

IN THE MIX

Official Newsletter of North Carolina Restaurant & Lodging Association

NCRLA | NC Restaurant
& Lodging Association

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Breaking News: Gov. Cooper Announces Ending of Curfews and Easing of Restrictions for Restaurants, Hotels, Event Venues and Bars

At his 2 p.m. press briefing today, Gov. Cooper announced the end of the modified stay-at-home order, including lifting the curfew and extending on-site alcohol sales to 11 p.m. Bars can open for indoor service at 30 percent occupancy or 250 people, whichever is less. In addition, the order eases capacity limitations for many businesses, including hotels, event venues and convention centers, which remain at 30 percent occupancy but increase to 250 people, whichever is less.

Gov. Cooper's Executive Order 189 was set to expire Sunday. The new Executive Order 195 takes effect Friday, February 26 and runs through March 26. NCRLA has been actively lobbying Gov. Cooper to ease restrictions on businesses as COVID cases have declined in recent weeks and recently sent him [this letter](#) urging him to ease restrictions on hospitality businesses.

"Today's announcement brings much-welcome news to our NC hospitality community. Restaurants, hotels and bars across our state have been struggling with shut-downs and capacity restrictions for nearly a year. Many of these businesses have remained closed while others have taken on significant debt. Nearly 103,000 members of our workforce remain sidelined. It's time to get doors open and people back to work. This marks the beginning of recovery and revival of our NC hospitality industry," said Lynn Minges, President and CEO of NCRLA.

Highlights of today's announcement include:

- 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. curfew is lifted

- 9 p.m. to 7 a.m. on-site alcohol sales probation is eased; alcohol can now be served on-site until 11 p.m.
- Capacity restrictions for meetings and events at hotels, convention centers and event venues remain at 30 percent but increase from 100 people to 250 people, whichever is less
- Bars can open at 30 percent or 250 people for indoor service, whichever is less
- Indoor gathering limits are increased to 25
- Outdoor gathering limits remain at 50
- The allowance of Cocktails To-Go will continue through March 31

For more information, visit ncrla.help/current-guidelines/



Group 3 Vaccinations Begin Today in NC

Group 3 vaccinations begin today in NC, with teachers getting a two-week head start ahead of other essential frontline workers. This includes restaurant and food service supply chain employees, who may begin getting their vaccines on March 10.

The number of people in **Group 3** includes as many as 441,000 North Carolinians. So far, supply of the vaccine and appointments have been limited across the state, but NC will receive two weeks' worth of vaccinations this week, representing an increase of 22.9 percent for current CDC allocation for NC.

On Tuesday, NCDHHS reported the lowest number of new daily cases in the state since Nov. 2, 2020. As of Sunday, 6.2 percent of COVID-19 tests came back positive. Health officials have said the goal is 5 percent or lower to control the spread of the virus. As of Monday, more than 1.2 million first doses and more than 676,000 second doses of the vaccine had been administered in North Carolina. As the numbers of COVID-19 cases fall and vaccinations rise, state officials are looking for ways to ease public health restrictions. "Our trends are moving in the right direction," said secretary of NCDHHS Dr. Mandy Cohen.

Good news from manufacturers of COVID-19 vaccines:

- They are substantially ramping up production of doses next month
- Pfizer expects to provide more than 13 million doses of its two-shot vaccine per week to the U.S. by mid-March, more than double the pace earlier this month
- By April, Moderna hopes to deliver 40 million doses per month, roughly double the current pace

- After FDA approval, Johnson & Johnson is prepared to ship more than 20 million doses to the U.S. by the end of March

[READ MORE](#)

Find helpful [COVID-19 resources on the NCRLA website](#) for both employers and employees as you find your spot to take your shot.



NCRLA Chef Showdown Applications Now Being Accepted!

Applications are being accepted **now through March 22** for the [2021 NCRLA Chef Showdown](#), presented by [Got To Be NC Agriculture!](#) Chefs, mixologists and distilleries across NC are encouraged to apply to be part of this can't-miss culinary competition. Participants will compete in multiple rounds to earn the titles of NCRLA Chef of the Year, NCRLA Pastry Chef of the Year, and NCRLA Mixologist & Distillery of the Year!

Save the date for the finale on [August 9 at Angus Barn's Bay 7 in Durham.](#)

[**APPLY NOW**](#)



Count On Me NC Message Reaches Millions

Our partners at [Visit North Carolina](#) continue to share the Count on Me NC message with consumers across the state in impressive ways. Watch a [short YouTube video](#) highlighting the success of the program.

As stated in the video: “In 2020 there wasn’t much that was certain, but with Visit NC’s help, the resilience of North Carolina’s people and businesses was one thing we all could count on.”

- Over 16,000 businesses have completed the training
- 65,000 courses have been taken
- 500,000 people have visited to the Count On Me NC website

[Count On Me NC](#) is an initiative co-created by NCRLA, NCDHHS, NC State Extension and Visit North Carolina. It provides free online training for restaurant managers and staff that is focused on advanced cleaning, disinfection, social distancing and hygiene practices to protect the public from COVID-19.

Property Tax Deferral Bill Gets Attention in Media

HB 119: Property Tax Relief for COVID Affected Businesses is the product of months of work by NCRLA, Rep. John Bradford, and legislative leadership to help businesses with the overwhelming burden of property tax bills. Since its introduction last week, this bill is getting attention in the media. Read an [article](#) that ran in the *Winston-Salem Journal* and the *Greensboro News & Record*.

HB 119 would specifically:

- Give local counties the authority to offer payment plans to businesses
- Give local counties the authority to waive interest and fees
- Allow for businesses that have suffered at least a 25 percent loss in sales revenues to apply for a temporary re-evaluation of their property taxes for 2020 and beyond, giving much-needed property tax relief to businesses most impacted by COVID-19

Please keep a close eye on your emails as we will be engaging in Calls to Action to help gain support for this bill as it makes its way through the legislative process. A special thank you to our past-Chair, Vinay Patel, current Chair Nish Patel, and our partners at the Asian American Hotel Owners Association for their hard work on this bill. This policy is a major component of [NCRLA's Blueprint for Revival of the NC Hospitality Industry](#).



"2021 Trends of the Year" Presented by US Foods

US Foods presents the "2021 Trends of the Year" in six informative and educational videos. The six trends are paleo, pizzas, burger toppings, dinner for two, spirit-free craft cocktails, and healthy sides. Watch videos demonstrating two trends below, and stay tuned for more trends to come.



Pizza Trend: *Quick and versatile ideas with great ingredients, including traditional and cauliflower crust, for those thinking about serving pizza in house, to-go, or as a meal kit.*



Healthy Sides: *One of the trends moving into 2021 is that customers are looking for new, healthier options. Four vegetable- or grain-based healthy sides are presented here.*



Hospitality Scholarship Season Now Open

Do you know a student or individual who is interested in pursuing a restaurant, foodservice or hospitality career? Here are two scholarship programs that are now accepting applications:

NCRLA Scholarship

NCRLA's Foundation awards a wide variety of scholarships to students across the state of North Carolina each year. These funds support the pursuit of higher education for future hospitality leaders. In 2020, we awarded \$40,000 in scholarship funding to 14 students and educators. The 2021

NCRLA Foundation scholarship application is now open through March 12, 2021. [LEARN MORE AND APPLY](#)

NRAEF Scholarships

From now until March 15, students, military service personnel and individuals pursuing a restaurant, foodservice or hospitality career [can apply for scholarships and grants](#) offered by the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation. This year, it's set to award up to \$1 million in hundreds of scholarships ranging from \$2,500 to \$10,000.

Key Dates:

March 31: Application Closes

April – May: Scholarship Application Review

June: Scholarship Award Notifications

July – August: Scholarship Claiming and Payments

August 15: Deadline to Claim Scholarship

[LEARN MORE AND APPLY](#)

NATIONAL UPDATES



PPP Updates for Small Businesses

The Biden Administration announced a [series of changes](#) to the [Paycheck Protection Program \(PPP\)](#) in an effort to widen access for very small businesses to obtain PPP loans.

One critical temporary change is that the Small Business Administration (SBA) will only review or accept applications from businesses with **fewer than 20 employees** during a two-week period from February 24 to March 9. Following that period, all qualifying businesses may resume applying.

The Biden-Harris Administration says these simple, progressive steps demonstrate the commitment to racial and gender equity and to reaching low- and moderate-income, rural, urban, and other underserved areas. While [reported data illustrates](#) the SBA has made real strides in ensuring these funds are reaching underserved communities, the new policy changes further ensure inclusivity and integrity by increasing access and much-needed aid.

Thus far, the PPP has utilized just under half of its appropriated funds, so it is likely that loan availability will remain for some time. The program, which ends on March 31, has been an immense help to the hospitality industry, and we encourage all qualifying members to utilize it prior to its expiration.

For more information on PPP Reform: [Biden Administration PPP Reform Fact Sheets \(sba.gov\)](#)



Ask Congress to Co-Sponsor Unified RESTAURANTS Act of 2021

The unified [RESTAURANTS Act of 2021](#) provides real relief for any small restaurant that can demonstrate they lost revenue in 2020. Federal grants under the bill can be used for everything from retaining workers to operational expenses like inventory and rent. Read [the NRA fact sheet](#) on the bill. To help demonstrate the immediate urgency of saving the restaurant industry, please ask your elected officials in Washington to save restaurants by co-sponsoring the unified RESTAURANTS Act of 2021. Click below to lend your voice.

[CONTACT YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS](#)

LOCAL UPDATES



AAA's *Go Carolinas* Magazine: 21 Plates for 2021

Looking for examples of who's trending? The chefs at these 21 for 2021 locally owned restaurants are doing great things, supporting local farmers and producers, and serving delicious fare. Check out the favorites published in AAA's *Go* magazine.

[READ MORE](#)



Charlotte Chapter Meeting

March 10 • 10 a.m. – 11 a.m.

Join us for a virtual NCRLA Charlotte Chapter Meeting. NCRLA President & CEO Lynn Minges will give a COVID-19 update, plus a look-ahead to the 2021 legislative session with discussion of key policy issues. This event is free, however, registration is required. [REGISTER NOW](#)



Asheville Chapter Meeting

March 11 • 2 p.m. – 3 p.m.

Join us for a virtual NCRLA Asheville Chapter Meeting. NCRLA President & CEO Lynn Minges will give a COVID-19 update, plus a look-ahead to the 2021 legislative session with discussion of key policy issues. This event is free, however, registration is required.

[REGISTER NOW](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

March 10

[Charlotte Chapter Meeting](#)

March 11

[Asheville Chapter Meeting](#)

April 19

[NCRLA Golf Tournament at Prestonwood Country Club](#)

August 9

[Chef Showdown](#)

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Restaurant:

[Lemongrass Thai Restaurant, Raleigh](#)

Allied:

[Boxyard](#)

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LIVE WEBINAR MAR 3

North Carolina Hospitality Operators Share Plans for Success





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ALSO IN THE NEWS



[Free Webinar on Feb. 25 - Changing the Menu: What Digital Menus Mean for Your Operation](#)

Hotel News

Restaurant News:

[This Is the Beginning of the End of the Pandemic](#)

[Deloitte: Perception of Travel Safety Improves, Net Spending Intent Hits Pandemic High](#)

[Hotel Industry Performance Improved in January](#)

[This Company Links Restaurant Workers Who Need Work With Restaurants Who Need Workers](#)

[Indies Struggle to Pay Rent, Even as Chains Get Current](#)



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lynn".

Lynn Mingos
NCRLA President & CEO



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nish".

Nish Patel
NCRLA Board Chair

The North Carolina Restaurant & Lodging Association serves to advance and protect the interests of more than 20,000 businesses that employ 11 percent of the state's workforce and generate more than \$27.3 billion in sales annually.

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