Multnomah County

Guidance for social service and non-profit agencies to prepare for COVID-19

February 27, 2020

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have directed communities to prepare for COVID-19. As your local health officials, here are some steps everyone can take to prepare.

What can your agency or organization do to prepare for COVID-19 now?

- Ensure that your sick leave policies make it easy for employees to stay home when they are sick and that your employees know about these policies and expectations. You'll want to make sure you are in compliance with federal, state, and local sick leave laws and policies. Talk with companies that provide your organization with contract or temporary employees about the importance of sick employees staying home and encourage them to develop flexible sick leave policies.
- Create or update flexible policies that allow employees to stay home to care for a sick family member or child who cannot go to school. Employers should plan for absenteeism at the workplace by identifying essential functions and creating plans for continuity of operations. These plans may include
  - Cross-train personnel to perform essential functions so that the workplace is able to operate even if key staff members are absent.
  - Prepared to change your practices if needed to maintain critical operations (e.g., identify alternative suppliers, prioritize clients, or temporarily suspend some of your operations if needed).
- Plan to protect your clients and staff by postponing non-urgent services, increasing service provision by phone or on-line instead of face-to-face contact. Assist clients to gather resources they would need to be able to stay at home for up to two weeks if they become sick or need to socially distance (medication refills, etc).
- Reassure and support clients and staff by sharing 2.26.2020 Community Message (https://multco.us/health-officer/news/still-no-cases-oregon-health-officials-are-preparing-covid-19): what people can do to prepare at home, and what public health is doing to prepare.

How can your organization help prevent illness?

- Emphasize staying home when sick, covering coughs and sneezes and good hand washing by all employees.
- Place posters that encourage staying home when sick (https://www.cdc.gov/nonpharmaceutical-interventions/tools-resources/educational-materials.html), cough and sneeze etiquette (https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/etiquette/coughing_sneezing.html), and hand hygiene (https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/materials.html) at the entrance to your workplace and in other workplace areas where they are likely to be seen.
- Provide tissues, waste baskets and hand sanitizer in areas where employees gather.
- Routinely clean all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, countertops, and doorknobs. Use the cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas and follow the directions on the label.

- No additional disinfection beyond routine cleaning is recommended at this time.
- Provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces (for example, doorknobs, keyboards, remote controls, desks) can be wiped down by employees before each use.

What can your organization do if employees are sick?

- Employees who have a cough/fever illness should stay home until they are free of fever and any other symptoms for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing or other medicines like cough suppressants).
- Any employee that becomes sick with a fever and cough illness at work should be kept away from others and be sent home immediately. For additional guidance, see CDC's interim guidance for businesses and employers (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-business-response.html).
- For those employees who are sick with acute respiratory illness, do not require they produce a healthcare provider's note to validate their illness or to return to work.