

PREVENTION AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

There are many challenges posed to implementing prevention and education programming by the COVID-19 virus, and by the social distancing efforts organizations and communities are weighing or have already put in place. Below are some considerations for your agency's prevention programming and prevention workers as you grapple with program implementation and with helping maintain staff health and safety, as well as the health and safety of the communities you work in and call home.

Limiting or Cancelling Presentations or Events: Your local health department, as well as state and national officials and health departments, can provide the best guidance regarding health considerations for hosting presentations or community events. We've included links to some of these resources throughout this document. **Please note:** the [White House is suggesting](#) that people avoid all gatherings of 10 or more people, and the CDC recently recommended that organizers cancel or postpone in-person events that consist of 50 people or more throughout the U.S. for the next 8 weeks. Additionally, consider the following:

- If event cancellations, school closing, etc. are occurring in your community, or if they are encouraged by local health organizations, consider cancelling or postponing your own events or educational sessions.
- Contact your partners to communicate your decisions and continued commitment to the partnership, and focus on the health-related underpinnings of your decision (health of your organization, your employees, and the health of your community).

Continuing Implementation of Presentations or Events: If you continue facilitating presentations and hosting community events, there are some great suggestions and resources from the [CDC for community and faith-based leaders](#). Additionally, consider the following:

- Adjust programming to fit with CDC guidance for preventing the spread of COVID-19.
- Change your training agenda or curriculum to prevent:
 - Contact or close proximity (anything less than 6 feet, if possible) amongst participants; or
 - Passing or sharing of materials or supplies between participants.
- Clean surfaces between presentations as is possible.
- Communicate with the agency or organization hosting your training about their sanitation and/or internal social distancing policies to ensure you are in compliance.
- Carefully practice the personal steps you can take to prevent contraction/spread of the virus, such as washing your hands before and after sessions. Encourage participants to do the same.

Community Engagement Work: A major component of prevention programming involves engaging communities in prevention efforts, and community-level prevention strategies are a requirement from several significant funding sources. It is critical to consider the following when planning community-level prevention activities in light of the COVID-19 virus pandemic:

- Community engagement has always been about the health of the community. Community health during this pandemic is dependent upon limiting community engagement, so consider putting off those meetings with community members, or rethink face-to-face coalition or partners' meetings.
- Explore online or teleconferencing options for meetings with community partners.
- Remember that your community partners are likely and rightfully going to be more focused on health and safety and response to COVID-19 than on prevention efforts.

Pressure from Funders: We anticipate that funders will be flexible and understanding during this unprecedented time, and we are reaching out to those funders to ask for assurances of this flexibility. If you have to start limiting or cancelling any or all program activities, contact Tim Love, TAASA's Director of Prevention (tlove@taasa.org) so that TAASA can advocate on your behalf to your funders.

In the Meantime: So much of prevention work is out of the office work or work that is hard to do in isolation. If your agency makes decisions to cancel prevention programming, and/or staff begin working from home, here are few things you can encourage your prevention staff to focus on to prepare for the future implementation of your prevention programming:

- Fine tune or modify your organization's prevention plan. This may include updating, or creating a prevention program logic model, solidifying community engagement and partnership plans, or event planning.
- Use this time for staff development. Staff can watch recorded webinars or look for online training opportunities. They can also read some of the great prevention resources they never have time to read. (Contact TAASA's Prevention Team at prevention@taasa.org for ideas.)
- This could be a good time to update or add new activities to the prevention curricula your agency uses (if changes are allowable) or to seek out training on new prevention curricula.

While TAASA has made the decision to encourage staff to work from home, please know that the staff of TAASA's Prevention Team are still available to provide resources (including sample logic models, resource lists for self-study, or available webinars and online training) or to discuss impact of COVID-19 on prevention programming. We can most easily be reached via email at prevention@taasa.org.