

This week, Governor Walz proclaimed [Latino Heritage Month / Mes de la Herencia Latina](#) in Minnesota. In Minnesota, we join this national month-long celebration to recognize the achievements and contributions of Latine communities in our state and honor Latine communities' history of resilience and perseverance, which has inspired others to achieve success. I hope you are able to take time between September 15 and October 15 to honor and celebrate the month with us!

COVID-19 Vaccine Clinics In Partnership with YMCA

The Walz-Flanagan Administration continues to encourage students, their families, and all Minnesotans to get fully vaccinated for the best protection against COVID-19 infection. Governor Walz and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan visited schools in Blaine, Rochester, Northfield, and Minneapolis last week calling for Minnesotans 12 and older to get vaccinated to help keep kids in schools. Governor Walz also [announced a series of free COVID-19 vaccine clinics](#) at YMCA locations across the Greater Twin Cities area.

MN Launches On-Site Incentives Program at COVID-19 Community Vaccine Clinics

Yesterday, Governor Walz and Lt. Governor Flanagan announced the launch of a new program offering \$100 on-site incentives for COVID-19 vaccines at community vaccination clinics around the state. Nearly 50 [COVID-19 Community Coordinators](#) (CCCs), community clinics and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) will be participating in the program. Participating organizations will offer incentives worth \$100 for a completed vaccine series. This program is designed to give organizations flexibility to determine which incentives would most resonate with the local communities they serve. While many will offer Visa gift cards, organizations participating in the program are already planning to tailor their incentives to their communities, with some offering grocery store vouchers, Target gift cards, or culturally specific food items.

COVID-19 Community Coordinators, FQHCs, and clinics offering on-site incentives will provide more information to their communities and patients about incentives available to them. The new incentive program comes after two successful Walz-Flanagan Administration efforts to encourage Minnesotans to roll up their sleeves and get their shot.

The incentive program is receiving \$4 million in American Rescue Plan funding, as well as \$400,000 in private foundation funds raised by the Minnesota Council on Foundations and its members as part of their ongoing philanthropic support for vaccine outreach and incentives. The State is working to develop and launch similar incentives programs with other partners, including local public health, those serving unhoused Minnesotans, and tribes.

COVID-19 Community Coordinators have now also held more than 300 vaccination events in communities across the state. CCCs are community-based organizations that connect Minnesota's diverse communities to COVID testing, vaccination, and other resources. CCCs contract with the State to serve communities hit hardest by COVID-19, including communities of color, American Indian communities, LGBTQ communities, and Minnesotans with disabilities.

MN Launches New Governor's Council on Economic Expansion

On Tuesday this past week, Governor Walz signed [Executive Order 21-31](#), establishing the new Governor's Council on Economic Expansion. The Council brings together 15 labor, business, philanthropic, and non-profit leaders from across the state to provide recommendations on expanding Minnesota's economy. The Council will first identify immediate actions, potential policy changes, and recommendations to leverage remaining American Rescue Plan funding to advance equitable economic growth. The group will then focus on developing a long-term roadmap to achieve a more equitable, inclusive, sustainable, and resilient Minnesota through public, private, and nonprofit systemic change. The Council will work with state, local, and tribal governments; businesses; workers; higher education institutions; nonprofits; grassroots movements; and communities who have been disproportionately impacted by the inequitable systems of the past and by the pandemic.

To learn more about this new Council, the Governor's appointees from across labor, business, philanthropy, and the non-profit sector, and the meeting schedule, visit [the Council's Website](#).

Back to School Safely

Four hundred thousand Minnesota middle and high school students are returning to class – in person – with the hopes to stay that way. To get back to school safely, we all need to do our part. Returning to school in 2021 may not look like it did before COVID-19, but there are things we can do to get back to the activities we miss most! To find out how, you can sign up to participate in an hour-long webinar hosted by Minnesota's Career and Technical Student Organizations. This webinar will feature health and safety officials who will talk about things we can all do to lead our schools and communities through safe practices.

The Youth Townhall webinar will take place on **September 20, at 3:15pm**. You can sign up [here](#).

DNR's Management of Public Lands to Address the Impacts of Climate Change

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is offering a unique monthly opportunity to connect with agency leaders. The "Commissioners Office Hours" is an hour-long conversation where DNR leadership can discuss a topic of interest, answer questions and share ideas with participants online.

This discussion is the second in our series on climate change. The meeting will begin with a short overview by DNR leadership of the actions we are taking to address the changing climate. Following this we will open the floor to participants to ask questions, make statements and spur dialogue.

Everyone who is interested is encouraged to join! Office Hours will take place on **September 24th from 2-3pm CST** and feature Commissioner Strommen, Deputy Commissioner Naramore, Assistant Commissioner Meier, Assistant Commissioner Lotthammer and Assistant Commissioner Richards.

Preregistration is required. Information on joining the event can be found [here](#). The password for the event is: SessionFive. You can also Dial-in at: 1-408-418-9388 and use the access code: 182 977 8537.

We look forward to hearing from you on **September 23rd!**

Minnesota Main Street COVID Relief Grants to Begin Accepting Applications

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) will begin accepting applications for the Main Street COVID Relief Grants Program on **Monday,**

September 20. A total of \$64,200,000 is available in grants for Minnesotan-owned and operated businesses that can demonstrate financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Businesses that are majority-owned by military veterans, women, and Black, Indigenous and people of color individuals; employ 6 people or fewer; and/or did not receive previous assistance from other state relief programs will be prioritized in the selection process. Funding will be distributed in a 50/50 split between the Twin Cities metro area and Greater Minnesota.

Applicants that qualify and are selected will receive a grant amount between \$10,000 and \$25,000 based on the number of full-time equivalent (FTEs) employees on staff. To be eligible, businesses must operate in Minnesota and be majority owned by a resident of Minnesota. Additional eligibility requirements and application information can be found at DEED's [Main Street COVID Relief Grants Program](#) page.

Previous relief programs include the Small Business Emergency Loan program, the Small Business Relief Grant Program, the Movie Theater and Convention Center Relief Grant program, and the County Relief Grant program.

The following information session is scheduled on [Monday, September 20 at 10 a.m.](#) If you have questions, email MSCRG.DEED@state.mn.us.

Applications will be reviewed, and awards will be disbursed and administered by qualified local and regionally based nonprofit organizations. Grant funds received by individual businesses shall be used for working capital to support payroll expenses, rent, mortgage payments, utility bills and other similar expenses that occur or have occurred since **March 12, 2020**, in the regular course of business.

The application portal will open **September 20** and will accept applications for 10 days after opening. Applications will close on **September 29 at 11:59 p.m.** Afterward, grant applications will be selected for consideration through a computer-generated, randomized selection process.