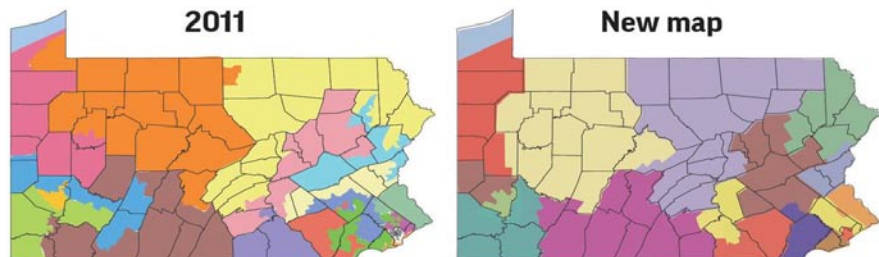


Pennsylvania redistricting

Pennsylvania's Supreme Court on Monday issued a new congressional district map for the state's 2018 elections:



SOURCES: Pennsylvania Redistricting; AP election results

AP

Have Your Say on Congressional Redistricting

By State Rep. Joe Emrick

BANGOR - The House State Government Committee will hold its first three regional hearings on congressional redistricting next week in western Pennsylvania to gather input on the drawing of new district lines based on data from the U.S. Census.

For our region, the nearest hearing to us will be held on Tuesday, Sept. 21, at 1 p.m., at the Spinnerstown Hotel located at 2195 Spinnerstown Rd., Spinnerstown, PA (Quakertown). For a full schedule of hearings, visit <http://www.paredistricting.com/hearingschedule>.

There are many options for submitting your feedback. You may register to testify in person at one of the hearings or submit written testimony, both of which can be done by visiting <http://www.paredistricting.com/hearingschedule> and selecting your region's hearing.

You may also submit the boundaries of your communities of interest and comment on the current congressional district map using online mapping tools by visiting <http://www.paredistricting.com/input>. You'll even be able to submit your own maps once Census data is finalized.

Every 10 years, information collected through the U.S. Census determines the number of congressional representatives each state is entitled to based on population. States are responsible for redrawing the geographic area of their congressional districts to ensure equal and fair representation, and the physical manifestation of the constitutional principle, "one person, one vote." This process is commonly referred to as redistricting.

All hearings will be streamed live, and video of past hearings archived, at www.PARedistricting.com.

COVID-19 Relief Grants Available in Northampton County

By County Executive Lamont McClure

EASTON - As Yogi Berra once said, "It ain't over till it's over." The COVID-19 pandemic play has been going on for quite some time but, despite the ceaseless drama, we might not even be in the third act right now. While case numbers dropped earlier this summer, they are rising again quickly in our area due to the highly transmissible Delta variant. The good news is that the three vaccines available in America help prevent Delta infections and, in the case someone does get sick, keeps that person from being hospitalized. The bad news is, not enough of us are getting vaccinated.

Until we reach herd immunity, we don't control our own future—right now, the virus has a tight grip on the steering wheel. So, I encourage everyone who is eligible to get the vaccine and, while case numbers are high, continue to practice social distancing and wear a facemask in crowded areas. Vaccines and good hygiene not only save lives, they save livelihoods.

The virus hasn't just affected public health, it's had a devastating impact on our economy. Many of our small businesses, non-profits, municipalities and EMS agencies are reeling from the fallout. That's why the county prioritized these organizations in its distribution of funds from the CARES Act and the American Rescue Plan of 2021. Grant applications are now open and I encourage all eligible organizations to apply.

Non-profits provide vital services to our communities through food banks, watershed protection, K-12 tutoring, etc. The County's ARP non-profit assistance program grants can be used to cover losses non-profits incurred due to expenses related to closure, installing structures to prevent disease transmission and decreases in revenue. Eligible non-profits can apply for up to \$100,000.

Grow NorCo grants are available to non-profits and municipalities to fund operations community planning, capital improvements, façade programs and municipal Police Department support. Eligible organizations can apply for up to \$50,000.

Emergency Management Agencies such as Fire Departments and ambulance companies are important at all times, but even more so in the middle of a public health crisis. EMS grants are available to professional, volunteer and non-profit emergency medical service organizations. Funds can be used for capital improvements, vehicle and equipment purchases and training. Eligible organizations can apply for up to \$50,000 per application or project.

Knowing what a critical driver small businesses are in any economy, Northampton County Council set aside \$15 million in American Rescue Plan funds for grants to be allocated with help from the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce. Eligible businesses can apply for \$15,000 and use the funds for payroll, rent and other operating expenses. Small businesses provide both the jobs and services our residents need. So far, the County has distributed \$10.1 million in CARES Act funding to 761 businesses and \$4,114,799 to 294 business so far with American Rescue Plan funds.

The pandemic isn't going to last forever. As the American poet Maya Angelou once said, "Every storm runs out of rain." When COVID-19 takes its final bow and exits the stage we're going to want our day care centers, gyms, theaters and spas ready to provide services to anyone who wants to be served and, in the process, recharge our economy. They'll only be able to do that then if we keep them healthy now. I encourage every small business which is eligible to apply for a COVID-19 Relief grant at lehighvalleychamber.org by the August 31st deadline.

Forms and information for all County grants can be found on the DCED page on the Northampton County website. EMS, Grow NorCo and non-profit applications must be submitted by September 10th.

In the meantime, please do your part to help stop transmission of the virus. Get vaccinated and follow the CDC and Pennsylvania Department of Health Guidelines. It isn't just our businesses, non-profits and municipalities we need to keep healthy—every resident in this County is valuable as well.





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