the Virus Hits Hard in the Second Week." *Npr.org*, April 8, 2020.

⁸ Baird, Robert, "Why Widespread Coronavirus Testing Isn't Coming Anytime Soon." *New Yorker*, March 24, 2020.



community of West Windsor, area Churches, the Turkish-American Steering Committee, and others have played an important and continuing part in our response to the pandemic. Those PPEs have been distributed to City employees, particularly first responders, and the City has distributed over 100,000 masks to Trenton residents.

As testing kits were not readily available to the City or public other than in limited instances at area hospitals, the City determined that with its limited resources, it would **1)** find its own supply and, **2)** utilize that limited number to provide testing to First Responders. The City was able to enter into a contract with Quest Diagnostics for the supply of a limited number of test kits; however, these tests had to be administered by qualified medical personnel. The City has since partnered with Mercer County to provide testing to First Responders, front-line workers, and Trenton residents with symptoms or asymptomatic residents (with a doctor's referral). Test sites have been established in each ward in the City. Testing will be expanded further when more test kits and funding become available.

IV. City of Trenton's COVID-19 Testing Plan

'Universal COVID-19 testing' is a laudable goal; however, there are many impediments to establishing it in the Capital City. Moreover, to avoid what is likely a fair goal with an ambiguous answer: Legal questions arise when employers or a governmental agency mandate testing of all residents. Even if the testing of every City resident, an unfunded mandate, were possible, it would require the subsidization of thousands of test kits, tens of thousands of PPEs for staff and technicians, and it would incur operational costs associated with conducting high-volume testing. Given the fact that staff and technicians must don (put on) and doff (take off) their PPEs after each administered test, the majority of the City's PPEs would need to be reallocated away from essential employees and senior citizens just to run a single week of testing. The vigorous testing of every City resident also ignores the possibility that false negatives would likely contribute to people, who otherwise may have more



closely observed social distancing requirements, departing from many public health guidelines. A preliminary cost estimate request, to determine the cost of a single test, was submitted to the Office of the Mercer County Public Health as well as to Mercer County's Office of Emergency Management (OEM). While the County's OEM was unable to provide an answer, it is difficult to provide cost estimates. However, we can make a general minimum estimate by looking at City procurement data.

The cost of a single test (inclusive of the PPEs, and testing costs) is approximately \$100.⁹ This number can be adjusted based on the number of people tested by the City of Trenton to determine the total cost of testing portions of the population; however, it does not account for staffing requirements (the cost of technicians who are administering, receiving, and reporting tests). If the City subsidized 5,000 tests each day, it would cost the City \$500,000 daily (in addition to the cost of staffing). Over sixteen days, the City could administer 80,000 tests (assuming the City could procure these tests and meet the staffing requirements). This testing scheme, for sixteen days, would cost the City \$8,000,000 (not including the cost of staffing and PPEs). To test all residents is an unfunded mandate, and the City has neither the resources nor the capacity to complete. It also ignores the shortage of tests available to local and state governments. The Governor's Office projected there to be, at some point in June, the capacity to test 20,000 people daily (statewide).¹⁰ If 5,000 Trenton residents were tested each day, then they would account for 25% of the total State tests administered (even though the population is approximately 1% of the State population).¹¹

Trenton began testing very early relative to others in our immediate region. The City, at its own expense, opened Mercer County's first COVID-19 testing site in late March with Cardinal Medical

⁹ This number is inclusive of the cost of PPEs and tests (per the data of the City's COVID-19 Procurement Officer).

¹⁰ Johnson, Brent, "N.J. Hits 20K Coronavirus Testing Goal Needed for More Reopening Plans, Murphy Says." *NJ.com*, March 28, 2020.

¹¹ United States Census Bureau, "QuickFacts: Trenton city, New Jersey." *Census.gov*, 2019.



Diagnostic Services. This site was to test first responders within Trenton.¹² Indeed, the City started its program the week the State opened its testing sites in Bergen and Monmouth Counties, but before the County opened its testing site at Quakerbridge Mall in Lawrenceville¹³. While City officials recommended that the County open their testing site in Trenton due to residents' transportation challenges, the County chose a more centralized location for these services, which was later expanded. Currently, the City, in conjunction with the County and the Trenton Health Team, is operating four rotating testing sites in the City, one in each ward.

The rationale for limited testing was that First Responders, who are on the front lines of the pandemic, routinely encounter residents (and those residents might be symptomatic or asymptomatic with COVID-19). After testing over 400 first responders, it was determined that 9 police officers had tested positive and that 50 officers had to self-quarantine. It was also determined that 1 firefighter had tested positive, which resulted in that firefighter following quarantine protocol. Additionally, 80% of Trenton Water Works (TWW) employees were tested to avoid an emergency shutdown of the City's water filtration plant.¹⁴ It was determined that through testing, the City could avoid the expense and risk of infection within the Trenton Police Department, Trenton Fire Department, and TWW. Thereafter, other jurisdictions throughout the State of New Jersey followed the City's lead and emphasized testing First Responders.

It should also be emphasized that by contracting with a third-party provider, the test operator supplied test kits, healthcare personnel to administer the tests, necessary PPEs to conduct tests, as well

¹² Brandt, Joe, "Trenton Sets Up Coronavirus Test Site for First Responders." *NJ.com*, March 25, 2020.

¹³ It should be noted that the choice of location of the County's testing site at the Quakerbridge Mall was not a decision that the City consented to or contributed any money to despite contentions to the contrary by some officials.

¹⁴ Per the directives of TWW, staff members either went to the City's mobile testing site for first responders *or* they went to a different site to get tested.



as remote medical consultations to ensure the necessity for the tests in compliance with CDC guidelines. The vendor also supplied a mobile testing unit to store test kits and other purposes for health care providers. At this stage, there were challenges obtaining independent healthcare personnel due to a shortage of nursing and other hospital staff due to early exposure to the virus and self-quarantine limitations placed upon the healthcare workers. In addition, there continued to be a national shortage of both test kits and PPEs. After six days of testing from the third-party vendor, from March 25 through April 1, 2020, there were 21 positive tests out of a total of 293 individuals tested. The City entered into an agreement with BIO-REFERENCE LABORATORIES, INC., to analyze the testing results.

On March 30, 2020, with funding from the State, the County opened its drive-up testing site at Quakerbridge Mall. Many residents expressed reservations on the location of the site outside the City and cited transportation challenges to and from the County's test site. Eligibility for a COVID-19 test appointment required County residents to have a doctor's script with described symptoms. The Henry J. Austin Health Center provided consultations and made referrals to the County's test site.

On April 13, 2020, the City, concerned that the Quakerbridge Mall testing facility was inaccessible to many residents with transportation challenges, collaborated with the Trenton Health Team, Henry J. Austin Center, and the County on a ward-by-ward testing plan (subsidized by the County). This testing process involved bringing a mobile health van directly to the City of Trenton residents and operating four rotating testing sites. As of May 27, 2020, the four sites have tested 272 Trentonians with 95 positive cases found.

On April 17, 2020, City health officials received news that Water's Edge Healthcare and Rehab Center located in Trenton had over 20 positive cases of COVID-19. While senior assisted living health centers fall under the purview of the State Department of Health, and therefore directly reported



COVID-19 stats to the State, it became clear that the COVID-19 pandemic had hit our area's long term care centers in the same manner as other like facilities across the State.

The City's COVID-response team arranged a conference call with representatives of all four (4) nursing facilities within Trenton. The purpose of the conference was to ascertain the true situation within each facility and to offer City resources if possible. As a result of these discussions, the City distributed PPEs and test kits to these facilities¹⁵. Thereafter, the Mayor, in a conference call with Health Commissioner Judith Persichelli, requested that the Department issue emergency regulations requiring nursing facilities to similarly report COVID-19 stats to the municipality where they are located. City health officials continue to monitor COVID-19 activity at the four nursing homes to ensure that any spread is contained.

On May 19, 2020, the County's testing operations moved to the Capital City. The County then located their drive-thru test site at the County Administration's parking lot across from 640 South Broad Street. While the New Jersey Commissioner of Health has since relaxed the requirement for testing of only symptomatic persons or with a doctor's script, as of this date, the County is still requiring a doctor's prescription for test scheduling purposes¹⁶. It is the City's position that asymptomatic persons should be permitted to be tested without a doctor's prescription as long as resources permit. The City's position is under review by the County. The County's rationale for requiring testing with a script is because it is difficult to track the persons being tested. Tracking is

¹⁵ In May, the State recognizing that covid-19 testing should be conducted at all long-term health care facilities, thereby ordered it to contain the spread of the virus at these living facilities. See Office of the Governor of New Jersey, "Press Release: Health Commissioner Orders COVID-19 Testing in all Long-Term Care Facilities." *NJ.gov*, May 12, 2020.

¹⁶ Office of the Governor of New Jersey, "Press Release: Governor Murphy Announces Expanded Access to Testing at New Jersey's Community Based Testing Sites." *NJ.gov*, March 8, 2020.



required to ensure that tested persons are included in the State’s data base, and also, in the event that contact tracing becomes necessary.

Currently, the City, in conjunction with the County and the Trenton Health Team, is operating four rotating testing sites.¹⁷ The City/County joint site, located across from **640 South Broad Street** is being expanded to test all individuals who want one (even those who are not symptomatic) to the limit of the existing supply of tests. It should be noted that anyone who wants to be tested must still adhere to the data gathering requirements and make an appointment to be tested.

In addition, once State or County funding becomes available, the City plans to expand testing to concentrated housing sites (i.e., senior towers, public housing, senior or recreation centers) beyond what can currently be provided. Such testing is dependent on funding, availability of PPEs and COVID-19 test kits, as well as health care workers. It is envisioned that such sites be notified of a testing date, a mobile unit would move to the concentrated housing site, and any persons who wish to get tested would either set up an appointment or line up to become tested. Such testing would be without cost to Trenton residents. **Any testing plan that does not include specific information regarding the source of funds, personnel, and equipment and data collection is simply doomed to failure. Moreover, without identifying a source of funding, such a testing plan also does not comply with state procurement law.**

¹⁷ These sites are listed in more detail on the City website and in the sixth section: East Ward at Living Hope Church; South Ward at Church of God of Prophecy; North Ward at Galilee Baptist Church; West Ward at Trinity Cathedral Church.



V. Tracking COVID-19's spread through the City's region

The City of Trenton operates a community impact dashboard found on the City's webpage, trentonnj.org, which includes geospatial data: The locations where active cases have been reporting, the total number of active cases, the total number of confirmed cases, and ancillary information about testing. This information is updated daily and allows residents and the City's administration and health officials to best communicate about the volume of testing and test results. This data visualization platform allows residents to see *where* the greatest number of cases are in the City¹⁸.



The reason we track the spread of COVID-19 through the Capital City is that Trenton is a racially and ethnically diverse city with many neighborhoods that also span various age demographics. We have senior living spaces, concentrated neighborhood housing, commercial areas, and single and multiple family residences. In response to COVID-19, one, unchanging, strategy will not meet the needs of every residents.

¹⁸ The website for the dashboard is at <https://trenton-covid-19-response-trenton-fire.hub.egis.com/>



We are fortunate that our Health Officer, Yvette Graffie-Cooper, is a former Public Health Epidemiologist. She understands the challenges of ensuring that each of our diverse neighborhood receives the proper response to slow the spread of the coronavirus through different communities. For example, seniors are highly susceptible to the virus, given the likely presence of major medical challenges; recent immigrants or undocumented persons may be less likely to seek medical attention and there may be language barriers preventing them from getting accurate medical information. Nursing homes, senior residential hi-rise towers and other congregant living establishments could become “hot spots” in the City should an outbreak occur in those facilities. Each demographic group requires information specific to their own unique situation to combat the virus, such as bilingual medical instruction materials, special medical assistance, and mobility concerns. Moreover, matching medical care with demographic groups has been a challenge for City health officials.

According to the NIH, "epidemiological studies measure the risk of illness or death in an exposed population compared to that risk in an identical, unexposed population (for example, a population of the same age, sex, race, and social status as the exposed population)."¹⁹ Given that one of the most critical aspects to an epidemiology study is an appropriate control group, an adequate time span, and the statistical ability to detect an effect, this may help explain why NJ DOH and New Jersey's Regional Epidemiology Program have been unable to provide any guidance on specific epidemiology-based programs for cities.²⁰ The results of epidemiological studies should not be confused with finding the total number of residents who have been infected with COVID-19. The total number of residents infected is the sum of the individuals who have tested positive, and those who, while they have not been tested, would have tested positive. While many Trenton residents with

¹⁹ U.S. National Library of Medicine, “Population and Epidemiology Studies.” *NIH.gov*, 2020. [https://toxtutor.nlm.nih.gov/05003.html#:~:text=Epidemiological%20studies%20measure%20the%20risk,status%20as%20the%20exposed%20population\).](https://toxtutor.nlm.nih.gov/05003.html#:~:text=Epidemiological%20studies%20measure%20the%20risk,status%20as%20the%20exposed%20population).)

²⁰ Ibid.



symptoms, are in favor of being tested and have been tested (evidence of this is in the data section), we cannot guarantee all residents will give their consent to being tested every day. In the early stages of testing, based upon the interim directives of CDC²¹, the following groups have been prioritized in order of high priority to low priority:

- Hospitalized patients with **symptoms**;
- **Symptomatic** healthcare workers, and symptomatic individuals living in long-term care facilities or congregant living settings;
- All remaining residents with **symptoms** of potential COVID-19 infection;
- Residents **without** symptoms in high density neighborhoods or housing;
- All other residents who want to be tested.

In short, there is no way to definitively determine the total number of cases of COVID-19 without forcibly testing all residents every day, which may be a violation of their civil liberties as well as cost prohibitive for the City’s budgetary constraints. Even if this scenario was possible, it ignores that there is daily intrastate transit and commuting, for potentially infected non-residents who work and live in Trenton. The best decision that the administration can and did make is to continue to help expand testing options and locations. Efforts to make testing easily accessible for City residents will increase the number of residents who get tested, and self-quarantine (which will have demographic challenges in itself) if they have tested positive.

Our Health Department has been charged with making sure that those individuals who require self-quarantine measures – e.g., seniors, single parents with small children, disabled individuals, those

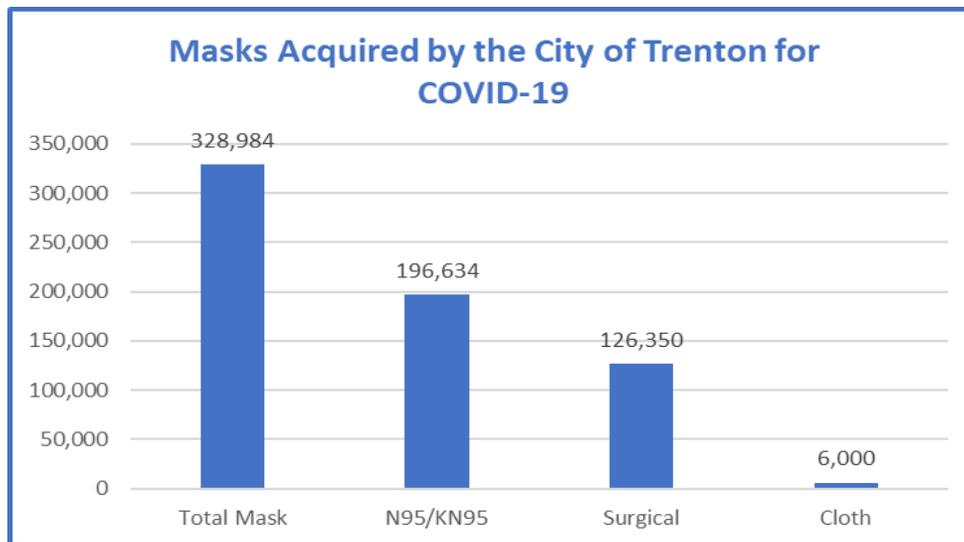
²¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Priorities for Testing Patients With Suspected COVID-19 Infection.” *CDC.gov*.
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/priority-testing-patients.pdf>

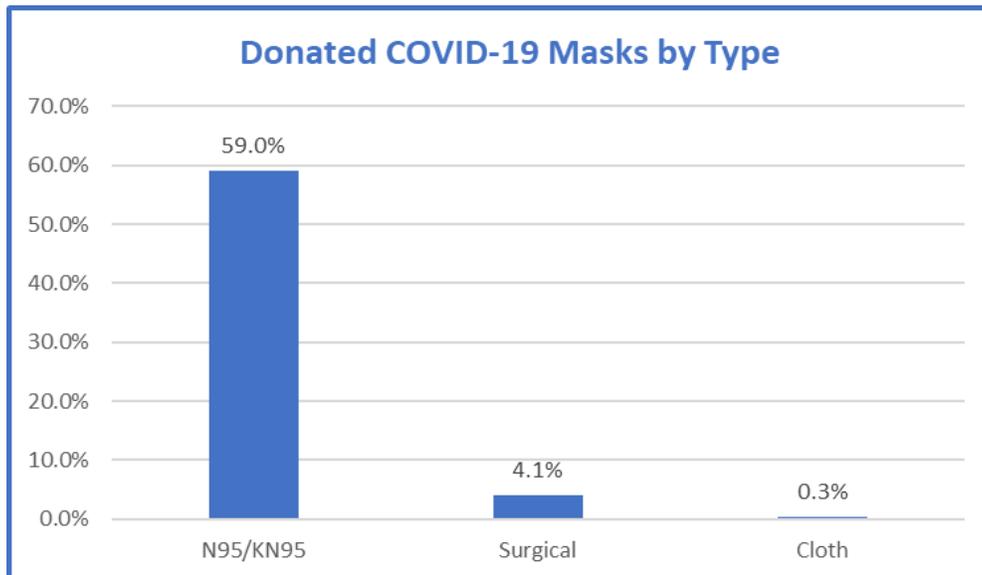
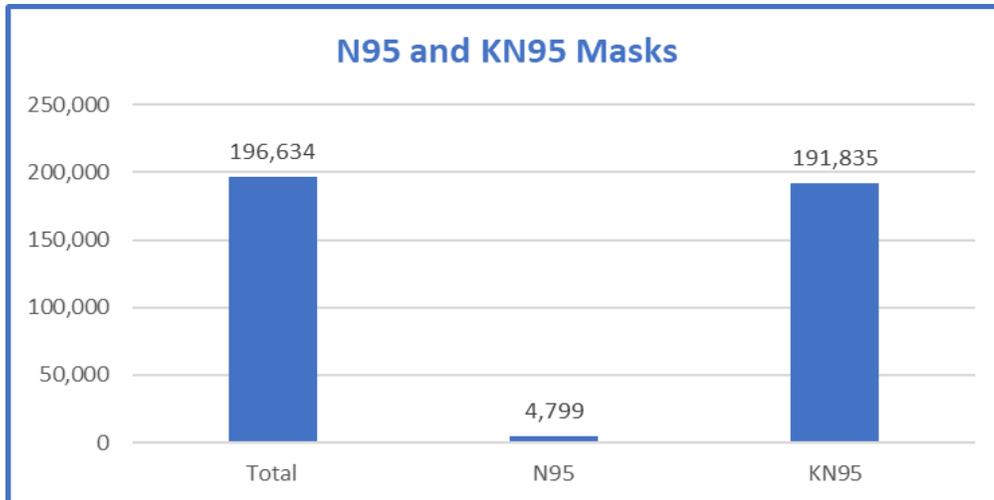


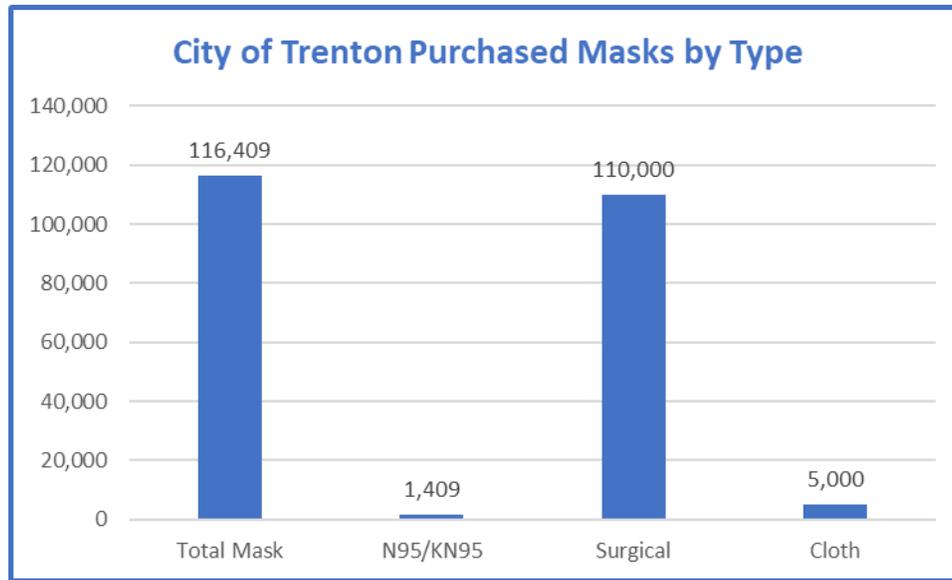
without transportation, etc. – have access to their daily requirements for food and medical supplies. Our Community Relations and Social Services Division has made arrangements to ensure that those individuals have deliveries of supplies, as needed. We are fortunate to have the support of several volunteer groups who have stepped forward to both donate and deliver portions of those supplies.

Our Health Officer has met with the managers of the two-dozen residential hi-rise towers and other high-density housing in the City. She has brought medical, educational information regarding sanitary conditions, cleaning shared spaces, and the importance of conveying social distancing measures. In addition, the City has purchased and/or acquired well over 300,000 masks for distribution to residential facilities, church groups, and neighborhood and business associations.

PPEs acquired by the City of Trenton as well as clarified statistical information on masks received is listed below:







Food distribution and care packages were delivered with masks and materials on testing and prevention of COVID-19 throughout the City. Small businesses, with a particular focus on food markets and corner stores, were visited by health officials to ensure social distancing and sanitary conditions was enforced. In addition, surgical masks were distributed to retail businesses where masks were required for customers and to restaurants that were opened for takeout or deliveries only.

Mobile Testing Units were set up in each of the City's four wards. Our Health Officer tracks COVID-19 statistics on investigative cases, positive cases, hospitalized persons, healthcare worker infections, sick persons at home, males, females, age groups (0-11; 12-17; 18-65; >66); and deaths (both of Trenton residents and persons at the City's long-term care facilities).

The City was also prepared to meet the challenge of ensuring that every Trenton resident has access to quality health care and any such COVID-related illnesses are addressed no matter of their insurance status or immigration status. By working with the Trenton Health Team, health care providers have helped with accessibility issues, including testing, treatment, and prescription needs.



The City secured emergency alternative housing for homeless residents who tested positive for the COVID virus to self-quarantine and have assistance in meeting their needs²². The City has also worked with school districts, senior centers, and recreational outlets to ensure that nutritional needs are met. Mental health care, domestic violence, and childcare are equally challenging for the City to meet the needs of our residents. In this regard, the City continues to work with local nonprofits and church groups to assess the needs of individuals and families in the communities they serve. The City has also been successful in capturing Federal (i.e., CDBG grant funding from US HUD), State and private grant funding to address the specific needs of our residents.

The City continues to make plans for any resurgence of the virus (currently expected in the fall and winter months of 2020-21), including the acquisition of additional emergency housing and alternative emergency treatment centers. In the event of additional Federal, State, and County resources, testing will expand within the confines of the City. Of particular interest is the ability to expand, beyond what is already being provided, to bring mobile testing to specific neighborhoods, concentrated living, or senior towers. In this regard, mobile units would be dispatched to the neighborhoods or facilities at high density housing to offer widespread and generalize testing; however, this is dependent on the increase of national supplies of test kits and PPEs as well as the availability of health care workers.

It should be noted that the existing testing sites in the City are operated by volunteers who are off-duty medical care providers (mostly nursing staff), who will soon be recalled to their full-time positions. We are in close communication with our health care providers (particularly Henry J. Austin) to determine the path forward, when those volunteers are no longer available for testing service.

²² In preparation for meeting homeless demands during the Covid-19 pandemic, the City reopened 15 residential rooms and space reserved for telemedical screenings at the Coordinated Entry Assessment System (CEAS) Center on Perry Street utilizing grant funding from the CDC Foundation.



VI. A description of COVID-19 Testing Priorities and how they are Addressed

Based on the interim directives of the CDC, the following groups are categorized in order of high priority to low priority²³:

- Hospitalized patients with **symptoms**;
- **Symptomatic** Healthcare workers, and symptomatic individuals living in long-term care facilities or congregative living settings;
- All remaining residents with **symptoms** of potential COVID-19 infection;
- Residents **without** symptoms or asymptomatic persons.

The City of Trenton's goal is to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and save as many lives as possible. This goal is accomplished by continuing to procure and contract with organizations and governmental agencies who can assist in the continuation of high-volume testing for City residents. These groups are addressed in the City's creation of four **walk-up** mobile-unit testing sites as well as the County's **drive-through** test site²⁴.

Healthcare workers in the City's medical facilities continue to get tested at those facilities. All senior citizens, who live in long-term care facilities in the City of Trenton, continue to be tested. The City's First Responders have COVID-19 testing available through the City's test sites or have testing availability under a standing contract with Robert Wood Johnson Urgent Care Center²⁵. All persons with a physician's prescription for COVID-19 may obtain a test by appointment through the Trenton

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Currently in the parking lot across from the County Administration Building at 640 South Broad Street, Trenton.

²⁵ The set fee for First Responder testing at RWJ Urgent Care is \$150 per test.



Health Team at Henry J. Austin Health Center. There is no fee for Trenton residents to get a COVID-19 test with a prescription.

The City of Trenton planned to secure COVID-19 antibody testing for all City employees as City Hall reopens to full staffing levels as well as all full access to the public. However, the plan needs to be reevaluated in light of the CDC’s new guidance that such antibody testing is only accurate in up to 50% of the test cases²⁶. The CDC’s report indicated that, “[s]erologic test results should not be used to make decisions about grouping persons residing in or being admitted to congregate settings, such as schools, dormitories, or correctional facilities.” Moreover, the guidance further indicates that the results also should not be used “to make decisions about returning persons to the workplace.”²⁷ However, when widespread testing becomes available, employee testing will either be offered at the City’s four mobile testing sites or on-site at City Hall.

The Trenton School Board is also currently developing a plan to reopen schools and ensure testing is available for teachers, administrators, and essential school staff. Schools would provide notices to parents to help assess and acquire testing for school children on an as-needed basis. Unless universal protocol, as well as source funding, is secured, it is unlikely that school children will be regularly tested for the remainder of this calendar school year. However, despite our close working relationship with the Superintendent of the Schools, Trenton’s Board of Education is an autonomous governmental body, and neither the City Council nor the Mayor can impose requirements upon them.

The Trenton Health Team and City health officials continue to monitor high-density housing in the City, including senior towers, private high-rise apartment buildings, and Trenton Housing

²⁶ Smith-Schoenwalder, Cecelia, “CDC: Don’t Rely on Coronavirus Antibody Tests for Decisions on Schools, Workplaces” *U.S. News and World Reports*, May 27, 2020.

²⁷ *Ibid.*



Authority residential units. Plans are being developed, in the event of a COVID-19 outbreak at such facilities, to have mobile testing units brought to the residential complexes. Residents will be offered the opportunity to receive free testing at their locations on a voluntary basis. Universal testing at all high-density housing complexes is contingent upon the availability of universal protocol, as well as source funding (either through Federal or State resources).

In the future, "instant" or "rapid" testing would also be readily secured and available at the City's senior centers, recreation centers, as well as City Hall and any First Responder stations, provided that such testing kits are FDA approved and secured. In addition, as technology progresses and with funding availability, temperature guns, fever detection cameras, entrance stations, and other COVID-19 detection mechanisms will be secured for public and educational buildings in the City.

VII. The COVID-19 Monitoring Program for Essential Workers

Before the first official confirmed COVID-19 positive case in the City of Trenton, each City department generated an administrative plan for how they would continue to provide essential services to city residents, maintain adequate social distancing, and work from home when possible. Continuity readiness, on the part of each department, is prioritized for appropriately trained City employees on the work practice controls needed to reduce risk levels for the spread of COVID-19 among the City's workforce.

According to the CDC, COVID-19 spreads through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes.²⁸ These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby and possibly inhaled into the lungs. People are thought to be most contagious when they are the most

²⁸ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "How to Protect Yourself and Others." *CDC.gov*, May 5, 2020. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention-H.pdf>



symptomatic; moreover, asymptomatic individuals are considered to be less contagious.²⁹ As OSHA's publication "Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19" states, "[s]ome [asymptomatic] spread might be possible before people show symptoms; there have been reports of this type of asymptomatic transmission with this new coronavirus, but this is also not thought to be the main way the virus spreads."³⁰

The City of Trenton understands that workers might miss work to help care for family members, care for children who are taking classes through distance learning, or they might be immunosuppressed. Mitigating the spread among city staff will be ensured through the contact tracing of workers who test positive for COVID-19, consistent cleaning of City facilities, and disinfection programs. Sanitary cleanser dispensers are stationed at all City Hall entrances as well as elevators.

On March 9, 2020, the City of Trenton public broadcast system, sent a high-priority message to each city worker requiring employees to regularly utilize cleaning supplies to clean and sanitize workplace settings with each department ordering and providing these supplies in coordination with the COVID-19 Procurement Officer. Such protocol and supplies include:

- Hand sanitizer(s);
- Disinfectant Wipes and Spray;
- Regular wipe downs of countertops, phones, doorknobs and railings;
- Leaving doorway entrances open;

²⁹ Gao, Ming, Lihui Yang, Xuefu Chen, Yiyu Deng, Shifang Yang, Hanyi Xu, Zixing Chen, and Xinglin Gao. "A study on infectivity of asymptomatic SARS-CoV-2 carriers." *Respiratory Medicine* (2020): 106026.

³⁰ Occupational Safety and Health Agency, "Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19," OSHA.gov, 2020.



- Social distancing protocols including the avoidance of shaking hands, hugging, etc.;
- Requiring masks to be worn at all times unless at a personal workspace; and especially when co-workers are gathered in meeting settings and the like;
- Requiring the washing of hands for at least 20 seconds.
- Group reinforcement of the above is strongly encouraged!

The disinfection of City Hall and First Responder facilities occurred again on March 28, 2020, and March 29, 2020, and employees were told, via an inter-office memorandum sent by Business Administrator Adam Cruz to prep-clean all areas and remove all items from surfaces as best as possible. Another deep clean is scheduled before a full work schedule resumes (currently scheduled for June 6-7, 2020).

On March 11, Business Administrator Adam Cruz outlined applicable leave time procedures for (i) employees diagnosed with COVID-19, (ii) directed by a medical professional or a governmental agency to self-isolate, and/or (iii) undergoing self-quarantine, then the employee will not be required to utilize accumulated leave time if they can verify the information above within a reasonable time frame.

Employees must follow the leave time process in instances of employees caring for family members who have been exposed to and diagnosed with COVID-19. Each department within the City has been working with a 'skeleton staff,' the minimum number of employees required to complete the essential duties of city work while collaborating with city staff who work remotely. As testing becomes more available and the State loosens restrictions, city departments will transition to a split staff work schedule (employees go to work on a rotating basis), where they socially distance, maintain adequate PPE, and continue to monitor their health.



In late May, as testing has become more available, the City of Trenton announced that it would collaborate with Quest Diagnostics on testing city employees. The City of Trenton has led the way on testing and managing its workforce, as demonstrated by a contained number of employees (who have been either quarantined or temporarily isolated) who test positive or come in direct contact with someone who did test positive. In the future, a partnership with Quest to test all city employees, each week, will ensure that our essential workers remain healthy.

Essential workers during the COVID-19 response are within the following areas: Health care, law enforcement/First Responders, food, and agriculture, energy, water, transportation, public works, communications and information technology, government-based operations, and critical manufacturing. All residents, independently of whether they work for the City or not, can get tested if they speak with a healthcare provider. If residents lack a healthcare provider, they can speak with the Henry J. Austin Center regarding testing. All city residents also have testing available at the mobile testing site currently operated by the County. As a result, all residents in the City of Trenton, especially essential workers, can be tested (however, they must speak with their primary care physician or obtain a referral from the Henry J. Austin Health Center before being tested).

The Trenton Police Department and the Trenton Fire Department have measured the body temperature of staff, before each scheduled shift since the start of COVID-19, to ensure that first responders who unknowingly have symptoms are checked. This has been a model for how City departments and private employers should begin to manage the risk of employees spreading COVID-19.



VIII. A School Disinfection Program with Health Screenings for all Students and Staff

The City of Trenton does not have direct control over the public-school system. The Trenton Public Schools are led by the district's seven board of education members who oversee the educational operation of the school district as well as the fiscal operation. The City's administration receives updates on the Board of Education for Trenton Public Schools on Trenton Public Schools policies on school re-openings as well as testing and sanitary protocols³¹.

On March 12, 2020, the school district was closed to allow teachers to develop lesson plans for distance learning and on March 13, 2020, for cleaning. After the conclusion of the academic year (the last day of school for students is June 22, 2020, the last day of school for staff is June 24, 2020, and the last day for 10 ½ month employees is June 29, 2020). The Trenton Public School district coordinated, amongst staff, a staggered schedule for teachers to remove personal belongings from their classrooms and to return borrowed items to the schools' administration. It will be up to the State as well as Trenton Public Schools to determine how and when schools will be reopened for student learning.

It is essential to make distinctions between cleaning and disinfecting. 'Cleaning' is "the removal of dirt and impurities, including germs, from surfaces."³² What is the consequence of cleaning? In short, cleaning **removes** germs from surfaces. If there are fewer germs on surfaces, there is a reduced chance of the spread of infection. 'Disinfecting' works by "using chemicals, for example, EPA-registered disinfectants to kill germs on surfaces."³³ Disinfecting **kills** germs. While disinfecting does not remove germs, by killing germs, there is a reduced chance of the spread of infection. The purpose of this

³¹ The Superintendent of Schools is on a daily COVID-19 conference call with City Directors and the City's Administration

³² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Interim Recommendations for U.S. Community Facilities With Suspected/Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)." *CDC.gov*, April 1, 2020.

³³ *Ibid.*



distinction shows that both cleaning and disinfecting will be an integral part of preventing the spread of infectious diseases in Trenton schools.

Moreover, Trenton Public Schools does not operate in isolation and is following guidance provided by the New Jersey Department of Education, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and other governmental entities. The CARES Act Works for All Americans is a program that provides direct economic assistance from the Coronavirus Relief Fund. The funds, distributed to Trenton Public Schools, will be utilized to purchase thermometers, to test individuals who are entering the school building. The school district is determining how social distancing can be accomplished on public school buses cost-effectively and efficiently. Finally, given the duration of classes, the Trenton Public Schools system plans on completing multiple cleanings per day and disinfecting rooms where teachers provide classroom instruction. Per the New Jersey Department of Education's guidance, there is a distinct purpose for the use of Federal funds during COVID-19.

- "According to Title I-A of the "Every Student Succeeds Act" (ESSA)- funds can be used as long as no other funds from other sources are reasonably available to pay for normal cleaning supplies. The USED has indicated that Title I-A funds may be used, as a last resort, for health and sanitary purposes to protect Title I students. As with any other cost, the use must be necessary, reasonable, and allocable to Title I, Part A consistent with 2 F.R. Part 200. The district must maintain on file documentation to show that no other sources of funding were reasonably available to pay for normal cleaning supplies.
- Title II-A cannot be used to clean or disinfect buildings.
- Title III cannot be used to clean or disinfect buildings.
- Title IV-A can be used to pay for the cleaning and disinfecting of the classrooms and school areas following the CDC's guidance. In addition, these funds can be used for one-time expenses, such as installing sanitizing stations throughout the school.



- IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) funds may not be used to clean or disinfect school buildings."³⁴

According to the CDC, guidance on cleaning schools should be followed: schools will need to consider factors such as the size of the room and the ventilation system design (including the air changes per hour and the location of supply and exhaust vents). Cleaner ventilation reduces the impact of an ill person suspected to have COVID-19 as respiratory droplets will be removed from the air more routinely. The following are processes that an individual (student or teacher) will follow if they are ill:

- "Close all areas visited by the ill persons—open windows and use ventilating fans to increase air circulation. Wait 24 hours before beginning cleaning and disinfection.
- Cleaning staff should clean and disinfect all areas such as offices, bathrooms, common areas, shared electronic equipment used by the ill persons (focusing on frequently touched surfaces).
- Cleaning staff and others should clean their own hands often: immediately after removing gloves and after contact with an ill person, by washing hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or with an at least 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Cleaning staff should wear disposable gloves and gowns for all tasks in the cleaning process, including handling trash. The gowns should be compatible with the cleaning products used, and hands washed after removing gloves."³⁵

In general, Trenton Public Schools are working with local and State health officials to ensure appropriate local protocols and guidelines, such as updated guidance for cleaning and disinfection, are

³⁴ New Jersey Department of Education, "Guiding the Education Community Through the COVID-19 Pandemic: CARES Act Education Stabilization Fund." *NJ. Gov.*, May 11, 2020. All these guidelines have been quoted.

³⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Interim Recommendations for U.S. Community Facilities With Suspected/Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)." *CDC.gov*, April 1, 2020. All these guidelines have been quoted.



followed. Staff should immediately notify their supervisor in the event there are suspected contaminated areas in the facilities of COVID-19 or in the event that any other students or staff exhibit symptoms for the virus, and Trenton Public Schools will coordinate with the City of Trenton's Department of Health & Human Services as to the proper response.

The City will continue to offer guidance and assistance to the Trenton School Board to ensure the health and safety of the students as well as the faculty and staff. The City will help facilitate the acquisition of PPEs for essential school personnel as well as a testing protocol to supplement supplies procured by the School Board, subject to the City's budgetary limitations. Nonetheless, the City will work in concert with the School Board and Administrators to prepare for schools to reopen for classes and individual learning.

IX. "A COVID-19 Testing Plan for Trenton"

The City of Trenton had a lead in preparing for the spread of COVID-19. On January 21, 2020, the first case of COVID-19 in the United States was reported out of Washington State. On this date, YZ Zhang, of West Windsor, a leader in the local Chinese American community, called on City officials to cancel Trenton's second annual Chinese New Year celebration planned for February 5, 2020. The festival was canceled due to concerns raised that community members felt gathering in crowds was not prudent considering the emerging threat of a pandemic. After consultation with affected communities, the City canceled the event for this year. Since that time, Trenton has been planning and preparing for the spread of the pandemic in our region.

In February, as more information on the extent and impact of the pandemic, portions of each weekly cabinet meeting were dedicated to preliminary threat assessment and planning; this included discussing departmental responses. As a result, on March 6, 2020, after continued cabinet discussions



concerning the City's preparedness and in consultation with City Health Director, Shakira Abdul-Ali, Mayor W. Reed Gusciora convened the first meeting of the COVID-19 Emergency Management team. The Emergency Management team is currently comprised of city administrators: Derrick Sawyer (Fire Director and EMO Coordinator), Grady Griffin (Director of Emergency Management Services and COVID-19 Procurement Officer), Maria Richardson (Recreation Director and COVID-19 Planning Chief), Yoshi Manale (Chief of Staff to the Mayor), Adam Cruz (Business Administrator), John Morelli (Law Director), Ben Delisle (Housing and Economic Development Director), and Steve Picco (COVID-19 Operations Chief and volunteer). Following Governor Phil Murphy's issuance of Executive Order No. 103, on March 9, 2020, which declared a Public Health Emergency and a State of Emergency in New Jersey, the City of Trenton declared the State of Emergency for the City of Trenton (on March 14, 2020). On this date, the Emergency Management team finalized a set of goals and plans to close public schools, senior centers, and recreation centers in the Capital City. Testing City residents, per federal and State public health directives, has and continues to remain the primary goal of City efforts. Additional objectives, established on March 14, 2020, are listed:

- Locate, prepare, and open a hospital overflow facility for victims affected by COVID-19, if necessary;
- Locate, prepare, and open a shelter facility for displaced and homeless individuals who test positive for COVID-19;
- Develop a staffing plan for hospital overflow and homeless shelters;
- Secure agreements with vendors for additional PPEs and test kits;
- Aggressively seek grant and charitable support for COVID-19 response activities, including the acquisition of PPEs, test kits, and financial support in place of in-kind benefits;



- Provide coordinated public information about COVID-19 facts and risks as well as actions that the City has taken to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and reduce burdens on businesses;
- Ensure that the City of Trenton's continuity of operations plans, for each department, is finalized to account for disruptions related to COVID-19;
- Leverage existing funding sources (i.e., storm response funds, UEZ funds) to transfer to COVID-19 preparation programs and small business loans to City businesses displaced by the pandemic closures.

On March 24, 2020, the City of Trenton, at its own expense, opened Mercer County's first testing site, where over two weeks, it tested first responders. Between March 25, 2020, and April 1, 2020, 493 individuals were tested, and 21 were confirmed to have tested positive. The City operated the site in coordination with BIO-Reference Laboratories, Inc., as well as with Cardinal Medical Diagnostic Services. By the time that nearly 500 individuals had been tested, on March 30, 2020, with funding from the State of New Jersey, Mercer County opened its drive-up testing site at Quakerbridge Mill. Since then, the County's testing facility has moved to the Mercer County McDade Administration building's parking lot located across from 640 South Broad Street in Trenton. Prior to the County testing site move into the City, the administration collaborated with the Trenton Health Team and the Henry J. Austin Health Center to develop ward-by-ward testing paid for by the County. Through collaboration with area churches and using church parking lots as the venue of the mobile testing site, 289 Trentonians were tested at these sites (of which 110 tested positive)³⁶.

³⁶ As of June 9, 2020.



The four sites continue to rotate on different days of the week and are listed below:

Ward	Testing Site	Day of the week
East	Living Hope Alliance Church 401 Farragut Avenue Trenton, NJ 08609	Mondays
South	Church of God of the Prophecy 397-403 Second Street Trenton, NJ 08611	Tuesdays
North	Galilee Baptist Church 440 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Trenton, NJ 08618	Wednesdays
West	Trinity Episcopal Cathedral 801 W. State Street Trenton, NJ 08618	Thursdays

The City of Trenton's proactive approach to procuring PPEs and test kits, as well as operating a mobile testing site (even before Mercer County), has reduced the total number of deaths. However, up until May 8, 2020, State-funded testing was only for symptomatic individuals. After May 8, 2020, testing of asymptomatic individuals has been permitted; however, asymptomatic individuals must speak with their health care providers prior to obtaining a COVID-19 test at a State-run testing site.³⁷ The purpose of the Governor's rule, according to his office, is because the total number of tests is less than the demand for testing. However, as per established Mercer County established protocol, testing of asymptomatic persons will still need to obtain a prescription from either their health provider or through the Henry J. Austin Health Center.

The Trenton Health Team arranged testing appointments through the Henry J. Austin Health Center. This became beneficial, especially for those residents who did not have a medical provider or

³⁷ Young, Elise, "NJ Expands Testing to Some Asymptomatic Residents." *Bloomberg.com*, May 8, 2020.



are in the immigrant population without proper health care. The City also set up a COVID-19 hotline³⁸ to respond to citizen inquiries and provide more information as to how to obtain a COVID-19 test.

Information about testing is provided through robocalls, listings on the City’s website and the State’s COVID-19 response dashboard, and informational flyers. In addition, area civic groups and Churches assisted in spreading the word as to how to obtain testing and other public health information about the pandemic. The City also took part in various food drives and mask distribution efforts that included information about the Trenton Health Team’s testing program. Schools also assisted in distributing information for students to bring home to their families. City officials also took part in various Public Service Announcements and media coverage interviews on the importance of testing and COVID-19 prevention strategies. Communication efforts to Trenton residents continue to be an ongoing priority and concern for the City’s health teams.

Once COVID-19 test kits and PPEs become readily available, and the County eases the requirements for physician review, City officials are eager to ensure widespread access to COVID-19 testing. Testing of high-density housing and residential towers would be prioritized throughout the City. When a limited outbreak of 5 or more occurs in such concentrated housing³⁹, then the Trenton Health Team will send mobile testing units to offer to test any resident of that housing complex (or neighborhood) who wants a COVID-19 test. Notwithstanding, the City must be mindful of the costs for such a testing program in that there is currently a high cost for test kits, the continual challenge of

³⁸ The City’s Health Department maintained the hotline and the number was set up (609) 989-3888.

³⁹ According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), an outbreak is the occurrence of more cases of a disease than would normally be expected in a specific place or in group of people over a given time period. This is typically between 5 and 20 percent of a given population.



acquiring PPEs, and cost for health care workers and test technicians. It will be necessary to fund such costs unless provided for by State or County resources⁴⁰.

Also prioritized for testing continues to be First Responders, Trenton Water Works (TWW) front line workers, City Hall Workers, Crossing-Guards, School Administrators, and teachers and staff. While the City will continue to be responsible for employees who are under the City's budget, the School Board will be responsible for employees at public schools.

City Health Officials will continue to monitor COVID-19 concerns at our long-term health care facilities even though they are still under the principle purview of the State. City Health Officials will also continue to monitor high-density housing at both public and private residential facilities. Although most public housing is under the domain of the Trenton Housing Authority funded through U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (USHUD), our Health Officer continues to maintain direct contact with the agency. There is currently a daily call with all City Directors, the Trenton Public Schools, and the Housing Authority regarding updates to our COVID-response team's efforts. Our Health Officer regularly visits small businesses, particularly restaurants and food stores, to ensure compliance with social distancing requirements and sanitary concerns to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

A health surveillance program for all Trentonians would involve periodic testing of City residents for a variety of conditions, which is entirely beyond the financial and physical capability of the City and does not exist in a universal form in the United States. Nonetheless, City Health officials track neighborhood outbreaks and are ready to provide strategic care to residents.

⁴⁰ As stated previously at the current cost of test kits and laboratory analysis at \$100, it is estimated that it would cost between \$8-\$10 million to test all 85,000+ residents of the City; costs would need to include PPEs and test technicians and other personnel.



X. A COVID-19 Vaccination Program

There is currently no licensed vaccine to prevent COVID-19⁴¹; however, research and development programs are underway in the U.S. and around the world to develop a vaccine that is safe and effective. For residents with private insurance, the majority of health insurers are required to cover recommended vaccines without charge to the insured; consequently, should there be a vaccine, those with private insurance, could readily obtain a vaccine contingent upon the availability. Those with Medicare Part B and Medicaid would also likely have the vaccine covered at little or no cost (there might be a copay or small fee). Similarly, New Jersey's Vaccine Preventable Disease Program works to reduce vaccine-preventable diseases by helping to provide free vaccinations for residents who aren't covered by insurance. It will be necessary, however, to encourage those with insurance to speak with their primary care physicians should they wish to receive the vaccine, which will reduce the volume of individuals who need to get vaccinated by the City. This helps ensure that insurers provide vaccinations cost-effectively and accessible to all residents. The City of Trenton plans on partnering with the Trenton Public Schools district to ensure that vaccines, which receive the necessary regulatory approval, are administered to as many students as possible. Students may be incentivized through activities coordinated through our nonprofit partners, donors, and the Department of Recreation.

It is essential however, to note the following information regarding the public's acceptance and confidence in taking a given vaccine. According to a poll released by the University of Chicago's NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, 31% of people were unsure of if they would get vaccinated, and 20% of individuals stated that they would refuse vaccination.⁴² Additional considerations that ought to be considered include the effect of a vaccine on individuals with weakened immune systems,

⁴¹ Gallagher, James, "Coronavirus vaccine: When Will We Have One?" *BBC.com*, May 18, 2020.

⁴² University of Chicago, "Expectations for a COVID-19 Vaccine." *APNORC.org*, May 2020.



those who take immunosuppressants, and those who have been ill recently. After having said this, it is important to stress *how* vaccines are typically administered.

According to the CDC, "each vaccine dose has a recommended administration route and site. This information is included in the manufacturer's package insert for each vaccine."⁴³ Whether the vaccines are provided orally, through intramuscular injection, through subcutaneous injection, or intradermal injection, vaccines will be administered per the guidelines outlined by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). The City of Trenton plans on encouraging residents through substantial communication campaigns about public health information related to vaccines. By coordinating with the Trenton Health Team as well as the City's Emergency Management Team, the Capital City will utilize its channels of communication with residents to ensure that Trentonians are aware of any such vaccine program that is established. Moreover, the City will adhere to any such State or County health mandates regarding such a future program offered to New Jersey residents.

Notwithstanding, such a vaccine program must consider natural immunities that may have developed for persons who have already been exposed to the COVID-19 virus. Additionally, community immunity occurs when a sufficient part of a given population receives immunity from a virus (typically through vaccines or prior exposures). However, given concerns that people might have over the potential effectiveness of a COVID-19 vaccine, any governmental effort may be undermined by not vaccinating enough residents. For example, while the flu vaccine is highly effective, it is difficult for State and City officials to ensure that residents receive the vaccination. There will be challenges in promoting COVID-19 vaccinations so that the City will follow directives from State and Federal officials.

⁴³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Administer the Vaccine(s)." *CDC.gov*, 2020.



It will be necessary for City health officials to work with civic groups, churches, and other nonprofits and governmental agencies to promote such a vaccine program as well as distribute educational materials promoting such a program. It will also be essential to provide public outreach on a bilingual basis to ensure that the needs of all residents are met.

XI. Detection of COVID-19 and Contact Tracing in Trenton

There is limited contact tracing in Trenton; however, the State of New Jersey will hire at least 1,000 people to serve as contact tracers and will coordinate with local health agencies in this effort⁴⁴. The State will be hiring contact tracers from municipalities and cities that they will be calling to ensure that they are, in the words of Governor Murphy, "as representative of the folks that they're phoning up or contacting."⁴⁵ The City of Trenton is no exception. City residents who develop COVID-19 will speak with State contact tracers who are Trenton residents to track down residents who might be exposed to the virus.

Currently, when a person is tested positive and is a Trenton resident or patient at our long-term health care centers, our Health Department contacts each person who tested positive to analyze who they may have come into contact with for the previous fourteen (14) days. City Health officials then contact those persons to advise them to "self-quarantine" and further give them information as to how to get tested for COVID-19.

⁴⁴ Arco, Matthew. "N.J. needs 1,000 coronavirus contact tracers for reopening strategy, Murphy says," *NJ.Com*, May 12, 2020.

⁴⁵ Jongsma, Jonathan. "Want to be a Contact Tracer for NJ? Here's What You Need to Know." *Northjersey.com*, May 12, 2020



XII. Conclusion

The COV-19 pandemic of 2020, has been the health crisis of our generation. While we are still not out of the woods, the City has adequately prepared for this crisis and continues to contain the spread of the virus as best as our resources allow. We pledged to remain vigilant to ensure the majority of our citizens are protected and that we meet their health care needs. We are also preparing for a second wave of the virus this fall and will update our citizens accordingly. In the meantime, we urge our residents to continue to wear masks, maintain social distancing, sanitize countertops as well as other surfaces, and wash hands frequently. As soon as a vaccine or cure becomes available, the City will take front and center to ensure resident access to the advances in treatments and medical science. In the meantime, God speed, and please safeguard your health.

Revised June 9, 2020

The COVID-19 Response Team:

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Grady Griffin, EMS, COVID Procurement Officer

Maria Richardson, COVID Planning, Director of Recreation

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