



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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COVID-19 Update: FDA Reagent Approval, Testing Strike Team, Fair Waiver, JobsOhio Banking Partnership, Dividend Checks

(COLUMBUS, Ohio)—Ohio Governor Mike DeWine and Dr. Amy Acton, MD, MPH, provided the following updates on Ohio's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

FDA REAGENT APPROVAL

Governor DeWine announced today that a new testing reagent, which is a compound used to determine if COVID-19 is present in a sample, has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Because reagents have been extremely limited, Ohio and other states have had limited testing capacity. On Sunday, Governor DeWine spoke with officials at the FDA and asked them to approve new types of reagents to allow Ohio to expand testing. Today, the FDA approved a new version reagent for Thermo Fisher's testing machines, which are used by most major labs in Ohio.

"This approval will greatly expand our state's ability to increase our testing capacity," said Governor DeWine. "We are also working with other companies to make additional reagent kits available so we can continue to ramp up testing in Ohio."

TESTING STRIKE TEAM

Governor DeWine announced the formation a new strike team led by former Ohio governors Richard Celeste and Bob Taft that will work to find more reliable sources of reagent and testing supplies for COVID-19 testing in Ohio.

"I am so pleased that Governor Celeste and Governor Taft have answered this call to help Ohio and did so without a moment's hesitation," said Governor DeWine. "I am so grateful that they have agreed to partner together and use their networks, contacts, and life experiences to help us in the critical mission to get testing supplies."

The new Testing Strike Team will also include other leaders from business, academia, and public health to help Ohio source these testing reagents and supplies.

COUNTY FAIR WAIVER

Governor DeWine announced today that the Ohio Department of Agriculture has waived the required \$50,000 local match for the Agricultural Society Facilities Grant Program.

Ohio's operating budget set aside this grant funding to help fairs make necessary facilities and grounds improvements. Fairs could apply for the \$50,000 grant with a required \$50,000 from local governments and businesses.

"COVID-19 has put a strain on local budgets and businesses' bottom lines, so this waiver will allow fairs to apply for grant funding for improvements without the local match," said Governor DeWine. "Going forward, we will continue to evaluate how, and if, we can safely operate Ohio fairs in 2020."

Fair managers have until May 30th to apply via the [Ohio Department of Agriculture's website](#).

JOBSOHIO BANKING PARTNERSHIP

JobsOhio, Peoples Bank (headquartered in Marietta) and the recently-merged First Federal Bank and Home Savings Bank (headquartered in Defiance and Youngstown) announced a new partnership to support those banks' existing small business clients in Ohio.

The partnership will help small businesses maintain operations and payroll during the COVID-19 pandemic. JobsOhio has committed up to \$50 million to assist Peoples Bank and First Federal-Home Savings Bank.

"This assistance bolsters each bank's ability to provide additional financing on favorable terms for local businesses in good standing that would otherwise not be able to access this credit due to the COVID-19 crisis," said Governor DeWine. "I thank these Ohio banks and JobsOhio for their partnership, which will get much-needed capital in the hands of small businesses that are so critical to Ohio's economy."

Eligible businesses can use the loans for working capital, including payroll, rent, mortgages or other fixed debts, utilities, and other bills.

BWC DIVIDEND CHECKS:

Less than two weeks ago, the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation board of directors approved to send up to \$1.6 billion in dividends to Ohio employers. Today, Governor DeWine announced that a total of more than 170,000 checks will be mailed over the next five days.

This dividend is intended to ease the impact of COVID-19 on Ohio's business community and the economy. The dividend equals approximately 100% of the premiums paid in policy year 2018.

Approximately \$1.4 billion will go to private employers and nearly \$200 million will go to local government taxing districts, such as counties, cities, townships, and schools.

CURRENT OHIO DATA:

There are 13,725 confirmed and probable cases of COVID-19 in Ohio and 557 confirmed and probable COVID-19 deaths. A total of 2,779 people have been hospitalized, including 838 admissions to intensive care units. In-depth data can be accessed by visiting [coronavirus.ohio.gov](#).

Video of today's full update, including versions with foreign language closed captioning, can be viewed on the [Ohio Channel's YouTube page](#).

For more information on Ohio's response to COVID-19, visit [coronavirus.ohio.gov](#) or call 1-833-4-ASK-ODH.

