



STRENGTHENING THE VOICES OF CASA STATEWIDE

TEXAS CASA GUIDANCE ON RETURNING TO WORKPLACES AND SOCIAL DISTANCING DURING COVID-19

April 28, 2020

Texas CASA recommends that local CASA programs continue remote work and remote advocacy throughout the month of May and until further notice, in order to protect the health of children and families, staff, volunteers and our local communities. According to the [Centers for Disease Control](#), organizations should reopen only if they can ensure strict social distancing, proper cleaning and disinfecting requirements, and protection of their workers and customers; with vulnerable workers continuing to work from home. We've outlined our recommendations for CASA programs on these areas below.

Assess Readiness to Return to Workplace and Develop Plans for How to Reopen

- Use both local and state public health information to determine when to reopen your offices
- Allow staff to choose whether they return to the workplace or not, based on their assessment of health risk or vulnerabilities to themselves or their families
- Colleagues that are ill, immuno-compromised, or have chronic health issues are at greater risk
- Consider mental and emotional health as well as physical health
- Consider childcare issues resulting from school and childcare provider closures

Analyze and Follow All Applicable Labor Laws

- Staff may have activated laws including Family Medical Leave Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, or paid sick leave
- In the case of conflicting laws, adhere to the strictest requirement

If Reopening, Maintain Social and Physical Distancing Measures

- Rearrange workspaces to increase physical distancing
- Close conference rooms, break rooms and other common spaces
- Mark six-foot distances on the floor of waiting rooms
- Continue using phone calls and videoconferencing to reduce in-person contact
- Consider creating rotating work schedules or several cohorts of staff that do not overlap, in order to reduce contact exposure per person
- Post signs reminding people to maintain social distancing
- Continue to use videoconferencing for meetings and trainings
- Restrict nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities



If Re-Opening, Require the Use of Facial Masks and Coverings

- In accordance with recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control, facial masks and coverings are effective at reducing the spread of the coronavirus
- Encourage or require all staff and volunteers to use facial masks or coverings when at the office or performing any advocacy functions
- Provide masks and personal protective equipment
- Post signs on [how to properly wear a face covering](#)

If Re-Opening, Practice Preventative Sanitation Measures

- Frequently sanitize all surfaces, door handles, and frequently touched areas
- Provide hand sanitizer of at least 60 percent alcohol
- Provide no-touch trash cans if possible
- Consider removing shared items such as microwaves, staplers and copiers, or enhancing sanitization and cleaning of these items
- Post signs on how to [stop the spread of COVID-19, properly wash hands and promote everyday protective measures](#)

If Re-Opening, Perform Temperature Checks or Self-Checks

- Consider using digital thermometers for daily temperature self-checks to determine if anyone is symptomatic prior to entering the offices. Sanitize and clean thermometers between each check.
- If there is any evidence of symptoms, require that person to work from home
- If there is any evidence of symptoms among an employee's family members or someone they live with, require that person to work from home
- Establish clear policies regarding illness

If Re-Opening, Continue to Restrict All Non-Essential Travel

- Cancel/restrict all non-essential travel, whether in-state or out-of-state
- Additionally, any staff or volunteers who travel by either air or road must adhere to CDC guidelines and state mandates regarding 14-day isolation

If Re-Opening, Ensure Your Program Has a Plan in Case an Employee Becomes Sick

- Employees with symptoms (fever, cough, or shortness of breath) at work should immediately be separated and sent home
- Close off areas used by the sick person until after cleaning and disinfection. Wait 24 hours to clean and disinfect. If it is not possible to wait 24 hours, wait as long as possible before cleaning and disinfecting. Ensure safe and correct application of disinfectants and keep disinfectant products away from children.
- Texas CASA provides additional guidelines and a [sample notice](#) regarding informing anyone in close contact with a staff or volunteer who tests positive on the [Covid-19 website](#).

Remember that businesses are reopening in a three-phase approach and programs that do reopen should continue to be prepared to close for a few days or longer if COVID-19 cases increase in the local area.