

COVID-19 Updates & Resources for Website

****Monroe County currently has multiple confirmed cases of COVID-19.****

We will continue to monitor this situation as it develops and this page will be utilized to post updates. Monroe County is currently accommodating the public differently during the current circumstance in order to do our part in protecting our community while still providing essential services, as mandated by law. We are also following all federal and state executive orders. To keep up with the number of confirmed cases, please visit <https://www.tn.gov/health/cedep/ncov.html>.

COVID-19 Travel Best Practices

The [Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#) and [Tennessee Department of Health](#) encourage individuals to prepare for COVID-19 and have issued the below best practices and information if you must be out in public:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after you've been in a public place, after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.
- If soap and water is not readily available, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick and put distance between yourself and others if COVID-19 is spreading through your community.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or with your elbow.
- Throw away used tissues then immediately wash or sanitize your hands.
- If you are not sick: You do not need to wear a facemask unless you are caring for someone who is sick (and they are not able to wear a facemask). Facemasks may be in short supply and they should be saved for caregivers.
- Please stay home if you're sick.
- If you are sick: You should wear a facemask when you are around other people when sharing a room or vehicle. If you are not able to wear a facemask, then you should do your best to cover your coughs and sneezes; and people who are caring for you should wear a facemask if they enter your room.

The coronavirus does not target specific populations of racial or ethnic backgrounds.

Monroe County Departments Directory During COVID-19

Monroe County Mayor's Office: 423-442-3981

- Visits are by appointment only

Animal Control: 423-442-1015

- Still operating

Animal Shelter: 423-442-1015

- Open by appointment only

Archives: 423-420-0910

- Open by appointment only

Chancery/Probate: 423-442-2644

- Dropbox and appointment only

Cherohala Skyway Visitor Center/Tourism: 423-253-8010

- Closed to the public, but available via phone

Circuit Co. Clerk: 423-442-2396

- Open by appointment only

Dental Clinic: 423-442-8828

- Open for emergencies only

Economic Development: 423-442-3652

- Open by appointment only

Election Commission: 423-442-2461

- Open by appointment only

EMA: 423-519-7100

- Open by appointment only

EMS: 423-436-0633

- Services remain available

E-911: 423-442-4357

- Services remain available

Finance: 423-442-9383

- Open by appointment only

General Sessions: 423-442-1382

- Open by appointment only

Health Department: 423-442-1235

- Services remain available

Monroe County Airport: 423-420-0563

- Terminal is closed to the public, air traffic is still open

Monroe County Clerk: 423-442-2220

- Online: tncountyclerk.com

- Walk-up window open; Lobby is currently closed; No driver license or marriage license until lobby reopens

Planning: 423-253-4187

- Open by appointment only

Property Assessor: 423-442-3637

- Open by appointment only

Register of Deeds: 423-442-2440

- Open by appointment only

Road Superintendent: 423-442-3637

- Services remain available

Sheriff: 423-442-3911

- Services remain available

Soil Conservation: 423-442-2202

- Open by appointment only

Solid Waste Convenience Centers: 423-442-2497

- Open normal business hours with limited assistance to the handicapped and elderly

Trustee: 423-442-2920

- Open by appointment only

University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Office: 423-442-2433

- Not open to the public, but available via phone

Veterans Service Office: 423-442-5812

- Open by appointment only

Business Resources

In Monroe County, we value our businesses. The current COVID-19 pandemic has created an economic need to support our businesses like never before. We have compiled a list of resources below:

- Unemployment for Employers: <https://www.tn.gov/workforce/covid-19/employers.html>
- Economic Injury Disaster Loans for up to \$2 million per applicant: <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/Information/Index>
- COVID-19 Guidance: <https://www.tn.gov/workforce/covid-19.html>
- Questions and Answers: <https://www.tn.gov/workforce/covid-19/faq.html>
- General Small Business Resources: <https://www.tn.gov/ecd/small-business/bero-home.html>
- Business Incentives & Grants: <https://tnecd.com/advantages/incentives-grants/>
- Small Business Resource Guide: https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/files/resourceguide_3147.pdf
- Broadband Resources: <https://www.tn.gov/ecd/rural-development/tennessee-broadband-grant-initiative/tnecd-broadband-covid-19-resources>

Individual & Family Resources

We are here for you and want to provide as much information as possible to our citizens to ensure that everyone has the assistance they need during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have compiled a list of resources below that you or someone you know may need:

- Emergency Funds:
 - Emergency Pandemic TANF is emergency cash for those impacted by COVID-19. More information can be found at <https://www.tn.gov/humanservices.html>.
- Emergency Food Services:
 - The Good Shephard Center of Madisonville is offering food box distribution every Monday – Thursday from 9 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.
 - First Baptist Church of Madisonville is providing supplemental groceries through their Drive-Thru Food Pantry every Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.
 - First Baptist Church of Tellico is providing meals through drive through stations March 23-27, 2020 from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m.
 - Loaves & Fishes will be distributing bags of food at the Hiwassee Church of God Madisonville on March 25 from 3:00-5:30 p.m. and New Providence Missionary Baptist Church Tellico Plains on March 27 from 3:00-5:00 p.m.

- Sweetwater First Assembly is offering Grab & Go Kids Lunches March 24 & 26 from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
- Unemployment:
 - Please visit jobs4tn.gov to file. If you are unemployed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, you are eligible.
 - Additional unemployment resources can be found at https://www.tn.gov/workforce/covid-19.html?fbclid=IwAR06LAbtxOz6Z_twW2_QvrYs_V2gifRI-XSYXEJ-8nUeRVDN5dJeDgAF_XM.
- Housing & Utilities:
 - Information regarding shelters, housing, and utility assistance can be found at <http://tn211.mycommunitypt.com/index.php/housing-and-utilities>.
- Grocery Services for Seniors:
 - SCHAS is offering their SOS program to provide grocery services to qualifying seniors for free. To inquire, please call 1-866-781-7095.
- COVID-19 Info Line:
 - The COVID-19 Information Line can be reached at 865-549-5343. This info line is designed to provide callers with trusted information related to COVID-19.
- Educational:
 - PhonicsPlay resources are available at www.phonicsplaycomics.co.uk by using the username “march20” and password “home.”
 - TN Reads can be accessed by utilizing the instructions found at <https://www.tellicoplainspubliclibrary.org/library-resources.html>.
 - Homework help can be found at https://www.khanacademy.org/?fbclid=IwAR00jU-CzLftHzCullfRWRE9NRUPERfW2vYbHCsS2MFuzP_NSMDMnhgVbIEs.
 - ABC Mouse is offering free services at <https://www.abcmouse.com/abt/homepage?8a08850bc2=T1266889726.1585064095.1021> by using the code “school 7771.”

COVID-19 Pandemic Q&A

We are currently facing a time of uncertainty. Uncertainty tends to induce many different emotions and having questions answered assists all of us in being as prepared as possible as we try to combat the COVID-19 pandemic together. If anyone has any additional questions, please share them below and we will address them as soon as possible.

Q: Why did Monroe County Mayor Ingram issue a Public Health State of Emergency for Monroe County?

A: *Issuing a state of emergency for Monroe County allows the County Mayor the authority to strictly monitor how County Offices serve the public. In addition, it will allow for the authorized use of federal and state financial resources when necessary.*

Q: Does the County Mayor have the authority to force businesses and industries to close?

A: *Mandated closures due to threats to public health can only occur if they come from the Tennessee Commissioner of Health/Governor of Tennessee (Tenn. Code Ann. § 68-1-201; Tenn. Code Ann. § 68-1-*

204) or from the designated county health regional officer (Tenn. Code Ann. § 68-2-609). Businesses and industries are encouraged to enact policies that take extra steps to assist vulnerable populations by considering measures such as shopping hours exclusive from the general public.

Q: Does the County Mayor have the authority to force a countywide “shelter in place”?

A: A mandated “shelter in place” due to threats to public health can only occur if they come from the Tennessee Commissioner of Health/Governor of Tennessee (Tenn. Code Ann. § 68-1-201; Tenn. Code Ann. § 68-1-204) or from the designated county health regional officer (Tenn. Code Ann. § 68-2-609). We are highly encouraging our citizens to stay at home as much as possible during the COVID-19 outbreak in our community.

Q: Are the County Offices still open?

A: Yes, the County Offices are still open, as mandated by law. However, person to person access is extremely limited as we utilize mail, online, and phone services to conduct business. Alternative work solutions, like working from home, have also been considered for qualifying positions. Visitations are not being allowed at the County Jail and our Courts are working under the guidance of the Tennessee Supreme court to not hold any in-person court proceedings. We are ultimately still open and providing essential services, but in a different way than normal in order to protect our employees and the public. All CDC guidelines are being followed.

Q: Why will the County not release the names, locations, and other information regarding individuals who have been confirmed with COVID-19?

A: This information is strictly confidential and held by the Tennessee Department of Health and the person’s healthcare provider. Due to this, private information is not made available to us.

Q: Will ambulance services and police services still be available?

A: Our ambulance services and police services are both considered essential services. As such, they will continue to serve Monroe County.

Q: Will Monroe County Schools remain closed?

A: Governor Lee has issued a recommendation that all schools across the state should remain closed through March 31, 2020 to further mitigate the spread of this infectious disease and that his office will issue further guidance prior to March 31.

Q: Are there any resources for individuals who have been financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic?

A: Emergency Pandemic TANF is now available as emergency cash for those impacted by COVID-19. More information can be found at <https://www.tn.gov/humanservices.html>.

Q: Are there any resources for businesses who have been financially impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic?

A: The Economic Injury Disaster Loans are administered and processed through the SBA. Applicants may apply online, receive additional disaster assistance information and download applications at <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/>.

Q: Will grocery stores and agricultural supply stores remain open?

A: Grocery stores and agricultural supply stores are considered an essential service during this time and will remain open. We urge the public to practice social distancing and follow other CDC guidelines when you must visit public areas.

Q: Can I still host events and gatherings?

A: According to TN Executive Order 17, no social gatherings of 10 or more people are allowed.

Q: Are gyms and exercise facilities still open?

A: Gyms and fitness/exercise centers or substantially similar facilities are to temporarily close and suspend in-person services until April 6, 2020. In the interim, these businesses are encouraged to pursue digital programming if possible.

Q: Can restaurants be open during this time?

A: Establishments are to exclusively offer drive-thru, take-out or delivery options to support families, businesses and the food supply chain during this emergency.

Q: Can I visit my loved one, who is in a nursing home, right now?

A: Visitation to nursing homes, retirement homes, and long-term care or assisted-living facilities is now limited to visits involving essential care only.