

As Louisiana moves through reopening phases, the Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) expects that providers will begin providing Individual and Group Supported Employment services, including opening of their provider owned/operated businesses.

To help you as you move forward, we are committed to offering you guidance to assist you in planning to keep individuals and provider staff, and their families’ safe. When developing a reopening plan, it is important to identify ways to ensure the safety and social wellbeing of the population.

It is recommended that individuals who are considered to be *vulnerable*, as defined by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) should continue to self-quarantine.

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Vulnerable Individuals are defined by the CDC as the following

- Elderly Individuals (65 years of age or older)
- Individuals with the following serious underlying health conditions including:
 - High blood pressure
 - Chronic lung disease
 - Diabetes
 - Obesity
 - Asthma
 - And those whose immune system is compromised such as by chemotherapy for cancer and other conditions requiring such therapy

The recommendations contained within this document serve as a guide in the ongoing development of providers' reopening plans. The recommendations are based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), as well as various other documents with links listed in the resource section. These recommendations include, but are not limited to:

- Training of staff and individuals;
- Having a screening process;
- Cleaning and Disinfecting the environment, such as the van, or provider owned business;
- Following guidance from the State of Louisiana for reopening and operating a business
- Establishing safe infection control practices such as wearing face coverings, social distancing and effective hand hygiene; and
- Establishing a routine that allows for sustained vigilance.

Prior to offering services, individuals and staff should be contacted to assess their interest in returning to work. A discussion should take place using the guidelines listed below:

Individual Guidance

- Is the individual ready to return to their job?
- Is the individual currently sick, recently sick, or recently exposed to COVID-19?
 - Individuals should be asked to ensure they are not currently sick and have not been knowingly exposed to COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
- Does the individual have one or more risk factors that place them in a *vulnerable* populations?
 - Individuals should understand that if they have one of the risk factors that puts them in the vulnerable population category as defined above, or if they live with someone who is classified as vulnerable, they should make an informed decision about returning to services or choosing to continue to self-quarantine.
- Does the individual understand the precautions in place for keeping them, and others, safe?

- If individuals decide to return work, they should be educated on precautions for keeping themselves and families healthy, such as practicing social distancing, wearing a mask, handwashing as well as such things as leaving shoes outside, showering and washing their clothes upon returning to their homes, etc.
- This information should also be communicated to families and those that they reside with.

Staff Guidelines

- Staff should be contacted to ensure they do not have COVID-19, and to ensure they have not been knowingly exposed to COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
- Staff should understand if they have one of the risk factors that puts them in the vulnerable population category or if they live with someone who is in the vulnerable population. They should make an informed decision about returning to work or choose to continue to self-quarantine.
- If staff decide to return work, they should be educated on precautions for keeping themselves and families healthy, such as practicing social distancing, wearing a mask, handwashing as well as such things as leaving shoes outside, showering and washing their clothes upon returning to their homes, etc.
- Staff should be provided in depth training in the proper precautions for remaining safe and keeping individuals safe

Preparing to Resume Supported Employment Services

Each agency should hold a meeting with staff, either in person or virtually, to begin developing a plan of how the agency will return to providing Supported Employment services. When preparing to resume Supported Employment services consider the following:

- Contact employers, who you currently hold contracts, in order to gauge the readiness of them for the group or individual to return to work and establish timelines
- Contact individuals to gauge who is ready to return to work, determine who will require transporting to the job site
- Possible reorganizing of the SE groups to only use those who are willing to return to work and to consider utilizing only those individuals who are needed to get the job completed
- Reorganize van routes if transportation is required by the individual
- Train staff on how to assess an individual's health, taking temperatures, proper use of a mask and gloves, proper cleaning procedures of the van using the CDC guidelines
- Create (or find) a training for the individuals on the precautions and measures to prevent infection of COVID-19, wearing mask, social distancing etc.
- Obtain proper equipment such as hand sanitizer, soap, gloves, masks etc.
- Determine procedures if someone becomes sick on the job
- Determine procedures of what will happen if someone tests positive for COVID-19
- Establish a screening process

Transporting Guidelines by a Provider

Non-emergency transport vehicles are often used to transport individuals to and from community activities. These vehicles, and the staff operating the vehicles, may interact with multiple individuals throughout the day, allowing for the potential spread of infection. As with other public spaces, routine cleaning and disinfection is recommended to reduce the spread of COVID-

19. Consider implementing the following recommendations when developing a reopening plan:

- Have family/DSW drop the individual off at the worksite, if possible.
- Temperature must be taken for each person getting in a vehicle, or prior to entering the worksite.
- If an individual has a temperature of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, the individual should not be allowed to get in the vehicle or enter the worksite.
- Each individual must use hand sanitizer and then put on a mask prior to getting in the vehicle or entering the worksite.
- The mask must be worn during the entire time the person is in the vehicle
 - If an individual has breathing challenges and is not able to wear a mask it is not advisable for that individual to return to work at this time.
- Limit the number of individuals being transported at one time through such methods as skipping every other seat. There should be enough space between individuals to practice social distancing, and so that individuals can not touch each other.
- When entering the vehicle, the first person to enter should proceed to the last seat. A seat should be skipped, the next person take the next seat, and so forth.
- The last person to enter the vehicle should be the first person to get off the vehicle. Everyone should remain seated until it's their turn to exit the vehicle.
- Consider multiple trips if needed to get everyone to the worksite.
- Vehicles should be cleaned and disinfected at a minimum of twice daily (beginning and end of each day) and when visibly soiled or after transporting a sick individual.
- Cleanse and disinfect commonly touched surfaces such as door handles, seat bars in the vehicle after each transport.
- Ensure cleaning and disinfection procedures are followed correctly. ***Please reach out to the vehicle manufacturer to understand what can and cannot be used on the interior surfaces of the vehicle to disinfect and sanitize it.***

Modifications to reduce transmission

- To increase airflow, windows should be open to the maximum extent possible while in the vehicle.
- A protective plastic barrier may be installed behind the driver or alongside the driver to assist in maintaining social distance between the driver and passengers.

Individual and Group Employment Supported Employment Guidance:

When providing individual Supported Employment and/or Group Supported Employment consider the following guidelines when developing your plan:

Work Environment Considerations for individual community jobs:

- Has the business adopted policies and procedures to support worker safety?
- Have changes been made to the work environment to increase the safety of employees?
- Are employees provided with necessary personal protective equipment (PPE)? Or do they need to provide their own personal protective equipment such as masks, gloves and hand sanitizer?
- If the individual is deciding whether to continue working, is the business allowing time off or the option to continue to take a furlough should the person feel it is unsafe for them to work?
- Is the business allowing the job coach to be onsite to provide guidance?
- Are natural supports available at the job site instead of bringing in a job coach?
- Are their self-management tools or technology that the individual can implement to promote independence on the job?

Work Environment Group Supported Employment Considerations:

- Has the business, where the group will be working, adopted policies and procedures to support the workers safely?
- Have changes been made to the work environment to increase the safety of all employees?
- Are there requests that need to be made on behalf of someone who is part of the group?
- Can the number in the group be limited to ensure safety, and the work still be done efficiently and effectively?
- Ensure Individuals use a face covering while working.
- Ensure individuals are practicing social distancing
- Individuals should be reminded to wash /sanitize hands frequently (see info below)
- Consider altering start times in order to accommodate changes such as altered routes, fewer individuals working etc.
- Individuals can meet up at the worksite or a meeting spot if individuals are coming from various parts of the community and typically are transported by other vehicles.
- Look for places in the community where breaks (like lunch breaks) can be taken while practicing appropriate social distancing.

Work Environment for Provider Owned/Operated Businesses Considerations:

Businesses should register and follow the Guidance of the State Fire Marshal's office and the [Governor's guidance for the Reopen Plan](#).

- Providers should post signs on the door encourage customers to wear masks while frequenting the business.
- Individuals, who are employed at the provider owned business, should wear masks while at work.
- Individuals should follow proper social distancing protocols.

SCREENING PROCEDURES

To limit the spread of COVID-19, it is important to promptly identify and separate individuals who are potentially infectious. Screening helps reduce the risk of exposure. Consider implementing the following recommendations when developing a reopening plan:

- All individuals, and staff should be screened prior to beginning services. Consider temperature checks with a no contact thermometer, and screening for commonly associated symptoms of COVID-19 such as:
 - Cough,
 - Shortness of breath,
 - Chills,
 - Repeated shaking with chills,
 - Headache,
 - Sore throat,
 - New loss of taste or smell, and/or
 - Muscle pain.
- Consider a mid-day recheck of temperature and symptom screening. If the individual screens positive, that person should be isolated from other people in a safe location and sent home immediately, and then they should contact their primary care physician for guidance.
- It is important to understand the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if an individual or staff becomes symptomatic. Collaborate with a staff and an individual's caregiver is to establish an action plan if the individual becomes symptomatic while receiving services away from the home.
- This plan should include emergency contact information of the next of kin/caregiver, how the individual will be transported back to the home, and routine follow-up on the individual's status.

Emergency warning signs for COVID-19 which require immediate medical attention include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath;
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest;
- New confusion or inability to arouse; and/or
- Bluish lips or face.

Face coverings

The CDC recommends the use of cloth face coverings to reduce the spread of COVID-19. A face covering is not intended to protect the wearer, but may significantly prevent the spread of asymptomatic or mild disease to others. Face coverings should be worn while in the community, in addition to social distancing. Cloth face coverings should fit snugly against the face, cover the mouth and nose, and allow for breathing without restriction.

Who will be responsible for providing the face coverings? Consider implementing the following recommendations when developing a reopening plan:

- Face coverings should be worn when people are in a community setting.
- Face coverings should be discarded or (when applicable) laundered, and machine dried after each use.
- Exercise extreme caution when placing face coverings on any individual who has trouble breathing, is incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

Social Distancing

Social distancing is a means of keeping space between yourself and other individuals. COVID-19 spreads mainly between individuals within close contact (6 feet) of one another for prolonged periods of time. Spread of this infection happens when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks, and droplets from his/her mouth/nose are launched into the air. Limiting face-to-face contact with others can reduce the risk of infection. Consider implementing the following recommendations when developing a reopening plan:

- Maintain 6 feet of distance between individuals.
- Arrange seating of chairs and tables to be least 6 feet apart during shared meals or other events while in the community.
Note: When supporting individuals requiring assistance during mealtimes (to avoid incidents of choking or to address PICA); providers are to consider the ability to adhere to social recommendations intended to mitigate spread.
- Stay away from large gatherings of people in the community.
- Minimize traffic in enclosed spaces, such as elevators and stairwells. Consider not riding in an elevator with others not in the group.
- Do not share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, or eating utensils.
- Frequently remind individuals to not shake hands, hug, or bump elbows.

Hand Hygiene

Hand hygiene, which includes the use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer or handwashing, is a simple and effective way to prevent the spread of infection. Washing hands with soap and water is the best way to clean your hands. If soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty, an alcohol-based hand sanitizer which contains at least 60% alcohol may be used. However, if hands are visibly dirty it is recommended to wash hands with soap and water. You should create a hand hygiene routine for all individuals and staff.

Key times to wash your hands:

- Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before eating food
- Before and after caring for someone who is sick
- Before touching your eyes, nose, or mouth to prevent germs from entering your body
- After using the toilet
- After touching garbage
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing

- After you have been in public places and touched items or surfaces that may be frequently touched by other people (e.g. door handles, tables, shopping carts, grab bars)

Hand washing should include the following steps:

- Wet hands with running water and apply soap;
- Lather hands, rubbing together and scrub for at least 20 seconds (sing the “Happy Birthday” song twice or some other method that equates at least 20 seconds that the individual knows);
- Rinse hands under clean, running water; and
- Dry hands with a clean disposable paper towel.

Hand Sanitizer use should include the following steps:

- Apply the gel product to the palm of one hand;
- Rub hands together; and
- Rub gel over all surfaces of your hands and fingers until hands are dry (approximately 20 seconds).

Temperature Check Process

Please consider using a no-contact thermometer or disposable thermometers. If you use disposable or no-contact thermometers and you did not have physical contact with the individual, you do not need to change gloves before the next check if doing multiple checks at one time. If this is not available, consider the following guidelines when doing temperature checks:

- Perform hand hygiene
- Put on disposable gloves
- Check the individual’s temperature
- Ensure that you use a clean pair of gloves for each temp check
- Disinfect the thermometer between each check.

Process if Someone Becomes Sick While in Day Services:

- If anyone becomes sick while attending the day program (staff or individuals), that person must stay home and may only return after going to the doctor and getting clearance to return.
- If someone tests positive for COVID-19, the area that the person has been in contact with should be shut down temporarily and sanitized. Individuals/family/staff/employers should be notified and monitored for further exposure and wait for further information.
- If someone in the group tests positive for COVID-19, there will be a process called “contact tracing” that will occur, carried out by the Office of Public Health. This process will determine whether the day services group was a source of potential exposure for other members of the group.
- If someone tests positive for COVID-19, the operation of the group that the person was a part of may cease for at least 14 days, depending on whether the contact tracing process identifies the group as a possible source of exposure to others.

- If the group is identified as a possible source of exposure for others in the group, those individuals and their families will be notified that someone has tested positive for COVID-19 and they should self-isolate for 14 days.
- Even if a group member is identified as having COVID-19, it does not mean the group was necessarily a source of exposure to others. If the day services group is not identified as a source of exposure to other members of the group, the group can continue services normally. The person who tested positive will stay out of the group until it is determined they are no longer infectious.

Resources:

Please see the following links to important resources. Always refer to the guidance from the State of Louisiana as well as your local government's guidance if different from the Governor.

Louisiana Department of Health

<http://www.ldh.la.gov/>

Plain Language pamphlet on COVID19

<https://selfadvocacyinfo.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Plain-Language-Information-on-Coronavirus.pdf>

Coronavirus Tips for Staying Healthy/Self Determination

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V7Yl-BesvDw&feature=youtu.be>

Wheelchair and AT Users: Precautions for COVID19

https://www.aahd.us/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/WC_COVID-19-Precautions.pdf

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Fact Sheet

<https://www.fema.gov/news-release/2020/04/30/planning-considerations-organizations-reconstituting-operations-during-covid>

Community Transportation Association of America

<https://ctaa.org/covid-19-resources/>

Centers for Disease Control

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html

Occupational Safety and Health Administration

www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19

Office of the State Fire Marshal

<http://sfm.dps.louisiana.gov/>