



## **Arlington County Public Meeting & Gathering Guidance to Mitigate and Contain the Spread of COVID-19**

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The National Capital Region is seeing an increased number of cases of COVID-19. We currently don't know what the impact will be region-wide. However, there are steps we can take as Arlington County Government to help mitigate and contain the spread of COVID-19.

Events and public gatherings create environments where a virus can spread quickly among event workers and participants. Examples of public gatherings include board meetings, commission meetings, community forums, festivals, special events, open houses, presentations, and other targeted group programs.

### **Factors for Determining if Arlington County Gatherings are Essential or Non-Essential**

The health and safety of participants and staff will always be our priority. Moving forward, many gatherings and events will be cancelled, postponed, or modified in some way to better protect our residents and staff. To help us do this, the County has created a set of determining factors to help guide decision-making, which at this time will remain on a case-by-case basis with as much notice given as possible. We'll be using the questions below to help us determine which events and gatherings are essential, and which can be postponed or conducted with some accommodations or modifications. We also strongly encourage other organizations to use these guidelines across our community.

#### **Is the Meeting Essential?**

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- ***Does the gathering meet a statutory requirement?***
- Example: The County Board is required to meet in person and accept public comment.
- ***Is the work of the group required for business continuity?***
- Example: A Board-appointed commission needs to act on time-sensitive agenda items coming before the County Board in the near future.
- ***Would not having the event cause undue hardship?***
- Examples: Meal or critical health programs/services

#### **Is the Meeting Not Essential OR Does it Pose a Risk to Likely Attendees?**

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- ***Can the gathering be rescheduled, in whole or in part?***
- Example: An activity, celebration or meeting that is not time sensitive and could take place at a later date.

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- **Can the experience be offered in a virtual format?**
- Example: Educational programs and/or engagement activities that offer participation through online tools and resources.
  
- **Does the event's target population include people in the high-risk categories?**
- Example: Older adult programming and events.

### **Are there Accommodations That Can Effectively Reduce Risk?**

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- **Is it possible to change meeting setup and design to reduce risk?**
- Example: Available space can be configured in a way that provides six feet of distancing between participants

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### **Event Checklist for Essential Meetings and Gatherings**

For all meetings and gatherings that will take place, use this risk mitigation to ensure that when we do meet, we do so safely.

- Venue Setup: Reducing Germ Spread**
  - Increasing physical distance between attendees
  - Identifying sick attendees
  - Soap and towels
  - Hand sanitizer, tissues, trash baskets positioned throughout event space
  - Increasing ventilation
  - Planning for cleaning frequently touched surfaces; cleaning and disinfecting supplies
- Venue Setup: Signs**
  - Post "How to protect yourself and others" signs
- Public Health Education**
  - Hygiene and Health: Wash hands, 'wave' in lieu of handshakes, cover coughs and sneezes, maintain six-foot distance; don't attend an event if sick
  - How to handle symptomatic attendees
- Attendee Education**
  - Pre-event meeting messaging: Stay home if sick
  - Event intro: Convey current County/region status
  - Reiterate safety steps, safety messages, process changes

*Coronavirus is disrupting "business as usual" around the world, around the region, and around the corner. An important reminder that this is a rapidly evolving situation and so this guidance may change as a result. Our priority is to ensure that staff, residents, and all who live, work, play, and learn in Arlington are healthy and safe.*