



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) FAQ for Contracted Health and Human Service Providers

Topic: Nonprofit Business Continuity Guidance

Updated March 15, 2020

Originally released March 6, 2020

Introduction

This document is targeted to City-contracted providers to provide guidance on business continuity questions. For questions concerning budget and finance, please consult specific guidance available below and online at nyc.gov/coronavirus. For programmatic questions, please consult agency-specific or program-specific guidance (e.g., guidance for congregate settings, shelters, schools, etc.) all also available at nyc.gov/coronavirus

This is a rapidly changing situation. Please consult guidance from the NYC Health Department and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) which are also provided on nyc.gov and nyc.gov/coronavirus.

Health-Related Guidance and Preparations

Q1. What actions should employers be taking in response to the Novel Coronavirus?

CDC Interim guidance for Businesses and Employers and the NYC Health Department's general disinfection guidance for non-healthcare settings can be found at nyc.gov and nyc.gov/coronavirus.

To reduce overcrowding, the City is advising employers and employees to consider telecommuting where possible and to consider staggered start times for staff. Those who take the subways at rush hour should consider commuting to work via alternative modes of transportation like biking or walking, if possible.

Q2. What guidance should we distribute to our employees and clients?

Direct employees and clients to nyc.gov and nyc.gov/coronavirus for up-to-date information and guidance. Resources may also be found at cdc.gov/coronavirus.

Good personal hygiene remains the best method for preventing the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Employers should encourage staff and clients to:

- Stay home if sick.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, shirt sleeve or bent arm, not hands.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.

- Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Get the flu shot. Although the flu shot will not protect you from COVID-19, it will help prevent the flu which has similar symptoms to this coronavirus.

Individuals with chronic lung disease, heart disease, cancer, diabetes, or a weakened immune system should avoid non-essential events and gatherings.

The NYC Health Department does not recommend the routine use of face masks if you are not sick. Face masks are not needed for general or routine tasks by staff – even those who frequently interact with the public. Remember that people wear face masks for many reasons, including seasonal allergies, pollution or to protect others from a common cold. In addition, some staff may have to use either face masks or N95 respirators per their organization’s protocol for reasons unrelated to the current COVID-19 outbreak. If so, such staff should use face masks or N95 respirators as usual.

Q3. What should employees or clients do if they have symptoms?

- Employees or clients with symptoms (fever, cough, and/or shortness of breath), should stay home and call their doctor and tell them about their symptoms and any travel history
- For those who do not have a doctor or health insurance, they can call 311 and/or visit an NYC Health + Hospitals facility. To find health care: www.nychealthandhospitals.org/hospitals.

Q4. How should we prepare and clean our facilities to prevent the spread of COVID-19? What protocols should be followed for congregate and residential settings?

General disinfection guidance for non-health care settings and protocols for congregate settings can be found at nyc.gov and nyc.gov/coronavirus.

Q5. How should individual businesses or Community Based Organizations prepare for potential local outbreak?

Business and Employer Guidance can be found at nyc.gov and nyc.gov/coronavirus. It provides general guidance for preparedness, including steps to creating an outbreak response plan. For program-specific guidance and aligning to existing program-specific emergency plans, please consult your contracting agency directly or through c-19.hhs@mocs.nyc.gov.

Program or Service Modifications

Q6. Should we cancel programs or services?

Any decisions to cancel programs or services should be made with your City contracting agency. City agencies will work with providers to support any modifications in programming, location and staffing as needed. Providers should consult the March 14 Budget and Finance Guidance available below.

Q7. What is the City’s paid sick leave policy for contracted providers as it pertains to the Novel Coronavirus?

Employees should follow the quarantine and isolation protocols issued by the CDC and the NYC Health Department.

Organizations under contract with the City are encouraged to treat employee absences as excusable with pay and without charge to leave balances when the absence is required because of a NYC Health Department ruling with respect to quarantine. Employees who have been diagnosed as infected by COVID-19 should receive time off with pay.

To the extent practicable and allowable, the City will reimburse providers for paid time off associated with NYC Health Department protocols. All COVID-19 related staffing information must be appropriately documented. The City will be providing further guidance on documentation.

All employers are required to adhere to applicable City, State and federal laws, including their City contract, regarding paid leave. For more information about the City's Paid Sick Leave Law, please see <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dca/about/paid-sick-leave-law.page>.

If there are questions about your City contract's policies, please refer to the March 14 Budget and Finance Guidance.

Q8. Will the City reimburse contracted providers for supplies, such as cleaning materials and food, related for the Novel Coronavirus?

The City will reimburse the additional cost of disinfection and safety supplies that exceed the current scope of the contract if the provider is following NYC Health Department or other rulings from the City contracting agency. Please consult March 14 Budget and Finance Guidance available below and at [nyc.gov/coronavirus](https://www1.nyc.gov/site/coronavirus).

Additional Guidance

Q9. Guidance is requested for more resources and translated materials on how community-based organizations can respond to bias related incidents, educate community members experiencing bias, and work with the administration to address bias.

The NYC Commission on Human Rights is monitoring and responding to potential bias incidents due to fear and stigma around COVID-19 which may manifest as harassment or discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, or other protected classes under the NYC Human Rights Law.

New York City is a community with strong laws and resources to prevent and respond to bias and discriminatory incidents. Please direct staff, volunteers, clients and other individuals who believe they have experienced a hate crime, harassment, or any type of discriminatory incident to contact the NYC Commission on Human Rights via 311 (say "human rights") for intervention or [report it here](https://www1.nyc.gov/site/cchr/about/report-discrimination.page) (<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/cchr/about/report-discrimination.page>).

City Agency Guidance for Health and Human Service Contract Providers

Topic: Budget and Finance

March 14, 2020

Introduction

This document is intended to provide guidance on budget and payment concerns for health and human service providers under contract with the City. We will continue to update this document regularly.

Continued Payments with Limited Program Operations

Q1. Will providers continue to get paid in the event that there is a program closure, or an inability to meet contract deliverables, as a result of decreased participation or staff outages?

Background: The Mayor's declaration of a State of Emergency for NYC triggers Section 7.03 of the Standard Health and Human Service Contract. This section allows Contractor, at the request of and in a manner determined by the Department, to assist the Department in carrying out emergency procedures during the State of Emergency.

Response:

- If a program is closed by the Health Department for a duration of 48 hours or less, the City will pay the provider the contracted reimbursement for that period of time.
- If a program is closed for a longer period of time, the City contracting agency may have additional service options that a provider can deliver to address the emergency, pursuant to section 7.03 of their contracts. Providers will be paid for any additional costs incurred in connection with offering different services. The City will initiate contract amendments, as necessary.
- If a City contracting agency and Provider agree that no alternative service options can be provide during the emergency, the provider may still get reimbursed for certain costs, such as staff salaries, rent and other fixed costs.
- If providers experience a decline in participation that hampers ability to meet program deliverables, as long as the provider is on premises and ready to offer services, provider will be reimbursed for that day's services. Providers should not choose to cancel programs for low or no enrollment without first contacting the City contracting agency. In that scenario, the City may have additional service options that the provider can deliver to address the emergency.
- Providers must keep records of all expenditures that are outside the scope of their contract.

Expenditures Outside of the Contract

Q2. Will providers be reimbursed for activities or precautionary expenditures that are not covered in their contract? For example, additional cleaning supplies or meals being provided remotely rather than on site.

Response:

- The City will reimburse the additional cost of disinfection and safety supplies that exceed the current scope of the contract if the Provider is following Health Department or other ruling from the City contracting agency.
- Providers must keep records of all COVID-19 expenditures that exceed the contract scope.

Direct Support

Q3. Will the City provide contracted providers with any particular supplies (cleaning, masks, etc.) to aid them in their response?

Response: Providers are strongly encouraged to use their own purchasing sources. Providers will be reimbursed the additional cost of supplies pursuant to Question 2 above. If a provider is unable to obtain necessary supplies from their sources, they should contact their contracting agency. Please note that due to the scarcity of personal protective equipment including masks and sanitizing supplies, there is limited resource availability.

Cash Flow

Q4. How is the City addressing cash flow concerns for health and human service providers?

Background:

- Health and human services providers receive an advance of 25% at the start of the fiscal year. Advance recoupments begin with the January invoices, which are typically settled in March.
- The City has done an analysis to identify how much cash reimbursement each provider has received against their FY20 annual budget. The City will maintain and update this list to target providers in need of cash.
- During the emergency, it is anticipated that City agencies will continue to have the ability to process invoices through remote access.

Response:

- Step 1: Agencies will immediately prioritize the review of invoices in their queue for targeted providers.
- Step 2: Providers may request an additional advance from the City. The advance is expected to cover prior expenditures not yet reimbursed. This advance may not result in the provider having received more than 60% of their FY20 Budget.
- Step 3: The City will continuously monitor the cash situation of providers under contract, and amend step 2 as necessary.

If providers have additional questions, please email c-19.hhsteam@mocs.nyc.gov.