

# Frequently Asked Questions Regarding COVID-19 for Homeless Providers

## Individuals with Symptoms

**Question:** What do I do if I recognize someone is exhibiting symptoms or if I am exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19?


**Answer:**

- If you or someone else are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 including fever, coughing and difficulty breathing, please contact your local healthcare provider, or your local hospital for further guidance.
- The MDHHS COVID-19 hotline is available 7 days a week, 8 am to 5 pm to answer questions about the virus: 1-888-535-6136
- Online resources available 24/7:


[www.Michigan.gov/coronavirus](http://www.Michigan.gov/coronavirus)

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)


## Questions About COVID-19?



**Call the COVID-19 Hotline at 888-535-6136,**  
7 days a week from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.



**Email COVID19@michigan.gov 24/7.** Emails  
will be answered 7 days a week, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.



## Supplies

**Question:** We are in desperate need of a variety of supplies including PPE. We have money to buy them but no stores are carrying anything we need.

**Answer:**

- If you are you in need of critical supplies or services to help serve individuals, Pure Michigan Business Connect (PMBC) is collecting data in order to help you source these needs and services within Michigan. Please visit the current link:  
<https://pmbc.connect.space/covid19/forms>

- We encourage you to make public asks for product donations. Ask your Board or local philanthropic organizations to help assemble a supply drive.
- Appeal to currently closed organizations (restaurants, colleges, dentists, tattoo parlors, etc.) to donate their unused products.
- Let your local emergency management team and public health department know what you need.
- [According to the Centers for Disease Control](#): Healthcare provider (HCP) use of homemade masks: In settings where facemasks are not available, HCP might use homemade masks (e.g., bandana, scarf) for care of patients with COVID-19 as a last resort. However, homemade masks are not considered PPE, since their capability to protect HCP is unknown. Caution should be exercised when considering this option. Homemade masks should ideally be used in combination with a face shield that covers the entire front (that extends to the chin or below) and sides of the face.

**Question:** How do we safely deliver or pick up food and supplies?

**Answer:**

- Leave supplies and food outside and contact someone by phone or text to let them know the supplies have been delivered.
- Provide Curbside pick up for food and supplies
- Schedule or stagger deliveries and pick ups during slower times

### **Staffing**

**Question:** How can we protect the health and safety of our staff?

**Answer:** *The Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) has extensive information on its website about how to help protect employees and maintain operations during a pandemic:*

[https://www.osha.gov/Publications/influenza\\_pandemic.html#maintain\\_operations](https://www.osha.gov/Publications/influenza_pandemic.html#maintain_operations)

**Some strategies include:**

- Provide your employees and clients in your workplace with easy access to infection control supplies, such as soap, hand sanitizers, personal protective equipment (such as gloves or surgical masks), tissues, and office cleaning supplies.
- Provide training, education and informational material about business-essential job functions and employee health and safety, including proper hygiene practices and the

use of any personal protective equipment to be used in the workplace. Be sure that informational material is available in a usable format for individuals with sensory disabilities and/or limited English proficiency. Encourage employees to take care of their health by eating right, getting plenty of rest and getting a seasonal flu vaccination.

- Assist employees in managing additional stressors related to the pandemic. Assuring timely and accurate communication will also be important throughout the duration of the pandemic in decreasing fear or worry. Employers should provide opportunities for support, counseling, and mental health assessment and referral should these be necessary.

### **Funding**

***Question:*** *How can I access emergency funding to help sustain shelter operations?*

***Answer:***

- Publicly announce the need for additional fundraising due to COVID-19.
- Reach out to your local United Way and Community Foundation.
- Consider starting an online donation campaign.
- Some communities in Michigan have already established relief funds to assist with emergent needs - <https://www.michiganfoundations.org/covid-19-resource-central#resources>
- If you are a Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Emergency Shelter Program funded shelter, reach out to your Salvation Army regional manager.

### **Additional Shelter Capacity**

***Question:*** *What if we need extra shelter beds in our community for people who are sick?*

***Answer:***

Communicate with your local homeless response system to identify options for isolation – whether that is isolation in a shelter, standing up a dedicated shelter for people recovering from COVID-19, or other options. Work with local emergency management and other community groups like the Red Cross to help open temporary facilities or set up temporary areas for isolation.

**Question:** *We are looking for community spaces to create temporary shelter facilities. What spaces have been used in other communities?*

**Answer:**

We encourage you to work with your emergency management team to locate facilities or additional shelter beds that could be used for short-term shelter and/or housing.

Across the country, many different arrangements are being made to provide locations for individuals and families who are homeless to shelter in place including:

- Vacant hotels and apartment buildings
- Schools
- Gymnasiums
- Tiny home villages
- Portable structures
- Dormitories

### **Infectious Disease Control**

**Question:** What is the difference between a respirator mask, a dust mask, and the disposable masks people keep talking about?

**Answer:**

According to the Federal Drug Administration in partnership with OSHA and CDC:

An **N95 respirator** is a respiratory protective device designed to achieve a very close facial fit and very efficient filtration of airborne particles. Note that the edges of the respirator are designed to form a seal around the nose and mouth. Surgical N95 Respirators are commonly used in healthcare settings and are a subset of N95 Filtering Facepiece Respirators (FFRs), often referred to as N95s.

A **surgical mask** is a loose-fitting, disposable device that creates a physical barrier between the mouth and nose of the wearer and potential contaminants in the immediate environment. These are often referred to as face masks, although not all face masks are regulated as surgical masks. Note that the edges of the mask are not designed to form a seal around the nose and mouth.

**Dust masks** are not NIOSH\* approved disposable filtering facepieces. They can be worn for comfort against non-toxic nuisance dusts during activities like mowing, gardening, sweeping and dusting. These masks are not respirators and do not offer protection against hazardous dusts, gases or vapors. For more detailed information: Please review the following helpful information from OSHA and the FDA:

<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/respiratoryprotection/index.html>.

<https://www.osha.gov/Publications/respirators-vs-surgicalmasks-factsheet.html>

<https://www.fda.gov/medical-devices/personal-protective-equipment-infection-control/n95-respirators-and-surgical-masks-face-masks>

### **Working with Children and Families**

**Question:** What if a member of a homeless family becomes ill?

**Answer:**

Ideally, the family member experiencing the symptoms should isolate from the rest of the family. In some circumstances, that is not possible. Please consult with your local health department for greater guidance based on the set up of your shelter.

Encourage parents to identify safe, short -term relative caregivers in the event a parent becomes ill and cannot care for their children.

### **Determining Critical Community Partners for your Emergency Response**

**Question:** How do we engage our community partners in conversations about our needs?

**Answer:**

Contact your local providers (Public Health, State Police, County Emergency Managers, other nonprofits) and let them know that you want to be a part of the planning process. If you think that you have been left out, it is never too late to ask for a seat at the table. Have data available to share that paints a picture of your critical needs.

To identify your local emergency management team, visit the Michigan Emergency Management Association at <https://www.memaonline.org/local-emergency-programs>

For further information:

MDHHS Coronavirus Website: <http://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus>

CDC COVID-19 Website: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>