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CONTACT:

Laura Levy
Pandemic Recovery Manager
laura@larimerrecovers.com
(303) 931-8080



Loveland Chamber of Commerce
Mindy McCloughan, President & CEO
mmcccloughan@loveland.org
(970) 744-4791

Larimer County Applies for “5 Star” Certified Business Variance Program *Ways Larimer County Can Prepare for Level Up*

LARIMER COUNTY, COLO. – December 18, 2020 – Larimer County partners applied for the “5 star” certified business variance program, locally known as the Level Up Program with the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) Office on Friday.

The Larimer County Level Up Program allows participating businesses who demonstrate compliance with public health guidelines and safety precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our community to operate with capacity restrictions one level above Larimer County’s position in the Statewide dial. As Larimer County’s position moves in the dial, participants in the program will continue to operate at the capacities one level above the overall county position.

In a meeting with the Governor’s office on Friday, state advisors discussed with the Level Up Steering Committee if the Larimer County COVID-19 numbers continue to show a sustained decline, the program is eligible, and it is ready to receive the application. An approval could come as early as next week.

Here are the ways the community and businesses can prepare if the program is approved.

- Continue to keep the COVID-19 numbers at a two-week sustained decline in cases, positivity percentage and hospitalizations.
- Prepare and submit business plans. Plans and Applications will be submitted on the [Larimer County Department of Health and Environment website](#).
- If the Level Up plan is approved, physical inspections of businesses who have submitted applications could begin as early as December 28
- Let other businesses know about the program

The Level Up Administrative Committee, made up of representatives from the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment, the Loveland and Fort Collins Area Chambers of Commerce, the Cities of Loveland and Fort Collins, Towns of Estes Park, Windsor, Berthoud and Wellington have been working closely with local businesses to develop and design this application and launch plan so that they can be ready to implement after approval.

“We want our businesses operating at the safest capacity possible, and the more we continue to follow the protective measures and guidance the closer we can get to achieving the required metrics

to receive approval from the state,” said Tom Gonzales, public health director in a press release from the County on December 17, 2020. “While we finally see a light at the end of the tunnel with a vaccine for now we need to continue limiting interactions outside of our household and wearing face coverings.”

About Level-Up

The Level Up Pilot Program was inspired by the Mesa County Variance Protection Program (referred to as the 5-star rating program). It represents a creative grass-roots effort to keep Larimer County residents safe and businesses functioning during the ongoing pandemic. This is a collaborative effort that has had robust participation from the business community-spanning a diverse set of industry sectors- the local chambers of commerce, economic development professionals and public health officials. Enlisting the help of the business community creates more cooperation and engagement resulting in a higher level of compliance. Ultimately, the Level-Up Pilot Program is focused on suppressing the virus and mitigating economic damage to the business community.

The Level Up Pilot Program will have participating businesses apply a layered approach of proven strategies to reduce the transmission of Covid-19. Participation will be based on the ability to apply current best practices and to prove compliance with implementing those protocols. This pilot program couples a robust messaging and education campaign to the business community and the general public to increase compliance with current public health guidance, particularly in the importance of limiting gatherings to members of a single household.

In adherence with the core elements of the state framework, the program was developed and will be operated by an Administrative Committee made up of members of the Loveland, Estes Park and Fort Collins Chambers of Commerce, City of Fort Collins, City of Loveland and Larimer County Economic and Workforce Development, Larimer Recovery Collaborative, and the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment. For more information, visit [NoCoRecovers.com](https://www.noco-recovers.com).

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