

Nebraska State and Legislative Actions:

Governor Update

Note: Gov. Ricketts held his daily press briefing at noon today, instead of 2 pm due to a Pardons Board meeting at 1 pm.

Gov. Ricketts began his Monday press briefing by announcing that the first two testing sites through the Test Nebraska program will be opened in Omaha and Grand Island. He said this would likely take place on Thursday, and reassured Nebraskans that the results of the tests will not be sold and privacy will be protected. Gov. Ricketts also announced that 89,000 people have signed up for testnebraska.com thus far.

Reopening

Nebraska Economic Development Director Tony Goins joined the Governor to discuss plans for reopening Nebraska businesses. Last week, Gov. Ricketts [announced](#) that restaurants in certain parts of the state would be allowed to operate with limited dine-in capacity, as well as other businesses like barber/beauty shops and tattoo parlors. Goins said that the state is committed to helping businesses reopen safely and within health guidelines. He then announced the creation of the “Get Nebraska Going Task Force,” which will work with Nebraska businesses in order to identify and communicate best practices that will aide in safely reopening businesses. Goins said those who have questions in regards to reopening can send them to ded.info@nebraska.gov or call 800-426-6506.

Q&A

Q: Did you speak with UNMC before lifting restrictions?

A: Ricketts: Yes

Q: If a business chooses not to reopen, are its employees still eligible for unemployment?

A: Ricketts: Yes, if a business chooses to stay closed, those employees are still eligible for unemployment.

Q: Are inmates being tested for COVID-19?

A: Ricketts: No, and not currently considering it. Inmates will be tested like anyone else: if they are showing symptoms.

Federal:

Contact Tracing

In a [letter](#) issued Monday, two former health officials that served under Presidents Obama and Trump called on Congress to devote further funding for contact tracing and quarantining. ¹ Andy Slavitt, former director of Medicare and Medicaid in the Obama administration, and Scott Gottlieb, a former

¹ <https://www.npr.org/2020/04/27/845165404/ex-officials-call-for-46-billion-for-tracing-isolating-in-next-coronavirus-packa>

Food and Drug Administration Chief for President Trump, warned that the current testing capacity needs to be improved, even with the \$25 billion for testing included in the aid package signed into law Friday.

"We believe the next step is to complement that investment with the additional support required to allow states to track and isolate infected populations, which will be a vital part of safely reopening the economy," Slavitt and Gottlieb wrote. Slavitt and Gottlieb recommend the following, which would cost \$46.5 billion:

- \$12 billion to help expand the contact tracing workforce. The officials estimate the workforce needs to increase by 180,000 until a vaccine is on the market.
- \$4.5 billion to use vacant hotels so that infected and exposed people without a place to self-isolate have somewhere they can go so they do not spread the virus.
- \$30 billion to offer 18 months of income support — a per-person stipend of \$50 a day, like jury duty — for those voluntarily self-isolating.

SBA Loans

On Monday morning, the Small Business Administration relaunched its Paycheck Protection Program after receiving an additional \$310 billion from Congress last week.² However, the relaunch did not come without complaints of delays and glitches in the system, which resulted from overwhelming demand.

On Sunday, the SBA released steps that would hopefully alleviate issues and help smoothly distribute funds to participating banks. One of the steps the SBA outlined was requiring banks to submit applications in batches of at least 15,000 loans. However due to the system issues Monday morning, the number has been lowered to 5,000. Another guideline issued Sunday evening: caps on the total loan processed by each bank. The government will now be capping the total loan processed by each bank at \$60 billion, in order to prevent one bank from grabbing a disproportionate chunk of the total pool.

² <https://www.wsj.com/articles/small-business-loan-program-resumes-with-reports-of-delays-11588013225>