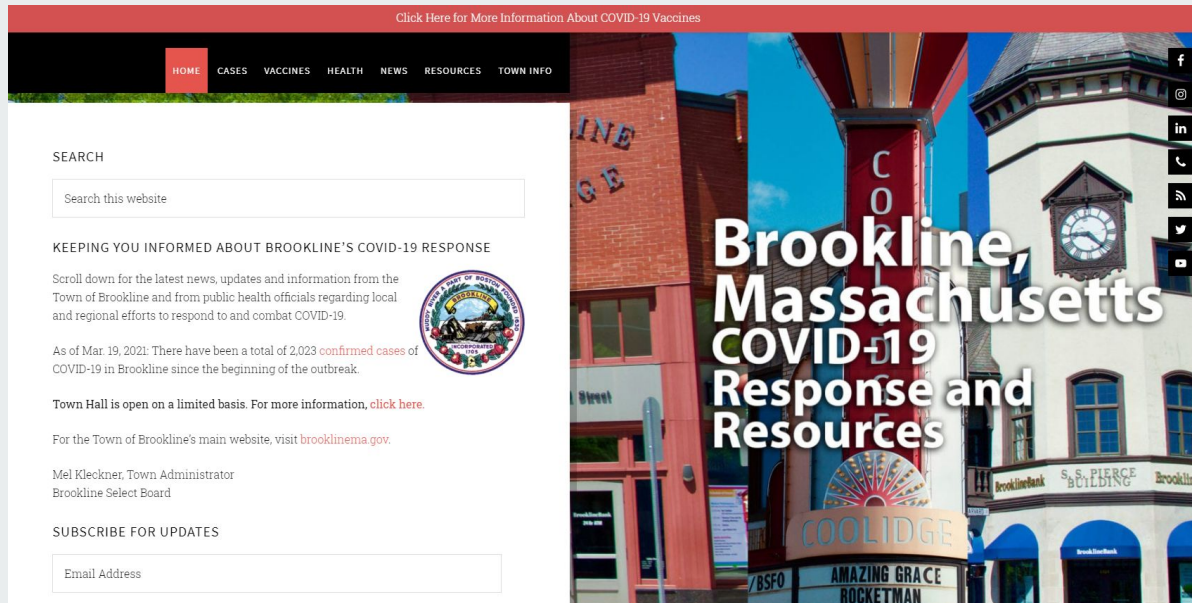


Town of Brookline Streamlines Communications in Real-Time During Pandemic Emergency



Situation Analysis

- As the seriousness of the COVID-19 pandemic became apparent, the Town of Brookline and municipalities like it were unprepared for the targeted outreach and resources the emergency demanded, while also fulfilling its emergency management obligations
- The town website was ill-equipped to serve as a comprehensive resource for the rapidly evolving nature of the pandemic
- Brookline contracted JGPR to support its general communications efforts as the state of emergency began in Massachusetts and throughout the U.S.
- While JGPR dove into crafting press releases and other messaging elements to support the Town of Brookline, it was apparent that the town's website, Brooklinema.gov, was falling short in supplementing this effort
- It was clear a holistic, dedicated approach was needed to meet information demands
 - The dedicated COVID-19 page on the town website was simply a running list of content the town and JGPR had produced up to that point, with no clear way to find key resources or various pieces of information that were published separately
- Town leaders and staff were stretched thin already as they were transitioning to remote work, attempting to coordinate emergency meetings via untested virtual platforms and trying to stay ahead of state guidance and stop the spread of a deadly virus



JOHN GUILFOIL
PUBLIC RELATIONS

Objectives

- Above all, JGPR sought to quickly and effectively launch a streamlined COVID-19 portal for the Town of Brookline
- The town needed to present diverse information and resources in a user-friendly way
 - What they had was not working
 - The town's social platforms, which were all managed by different staff serving different departments, also needed to be leveraged and streamlined -- especially in the early days of the crisis
- JGPR and the Town of Brookline wanted to create a resource that could quickly evolve, without adding additional work to staff's plates, and remain timely as the pandemic progressed
- JGPR wanted to create a page that would have staying power beyond the pandemic
- Brookline needed a website that could bring answers to different questions under one umbrella
 - Residents should be able to find general public health information, school/remote learning information & news about their community's response in one place

Stop the spread. Save a life. WEAR A MASK.



**WHENEVER you go outside.
Masks are required in Brookline.
All adults and children 2+.**












April 17, 2020



Brookline Department of Public Health
Dr. Swannie Jett, Director

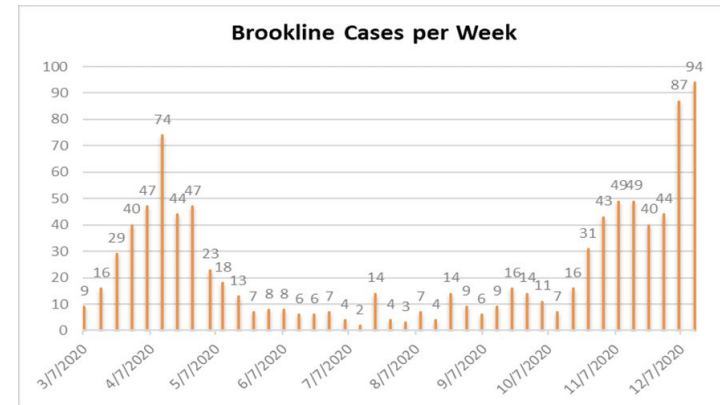
COVID 19 & HALLOWEEN



LOWER RISK		HIGHER RISK	
 <p>DECORATING PUMPKINS OR YOUR HOME WITH YOUR FAMILY.</p>	 <p>HAVING A SCAVENGER HUNT-STYLE TRICK-OR-TREAT SEARCH WITH YOUR HOUSEHOLD.</p>	 <p>TRADITIONAL TRICK-OR-TREATING WHERE CHILDREN GO DOOR TO DOOR.</p>	 <p>ATTENDING CROWDED COSTUME PARTIES HELD INDOORS.</p>
 <p>HAVING A HALLOWEEN MOVIE NIGHT WITH YOUR FAMILY.</p>	 <p>HAVING A VIRTUAL HALLOWEEN COSTUME CONTEST.</p>	 <p>GOING TO AN INDOOR HAUNTED HOUSE WHERE PEOPLE MAY BE CROWDED TOGETHER AND SCREAMING.</p>	 <p>GOING ON HAYRIDES OR TRACTOR RIDES WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD.</p>

Objectives

- A core concern was meeting the needs of an extremely engaged community with high expectations
 - Brookline’s population is approximately 59,000
 - The most popular resident Facebook group Brookline Townwide Discussion has 6,200 members and averages 50 posts per day
- Put a stop to fractured messaging by creating a “checkpoint” between individual department priorities and the public
 - At the beginning, individual departments were sharing unofficial resources from board members or the internet
 - JGPR and top town staff needed to ensure that information being provided to the public was vetted and valid
- BrooklineCOVID19.com needed to allow JGPR and town leaders to make information accessible to residents
- Showcase the consistent effort the town, with JGPR’s help, was making to keep the community informed
- The site needed to answer the core questions residents had:
 - How prevalent is COVID-19 in Brookline today?
 - What steps should my family and I be taking?
 - How do I know if I have COVID-19?
 - What steps is the town taking to stop the spread?
 - How can I get help navigating this time at home?
 - How can I help those in need?



COVID-19: What Brookline Residents Need to Know to Start the Day (3/24/20)

MARCH 24, 2020 BY JORDAN MAYBLUM (EDIT)

Below are the latest updates from the Town of Brookline regarding the local and state responses to COVID-19 The Latest Case Numbers COVID-19 case numbers are updated daily as brooklinecovid.com/cases. Brookline Fire Station Temporarily Closed as a Precaution The Brookline Fire Department has temporarily closed one of its stations out of an abundance of caution [...]



Strategy

- Early on: Produce daily, holistic updates summarizing the status of COVID-19 in Brookline, from public health guidance to service impacts
- Site was developed over the course of 24 hours. During that time:
 - Businesses closed
 - Schools closed
 - Playgrounds/town facilities were closed
 - Residents statewide were placed under a stay-at-home advisory
 - JGPR was on-site at Brookline Town Hall, developing the page in close coordination with town and public health leaders
- Position the town as a leader in key areas
 - Brookline was the first of a dozen JGPR client towns to launch a standalone COVID-19 portal
- Create accessible menus with key topics residents wanted/needed to know:
 - Case numbers
 - Town efforts/mandates (face covering mandate, expanded sidewalks, symptoms, testing)
 - Key resources for residents and businesses
- Create a site that was accessible across platforms, ensuring it was both mobile and desktop friendly

BrooklineCOVID19.com as it appeared on 3/25/20

KEEPING YOU INFORMED ABOUT BROOKLINE'S COVID-19 RESPONSE

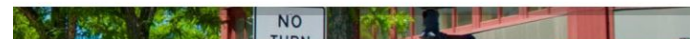
This website will contain the latest news, updates and information from the Town of Brookline and from public health officials regarding local and regional efforts to respond to and combat COVID-19.



There are currently **13 positive cases** of COVID-19 in Brookline.

For the Town of Brookline's main website, visit brooklinema.gov.

Mel Kleckner, Town Administrator
Brookline Select Board



[LEAVE A COMMENT](#)

***Update #11* (6:10 p.m., 3/24/20) Town of Brookline Provides Update on COVID-19 Response**

MARCH 24, 2020 BY [JORDAN MAYBLUM](#)

Strategy

- JGPR utilized multiple assets & approaches to launch BrooklineCOVID19.com
 - The Select Board hosted an emergency public Q&A on March 17, 2020. The launch of BrooklineCOVID19.com was timed to coincide with this event.
 - Presenters at the forum were instructed to repeatedly mention the site, driving traffic in the early hours and days after launch
 - The town website prominently featured the site & redirected existing COVID-19 related pages to the new portal
 - The Q&A was promoted via (and embedded within) the site itself
 - The first publicly-shared post on the site was the meeting link, immediately followed by the press release announcing its launch
 - BrooklineCOVID19.com is connected to and automatically publishes across more than a dozen town social media accounts
- In the early days of the pandemic, “Need to know” posts with the latest information from the town were shared on the site and on social media every morning, raising awareness of the website
- BrooklineCOVID19.com features email subscription technology that Brooklinema.gov lacked
- JGPR produced daily press releases from the town, which are cross-posted on BrooklineCOVID19.com
 - All new information led the releases, along with “In Case You Missed It” content at the bottom of each release/post
- JGPR embedded video from Brookline Interactive Group and others, including forums for business owners and key public meetings, to provide stakeholders with information they needed amid uncertainty
- The town utilized the site to raise awareness of resources for businesses, the unemployed, and those in need of assistance
- The town made large contributions to a “safety net” fund, and leveraged BrooklineCOVID19.com to raise awareness of and donations to the fund
- Updates are made regularly based on real-time feedback from town leaders and residents, as well as daily updates of case data

COVID-19 Cases in Brookline

As of April 28, 2020

Positive: 260

The “cases” page as of 4/28/20

Deaths: 22

Suspected Cases: 33

In Quarantine (not sick): 250

Released from Quarantine: 151

Released from Isolation: 101

COVID-19 Cases in Brookline

As of Mar. 19 (increase since March 18 in parentheses):

Total Positive Cases: 2,023 (10)

The “cases” page as of 3/19/21

Total Probable Cases: 203 (0)

Deaths: 96 (0)

Results Documentation

- In one year, BrooklineCOVID19.com has approximately 594,000 views and 1,600 email subscribers
 - Brookline has a population of about 59,000 people. That averages to 10 visits per resident over the course of the pandemic
 - The site has been live 100% of the time since launch on March 17, 2020
- Of visits to Brooklinema.gov during the week that BrooklineCOVID19.com launched, approximately 25% were from people looking for updates on COVID-19
- JGPR has published over 300 blog posts to BrooklineCOVID19.com, ranging from daily case number updates to major policy announcements and other news from the state and federal governments
- The cases page alone has had 130,000 visitors since launch, showing the appetite for up-to-date information among residents
- Other top viewed items center around testing, the face covering center and - lately - vaccines
- All of the information on the website is easily searchable, and up-to-date resources directly related to COVID-19 are presented front and center via the interactive menu
- As time has gone on, the site has expanded to include news not necessarily related to the pandemic, like early voting, town programs & initiatives, etc., which lays the foundation for the site to transition into a general town news blog in the post-COVID era



TOWN OF BROOKLINE
EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER
Brookline, Massachusetts

COVID 19 RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

HOW TO STAY SAFE

- Limit exposure to public areas
- Maintain 6 feet of distance from others
- Wash your hands frequently
- Use at least 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Clean surfaces regularly
- Monitor for symptoms (below) & report presence of COVID symptoms to Brookline Health Department at 617-730-2300

COVID-19 Symptoms



Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure.

If you develop COVID-19 symptoms

- Self-isolate
- Call ahead to your doctor
- Cover your cough and sneeze
- Notify your local health department
- Avoid public places
- Avoid others
- Avoid contact with research your home (including pets)

Information compiled from:



INFORMATION & ASSISTANCE

Medical Questions:

- Brookline Dept. of Public Health
- 617-730-2300
- COVIDmedical@brooklinema.gov

Non-Medical Questions & Resources:

- Brookline COVID-19 Call Center
- 617-879-5636
- COVID19Info@brooklinema.gov
- <https://brooklinecovid19.com/>

CHANGES IN TOWN SERVICES

All Town buildings & facilities are closed to the public

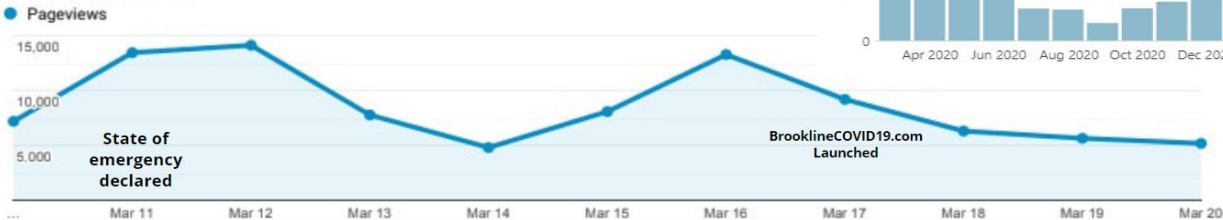
Residents should visit:

- www.brooklinema.gov
- Call 617-730-2000 to learn how to conduct transactions and business with the Town online

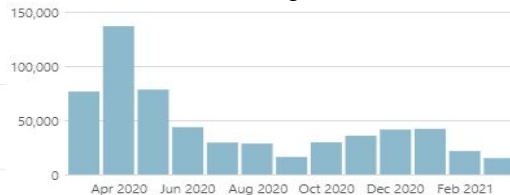
Essential town services remain running uninterrupted, including Police, EMS, Fire, & Sanitation

Results Documentation

Brooklinema.gov Page Views - March 2020



BrooklineCOVID19.com Page Views



Do Your Part to Stop the Spread of COVID-19

- Stay home whenever possible
- Avoid large crowds
- Get vaccinated when you're eligible
- Wash your hands regularly
- Get tested
- Cover your face and keep your distance (6 ft)

Politics & Government

Brookline Releases New Coronavirus Website

Town officials released a special website in an effort to keep community members up to date on the rapidly changing coronavirus situation.

Jenna Fisher, Patch Staff
Posted Wed, Mar 18, 2020 at 10:04 am ET



Brooklinema.gov redirects all COVID traffic to BrooklineCOVID19.com



JOHN GUILFOIL
PUBLIC RELATIONS