**Community Cluster Testing**

*What is “cluster testing?”*

* Cluster testing is **time-limited testing** that is deployed to a community as a result of an **active and ongoing cluster outbreak**.

*Who can request cluster testing?*

* Cluster testing may be requested by a local board of health (LBOH).

*Who cannot request cluster testing?*

* This guidance does not pertain to clusters occurring in Houses of Correction or state-operated programs. Clusters in these settings should be referred to Amy Kaplan at amy.e.kaplan@mass.gov.
* Clusters occurring within a private business should be addressed by the business owner with [privately funded testing](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-testing-guidance#testing-options-for-entities-).
* Municipalities that currently have [Stop the Spread](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/stop-the-spread) testing may request rapid response testing for a school-based outbreak (see “School-Based Rapid Response Testing” below), but not for broader community testing.

*How does cluster testing work?*

* Once approved, the Department of Public Health will connect the requesting party with a **Mobile Testing Provider**, who will coordinate date(s), locations(s), and logistics of the testing event.
* The Mobile Testing Provider will provide all staff and supplies for the event and will provide individuals with their test results; the municipality is responsible for publicizing the testing event and notifying relevant community members.

*When can a LBOH request cluster testing for a community?*

* If you have identified a large COVID-19 cluster **impacting more than 10 households** and you are concerned that this will spread within the community, you may request cluster testing.

*Who do I contact to request cluster testing?*

* Contact the on-call epidemiologist in the Division of Epidemiology at the Department of Public Health by calling the 24/7 Epidemiology Line at **617-983-6800**. A state epidemiologist will work with you to determine if the situation is consistent with these guidelines.

*What other options are there to expand testing in my community?*

* The COVID Command Center has published detailed [guidance](https://www.mass.gov/doc/guidance-and-faq-for-municipal-testing-programs/download) on how to stand up a testing site.

**School-Based Rapid Response Testing**

*What is “rapid response testing?”*

* In the context of school-based testing, cluster testing is referred to as “rapid response.”

*Who can request rapid response testing?*

* Rapid response testing may be requested by a local board of health (LBOH) or school official.

*When can a school request* [*rapid response testing*](https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/mobile-testing-unit/)*?*

The following describes minimum conditions, as determined by the COVID Command Center or the Department of Public Health, when a Mobile Rapid Response Team may be deployed. One of the following conditions must be met:

* Within a 14-day period, if two or more individuals within a single classroom test positive for COVID-19 and transmission/exposure is likely to have occurred in the classroom, a mobile rapid response unit may be deployed to test all asymptomatic individuals within that classroom.
* Within a 14-day period, if 3 or more individuals or 3 percent, whichever is greater, of a given grade or cohort test positive for COVID-19 and transmission/exposure likely occurred in the school, a mobile rapid response unit may be deployed for all asymptomatic individuals in that grade or cohort.
* Within a 14-day period, if more than 3 percent of a school tests positive for COVID-19 and transmission/exposure likely occurred in the school, a mobile testing unit may be deployed for the entire school population who are asymptomatic.
* Within a 14-day period, if 2 or more individuals within the same school bus test positive COVID-19 and transmission/exposure likely occurred on the bus, a mobile rapid response unit may be deployed for all asymptomatic individuals who traveled on that bus.

# Who do I contact to request rapid response testing?

* Contact the on-call epidemiologist in the Division of Epidemiology at the Department of Public Health by calling the 24/7 Epidemiology Line at **617-983-6800**.