

[Facebook Local Alerts Tool](#)

Facebook is excited to announce that our [Facebook Local Alerts Tool](#) is available to the following local government Facebook Pages across the country. Local Alerts is a free tool that allows local government, public health agency and first responder Pages to broadcast essential updates to people in their community via Facebook by marking a page post as local alert, which sends out a notification to page followers who live in a community. With four out of five internet users actively engaging on Facebook each month in the US, this is a great tool to reach your communities in emergency situations. [Learn more here.](#) Facebook is also offering [short tutorials which you can sign up for here.](#)


The tool is available:

- **At City and County Level:** primary government page (City of or County of XYZ), law enforcement and emergency responder pages, and public health agency pages
- **At State Level:** public health agency pages, law enforcement and emergency responder pages

****Note: the tool is not available to elected officials or public figures, only government organizations listed above****

If you don't already have access, you should find instructions on how to sign up in an email to your Facebook Page admins. An admin for your Page will need to view the instructions before you can send your first Local Alert. We recommend doing this on a desktop computer (rather than using a mobile browser or app). We also recommend doing this as soon as you can to ensure you have full ability to send Local Alerts when you need them. If you don't see either of these, please [complete this form](#) and let me know.

Step-by-step guide

1. Go to your Facebook Page while using a computer (not a phone or tablet) and select the "local alerts" button in the page composer experience (where you go to make a post).
2. When you do this for the first time, you will be prompted to go through a short onboarding experience. Once an admin from your page has completed the onboarding experience, you will have the option to post a local alert, which will:
 1. Allow Page followers to see the "local alert" **indicator** on that post in News Feed ()
 2. Cause that post to appear on **Today In**, a new place on Facebook for local news and community information.
 3. Send a **notification** to Page followers living in the affected area, as well as to people who have opted in to receive regular local updates from Today In.

Please know that Local Alerts are meant to be used *sparingly* to communicate important information to people living in your community. Local Alerts can be used in emergencies as well as in less critical situations where timely information is valuable. Specifically, Local Alerts are meant to help you communicate information that is:

1. **Urgent and time-sensitive.** Speed matters.
2. **Need-to-know.** Very important.
3. **Actionable.** May lead people to take action.
4. **Local.** Matters for people living in a specific area (vs. of national importance).
5. **Relevant to the public at large.** Broadly applicable.

To help you learn more about how to use local alerts, please see:

- [Our Help Center guide](#) on how to use Local Alerts
- [A blog post we put out recently](#) on Local Alerts and how they've been used in emergencies.

Facebook has also launched the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information Center, featured at the top of News Feed, to provide a central place for people to get the latest news and information as well as resources and tips to stay healthy and support their family and community. Timely local information is extremely important to people so we are now also sharing posts marked as local alerts to the top of the hub - giving them additional distribution.

We encourage you to share this information with any eligible government pages you think would be interested. Let me know if you have any questions.

The image displays three side-by-side screenshots of Facebook posts from government pages, each marked as a local alert. The first post is from the City of Smyrna, GA Government, dated 8 hours ago, with the text: "Smyrna Citizens: This morning I signed a Declaration of Emergency for the City of Smyrna and issued an Executive Order to protect citizens in this current health crisis. This is not a decision taken lightly. The environment we live in is changing hourly and the City of Smyrna will continue to make timely decisions to protect our citizens and staff. Please be vigilant and limit your interactions with others as much as possible. Smyrna is a strong community and we will all get through this together. May you and your families stay safe. Derek: (Update: 10:10 a.m., Fri., March 20, 2020: All other established laws regarding the purchase and/or consumption of alcohol must be followed. The intent of the option with this Executive Order is to help our local establishments stay afloat during this very difficult time. You may order with a takeout order to take home for consumption.) EXECUTIVE ORDER (March 20, 2020 - effective 8:00 p.m.) Pursuant to the Declaration of Emergency adopted today, and for the reasons stated therein, it is hereby". The second post is from King County, Washington - Government, dated 52 mins ago, with the text: "While our community works together to slow the spread of COVID-19 by limiting face-to-face interaction, we can still support local businesses. Until at least March 31, all social and recreational services must temporarily close, and restaurants may not offer dine-in services. Despite the challenge of social distancing, you can support local businesses in several ways: • Get takeout, drive-through or delivery from local restaurants. • If you can, remember to tip --- food workers need your extra support. • Purchase gift cards from retailers, entertainment venues and services to use later. • Order online from local retailers, or call to see if you can order by phone. • Thank the workers in grocery stores and elsewhere on the frontline. We know these social distancing measures will be difficult and disruptive for all of us. The economic impact to businesses, restaurants, entertainment venues and cultural institutions will be enormous. Most of all, we want our local establishments to weather the pandemic. We feel for the sacrifices they must endure and look forward to when they can". The third post is from the City of Dixon Illinois Government, dated 1 hr ago, with the text: "Governor J.B. Pritzker to issue lockdown order requiring residents 'shelter in place' starting Saturday according to the Chicago Tribune. Sources have confirmed this information. Essential services, such as groceries, gas stations, pharmacies will remain open and residents will be allowed to travel to these locations to get necessary items. Residents will also be allowed to take their dogs for a walk outside, run, and things of that nature. More information will be forthcoming as information becomes available." Below the text is a graphic that says "COVID-19 UPDATE" surrounded by a circular arrangement of red and white flowers. At the bottom of each post is a comment box with a "Write a comment..." placeholder and icons for GIFs and emojis.