



Pandemic Checklist for Local Governments:

Have you thought about ...?

Many emergency preparedness plans are built upon mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. As it pertains to the current COVID-19 pandemic, local governments may find themselves already in the response and later stages. If your community has a plan in place, use it as guidance. But, do note that many emergency plans are not available publicly or are heavily redacted for security reasons.

Whether a plan is available or not, this document intends to provide communities with some basic questions to think about as they handle pandemic issues. It is not an exhaustive list.

What critical services must continue during the pandemic and what are those that could be temporarily suspended?

- Examples: public safety (*incl. public safety, public works*)
- City council and regular city business meetings may still need to occur, and be considered critical services (*may be done via electronic methods*)
- Even within the “critical service” departments, priorities may shift and some services temporarily suspended

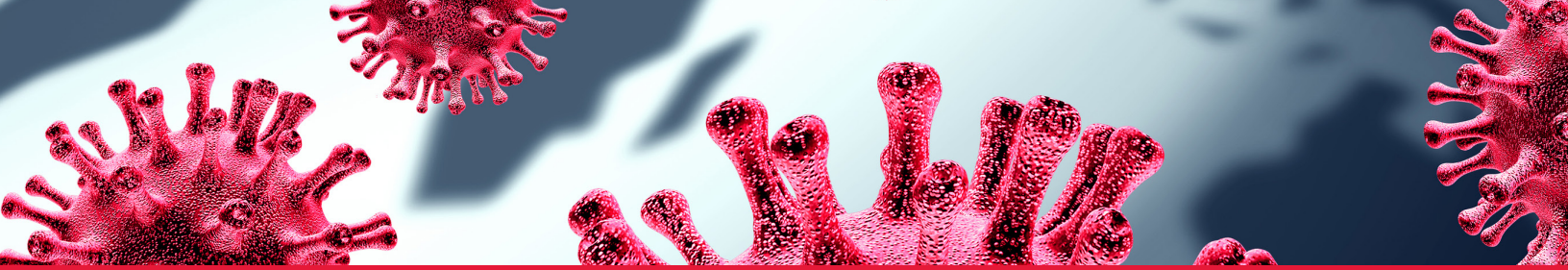
What staff will you need, and when?

- City manager, city clerk or admin (or, who will take phone calls and make arrangements), communications, human resources, IT, legal....?

- Who can step in if there are staff with no on-staff backup? Who can perform those essential responsibilities? (*Think: mayor, police chief, volunteers*)
- What could be done remotely?

What technology needs will there be to continue critical functions? What are the priorities for limited tech resources?

- Includes: staff needing to be setup to work from home or remotely
- Moving staff locations to separate out departments at different buildings/locations
- Public safety – IT needs in squad cars, police department, etc.
- How to setup and conduct electronic meetings (<https://ipib.iowa.gov/news/open-meetings-electronic-meetings-governmental-body>)



What closures are needed?

- Examples: public buildings (*to limit spread*), parks and rec. facilities, library, etc.
- Postpone or cancel meetings or functions (*potentially including longer-term functions like city festivals*)

How do you protect staff from COVID-19, to the extent possible?

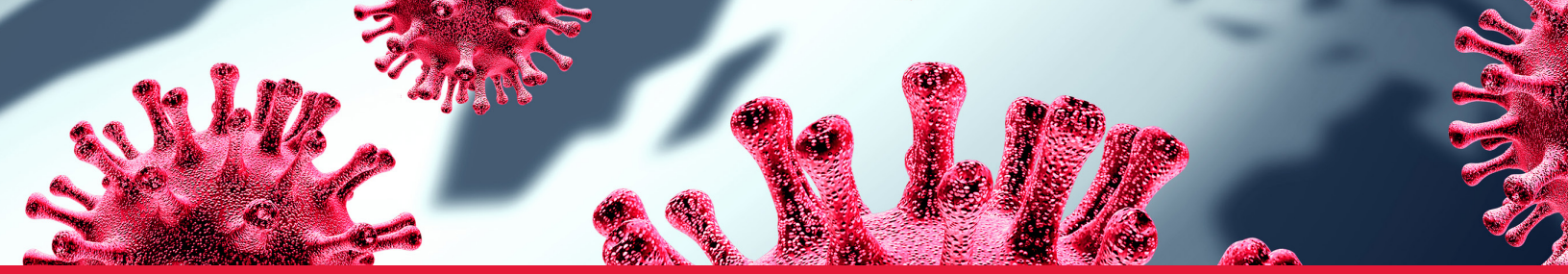
- Those who work remotely be allowed – develop a policy
- What will your new travel policy be?
- Can you separate staff that cannot work remotely into different locations, to prevent an entire department from getting sick if one does? (*Think: police officers, EMS, sanitation handlers, public works, IT, etc.*)
- What training is necessary for those staff not working remotely? (*Think: police officers, EMS, sanitation handlers, public works, utilities, etc.*)
- What is your policy for employees notifying you they are feeling ill, when they may return to work, what happens if sick leave is exhausted, what employees need to do if they are feeling well, but have been exposed to the virus, coverage for health insurance, etc.
- Encourage staff to practice good hygiene and social distancing in their personal lives as well as work lives
- How will everyday functions change? (*including public safety response, ability to visit sick/otherwise individuals in the hospital, ability to attend weddings/funerals*)

Do you need to implement staff policy changes? Other measures?

- (*Think: supervisors sending ill employees home, how is sick pay handled, employee travel, employee hygiene, internet/remote work policy*)
- Do you require employees to tell you if they've traveled outside of the state, etc.? Been potentially exposed to someone with the virus?
- Overtime/payroll, hiring temporarily employees, furloughs or layoffs

How are communications handled?

- Electronic meetings (*council meetings, departments*)
- How do we seek approvals from council/decision-makers, and how do we keep council, staff, public informed?
- How will you communicate with staff? Do your staff have a list of critical numbers and emails?
- Who has access to keys/buildings etc, if needed? Documents?
- What might you collaborate on beyond your city (*with the nearby region/metro*)?
- How do we best communicate information with the public? (*Think: notification of public meetings, actions citizens should/should not take, city functions that are cancelled, restricted, closed, etc.*)
- Do you have a city website? Social media? Do you have someone designated as a backup to make updates? Do they know the current passwords?
- How can you best communicate with/check on vulnerable individuals/groups? (*incl. elderly*)



Do you know your succession plan if critical staff are sick? If an entire department is sick?

- Do you have a plan for cross-training staff, where possible?
- Can you ask former city employees or retirees to help, if critical? Connect with third parties, neighboring or regional communities for assistance?

What supplies might you need for long-term?

- What needed materials can you safely ration if ordering more is not possible?
- What Personal Protective Equipment do you have/need? Are you able to get it? If not, what will you do?
- Do you have an alternate shelter location, in case you might need it?

What about your budget?

- Has your budget been filed? The deadline is extended, and cities may need to hold public hearings electronically (<https://ipib.iowa.gov/news/open-meetings-electronic-meetings-governmental-body>). Keep in mind budget amendment and other deadlines. Document everything! Be sure to include who authorized any expenditure, what it was used for, when, etc. Also document hours and expenses on emergency response activities, including volunteer hours.
- Have you thought about how your budget may be impacted? (*Deadlines moved for property tax and utility fee collection, economic downturn, reduced programs/fees including Road Use Tax Fund, Local Option Sales Tax, and others etc.*)
- Are costs anticipated to increase? (*IT needs for more remote workers/setup, setup of electronic meetings, cost of goods and services, etc.*)
- Have you considered refinancing local debt if interest rates plummet?
- Do you have a backup in place to process payroll? Do you have adequate separation of duties for finances? If it's within policy to make an exception, what is the notification process "up the chain?" Will workers compensation plans, processes, or costs change?

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