

## **FAQs for Orange County Businesses re: COVID-19 Outbreak**

### **Q: DOES MY BUSINESS HAVE TO SHUT DOWN?**

**A:** The following guidelines are in effect as a result of NYS Governor Andrew Cuomo's emergency order:

Effective March 21, 2020 at 8pm and until further notice, all businesses and not-for-profit entities in the state shall utilize, to the maximum extent possible, any **telecommuting or work from home procedures** that they can safely utilize. Each employer shall **reduce the in-person workforce at any work locations by 100%**. Essential business or entity providing essential services or functions shall not be subject to the in-person restrictions.

Please reference the **Governor's full executive order** at: <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/no-2027-continuing-temporary-suspension-and-modification-laws-relating-disaster-emergency>

### **Q: HOW CAN I CONFIRM THAT I CAN REMAIN OPEN AS AN 'ESSENTIAL BUSINESS'?**

**A:** Please see New York State's *Guidance for Determining Whether a Business or Enterprise is Subject to a Workforce Reduction* at: <https://esd.ny.gov/guidance-executive-order-2026>

If and only if your business is deemed Non-Essential, yet you wish to seek a waiver to continue operating, you should apply for **Designation as an Essential Business** through Empire State Development at: <https://esd.ny.gov/content/request-designation-essential-business-purposes-executive-order-2026>

### **Q: HOW CAN I CONTINUE TO OPERATE MY RESTAURANT THROUGH THIS SHUTDOWN?**

**A:** As of March 16, 2020 at 8pm, food services are not allowed to have any indoor or outdoor seating available for patrons. Food services are allowed to stay open to provide carry-out or delivery services only during this time. You cannot provide seating, regardless of time of day. You do not have to close takeout and delivery after 8pm. Restaurants that fail to abide by this directive could be issued violations and/or be subject to enforcement. For more information, please refer to the Orange County Dept of Health at: <https://www.orangecountygov.com/149/Health>

### **Q: IF I CAN REMAIN OPEN, WHAT STEPS SHOULD I TAKE TO PROTECT MY STAFF AND CUSTOMERS?**

**A:** Refer to the CDC's *Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers* found at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/> (click on 'Businesses & Employers')

In addition, New York's Empire State Development has distributed and updated a comprehensive COVID-19 Q&A to provide guidance for businesses in the state. The full document can be found at:

[https://esd.ny.gov/sites/default/files/ESD%20FAQ%20COVID1\\_Businesses%203\\_FINAL03152020.pdf](https://esd.ny.gov/sites/default/files/ESD%20FAQ%20COVID1_Businesses%203_FINAL03152020.pdf)

U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

## COVID-19 Business Preparedness Checklist

**PRIORITIZE CRITICAL OPERATIONS**

Be prepared to change your business practices if needed to maintain critical operations (e.g., identify alternative suppliers, prioritize customers, or temporarily suspend some of your operations).

**ESTABLISH POSSIBLE TELEWORKING POLICIES**

Review human resources policies and explore whether you can establish flexible worksites (e.g., telecommuting) and flexible work hours. Consider cancelling large work-related meetings or events.

**PREPARE FOR SCHOOL CLOSINGS**

Pre-schools and K-12 schools may be dismissed. Determine how you will operate if absenteeism spikes from increases in sick employees and/or sick families.

**COORDINATE WITH STATE EXTERNAL & LOCAL EXTERNAL HEALTH OFFICIALS**

The intensity of an outbreak may by location, and local health officials will be issuing guidance specific to their communities. Employers should learn about the plans in place in each community where they have a business.

**CREATE A COMMUNICATION PLAN**

Put measures in place to effectively notify employees of the latest COVID-19 updates and information.

For more information about the coronavirus visit [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)

**Q: MY BUSINESS HAS CAPABILITIES TO MANUFACTURE PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE), WHO CAN I CONTACT ABOUT THIS?**

**A:** NY has a critical need for Personal Protective Equipment including gloves, gowns, masks and ventilators. If you have or can produce any of these supplies, NY will pay a premium and offer funding.

- Email: [COVID19supplies@esd.ny.gov](mailto:COVID19supplies@esd.ny.gov)
- If you have **Unused Supplies**, call: **(646) 522-8477**
- If you **Need Funding**, call: **(212) 803-3100**

**Q: WHAT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE FOR MY BUSINESS DURING THIS CRISIS?**

**A:** The following assistance programs have been announced in response to COVID-19:

- On March 27, 2020, President Trump signed into law the **\$2 Trillion CARES Act**, which provides massive economic relief for several facets of the U.S. economy, including our small businesses as well as non-profit organizations.

Please return to the [Orange County Economic Development](#) webpage and follow the links to the following summary documents about the federal government's relief plan:

- **Summary of CARES Act/SBA for Small Businesses** – This document provides a comprehensive yet easy-to-follow summary of the CARES Act, its Small Business Administration program components, and other valuable information and links.
- **Summary of Unemployment, Direct Payments, etc.** – This summary focuses on unemployment benefits for *employees* (and now for the first time for *small business owners* themselves), as well as the Direct Payments that taxpayers will receive from the federal government.

We recommend that you **speak to your own accountant and lending institution** for clarity and guidance on these programs, as details from the federal government are still being sorted out on a daily — sometimes hourly—basis.

If you require additional **1-on-1 Technical Assistance** when applying for the SBA programs, please contact:

**Mid-Hudson Small Business Development Center (SBDC)**  
**(845) 802-9150**  
[sbdc@sunyulster.edu](mailto:sbdc@sunyulster.edu)

- The **Orange County Industrial Development Agency (IDA)**, through their sister organization, **Orange County Funding Corp.**, will soon launch an emergency loan fund aimed at providing immediate financial relief for Orange County businesses who are suffering from the crisis. The IDA/OCFC are already providing **technical support and guidance** to help local businesses who wish to apply for financial relief, require supply chain support etc. Visit the IDA's COVID-19 webpage for more information at: <https://www.ocnyida.com/covid-19/>
- Several financial institutions are **waiving various fees and penalties**, such as for early CD withdrawals, as well as **deferring mortgage payments** (i.e. “forbearance”) and other assistance. Contact your bank and/or lending institutions and discuss options to reduce or postpone your payments if need be.
- **Facebook** is offering **\$100 million in cash grants and FB ad credits** to support up to 30,000 small businesses with between 2 and 50 employees. Check their website for more details at to apply at: <https://www.facebook.com/business/boost/grants>

**Q: WHERE CAN I TURN WITH OTHER QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS ABOUT MY BUSINESS?**

**A: Call Orange County's COVID-19 Business Hotline at: (845) 360-0231**  
or email our **Economic Development Director** at  
[bfioravanti@orangecountygov.com](mailto:bfioravanti@orangecountygov.com)