



## Facebook Announces “Local Alerts” Tool for Local Government Pages

As COVID-19 has spread in the US, local governments have used Facebook to share critical information with their communities about this fast-evolving situation. Because of the increasing need to get timely and accurate information to local communities, **we’ve expanded Facebook Local Alerts to municipal governments, state and local emergency response organizations, law enforcement agencies, and public health departments nationwide.**

[Facebook Local Alerts](#) is a free tool that allows state and local government, public health agency, law enforcement and first responder Pages to broadcast essential updates to people in their community via Facebook by marking a page post as local alert, which sends out a notification to page followers who live in a community. With four out of five internet users actively engaging on Facebook each month in the US, this is a great tool to reach your communities in emergency situations, like COVID-19. [Learn more here.](#)

*Facebook Local Alerts* is now available to the following Facebook Pages in the **State of Mississippi**:

- **At City and County Level:** primary government page (City of or County of XYZ), law enforcement and emergency responder pages, and public health agency pages
- **At State Level:** public health agency pages, law enforcement and emergency responder pages

**\*Note: the tool is not available to elected officials or public figures, only government organizations listed above\***

Some of you may already see the Local Alerts option in your government Page’s composer box (where you go to make a post). **The first time you click on the Local Alerts option, an admin for your Page will need click through the instructions before you can send your first Local Alert. We recommend doing this on a desktop computer** (rather than using a mobile browser or app). We also recommend doing this as soon as you can to ensure you have full ability to send Local Alerts when you need them. **If your Page is eligible and you don’t see the option to post a Local Alert already available on your Page, please [complete this form](#).** Please understand that review time is roughly one-two weeks after signing up through the form, due to COVID-19.

### Step-by-step guide

1. Go to your Facebook Page while using a computer (not a phone or tablet) and select the “local alerts” button in the page composer experience (where you go to make a post).
2. When you do this for the first time, you will be prompted to go through a short onboarding experience. Once an admin from your page has completed the onboarding experience, you will have the option to post a local alert, which will:
  1. Allow Page followers to see the “local alert” **indicator** on that post in News Feed ()
  2. Cause that post to appear on **Today In**, a new place on Facebook for local news and community information.
  3. Send a **notification** to Page followers living in the affected area, as well as to people who have opted in to receive regular local updates from Today In.

Please know that Local Alerts are meant to be used *sparingly* to communicate important information to people living in your community. Local Alerts can be used in emergencies as well as in less critical situations where timely information is valuable. Specifically, Local Alerts are meant to help you communicate information that is:

1. **Urgent and time-sensitive.** Speed matters.
2. **Need-to-know.** Very important.
3. **Actionable.** May lead people to take action.
4. **Local.** Matters for people living in a specific area (vs. of national importance).
5. **Relevant to the public at large.** Broadly applicable.

To help you learn more about how to use local alerts, please see:

- [Our Help Center guide](#) on how to use Local Alerts
- [A blog post we put out recently](#) on Local Alerts and how they've been used in emergencies.