

Cook County

Reopening Plan

for Offices Under the President



Toni Preckwinkle
Cook County Board President

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Overview

Goal

To implement a phased approach to reopening Cook County facilities to employees and the public.

Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and the Offices Under the President (OUP) – the six bureaus and 34 departments that report directly to the President - began preparing for and responding to the global outbreak of a novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in early 2020 and President Preckwinkle officially declared a disaster for Cook County on March 10, 2020. As the virus upended residents' lives and disrupted our economy, Cook County government pivoted to working remotely while maintaining all essential government services.

President Preckwinkle issued Executive Order 2020-10 to amend previous orders and comply with the extension of Governor Pritzker's Stay at Home Order issued on April 30, 2020. This allowed for the continued operation of essential functions of Cook County government while protecting the public and OUP employees. OUP adopted personnel policies and practices designed to continue continuity of operations while setting into motion a roadmap for transitioning back to on-site work.

OUP continues to prioritize protecting public health and safety while maintaining essential government functions centered around the following core principles:

Mission

To serve as a good steward of public resources by building equitable and sustainable communities for all residents.

Vision

To be a leader in building vibrant, sustainable and inclusive communities where people want to live, learn, work and play.

Values

Equity, Engagement, Excellence

OUP is now preparing to implement a phased approach to transitioning employees to on-site work in accordance with Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker's Restore Illinois Plan. As of June 1, 2020, the Northeast Region, which includes Cook County, has transitioned to Phase 3: Recovery under the Restore Illinois Plan, which allows businesses and workplaces to reopen by observing capacity limits and public health precautions. To outline OUP's phased approach to reopening Cook County facilities to employees and the public, President Preckwinkle's administration has created this *Cook County Reopening Plan for Offices Under the President*.

Under this plan for Offices Under the President, senior staff will return to work in Cook County facilities beginning June 15, 2020. The first official wave of employees will return to work in Cook County facilities on July 6, 2020. Employees working on-site will continue to comply with physical distancing standards and adhere to the guidance provided within this plan and any additional guidance provided by Cook County Bureau Chiefs and Department Heads.

Cook County facilities will reopen to the public on July 6, 2020 and OUP will require the public to adhere to physical distancing standards and other requirements as directed by Cook County.

Planning Process and Considerations

When the Offices Under the President (OUP) transitioned employees from on-site work to remote work in March 2020, our main priority was continuing to safely provide all essential services to residents in accordance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Cook County Department of Public Health guidelines. This remains OUP's highest priority as we begin reopening facilities to employees and the public.

To develop, implement and monitor reopening Cook County facilities to employees and the public, President Preckwinkle established a multi-disciplinary OUP Reopening team within her office led by the Bureau Chief of Asset Management, the Bureau Chief of Human Resources and the Deputy Chief of Staff. Subject matter experts from the Cook County Department of Public Health and the consulting firms of Cushman & Wakefield and Guidepost Solutions provided additional guidance.

Planning Process and Schedule: The Strategic Direction

Step 1: April 13, 2020: OUP leadership met for a preliminary brainstorming session on reopening facilities to employees and the public. The group established the OUP Reopening Planning team.

Step 2: April 18, 2020: The OUP Reopening Planning team distributed information to help bureaus and departments determine the requirements for returning to work in waves, with guidance regarding facilities constraints and human resources policies and a racial equity analysis tool.

Step 3: May 7 – May 30, 2020: The OUP Reopening Planning team completed all return to work plan reviews with all bureaus and departments.

Step 4: July 6, 2020: OUP will begin transitioning employees to on-site work by bringing the first wave of employees back into Cook County facilities. Cook County facilities will reopen to the public. The second and third wave of employees will transition to on-site work 2 – 4 weeks thereafter as environmental and public health conditions allow.

The OUP Reopening Planning team adopted the following planning assumptions and will use them as a guide during the implementation phase:

Iterative: The planning and implementation processes are not one-time processes. Rather, they are iterative processes that OUP will evaluate and adjust as the situation evolves.

Phased: OUP will need to adopt a phased approach to reopening facilities to Cook County employees and the public to ensure everyone can practice physical distancing while in Cook County facilities. Adopting a phased approach also allows OUP to respond to the pandemic's changing conditions and maintain the ability for OUP employees return to working remotely if needed.

Tailored: OUP recognizes there may not be a one size fits all approach when reopening and transitioning employees back to on-site work. Plans must be tailored to fit the operational needs of our various departments, bureaus and separately elected offices.

Planning Process and Considerations

To create a responsive reopening strategy, the OUP Reopening Team will:

Prioritize the health, safety and wellness of the public and Cook County employees:

OUP has updated personnel policies and infection control plans related to COVID-19 to safely resume on-site activities.

Follow all public health guidance and regulations: OUP commits to following all Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH), Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidance for work and public space preparation. Under this guidance, OUP has adjusted facilities to accommodate physical distancing and will provide personal protective equipment (PPE) to employees and the public (when necessary for them to carry out their business in County facilities), including masks and gloves.

Set expectations through consistent communication: Internal and external communication are critical to reopening Cook County facilities to employees and the public. Successfully resuming on-site work will require OUP employees' trust and buy-in. OUP will achieve this through consistent updates to manage expectations for all involved through the OUP employee newsletter and through a regular cadence of internal messaging to all employees.

Consider Cook County's fiscal constraints: OUP must consider the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Cook County's finances when implanting a return to work plan. As a result, departments must strategize and plan for the best ways to return employees to their offices with less financial resources.

Prioritize racial equity: OUP must consider compounding inequities and use a racial equity framework when implementing a reopening plan at Cook County facilities. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing racial disparities in the county. For this reason, a Racial Equity Impact Analysis tool was developed. The tool is being used to examine how Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), and people in low wealth communities, will be affected as decisions are being made in relation to COVID-19.

To facilitate safely reopening Cook County facilities to employees and the public, the Bureau of Human Resources revised relevant policies and created a tool to assist bureaus and departments in determining which employees should return to work in which wave. Additionally, the Bureau of Asset Management began adjusting Cook County facilities to comply with public health guidance and accommodate bureaus' and departments' needs, including space modifications and personal protective equipment.

To ensure a coordinated response among Cook County government, OUP also provided technical assistance support to the other Cook County separately-elected officials. Specifically, OUP convened separate planning groups for the property tax stakeholders¹ and the criminal justice stakeholders² to accommodate their unique operations and the public facing services they provide.

In addition to coordinating with Cook County separately-elected officials, OUP coordinated with the State of Illinois and the City of Chicago. Since, all three jurisdictions share common entrances and exits for both the general public and government employees, it was important for OUP to facilitate a collaborative framework to achieve a safe and successful reopening.

Facilities Modification and Protocols

To safely reopen Cook County facilities to employees and the public, the Offices Under the President (OUP) relied on best practices, public health guidelines³ and data⁴. Cook County is committed to implementing a careful, methodical approach to safely reopening our facilities to the public and transitioning our employees to working on-site.

Each department and agency is leading the effort to modify their workspaces for employees, and for the public where applicable. To assist with this process, the Bureau of Asset Management (BAM) and the Bureau of Human Resources (BHR) developed the Manager Guidebook, which includes guidelines on:

- ▶ Accommodating at least 6 feet of physical distancing between desks in open workspaces.
- ▶ Planning circulation patterns throughout workspaces, using directional signage or markings.
- ▶ Managing interior conference rooms to prevent large gatherings.
- ▶ Posting signage with maximum capacity in all public and employee gathering spaces;
- ▶ Removing chairs to discourage excess capacity in lunchrooms, courtrooms, and lobbies;
- ▶ Posting signage throughout workspaces occupied by cubicles;
- ▶ Following policies that apply while an employee is physically at their workplace; and
- ▶ Maintaining cleanliness of frequently touched surfaces.

Departments and agencies appointed reentry captains to coordinate their planning efforts. BAM held trainings for reentry captains to assist them in implementing adjustments to their office. Prior to employees returning to onsite work, BAM will provide reentry captains with physical distancing kits that include supplies for reopening their county office.

BAM also provided a guidebook on how to evaluate, plan and implement adjustments to workspaces to maintain at least six feet of physical distancing, as well as supplies, signage and assistance in applying the guidelines where needed. The Department of Facilities Management (DFM) assisted departments with the placement of floor decals and stanchions.

In addition to modifying individual offices' workspace, BAM also maintains all common areas within Cook County facilities. The protocols established below align with the Restore Illinois Plan, health guidance from the Cook County Department of Public Health (CCDPH) and Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and Cook County policies, and will be implemented at all Cook County facilities to ensure the safety of employees and members of the public.

Entering and exiting facilities

Managed entry points: BAM will manage entry and exit for all Cook County facilities. Where applicable, these procedures will be a collaborative system in partnership with the City of Chicago, the State of Illinois and relevant stakeholders.

Wellness screenings: Beginning June 15, 2020, all individuals entering Cook County facilities will be subject to a health screening survey, thermal scanning and, if necessary, a second temperature screening using a non-contact infrared thermometer.

Facilities Modification and Protocols

Face coverings: OUP will require the public and employees to wear face coverings in all common areas where six feet of physical distancing may not be possible. OUP will provide a limited supply of disposable face coverings to members of the public who do not have them and have an urgent need to access the building. In the event of an entrant's temperature showing to be above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit after first and secondary scanning, answering the screening questions reveals exposure/symptoms related to COVID-19, or lack of cooperation, entry will be denied. Denied entrants (whether public or County employees) will have to show their Identification card, not just employment ID. The entrant will be given a denial receipt with the date/time stamped, facility name, phone number to call, and code indicating reason for denial.

Maintaining safety within facilities

Lines: In anticipation of lines forming near elevators and in lobbies, DFM will place decals throughout facilities indicating where individuals should stand while waiting for the elevator. Security personnel will also be present in lobbies to assist with line management.

Elevator capacity limits: BAM will post elevator capacity limits throughout Cook County facilities and in elevators in accordance with public health guidelines. Security staff will manage both lining up and boarding to manage elevator capacity.

Capacity limits and guidance: BAM provided capacity guidelines for office spaces and spaces serving the public. BAM followed current IDPH guidance for retail and service counters of 1 person per 200 square feet. BAM's capacity guidance for office spaces limits capacity to 50 percent of the current fulltime employees to ensure individuals can safely move throughout the facility and maintain physical distancing.

Lunchrooms, conference rooms and shared spaces: DFM will post maximum capacity guidelines and alter seating and table arrangements in shared spaces in Cook County facilities to achieve 6 feet of physical distance.

Signage and communication: BAM will post signs throughout Cook County facilities reminding individuals of COVID-19 symptoms, to wear face coverings, maintain six feet of physical distance from others, follow capacity limits and follow proper handwashing.

Facility maintenance and engineering controls

Heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) and air circulation: DFM increased air ventilation in Cook County facilities. HVAC systems use high-efficiency air filters, which DFM will replace more frequently to accommodate a safe return to work. DFM staff follow OSHA and CDC guidelines in maintaining air quality in Cook County facilities.

Plastic barriers: DFM will install plastic barriers, or sneeze guards, at all public-facing counters and wherever staff need additional protection.

Frequent cleaning of high touch areas: DFM increased custodial staffing across Cook County facilities to increase COVID-19 sanitation. DFM will ensure frequent, detailed cleaning in bathrooms and frequent disinfecting in common areas, office spaces in use, and frequently

Facilities Modification and Protocols

touched areas, including elevator buttons, light switches, handrails, doorknobs, door handles, countertops of information desks and handles on toilets and sinks. To expand on the effort to clean surfaces, DFM will perform regular bathroom checks and document the time checked and will stock and clean every two hours.

DFM will also increase the frequency of sanitizing floors and counters. Departments and agencies must sanitize their refrigerators and microwaves.

Cleaning supply procurement: DFM provided a written policy to designated county staff explaining the process for procuring additional cleaning and signage supplies.

Food: DFM provided a written policy to county employees informing them of procedures for common refrigerators and microwaves. This policy encourages occupants to bring food and beverage items from home. Finally, it designates suitable in-office eating areas.

Mail and supply rooms: DFM provided a written policy to department managers covering the designation of one person to go in and out of mail or supply rooms. It also addresses assigning delivery management and sterilization tasks to specific employees.

COVID-19 risks may vary depending on the work environment, type of work performed and the potential for close contact for a repeated or extended period. To help OUP determine appropriate PPE for employees, the OUP Reopening Team developed the following guidance in accordance with CDC guidelines and adopted from OSHA Occupational Risk levels⁵:

Low Exposure Risk: positions that do not require contact with people known to be, or suspected of being, infected. Workers in this category have minimal occupational contact with the public and other coworkers.

Medium Exposure Risk: positions that require frequent close contact with people who may be infected, but who are not known or suspected patients. Workers in this category include those who may have contact with the general public, including schools, high-population-density work environments, including individuals returning from locations with widespread COVID-19 transmission.

High Exposure risk: positions with a high potential for exposure to known or suspected sources of COVID-19. Workers in this category include healthcare delivery, healthcare support, medical transport, and mortuary workers exposed to known or suspected COVID-19 patients or bodies of people known to have, or suspected of having, COVID-19 at the time of death.

Very High Exposure Risk: positions with a high potential for exposure to known or suspected sources of COVID-19 during specific medical, postmortem, or laboratory procedures. Workers include healthcare and morgue workers performing aerosol-generating procedures on or collecting/handling specimens from potentially infectious patients or bodies of people known to have, or suspected of having, COVID-19 at the time of death.

Personnel

The Bureau of Human Resources (BHR) developed a strategy for all Offices Under the President (OUP) employees to return to on-site work in a phased approach organized into three different waves beginning on July 6, 2020.

To prepare for this phased approach, BHR developed a return to work analysis tool to help departments determine which employees would return to work in which waves. To assist departments, BHR provided guidelines around:

- ▶ Determining which positions are needed on-site to fully serve the public as Cook County facilities reopen.
- ▶ Reviewing positions that were not viable for telecommuting based on function.
- ▶ Determining personal protective equipment requirements for each position.
- ▶ Offering alternative work schedules, staggered hours and compressed workweeks to accommodate employees' constraints with returning to on-site work.
- ▶ Analyzing positions for longer term telecommuting, in alignment with the Telecommuting Policy BHR issued in March 2020; and
- ▶ Encouraging managers to be sensitive to employees' challenges with childcare, transportation and other accommodations and consider these situations to determine which wave each employee returns to work in.

BHR will continue to encourage departments to use the return to work analysis tool to reduce on-site staff. For example, they utilize staff schedule rotations and virtual meetings.

To reopen Cook County facilities and accommodate those returning to their on-site workspaces BHR has:

- ▶ Instituted employee screenings at entrances for all Cook County facilities, including temperature checks and wellness screenings, in conjunction with the Bureau of Asset Management (BAM). This includes a COVID-19 Employee Questionnaire developed in partnership with the Cook County Department of Public Health.
- ▶ Created an online employee safety training to inform employees of new building and workplace protocols. This will complement an Employee Handbook that will be provided on re-entry developed by BAM.
- ▶ Developed processes for employees who exhibit symptoms of or test positive for COVID-19 - this includes an investigation protocol managers can employ and policies that cover employees who may become symptomatic during the workday.
- ▶ Created pay policies for periods of stay-at-home orders.
- ▶ Continued to encourage employees to use the Employee Assistance Program throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ▶ Developed a plan to increase webinar offerings to help employees cope with the stress of the pandemic and transitioning back to on-site work.

Personnel

- ▶ Retained equipment and technology to implement protocols such as telecommuting and VPN accommodations.
- ▶ Developed a communication strategy to identify employee concerns regarding returning to on-site work and update employees on Cook County's commitment to preparing a safe environment for their return.
- ▶ Developed a return to work questionnaire to identify employees with health concerns prior to their return to work as BHR determines who is in what wave of return.

OUP also adjusted organizational structures and position functions to accommodate on-site and off-site work in the event of a future COVID-19 surge. As an example, many public facing positions have been adjusted to virtual platforms and remote electronic and telecommunications capability.

To safely facilitate OUP employees returning to on-site work, BHR also modified and drafted applicable policies.

Time and Attendance Policy: BHR updated the OUP Time and Attendance Policy to allow telecommuting, remote clock-in via the Cook County Time Dashboard and departmental discretion in creating schedules for staffing and related procedures. It also:

- ▶ Encourages managers to employ flexible schedules, including staggered schedules and alternative workweeks, in response to transportation issues;
- ▶ Instructs employees on how to properly record time during the stay-at-home order and when returning to on-site work; and
- ▶ Creates pay codes for new policies based on regulations passed by Congress, including the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, in conjunction with the Comptroller's Office.

Physical Distancing Policy: The OUP Physical Distancing Policy provides guidance on maintaining physical distancing in Cook County facilities and outlines measures that employees must follow. The Policy addresses protocols for employees to operate in meetings, common areas, and other spaces throughout County buildings and facilities. recommends options such as alternative work schedules and virtual meetings in lieu of in-person meetings depending on pandemic conditions and public health guidelines. In support of this Policy, BHR also has:

- ▶ Encouraged departments to limit the number of employees returning to on-site work to stay below 50 percent of the Certificate of Occupancy limits in Cook County facilities.
- ▶ Developed employee training on required safety and physical distancing guidelines.
- ▶ Identified remedies to avoid overcrowding in common areas, including kitchen areas, and encourages employees to bring their own lunch; and
- ▶ Provided policy guidance around unnecessary travel outside of the workplace during the workday.

Personnel

Clean Workspace Policy: The OUP Clean Workspace Policy provides guidance on maintaining clean workspaces to keep employees safe and healthy and facilitate easy access to and quick sanitization of such areas as necessary. This Policy outlines employees' and department heads' responsibilities to keep respective workspaces and access areas neat and organized. It also limits personal items at work to allow the Department of Facilities to properly clean.

Personnel Rules Addendum – COVID-19 Related Leaves and Return to Work

Processes: This addendum to the Personnel Rules addresses absences related to COVID-19 and return to work processes and requirements for employees affected by COVID-19 or asked to stay home pursuant to Executive Orders. It provides a list of safety measures that employees must follow while in Cook County facilities, including a detailed investigation protocol for employees who become sick or demonstrate COVID-19 symptoms while at work. As part of this addendum, BHR will implement an Employee Wellness Screening Program to further ensure the health and safety of all employees and to minimize the spread of COVID-19.

Telecommuting Policy: The OUP Telecommuting Policy outlines eligibility requirements, guidance and expectations for employees and managers working remotely, including a telecommuting acknowledgment form to detail the telecommuting arrangement for each employee.

Communications

Public Communications

OUP's communications strategy centers on clear, concise and consistent messaging to the public and employees to inform them when Cook County facilities will reopen and what procedures OUP will put in place. This is a multi-pronged strategy using internal and external communications including but not limited to press and public service announcements, social media channels and Cook County and stakeholder websites.

The Bureau of Asset Management is meeting regularly with building tenants, management firms, and other users of facilities to provide updates and capture concerns.

Internal Communications

The Bureau of Human Resources is sending emails and memorandums to all Cook County employees and chain-of-command communication to managers and organizing meetings to provide two-way feedback regarding safety protocols for returning to work. BHR initially determined the phased return to work and workspace accommodations through rounds of analysis and discussions with departments.

Cook County Board of Commissioners

OUP briefs the Cook County Board of Commissioners weekly. The Secretary to the Cook County Board of Commissioners is coordinating the return to work for the Board of Commissioners with the support of the OUP return to work team.

Conclusion

OUP has worked tirelessly to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of Cook County's 5.2 million residents during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In accordance with the five-phase Restore Illinois Plan and public health guidance, OUP will reopen its facilities for the public and Cook County employees beginning on July 6, 2020. OUP will phase back into on-site work in gradual waves as directed by their supervisors. The Bureau of Asset Management and Bureau of Human Resources will continue to provide guidance and evaluate processes to ensure the safety of employees and the public.

The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare society's inequities and underscores the importance of government's role in supporting residents most in need. Given that the COVID-19 pandemic is not over, OUP will update this Plan as circumstances change.

Appendix

Appendix

Calculating PPE Needs: Assessment Tool

PPE 6 Month Needs Assessment Survey

Department Name	
Contact Name	
Contact Email	
Contact Phone	

Please complete the following survey estimating the amount of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that your department will need over the next 6 months.

Department Name	Facility Using PPE (Break out estimates by Facility)	Floor/Room	Estimated # of Daily Public Visitors	NITRILE GLOVES BOXES (100 per box)				FACE COVERINGS (each)		HAND SANITIZER AND WIPES (each)		
				Gloves Nitrile Small (Boxes)	Gloves Nitrile Medium (Boxes)	Gloves Nitrile Large (Boxes)	Gloves Nitrile X-Large (Boxes)	For Employees Cloth Mask - Washable (each)	For Public 3-Ply Mask (each)	For Employees Hand Sanitizer (8-12 ounce Bottles)	For Communal Areas within Office Hand Sanitizer (1 gallon bottles with trigger pump)	Clorox or Equivalent Wipes (80 wipes per container)
User				Public Facing Employees	Public Facing Employees	Public Facing Employees	Public Facing Employees	All Employees	Public Visitors without Masks	All Employees	All Employees	All Employees
Burn Rate				1 Box per public facing employee per month	1 Box per public facing employee per month	1 Box per public facing employee per month	1 Box per public facing employee per month	2 per employee	Disposed after use	1 per employee per month	1 per communal area per month	1 per month
EXAMPLE Environment and Sustainability	69 W. Washington	19th Floor	0	14	80	20	6	40	0	120	6	6

Additional Resources

[Download the Cook County Manager Guidebook](#)

[Download the Cook County Employee Handbook](#)

[Download the Restore Illinois Service Counter Guidelines](#)

Endnotes

- 1 The Cook County property tax stakeholders include the Cook County Assessor, Cook County Board of Review, Cook County Clerk, Cook County Recorder of Deeds and Cook County Treasurer.
- 2 The Cook County criminal justice stakeholders include the Chief Judge of the Circuit Court of Cook County, Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County, Cook County Public Defender, Cook County Sheriff and Cook County State's Attorney.
- 3 <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>
- 4 <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/diseases-and-conditions/diseases-a-z-list/coronavirus/business-guidance>
- 5 <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3993.pdf>



Toni Preckwinkle
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