



## Ashe County

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May 8th, 2020

### Press Release:

#### **Ashe County Government Offices to Reopen to Public with Preventative Measures in Place**

Jefferson, N.C.-

Starting Friday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020, at 5 P.M. your Ashe County Government will join in the important process of reviving our economy while following appropriate public health guidance in the easing of COVID-19 restrictions. After a careful review of both the local and statewide public health situation, Ashe County believes that enough of the key public health indicators are moving in the right direction to allow us to make the transition to *Phase 1* of Governor Roy Cooper's Executive Order No. 138, which seeks to ease restrictions in a multi-tiered plan.

Public health experts and analyses indicate that if we gradually ease restrictions but keep safety practices in place, North Carolina can benefit from economic recovery without a renewed outbreak. With that in mind, here are some key things to consider and expect when returning to the courthouse for county or court business:

- Housekeeping staff will constantly be performing extra cleaning and disinfecting of the public areas in the courthouse throughout the day. You will likely see staff cleaning frequently-touched surfaces and higher-traffic areas even as business is conducted around them. Visitors to the courthouse and County offices should expect to smell cleaning and disinfecting products being used while inside the building.
- The number of people permitted to enter the courthouse will be limited to ten (10) at a time. If this number is reached during operating hours visitors may be asked to temporarily wait outside until others leave the building in an effort to maintain appropriate social distancing and comply with state guidelines on mass gatherings. Additionally, some lobby areas in each office may need to limit the number of people allowed into their waiting areas as the lobbies of each department varies in size.
- Face coverings or masks for all staff and visitors to the courthouse are strongly encouraged but at this time will not be mandatory for visitors.
- Visitors to the courthouse will receive a forehead-read temperature screening with a sanitized thermometer at the security check-in. Anyone, this includes staff and visitors,

with a temperature reading of 99 degrees or above will not be permitted to enter the courthouse and will have to either return at a later date or conduct their business via telephone or internet.

- Water fountains will not be available for use by the public or staff at this time.
- Stairways will be clearly labeled for one-way use to allow for appropriate social distancing.
- Some external County offices such as Animal Control, Parks, Environmental Services and the Sheriff's Office may have different guidelines for access than those offices inside the courthouse. Calling ahead to these offices before visiting may be a good idea as they may ask that you make an appointment or they may have an option to allow you to conduct certain business online.

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