



## Board of Chosen Freeholders

County of Hunterdon  
71 Main Street, Building #1  
PO Box 2900  
Flemington, NJ 08822-2900

## MEDIA RELEASE

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: March 16, 2020

Contact: Shaun C. Van Doren, Freeholder Director

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## State of Emergency Declared In Hunterdon County County Government Remains Open Some Activities Suspended

Hunterdon County Freeholder Board Director Shaun C. Van Doren today signed a declaration of a state of emergency in the County to protect the health and welfare of County residents during the national public health emergency and announced the suspension of some County activities.

The state of emergency declaration as a result of COVID-19 enables the County's Office of Emergency Management (OEM) to request assistance from the State of New Jersey and the Federal Government, with the concurrence of the Hunterdon County Health Officer, including material resources from the Strategic National Stockpile, such as personal protective equipment to support the Hunterdon Medical Center, other health care facilities, other health care workers and first responders in the county, as well granting authority for the activation of local Emergency Operations Plans, and providing the County OEM Coordinator with authority to direct resources where needed.

Van Doren stated, "Officials within the County have been hard at work addressing the public health emergency posed by Coronavirus/COVID-19. The Hunterdon County Health Department and Office of Emergency Management have been working around the clock to plan and respond to the constantly evolving challenges posed by Coronavirus.

Like many private businesses, the County has implemented more aggressive and frequent cleaning of facilities for the protection of both the public and staff members. In addition, the County has taken steps to limit large public gatherings in accordance with the guidance that has been issued by the Department of Health and CDC.

Hunterdon County's government remains operational; however, additional and more aggressive steps are required to combat the spread of Coronavirus/COVID-19. The decision to take these actions is not taken lightly but is absolutely necessary to ensure the ongoing continuity of county government operations. "



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- The County's Electronics Waste cleanup scheduled for March 21, 2020 from 9 am to 1 pm remains scheduled at this time. To assure social distancing and to ensure the safety of residents and personnel, those participating are required to remain in their vehicle when dropping off material. Electronic waste should be in the trunk, cargo area or truck bed, easily accessible to staff, who will remove it from the vehicle.
- The County Health Department continues to provide essential services to residents and businesses but encourages the electronic transfer of documents and conducting business by phone when possible. If not feasible, the Department has instituted a drop-off process outside the Health Department's office. Call 908-788-1351 for more details or visit the Health Department website.
- Public access to the Hunterdon County Senior Center is temporarily suspended through April 6, 2020, at which point the situation will be re-evaluated. All Senior activities, including congregate meals, are suspended. The Meals on Wheels program will continue with a meal drop off program designed to eliminate personal interaction between participants and volunteers.
- Seniors with questions may contact the Senior program by calling (908) 788-1361 during regular business hours or via email at [aging@co.hunterdon.nj.us](mailto:aging@co.hunterdon.nj.us).
- The Hunterdon County Library System will close on Tuesday, March 17th at 5pm, until at least April 1st. Due to museum closures, lending of Museum Passes has been suspended until further notice. Late fines will not be charged for any materials.
- The Library is offering remote, digital and on-line resources. Please visit [hclibrary.us](http://hclibrary.us) or call (908) 788-1434.
- The Board of Elections office is closed to the public; however, staff will continue to administer election procedures. There will be a table in the lobby for forms so that the public can come in and fill out any forms that they need and leave them in the lock box for processing elections staff.
- The HackHunterdon Monthly Tech Meetup originally scheduled for next Thursday, March 26<sup>th</sup> is cancelled.
- Parks & Recreation is temporarily suspending programs and closing visitor centers to the public. Parks trails remain open. Staff will be working to ensure refunds are issued to those affected and continue to be available via email and telephone for public inquiries and reservations. Parks staff are exploring options to offer educational resources online through our website and Facebook page. This decision will be revisited by March 31.



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- County Clerk Mary Melfi has cancelled the Searching the Search Room event that was scheduled for Saturday March 21.
- The Department of Human Services has announced that County residents who wish to apply for SNAP food assistance, or cash assistance under the Work First New Jersey program can do so online at [NJHelps.org](http://NJHelps.org). During this public health crisis, Social Services can conduct interviews by phone. Applicants do not need to come into the office to apply. Residents are encouraged to call Social Services at 908-788-1300 if they have an emergency housing need.
- The Greater Raritan One-Stop Career Training Service Centers in Flemington and Somerville are closed to in-person visits. Staff will continue to assist customers over the phone and via email. Customers are asked to call 908-541-5780 or email [onestop@co.somerset.nj.us](mailto:onestop@co.somerset.nj.us) for assistance.

Van Doren added, "Like many employers throughout the State of New Jersey, the County is also dealing with staffing challenges posed from the closure of public schools. Please know that the actions laid out will be reevaluated on an ongoing basis in consultation with the officials from the Department of Health and in accordance with CDC guidelines. As conditions on the ground change and the risk of Coronavirus subsides, the County will aim to scale back these policies.

We must remember that as Americans we are in this fight together and by taking these measures now; we will help to mitigate against additional exposures and serious health outcomes."