Attachment 1:

Unified Situation Summary #20 for the COVID-19 activation, as of 1530 on April 1, 2020

by

Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department
# Situation Report

**Report #**: 20  
**Date**: April 1, 2020  
**As of Time**: 1530

**Operational Period**: 0700-0700  
**FEMA #**: FEMA-4481-DR-WA

**Incident Name/Incident Type**: COVID-19 2020  
**Mission #**: 20-0265

## EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER STATUS

**EOC Activation Status**: Level #1 (High)  
**Location**: EOC  
**EOC Phone**: 253-798-6595

**Hours of Operations**: 0700-0700

While the operational period for this incident is 24 hours, Command Post operations in the EOC are from 0700 to 1700 hours.

## CURRENT OBJECTIVES

1. Ensure safety of all personnel.  
2. Establish adequate quarantine and isolation sites to serve all geographic areas of Pierce County.  
3. Identify and investigate COVID-19 cases and contacts.  
4. Provide coordination and support to local healthcare system.  
5. Manage and coordinate public information messages and community engagement to support the response strategy.
GENERAL SITUATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pierce County COVID-19 Cases</th>
<th>Today</th>
<th>Previous Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New cases</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of cases</td>
<td>423</td>
<td>377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New deaths due to COVID-19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of deaths due to COVID-19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated lab tests in Pierce County (WA PHL and UW)</td>
<td>N/A*</td>
<td>N/A*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Testing numbers have been delayed due to technical issues with the state reporting system

COVID-19 case map on Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department website.

https://www.tpchd.org/healthy-people/diseases/covid-19-pierce-county-cases/

COVID-19 Daily Case Count, Pierce County

Growth rates of the virus over time
Pierce County logarithmic comparison to King County and the United States.

Emergency Operations Call Center

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Total Contacts</th>
<th>Phone Calls</th>
<th>Emails</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11-Mar</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-Mar</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>13-Mar</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>27</td>
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<td>14-Mar</td>
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<td>17-Mar</td>
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<tr>
<td>18-Mar</td>
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<td>21</td>
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<td>22-Mar</td>
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<td>21</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>31-Mar</td>
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Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department Call Center

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Total Contacts</th>
<th>Phone Calls</th>
<th>Emails</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>102</td>
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<td>25-Mar</td>
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<td>26-Mar</td>
<td>125</td>
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<td>27-Mar</td>
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<td>58</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-Mar</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Reported Student Meals Served

3/31

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Meals Served</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bethel</td>
<td>2965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbonado</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clover Park</td>
<td>4674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deringer</td>
<td>99</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fife</td>
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<tr>
<td>Franklin Pierce</td>
<td>1832</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orting</td>
<td>436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peninsular</td>
<td>1384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steilacoom</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tacoma</td>
<td>8838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Place</td>
<td>778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White River</td>
<td>1374</td>
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</table>
PREPARATION & DISSEMINATION

Changes and Developments for April 1, 2020:

All changes and updates will be listed here by section. The complete situation report will follow this section.

Emergency Operations Center Activity:

- **Operations**
  - Case Investigations and Testing
    - Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department (TPCHD) reported 46 new COVID-19 confirmed cases in Pierce County that brings total cases to 423.
    - TPCHD reported the seventh death of a Pierce County Resident.
    - The Public Health Lab and UW Virology Lab testing numbers for the day were delayed due to technical issues with the state reporting system.
    - TPCHD staff conducted 100 tests and dropped off an additional 50 tests to finish testing all employees at a long-term care facility with a confirmed COVID-19 case.
    - Working with state and federal partners on next steps to use remaining test kits not used during the Tacoma Dome mass testing event.
  - Health Care
    - Working with healthcare systems, EMS and long-term care facilities on crisis standards of care and alternate care system planning.
  - Community
    - Coordinating with city and county human services staff to update the list of temporary expansion shelters and services.
  - Temporary Care Center
    - Planning walk-thru of Central Temporary Care Center at 1000 on 4/2 for Pierce County Unified Command staff.
    - Developed work group for First Responders and Critical Care Isolation and Quarantine facility.
    - Temporary Care Center staff located operations to Tacoma Police Headquarters.
  - Finance
    - Issued Notice to Proceed for security fencing at the Central Temporary Care Center.
    - Issued first lease payment to Central Temporary Care Center site owner.
    - Finalized private security services billing for Central Temporary Care Center.
    - Recruited City of Tacoma Citizen Emergency Response Team driver for transporting residents to the Central Temporary Care Center.
    - Developed process for tracking all volunteer’s work hours.
  - Logistics
    - Continue to receive donations from the public to fulfill small Tier One and Two requests.
    - Filled small Tier One and Two orders from the DES shipment received Monday.
    - Documenting PPE dissemination based off DOH Tier guidelines.
    - Evaluate Tier Three facility requests based on immediate needs and facility type for future distribution.
    - Within the last 30-days, received 139 PPE resource requests.
  - Communications
    - Completed the blog: COVID-19 case numbers: Why the delay in reporting:
    - Updated Temporary Care Center webpage:
    - Finalized TPCHD Board of Health meeting presentation on mass testing, temporary care centers and temporary expansion shelters
Liaisons

- With the development of the Economic Recovery & Resilience Task Force, Pierce County Unified Command met an Incident Objective to:
  - Facilitate development of a task force to monitor financial impacts, convene economic development stakeholders, identify strategies and advance plan to support economic recovery.
  - Recovery and Resiliency Task Force began planning of Community Points of Dispensing for Food and Communities.
  - Involved technology planning for schools.

- Schools (K-12)
  - Worked with Joint Information Center on communication plan for schools.
  - Working on communication for Superintendents.
  - Addressing technology needs to assist with distance learning.

- Schools (Higher Education)
  - Held conference call with institutions to discuss needs and current status, but nothing to report.

- Pierce County Employee and Volunteer Work Task Force for the week of 3/30:
  - Assigned 224 hours to six County employees.
  - Assigned 165 hours to 11 volunteers.
  - Task Force will work at Nourish Food Bank locations and at the Tacoma Rescue Mission.

- Faith Based
  - Reworking volunteer staffing at local food banks with Governor Inslee's announcement that Washington State National Guard will assist at food banks.

Safety

- Developing evacuation plan, safety messaging/plan and medical plan for the Central Temporary Care Center.

Global, Federal, State, Local Partner Updates

- Pierce County
  - West Pierce Fire & Rescue has placed 19 employees into quarantine after one firefighter tested positive for the COVID-19 virus. It appears the firefighter was exposed while off duty. The firefighter worked in two West Pierce stations, just prior to becoming symptomatic. After testing positive, all employees who came in close contact with the firefighter were placed into self-quarantine. Both stations have been decontaminated and remain operational.

- Washington State
  - Governor Inslee signed a proclamation that waives the post-retirement statutory work limitations for PERS, LEOFF, and PSERS to allow experienced employees to return to work for essential jobs, including in medical, public health, law enforcement and other critical positions. It also allows experienced employees in essential positions who are nearing retirement to remain in their positions.
  - Attorney General Bob Ferguson sent warning letters to five Washington-based independent sellers who significantly raised prices on coronavirus-related products like hand sanitizer and N95 masks that continuing their conduct could result in a lawsuit under the state Consumer Protection Act.

End of April 1, 2020 update; contextual information follows:

Current Situation Timeline

4/1/2020 4:30:09 PM  Unified Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department and Pierce County Department of Emergency Management
2020

- **Feb. 29th**: Governor Jay Inslee proclaims a state of emergency in Washington State for COVID-19.
- **March 4th**: The Washington State Legislature designated $100 million to fund COVID-19 response.
- **March 6th**: Tacoma-Pierce County Director of Health Dr. Anthony Chen and Pierce County Executive Bruce Dammeier signed a Proclamation of Emergency in response to COVID-19.
- **March 11th**: Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department (TPCHD) and Pierce County Department of Emergency Management (DEM) transitioned to Unified Command and elevated the Emergency Operations Center (the EOC) to a level 1.
- **March 13th**: President Donald Trump approved a nationwide emergency declaration for COVID-19.
- **March 13th**: Governor Jay Inslee announced that all public and private K-12 schools in Washington State shall close for the next six weeks: March 17 through April 27.
- **March 15th**: Governor Jay Inslee announced the immediate two-week closure of all restaurants, bars, and entertainment and recreational facilities, as well as additional limits on large gatherings above 50 people. Effective midnight March 16, food service may still be offered to-go or delivery.
- **March 21st**: Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department begins mass testing at the Tacoma Dome with the resources to conduct 250 tests per day until March 25th, 2020.
- **March 22nd**: President Donald Trump approves Governor Jay Inslee’s request to declare a major disaster in Washington State.
- **March 23rd**: Business resilience call center begins operations at the Tacoma Mall Office Building.
- **March 24th**: Governor Jay Inslee institutes a “Stay Home, Stay Healthy” order.
- **March 25th**: Tacoma Dome mass testing event concludes with 996 samples taken over five days.

**Glossary:**

- **Close contact**: A person who has been within 6 feet of someone with confirmed novel coronavirus for 10 minutes or more.
- **Self-monitoring**: A person monitors themselves for symptoms, including fever, and reports any symptoms to their local public health department. Public health checks in periodically during the monitoring period.
- **Active monitoring**: The local public health department contacts a person daily to monitor for symptoms, including fever, throughout the monitoring period.
- **Quarantine**: The separation of a person possibly exposed to a disease but not yet sick to prevent the potential spread of disease to others.
- **Isolation**: The separation of a person that is currently ill who can spread the disease to others.
- **Nonpharmaceutical Interventions (NPIs)**: Individual or community-wide strategies that can be used to reduce the spread of disease that are not medication (e.g. vaccines, antivirals).
Attachment 2:

Two County employees with COVID-19, March 16, 2020

by

Our Family, Pierce County Executive Department
To Our Family,

We have learned that two Pierce County employees have tested positive for COVID-19.

One person works in the Sheriff’s Department headquarters at the CCB. That individual is doing well and recovering at home.

A County employee who works at Remann Hall has also tested positive. They are receiving treatment in the hospital.

Both buildings where the two employees worked have been cleaned and disinfected per public health guidance.

We have been coordinating with Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department and additional information has been sent to those who may have had close contact with the individuals. As a result, four additional employees are in self-quarantine.

Based on the information gathered, so far, the risk of transmission for the general community is considered low. We are currently not recommending additional measures beyond those that have already been indicated, but will continue to monitor the situation and advise the appropriate individuals or groups accordingly, should that change.

For more information about COVID-19, go to the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department website. As a reminder, most people with the COVID-19 infection develop a mild to moderate illness without the need for medical care. Those who are older and/or have underlying health issues are at higher risk for developing a more serious illness.

The most important things each of us can do to limit the spread of illness are to:

- Stay home when you are sick and avoid close contact with others.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If water is not available, use hand sanitizer, with at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Cover your mouth/nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing. Immediately throw the tissue in the garbage.
Given increased testing and interventions, more cases can be expected as community spread of COVID-19 continues. Information about any future confirmed cases among Pierce County employees will be sent to work groups and employees at risk of being directly affected.

As Executive Dammeier said in a recent message, the people of Pierce County need us now, more than ever. Together, we will get through this.
Attachment 3:

County employee tests positive for COVID-19, March 23, 2020

by

Our Family, Pierce County Executive Department
To Our Family,

We have learned that a Pierce County employee who works in General Services has tested positive for COVID-19. The employee is now in self-quarantine at home and under a doctor’s care.

We are following guidance from the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department on the appropriate ways to safeguard the health of our employees.

The Health Department advises that you need to be in close contact with a sick person to get infected. Close contact includes being within 6 feet of a sick person with COVID-19 for about 10 minutes. Based on this guidance, and because the employee’s interactions with co-workers were brief, the risk of transmission for the general community is considered low.

We are currently not recommending additional measures beyond those that have already been indicated. However, we will closely monitor the situation and advise the appropriate individuals or groups accordingly, should that change.

For more information about COVID-19, go to the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department website. As a reminder, most people with the COVID-19 infection develop a mild to moderate illness without the need for medical care. Those who are older and/or have underlying health issues are at higher risk for developing a more serious illness.

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Given increased testing and interventions, more cases can be expected as community spread of COVID-19 continues. Information about any future confirmed cases among Pierce County employees will be sent to work groups and employees at risk of being directly affected.

As Executive Dammeier said in a recent message, the people of Pierce County need us now, more than ever. Together, we will get through this.
Attachment 4:

County employee tests positive for COVID-19, March 24, 2020

by

Our Family, Pierce County Executive Department
To Our Family,

We have learned that a Pierce County Prosecutor’s Office employee who works at Remann Hall has tested positive for COVID-19. The employee is now in self-quarantine at home and under a doctor’s care.

We are following guidance from the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department on the appropriate ways to safeguard the health of our employees.

Given the medical guidance from the Health Department, and the fact that her last day of work at Remann Hall was March 12, the risk of exposure to others is low. We are relieved to know her symptoms have been relatively mild. Once her quarantine is over on March 30, she intends to work remotely if possible, per the Governor’s “Stay Home, Stay Healthy” order.

For more information about COVID-19, go to the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department website. As a reminder, most people with the COVID-19 infection develop a mild to moderate illness without the need for medical care. Those who are older and/or have underlying health issues are at higher risk for developing a more serious illness.

The most important things each of us can do to limit the spread of illness are to:

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Given increased testing and interventions, more cases can be expected as community spread of COVID-19 continues. Information about any future confirmed cases among Pierce County employees will be sent to work groups and employees at risk of being directly affected.
Attachment 5:

Re: The Threat of COVID-19 in Jails and Prisons

by

Sarah Fortune, MD
John LaPorte Given Professor and Chair
Department of Immunology and Infectious Diseases
Director, TB Research Program at the Ragon Institute of MGH, MIT, and Harvard
Re: The Threat of COVID-19 in Jails and Prisons

COVID-19 is a highly contagious and dangerous pandemic that poses an unprecedented threat in detention and correctional facilities. As state and local officials work to mitigate the threat of the disease, they must take proactive steps to reduce their detained populations before an outbreak occurs. Failure to act now will endanger the lives of both detained and non-detained people alike.

At this time, there is no cure, no vaccine, and no effective anti-viral treatment for COVID-19. We know that the virus remains viable in the air and on surfaces, and that people who do not present symptoms are nonetheless contagious. This is why schools, sporting arenas, movie theaters, and other settings involving person-to-person contact have been closed to slow the spread of disease. The only known ways to prevent rapid spread of the virus are social distancing and strict hygiene practices. Neither of these prevention tools are effective in jails, prisons, detention centers, and similar environments of confinement.

Social distancing is just as impossible in a jail or prison as it is on a cruise ship. In confined spaces, a single case of COVID-19 is able to spread throughout the population. It is difficult to overstate the danger posed by such an outbreak. It would not only spread quickly throughout the detained population and the people working in the institution, it would also spread to nearby communities as well. This would threaten to further overwhelm local medical systems, which will already be struggling to cope with the number of patients needing prolonged intensive care.

One of the goals of the criminal justice system is to protect public safety. At this time, the best thing that can be done within the criminal justice system for public safety is to get as many people out of jails and prisons as possible, and to minimize the number of new people getting arrested and cycling into these facilities. Anybody detained for a non-violent offense or who does not pose an immediate danger to themselves or others should be released immediately, before an outbreak occurs. This is especially true of medically vulnerable people, including elderly, immunocompromised, and pregnant individuals. The more people we have behind bars when the virus hits, the more people will die – including people who are not detained.

For people who remain in correctional facilities, we must do everything we can to create as safe an environment as possible. Soap and hand sanitizer should be available at all times, free of all cost. Sheriffs and wardens should implement screening policies and have staffing and quarantine plans in place. But even the most rigorous measures will not be enough. Because the virus has a long latency period and can be spread by people who are not showing symptoms, no screening or quarantine procedures will be fully effective, and the disease will spread.

Finally, we also must limit the potential for community spread for people who are not in correctional facilities but who are on work release, out on bond, or serving sentences of probation. To the greatest extent possible, we must limit supervision conditions requiring in-person meetings, classes, work assignments, and testing.

COVID-19 is already spreading throughout our communities, and our window to prepare is closing. The steps we take in the coming days to mitigate the spread of the disease in our correctional facilities will have long-lasting ramifications. These are unprecedented times, and we urge state and local officials to act now to prevent a worst-case scenario.

Sincerely,
Sarah Fortune, MD
John LaPorte Given Professor and Chair
Department of Immunology and Infectious Diseases
Director, TB Research Program at the Ragon Institute of MGH, MIT and Harvard
Attachment 6:

'Jails Are Petri Dishes': Inmates Freed as the Virus Spreads Behind Bars, March 30, 2020

by

Timothy Williams, Benjamin Weiser and William K. Rashbaum
The New York Times
‘Jails Are Petri Dishes’: Inmates Freed as the Virus Spreads Behind Bars

Some jails are releasing people to stem outbreaks, but critics say it is not happening quickly enough to save lives and resources.

By Timothy Williams, Benjamin Weiser and William K. Rashbaum
Published March 30, 2020 Updated March 31, 2020, 11:14 a.m. ET

The coronavirus is spreading quickly in America's jails and prisons, where social distancing is impossible and sanitizer is widely banned, prompting authorities across the country to release thousands of inmates in recent weeks to try to slow the infection, save lives and preserve medical resources.

Hundreds of Covid-19 diagnoses have been confirmed at local, state and federal correctional facilities — almost certainly an undercount, given a lack of testing and the virus's rapid spread — leading to hunger strikes in immigrant detention centers and demands for more protection from prison employee unions.

A week ago, the Cook County jail in Chicago had two diagnoses; by Sunday, 101 inmates and a dozen employees had tested positive for the virus. A nearby Illinois state prison reported a coronavirus-related death on Monday, and Michigan prisons had 78 positive tests. The Rikers Island jail complex in New York City had 167 confirmed cases among inmates by Monday. And at least 38 inmates and employees in the federal prison system have the virus, with one prisoner dead in Louisiana.

“It's very concerning as a parent,” said William Brewer Jr., whose son is serving time for robbery in Virginia. “He's in there sleeping in an open bay with 60 other people. There's no way they can isolate and get six feet between each other.”

Defense lawyers, elected officials, health experts and even some prosecutors have warned that efforts to release inmates and to contain the spread of the disease are moving too slowly in the face of a contagion that has so far infected at least 156,000 people in the United States, with more than 2,500 known deaths.

“By keeping more people in the jails, you are increasing the overall number of people who contract the virus,” and the demand for hospital beds, ventilators and other lifesaving resources, said David E. Patton, head of the federal public defender's office in New York City, which represents nearly half of the 2,500 inmates in the city's two federal jails. “They are playing roulette with people's lives.”

America has more people behind bars than any other nation. Its correctional facilities are frequently crowded and unsanitary, filled with an aging population of often impoverished people with a history of poor health care, many of whom suffer from respiratory problems and heart conditions. Practices urged elsewhere to slow the spread of the virus — avoiding crowds, frequent handwashing, disinfecting clothing — are nearly impossible to carry out inside.

“Even as a visitor,” said Mr. Brewer, “if you want to wash your hands, you've got to walk out and go into another building to do it.”

The federal Bureau of Prisons, which holds more than 167,000 people nationwide, has been criticized by its own employees as slow to act. On Friday, dozens of public health experts sent a letter to President Trump urging him to take immediate steps to protect inmates and immigration detainees.

Latest Updates: Coronavirus Outbreak

- Models predicting expected spread of the virus in the U.S. paint a grim picture.
- Asia faces a second wave of infections from the West.
- Trump suggests coronavirus testing is no longer a problem. Governors disagree.

See more updates

More live coverage: Markets New York

Attorney General William P. Barr said officials were trying to expand home confinement, as opposed to directly releasing federal prisoners, almost all of whom were convicted of felonies. He ordered an assessment of at-risk nonviolent inmates, particularly those who have served much of their sentence.

But it was unclear how many would qualify under a complex list of criteria. And Mr. Barr cautioned that the review would not result in immediate transfers because of the need to ensure that prisoners would not spread the virus once freed.
In Chicago, as the number of positive test results at the county jail has skyrocketed, the sheriff, Tom Dart, has established a quarantine area for those who have the virus, and another one for those showing symptoms who have not tested positive but need to be monitored. The most serious patients are being taken to a hospital.

“Our jails are petri dishes,” said Toni Preckwinkle, president of the Cook County Board of Commissioners, comparing them to nursing homes or cruise ships — both places where the virus has spread rapidly. She said officials were seeking to reduce the jail's population to 4,000 people, from about 6,000 before the outbreak began. Currently, the population stands at about 5,000. Only inmates accused of nonviolent crimes are eligible for release, she said.

In Cleveland, the legal system was quick to act as the coronavirus took hold in the United States, cutting the county jail population in half, to about 1,000 people, since March 12.

“Otherwise, once this hits, we'd be crippled,” said Brendan J. Sheehan, the administrative and presiding judge of the Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court. “We would be releasing people immediately because we couldn't have a quarantine.”

Judge Sheehan led an effort to expedite cases for inmates in the jail awaiting trial. The usual protocols — hearings, plea deals, requests for trials — were kept in place, but proceedings that might have taken 60 or 90 days were resolved within two or three.

“I don't want people to think that we're opening up the jail doors and letting people go,” the judge said, adding, “We have to protect the public, and we also have to protect the safety of the inmate.”

In New York City, where the jail system's chief physician warned several days ago that “a storm is coming,” Mayor Bill de Blasio said the city had released at least 650 people by Sunday from Rikers Island, the city's main jail complex. Most of those inmates were convicted of nonviolent crimes and serving sentences of less than a year. Hundreds more were under review for possible release.

In Los Angeles County, Sheriff Alex Villanueva has embarked on what appears to be the largest U.S. effort to release inmates, freeing 1,700 people this month, or about 10 percent of the population of one of the nation's largest jail systems.

“Our population within the jail is a vulnerable population just by virtue of who they are and where they're located,” he said.

Sheriff Villanueva said the releases had been limited to inmates scheduled to be freed in 30 days or fewer. All had been convicted of nonviolent misdemeanors, he said. So far, there are no confirmed coronavirus cases inside the county's jails.

Deputies in Los Angeles have also been instructed to make fewer arrests, and Sheriff Villanueva asked the district attorney and courts to delay some criminal proceedings. Arrests in areas patrolled by the Sheriff's Department have dropped from around 300 a day to about 60 a day.

Jackie Lacey, the Los Angeles County district attorney, said that as a way to remind her prosecutors about the seriousness of the threat to inmates, “I have asked my attorneys to consider the health risks in every decision they make.”

But officials acknowledged that there were concerns about reducing incarceration: About 30 percent of the county’s jail inmates are homeless, and they might be living on the street as soon as they are released, making them at least as vulnerable to the virus as they might be behind bars.

In recent weeks, the city has started to open recreation centers, which were closed to stop the spread of the virus, to homeless people.

“We're not going to keep them in jail because they don't have a home,” Sheriff Villanueva said.

California has the second-largest prison population in the country, after Texas, and at least 12 state prison employees there have tested positive for the coronavirus. Staff members and inmates have also tested positive at correctional facilities in Florida, Texas, Michigan, Pennsylvania, New York and Washington State, among others, and advocates said there were almost certainly many undetected cases across the country.

Most inmates in county jails are either serving sentences for minor crimes or are awaiting trial, but state prisons — which hold the majority of the nation's 2.3 million incarcerated people, most of whom were convicted of felonies — are less likely to make large-scale releases.

For families of incarcerated people, the concern can be agonizing. At other times, Mr. Brewer might worry about his son getting into a fight or running afoul of gangs in the Virginia prison system. But now, he just prays he will not get sick.

Virginia's Department of Corrections said it had not had any positive tests, and it had halted visits to prisoners as a way of trying to keep the virus out. Many other states, as well as the federal prison system, have also limited or halted visitation.
In New York City, where the Bureau of Prisons said four inmates had tested positive in the city’s two federal jails by Sunday, a lawsuit filed late Friday asked the federal court in Brooklyn to order the immediate release of about 540 federal prisoners there identified as “particularly vulnerable” to the virus because of their age or underlying health conditions.

Katie Rosenfeld, a lawyer for the plaintiffs, said prisoners and their family members were “terrified” that the jail would “very soon be overwhelmed with hundreds of people sick and dying inside.”

Even before the suit was filed, prosecutors in Brooklyn had been directed to review their cases and decide whether releasing inmates would be appropriate, considering their age, health status, the nature of the charges against them and their risk to the community.

Marilyn Mosby, Baltimore's chief prosecutor, is going through a similar exercise, but has also announced that she will decline to prosecute certain low-level cases, including trespassing, drug possession, prostitution and urinating in public, during the coronavirus outbreak.

“We believe that no longer prosecuting individuals for substance-use disorder or sex work — that’s not going to increase crime,” she said. “The thing that we're concerned with is public safety, and we don't want to prescribe someone with substance-use disorder to a death sentence.”

Reporting was contributed by Danielle Ivory, Nicole Hong, Jan Ransom and Alan Feuer.

The Coronavirus Outbreak ➔

Answers to Your Frequently Asked Questions
Updated March 24, 2020

- **How does coronavirus spread?**
  It seems to spread very easily from person to person, especially in homes, hospitals and other confined spaces. The pathogen can be carried on tiny respiratory droplets that fall as they are coughed or sneezed out. It may also be transmitted when we touch a contaminated surface and then touch our face.

- **Is there a vaccine yet?**
  No. The first testing in humans of an experimental vaccine began in mid-March. Such rapid development of a potential vaccine is unprecedented, but even if it is proved safe and effective, it probably will not be available for 12 to 18 months.