

NEIGHBORHOOD NOTES

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COVID-19 Vaccinations

Appointments are required to receive a vaccination. To determine your eligibility, access a list of nearby providers, and schedule your vaccination appointment, use New York State's *Am I Eligible* app. Prior to receiving your scheduled vaccination, you must complete the New York State COVID-19 Vaccine Form. Please be patient and continue to monitor these links frequently for available vaccine appointments:

New York City: <https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov/> or 877-VAX-4NYC (877-829-4692)

New York State: <https://am-i-eligible.covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/> or call 1-833-NYS-4-VAX (1-833-697-4829)

VaccineTogetherNY: <https://vaccinetogetherny.org/Pages/default.aspx> or call 646-697-VACC

To schedule an appointment, go to: <https://vax4nyc.nyc.gov/patient/s/>.

To find a vaccination site, go to: <https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov/locations>.

Your physician or local pharmacy may also have information on scheduling vaccine appointments.

If you need transportation to get your vaccine appointment, click this link for a list of options: <https://forms.ny.gov/s3/vaccine>.

To schedule an appointment at Yankee Stadium, you can also call 1-833-SomosNY. Another new mass vaccination site opened at Co-Op City on Thursday, March 4, which is open to all eligible applicants.

For trustworthy information on the vaccines and the research behind them, go to: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/doh/covid/covid-19-vaccine-facts.page>.

The MTA announced that it has launched a new vaccination site locator on its live subway map. See the map here: map.mta.info.

Bronx CB7 Vaccine Site Update

The Walton High School Campus vaccination site, one of the local vaccination sites for Bronx Community Board 7 residents, has moved to the Bronx High School of Science, located at 75 West 205th Street, in Jerom Park. NYC

Department of Education needed to reclaim the Walton HS campus for middle schoolers who are returning to the classroom for in-person learning.

More Help with Scheduling Vaccine Appointments

Epicenter-NYC is a vetted, volunteer group, assisting New Yorkers to find and schedule vaccine appointments, particularly the elderly, and anyone not adept at using the internet. More details can be found here: <https://epicenter-nyc.com/epicenters-vaccine-resources/> or my emailing hello@epicenter-nyc.com.

Sign-up here: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSczOilgEn1U-4-RavkHdRSadTgd6_VSM-D1-Ueqhs4jwpxyH6NQ/viewform

Separately, and additionally, the turbovox site, <https://www.turbovox.info/>, scans the websites of all providers offering the vaccine throughout the city and lists their available appointments.

Latest Updates on Vaccine Eligibility

Who is now also eligible?

As of March 10, New York residents ages 60 and older are eligible.

As of March 17, the following groups are eligible:

- public-facing government and public employees;
- nonprofit workers providing public-facing services to New Yorkers in need;
- essential, in-person, public-facing, building service workers (does not include workers at construction sites).

COVID-19 Testing Sites

For a full list of COVID-19 testing sites, text "COVID TEST" to 855-48 or go to:

<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/coronavirus/get-tested/covid-19-testing.page>.

Bronx District 11 and District 15 Council City Special Elections

The District 11 and District 15 special elections will be held on March 23. Polls are open on election day from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. Find your poll site and view a sample ballot here: <https://findmypollsite.vote.nyc/>.

The Early Voting Period is from March 13, 2021 to March 21, 2021. Voters must vote at their assigned early voting site.

Early Voting Hours
 Saturday, March 13, 2021
 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
 Sunday, March 14, 2021
 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
 Monday, March 15, 2021
 7:00 AM to 3:00 PM
 Tuesday, March 16, 2021
 12:00 PM to 8:00 PM
 Wednesday, March 17, 2021
 12:00 PM to 8:00 PM
 Thursday, March 18, 2021
 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM
 Friday, March 19, 2021
 7:00 AM to 3:00 PM
 Saturday, March 20, 2021
 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM
 Sunday, March 21, 2021
 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

The Bronx Board of Elections is accepting applications for absentee ballots from voters who wish to vote by mail. Further information can be found on:

<https://vote.nyc.gov/page/absentee-voting-0> or by calling the Bronx Board of Elections at (718) 299-9017 and selecting Ext. 1875.

Whoever wins the March 23 special, nonpartisan election will serve until Dec. 31, 2021. Future representation in the District beyond that point will likely be determined via a June 2021 primary and a November 2021 general election.

Ranked Choice Voting

The District 15 and District 11 special elections are the first two elections in the Bronx which will incorporate the new voting method of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV). RCV is a voting method whereby voters can, but are not obliged to, rank up to five candidates in order of preference, instead of choosing just one. Note that there can be more than five candidates on the ballot in a race, but only five rankings are possible.

If a candidate receives more than 50 percent of first-choice votes, that candidate is the winner. If no candidate earns more than 50 percent of first-choice votes, then counting will continue in rounds. At the end of each round, the candidate with the fewest votes will be eliminated.

If a voter ranked an elimi-

nated candidate first, then the next highest-ranked candidate on the voter's ballot will be taken into account in the next round of counting. The process continues as such until there are two candidates left. The candidate with the most votes wins.

LAAL Mental Health Initiative

LAAL, the Norwood-based, nonprofit dedicated to supporting women in the Bangla community, is holding a Mental Health Fundraiser to support its Mental Health Initiative. The funds raised will be used to conduct carefully designed assessment surveys of 300 womxn, using materials accessible in both Bangla and Sylheti. The surveys will be followed up with in-depth, hour-long, qualitative interviews, with the aim of producing data that can be used in future health policy initiatives, prioritizing mental health issues among such marginalized communities.

LAAL Womxn's Support Group

LAAL is launching its newest program, Laal Mohila Shomitim, a womxn's support group. Laal's needs-based assessment in 2019 found that 62 percent of Bangladeshi womxn surveyed in Norwood spent more than eight hours a day alone. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, social isolation has had an even greater effect on the mental health of womxn. The aim of the womxn-only, support group is to allow womxn to come together and address the problems they are facing, and work through possible solutions, all in a safe space. Laal wants to reassure all women that they are never alone in their struggles, when shared with another person. The group meets monthly, the discussion topics are led by womxn and vary from overall health, education and housing, to gardening and growing food. The goal is for the group to be a place where womxn can forge stronger relationships, and have their voices heard, regularly.

LAAL Food Pantry

In February, Laal partnered with NYC's Test &

Trace Program and Dhaka Discount Grocery in Norwood to hold its first food pantry. The group distributed over 60 halal chickens, 1,360 pounds of padma rice, 68 pieces of Bangladeshi lao (squash), and more to 34 households. A second food pantry is scheduled for April 8, also at Dhaka Discount Grocery. As Ramadan begins on April 12, the food pantry will focus on providing staple food items during the holy month. It will also be a chance to test & trace for COVID-19, and to sign people up for the COVID-19 vaccine.

Indoor Dining Updates

Indoor Dining in New York City will expand capacity to 50 percent beginning March 19. Currently, New York City (and New Jersey) restaurants are operating at 35 percent capacity, and the rest of New York State is operating at 50 percent capacity. This follows Gov. Andrew Cuomo's announcement that restaurants outside of New York City will expand to 75 percent capacity beginning March 19.

All restaurants and bars licensed by the SLA must cease all indoor and outdoor dining activities by 11 pm daily.

Bars Inside Establishments: All physical patron bars must be converted to service bars only. That means no seats at bars, and patrons cannot directly order a drink at the bar or be served a drink at the bar. All service is at seated tables.

Outdoor Dining Structures: If more than two sides of an outdoor dining structure are enclosed, it is considered "indoor dining" and the 50% occupancy and related requirements apply.

Table Spacing: Tables are to be spaced 6 feet apart. However, when that is not feasible, they can be closer if approved barriers are placed between the tables.

No Face Mask, No Entry: Businesses cannot allow patrons to enter the establishment, go to or from the bathroom, or stand inside for takeout, if they are not wearing a face covering.

HVAC: Businesses must closely review air circulation and filtration requirements.