



## In Person Programming with Social Distancing Guidelines

As states begin to lift stay at home orders, there may be a desire to relaunch services. Mercy Housing must balance the risk infection of Covid-19 with social and economic the risk of limiting programming indefinitely. That risk calculation will likely be different for each region and property. Properties in areas with limited transmission may choose to offer more in-person programming, while others may choose to continue the model of limited programming applied in shelter in place.

### Criteria for properties to begin limited in-person services under these guidelines

- **There have been no new known cases (staff & residents) of Covid-19 for at least 28 days since the last case was detected,<sup>1</sup> nor are there known contacts self-isolating.**
- Local Shelter in place/Stay at home orders are lifted for the area and/or population
- Resident Services Staff feel that residents at this property can comply with social distance rules and will wear masks during services and programming.
- The property has outdoor spaces or very well-ventilated community rooms (doors and windows open to the outside).

### Covid-19 In Person Programming Safety Checklist

If a property meets the criteria to begin in person programming, the Covid-19 In Person Program Safety Checklist (Annex 1) should be completed to determine the protocols and procedures specific to their property. The approval process of this checklist will be determined at the GBC level.

### Overarching Protocols for in person programming

These rules must be applied regardless of the situation:

- **Local guidelines must be followed and supersede any guidelines in this document.**
- Staff and residents **must wear masks during services and programming.** You may require this of residents as a condition of participation.
- Social distancing (> 6 ft) must be adhered to regardless of location and circumstance. This may be reduced to >3 ft if there is a separating shield between you and the resident.
- Residents/Staff must wash hands or use hand sanitizer prior to entering the event/meeting.

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<sup>1</sup> This may be fewer than 28 days if that local public health guidance allows it.



- Food and drinks (including water) may not be shared.
- Materials **may not** be shared. This includes pens, papers, and supplies
- Gathering sizes cannot exceed local orders. In the absence of local guidance on gathering size the following rules should be applied:
  - o Outside gatherings- No more than 10 people (including staff) may gather at any time
  - o Indoor gatherings – no more than 5 is recommended, however, exceptions may be made based on room configuration, not to exceed a maximum of 10.
- Residents should verbally confirm that they have no symptoms prior to entering the space. Any resident who has symptoms related to Covid-19 must be asked to not participate.
- Do not touch residents and discourage residents from touching each other.
- Indoor meetings should be as short as possible, not to exceed 60 mins.

## Specific Guidelines

### Provide programming outdoors where possible

There is increasing evidence that the risk of transmission is particularly low<sup>2</sup> outside and thus properties with outdoors spaces should consider providing programming and services outdoors.

#### **Group events:**

- There may be only 9 residents (including staff no more than 10 in total) and all must be >6 ft apart. If the space is small, the maximum number of residents may need to be <10 to account for appropriate >6 ft spacing. *If local orders have smaller gathering maximums, they must be followed.* Consider holding multiple sessions to accommodate smaller numbers.
- Do not share equipment or materials.
- If the program requires residents to sit down, avoid using fabric chairs, wipe down the chairs with disinfectant before and after the session. If supplies allow, pass out sanitary wipes. Space chairs >6 feet apart. (see picture below)

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.04.04.20053058v1>



### ***Individual meetings***

- If space allows, explore having individual meetings with residents outside. This should only be done if confidentiality can be maintained (e.g. the conversation cannot be overheard) and if physical distancing (>6ft) is possible. At some properties, there may be an outdoor space that can be cordoned off using screens or other physical barriers for resident meetings.

Note: In-person meetings may not be an option for all residents. Staff should **use their judgment** to determine if a resident is able to maintain the appropriate distance and therefore a good candidate for an in-person meeting. Staff should also consider if the subject matter is appropriate for this environment. If not, continue to use the phone and other virtual means.

### **Provide Indoor Services with Caution**

#### ***Indoor group sessions***

Because the risk of transmission indoors is high, indoor group activities should be severely limited, and staff providing any in person programs must take the following precautions:

- **Make sure the room is well ventilated and open windows/doors if possible. If your community room is in a basement and/or has poor ventilation, it should not be used under limited circumstances with the approval of your supervisor.**
- It is recommended that no more than four residents (no more than 5 in total including staff) at a time and all **MUST** wear a mask.
- Verbally ask residents to confirm that they have no symptoms. **Any resident who has symptoms related to Covid-19 must be asked to not participate.**
- Chairs and tables should be spaced >6 feet apart. Set up the room so that it difficult to come in proximity with other residents. That may mean removing or taping off unused furniture.
- Residents must wash or sanitize hands prior to entering room.



- Tables and chairs should be sanitized both before and after the event. Avoid using furniture with fabric.
- Prop doors open to minimize touching of handles when entering
- No food or drinks (including water) may be provided.

### ***Indoor Individual Meetings.***

It may be useful to have 1 on 1 meetings with residents in specific circumstances. Here are a few guidelines/considerations to reduce risk

- Consider using larger rooms for 1 on 1 meetings instead of small offices. Empty community rooms that are well ventilated may be converted into resident staff 1 on 1 meeting spaces. Make sure confidentiality can be maintained.
- Keep windows/doors open if possible, to ensure air circulation. Again, do not use basement community spaces or rooms with poor ventilation unless you received the approval of your supervisor.
- Verbally ask residents to confirm that they have no symptoms. Request that **any resident who has symptoms related to Covid-19 to meet by phone.**
- Consider using plastic sheeting or another physical barrier in small offices or other small spaces. (see picture). Plexiglass and clear plastic sheeting could be used to allow for one on one in person or very small group meetings.



### **Procedures if resident(s) appear unable to adhere to the guidelines.**

If during the programming/service a resident or a group of residents are unable to participate safely because they:

- refuse to wear a mask, and/or
- are not practicing social distancing (getting close to other residents, touching, etc.) and/or
- appear to have any symptoms (coughing, sneezing, fever, shortness of breath etc.).

**Staff should immediately stop the programming and ask residents to return to their units.**

## **Special Cases**

### **Gardens**



Community gardens may be operated during this time under the following guidelines:

- Masks and gloves, should we worn.  
Residents and staff should wash hands prior to gardening
- If a resident has any symptoms, they should be asked not to enter the garden.  
Two or fewer residents or 1 household unit should enter the garden at any time.  
This may be increased for large community gardens.
- Residents should use their own gardening tools. If not, Mercy Housing should provide them and sanitize between each use.
- Gloves must be worn when using the hose, Residents should be asked to spray with bleach or wipe down the hose after each use.
- Signs with these guidelines should be clearly posted at the entrance of the garden.

### **Out of School Time**

At this point, in person Out of School Time should be conducted on a limited basis and virtual OST is recommended. If in-person OST being explored, it should be considered as part of hybrid approach using a combination of both virtual and in-person sessions. For example, the OST program could meet 1-2 days a week in person with the rest of the week being virtual. If staff are interested in exploring in-person program, please follow the following guidelines:

- **Follow local guidelines around summer camps, particularly around group size.**
- If you have large programs, consider staggering times to have multiple sessions
- Desks/Chairs should be spaced to keep children >6 ft apart.
- Programming should be outdoors as much as possible.
- All children with symptoms must immediately be sent home.
- Handwashing before and during programming is mandatory.
- Mask wearing by staff is required and is encouraged for the children.
- All chairs/desks etc. should be disinfected before and after the programs.

Please see the CDC summer camp guidelines for more detailed considerations.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/summer-camps.html>



## Covid-19 In Person Programming Safety Checklist

*Instructions: Resident Services staff should complete this checklist prior to commencing in person programming and reviewed with Supervisor and others as directed by the GBC. The completed Checklist should be shared and communicated with property management staff prior to programming at the weekly blended management meeting.*

Property Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date completed \_\_\_\_\_

Date to be reviewed again \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by \_\_\_\_\_

### **Confirmation that the Property Meets Safe in-person meeting Criteria (Must meet all)**

- There have been no new known cases (staff & residents) of Covid-19 for at least 28 days since the last case was detected, nor are there known contacts self-isolating.
- There are no shelter in place/stay at home orders in place for the area or the populations
- Resident Services Staff feel that residents at this property can comply with social distance rules and will wear masks during services and programming.
- The property has outdoor spaces or very well-ventilated community rooms (ideally doors and windows that open to the outside).

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### Use of Community Room<sup>3</sup>

To have in person programming in a community room, please confirm the following:

- Community Room has a window/door to the outside that can be opened. (These must be opened during group meetings)
- Is large enough to ensure that participants can sit > 6 feet apart
- Has chairs and tables that can be easily cleaned (not fabric)
- Sufficient staff and supplies available to clean room both before and after meeting.

If you checked yes to all, then this community room may be used for programming.

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<sup>3</sup> Note, these guidelines do not apply to food bank distribution in Community Rooms. Please reference food bank distribution guidelines in the RS Covid-19 Operational Guidance document for more details.



Please list max number of people allowed for an indoor group meeting. (Recommendation is 5, but may not exceed 10) \_\_\_\_\_

Please list the max time allowed for a given program (Recommendation is less than 60 minutes) \_\_\_\_\_

Please describe the protocols that will be employed to ensure > 6 ft social distancing by residents. (Examples including placing X's on the floor to ensure chairs are adequately spaced, blocking off unused seats, allowing only one person per table, etc.)

*Enter text here*

Please describe the cleaning protocol before and after the in-person meeting. Include who is responsible for disinfecting the community room.

*Enter text here.*

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### Use of outdoor space

Please describe the location of the outdoor space that will be used for in-person meetings:

Click or tap here to enter text.

What if any modifications/additions are required to make the space more usable? (e.g. tents for shade, misters to keep cool, additional chairs etc.)

*Enter text here*

Please list the max number of people allowed for an outdoor group meeting. (May not exceed 10 including staff member) \_\_\_\_\_

Please describe the protocols that will be employed to ensure > 6 ft social distancing by residents (Examples: taping/chalking circles on ground, removing furniture, ensuring chairs are adequately space, blocking off unused seats, etc.)

*Enter text here*

Please describe the cleaning protocol before and after the in-person meeting. Include who is responsible and how will it be completed?

Click or tap here to enter text.



Does the property have a private outdoor space that can be use for 1 on 1 meetings with residents where confidential conversations can be held? If yes, describe where and how you will ensure social distancing and privacy:

Click or tap here to enter text.

### In person meetings in offices

Prior to commencing in-person meetings in an office, please confirm the following:

- The office large enough to ensure that participants can sit >6 feet apart
- The office has chairs and tables that are easily cleaned. (not fabric)
- There is the ability to put up a barrier such as plexiglass or shower curtain
- The office has good ventilation (windows that can be open)

All must be true before in-person meetings may safely begin in each office place.

If you plan to use office space for in-person resident-staff meetings, what precautions will you take to staff and resident safety and >6 ft social distancing?

Click or tap here to enter text.

\_\_\_ Max Number of residents in an office.

Are there other in person activities planned (e.g. walking clubs, pop up events etc.)? If yes, please tell us your plan and describe the social distancing/sanitizing protocols to be used.

Click or tap here to enter text.

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### Special Considerations- Complete as applicable

#### Out of School Time

Do you plan on having an in-person OST program?

- Yes
- No



If yes:

List the days of the week \_\_\_\_\_ Duration \_\_\_\_\_ Max # of kids \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Please describe your process encourage handwashing and social distancing guidelines:

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

### **Community Garden**

Prior to opening your community garden, please confirm that those using it will be able to follow the above written rules. (e.g. social distancing, mask wearing, keeping the garden to only 1-2 residents/households at a time, use their own tools, wearing gloves, and disinfecting the hose after each use)

Yes

No

\_\_\_ Max number of people in the garden at any given time.

Will the garden be by appointment only?

Yes

No

What is protocol for using the hose or other shared equipment? (Examples include only Mercy Housing staff can use the hose, or hose must be disinfected between each use, etc.)

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Where will the sign that describes the rules of the garden be posted?

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)