

COVID-19 Update: March 18, 2021

Reminders: All previous bulletins and other resources listed at www.gpcovid.com. Send any questions to bizinfo@greaterpeoriaedc.org.

Illinois Releases Details on “Bridge Phase”

Governor Pritzker announced details on the state’s “Bridge Phase,” an interim step of COVID restrictions and regulations between the current Phase 4 and Phase 5 (no restrictions). The Bridge Phase generally eases capacity restrictions for most business types. For bars and restaurants, seated areas are unchanged (6 foot separation between tables and maximum party size of 10) but capacity in standing areas increases to 30% for indoor areas and 50% for outdoor areas. Capacity is increased to 60% of occupancy for amusement parks, museums, spectator events (ticketed and seated), offices, personal care, retail, health and fitness, theaters, performing arts, and zoos. Indoor social events will be able to host up to 250 people and outdoor events 500 people. The Illinois Department of Public Health also expanded the capacity of some activities in the current Phase 4. A full breakdown is available [here](#).

The governor’s press release also stated this: “In an update to current Phase 4 mitigations and the capacity limits of the bridge to Phase 5, individuals with proof of full vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test (PCR) 1-3 days prior to an event or outing do not count against capacity limits.” There is no further detail on how this provision might be implemented.

The Bridge Phase will go into effect when the following metrics are reached:

- 70% first dose vaccination rate for residents 65 and over (current data shows the state is at 58%);
- 20% or greater ICU bed availability rate; and,
- hold steady on COVID-19 and COVID-like illness hospital admissions, mortality rate, and case rate over a 28-day monitoring period.

Importantly, the entire state must meet these metrics in order for any region to move to the Bridge Phase. The plan also includes provisions to roll back from the Bridge Phase if infections and deaths increase or hospital capacity decreases.

To move from the Bridge Phase to Phase 5 (where there are no restrictions at all), 50% of all Illinois residents 16 years and older must be vaccinated and stable or declining COVID-19 metrics. (Illinois is currently reporting that 12.9% of people are vaccinated.) Like the Bridge Phase, the entire state must meet these thresholds for any community to move forward.

Expanded Vaccinations

Governor Pritzker also announced that all Illinois residents will be eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine starting on April 12. More vaccine information [here](#).

Paycheck Protection Program Ending March 31

The popular [Paycheck Protection Program \(PPP\)](#) is accepting applications through March 31, 2021. Through March 7, the program has approved 2.4 million loans totaling nearly \$165 billion, just over half of the \$284 billion allocated to the program when it reopened in January. A bi-partisan group of legislators has [introduced legislation](#) to extend the deadline for another two months until May 31. It is unclear how the new influx of PPP funds from the American Rescue Plan will impact deadlines.

Extended Deferment Periods for Disaster Loans

The [U.S. Small Business Administration](#) announced extended deferment periods for all disaster loans, including the COVID-19 Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) program, until 2022.

- All SBA disaster loans made in calendar year 2020, including COVID-19 EIDL, will have a first payment due date extended from 12-months to 24-months from the date of the note.
- All SBA disaster loans made in calendar year 2021, including COVID-19 EIDL, will have a first payment due date extended from 12-months to 18-months from the date of the note.