



Contact Tracing for COVID-19 in Illinois

As part of the continuing effort to combat the COVID-19 pandemic the State of Illinois is beginning the process of standing up a massive contact tracing operation throughout the state.

Contact tracing itself as a public health practice is not new. Most, if not all, local health departments use contact tracing in their work. Local community colleges and other schools have or were already developing community health worker programs and curricula. Because it has become clear that contact tracing must be part of the response to COVID-19, various community groups, businesses, and other organizations have started working to stand up contact tracing on their own. The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) is working to put together a comprehensive plan that will leverage and build upon what already exists to get it to the scale needed across the state. Below are some FAQs regarding the state's contact tracing efforts:

How is contact tracing currently being used in Illinois? The most common use is by local health departments in the tracing of infectious diseases, just on a smaller scale that will be needed for COVID-19. This was employed to track and map pandemics like Ebola and HIV/AIDS. Contact tracing is not new and has been implemented in Illinois for decades.

What apps will be used to assist in contact tracing? Will my privacy be protected? All contact tracing requires technology in order to report test results, handle case-management and properly map the COVID-19 spread. The state is continuing to research technology options, including how to ensure that individual privacy will be protected throughout the process.

Who will be managing the contact tracing program? The Illinois state-wide contact tracing program will be managed by the Governor's Administration, including IDPH, in coordination with local health departments and local community-based organizations.

If I'm interested in becoming a contact tracer, how can I apply? Hiring will be done through local health departments and CBOs, not at the state level through IDPH. Once the program is finalized those entities and the Administration will alert stakeholders and legislators. In the meantime, any individual who would like to express their interest in working as a contact tracer through a local health department or CBO may register that interest at <https://redcap.dph.illinois.gov/surveys/?s=KWKJL93TM7>.

Who will be conducting the training and what will it consist of? IDPH is developing a standardized statewide curriculum for contact tracing. Many contact tracing programs already exist throughout Illinois, and the standardized program will look to incorporate the work already being done in order to capture the knowledge that already exists in this field. Programs already in place at various community colleges and other schools will continue and work in tandem with the state's efforts.

How many people may get hired? Current projections show that Illinois will need to have 2,000-3,800 contact tracers to properly staff the program, almost all of which would be new hires.