



This guidance is being issued as of March 13, 2020 from the Indiana Democratic Party for county party organizations, campaigns and others who are seeking information about COVID-19 and necessary activities during the primary election season. We will continue to monitor this issue and will provide updates or further guidance as we can. For any health concerns, we encourage those impacted to continue to follow state and local health department guidelines.

Primary Season

The Indiana Democratic Party is currently in conversations with state officials about any possible changes that would need to take place regarding the 2020 primary election on May 5. The Indiana Election Commission has jurisdiction over many of these matters with regards to absentee voting, and county election boards are encouraged to begin talking about any processes or changes that could be relevant to ensure our primary election runs smoothly. Those with questions are encouraged to call Angie Nussmeyer, the Democratic Co-Director at the Indiana Election Division. She can be reached at 317.232.3939.

What's our advice for county parties?

We're advising county parties to limit gatherings by postponing all non-essential party events effective Saturday March 14, to be re-evaluated in two weeks. The State Party will work with any county party needing to conduct vital party business to set up a virtual conference call or other remote options. State Party staff will limit travel and conduct party business remotely for two weeks, effective Saturday, March 14, 2020.

What's our advice for campaigns?

We're advising candidates to limit non-essential gatherings and postpone any large rallies and other in-person political events. We're also advising campaigns to conduct voter contact via phone or other means virtually, to be re-evaluated in two weeks. We ask that campaigns consider health and safety issues when engaging volunteers at all times.

Campaign/Party Staff or Officer Travel

Each organization should take into account the information from our own state and county health officials. However, below are some general guidelines that may be helpful in planning your own staff guidance:

- While the CDC has warned that there are reported cases of community-spread COVID-19 in the continental United States (and 12 confirmed in Indiana as of March 12), there are currently no domestic travel restrictions in place at this time.
- However, this is a rapidly evolving situation and those potential restrictions will change with the circumstances -- as should your guidance to staff.
- In short, State Parties are being encouraged to reduce non-essential travel.

Party Events

How can we keep staff and attendees safe at events if they do occur?

- **Share everyday preventive actions with pre-registered attendees to help prevent the spread of COVID-19**, including:
 - Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.
 - Cover coughs/sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
 - Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects daily.
 - Try to minimize your contact with frequently touched objects – doorknobs, light switches, railings, etc.
 - Reduce unnecessary person-to-person contact, including handshakes.
 - Put up posters reminding people how to protect themselves from Coronavirus -- both the [CDC](#) and the [WHO](#) have flyers you can use for this purpose.
- **Clean and disinfect** commonly used surfaces before and after your event.
- **Provide** additional prevention supplies at your meetings and events for attendees, including soap, hand sanitizers, and tissues should your venue not have enough for your anticipated number of attendees.
- **Avoid** food options where individuals may share serving utensils and have an increased opportunity for exposure, such as buffet or family style services; instead, consider brown bag lunches from home, or personalized box lunches.

- **Identify critical job functions and positions** and plan for alternative coverage by cross-training staff (similar to planning for holiday staffing) when possible.
- **Promote messages that discourage people who are sick from attending events.** This should include messages requesting that people leave events if they begin to have symptoms of COVID-19, which include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. They should seek medical advice promptly by calling ahead to a doctor's office or emergency room to get guidance. [See CDC guidance on what to do when sick with COVID-19.](#)
- **Limit in-person contact** at events. This means avoiding workshops where individuals may come into unnecessary physical contact; discouraging the sharing of pens; normalizing and encouraging greetings other than handshakes; forgoing handouts and asking that presenters share materials digitally; trying to seat people at least 3 feet apart, if possible; and providing opportunities to join planning meetings and events via phone or video conferencing.
- **Retain the names and contact information** of all participants for one month, to help public health authorities trace people who may have been exposed to COVID-19 if one or more participants become ill shortly after the event.

Conducting Party and Campaign Business

What else can parties do to prepare?

Consider your organization's readiness for a potentially extended remote/telework situation in the event that "social distancing" policies are enacted in your community. This may include:

- Test your videoconferencing and teleconferencing systems to ensure that they are operational and that all necessary staff have the ability to both join and create meetings;
- Meet now to set expectations around how you would potentially manage remote work situations so that managers and staff have the tools they need to continue carrying forth our important mission;
- Ensure more casual check-ins and meetings are regularly scheduled, so that all necessary attendees can plan to attend remotely if needed;
- Be sure that, as you are making plans for any upcoming events, you are working with your venues and other vendors to include a COVID-19 clause that allows you to back out of your contract(s) with no/reduced penalty;
- Ask all staff and volunteers to bring home both their work laptop and their charger every night, to ensure that any rapid developments don't lead to staffers not having their required technology at home; and

- Consider a “dry run” work-from-home day so that all employees can test their internet, video conferencing tools, cell service, ability to remotely log in to various programs/systems needed to fulfill their duties, etc.

Party Caucuses

This language is provided as guidance from the IDP Rules Committee in consultation with the State Central Committee.

- **Public Offices:** For party caucuses to fill the vacancy of an elected official (non-party officers), county party leadership should consult the Indiana Election Division (317.232.3939) for consultation if there is a risk that the caucus will not be held within the 30-day window required by state law. There are different provisions for how the vacancy is filled after this time depending on the office. Our Democratic staff there are aware of this possibility and are ready to assist.
- **Party Office Caucuses:** For party caucuses to fill the vacancy of a party officer that may exceed the 30-day window, the IDP Rules Committee is issuing the following guidance:
 1. Any party organization who has a caucus scheduled to fill an party officer vacancy and is at risk of going past the 30-day threshold will be given flexibility to extend that to 60 days (this would allow for the 30 day window to pass, and then have a second round of notifications to reschedule the caucus within a 30-day window).
 - a. Party organizations who fall under this situation should submit to the State Party a letter documenting their plan no later than three days after the original 30-day window passes.
 - b. Any plans for caucuses to be held in person should include plans for how caucus voters will be allowed to vote efficiently. Flexibility should be given with respect to business agendas and speaking times, as well as how voting is conducted for the caucus.
 - c. Any petitions brought for an alleged IDP Rules violation by someone within the county or district will still be considered, but recommend this guidance be used as rationale for how the hearing/appellate body should act on that petition.
 2. If a party organization chooses to hold a caucus meeting virtually, the Rules Committee will provide flexibility on voting procedures. For organizations that want to maintain a secret ballot, virtual conferencing could possibly be used. As stated before, however, IDP Rules and Robert’s Rules of Order should be followed as strictly as possible, and notification efforts by party leadership should still be followed to notify participants of caucuses of changes.

3. It should also be noted that caucuses that are uncontested can be done by acclamation, which may not require in-person meetings.

Virtual Meeting Options

Zoom

[Zoom](#) is a video conferencing platform that allows a virtual meeting to occur with video capabilities. Zoom Meeting Hosts can individually mute and unmute participants, set limitations on participant chatbox capabilities, share their screen, conduct interactive polls, and choose to record the webinar or meeting. Zoom participants have a “hand-raising” ability as well as an in-call chatbox. The BPI has created a separate “[Zoom Call Checklist](#)” that currently lives in the Legacy Files.

MaestroConference

- MaestroConference
- Go To Meeting
- Google Hangouts
- Skype
- FreeConferenceCall
- UberConference
- Facebook Live

Conducting Elections

- Google Forms
- Vote by Mail
- SMS Polling

Health Information

Coronavirus/COVID-19 FAQ

What is a coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses causing illness in both animals and humans, ranging from mild illnesses such as the common “cold” to more severe illnesses causing previous pandemics including SARS and MERS. The current coronavirus outbreak is caused by a “new” coronavirus. The World Health Organization emphasizes that our ability to prevent, contain, and respond to the new outbreak relies on understanding that this virus has different characteristics than previous coronaviruses, that we do not

fully understand its behavior, and that we must approach this virus as a new “unknown” coronavirus. COVID-19 was first reported in Wuhan within the Hubei province of China on 12/31/19.

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms of coronavirus are fever, dry cough, shortness of breath, and muscle aches. Some patients have had other symptoms, including headache, sore throat, or diarrhea. Symptoms may appear between two and 14 days of exposure. If you believe that you may have the coronavirus, contact your health care provider immediately. Symptoms are similar to other respiratory illnesses that are circulating, such as influenza, so experiencing these symptoms alone does not necessarily mean you need to be tested for COVID-19.

What is the CDC’s current risk assessment?

- For most people, the immediate risk of being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to be **low**. This virus is not currently widespread in the United States, but new guidance encourages older adults to stay at home as much as possible.
- [New guidance encourages older adults to 'stay at home as much as possible' due to coronavirus](#)
- People in places where ongoing community spread of the virus that causes COVID-19 has been reported are at elevated risk of exposure, with increase in risk dependent on the location.
- Healthcare workers caring for patients with COVID-19 are at elevated risk of exposure.
- Close contacts of persons with COVID-19 are at elevated risk of exposure.
- Travelers returning from affected international locations where community spread is occurring are at elevated risk of exposure, with increase in risk dependent on the location.
- CDC has developed [guidance to help in the risk assessment and management](#) of people with potential exposures to COVID-19.
- Those concerned about when they should engage in self-confinement/quarantine should consult a medical professional or follow state and local health department guidelines to protect themselves and risk to others.

Prevention

What precautions should be taken to slow and prevent the spread?

Beyond cancelling and postponing travel to places identified as a high-risk area, the best day to day preventative measures to avoid being exposed to this virus are as follows:

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
 - If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if your hands are visibly dirty.
 - [See CDC's Handwashing page for more information.](#)
- The CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19.
 - Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 to help prevent the spread of the disease to others.
 - The use of facemasks is also crucial for health workers and people who are taking care of someone in close settings, such as at home or in a health care facility.

[The World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) and [the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) have useful advice on protecting yourself as well, which we recommend reading.

What can I do to keep myself and my community safe?

We recommend reaching out to local public health officials to help you determine what is appropriate for you based on your personal situation. As leaders in your Party, please also be mindful of sharing only science-based health information, ideally from our own in-state health organizations -- emphasize the urgency of a proper and prepared response, without inciting a panicked reaction from those in your sphere.

State of Indiana Department of Health: <https://www.in.gov/isdh/28470.htm>

You can sign up for e-mail updates here from the State Health Department, get updates on case numbers and other information. Organizations are also encouraged to check in with their local county health departments.