



Press Release

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Olmsted County marks 50 days of community response to COVID-19

ROCHESTER, Minn. – Olmsted County activated its Incident Command System on February 26, 2020 to respond to COVID-19. Today, April 16, 2020, marks 50 days of dedicated community response to manage the pandemic.

Our priorities have been and continue to be mitigating the spread of COVID-19, meeting essential needs in our communities, and providing timely and credible information to the public as we weather the effects of the pandemic.

To mitigate spread, Olmsted County is:

- Managing the Graham Park Collaborative Collection Site with Mayo Clinic and Olmsted Medical Center. This is the first community COVID-19 collection site in the state, with more than 2,500 tests conducted to date.
- Partnering with Handi Van to ensure safe transportation of county clients to the COVID-19 testing site; eight individuals have been transported to date.
- Facilitating community cloth mask collection and distribution with many local partner agencies. Masks will be provided to agencies providing essential services to the public.

To provide essential services to community members in need, Olmsted County is:

- Partnering with the Channel One Regional Food Bank to help ensure our clients have access to food. Olmsted County social workers and public health nurses have delivered more than 1,000 boxes to clients to date.
- Through a partnership with the City of Rochester and Catholic Charities, serving the county's homeless community at the Rochester Community Warming Center (which

was relocated to the Mayo Civic Center) and the day center in the same location. Approximately 125 individuals are visiting each day.

- Continuing to serve pregnant and nursing mothers and their children through the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program. Meetings previously conducted face-to-face are now happening via phone and the WIC team is offering curbside delivery of items like specialized baby formula to ensure program participants still have access to healthy foods, nutrition information, and breastfeeding resources.

To ensure access to information and resources to the public, Olmsted County is:

- Leading a Joint Information Center among local public, private, and nonprofit agencies to share information, streamline efforts, coordinate messages to the public, and partner on specific projects.
- Collaborating with the City of Rochester on a COVID-19 community hotline that is answered 7 days a week from 9 a.m. - 9 p.m. (507-328-2822). The line has helped **X callers in the past X**.
- Updating website information daily including an online mapping tool with COVID-19 community resources. Visit www.olmstedcounty.com and click the "COVID-19 News & Updates" icon for more.

Until the pandemic has eased, Olmsted County and our partners will continue to provide these and many other services and look for ways these services can be enhanced.

"We are grateful for and proud of the way our staff, partner agencies and communities have come together to support one another and address this challenge, **said X**. We look forward to the day when we can stand down our Incident Command System. But for now, we stand ready to address the next challenge."

We've seen an amazing response from Olmsted County staff to help in COVID-19 response activities. Employees from 16 departments – a total of 148 positions – are dedicating time to COVID-19 initiatives. The first 50 days of the COVID-19 pandemic is evidence that we are all living up to our Olmsted County motto: "quality services through community involvement."

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About Olmsted County

Olmsted County is the eighth largest county in the state of Minnesota with eight cities (Rochester being the largest), 18 townships and approximately 150,000 residents (2016 census data). The county is governed by seven individuals elected to serve on the Olmsted County Board of Commissioners, and county services are supported by nearly 1,300 Olmsted

County government employees working to fulfill the county's vision of being a dynamic, world-class county delivering excellence every day. For more information, visit www.olmstedcounty.com.

About Olmsted County Public Health Services

[Olmsted County Public Health Services](#) provides critical services to individuals, families, and communities to promote and protect the health of those who live, learn, work, play, and age in Olmsted County. Our 90+ staff partner with government, business, education, healthcare, and non-profits to address community health issues and concerns.