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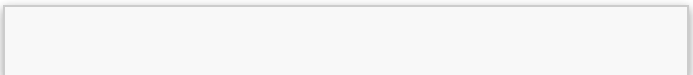
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Documenting Idaho's path to recovery from the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, 2020-2021

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Ballotpedia's [coverage](#) of COVID-19 includes how



federal, state, and local governments are responding, and how those responses are influencing election rules and operations, political campaigns, the economy, schools, and more.

This article contains a [general timeline of noteworthy state government responses](#) to the coronavirus pandemic since April 2020. It also includes details on **three** specific types of state responses to the pandemic:

- [Statewide travel restrictions](#)
- [School reopenings and closures](#)
- [Statewide mask requirements](#)

Additionally, the article includes:

- [Noteworthy coronavirus lawsuits](#)
- [Diagnosed or quarantined officials and candidates](#)

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Response news updates



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Reopening plans by state

Alabama ▼ Submit

The following section provides a timeline of Idaho's reopening activity beginning in April 2020. The entries, which come from our [Documenting America's Path to Recovery](#) newsletter, are sorted by month in reverse chronological order. The date shown is the day that we wrote about them in the newsletter. They appear exactly as they appeared in the newsletter.

June 2021

- **June 21:** The state [stopped](#) participating in pandemic-related federal unemployment benefit programs on June 19. Gov. Brad Little (R) made the announcement May 11.

May 2021

- **May 28:** On May 28, Gov. Brad Little (R) [repealed](#) Lt. Gov. Janice McGeachin's (R) executive order banning government entities, including schools, from requiring masks. McGeachin, who was serving as acting governor while Little was out of state at the Republican Governors Association conference, issued the order without informing Little beforehand. Little did not issue a statewide mask mandate during the pandemic. McGeachin has said she intends to run for governor in 2022.
- **May 12:**
 - Gov. Brad Little (R) [announced](#) the state will stop participating in federal pandemic unemployment programs beginning June 19.
 - Idaho [entered](#) Stage 4 of reopening May 11. The stage lifts all suggestions on gathering sizes. It also ends seating-only restrictions for restaurants, bars, and nightclubs. To read the full guidance, [click here](#).

April 2021

- **April 19:** Gov. Brad Little (R) [vetoed House Bill 135](#) and [Senate Bill 1136](#), which limit executive emergency powers. The bills would allow governors to issue restrictions through a disaster declaration for up to 60 days. After 60 days, governors would have to get legislative approval to extend disaster emergency restrictions. Governors could [still extend](#) emergency declarations beyond 60 days to secure federal government funds, even if the legislature rejects restrictions accompanying an order. Both bills passed the state House and Senate with more than the two-thirds majority needed to override the veto. Every Democrat in both chambers voted against the bills, except for two who abstained from the vote on HB 135. Republicans have a 58-12 majority in the House and a 28-7 majority in the Senate.
- **April 8:** Gov. Brad Little (R) [signed](#) an executive order prohibiting any state government entities from requiring COVID-19 vaccination proof for citizens to access public services or facilities.
- **April 6:** All residents 16 and older [became eligible](#) for vaccination on April 5.

March 2021

- **March 25:** Gov. Brad Little (R) [announced](#) all residents 16 and older will be eligible for vaccination starting April 5. People with underlying [health conditions](#) will be eligible starting March 29. Currently, residents 45 and older, people in congregate settings, and state-defined frontline essential workers can get vaccinated.
- **March 8:** Gov. Brad Little (R) [announced](#) the state's pre-registration website for vaccines. The site lets residents join a waitlist regardless of when they are eligible for vaccination in the state's distribution plan. An enrolled COVID-19 vaccine provider will contact individuals in the system when they become eligible for appointments and the provider has appointments available. Click here to [sign up](#).

February 2021

- **February 3:** Gov. Brad Little (R) [signed](#) an order moving the state to [Stage 3](#) of reopening on Feb. 2. The order increased the limit on gatherings from 10 people to 50 people or less. Religious and political

gatherings are exempt from the limit but must maintain social distancing. Previously, Idaho was in Stage 2 since Nov. 13.

- **February 1:** Gov. Brad Little (R) announced a new [vaccine distribution website](#) outlining current and upcoming eligibility.

January 2021

- **January 13:** Gov. Brad Little (R) [announced](#) the state is starting its next phase of vaccine distribution. Little said teachers, school staff, and first responders would be prioritized between Jan. 13-31. The first phase included frontline healthcare workers and nursing home staff and residents. Individuals age 65 and older will be able to access the vaccine starting February 1.

November 2020

- **November 17:** Gov. Brad Little (R) [moved](#) the state backward in reopening from Stage 3 to modified Stage 2. Under the new rules, indoor and outdoor gatherings larger than 10 people are prohibited. Religious and political gatherings are exempt from the limit but must maintain social distancing.

October 2020

- **October 30:** Gov. Brad Little (R) [moved](#) the state backward in the reopening plan from Phase 4 to Phase 3, which limits indoor gatherings to 50 people and indoor gatherings to 25% of a venue's capacity. The order also includes a mask mandate for long-term care facilities. Bars, restaurants, and nightclubs will only be able to serve seated customers.
- **October 15:** Gov. Brad Little (R) [announced](#) the state will remain in Phase Four for at least two more weeks. Idaho entered Phase Four on June 13.
- **October 1:** Gov. Brad Little (R) [announced](#) the state will remain in Phase Four for at least two more weeks. Idaho entered Phase Four on June 13.

September 2020

- **September 18:** Gov. Brad Little (R) [announced](#) the state will remain in Phase Four for at least two more weeks. Idaho entered Phase Four on June 13.
- **September 3:** Gov. Brad Little (R) [announced](#) the state will remain in Phase Four for at least two more weeks. Idaho entered Phase Four on June 13.

August 2020

- **August 26:** The state House of Representatives [passed](#) a resolution that would end Gov. Brad Little's (R) coronavirus emergency declaration if it becomes law. The resolution passed the House by a 48-20 margin.
- **August 21:** Gov. Brad Little (R) [announced](#) the state will remain in Phase Four for at least two more weeks. Idaho entered Phase Four on June 13.
- **August 18:** Gov. Brad Little (R) [announced](#) the state accepted President Donald Trump's (R) partial extension of unemployment benefits. Individuals receiving at least \$100 of weekly unemployment from the state and are unemployed because of the coronavirus will be eligible to receive an additional \$300 per week from the federal government. The payments will be retroactive to Aug. 1.
- **August 7:** Gov. Brad Little (R) [announced](#) that the state would remain in Phase Four for at least two more weeks. Idaho entered Phase Four on June 13.

July 2020

- **July 23:** Gov. Brad Little (R) [announced](#) the state will remain in Phase 4 of reopening for at least two more weeks.
- **July 10:** Gov. Brad Little (R) [announced](#) a reopening plan for schools. [Guidelines](#) include encouraging face coverings for students and faculty, teaching hygiene, and complying with regular cleaning and disinfecting protocols. It also recommends schools be prepared to teach students in-person, with a hybrid schedule, and completely online. Little also [announced](#) Idaho would remain in Phase 4 of reopening for at least two more weeks.

June 2020

- **June 26:** Gov. Brad Little (R) [announced](#) Idaho would stay in Phase 4 for at least two more weeks, saying the state did not meet the metrics necessary to finish reopening.
- **June 17:** Gov. Brad Little (R) [announced](#) the formation of the Public Schools Reopening Committee to create a plan for schools to resume operations in the fall.
- **June 15:** Idaho [moved](#) into the fourth phase of reopening on June 13. [Phase Four](#) permits all businesses to open, including nightclubs and large sporting venues. It also allows gatherings of more than 50 people. Visits to jails and nursing homes can [resume](#).
- **June 1:** The state [moved](#) into its third phase of reopening on May 30. [Phase Three](#) allows non-essential travel and gatherings of up to 50 people. Businesses like bars and movie theaters can reopen. Larger venues like nightclubs and stadiums remain closed.

April 2020

- **April 30:** Gov. Brad Little (R) [announced](#) the state will enter the first stage of a four-stage reopening plan Friday. Stage one [allows](#) daycares, organized youth activities, and places of worship (if they adhere to distancing, sanitation protocols, and CDC guidance) to reopen or resume. The state will move on to subsequent stages if there is no significant increase in new cases and if public health benchmarks are met. Idaho is a [Republican trifecta](#).

Vaccine distribution

This section contains a table of quick facts on the state's vaccine distribution plan and a timeline of noteworthy events, including updates on vaccine availability for new groups of individuals, changes to state distribution plans, and much more. If you know of a noteworthy story we are missing, please email us at editor@ballotpedia.org.

The [Idaho Department of Health](#) released a [distribution plan](#) on October 16, 2020.

Quick facts

Idaho state vaccination plan quick information	
What governing entities are responsible for vaccine allocation and distribution? ^[1]	COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Committee
Where can I find a quick breakdown of phases in my state?	Idaho COVID-19 Vaccination Information
Where can I find the distribution plan?	Idaho COVID-19 Vaccination Plan - Interim
When was the plan first released to the public?	October 16, 2020

When was the plan most recently updated?	October 19, 2020
Where can I find answers to frequently asked questions?	COVID-19 VACCINE FAQ
Where can I find data related to the coronavirus in my state?	Idaho COVID-19 Information Updated Daily*
Where is the state health department's homepage?	Idaho Department of Health
Where can I find additional information about the state's vaccine distribution?	The COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Plan in Idaho - AARP

Timeline

- **April 5, 2021:** All Idaho residents 16 and older became eligible for vaccination on April 5. ^[2]
- **March 24, 2021:** Idaho Gov. Brad Little (R) announced all residents 16 and older would be eligible for vaccination starting April 5. People with underlying health conditions were scheduled to become eligible starting March 29. ^[3]
- **January 12, 2021:** Gov. Brad Little (R) announced the state was starting another wave of vaccine distribution. Little said teachers, school staff, and first responders would be prioritized between Jan. 13-31. The previous phase included frontline healthcare workers and nursing home staff and residents. He said individuals age 65 and older would be able to access the vaccine starting February 1. ^[4]

Statewide travel restrictions

See also: [Travel restrictions issued by states in response to the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic, 2020-2021](#)

Does Idaho have restrictions on travel? No. Visitors are encouraged to self-quarantine, but the 14-day quarantine requirement for travelers expired May 15, 2020. ^[5]

More information can be found at [Visit Idaho](#).

Timeline

- **May 15, 2020:** Gov. [Brad Little](#) (R) announced that out-of-state visitors would no longer need to self-quarantine for 14 days upon entering Idaho. Little said people were encouraged to self-quarantine. ^[6]
- **April 15, 2020:** Gov. Little issued a travel restriction that required out-of-state visitors to self-quarantine for 14 days. The restriction was included in an extension Little issued to the stay-at-home order that went into effect March 25 and was set to expire on April 15. Workers engaged in essential activities were exempt from the order. ^[7]

School reopenings and closures

See also: [School responses in Idaho to the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#)

Schools in Idaho were closed to in-person instruction on March 24, 2020, and remained closed for the remainder of the 2019-2020 academic year. To notify us of when schools were allowed to reopen statewide, [email us](#). The

timeline below lists statewide responses we tracked.

- **June 29, 2021:** At the end of the school year, [Burbio](#) reported all schools were in-person in Idaho. [\[8\]](#)[\[9\]](#)
- **Sept. 10, 2020:** At the beginning of the school year, [Burbio](#) reported most schools were using virtual or hybrid learning in Idaho. [\[10\]](#)[\[11\]](#)
- **July 9, 2020:** The Idaho Board of Education approved a reopening framework. The guidance said that all school buildings were expected to reopen in the fall for in-person instruction. [\[12\]](#)
- **May 5, 2020:** The Idaho State Board of Education released initial reopening guidelines. [\[13\]](#)

- **April 6, 2020:** The [Idaho State Department of Education](#) voted to close schools to in-person instruction for the remainder of the academic year, or until social distancing protocols in the state were lifted. [\[14\]](#) Officials said that individual schools could be approved to reopen if local social distancing orders were lifted and the school met criteria laid out by the board. [\[15\]](#)
- **March 23, 2020:** The [Idaho State Department of Education](#) ordered schools statewide to close to students from March 24 to April 20. [\[16\]](#)

Statewide mask requirements

See also: [State-level mask requirements in response to the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic, 2020](#)

Idaho did not issue a statewide mask requirement.

On May 28, Gov. [Brad Little](#) (R) repealed Lt. Gov. [Janice McGeachin](#)'s (R) executive order banning government entities, including schools, from requiring masks. McGeachin, who was serving as acting governor while Little was out of state at the [Republican Governors Association](#) conference, issued the order without informing Little beforehand. McGeachin had said she intended to run for governor in 2022. [\[17\]](#)

Noteworthy lawsuits

See also: [Lawsuits about state actions and policies in response to the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic, 2020](#)

Chew v. Bedke: On January 7, 2021, two Idaho state lawmakers filed suit against Idaho House of Representatives Speaker [Scott Bedke](#) (R), alleging that the absence of COVID-19 safety measures at the state capitol constituted a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The plaintiffs were Representatives [Sue Chew](#) (D) and [Muffy Davis](#) (D), both of whom were at greater risk of serious danger from COVID-19 due to pre-existing medical conditions. They sought "accommodations, including remote participation and a self-contained office if the legislature leadership and Governor aren't going to reasonably institute COVID-19 protections and control those with bad intentions who enter our Capitol." Bedke responded to the suit, saying, "Though it's unfortunate that negotiations have taken this turn, I will continue to move forward in good faith toward a solution workable for all members." The case was filed in the U.S. District Court for the District of Idaho. [\[18\]](#)[\[19\]](#)

Officials and candidates diagnosed with or quarantined due to coronavirus

See also: [Government official, politician, and candidate deaths, diagnoses, and quarantines due to the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic, 2020-2021](#)

The table below lists officials or candidates who have been diagnosed with or quarantined due to coronavirus. The most recent announcements appear first.

Name	Office	Date	Status
Greg Chaney	Idaho House of Representatives District 10B	March 18, 2021	Chaney tested positive for coronavirus. [20]
James Ruchti	Idaho House of Representatives District 29B	March 18, 2021	Ruchti tested positive for coronavirus. [21]
Julie Yamamoto	Idaho House of Representatives District 10A	March 18, 2021	Yamamoto announced that she had tested positive for coronavirus on March 17. [22]
Ryan Kerby	Idaho House of Representatives District 9A	March 16, 2021	Kerby announced that he had tested positive for coronavirus. [23]
Bruce Skaug	Idaho House of Representatives District 12A	March 12, 2021	Skaug announced that he had tested positive for coronavirus. [24]
Lance Clow	Idaho House of Representatives District 24A	March 12, 2021	Clow announced that he had tested positive for coronavirus. [25]
Steve Bair	Idaho State Senate District 31	February 16, 2021	Bair announced that he had tested positive for coronavirus. [26]

Paths to recovery by state

To read about other states' responses and recoveries, click one of the links below:

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- [Wisconsin](#)
- [Wyoming](#)

Other state government responses

To view previous coverage areas, including changes to 2020 election dates and policies, initial stay-at-home orders, coronavirus-related legislation, and much more, click a state in the map below.

Choose your state... ▼

General resources

The chart below shows coronavirus statistics from countries across the world. The information is provided by [Real Clear Politics](#).

Click the links below to explore official resources related to the coronavirus outbreak.

- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\), U.S. Department of Health & Human Services](#)
- [National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services](#)
- [Occupational Safety and Health Administration, U.S. Department of Labor](#)
- [U.S. Department of Education](#)
- [World Health Organization](#)
- [Trends in Number of COVID-19 Cases and Deaths in the US Reported to CDC, by State/Territory](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Vaccinations, Our World in Data](#) (Number of vaccines administered)
- [Coronavirus Vaccine Tracker, New York Times](#) (Progress of vaccine trials)

See also

- [Documenting America's Path to Recovery](#)
- [School responses in Idaho to the coronavirus pandemic](#)
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- [Travel restrictions by state](#)
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5. [↑](#) [KSL News Radio, "Idaho, Wyoming loosen COVID-19 travel restrictions," May 15, 2020](#)

6. ↑ [KSL News Radio, "Idaho, Wyoming loosen COVID-19 travel restrictions," May 15, 2020](#)
7. ↑ [Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, "Order to Self-Isolate," April 15, 2020](#)
8. ↑ [Burbio rated Idaho's in-person index at 100. To read more about Burbio's school opening tracker, \[click here\]\(#\). To read more about Burbio's methodology, \[click here\]\(#\).](#)
9. ↑ [Burbio, "Burbio's K-12 School Opening Tracker," accessed Oct. 6, 2021](#)
10. ↑ [Burbio rated Idaho's in-person index between 20-40. To read more about Burbio's school opening tracker, \[click here\]\(#\). To read more about Burbio's methodology, \[click here\]\(#\).](#)
11. ↑ [Burbio, "Burbio's K-12 School Opening Tracker," accessed Oct. 6, 2021](#)
12. ↑ [Idaho Department of Education, "Fall 2020 Public Schools Reopening," accessed August 5, 2020](#)
13. ↑ [Idaho Statesman, "New state rules outline how schools can reopen this spring," May 5, 2020](#)
14. ↑ [U.S. News & World Report, "Idaho Officials Extend Statewide School Closure," April 9, 2020](#)
15. ↑ [Idaho Statesman, "Idaho closes schools for the rest of the year. But there's a big catch." April 6, 2020](#)
16. ↑ [Idaho Education News, "State Board orders four-week school closure," March 23, 2020](#)
17. ↑ [Idaho Statesman, "'Tyranny': Idaho Gov. Brad Little repeals McGeachin's ban on mask mandates," May 28, 2021](#)
18. ↑ [United States District Court for the District of Idaho, "Chew v. Bedke: Complaint," January 7, 2021](#)
19. ↑ [NPR, "Idaho Lawmakers Sue Saying Returning To State Capitol Amid COVID-19 Violates ADA," January 10, 2021](#)
20. ↑ [The Idaho Press, "Four new Statehouse COVID-19 infections reported," March 18, 2021](#)
21. ↑ [The Idaho Press, "Four new Statehouse COVID-19 infections reported," March 18, 2021](#)
22. ↑ [The Idaho Press, "Four new Statehouse COVID-19 infections reported," March 18, 2021](#)
23. ↑ [The Idaho Press, "Third House member tests positive for COVID-19," March 17, 2021](#)
24. ↑ [KTVB, "First-term Idaho Republican lawmaker out with COVID-19," March 12, 2021](#)
25. ↑ [The Idaho Press, "Second House member tests positive for COVID-19, makes 8 cases at Statehouse so far this session...," March 15, 2021](#)
26. ↑ [The Idaho Press, "Second senator tests positive for COVID-19," February 16, 2021](#)

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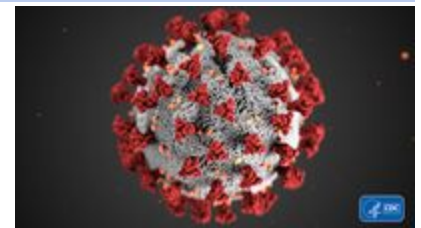
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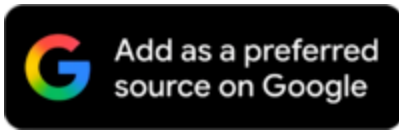
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