

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
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## **Freeholders provide COVID-19 updates; announce assistance for special needs schools, expansion of CARES Act grant programs**

FREEHOLD, NJ – The Monmouth County Board of Chosen Freeholders held a press conference today to announce the expansion of the Monmouth County CARES Economic Assistance Grant Program, assistance for special needs schools and provide COVID-19 updates.

“To date, the total number of positive COVID-19 cases in Monmouth County since March is 14,500. As of Oct. 30, there are 84 hospitalized, 21 in intensive care (ICU) and 10 on ventilators in Monmouth County due to COVID-19,” said Freeholder Director Thomas A. Arnone. “We need everyone to do their part to slow the spread by practicing social distancing and staying home when they are sick.”

The Monmouth County Health Department (MCHD) has administered 3,832 tests, with 84 positive results, as part of the County’s COVID-19 Free Testing Program, which began in July. MCHD is conducting contact tracing for all residents who test positive.

The testing site locations, dates and hours of operation are posted on the County’s website at [www.visitmonmouth.com](http://www.visitmonmouth.com).

Freeholder Director Arnone announced that Monmouth County is allocating CARES Act funding to vocational and special needs schools.

“There are some things that cannot be taught virtually, including culinary arts, biotechnology and health care. Because of the critical need for hands-on learning, the County vocational schools have worked tirelessly to safely return students to the classroom,” said Freeholder Director Thomas A. Arnone. “To assist them in this endeavor, the County will be allocating \$500 per full time student and \$250 per share time student.”

“We are also going to be allocating \$500 per student to the ten special needs schools in Monmouth County in order to help enhance their education,” said Freeholder Director Arnone. “The students and families in these schools rely heavily on structure and so the schools have had to dedicate their efforts to figure out how to bring them into the schools safely.”

“These students have worked so hard to get where they are today and we will do everything we can to help these schools keep their students in their classrooms with their favorite teachers and peers,” added Freeholder Director Arnone.

Freeholder Director Arnone also gave updates about “The Show Must Go On in Monmouth!” and the Monmouth County CARES Economic Assistance Grant Program.

“At our last press conference, I announced “The Show Must Go On in Monmouth!” program. I am happy to say that all performing arts organizations in Monmouth County that we know of have been contacted,” said Freeholder Director Arnone. “If any performing arts company has not been contacted, please contact the Monmouth County Administrator’s office at 732-431-7384.”

“Additionally, I am excited to announce that we are expanding the Monmouth County CARES Economic Assistance Grant Program and allowing small businesses to apply for an additional \$10,000—for a total of up to \$20,000 in grant money,” said Freeholder Director Arnone. “Any small business that has already applied and submitted expenses in excess of \$20,000 does not need to do anything—your application will be reviewed and eligible expenses will be processed. If you submitted more than \$10,000 but less than \$20,000 and have incurred additional expenses, please submit them as soon as possible.”

“I encourage any small business that has not applied at all, to please do so as soon as possible,” said Freeholder Director Arnone.

To apply for a grant, small business owners can go to [www.MonmouthCountyCares.com](http://www.MonmouthCountyCares.com) or call 732-375-2196, Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

“We have now approved more than 2,100 applications and dispersed nearly \$18 million,” said Freeholder Director Arnone. “If you have any questions, about eligibility or how to fill out an application, the County is ready to help you.”

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