

# COVID-19 PANDEMIC MUNICIPAL OPERATIONS AND SERVICES RECOVERY FRAMEWORK

2020

## Purpose

The COVID-19 Pandemic Municipal Operations and Services Recovery Framework outlines the flexible and adaptable strategies of how the Town of St. Marys will reopen its operations and services safely and affordably for the community. Of paramount importance will be to protect the health, safety, and well-being of the Town's staff and the public.

## Background/Introduction

On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) a public health emergency of international concern and on March 11, 2020 declared the coronavirus outbreak a global pandemic.

Huron Perth Public Health confirmed the first case of COVID-19 in Huron and Perth on March 14, 2020 in the Town of St. Marys. Additional cases are updated on the Huron Perth Public Health website.

The Government of Ontario enacted a Declaration of Emergency to Protect the Public on Wednesday, March 17. Following the lead of the Province, the Mayor signed a "Declaration of Emergency", effective March 19, 2020 at 9:30 a.m. On June 2, 2020 the Legislative Assembly was convened and the provincial Declaration of Emergency under the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act (EMCPA) was extended to June 30, 2020.

On April 27, 2020 the Province of Ontario released its framework for reopening the Province, identifying the three key phases of recovery. On May 19, 2020, the Province announced that it had entered "Phase 2: Restart", Stage 1. As a part of Stage 1, the Premier has begun lifting public health restrictions, meaning that some Town operations and services can begin to reopen when the Town is ready. Moving forward, each stage of the Province's recovery is forecasted to last 2-4 weeks assuming the pandemic does not worsen.

## Overview

This recovery framework lays out the Town's approach to reopening its operations and services as the Province of Ontario moves through its phases of recovery and further eases public health restrictions.

The goals of this framework are:

- To communicate the strategies the Town will use to ensure it can safely deliver its operations and services as the Province works through the three phases of its reopening strategy.
- To communicate the framework the Town will use to determine the costs and capacity requirements of delivering operations and services during the "new normal".

Overall, this framework will produce the information and data that will be required for Council and staff to make service level decisions on whether the Town reopens its various operations and services as Provincial public health restrictions are lifted.

## Key Principles of the Framework

The following key principles will guide the Town's approach to reopening operations and services:

**Principle #1** *The Town will reopen its operations and services on its own timeline, when it is confident that the health, safety, and well being of staff and the public can be maintained.*

**Principle #2** *The Town will reopen its operations and services in a scale appropriate and fiscally responsible fashion.*

## Approach

Recovery planning is a complicated task because there are so many unknown variables. There is no precise information on when provincial orders will be lifted, and no information or indication of what restrictions and/or protocols may exist that may affect how the Town delivers services (i.e. limitations on gathering sizes, disinfection standards, etc.).

The framework that has been produced for the Town is one that will generate an understanding of: the requirements that will need to be in place to deliver operations and services safely; the lead time needed to implement these requirements; and the cost and staffing capacity that will be required to deliver operations and services during the pandemic.

Overall, the approach is a three-step process which attempts to answer the following key questions:

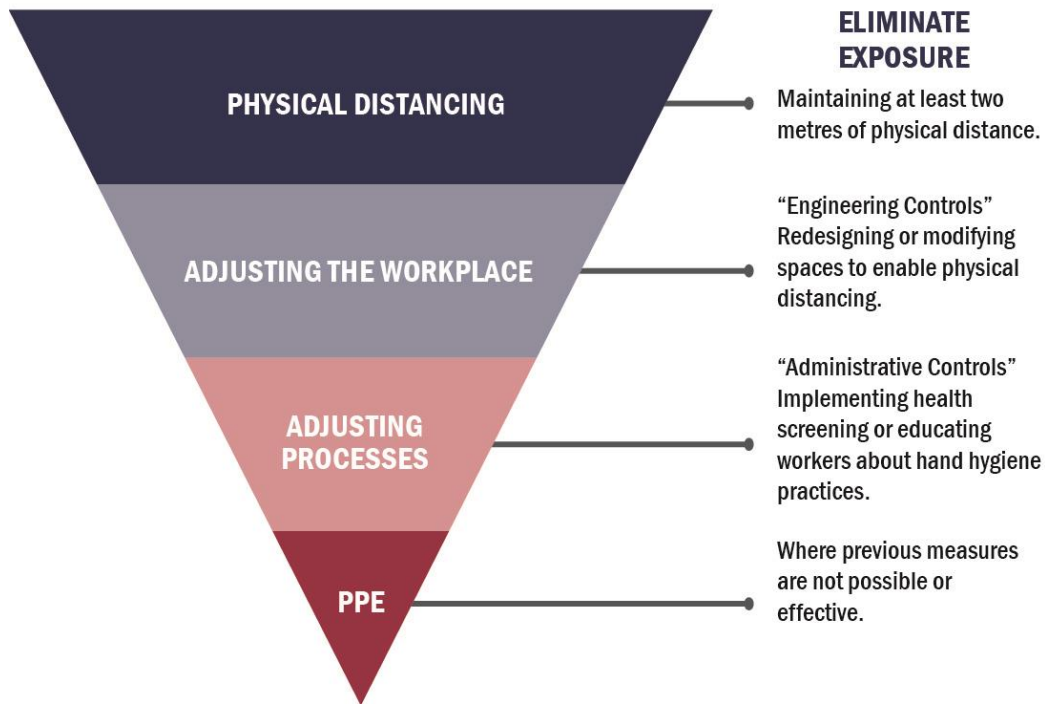
### **Step 1: Service Inventory**

- What services have or may be affected by the pandemic (current state)?

### **Step 2: Health and Safety Standards Required to Deliver Operations and Services in the Future State**

- How will we deliver this operation or service when orders are lifted (future state):
  - What infection control and sanitization standards need to be in place?
  - Can physical distancing be achieved in service delivery, and how?
  - What PPE requirements need to be in place for staff and the public to deliver the service?
  - What signage needs to be in place at a reopened operation or service?
- What are the key steps to getting the operation or service operating in the future state?
- What is the total lead time of these key steps?

Represented visually, service delivery in the future state considers the following hierarchy of controls:



### Step 3: Costing of Future State of Operations and Services

- How much will it cost to deliver the operation or service in the future state?
  - What are the staffing requirements to meet the standards?
  - What is the cost of: PPE, cleaning products, physical barriers, etc?
  - What is the cost impact if physical distancing requires reduced participation numbers in the program?
- Can the Town afford this cost to deliver the operation or service, or are service delivery adjustments required?

➔ Council decision required because this is a service level question.

This approach has been rendered into a high-level decision tree that is attached as Appendix 1 to this framework. The end product of the decision tree is a clear answer on whether or not an operation or service can be reopened responsibly as public health restrictions are eased. For the decision tree to work, a number of assumptions have to be made to fill in unknown variables and key constraints. These are further discussed below.

## Key Constraints & Assumptions in the Approach

To make the reopening framework function, a key action is to eliminate as many of the unknowns that exist by making various assumptions. The key constraints identified, and the assumptions used include:

### *Standards & Best Practices*

Almost no one has delivered municipal programming during a pandemic. This means that the standards and best practices that the Town will follow to control the risk mostly do not exist and have to be created.

The Town's approach is to develop a set of minimum health, safety, and infection control standards for its operations and services for when they are reopened. The minimum standard will be based on recommendations, guidance and documents from the following sources:

- Huron Perth Public Health;
- The Ministry of Health and Long Term Care;
- Ontario Health;
- Medical Officers of Health;
- Any other agency recommended by any of the above;
- Existing policies from other municipalities; and
- Town of St. Marys Joint Health and Safety Committee.

Where a standard or best practice does not exist, at this point in time a key assumption that we will make is that the standards and best practices emerging from British Columbia will ultimately serve as the model in Ontario. This assumption comes with an understanding that, when either national or Ontario best practices emerge from the various agencies and associations, the Town will adjust its minimum standards to reflect the recommended approach in Ontario.

### *Cost*

Even if the Town can reopen its operations and services safely and responsibly, the cost to do so can quickly become a constraint. In an effort to streamline the reopening process while also containing the overall cost impact of the pandemic, Council has authorized the CAO to reopen individual operations and services that will have a total budget impact of equal to or less than \$10,000 more the 2020 approved budget allocation, within a total budget cost of \$250,000 for the remainder of 2020. Council approval is required for operations and services where the cost of reopening exceeds these thresholds in the 2020 operating year. Service levels will be re-evaluated during the 2021 budget deliberations.

Where reopening operations and services exceed the threshold, a service level decision will be made by Council. In an effort to assist Council in their decision making, staff will present the following at a minimum:

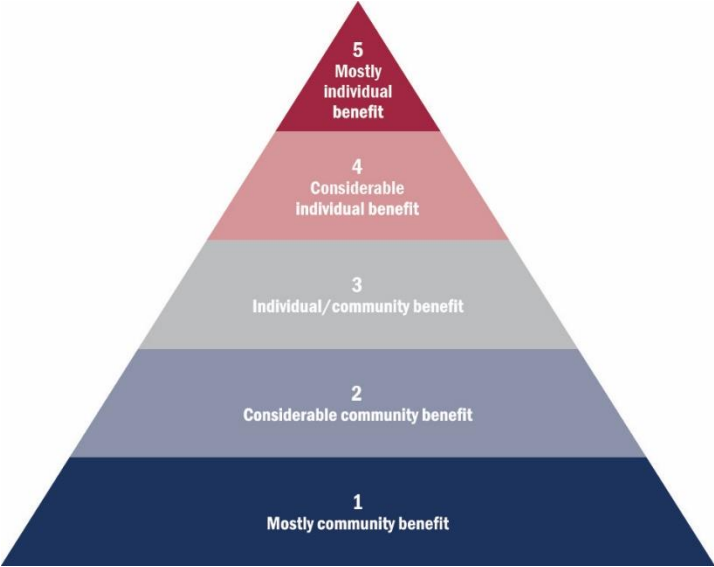
- Total cost to deliver operations and services in the future state
- Options to reduce or recover costs (i.e. reduced operating hours, fee increases, offering through a "use at your own risk" approach, etc.)
- Options for alternate service deliver approaches (i.e. online or virtual services, etc).

**Priorities for Opening Operations and Services**

The Town does not have infinite resources, and decision may need to be made to reopen one aspect of operations or services over another. When making these decisions, operations and services will be reopened in the following priority order:

- 1. **Mandatory Services** - Legislated by other levels of government and/or are governed under a municipal by-law. The service meets a legal or policy mandate.
- 2. **Traditional Services** - Benefits accrue to the community or general public and are considered a public investment. These services have been offered for a length of time and have become part of the expectations of the citizenry.
- 3. **Specialized Services** - Benefits accrue to a small group and services are offered to augment traditional services.

Represented visually, operations and services that meet the tests of the lower end of the pyramid will be prioritized and reopened over operations and services that only meet the tests of the upper levels of the pyramid:



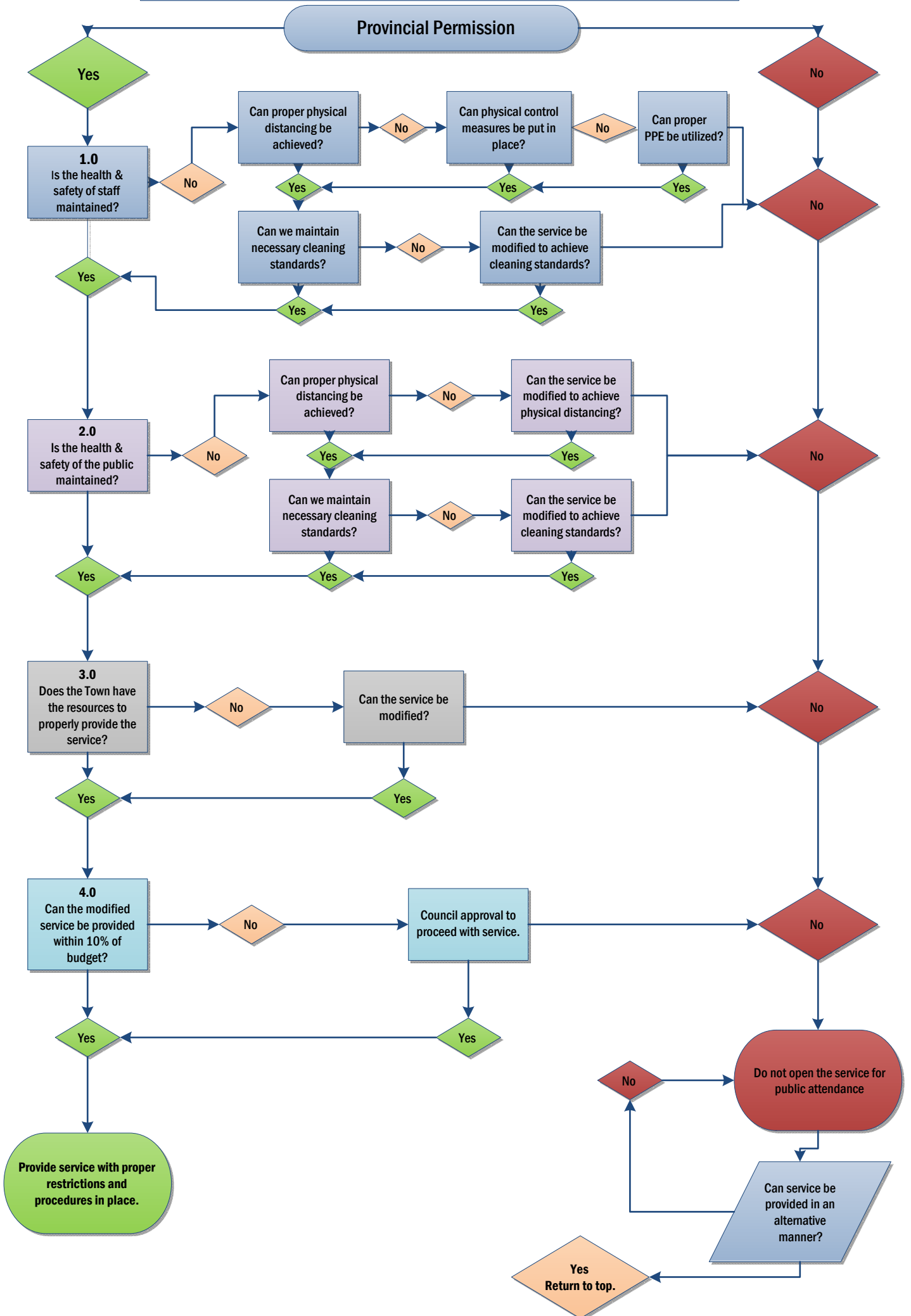
**The Path to Recovery**

The Town of St. Marys will reopen its operations and services safely and affordably. The number one goal will be to protect the health, safety, and well being of the Town’s staff and the public.

The path to recovery depends on the Town and its residents’ continued efforts in stopping the spread of COVID-19. The Town’s operations and services recovery approach will continue to be nimble and will be adjusted to adapt to changing circumstances as needed.

As the Town begins its path of recovery, it is more important than ever for the Town and its residents to follow public health advice. Everyone will need to take simple yet important steps to reduce exposure and protect each other, such as: staying home when ill, practicing physical distancing, frequent hand washing, and covering a cough or a sneeze. These steps will be critical to ensure operations and services can remain open.

# Town of St. Marys – COVID-19 Re-Opening Decision Matrix





## Appendix 2: Operations and Services Readiness Checklist

The following readiness checklist will be used to compliment the decision-making framework presented in Appendix 1 when evaluating the level of readiness to reopen the Town's various operational and service offerings.

The following five areas of consideration offer a check list of considerations:

### 1. Physical Distancing and Limiting Gatherings

- Does the space/facility/program allow for physical distancing of the public and employees?
- Does the space/facility/program allow for controlling maximum gathering requirements?
- Have you calculated the new capacities for each programmable facility component?
- Have policies or procedures been developed for the monitoring and educating patrons about physical distancing and gathering requirements?
- Have employees been trained on proper procedures for monitoring physical distancing?
- Do you have a communications plan for sharing information on physical distancing, gathering requirements and monitoring procedures?
- Has signage been posted reminding community members to physically distance, stay home when sick, avoid lingering, and limit gatherings?
- Do you have a contingency plan in the event that mitigation and gating measures need to be reinforced due to a resurgence in COVID-19 case counts?
- Have you adjusted our emergency evacuation protocols and mustering arrangements to consider physical distancing (recognizing that physical safety in an emergency is the primary concern)?

### 2. Cleaning and Disinfection Practices

- Can the space/facility/program materials be properly cleaned/disinfected regularly?
- Have maintenance plans/checklists outlining cleaning protocols and frequency been created to prepare employees for implementation?
- Have you established service levels to maintain the cleaning protocols and frequency your facility has planned?
- Have you secured cleaning/disinfection supplies and non- medical PPE for employees?
- Do you have a plan in place for securing additional cleaning/disinfection supplies within the supply chain?
- Have you trained employees on proper cleaning/disinfection?
- Do you need to provide hand sanitizer to users?



- Have you posted information for patrons on your cleaning and disinfection practices (e.g. how often spaces are cleaned?)
- Have you considered requiring patrons to clean equipment after use? If so, have you provided the required cleaning supplies?

### 3. Staff Capacity

- Do you have a staffing plan in place to reopen spaces/facilities/programs?
- Does your staffing plan include re-orientation of employees who have been off the job for an extended period of time, and overall training of all employees to review all COVID related policies, expectations and opportunities for feedback?
- Do you need to repurpose employees (e.g. full time to staff seasonal operations; admin shifting to maintenance/sanitization roles, etc.)?
- Is there a plan in place for protecting vulnerable/high-risk employees?
- Does the plan include training, supervision and support for any workers expected to monitor compliance with public and/or may encounter disgruntled patrons? Employers should review working alone and harassment policies and procedures.
- Is there a contingency plan in place in the event of losses in staff capacity?

### 4. Measures to Protect Employees and the Public

- Do you have a clearly stated policy that every employee adheres to regarding the absolute need to stay home if sick or experiencing symptoms of COVID-19?
- Have you identified for your employees when and what PPE is needed?
- Have you secured a supply chain for the necessary PPE?
- Have you trained employees on the proper use and disposal of PPE?
- Is there a clear understanding in place regarding hand washing/sanitizing frequency of employees?
- Do you have updated emergency contact information for employees?
- Have you updated your first aid protocols, supplies, and dedicated rooms?
- Are there any processes required for start-up that might introduce risks? Consider the impact of restarting machinery, tools and equipment, or clearing systems and lines of product that may have been left when your business was closed.

### 5. Site-Based Questions

- Based on the specifics of your spaces, facilities and programs, have you created a plan for additional employees and user protective measures that may be required? This may include:
  - Do you need/have updated emergency contact information for patrons?
  - Do you have a plan to offer health screenings for employees? For patrons?
  - Are you able to limit the number of patrons or stagger entry times?
  - Can signage be installed reminding the public to physically distance, limit gatherings, stay home when sick, wear face coverings if necessary, and practice proper personal hygiene per CDC guidance?
  - Will adjustments to equipment or office space be needed to meet physical distancing and/or reduce common touch points?
  - Have you developed a drop-off system for childcare programs?
  - Is there an isolation room on-site in the event someone falls ill during a program?
  - If you are providing food, what policies are in place for food deliveries and distribution?
  - Do you need additional organization vehicles?
  - Will you need to install physical barriers to keep frontline employees safe?
  - Do you have a plan should a case or outbreak occur on your site?