

COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus: Update/Guidance for Gardens (v.5: March 28, 2020)

[Please refer to our COVID-19 Website for the most up-to-date resources and etc.](#)

March 28, 2020 Update:

- Responses to our Association survey indicate that over 97% of our gardens are fully or partially closed. The vast majority closed within just a few days of each other (March 16-18, 2020)
- The \$2.2T Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) became law
 - Direct Relief for Museum Sector Businesses is slight (\$50M through IMLS) and will be slow to arrive, but is also coupled with some NEH and NEA assistance
 - Several incentives for 501 (c) 3 organizations were included via Small Business Administration Loans and other provisions, primarily
 - Economic Injury Disaster Loans
 - Payroll Protection Program
 - ALL GARDENS ARE STRONGLY URGED to investigate and pursue these, even if previously rejected earlier this year. These will demonstrate need at the very least. Up to two months of Operational Expenses (\$2M) may be available, for example.
 - Important considerations must be made before applying (for example, laying off or furloughing personnel may not be appropriate for a garden when credits/incentives are available through loans to retain personnel.
- **The Association will host an EMERGENT ISSUE WEBINAR on Wed. April 1, 2020 at 3pm ET to educate garden leaders about business recovery provisions available in the CARES Act. Look for registration details coming through community posts, e-blasts, or on the Association's website.**
- Business continuity planning to determine worst-case/best case length of closure expected, re-staffing and re-opening plans based on this, and considerations of best options to fulfill the continuity gaps are of primary importance.
 - Closely following this are forecast plans for gardens in fundraising and philanthropy as gardens preserve/sustain their ability to operate.
- Other observed practical considerations have recently included the following:
 - Identifying and Designating the few "essential" on-site employees who must report on-site to with social distancing guidelines to maintain garden facilities. State by state processes vary for this and gardens are directed more toward their state guidelines for this.
 - Some gardens have successfully advocated with their state to expand "essential" personnel designations for key segments of their workforce, such as those in facilities and landscape maintenance.
 - In precious few cases, gardens are being designated as essential businesses to remain open. These are mostly those aligned with parks and municipalities.
 - They are promising no onsite services but offering visitors a place to walk and find respite with appropriate social distancing. Admission is often free.
 - These organizations often have additional challenges to ensure social distancing guidelines are strictly adhered to and services provided, while still being "partially closed" with no classes or programming



- Remote work for those who are able to do so is being performed. The Association's Telework Policy is available as a template and the TIPS Community is offering a [March 31 Webinar on Remote Collaboration](#).
- Temporary layoffs of personnel have been noted. Best practice is some recourse being provided to furloughed staff wherever possible, including for part-time employees.
- As predictable for pandemics and invasive spread, there is an exponential rise occurring, particularly throughout the USA as the initial delay in testing has shifted to widespread testing in key outbreak areas.
- Over 175 out of 195 Countries Worldwide have COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus. The WHO has declared COVID-19 a global pandemic and the US has declared a National Emergency. It leads the world with over 112,000 confirmed cases.

General Guidance for Gardens

- All gardens must **conform to mandates** from their governing bodies and health authorities (local, regional, state, or federal).
 - States of Emergency, Travel Bans, Social Distancing/Gathering Limits, etc. not only dictate if/when a garden can be open but also trigger insurance coverage and contract implications, personnel availability, as well as other important matters related to events and business continuity.
- Please be **science-based** and **unbiased/non-political** in communications whenever you are able. While COVID-19 is a novel Coronavirus, it is still following known epidemiological models/predictions for worldwide outbreaks closely.
- “Social distancing” and “Flattening the Curve” are key in garden closure measures. Avoid communications terminology that states we can “prevent” or “eliminate” spread of COVID-19 and **emphasize the gardens role in "doing its part to slow the spread and reduce healthcare system impacts"** as this language has been more rightly adopted nationwide.
- Gardens should have a business continuity plan and be ready to execute it in order to resume normal operations as quickly as possible. As primarily outdoor and/or open venues with ample fresh air to breathe, [our gardens are/will be great places to go to find respite, solace, and peace at these uncertain times](#). We are great places to practice social distancing techniques and mindfulness!
- Please continue to be prepared, proactive, and positive. Our gardens will emerge and can serve as resilient centers for communities in need of us.



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**Advancing public gardens as leaders,
advocates, and innovators.**

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