



COVID-19 Situation Update for Ashe County November 6, 2020

This document is intended to provide a regular update on the local response to COVID-19 in our communities and timely, trended data related to COVID-19. This report will be published on Fridays.

Situation Update

For the week of October 25-31 (graphs below), there were increases in active cases and for those who are in quarantine. These data points are beginning to trend in the wrong direction and we are continuing to see an increase in cases for Ashe County. The largest percentage of cases are occurring in the 25-49 year old age group.

The same trend continues with most cases exposed due to close contact with others through living or working closely with others or attending social gatherings. Small gatherings with people outside of immediate household members has contributed to additional exposures. As we get closer to the Thanksgiving and Holiday season, we encourage everyone to be mindful of the fact that this virus is still with us and there are actions we can all take to avoid and lessen our exposure and a potential spike that could overwhelm our healthcare system. If you will be hosting or attending an event, NC DHHS has compiled some [tips for gathering safely](#) and some [guidance for private social gatherings](#).

Some of those tips include:

- Stay home if you are sick or have been exposed to COVID-19,
- Keep the gathering small,
- Stay outdoors if you can,
- Avoid self-serve food,
- Consider asking guests to self-quarantine for 14 days before the event, and if you cannot, at least minimize your exposure to others prior to attending, and
- Maintain a safe distance of at least 6 feet from others, wash your hands and wear a face covering.

“The Thanksgiving and upcoming holiday season will certainly look a lot different this year than it has in previous years. We encourage everyone to commit to actions that will keep you and the entire community healthy and safe and reduce the risk of virus transmission. We must keep up this commitment to ensure our metrics go in the right direction,” stated Jennifer Greene, Health Director, AppHealthCare.

Key Points

- **Free COVID-19 Testing at AppHealthCare:** We offer free COVID-19 testing Monday through Friday beginning at 9:30am. Please do not just show up for testing. We request that you

schedule an appointment through our [website](#) or by calling our COVID-19 Call Center at (828) 795-1970. Rapid testing is available on a limited basis to those who have symptoms.

- **We continue case investigation and contact tracing efforts to reduce the spread of COVID-19. If you receive a call from a member of our case investigation or contact tracing team, we urge you to cooperate and provide information that will help us conduct response efforts.** You may receive a call from (844) 628-7223 or (828) 264-4995. It may also show up as “NC Outreach” or “Contact Tracing.” Your cell phone carrier may flag the call as spam.
- We are continuing to work with Ashe County Schools and provide public health information to inform their decisions about school operations.
- We are conducting response based testing when data gathered in the case investigation of a positive case informs the need to conduct broader testing. These response based testing events are intended to focus on areas where there is potential for further spread, a cluster of cases, or an outbreak.
- PPE (personal protective equipment) levels remain stable.
- Turnaround times are around 2-4 days. NC DHHS provides data on testing turnaround times. This data is updated daily and can be found [here](#).
- We continue to add positions and capacity to respond to the demand in this response effort. More information about those positions can be found [here](#).
- Outreach continues to be an important part of our collective community strategy to address COVID-19. Regular meetings take place with community partners to discuss the current situation in the county, strategize areas for growth and improvement and provide a time for questions and answers.

Outbreaks & Clusters

Data is provided for outbreaks and clusters that are active and ongoing. The number of cases for outbreaks and clusters are current as of each Thursday at 9:00am. The case counts vary day by day as new cases are identified and as cases are moved in and out of isolation. This data may not match other reported data since this is a point in time. As we conduct outbreak and case investigations, the data included in this report are subject to change. For a current case count, visit the [AppHealthCare data dashboard](#), which is updated daily by noon.

An outbreak is defined as two or more laboratory confirmed cases. A cluster is defined as a minimum of five cases with illness onsets or initial positive results within a 14-day period and plausible epidemiologic linkage between cases. An outbreak or cluster is considered over if 28 days have passed after the latest date of symptom onset in a symptomatic person or first date of specimen collection from the most recent asymptomatic person, whichever is later. Additional information on the [definitions of outbreaks and clusters](#) is provided by the North Carolina Department of Health & Human Services.

NC DHHS also provides regularly updated information on [outbreaks and clusters](#). A newly added “COVID-19 Clusters in North Carolina” report includes aggregate data of settings where clusters are occurring. These settings include workplaces, shopping services, community events, etc. This report will be updated each Monday.

Active Outbreaks & Clusters <i>Data is current as of Thursday, November 5, 9:00am</i>				
Facility or Setting Type	Facility or Setting Name	Active Cases	Cumulative Cases	Last Positive Result
Long Term Care Facility	Forest Ridge Assisted Living	1 staff	20 staff 41 residents 7 deaths	10/27/2020
Long Term Care Facility	Margate Health & Rehab	2 staff	4 staff	10/30/2020
Agricultural	Happy Holiday Tree Farm	0	4 staff	10/28/2020

Mitigation and Response Efforts

- Ongoing testing continues to monitor the health of residents in skilled nursing facilities
- Educational outreach on COVID-19 prevention with these facilities
- Positive cases are separated from others to allow for safe isolation
- Ongoing daily health monitoring is occurring at the facilities
- Monitoring of positive cases continues with public health staff

Demographic Data from NC DHHS as of November 6

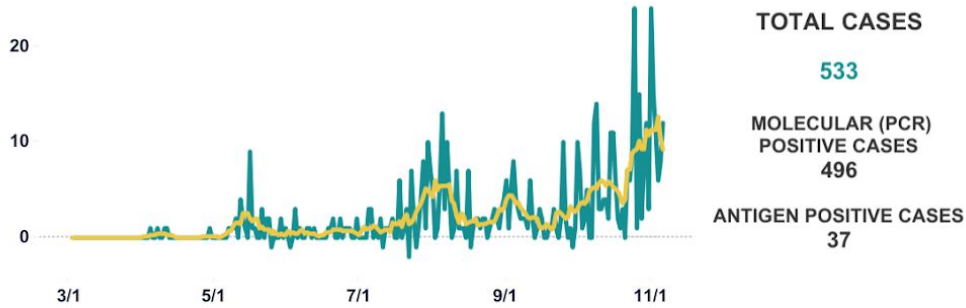
NC DHHS updates this data daily and can be found on [NC DHHS's website](#).

Daily Cases i

Top Graph - Select By:

- CASES by Date Reported
- CASES by Date of Specimen Collection
- DEATHS by Date of Death

Is Ashe County seeing a downward trajectory over 14 days, or sustained leveling in new cases?



Molecular (PCR) positive cases represent confirmed cases, and antigen positive cases represent probable cases of COVID-19, in accordance with CDC case classification guidelines. The terms "confirmed" and "probable" are used nationally to standardize case classifications for public health surveillance but should not be used to interpret the utility or validity of any laboratory test type.

Demographic Data - Cases

Select county:
Ashe County

Ashe County Cases

533

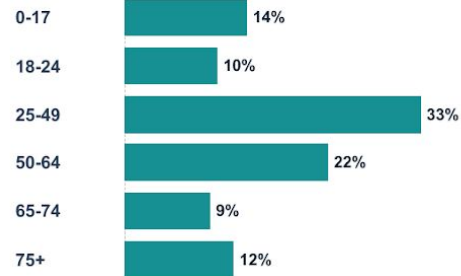
Select demographic metric:

- CASES
- DEATHS

For demographic groups where the county has fewer than five cases and the county has a population of fewer than 500 for that demographic, then that data is suppressed for privacy and the graph for that demographic won't appear. For example, if a county has fewer than five cases in people 18-24 years old and the county population has less than 500 people who are 18-24 years old based on census data, then the age graph will not appear for that county. Numbers may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

By Race

By Age



By Ethnicity



By Gender



Missing Demographic Data

Race	209
Ethnicity	276
Gender	3

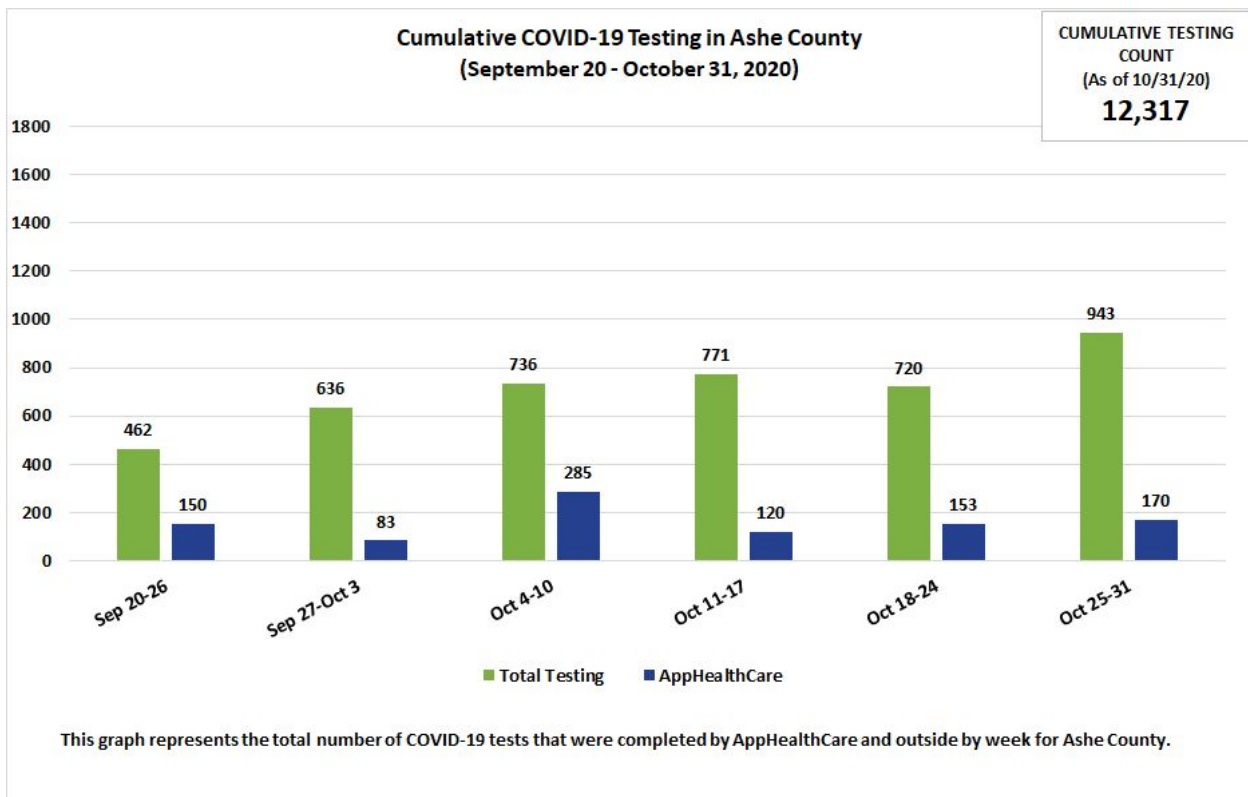
November 6, 2020

Data for Ashe County

An important note about data context: The graphs below show the available data. Please carefully read the descriptions below the graph to understand the data limitations. The most current data is available on the [AppHealthCare dashboard](#), as the data below is past data trended.

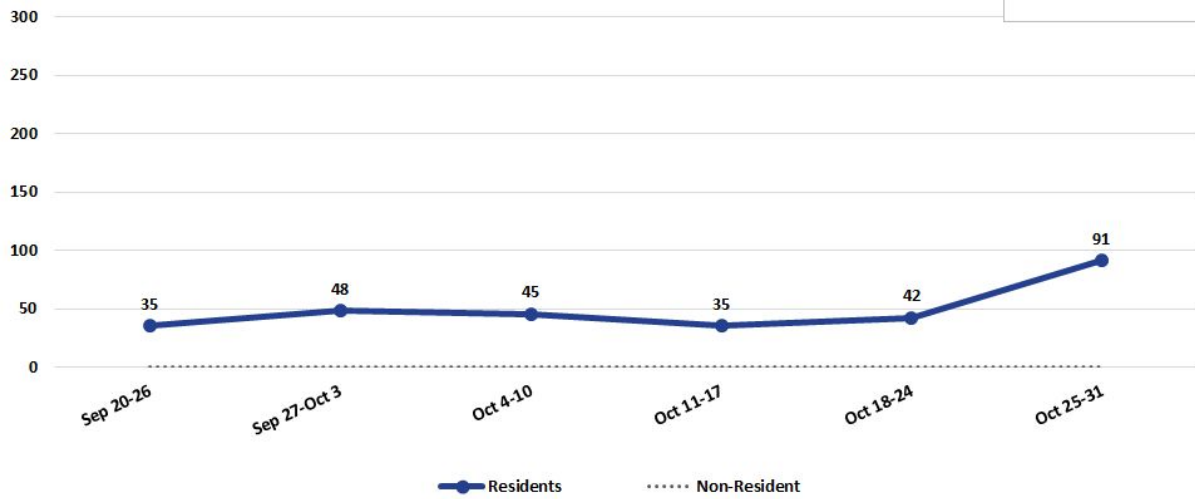
Important Disclaimer About Data

It is imperative that this report and the data contained within is understood in the appropriate context. Please, if you use this report, please be certain that the information included within is shared within the appropriate context. Doing otherwise may be damaging to the public health response efforts. There are multiple factors involved in addressing this virus, including compliance with public health control measures implemented by the local health director and referenced in NC GS 130A. These measures are imperative for limiting the spread of COVID-19. **AppHealthCare strongly advises that when data is shared for the purposes of educating the public or informing policy decisions, it should come directly from NC DHHS or AppHealthCare as it is presented with appropriate context from those directly involved in public health response.**



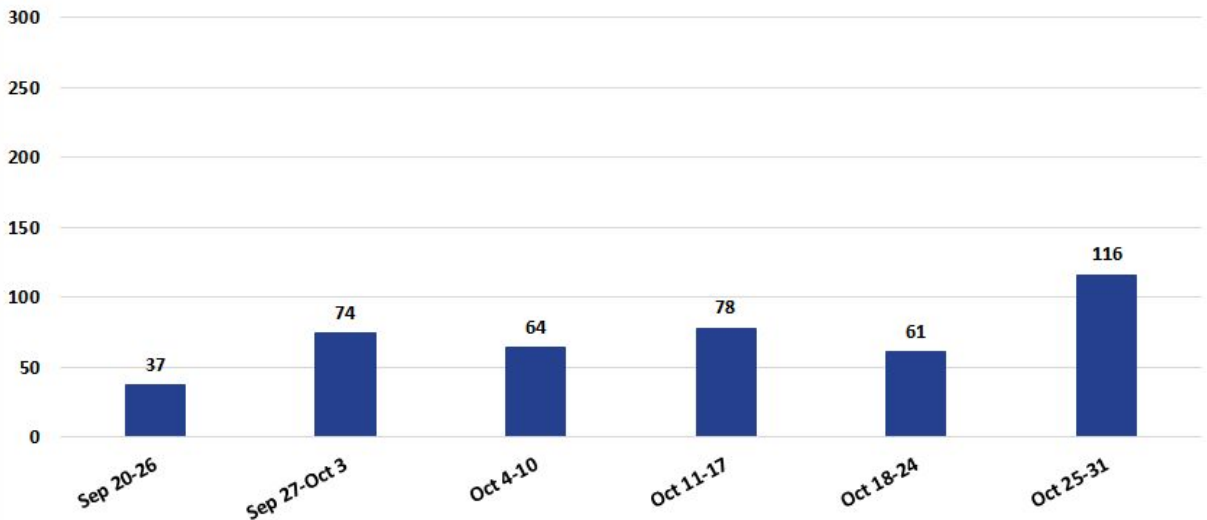
**Cumulative Case Count by Week in Ashe County
(September 20 - October 31, 2020)**

CUMULATIVE CASE COUNT
(As of 10/31/20)
540



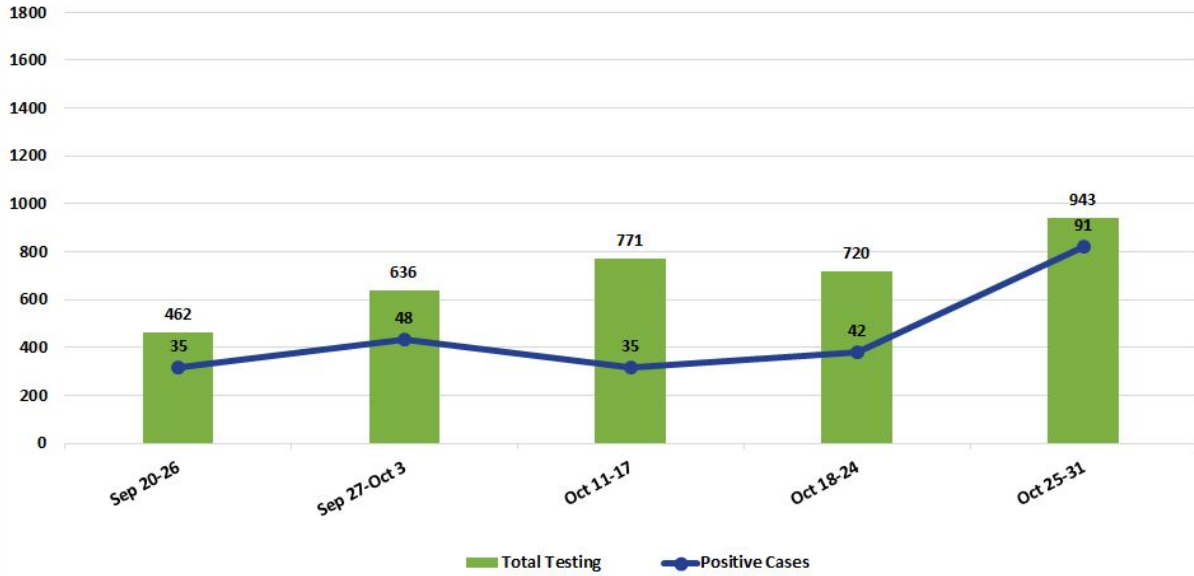
The solid navy blue line in this graph represents the number of positive COVID-19 cases among Ashe County residents by week. This graph also shows the number of non-residents that have tested positive for COVID-19 but reside in another county.

**Number of Active Positive Cases by Week in Ashe County
(September 20 - October 31, 2020)**



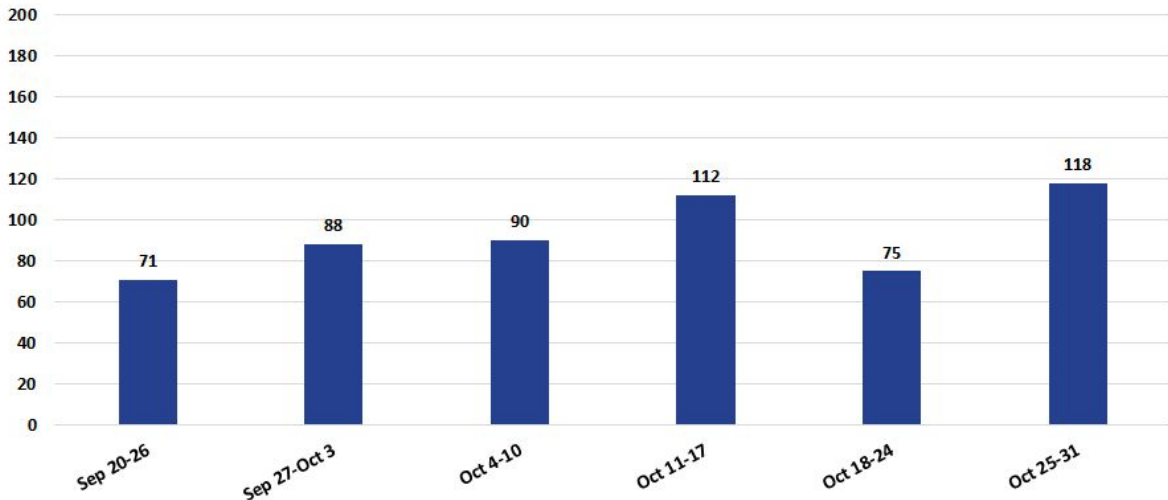
The graph represents the number of active COVID-19 positive cases by week in Ashe County. A positive COVID-19 case is considered active for ten days after the initial positive test result.

**Total Weekly Tests Reported vs. Weekly Positive Case Count in Ashe County
(September 20 - October 31, 2020)**



This graph represents the number of COVID-19 positive cases by week in Ashe County compared to the total number of reported tests that were completed by AppHealthCare and outside agencies each week in Ashe County.

**Number of People Being Actively Monitored by Week in Ashe County
(September 20 - October 31, 2020)**



This graph represents the total number of Ashe County residents that AppHealthCare staff have monitored due to being exposed to a confirmed COVID-19 case. Individuals are notified and asked to quarantine and monitor for symptoms for fourteen days.

Additional data can be found on [AppHealthCare's data dashboard](#). This data is updated each day around noon.

Additional Data and Information from NC Department of Health & Human Services

- **Zip Code Data** - NC DHHS publishes data for confirmed cases by zip code for the state. The map and data can be found [here](#).
- **Outbreak Data & Information** - This data is broken down by type of congregate setting like a nursing home, residential care facility, correctional facility, or a congregate working setting. The map by county and report can be found [here](#).
- **Hospitalizations** - More detailed data around hospitalizations, ventilators and bed capacity is now available by regions and can be found [here](#). Our district counties are in the Triad Healthcare Preparedness Coalition.

Key Messages

- **Show Your Love!** This multi-county communication campaign focuses on showing your love to yourself, others around you and the community. Posters and social media graphics for the 3Ws are now available on our website in both English and Spanish. Download them [here](#).
- Practice the 3Ws if you have to leave your house - **Wear** a cloth face covering, **Wash** your hands frequently or use hand sanitizer and **Wait** 6 feet from others.
- Regularly clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces like doorknobs, handles, light switches, countertops, etc.
- If you are sick, please stay home except to receive medical care.
- If you are at higher risk for severe illness due to COVID-19, we encourage you to stay at home to the greatest extent possible to decrease your chance of infection.



Testing

If you meet any of the criteria listed below, we encourage you to be tested for COVID-19. You can call your healthcare provider or AppHealthCare. You should be tested if:

- You believe you have symptoms of COVID-19,
- You have no symptoms and you are at higher risk for severe illness (you are 65 or older, you have an underlying health condition or chronic condition), or have been in close contact with someone who is known to have a positive result,
- You are someone working in a frontline role or essential business where social distancing is hard to maintain,
- You are a first responder, law enforcement officer, fire department staff member, or healthcare staff member,
- You live in or work in a facility where social distancing is hard to maintain, like congregate living, healthcare facilities or home care.

- You are part of a historically marginalized population who may be at higher risk for exposure.
- You have attended protests, rallies, or other mass gatherings where you could have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 or could have exposed others because it may have been difficult to practice social distancing.

What should you do while waiting for test results? What if the test is negative or positive?

Answers for those questions, including prevention measures and home care if someone is sick are included in NC DHHS guidance [here](#).

NC DHHS has tools for the public including a website to [Check Symptoms](#) and [Find My Testing Place](#). AppHealthCare does not require someone to have symptoms to be tested.

Alleghany (336) 372-5641 | Ashe (336) 246-9449 | Watauga (828) 264-4995

AppHealthCare COVID-19 Hotline (828) 795-1970

General COVID-19 Questions: preparedness@apphealth.com

Media inquiries: media@apphealth.com

www.AppHealthCare.com and follow us on Facebook & Twitter

