

A bicyclist enjoys the Pumpkinvine Nature Trail in the summertime. The trail is one of the many natural treasures in Goshen that are worth protecting for future generations.

(ACTION, continued from page 1)

respond to our young people, who asked us in the 2019 Youth Environmental Resolution to “work to achieve carbon neutrality by 2035 and take all appropriate actions to do so.”

With this plan, we seek to demonstrate that meeting the challenges of climate change will ensure that Goshen continues to be a place of prosperity and abundance, with sustainability for both our community and our budgets. We can be confident that our great-great-grandchildren will have a community they will be proud to call home.

Edits to the official plan are still being made. Expect to see it on the City's website in the next several weeks.

With hope for the future,

Jeremy Stutsman, Mayor of Goshen



**EN ESPAÑOL**  
Para recibir este boletín en español,  
por favor póngase en contacto con  
nuestra oficina al 537.3883.

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**LET'S STAY CONNECTED:**

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# MapleCityNow



SPRING 2021

## Dates to remember

- Independence Day  
July 5 (observed)  
City offices closed
- Labor Day  
September 6  
City offices closed\*

\*Trash pick-up will be  
delayed by one day after  
Labor Day

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## Climate action plan For local government operations



Almost 200 years ago, Goshen was founded with a name that many recognized as synonymous with prosperity and abundance. Amid a landscape of rich soil, vibrant forests and plentiful water, Goshen thrived. Today we continue to thrive, mixing industrial ingenuity with digital dynamism, while growing quality of life rooted in our natural setting.

As there have always been, there are challenges our community has to face. Climate change is a challenge unlike any other. It is unique because it is so large. Climate touches nearly every aspect of our lives—in both subtle and obvious ways. It also is widespread, affecting nearly every place on earth in different ways. Indeed, we face the dual challenge of mitigating these changes (lessening their impacts) and adapting to the changes.

In the Maple City we are working hard to understand how the changing climate will affect us, as well as how we should prepare. We are nearing the end of developing a Local Government Operations Climate Action Plan for the City of Goshen. We have submitted this plan to the Board of Works and will then be bringing it to the City Council.

This is our first attempt to name the challenges before us and to describe how we want to meet those challenges. We know that our understanding of climate challenges will evolve over time, which will require that

our responses change and adapt. This fluid reality may be one of the trickiest dynamics of climate change. For that reason, it is important to understand that this Climate Action Plan is a living document, intended to be reviewed and revised in the coming years.

The challenges identified and addressed in the document are real, and we intend to move our City operations to net-zero emissions by 2035.

All this will involve:

- Reimagining how we manage grounds and landscaping
- Shifting our vehicles away from fossil fuels toward electricity
- Auditing and doing inventory of the energy we use in our offices and buildings
- Investing in solar and renewable energy
- Planting and caring for trees
- Finding humane operating efficiencies

Making these adaptations will stretch us and require patience and creativity. It will take all of us working together to build a City government that achieves these three essential objectives: (1) operate with fiscal responsibility, (2) tend a healthy and sustainable ecosystem, and (3) care equitably for our employees and our residents.

This Climate Action Plan for Goshen's government operations also is our opportunity to  
(ACTION, continued on page 8)



# Quick updates

**Wastewater Treatment Plant improvements:** Construction is underway for the Goshen Wastewater Treatment Plant improvement project.

In 2017 the City contracted with consulting engineering firm Donohue & Associates to identify and report upgrades needed at the treatment plant. Following a study in which the contractor estimated the need for a \$19.7 million project, the Goshen City Council in 2018 approved a steady annual increase in utility rates through 2022 to fund the improvements.

Work on the plant began in 2020, with a handful of structures being erected and several large pieces of equipment already installed. The project includes replacing old and deteriorated equipment, installing upgraded equipment, and increasing capacity for storage of chemicals and treated wastewater.

Construction is scheduled to be completed in January 2022. Aside from receiving the benefits of upgraded equipment, the project will bring some bonuses, such as improved energy efficiency, naturalized pollinator-friendly landscaping and further flood resiliency. For more information, go to [goshenindiana.org/utilitiesbilling](https://goshenindiana.org/utilitiesbilling) or call 533.9399.

**Air show postponed:** Goshen's annual air and fireworks show, which takes place at the Goshen Municipal Airport and is customarily attended by thousands of spectators, is being pushed back this year until further notice.

Organizers of America's Freedom Fest announced earlier this year that the 2021 edition, slated for Saturday, July 10 at the Goshen Municipal Airport, has been postponed until further notice in light of uncertainty linked to the current COVID-19 health crisis.

For updates on the air show, go to [goshenindiana.org](https://goshenindiana.org) or [americasfreedomfest.net](https://americasfreedomfest.net)

**2021 Activity Guide from Parks & Recreation Department:** Last year the pandemic brought challenges in how we played in Goshen and how we interacted with one another, leading to many Goshen Parks & Recreation classes and events being canceled or postponed, along with some recreational areas being closed temporarily. The Parks & Recreation Department's 2021 *Activity Guide* is out now, with the hope that most activities, events and programs can proceed as scheduled.

Though we move into the spring and summer season with cautious optimism, the City's first concern is everyone's health and safety. Adjustments may need to be made in the months to come. To receive the latest information, please visit the Park Department's website at [goshenindiana.org/parks-rec](https://goshenindiana.org/parks-rec) or call 534.2901.

You will find a printed copy of the guide at the following locations:

- Goshen Parks & Recreation Office, 524 E. Jackson St.
- Rieth Interpretive Center, 410 W. Plymouth Ave.
- Wayne Wogoman Welcome Center, Fidler Pond Park, 1424 Lincolnway East

**New payment-processing software coming soon:** Goshen residents will soon have a new electronic billing and payment service that will allow greater flexibility to view and pay their water and sewer bills.

In early 2021 the City signed an agreement with InvoiceCloud; many residents may be familiar with the service as it is used by Elkhart County to collect property-tax payments. The existing EZ-Pay option for Goshen water and sewer payments will remain in place.

The transition from the existing service, PayGov.us, to InvoiceCloud will provide numerous benefits, such as:

- Integrated online-banking bill payments
- Pay-by-text option
- Reduction in convenience fees currently charged to customers for credit/debit card transactions from 3 to 2.75 percent
- Option for flat fee e-check payments for 95 cents
- Scheduled payment dates
- Paperless billing option
- Modern cloud interface and intuitive user experience, including access to digital invoices

The change of services will be later this year; a specific date has not yet been set. At that time, the City will send out further communication via various mediums: online, regular mail and/or in person.

For more updates about InvoiceCloud, check out the Water & Sewer Utilities Business Office webpage at [goshenindiana.org/utilitiesbilling](https://goshenindiana.org/utilitiesbilling) or call 533.9399.



City Engineer Bryce Gast (right) gives a tour of the Goshen Wastewater Treatment Plant in March 2021.

# 2021 brush collection

The Goshen Street Department began its monthly spring/summer brush pick-up in late April; the next one will be the week of June 28. During scheduled brush collections, the Street Department will make only one pass through Goshen to pick up brush. Please have your brush by the front curb, but not in the street, by that Monday morning at 7 a.m. Brush will not be picked up in alleys, and the piles must be trash-free.

Ordinance 5054 was signed into effect on September 1, 2020, and enforcement started this year. The ordinance outlines:

- Brush and leaves may not be mixed—and must be placed in a location free of obstacles.
- Brush-pile size can be no more than 5 feet high and 10 feet long. Branches must be 6 inches in diameter or less.
- Brush shall not be placed out for pick-up during the months of October–March.
- The city does not pick up brush generated by landscaping and tree-trimming contractors, who are required to remove all brush generated by their work.

- The City has extended the Brush Trailer Program to year-round (weather permitting) for residents without the ability to comply with the new ordinance.
- Residents/property owners may be cited and fined for non-compliance with this ordinance.

## Brush Trailer Program

The trailer can be reserved for the removal of large amounts of brush. This program is for the homeowner only and not to be used by private landscaping or tree-trimming professionals. The program is free of charge as long as only brush is placed in the trailer. Trash—such as landscape timbers, lumber and old fencing—is not allowed and if found in the brush trailer, the homeowner will be charged for a Dial-A-Trailer (see next section).

## 2021 Dial-A-Trailer Program

The 2021 edition of the Dial-A-Trailer program resumed May 10 and will end in September. This program allows for the use of a City dump trailer and is available to all Goshen residents for the disposal of unwanted household items. The

cost of this service is \$75 and covers the use of the trailer and landfill fees. These charges are to be paid, and paperwork is to be filled out prior to the trailer delivery date. Payments are accepted at the Street Department Office, or credit-card payment and paperwork can be processed via e-mail (3 percent processing fee).

## Future brush-collection dates:

- June 28
- July 26
- August 30
- September 27

With both programs, the trailer is usually dropped off in the afternoon between 2 and 3 p.m. It is picked up the next day shortly after 7 a.m. if it was scheduled to be received on a weekday. If scheduled for a weekend, the trailer will be dropped off Friday afternoon and picked up early Monday morning.

# Meet the 2020–21 Goshen City Council youth adviser

Hazany Covarrubias Palomino is serving as Goshen High School's 2020–21 Goshen City Council youth adviser.

In 2016 Mayor Stutsman created the youth adviser position within the City Council, and expanded the program in 2020 to create additional youth adviser positions on the Mayor's Environmental Advisory Committee, Community Relations Committee, and the Parks & Recreational Board.

As the 2020 GHS youth adviser election winner, Hazany (pronounced huh-ZAH-nee) chose to serve as the youth adviser to the Goshen City Council in order to pursue her interests in politics and government.

Hazany is a senior at Goshen High School and loves being involved in her school and community through extracurricular activities. She runs cross country in the fall, plays the violin and is serving as president of her school's National Honor Society. She also is involved with the school's Youth Caucus and Environmental Resilience Club. Outside of school, Hazany enjoys the outdoors by running and biking; her favorite pastimes include listening to and watching true-crime podcasts and shows.

Hazany plans to study Political Science and Public Policy at the University of Virginia this fall. She hopes to expand her experience with local government at college by joining student-led government and advocacy groups.

Reflecting on her service as the Goshen City Council youth adviser, Hazany states:

"I'm grateful to be in a position where I am able to express my ideas and beliefs and for those be heard and valued by community leaders. As a young woman I often recognize the lack of representation our generation is given in society, and I'm glad I am able to represent my constituents. I'm beyond fortunate to have been given the opportunity to learn more about the city I've lived in my whole life while building relationships with those in my community."



**Hazany Palomino**  
Goshen City Council Youth Adviser



# Blocked railroad crossings



Trains frequently stop along Ninth Street in particular in Goshen, blocking pedestrian and vehicular traffic for extended periods of time throughout the day.

With increasing frequency, the City of Goshen has been in the unfavorable situation of coping with stopped trains blocking crossings for extended periods of time. The blockages have usually been on the north-south tracks along Ninth Street, as trains in this area sometimes need to wait their turn prior to getting in line for the Elkhart train yard.

Regrettably, City staff persons have had to pass along to residents, who have understandable complaints, that there is little the City can do to prevent these frustrating and even dangerous occurrences.

Until 2018, Indiana law authorized local police to issue fines of up to \$200 to rail companies whose trains blocked street crossings for longer than 10 minutes. At that time, however, the Indiana Supreme Court struck down the state's Blocked Crossing Statute, which had been on the books since 1865. The Court determined that the law was pre-empted by a 1995 federal deregulation statute prohibiting states from enacting any law or rule that has the effect of "managing" or "governing" rail transportation and other forms of interstate commerce.

Since that time, both the frequency and duration of these occurrences has increased significantly—in Goshen and other parts of Elkhart County.

It's now up to the federal government to pass a law similar to what the state had on the books to prevent lengthy blockages of crossings. Mayor Jeremy Stutsman recently worked with numerous community leaders, including the Goshen City Council, the Elkhart County Commissioners, and the Elkhart County Sheriff's Office to write a letter to the Norfolk Southern Board of Directors conveying our community's concerns. Indiana Governor Eric Holcomb, Congresswoman Jackie Walorski, Senator Todd Young and Senator Mike Braun were copied on this correspondence.

Concerns conveyed in the letter include the following problems when crossings are frequently blocked for long periods of time:

- Bus routes are prevented from running, impacting our education systems and our young people.
- Ambulances and firetrucks are kept from responding to emergency calls, negatively impacting emergency response times and fire-suppression efforts.
- Law-enforcement officers are hindered from expeditiously getting to crashes and crimes in progress, as well as from helping those in need.
- There's a significant negative impact to interstate commerce in the form of semis, recreational-vehicle manufacturers and transporters, and modular home manufacturers and transporters—all significant parts of our local community and economy.

Community members also are encouraged to reach out to these officials to convey their concerns.

In addition, crossings blocked by trains for extended periods can be reported at the following website: [www.fra.dot.gov/blockedcrossings/](http://www.fra.dot.gov/blockedcrossings/)

To log the event on the website, simply identify the blocked crossing on the map provided, click on the "railroad crossing" icon, offer feedback on the short form provided, then click submit. The Federal Railroad Administration has created this site in an attempt to identify areas where chronic problems exist.

While logging the events does not guarantee any response from Norfolk-Southern, over time it will create a repository of data that community leaders can present in future correspondence with the railroad and federal legislators.

So the next time you're in the unfortunate situation of being rerouted by blocked crossings, please take the time to visit the website and log the event, but please do so in a safe manner—and not while your vehicle is moving.

# From new Community Relations director



AJ Delgadillo  
Community Relations Director

and in subcommittees—and ended up accepting nominations for treasurer in 2020 and 2021.

I'm enjoying the new role, and I'm glad to have started as a commissioner and have relationships with many of the commissioners who sit on the CRC. While I no longer have a binding CRC vote, I'm involved by leading the mission of the CRC to build a just and equitable place to work, learn and live while building relationships in the

Hello, Neighbors,

I'm AJ Delgadillo. I started serving as Community Relations director in March 2021. This is a continuation of work I was already doing as a commissioner on the Community Relations Commission (CRC). In early 2019 I began working with the CRC and helped organize Taste of Goshen and the Growing Goshen Together community conversation series. I worked with the entire commission

Goshen community and working to repair harm from discrimination.

I haven't been at it for very long, but right now my main priorities are working with the CRC officers to establish a more aggressive agenda, to restart subcommittees on public events, and to build a coalition of people in Goshen who are working to improve diversity, equity and inclusion in their workplaces. Goshen is full of people trying to do good work for empowering marginalized people and building equal opportunity for all residents; I want to assist in that work wherever it's happening.

I hope to get a framework set for how to safely restart the Growing Goshen Together conversation series. I'm also moving quickly to build a racial-competence workshop for the City to use internally and perhaps make available to the community. Longer term, I intend to encourage acknowledgment and celebration of the diversity of neighbors we have here in Goshen—and help build a community dedicated to making sure all our neighbors can expect a good life for themselves and their children in Goshen.

With enthusiasm,

AJ Delgadillo, Community Relations Director

## What's the deal with mercury?



Mick Reese  
Environmental Compliance Administrator,  
Goshen Wastewater Treatment Plant

When I was a child, growing up in Pennsylvania, I found an old switch panel in our shed. I tinkered with such stuff. This particular one had two mercury switches encased inside glass-tilt casings. This was a rare treat. (It didn't take very much to entertain us kids.)

We carefully cut the glass and let the mercury roll out into the palms of our hands. It was the coolest substance. It

was heavy, and it dimpled in your hand. You would roll it around and poke it with your other finger. It would split, then come back together like magic.

More than 45 years later, studies are showing that this wasn't exactly the wisest thing to do. I'm just thankful that human skin is an incredibly effective barrier at not absorbing mercury in its elemental form. Also, we were lucky we didn't get hold of this stuff more often than about twice in my childhood.

Like many things, research today is starting to reveal some astounding hazards of mercury in its many different forms. Prolonged exposure to this element has been linked to anything from premature gingivitis to emotional instability, from tremors to kidney failure.

Mercury isn't found in its pure state in the ground. Rather it's pulled from a rock called cinnabar. This rock is mined, and the

mercury is extracted from it. It has been carved and made into jewelry and ornamental trinkets for thousands of years. Is it safe to wear? Studies are now emphatically saying, "No!"

Various forms of mercury have been found in old amalgam teeth fillings, compounds and, yes, in its elemental form. Other sources of mercury can come from medical facilities, heating and cooling industries, and laboratories. Within the last 15 years or so, fish have been known to contain amounts to a point where the state of Indiana puts a consumption advisory on certain species and the locations where they're caught.

The City of Goshen's Wastewater Treatment Plant removes about 98 percent of the mercury pollutants that enter our facility. The plant strives to meet the stringent standard set by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The EPA has set a mercury limit of 1.3 parts per trillion leaving the plant into the Elkhart River. Our facility is challenged in meeting this limit. How low is 1.3? One part per trillion could be compared to one penny out of 10 billion dollars. That is tiny!

Mercury is in a lot of stuff the majority of us don't realize. The main things in most homes are the fluorescent light fixtures, old sump-pump float switches and broken thermometers, to name just a few. If you have these items, you can take them to the monthly household hazardous waste pick-up in Elkhart County. For more information, call 522.2581.

Let's do our part! We all are in charge of this community. Let's meet this wastewater regulation and make life easier for those who will be joining us on this planet in the future. Recycle that mercury; don't break the bulb in the trash. The responsibility is ours.



# Goshen City Council and Districts



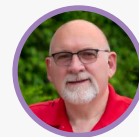
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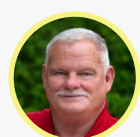
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**YOUTH ADVISER: HAZANY PALOMINO**  
Hazany was elected by her peers at Goshen High School. She is a non-voting member.



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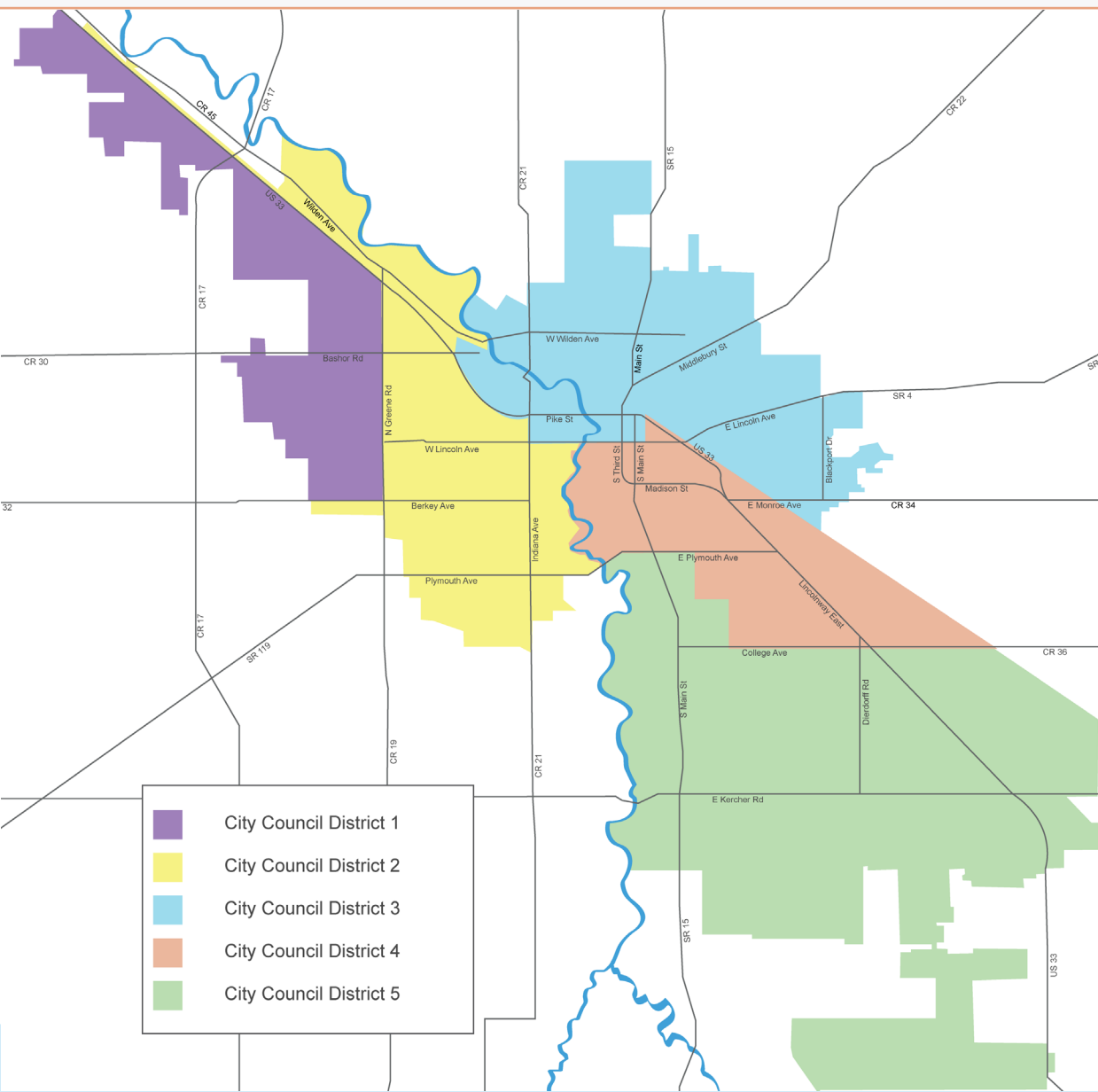
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# How do we end a pandemic?



**Dr. Bethany Wait**  
Elkhart County Health Officer

The first case of COVID-19 in the United States was reported January 15, 2020—and our country changed that day. While most of us had to shelter in place starting about mid-March 2020, our scientists went to work to try to end the pandemic, while medical professionals prepared themselves for an unimaginable struggle ahead of them.

That leads me to where we are today, more than 14 months later with our hospitals in Elkhart County full again. Healthcare workers, at one point seen as heroes, are now too often characterized as conspiracy theorists pushing propaganda.

Since March a year ago, we have tried numerous preventive measures, which have helped greatly, but so far they have failed to give a clear win over COVID. But nothing has reduced the spread of the virus more effectively than masks.

Along with other preventive practices, we have increased the rate of survival for our community by also using clear, evidence-based treatments for our hospitalized patients.

We now have a very effective preventive tool—a vaccine—that could end the pandemic for the United States and the world. It's a measure that has been clearly demonstrated to be safe and effective. Yes, it comes in an uncomfortable delivery system (a needle!) and has had multiple barriers to its access, but it's here and it's free.

Every day more data are collected from around the world showing the effectiveness and safety profile of the multiple vaccines developed. As of early May, however, just 8 percent of the world had at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccination—that's 625,000,000-plus individuals.

The U.S. has recorded about 4,200 deaths among patients who have received the COVID vaccine. Of those deaths, most were determined to have no causal link to the vaccination. The very small number of deaths that could have resulted from the vaccination have been linked to a rare and serious adverse event that caused blood clots with low platelet levels. Thanks to quick action from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, we now know what to look for in terms of adverse side effects.

Yes, every death from the vaccination is

one too many, but let's review the deaths from COVID in Elkhart County where there have been more than 440 deaths since late March 2020. The risk of dying from the vaccine is 1 in 7 million people. The risk of dying from a COVID infection for an 80-year-old is 1 in 2 people. For a 70-year-old, 1 in 5; for a 60-year-old, 1 in 7; for a 50-year-old, 1 in 25; for a 40-year-old, 1 in 50; for a 30-year-old, 1 in 80; and for a 20-year-old, 1 in 500.

## Schedule a vaccine appointment:

- [OurShot.IN.Gov](https://www.ourshot.in.gov)
- Call 211

Please, Elkhart County, get vaccinated! This is truly our opportunity to end the pandemic. As much as we want to just forget about COVID and move on with our lives, the virus will continue to circulate—changing, mutating and becoming more agile, infecting more of our population, one person at a time.

The good news is we can end this pandemic, one shot at a time.

*Dr. Bethany Wait*  
Elkhart County Health Officer

# COVID-19 financial help

Are you a resident of Elkhart County and in need of assistance to pay rent, utilities or Internet due to the COVID-19 pandemic? Elkhart County has a financial assistance program to help.

The project is funded through an award made to Elkhart County by the U.S. Treasury Department. Elkhart County has entered into a service agreement with Baker Tilly US to administer the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP).

Elkhart County ERAP makes funding available to eligible households with regard to past-due and future payments for:

- Rent
- Utilities (water, sewer, stormwater, gas, trash and electricity)
- Internet

When possible, payments will be made on behalf of tenants directly to landlords and utility companies. The goal of this program is to increase housing stability in Elkhart County.

Funding is available for past-due rent and utilities from April 1,

2020, to present, as well as up to three months of future rent and utilities from the date of application. Past-due rent and utilities must be documented through statements and/or invoices from your landlord and utility service provider(s).

Eligible applicants will be awarded a maximum of \$1,500 per month for six months of past-due rent and utility payments. Depending on fund availability, the County may pay up to 100 percent of future rent and utility payments to a maximum of \$1,500. The program will end once all the funds provided for it are exhausted.

A website with information on how to apply, along with the application portal, has been set up at [elkhartcounty.com/en/residents/elkhart-county-rental-assistance-program](https://elkhartcounty.com/en/residents/elkhart-county-rental-assistance-program)

If you are in need of assistance and don't have access to a computer or smartphone, if you have questions about the application that you couldn't answer at the website, or if you still have any questions about the rental-assistance program, please call 317.452.8363.