

COLUMBIA



Photo by Paul Ramsey

UPDATE AUGUST 2020



TOWN OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE FIRST SELECTMAN

STORM ISAIAS UPDATE 8/6/20: The impact from this storm, in terms of power outages, is greater than Superstorm Sandy. The fierce winds with this storm caused widespread power outages and historic damage, affecting customers in all of the 149 communities in Connecticut. Please prepare for multiple days without power. We are waiting for Eversource to provide more specific time-frames as the damage is assessed.



If you need to go out and travel the roads. Residents are reminded to treat all wires as if they are live. Do not go near any downed trees that are touching wires.

Potable water is NOW AVAILABLE behind the Town Hall.

The Town will have charging stations available for residents at Yeoman's Hall during normal working hours (Mon.-Wed. 8:00 to 4:00, Thursday 8:00 to 6:00 and Friday 8:00 to 12:00). Please call the Town Administrator's office at 860-228-0110 to arrange a time to charge your phones, iPad, etc.

Wifi is available at the Horace Porter School. There is no password needed and the Wifi network name is HPS-Public.

Please call the Town Administrator's Office or the First Selectman's Office for any questions or assistance at 860-228-0110.

The Town of Columbia's departments are open by appointment only; however, we continue to encourage residents to use on-line services and the drop-boxes at Yeoman's Hall and Town Hall. We have installed a lock box by Yeoman's Hall for payments, correspondence, permits, Transfer Station Applications, Dog License, etc. Tax Payments can be dropped off at the lock-box in front of Town Hall's front door.



For a staff directory to schedule an appointment please visit the Town of Columbia's website at www.columbiact.org.

Entrance to the building will be limited to Yeoman's Hall and exiting through Town Hall. Please respect our safety guidelines by wearing a mask when entering the building, use hand sanitizer at the entrance, and observe social distancing guidelines.

In accordance with Governor Lamont's Executive Order 7B and social distancing guidelines recommended by the CDC to slow community spread of COVID-19, meetings are physically closed to the public. We encourage residents to join via Zoom and to provide your comments and input during the meetings utilizing the "Chat" feature in Zoom, or providing comment during the Audience of Citizens/Public Comment portion of the meeting.

Public Comment will be accepted by our dedicated email at PublicInput@columbiact.org or by USPS mail to 323 Route 87, Columbia, CT 06237 and must be received prior to the meeting (public comment received after the meeting will be shared at the next meeting).



The Senior Center will remain closed, but the Transportation Program has started back up with limited seating from 8am to 3pm. The Medical Car is now in service. More information is provided on Page 10.

We encourage the public to visit the Town website at www.columbiact.org for up to date information and I will also be providing weekly live updates on the Town of Columbia [YouTube](#) channel and on our [Facebook](#) page.

Thank you and please be safe.

Steven M. Everett, First Selectman
severett@columbiact.org

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

AUGUST 2020



THE TOWN OF COLUMBIA IS ACCEPTING ONLINE DONATIONS through the [Recreation Departments Programs page](#). The donations are to assist those in need during the COVID-19 pandemic. Donations may be used for food supply, fuel assistance, protective equipment and other social services that will benefit those affected by COVID-19.

IMPORTANT LINKS AND INFORMATION RELATED TO COVID-19

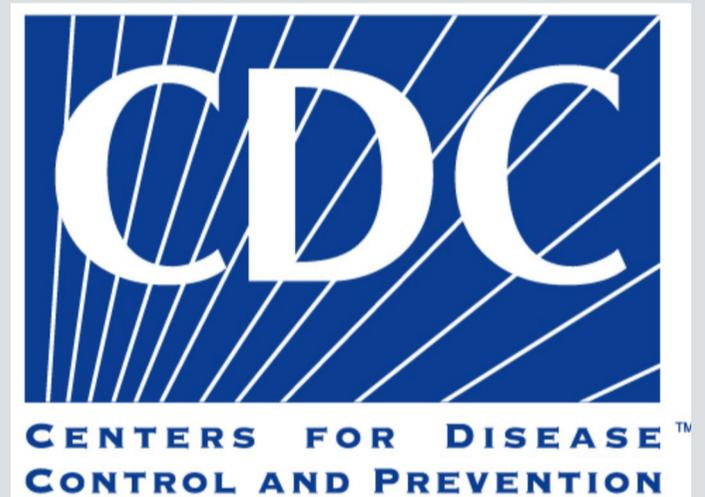
CORONA VIRUS: As the details of the COVID-19 outbreak change and the likelihood of community transmission increases, Eastern Highland Health District (EHHD) has real-time information on their website www.ehhd.org with an embedded link to COVID-19 information from the CDC. If you have specific questions please contact EHHD directly at (860) 429-3325.

Governor Lamont is encouraging Connecticut residents to sign up for *CTAlert*, the state's emergency alert system, which provides text message notifications to users. To subscribe, text the keyword COVIDCT to 888-777.

For the most up-to-date information from the State of Connecticut on COVID-19, including an FAQ and other guidance and resources, residents are encouraged to visit ct.gov/coronavirus.

For several additional graphs and tables containing more data, including a list of cases in every municipality, visit ct.gov/coronavirus and click the link that is labeled, "COVID-19 Data Tracker."

Providing information to Connecticut residents: Individuals who have general questions that are not answered on the website can also call 2-1-1 for assistance, or text



CTCOVID to 898211. The hotline is available 24 hours a day and has multilingual assistance. Anyone who is out-of-state or requires a toll-free number can connect to Connecticut 2-1-1 toll free by dialing 1-800-203-1234. This is intended to be used by individuals who are not experiencing symptoms but may have general questions related to COVID-19. Anyone who is experiencing symptoms are strongly urged to contact their medical provider.

- [Statewide: FAQ regarding the State of CT's actions related to COVID-19 from Governor Lamont's office](#)
- [Governor Lamont's Executive Orders.](#)

FOODSHARE'S FOOD DISTRIBUTION IS LOCAL and AT RENTSCHLER FIELD

CONTINUES THROUGH THE MONTH OF AUGUST. The Local MOBILE Foodshare location is at the Horace W. Porter School at 3 School House Rd. EVERY THURSDAY from 1:00 PM to 1:30 PM through AUGUST 27th. For more information please visit the [FoodShare website](#).

There is also the Food Distribution at Rentschler Field:

Distribution dates:

- Weekdays - Today through Friday, August 28th.

Distribution times:

- 8:30 am to 12:00 noon;
- Gates will close at Noon;
- Shorter wait time between 9:30 am and 11:30 am.

Distribution address:

- 615 Silver Lane, East Hartford, CT 06118 – Silver Lane entrance.

Important information:

- One allocation of food per car per day to ensure that we have enough food for everyone.
- Open to ALL – no ID needed nor income requirements.

CONNECTICUT RESIDENTS ASKED TO REPORT RECEIPT OF ANY UNSOLICITED

PACKAGES OF SEEDS: (HARTFORD, CT) – The Connecticut Department of Agriculture (CT DoAg) and The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) have been notified that several Connecticut residents have received unsolicited packages containing seeds that appear to have originated from China. The types of seeds in the packages are unknown at this time and may be invasive plant species. The packages were sent by mail and may have Chinese writing on them.

Unsolicited packages of seeds have been received by people in several other states across the United States over the last several days.

Please do not plant these seeds. CT DoAg and CAES encourage anyone who receives an unsolicited package of seeds from China to immediately contact their state plant regulatory officials, Dr. Kirby Stafford at 203-974-8485 (Kirby.Stafford@ct.gov) or Dr. Victoria Smith at 203-974-8474 (Victoria.Smith@ct.gov). Please hold on to the seeds and packaging, including the mailing label, until someone contacts you with further instructions.

Invasive species wreak havoc on the environment, displace or destroy native plants and insects and severely damage crops. Taking steps to prevent their introduction is the most effective method of reducing both the risk of invasive species infestations and the cost to control and mitigate those infestations.

EVERBRIDGE NOTIFICATIONS: We will from time to time issue an Everbridge Notification with a message from the First Selectman, Steven M. Everett to help keep you informed. If you would like to sign up for Everbridge Notifications please go to the Town's website and on the [Everbridge Notifications](#) tab.

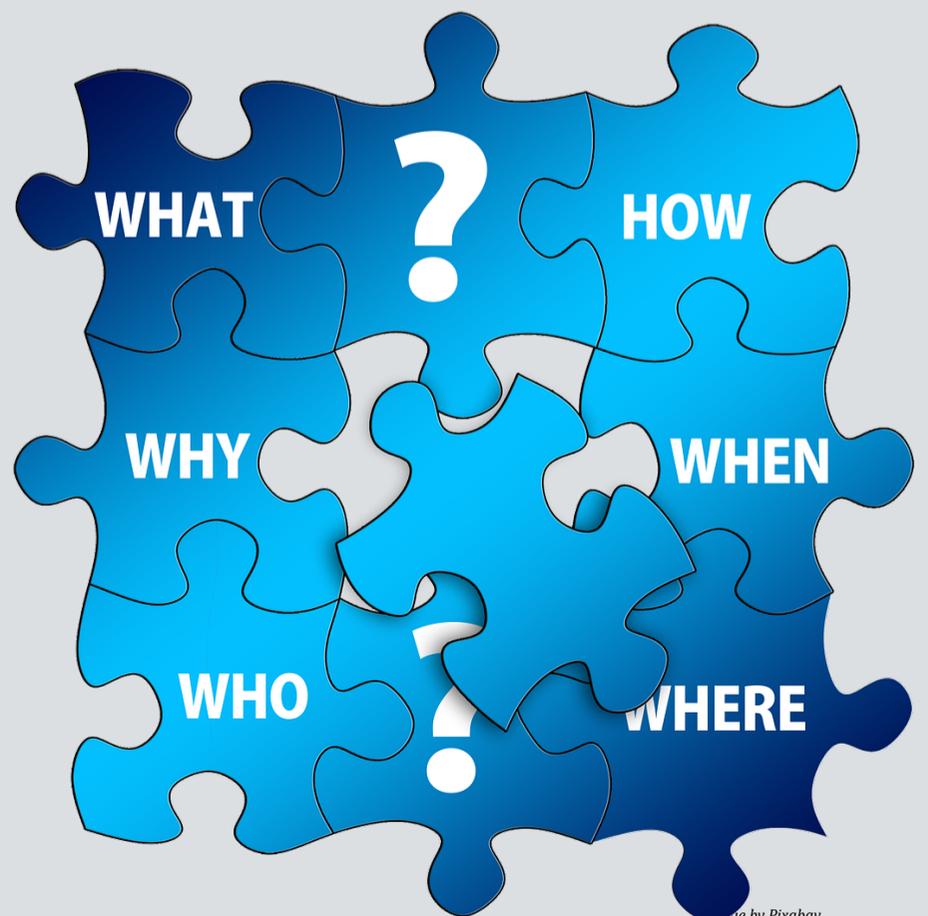
EMAIL NOTIFICATIONS: To receive Town news please go to the Town's website and click on the [Email Notifications](#) tab.

If you need assistance please do not hesitate to call the Town Administrative Office or the First Selectman at 860-228-0110 or email us at townadministrator@columbiact.org.

Thank you,

Mark B. Walter, Town Administrator
323 Route 87
Columbia, CT 06237
860-228-0110
townadministrator@columbiact.org

Find us on 



COLUMBIA'S
MOBILE FOODSHARE
NEW SITE LOCATION

HORACE W. PORTER SCHOOL
3 SCHOOL HOUSE ROAD

EVERY OTHER THURSDAY:
June 4th – June 18th – July 2nd – July 16th –
July 30th – Aug 13th – Aug 27th
1:00 PM TO 1:30 PM

**DRIVE THROUGH ONLY—NO CONTACT
OPEN TRUNK OR CAR DOOR AND WE WILL
PLACE ITEMS IN YOUR CAR AND YOU CAN
DRIVE AWAY SAFELY. PLEASE DRIVE
SLOWLY THROUGH THE PARKING LOT
AND FOLLOW THE VOLUNTEERS
DIRECTIONS**

**EVERYONE IS WELCOME—NO PERSONAL INFO
REQUIRED FOR PARTICIPATION**



UPCOMING TOWN MEETINGS

Due to the current COVID-19 Emergency, meetings will be held by utilizing remote access. Each board or committee will provide the information needed to join using an on-line conferencing platform. Please check the Town of Columbia's [website](#) for updates.

TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

REGISTRAR OF VOTERS:

AUGUST PRIMARY 8/11/20

The Republican and Democratic Primary is being held for in person voting on August 11, 2020 at HORACE W. PORTER SCHOOL. Please remember that only registered Republicans and Democrats are eligible to vote in the Primary.



If you are not currently registered to vote, or not currently affiliated with a political party (registered as Unaffiliated), you can enroll in a party via mail until August 6, 2020 or in person until noon on August 10, 2020 and still be eligible to vote in the Primary.

The deadline for requesting an Absentee Ballot for the Primary is Monday, August 10th at 4pm. Completed Absentee Ballots can be returned via mail or placed in the ballot drop box outside the entrance of Town Hall. Absentee Ballots must be received by 8pm on Primary Day, August 11, 2020. For questions about Absentee Ballots, please contact the Town Clerk at (860) 228-3284.

Due to the current COVID health crisis, we will be following state guidelines to protect the health and safety of Columbia voters and our staff. Please check our Registrar of Voters page on the town website for all Primary information including health and safety guidelines. Call or email our office should you have any questions.

Registrars of Voters

Karen Butzgy – Democratic

Katherine Morrison – Republican

(860) 228-6843 x113

registrar@columbiact.org

TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION (Continued)

BECKISH SENIOR CENTER: *Columbia's Transportation Program*

The Town of Columbia's Transportation Program will start back up with limited seating. Starting, Monday July 6th from 8am to 3pm we will begin providing transportation for our seniors and disabled persons. The seating will be limited on the 14-passenger van to 1 wheelchair and 3 passengers plus your driver.

If you have a medical appointment or would like to go food shopping please call the senior center to book your rides. Please call Lisa at 860-228-0759 ext. 2 only. I am sure we will be filling up fast due to limited space on the van. To ensure the safety of you and our drivers the following rules will need to be followed:



1. You and your caretaker must always wear a mask during your ride.
2. We will be using a scanner to check your temperature. If you are running a fever of over 100 degrees, we will not be able to transport you.
3. After each round trip per person the driver will wipe down all surfaces of the van to properly sanitize.
4. If you are feeling sick on the day of your ride please contact our office as soon as possible to reschedule.
5. Sanitizer and gloves will be available on the van.

Thank you!

Bernadette Derring, Senior Center Director

Ph:860-228-0759 or email at beckish@columbiact.org

TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION (Continued)

BUILDING/LAND USE DEPARTMENT: To make an appointment with the Building Department please call (860) 228-0440 or by email LandUse@columbiact.org. Permits or applications for land use can be safely dropped off in the lock box located by the front entrance to Yeomans Hall. The box is checked every morning. Please make sure that the envelope is clearly marked with the town department name and include your contact information on your envelope placed in the lock-box.

Please click [here](#) for all permit paperwork.

Please call or email ahead to verify permit fees (by check only, made out to Town of Columbia), or to address other questions. Work that is to be done by a contractor must include a copy of their State license, and certificate of insurance with workman's comp, and should include a signed authorization from the property owner. Inspections will be carried out by appointment only for exterior inspections as well as inspections of non-occupied structures (new construction/additions) will continue.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS: The Transfer Station has resumed full service with the following exceptions:

- Swap Shop is Closed.
- Hard & soft cover books will not be accepted.
- Textiles (clothing) will not be accepted. Please dispose of textiles in the regular garbage.

When providing payment please use exact change. There is a box mounted on the outside of the Transfer Station custodians office for your payments. The Scouts BSA Redemption Shed will be open. We ask residents to please be respectful as always of this shed and to please only deposit CT redeemable bottles and cans.

Applications can be picked up at the Transfer Station or [on-line](#). Please mail in your application to 323 Route 87, Columbia CT., attention Town Clerk, drop off at the lock box located outside Yeoman's Hall. Please include a self-addressed stamped envelope. You can also call the Town Clerk's office for an appointment at 860-228-3284.

TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION (Continued)

You can also purchase your Transfer Station stickers on-line on the [Reckdesk](#) page. If you have not previously set up an account in our Reckdesk system you will need to do so. Once your account is set up click on the Programs icon and scroll down to Transfer Station Pass and click to go to the on-line application process.

The standard permit price (2 stickers) is \$40 per household for non-seniors and \$20 per household for seniors (62 and over). Up to 2 additional stickers may be purchased at \$20 each.

REMINDER: When using the Transfer Station Masks Are Required and practice social distancing.



TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

(Continued)

FIRE MARSHAL: OPEN BURNING - The Town of Columbia allows campfires and the burning of brush. Both are governed by the State of Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) regulations and town ordinance 15-8. These regulations and guidelines can be found on-line at [CT.GOV website](#) or the [Town's website](#).

Campfire Safety

- No permit is required, but follow safety guidelines.
- Campfires should not be larger than 3 feet in diameter.
- Burn tree wood only.

Brush Burning

- A permit is required.
- Do not burn to clear land.
- Brush should be 3 inches in diameter or less.
- Burn piles should not exceed 10 feet in diameter or height.

Safety Tips for All Fires

- If the smoke affects your neighbors, find a different location to burn.
- Have a 5-gallon bucket of water and a metal rake available, if needed.
- No burning of garbage, furniture, tires, manufactured lumber, stumps, or hazardous materials.
- Do not place fire under electrical lines, the smoke can be a conductor.
- Always burn safely and never leave a fire unattended.

If you have any questions or need to obtain an open burning permit, please contact the Town of Columbia Land Use Department at 860-228-0440.

Michael Lester
Fire Marshal/Open Burning Official
Town of Columbia

TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION

(Continued)

TAX OFFICE: In accordance with Governor Lamont's Executive orders Columbia has adopted the Deferment Program. This defers the last day to pay taxes until October 1, 2020. The exception to this program is: Real estate bills for landlords and Real Estate escrowed accounts, they are due on or before Monday August 3, 2020. The postmark of August 4, 2020 is a late payment and interest will be charged from the due date of July 1, 2020 at 3. % (1.5% for July and 1.5% for August).

All motor vehicle taxes, the 1st installment of Real Estate and Personal Property taxes are due on or before October 1, 2020. This office uses the postmark as the date of payment.

The postmark of October 2, 2020 is a late payment and interest will be charged at 6%

(1.5% for July, 1.5% for August, 1.5% for September and 1.5% for October). By law, interest is charged at 1.5% per month from the due date of July 1, 2020. Please check your bill for the last day to pay without a penalty printed below the July 1, 2020 payment amount.



You can view and pay tax bills on-line at www.columbiact.org.

You may need to scroll down on the home page to find the view/pay on-line link. The service fees to pay tax bills on-line using a credit or debit card is 2.95% or if using a Bank account .95 cents.

Payments may be mailed using the envelope enclosed with your bill or put in one of the lock boxes outside of the Town Hall front doors.

If you need assistance please contact the tax office at 860-228-0230, or via email at taxcollector@columbiact.org. The office hours in July and August 3rd are Monday through Wednesday 8:00-4:00, Thursday 8:00-6:00 and Friday 8:00-12:00. Beginning August 4, 2020, the tax office hours are Monday through Wednesday 8:00-2:00, Thursday 8:00-6:00 and closed on Friday. If you need to enter the Town Hall please call the office to make an appointment.

TOWN CLERKS OFFICE: It is business as usual in the Town Clerk's office for those services that you might need – Recording and Searching of Land Records, Fishing and Hunting licenses, Certified copies of Vital Records, Marriage Licenses, Dog Licenses, Transfer Station stickers, etc.

TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION (Continued)

As of July 6, 2020, admittance to the Town Clerk's office is by appointment only. Please call our office at 860-228-3284 to set up an appointment.

For your convenience, a large white drop box has been installed outside the doors to Yeoman's Hall. This box can be used to drop off items for the Town Clerk and is shared with other offices in Town Hall.

PRIMARY ELECTION ABSENTEE BALLOT: There is a separate drop box outside the doors to Town Hall (Adella G. Urban Administrative Offices) marked for Absentee Ballots ONLY. Please use this drop box ONLY for the official returned Absentee Ballot. This box IS NOT to be used to request an absentee ballot.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call us or reach out to us by email – Robin (townclerk@columbiact.org) or Gail (atownclerk@columbiact.org).

Take care. Stay safe.

RECREATION DEPARTMENT: Please note that the Parks and Recreation Department is now located at the Murphy House at Columbia Lake. Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)!

Beach passes can be purchased on-line using this [link](#). If you want to purchase a day pass throughout the year you will be able to do it on-line. If you need to purchase one in person you will be able to do so using credit/debit card. If you would like to use cash we ask that you bring exact change to limit the exchange of cash. We also ask that you respect the space of staff that you may be interacting with for everyone's safety.



TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION (Continued)

Rec Park: Grounds are open to the public. Please note that social distancing is recommended even in open parks, and that group sizes should be kept to an absolute minimum. **The use of the playground equipment *IS* prohibited.**

Concert on the Green is scheduled for Wednesday, August 19th from 6-8 PM on the Town Green. The concert features Bruce John and is free to attend.



**SUMMER
CONCERT**

FEATURING BRUCE JOHN

Wednesday, August 19, 2020

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Columbia Town Green

Thank You to Our Sponsor!
Law Office of Marguerite T. Friar, LLC

Free Admission!
Free food and beverages!

The poster features a vibrant background with a large yellow sun in the upper right, blue musical notes scattered around the text, and a brown acoustic guitar in the lower half. The bottom of the poster is decorated with light blue wavy lines representing water.

TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION (Continued)

Other news from the Columbia Parks & Rec Department continued:

- New sign at Columbia Town Beach has been installed
- Kayaks can be rented at Columbia Lake by residents – cost is \$10.00 for 2 hours – provided with life jacket. We have single kayaks and one double kayak
- Fit-Fusion classes are being held on Mondays and Wednesdays at Yeoman’s Hall from 4:30 – 5:30 PM. We will have a max occupancy of 12 people per a class and our asking that you reserve your spot by emailing recdirector@columbiact.org.
- Yoga will be starting on Tuesday, August 25th at Yeoman’s Hall. Class runs from 6-7 PM



MARINE PATROL AND GATE MONITORING:

GATE MONITORING

- May 16th & 17th: 9:00 am – 3:00 pm
- May 23rd - September 13th: 10:00 am – 8:00 pm
- Weekends Only: September 19th - October 11th: 10:00 am-8:00 pm

BOAT PATROL

- Dates: May 16th - September 13th
- Weekends: 11:00 am - 8:00 pm
- Weekdays: 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm

TOWN DEPARTMENT NEWS AND INFORMATION (Continued)

The Road Race has a new name, date, and location. We have partnered with 02 Events Productions to bring you the Summer Sizzler. Sign up quick as entries are limited this year. Proceeds support Columbia Parks and Recreation. For more information and to register click [here](#).

A promotional poster for the Summer Sizzler Airline Trail 5K race. The poster features a large, stylized sun graphic in the center with a blue banner across it. The text on the sun reads "SUMMER SIZZLER" at the top, "AIRLINE TRAIL 5K" on the banner, "COLUMBIA, CT" below the banner, and "AUGUST 14TH, 2020" at the bottom. Below the sun graphic, the text "Register Online: www.lightboxreg.com" and "Early Registration Discount!" is displayed. Further down, smaller text provides registration details: "On-line registration will be open until 1:00 pm on race day. On-site registration is from 5:00 PM to 6:30 PM; fee will be \$30." At the bottom, a black-bordered box contains the starting point and time: "Starting Point: 22 Willimantic Road, Columbia" and "Start Time: 6:45 PM". The background is a solid blue color, and there is a decorative grass border at the bottom.

SUMMER SIZZLER
AIRLINE TRAIL 5K
COLUMBIA, CT
AUGUST 14TH, 2020

Register Online: www.lightboxreg.com

Early Registration Discount!

On-line registration will be open until 1:00 pm on race day.
On-site registration is from 5:00 PM to 6:30 PM; fee will be \$30.

Starting Point:
22 Willimantic Road, Columbia
Start Time: 6:45 PM

NON-MUNICIPAL SERVICES PROVIDERS AND NON-PROFIT NEWS AND INFORMATION

SAXTON B. LITTLE LIBRARY IS OPEN AS FOLLOWS:

* **Summer Reading continues.** There is still time to sign up for a History of Bibliotherapy, Homeschooling 101, How To Make Homemade Kombucha, view Animal Embassy and more all from the comfort of home. Contact the Library for Zoom codes or more information. Readers are still earning tickets to enter into our end of summer drawing and supporting Read for Feed donations to Animal Companions Animal Shelter, while earning reading time points to adopt a (stuffed) animal.

* **Join us for our book groups or chat discussions.** More than 8 to choose from, for all ages. **Read Woke**, meets for the first time August 13 – be a founding member!

* **In-Library Browsing Times** -- Tuesday 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm and 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm, Wednesday 11:00 am - 2:00 pm, and Saturdays 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm. [Note: limited browsing area, stacks, children's area and rest rooms staff only. Masks and social distancing are required.]

* **Curbside pick-ups** -- Mondays 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm, Thursday noon – 4:00 pm, 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm, Saturday 11:00 am – 1:00 pm

Materials may be requested by calling the Library, requesting through our catalog or by emailing: SBL@columbiactlibrary.org.

If you have materials checked-out from Spring, we thank you for taking care of them. We are now ready for their return home! Our outside Book Drops are open 24-7. Please return materials now – while they are still not accruing any fines! Thank you.

Don't have a card? *We can issue you one remotely.*

Don't know what you'd like? *Try a grab bag or our **Tailored Titles program** where we offer you suggestions to try based on your interest.*

Missing browsing the shelves? *Do it virtually from your computer. Instructions found [here](#).*

Call us at 860.228.0350. Email us: SBL@columbiactlibrary.org

Or visit our website: www.columbiactlibrary.org for more information and to sign up for our e-news letter and be the first to know about new events.

We are happy to continue to provide services to the Columbia Community during these stressful and unprecedented times.

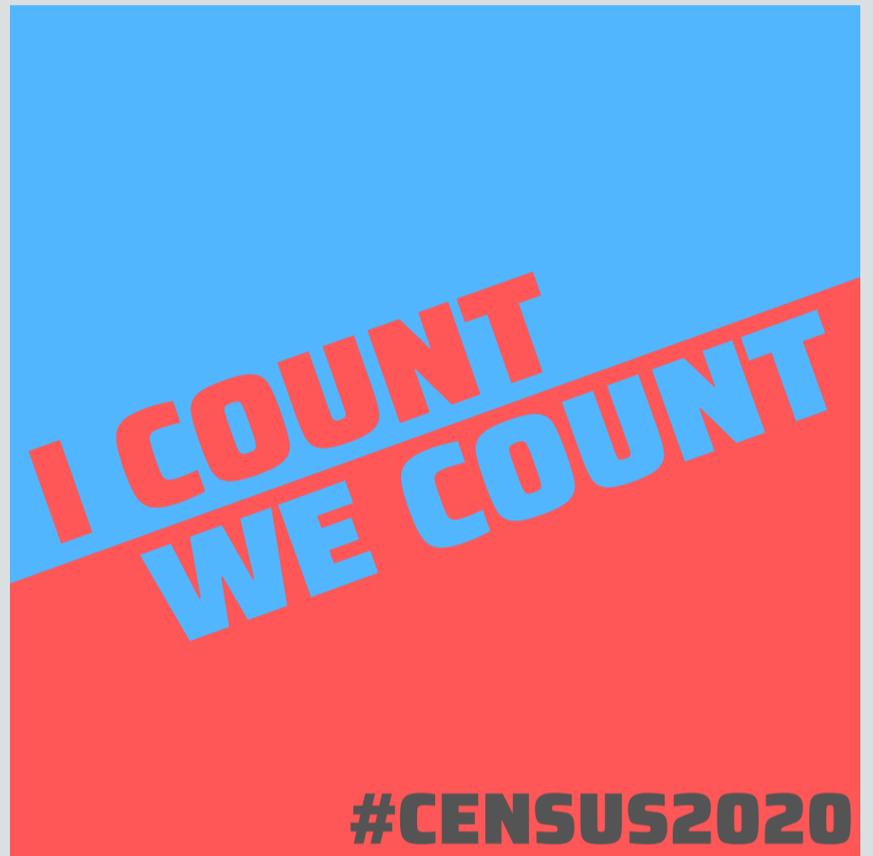
NON-MUNICIPAL SERVICES PROVIDERS AND NON-PROFIT NEWS AND INFORMATION

2020 CENSUS:

The 2020 Census is still on-going. It is not too late to respond! Go to [Census.gov](https://www.census.gov) or call (844)-330-2020.

The U.S. Census Bureau, in coordination with federal, state and local health officials, will begin a phased restart of some 2020 Census field operations in select geographic areas this week. As part of the phased restart of operations, the Census Bureau will resume dropping off 2020 Census invitation packets at front doors of households in areas where the majority of households do not receive mail at their home. This operation is also known as "Update Leave". About 5% of households are counted in the Update Leave operation, where census workers will confirm or update a household's physical location address and then leave a census questionnaire packet during the months of July and August. For more information, please visit the [2020 Census COVID-19 operational adjustments](#) page.

Furthermore, if any Columbia household has not filled out the 2020 Census the Censes field representatives will be going door to door in mid-to-late August.



NON-MUNICIPAL SERVICES PROVIDERS AND NON-PROFIT NEWS AND INFORMATION

Molly's Market is a traditional style farmer's market that is taking place at Heartstone Farm and Winery in Columbia CT. From 3-6pm every Thursday August 6th-October 29th you will find fresh home grown products from local farmers. Vendors include Field Engineer Farm, Wilkinson Farm, Cambera Farm, Granny's Pie Factory and more. Molly's Market is still looking for more vendors to join the market. If you are interested send an email to mollysmarketct@gmail.com for more information. Be sure to check out the [Molly's Market's Facebook](#) page and Instagram @mollysmarketct for everything from getting to know the market's vendors, to recipes and farming tips.

