

# Coordinated COVID-19 Response Newsletter

May 29, 2020

The purpose of this newsletter is to keep local stakeholders informed about the coordinated response to the evolving COVID-19 situation. The Region, area municipalities and local community partners are meeting regularly to make sure our pandemic response efforts are coordinated and aligned. This work is being done through a Regional Pandemic Control Group which coordinates the efforts and actions of five other sector control groups which are described further in this document.

## Regional Pandemic Control Group (RPCG)

The Regional Pandemic Control Group has been meeting regularly to share information, facilitate sharing of resources, and guide the community-wide pandemic response in five areas: health, community support, critical infrastructure, the municipalities and communications. The following sections provide an update on these five areas that are working together to ensure an effective and efficient response to the COVID-19 pandemic in our community.



<https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/living-here/covid-19-information-centre.aspx>

## 1. Health Sector Control Group (HSCG)

The Region of Waterloo Public Health continues to work closely with local hospitals, health care partners, the Ministry of Health, Public Health Ontario and many community partners to respond to [Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) in Waterloo Region.

**COVID-19 Dashboard:** Public Health continues to refine the COVID-19 dashboard on the Region's website: [www.regionofwaterloo.ca/COVID19summary](http://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/COVID19summary). This Dashboard illustrates the trends and is updated daily at 10:30 a.m.

### Testing Update:

Clinical assessment and testing is now available for:

- Anyone with at least one symptom.
- Anyone concerned they have been exposed to COVID-19.
- Anyone who is at risk of exposure to COVID-19 through their employment (e.g. health care workers, grocery store employees, food processing employees).



You do not need a referral from a primary care provider or Public Health to access testing. All the assessment centres take self-referrals. If you would like, you can use the [self-assessment tool](#) or speak to your primary care provider, to help determine if you need to seek care or testing.

Region of Waterloo Public Health will contact individuals who test positive for COVID-19.

**All individuals who have been tested can review their results online through the [Ministry of Health](#).**

#### **Assessment & Testing Centres, Waterloo Region:**

There are currently four COVID-19 Assessment and Testing Centres in Waterloo Region. Please note: hours of operation are subject to change. Please consult the latest information provided by the Centres at Public Health's Assessment and Testing Centre's webpage at:

<https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/health-and-wellness/community-assessment-centres.aspx>.

#### **Cambridge-North Dumfries Community Assessment and Testing Centre**

- 700 Coronation Boulevard, Cambridge (Cambridge Memorial Hospital, separate entrance)
- Please note: This location is not accessible for individuals with mobility issues.
- Hours of Operation: 8:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Monday to Friday and 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on weekends and holidays
- Self-referrals are accepted by calling 519-621-2333 ext. 2689 or emailing [CMH COVID-19 Testing](#)

#### **Grand River Hospital COVID-19 Testing Centre**

- 835 King Street West, Kitchener
- Hours of operation: 7:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. 7 days/week
- Self-referrals are accepted by calling 519-749-4300 ext. 6824

#### **St. Mary's General Hospital COVID-19 Testing Centre**

- 50 Bathurst Drive, Unit 11, Waterloo
- Hours of operation: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. 7 days/week
- Self-referrals are accepted by calling 519-885-9517

#### **Kitchener-Waterloo-Wilmot-Wellesley-Woolwich (KW4) Community Assessment Centre**

- 50 Westmount Road North, Waterloo
- Hours of Operation: 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. 7 days/week
- Self-referrals are accepted by calling 1-855-414-2255



**Keep in mind the following Public Health measures:**

As more restrictions are relaxed, it is important to keep in mind the following Public Health measures that are critical to ensuring we are able to limit the spread of COVID-19:

- 1.** Always keep at least 2m between yourself and another person (non-household). If visiting the grocery store or other essential services follow the arrows and other floor markings that will ensure the [physical distancing](#) is maintained. If you would like to print the physical distancing poster click [here](#).
- 2.** If you need to take public transit or are concerned you may not be able to keep the physical distancing, it is recommended you wear a face covering or [non-medical mask](#).
- 3.** Avoid social gatherings. It is tempting with the summer-like weather to gather with friends in your backyard or at local parks. Community spread of COVID-19 is present in Waterloo region and we ask that you avoid groups or social gatherings. If a gathering is essential, under the Provincial Emergency Order, the group must be no more than 5 people and physical distancing should be maintained.

On May 27, 2020, the Premier announced that all Emergency Orders will remain in effective until at least June 9, 2020.

**Translated resources:**

Key COVID-19 information resources and have been published in Arabic, Chinese (Simplified), Farsi, French, Somali, Portuguese, Spanish and Tigrinya.

Resources are currently available and posted at: <https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/health-and-wellness/2019-novel-coronavirus.aspx#>

Additional multilingual resources are available at [www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca/COVID19](http://www.immigrationwaterlooregion.ca/COVID19)

**It is important to note that all the Region of Waterloo's webpages have a translate feature for multiple languages found at the top of each webpage.**

Translate 

**Who to contact if you have questions or need additional information:**

Please email [publichealth@regionofwaterloo.ca](mailto:publichealth@regionofwaterloo.ca). This will ensure your questions are sent to an inbox that will be regularly monitored, and referred to the appropriate staff for follow-up.

## 2. Community Support Control Group (CSCG)

The Region, the area municipalities and many community partners have taken action to support the health and safety of vulnerable people affected by COVID-19. This group's mandate is to:

- Identify populations that may require additional supports during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Identify the community supports that will be provided to those populations; and
- Determine which organizations will coordinate and provide those supports.

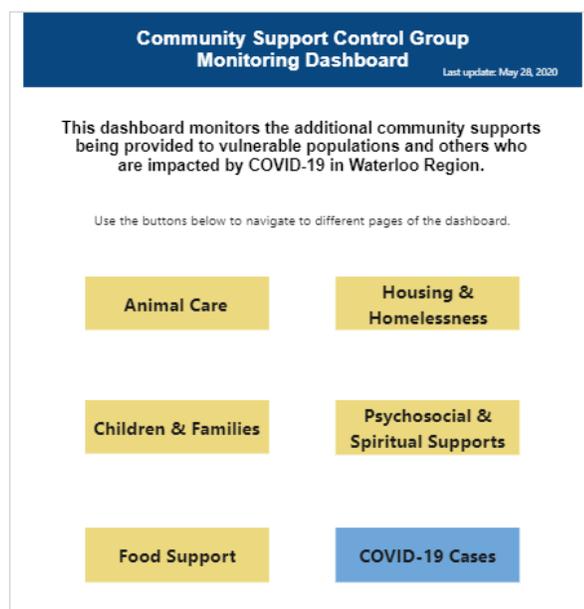


The Community Support Control Group is addressing the following service areas: Food Services; Housing and Homelessness Services; Children's Services; Psychosocial and Spiritual Support Services; Animal Care Services. Below is this week's update from the Community Support Control Group. For more information, visit: [www.regionofwaterloo.ca/communitysupportsCOVID19](http://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/communitysupportsCOVID19).

- Some of the working groups are starting to plan for recovery and the development of their plans are being guided by Public Health.
- The Counselling Collaborative will deliver psychoeducation to emergency shelter workers to use for themselves and to support shelter participants.
- A [list of translated resources](#) with information related to COVID-19 and staying safe as well as mental health and psychosocial supports was created and will be distributed.
- A partnership has been established with the KW Multicultural Centre to offer reassurance calls for older adults in various languages with the use of interpreters.
- The [Friendly Voice Program](#) is now being offered to people who are feeling lonely or isolated. This is a wellbeing check-in with a local volunteer over the phone. Please call 519-743-6333 between 8:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. if you need this service.

An interactive [dashboard](#) on the Community Support Control Group webpage now has statistics available and will be updated weekly. The dashboard includes data in the following areas:

- Number of pets helped by emergency boarding, the pet food bank and emergency care.
- Enrollment in emergency child care.
- Community meal program and food hamper distribution and delivery.
- COVID-19 mobile assessments and COVID-19 cases among people experiencing homelessness.
- Number of people accessing psychosocial and spiritual supports.





### 3. Critical Infrastructure Control Group (CICG)

The Region of Waterloo and area Municipalities continue to maintain all critical services and maintain legislative requirements while performing these services.

**Active Transportation and Economic Assistance for Businesses (Pavements and use of road/parking spots):**

The group working on potential options to provide improved active transportation opportunities met recently to help encourage residents to either start or continue using active transportation during the COVID crisis and beyond. The group is reviewing both Region and local municipal opportunities and coordinating them. The goal is to report back to Councils by the end of June.

A similar group is exploring ways to help businesses wanting to use or expand outdoor spaces (e.g., patios). Their goal is to provide businesses (likely largely restaurants but could be others) with assistance as quickly as possible for access to streets, sidewalks, parking spaces as well as opportunities on the business's property.

**Grand River Transit (GRT):** Fare collection will resume on all GRT buses, ION light rail and MobilityPLUS on Monday June 1. Front door boarding on buses will also resume on June 1. Please follow information posted on the Grand River Transit webpage for more details. In the interim, all GRT services continue to be free until May 31, 2020. Customers continue to be reminded to use transit for essential trips, and to board and exit through the rear doors of the bus until May 31.

As of June 1, contactless fare payment with fare cards is preferred but cash will continue to be accepted on buses. 105 King St. and Ainslie St. terminal Customer Service Centres have reopened to the public. Hours of service are: 9:30 am – 5 pm, Monday to Friday, and 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., Saturday and Sunday.

GRT is also encouraging customers to wear a mask or face covering while riding transit to protect those around them.

**Waste Management:** The waste transfer stations continue to remain operational during normal operating hours of 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday to Saturday. Gate 1 Waterloo is also open for business drop-off on Saturdays, during normal operating hours of 8:00 a.m. to 1 p.m. Recycling, green bin, yard waste and garbage collection continues as normal. Currently the every-second-week garbage bag/can limit continues to be temporarily increased from four to six bags.

The Region is making temporary arrangements to provide green bins and blue boxes available for new homeowners at the household hazardous waste drop off locations in Cambridge and Waterloo. In addition, staff will review when free compost pickup by residents can resume.

A reminder for citizens that all garbage must be placed in bags in order for it to be collected. Bi-weekly bulky/large item collection was reinstated as of May 25. We continue to ask that citizens remember to



respect the environment and do not dump or burn garbage or yard waste.

**Water/Wastewater:** Water demands are starting to trend upward as demands increase this time of year for outdoor water use. Conservation By-law with once per week lawn watering will commence on May 31. The Ayr Water Tower was taken offline for maintenance inspection. The public may have noticed water leaking from a lower hatch as it was opened to allow the full draining of the tank.

**Capital/Construction projects:** Projects are well underway throughout the Waterloo region. We ask that you continue to visit the Region of Waterloo's [website](#) for any road closure information to assist you with planning your essential travels.

#### 4. Municipal Control Group (MCG)

The Chief Administrative Officers of all municipalities have been meeting frequently to discuss pertinent issues and to coordinate operational decisions on the local municipal response to COVID-19. The current focus of the team is on coordinated recovery planning work to ensure an eventual safe and effective return to normal operations based on public health guidance and the Ontario Government's Plan to Reopen the Province. Of note is the anticipated reopening of municipal administrative facilities to the public in mid-June.

#### 5. Communications Control Group (CCG)

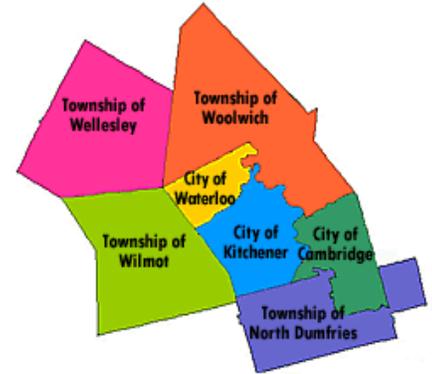
The Communications Control Group (CCG) meets to share relevant information about COVID-19 communications. The group is comprised of communication leaders from public sector organizations across Waterloo Region (hospitals, municipalities, school boards, post-secondary, police, BESTWR, etc.) The group did not meet this week but communication activities are ongoing, including:

- Recovery and reopening plans are underway for all public sector organizations (reopening of buildings, facilities, services, etc.). Includes public and employee communication.
- Distribution of a joint municipal media release about the reopening of administrative buildings to the public. Facilities will tentatively open to the public in mid-June, aligned with Provincial direction.
- Work continues on supporting the Older Adult strategy for citizens 70+ living in urban and rural areas who are at risk of isolation, loneliness and frailty, not currently linked to services during COVID-19. The campaign also targets urban and rural members of the public who might be aware of an older adult who is isolated.

Public Health and Corporate Communication teams continue to share important COVID-19 information with media, residents and staff through our website, social media accounts and regular media briefings. Starting next week media briefings will be held 2x/ week (Tuesday and Fridays).

## Municipal Services

All municipalities in Waterloo region are continuing to closely monitor the COVID-19 pandemic. The Region and all area municipalities have made significant changes to services and programming. Closures, cancellations, news releases, important contacts, and frequently asked questions can be found on the following websites:



### Region of Waterloo Response to COVID-19

<https://www.regionofwaterloo.ca/en/living-here/covid-19-information-centre.aspx>

### City of Cambridge's Response to COVID-19

<https://www.cambridge.ca/en/your-city/2019-novel-coronavirus.aspx#>

### City of Kitchener's Response to COVID-19

<https://www.kitchener.ca/en/city-services/storm-and-emergency-updates.aspx#>

### City of Waterloo's Response to COVID-19

<https://www.waterloo.ca/en/living/covid-19-response.aspx#>

### Township of North Dumfries' Response to COVID-19

<https://www.northdumfries.ca/en/index.aspx>

### Township of Wellesley's Response to COVID-19

<https://www.wellesley.ca/en/living-here/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19.aspx#>

### Township of Wilmot's Response to COVID-19

<https://www.wilmot.ca/en/living-here/2019-novel-coronavirus.aspx#>

### Township of Woolwich Response to COVID-19

<https://www.woolwich.ca/en/township-services/2019-novel-coronavirus.aspx#>

**Complaints about compliance to COVID-19 orders should be directed to the [Region of Waterloo Call Center](#) – 24 hours /7 days per week at 519-575-4400**



## Community Updates

### **Pandemic Volunteer Program launches this week**

The Volunteer Action Centre Waterloo Region recognizes that in times of community distress many individuals want to be of assistance, helping where there is need. In almost every form of emergency, the offer of help and willingness to gather to get things done is appreciated. We have launched the [Pandemic Volunteer Program](#) for the Region's Pandemic Response. The volunteer program is being launched to meet immediate volunteer needs. For those wanting to assist with Covid 19 response we are accepting applications from individuals between the ages of 19 and 64 years. This age criterion is in place to meet the guidelines of Public Health to keep the most vulnerable safe at this time.

[Learn More](#)

[Apply Now](#)

### **[Apply now - funding available for charities supporting COVID-19 efforts](#) through Kitchener Waterloo Community Foundation and the Cambridge & North Dumfries Community Foundation**

Kitchener Waterloo Community Foundation and the Cambridge & North Dumfries Community Foundation have approximately \$1 Million available to grant to Waterloo Region charities responding to COVID-19, through funding made available by the Government of Canada's Emergency Community Support Fund (ECSF). Applications opened on May 19 and will be reviewed in partnership with United Way Waterloo Region Communities, with grants distributed on a rolling basis until the end of July. The funds are available to support efforts aimed to assist vulnerable populations disproportionately affected by COVID-19. Learn more and apply at [www.kwcf.ca/covid19-ecsf](http://www.kwcf.ca/covid19-ecsf) or [www.cndfoundation.org/covid-19-ecsf](http://www.cndfoundation.org/covid-19-ecsf).

### **Apply now – United Way Waterloo Region Communities is now accepting applications for the Emergency Community Support Fund**

United Way Waterloo Region Communities (United Way WRC) is now accepting applications for the Emergency Community Support Fund to help charities and qualified donees serve and support vulnerable Canadians during the COVID-19 pandemic. This funding has been made available by the Government of Canada and funding streams are being administered by United Way Centraide Canada, Community Foundations of Canada, and the Canadian Red Cross in communities from coast to coast to coast. United Way WRC is proud to support this important investment by the Federal Government.

#### Who can apply?

United Way WRC will fund organizations that provide direct services to vulnerable populations who are impacted by COVID-19. Your organization is eligible to receive funding if your organization has a charitable number or is otherwise a qualified donee, and is providing supports and services to meet immediate community needs related to the COVID-19. This funding is intended to support frontline community service organizations providing services to support vulnerable Canadians, including low-income seniors, women, children and youth, persons with disabilities, members of the LGBTQ2S+ community, refugees, Indigenous peoples, members of racialized communities, and more.

Funds may be used for immediate needs and priorities related to the impact of COVID-19. This includes, but is not limited to, services such as:

- Preparing and delivering meals and/or food hampers.
- Supporting individuals in accessing income supports and financial coaching.
- Providing home care or personal support for seniors, elders, and persons with disabilities.
- Mental health & wellness supports, including crisis counselling and peer support.
- Personal safety supports, including for those living in or escaping situations of violence.
- Access to safe transport for essential appointment and errands.
- And others.

#### What types of activities could be funded?

- Community outreach and engagement.
- Developing and/or delivering new programs, services or delivery models as a result of COVID-19.
- Sharing information and knowledge.
- Engaging and recruiting volunteers.

#### How to apply

Applications will be accepted in two rounds. Round one will be open May 19, 2020 to June 12, 2020 and Round two will be open June 22, 2020 to July 7, 2020. We anticipate a high volume of requests and are working to ensure that all requests are reviewed as quickly as possible.

[Applications](#) will be accepted until 4:00 p.m. on the final day of each round of applications.

#### Questions?

Please refer to the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) and [Application Guide](#). For questions not addressed in these resources, please contact Nancy Bird at [nbird@uwaywrc.ca](mailto:nbird@uwaywrc.ca) or 519-888-6100 ext. 204 for assistance.

#### **Friendly Voice**

Could you use a friendly chat? The Friendly Voice program is a general wellbeing check-in that provides social connection to reduce loneliness and isolation in the community. It was developed in response to COVID-19 impacts on the community.

To register for the Friendly Voice program, please call 519-743-6333 and ask reception how to get started! Reception hours are 8:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., but Friendly Voice hours may vary. To print or download the poster for distribution purposes [click here](#).

**If you are in crisis, please call  
Here 24/7 1-844-437-3247, or 9-1-1.**

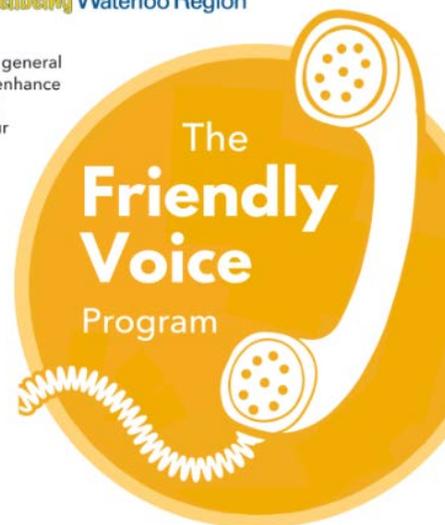
CARIZON family + community services Wellbeing Waterloo Region

The Friendly Voice is a general wellbeing check-in to enhance social connections and reduce loneliness in our community.

#### **How To Register**

To register for the Friendly Voice program, please call 519-743-6333 ask reception how to get started!

Reception is open 8:30 am-6:00 pm, but Friendly Voice session times may vary.



**Free over the phone support for anyone in the Waterloo Region who's feeling isolated or lonely.**