



# **City of New Orleans**

## **COVID-19 Community Mitigation Plan**

March 2020

# Purpose & Scope

## *Purpose*

The purpose of this document is to define the role and responsibilities of the New Orleans Health Department (NOHD) in its support of Emergency Support Function 8 – Public Health and Medical Services (ESF-8) during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Within Louisiana, the Louisiana Department of Health, is the lead agency responsible for the response of a disease outbreak. As a local health department, the New Orleans Health Department is the lead agency within the City of New Orleans tasked with protecting public health during emergencies and maintains robust partnerships with those responsible for providing medical care in an emergency (Emergency Medical Services, hospitals, etc.). The goal of ESF-8, as defined by the *National Response Framework* (NRF) and established by Presidential Policy Directive 8 (PPD 8) in an infectious disease outbreak is to: determine the source of the infection prevent the spread of the infection, and minimize the morbidity and mortality caused by the infection. All actions outlined in this document support the objectives of ESF-8.

## *Scope*

The City of New Orleans COVID-19 Community Mitigation Plan provides direction to NOHD and its partners for the mitigation of the spread of, and morbidity and mortality from COVID-19. This plan outlines measures that may be taken by the City of New Orleans in the event of widespread, community transmission of the virus within Orleans Parish. **The plan includes potential actions that may be taken, but implementation of specific measures will be dependent on the number of cases and the scale of public cooperation and attention. If deemed necessary by the level of community transmission and the dangers thereof, additional measures not outlined in this plan may be implemented at the direction of City leadership.**

This plan has been developed to complement those of the Louisiana Department of Health Office of Public Health (LDH OPH) for containment and mitigation of severe respiratory pathogens. This plan also satisfies the authority given to the New Orleans Health Department by the Louisiana Administrative Code and the New Orleans City Charter and Ordinances.

# Situation Overview

## *Global Situation*

COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first detected in Wuhan, China in December, 2019. It has now been detected in a growing number of locations internationally, including the United States, and was declared an official “Pandemic” by the World Health Organization (WHO) on March 11, 2020.<sup>1</sup> The virus is named “SARS-CoV-2” and the disease it causes has been named “Coronavirus Disease 2019”, which is often abbreviated to COVID-19.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses which includes those responsible for the common cold. Certain coronaviruses cause illness in humans and others may cause illnesses in animals, including mammals. Rarely, animal coronaviruses have crossed species, gaining the ability to infect humans and spread directly from person-to-person. This is suspected to have occurred for COVID-19 and is believed to have also been the case with similar coronavirus outbreaks in recent history: Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). There is little to no evidence that suggests that humans may transmit or catch the virus from their pets.

Current understanding about how the virus that causes COVID-19 spreads is largely based on that which is known about similar coronaviruses. COVID-19 is a new disease and there are global efforts to learn more about how its transmission, the severity and mechanisms of the disease it causes, and which medical interventions are effective in treating those with the disease. As it is understood now, the virus is thought to spread primarily from person-to-person through small droplets expelled from the nose or mouth (during exhalation, coughing, or sneezing), which are spread throughout the immediate vicinity of the person. These droplets can be inhaled by another individual or may enter the person’s eyes or nose and may cause the development of COVID-19. The droplets may also land on objects and surfaces around the infected person. If another person touches those items, then touches their eyes, mouth, or nose, they may develop COVID-19.

For those who report illness, most cases are mild to moderate. Symptoms are believed to appear 2-14 days after exposure and may include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of Breath

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<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization <https://www.who.int/dg/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---11-march-2020>

A smaller proportion of individuals will develop serious illness from COVID-19 and may require hospitalization including intensive care services. While anyone may become seriously ill from COVID-19, those most at risk for severe illness are those with underlying health conditions such as diabetes, heart or lung disease, high blood pressure, cancer, and other conditions that may cause a weakened immune system. Individuals over the age of 65 are also considered high-risk for serious illness from COVID-19.<sup>2</sup> Severe complications of COVID-19 can include pneumonia, acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), and septic shock.

Based on available evidence, there is no indication that children are at higher risk for COVID-19 than adults. While some children and adults have been sick with COVID-19, adults make up most of the known cases to date. Children with COVID-19 typically present with mild symptoms.<sup>3</sup>

### *Local Situation*

The first known case of COVID-19 in the United States was confirmed on January 20, 2020 in Washington State. The virus has since spread to all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and additional U.S. territories. While the first several cases in the U.S. are believed to have occurred in individuals with recent travel to the Wuhan region, many states now confirm that there is widespread community transmission in their boundaries.

The first known case of COVID-19 in Louisiana was diagnosed on March 9, 2020 at a New Orleans hospital. Since then, COVID-19 has spread rapidly throughout the New Orleans region and surrounding parishes. The growth of new infections in Orleans Parish is among the highest in the world at the time of this plan's release and the City is experienced one of the highest per capita infection rates in the country. Current statistics can be found at [www.ldh.la.gov/coronavirus](http://www.ldh.la.gov/coronavirus).

New Orleans is home to many individuals who may be considered “high-risk” for severe illness or complications from COVID-19 because of their pre-existing health condition(s) and limited access to healthcare services. In all situations, the New Orleans Health Department directs resources to address the needs of those disadvantaged by health and socioeconomic disparities. NOHD and its partners are aware of how these health disparities that are so common in our community will impact potential morbidity and

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<sup>2</sup> World Health Organization <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>

<sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/children.html>

mortality from COVID-19 and is committed to protecting the health of our city's most vulnerable residents.

Amidst the first appearances of COVID-19 in China, the New Orleans Health Department and its local and state partners took deliberate and preemptive action to prepare the New Orleans region for the potential arrival of the disease. On March 6, 2020, NOHD, in coordination with the New Orleans Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (NOHSEP), hosted a table-top exercise with local, state, and federal partners to validate pandemic mitigation plans and identify gaps in planning and coordination processes. On March 11, Mayor Latoya Cantrell signed an emergency declaration for City ahead of widespread COVID-19 transmission in the community. A state-wide emergency declaration was signed by Governor John Bel Edwards on the same day. Also on this day, NOHSEP activated the City Emergency Operations Center (CEOC) with representatives from local and state public health, medical, and public safety partners across the New Orleans region. The CEOC promotes central coordination and communication of all City efforts to combat COVID-19. New Orleans has also received on-site personnel from the CDC and U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS) to support its operations during this emergency.

On March 22, 2020 Governor John Bel Edwards issued a formal request to President Donald Trump, requesting the declaration of a major disaster in Louisiana. This request was approved and may allow for additional federal resources and support for the state.

### *Legal Authority*

The Louisiana Administrative Code, Title 51 Public Health – Sanitary Code Part II Section 117 and Revised Statutes Title 40:5(1), 7, 15, 18 gives the State Health Officer the authority to use isolation and quarantine measures to control disease outbreaks in individuals, groups, facilities, and animals.<sup>4</sup> City of New Orleans City Charter 4-1202 gives the Director of Health the authority to isolate symptomatic individuals and take other measures, including the closure of building for the control of epidemic, preventable, and communicable disease.<sup>5</sup> Per City Code 82-103, 104, 108, the Director of Health may restrict access to places containing a contagious disease and may designate premises, hotels, residences, houses, and inns as locations for isolation.<sup>6</sup> The authority of the New Orleans Health Department extends to all vessels docked within Orleans Parish and to the New Orleans Louis Armstrong International Airport (MSY).

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<sup>4</sup> State of Louisiana <https://www.doa.la.gov/Pages/osr/lac/books.aspx>

<sup>5</sup> City of New Orleans [https://library.municode.com/la/new\\_orleans/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=PAI\\_HORUCH](https://library.municode.com/la/new_orleans/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PAI_HORUCH)

<sup>6</sup> City of New Orleans [https://library.municode.com/LA/New\\_Orleans/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=PTIICO\\_CH82HESA](https://library.municode.com/LA/New_Orleans/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIICO_CH82HESA)

## *Assumptions*

This plan is based on the following assumptions:

- The New Orleans Health Department must work in close coordination with the Louisiana Department of Health and other local, state, and federal partners for the purposes of epidemiological surveillance, disease investigation, and the implementation of mitigation strategies.
- Widespread COVID-19 transmission in the New Orleans community will cause fear, anxiety, and possible panic in the general population. The City Emergency Operations Center must implement aggressive public messaging strategies to inform, education, and communicate the mitigation strategies outlined in this plan.
- Protecting the health of first responders and healthcare workers will be critical. It will be just as important to protect the health of all New Orleanians.
- Response actions, including surveillance, investigations, testing, treatment, and other guidance from state and federal partners has and will continue to rapidly change during this public health emergency. This is expected due to the fluidity of the situation and the growing understanding of COVID-19.
- NOHD will take all actions to encourage voluntary compliance with isolation, quarantine, or other community mitigation measures. If mandatory enforcement is deemed necessary, it will be coordinated through NOHSEP and public safety agencies.
- At the time of this plan's public release, there is confirmed, widespread, community transmission of COVID-19 in the City of New Orleans. Aggressive actions are required to mitigate the spread of the disease and limit the extent to which the disease overwhelms the local and state hospital capacities.

# Mission

At the time of this plan’s public distribution, there is confirmed, widespread community transmission of COVID-19 across the City of New Orleans. The measures detailed within the Concept of Operations section of this document intend to mitigate further, rapid spread of COVID-19 through our communities. The primary objective of mitigation is often referred to as “flattening the curve”, which is a phrase used to describe the slowing of the transmission of a disease through a population. By doing so, the levels of seriously-ill individuals requiring hospitalization and acute medical care may be maintained at or below the surge capacities of local hospitals and medical facilities.

# Partners

For any public health emergency such as this one, the New Orleans Health Department is tasked as the primary coordinating agency within the City. All actions will be coordinated with the Louisiana Department of Health. For actions within Orleans Parish, NOHD will provide education to the community and deliver guidance to City leaderships. NOHD will maintain operational activities in coordination with those of the state and federal governments. NOHD will also coordinate the activation of the New Orleans Medical Reserve Corps in the event volunteers are needed to augment the operations outlined in this plan.

The measures described in this plan cannot be executed without the assistance of numerous local, state, and federal partners. NOHD will maintain constant bidirectional communication and coordination with its partners in the COVID-19 response. These partners include, but are not limited to:

- New Orleans Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness
- New Orleans Emergency Medical Services
- New Orleans Police Department
- New Orleans Fire Department
- Orleans Parish Communications District
- Orleans Parish Coroner’s Office
- Orleans Parish Sheriff’s Office
- New Orleans Sewage & Water Board
- New Orleans Mosquito, Termite, & Rodent Control Board
- New Orleans Department of Sanitation
- New Orleans Department of Public Works

- New Orleans Department of Safety and Permits
- New Orleans Regional Transit Authority
- New Orleans Department of Property Management
- New Orleans Metropolitan Human Services District
- New Orleans Recreation Development Commission
- Orleans Parish School Board
- New Orleans Louis Armstrong International Airport
- New Orleans Lakefront Airport
- Port of New Orleans
- Louisiana Department of Health
- Louisiana Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness
- Louisiana National Guard
- U.S. Coast Guard
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

## Concept of Operations

### *Epidemiological Surveillance*

The Louisiana Department of Health Office of Public Health is tasked as the lead agency responsible for Infectious Disease Epidemiology (IDEpi) and the processing of COVID-19 specimens at the state laboratory in Baton Rouge. The New Orleans Health Department will maintain daily communication with and provide support to the state IDEpi team to document the spread of the COVID-19 through the City of New Orleans. The New Orleans Health Department will utilize the findings of the IDEpi team to inform further actions by highlighting priority populations and areas most affected by the disease.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the IDEpi team will release regular public updates on case counts and deaths throughout the state. Daily updates can be accessed online at [www.ldh.la.gov/coronavirus](http://www.ldh.la.gov/coronavirus).

### *Contact Tracing*

The IDEpi team of the Louisiana Department of Health is the primary group tasked with conducting contact tracing for infectious disease outbreaks in the state. Contact tracing is the process of identifying the recent close contacts of suspected, presumed, or confirmed cases. Contacts are then notified of their potential exposure by the IDEpi team and asked



if they have developed any symptoms of COVID-19 themselves. Individuals who have not developed signs of illness are instructed to self-quarantine at home for 14 days to ensure they will not develop COVID-19 from that exposure. Contact tracing at high risk facilities, healthcare workers, and first responders is particularly important and NOHD is able to provide support for these operations.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, NOHD will support the IDEpi team in all stages of contact tracing, including through the use of trained volunteers from the New Orleans Medical Reserve Corps or NOHD staff.

It should be noted that the utility of contact tracing may be limited when widespread community transmission of COVID-19 is present in New Orleans. At the discretion of LDH and NOHD, contact tracing efforts may be limited and resources directed to other critical disease mitigation strategies.

### *Testing Capacities*

The ability to test suspected (symptomatic) individuals for COVID-19 is paramount to understanding the spread of the virus through the community and maintaining maximum staffing for healthcare facilities and public safety agencies. Testing involves the collection of a nasopharyngeal swab from a symptomatic individual and transport to a medical laboratory for analysis. Depending on the statewide and national demand for testing during the COVID-19 emergency, it may take several days after the collection of the swab until results are available.

With widespread concern for COVID-19, there are expected to be extreme national shortages of testing supplies and limited laboratory capacity to process and analyze tests. In this case, NOHD may direct testing supplies to priority populations including hospitalized patients, first responders and healthcare workers, and those at the greatest risk of developing serious illness from COVID-19. At this time, NOHD does not promote the testing of asymptomatic individuals as there is little public health or medical benefit to doing so.

Testing may be conducted in a variety of settings including hospitals, outpatient clinics, and stand-alone facilities. On March 20, 2020 the New Orleans Health Department, in collaboration with NOHSEP and the Louisiana National Guard (LANG) launched two drive-through testing sites, known as Community-Based Test Sites in Orleans Parish. These sites are the first of their kind in the nation and are the result of the rapid development of a pilot program with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The success of these sites is used to guide the implementation of similar programs across the country.

### *Call Center Operations*

NOHD may operate a call center, staffed with NOHD employees and volunteers from the New Orleans Medical Reserve Corps. The Call Center may be available to support a variety of operations, including contact tracing, public information, and more.

### *Emergency Medical Services and 911 Dispatch*

New Orleans Emergency Medical Services (NOEMS) is the primary provider of pre-hospital emergency medical care and transport in the City of New Orleans. During the COVID-19 pandemic, NOEMS will take measures to protect the health and safety of their employees and meet the increased demand for care during this time.

The Orleans Parish Communications District (OPCD) is responsible for managing 911 and 311 services in Orleans Parish and will work with New Orleans EMS to adopt policies and procedures that reduce strain on EMS resources and ensure continued emergency public safety services for all New Orleanians. NOHD may support NOEMS and OPCD in these missions as requested.

### *Support of Hospital Surge Capacities*

The New Orleans Health Department will maintain, through partner agencies, regular communication with all Tier 1 and Tier 2 hospitals in the region during the COVID-19 pandemic. NOHD will assist in the coordination of surge capacity at these facilities and will communicate requests and support needs from hospitals to city, state, and federal partners.

### *Support of Nursing Homes and Long-term Care Facilities*

Nursing homes, long-term care facilities, and assisted-living facilities will be at a particularly high risk during widespread community transmission of COVID-19. These facilities are home to many residents whose age or pre-existing health condition may place them at greater risk of severe illness from COVID-19. NOHD will maintain constant communication with all nursing homes, long-term care, and assisted-living facilities in New Orleans and will provide technical assistance, critical supplies, and other needs to aggressively limit the spread of the disease through these vulnerable communities. This

will be done through the provision of critical sanitation supplies and PPE, assistance with temperature monitoring of residents and staff, and guidance on infection-control policies.

### *Support of Outpatient Clinics and Pharmacies*

Many outpatient clinics and pharmacies will remain essential during the COVID-19 pandemic, helping to manage chronic and new illnesses and thus prevent further strain of hospitals in the region. Many of these clinics and pharmacies may also choose to operate as COVID-19 testing sites for their communities. NOHD will support clinics and pharmacies with technical assistance and may provide critical sanitation, PPE, and testing needs as they are available.

### *Critical Supply Needs*

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is highly likely that extreme shortages of critical medical equipment, including testing supplies and personal protective equipment (PPE), will arise. The New Orleans Health Department recognizes the vitality of these materials to delivering high quality patient care and protecting employees at the area's healthcare facilities. In the event of widespread shortages and commercial unavailability of these products, NOHD and NOHSEP will assist local hospitals, nursing homes, first responders, and other critical industries with attaining these items through state and federal resource requests. Healthcare facilities may order PPE at [www.ldh.la.gov/coronavirus](http://www.ldh.la.gov/coronavirus).

### *Quarantine Facilities*

During the COVID-19 emergency, quarantine will be necessary for persons who are exposed to an individual known to have COVID-19. Quarantine will involve the separation of the exposed individual for a period of 14 days, the upper limit of the suspected incubation period, and supervision to determine if the individual develops illness from their exposure. During this time, the quarantined person should limit all contact with others and avoid the use of shared spaces wherever possible.

Most individuals exposed to COVID-19 will be able to self-quarantine in their own homes and can self-monitor for the development of symptoms. However, NOHD recognizes that a small number of New Orleanians may not be able to self-quarantine because of housing insecurity or homelessness, significant mental illness, occupancy in a group setting such as a shelter, residence with high-risk individuals, or other reasons. NOHD is committed to providing arrangements that protect the health of these individuals and the public.

NOHD may coordinate with local, state, and federal agencies to open centralized facilities dedicated to the quarantine of persons unable to do so at home. NOHD and its partners will arrange for the essential needs of all persons at the facility, including, but not limited to, feeding, laundry, personal hygiene, and medical and behavioral health care.

By the powers granted in the Louisiana Administrative Code, the State Health Officer or their designee may order individuals to quarantine as necessary to protect the health and safety of the public.

### *Isolation Facilities*

Isolation differs from quarantine and is necessary for all individuals with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection. Isolation involves the provision of all necessary care for ill individuals while maintaining physical separation sufficient to prevent the spread of infection between confirmed and suspected cases, among suspected cases, or to other individuals. Per CDC guidance at the time of this publication, those with known COVID-19 illnesses may be cared for in shared spaces, but those with suspected (awaiting test results) should not share spaces with those with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 illness.<sup>7</sup>

Many individuals who develop COVID-19 will experience only mild to moderate symptoms and will not require hospitalization. For this reason, it is expected that the majority of those with mild to moderate symptoms will be able to self-isolate at home, similar to those self-quarantining at home. For similar reasons as above (homelessness, housing insecurity, mental illness, residence with individuals at high risk of serious COVID-19 complications, etc.) some persons may require a location other than home in which to receive care and maintain isolation.

NOHD may coordinate with local, state, and federal agencies to open centralized facilities dedicated to the isolation of persons unable to do so at home. NOHD and its partners will arrange for the essential needs of all persons at the facility, including, but not limited to, feeding, laundry, personal hygiene, and medical and behavioral health care.

By the powers granted in the Louisiana Administrative Code, the State Health Officer or their designee may order individuals to isolate as necessary to protect the health and safety of the public.

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<sup>7</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/infection-control/control-recommendations.html>

### *Alternative Care Sites*

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is possible that the number of critically ill New Orleanians exceeds the capacity of the region's hospitals, including their surge capabilities. In this case, it may be necessary to establish Alternative Care Sites (ACS), which are non-traditional locations that may be converted to provide hospital-level or step-down care to those whose illness requires it. If the establishment of ACSs is necessary in the New Orleans region, NOHD will support state and federal partners in operation and staffing of these facilities.

### *Support for Individuals Who Are Homeless or with Housing Insecurity*

The protection of New Orleans's most vulnerable population is, at all times, paramount to the mission of the New Orleans Health Department. During the COVID-19 pandemic, NOHD recognizes that individuals who are homeless or who lack stable housing will face additional challenges to their day-to-day needs as well as their ability to prevent infection, quarantine, isolate, or access medical care if necessary.

NOHD will adopt forward-leaning, proactive measures to protect these populations. At shelters, this may include temperature monitoring residents and staff, the provision of additional staff, and access and transportation to quarantine and isolation facilities for those who may have a known exposure to or symptoms of COVID-19. Outside of a shelter setting, NOHD will amend encampment sanitation efforts to promote disease prevention and social distancing, including the provision of handwashing and toilet facilities at known encampments. NOHD may also work with local partners to institute outreach and education efforts and well-checks at these locations. Individuals living in an encampment and needing quarantine or isolation will be provided transportation and placement to a facility able to accommodate their medical and other needs.

### *Temperature Monitoring at City Facilities*

NOHD will work with leadership in all City departments to institute infection control policies for all City employees, visitors, and contractors entering municipal facilities. NOHD will assist the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) with the development of policies and procedures to institute temperature monitoring for all persons entering these facilities. NOHD may also supply thermometers and/or personnel to assist in the temperature monitoring of these facilities. Any person who is measured as having a temperature greater than or equal to 99.6° F or reporting symptoms of COVID-19 will be instructed to immediately leave the premises and contact their primary care provider for guidance.

### *Airport and Port Operations*

Given the risk further COVID-19 transmission into and out of New Orleans during this emergency, NOHD and NOHSEP will maintain regular communication with the New Orleans Louis Armstrong International Airport, New Orleans Lakefront Airport, and the Port of New Orleans. The U.S. Transportation Security Administration, Customs and Border Protection, and the U.S. Coast Guard may implement infection control measures, including passenger temperature screening.

### *Mental Health*

The stress, fear, and panic surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to have serious, adverse impacts on the mental health of New Orleanians and may also limit access to traditional mental and behavioral health services. NOHD will work with public and private partners to ensure mental health resources, including phone-based counseling services, are available to the public. NOHD will also ensure that services involving direct care for those exposed to or suspected of having COVID-19 (testing sites, isolation and quarantine facilities, ACSs, etc.) will be capable of providing behavioral health services to those in need.

Additionally, NOHD recognizes the stress and fear that the COVID-19 pandemic will impart on healthcare workers, first responders, and other essential service providers. NOHD will support the efforts of its partners in establishing and maintaining mental health support for these individuals and their families.

### *Support for Hemodialysis and Special Medical Needs*

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the chronic health needs of New Orleanians will continue. This is especially true of persons requiring hemodialysis services, which are typically provided multiple times per week in an outpatient setting. Individuals who previously required these services for their chronic medical conditions may require special accommodations if they are exposed to or suspected of having COVID-19.

NOHD will work with hemodialysis providers in the New Orleans region to ensure continuity of operations for all patients. NOHD will also assist hemodialysis providers in preparing and implementing plans to provide separate spaces for uninfected and potentially infected patients to receive their normal hemodialysis services.

NOHD will work with the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (NORTA) and private partners to facilitate transportation (if necessary) to hemodialysis appointments, using

procedures that abide by best practices for infection control and the safety of passengers and vehicle operators.

NOHD also recognizes that individuals will have continued access, functional, and medical needs for their chronic health conditions. Residents with such needs may continue to utilize the Special Needs Registry during this time, which can be accessed at [www.specialneeds.nola.gov](http://www.specialneeds.nola.gov) or by dialing 311. NOHD will utilize the Special Needs Registry as needed to identify and protect residents with special medical concerns.

### *Maintenance of Water and Utility Delivery*

The continue delivery of water, electricity, gas, and communications during the COVID-19 pandemic is essential for individuals to follow proper hygiene practices and stay safe and informed during this time. NOHD will support the Mayor's Office in establishing agreements with local utilities corporations to maintain service delivery for all residents during this time.

NOHD also recognizes that the wellbeing of employees at the New Orleans Sewage & Water Board and other utilities is paramount to their continued safe operations. NOHD will assist with workplace policies, temperature monitoring, and other measures to ensure essential workers are protected and able to continue their role in providing critical services to the City of New Orleans.

### *Sanitation of Public Spaces and Vehicles*

NOHD will guide local partners, including the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority, the Department of Property Management, and New Orleans Mosquito, Termite, & Rodent Control Board to adopt policies and procedures for the sanitation of all public transit vehicles, public and employee spaces in municipal buildings, and other spaces. Cleaning practices will be implemented with high frequency to limit the risk of disease spread in these spaces.

### *Correctional Facilities*

The Orleans Parish Sheriff's Office (OPSO) is the lead agency tasked with the oversight of Orleans Parish Prison (OPP), which maintains its own medical services team. Given the potential risk of COVID-19 spread in a prison setting, NOHD will offer guidance on employee and inmate temperature monitoring and other methods of infection control.



The decision to release inmates from OPP as a method of disease mitigation rests solely with OPSO.

### *Volunteer Management*

The New Orleans Health Department maintains an active volunteer group, the New Orleans Medical Reserve Corps (NOMRC), which is comprised of several hundred trained medical and public health volunteers. The NOMRC is frequently utilized in emergencies of all types and may be expected to have heavy involvement in a public health emergency such as COVID-19.

Volunteers from the NOMRC will be used to support a variety of clinical and non-clinical roles, including contact tracing, call center operations, Community-Based Testing Sites, isolation and quarantine facilities, Alternative Care Sites, mental health services, and more. Volunteers with NOMRC undergo NOHD-specific training, are provided with necessary PPE, and are only tasked with responsibilities in line with their level of expertise and medical licensure (if applicable). NOHD will continue to train new volunteers as needed throughout the COVID-19 emergency. Interested individuals can visit [www.ready.nola.gov/volunteer](http://www.ready.nola.gov/volunteer) to register with the NOMRC. NOLA Ready, the public safety campaign of NOHSEP, also maintains a list of other volunteer opportunities with local partners at this website.

### *Donation Management*

During the COVID-19 pandemic, local private and non-profit partners may be willing to donate material goods, such as PPE and other medical equipment, meals, or other critical needs. These donations are greatly appreciated by the City of New Orleans and its partners in this response, but in-kind donations can quickly overwhelm an emergency management organization if not properly managed and distributed. NOHD will work with NOHSEP, the lead agency tasked with emergency management and coordination of such emergency donations in the City of New Orleans. This may also involve cooperation with the Office of Neighborhood Engagement and New Orleans City Council. Those interested in donating services or goods to the City of New Orleans COVID-19 response should visit [www.ready.nola.gov/donate](http://www.ready.nola.gov/donate) for guidance.

### *Guidance for Businesses*

NOHD will offer technical assistance to the Mayor's Office, the Office of Cultural Economy, and the Office of Economic Development to support the implementation of measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in New Orleans's communities. This



guidance will outline activities and businesses may be considered “essential” and those for which closure may be recommended in the interest of public health. NOHD will also advise on social distancing and infection control measures for businesses, schools, centers of worship, community organizations, fitness centers, and other institutions. These recommendations may be adopted as mandates as deemed necessary by the Mayor of New Orleans.

### *Mass Fatality Management*

The Orleans Parish Coroner’s Office (OPCO) is responsible for the management and investigation of remains during a public health emergency. During the COVID-19 emergency, OPCO may activate Mass Fatality Management Plans to accommodate a surge of deceased patients from hospitals. NOHD will support OPCO in its mission as requested.

## **Communications**

### *State and Local Coordination*

During the COVID-19 emergency, coordination of response activities across the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors at all levels of organization will be key. As with other large-scale disasters and events, members of the emergency preparedness team at NOHD will embed in the City Emergency Operations Center operated by NOHSEP. There, NOHD personnel may implement response efforts with real-time coordination with health, public safety, and public works partners. NOHD will coordinate daily with the Louisiana Department of Health Office of Public Health for Region 1, with whom NOHD has already developed close working relationships.

### *Public Messaging*

Prompt notification of resources, mandates, and guidance for the public of New Orleans will be made available through the NOLA Ready platform, operated by NOHSEP. The public may sign up for COVID-19 text alerts by texting “COVIDNOLA” to 888-777 or may visit the NOLA Ready website for a full list of updates and resources ([www.ready.nola.gov](http://www.ready.nola.gov)). In addition, the Mayor of New Orleans and other members of City Leadership will conduct regular television press conferences. All information released to the public related to COVID-19 will be coordinated through a Joint Information Center comprised of representatives of the Mayor’s Office of Communications, NOHD, NOHSEP, NOPD, NOEMS, NOFD, and other public entities.

### *Language Access*

The City of New Orleans is committed to providing information and access to all residents. For this reason, wherever possible, the City will provide public messaging with translation to Spanish and Vietnamese. The City will also utilize ASL translators in video press conferences.

## **Commitment to Culture & Economy**

The City of New Orleans is world-renowned for its blend of history, culture, and tradition, all of which can be witnessed in the daily life of its residents. The challenges that will be faced during the COVID-19 pandemic will not only threaten the health, but also the livelihoods of those who call New Orleans home. The New Orleans Health Department recognizes the severe impacts mitigation measures may have on cultural practices and the City's economic development and will work with local, state, and federal partners to limit these effects. However, NOHD, at all times, remains committed to its primary mission, which is to protect the health and safety of all residents of the City of New Orleans.

## **Recovery**

The timeline for loosening of City mandates and movement toward the "Recovery" phase for the City of New Orleans is strictly dependent on the progression of COVID-19 through our community. At the earliest time at which it is safe to do so, the New Orleans Health Department will work with NOHSEP and other partners to reduce limitations on residents' and businesses' ability to operate normally. During this time, NOHD will remain committed to monitoring and protecting the health of all residents in the City of New Orleans and will work with partners accordingly to implement practices and issue guidance in support of this mission.

## **Media Inquiries**

Media inquiries should be directed to the Mayor's Office of Communications at [communications@nola.gov](mailto:communications@nola.gov) or by calling (504) 658-4945.