# COVID-19 External Frequently Asked Questions

Members of the public have many questions regarding the impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) on operations and services of the California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR). Below is guidance to address questions, which we will be updating as the situation develops.

Visit the [California Department of Public Health (CDPH)](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/ncov2019.aspx) website for the latest information on COVID-19.

## For Consumers:

### Q: Is DOR planning to close offices?

A: We currently do not have plans to close offices due to COVID-19 and intend to remain open at this time to serve our consumers and be available to partners. We are closely monitoring the COVID-19 situation and will take appropriate action as needed. Also, the situation across the state will be different for various local areas. For current status information, you may contact your local DOR office as well as your local public health department.

### Q: Am I required to come to the office for my intake appointment or meeting with my counselor or other DOR staff?

A: We appreciate that consumers may want to limit their exposure within the community over concerns about COVID-19. You may request to have your appointment or meeting by phone or reschedule for a future date. In many cases, you may also communicate and discuss needs through text or email. DOR staff will work with you to ensure services continue without any undue interruptions.

### Q: I am feeling sick with a cold or the flu. Should I come to the office for my appointment or meeting?

A: Your health and safety are our primary concern. If you are feeling ill with the cold or flu, we ask that you stay home and, as appropriate, seek medical attention. You have the option of holding your appointment or meeting by phone or to reschedule for a future date. Communication by email or text is another option. DOR staff will work with you to ensure services are not interrupted.

### Q: How do I protect myself from COVID-19?

A: Individuals are advised by the California Department of Public Health to practice basic hygiene efforts, such as washing your hands frequently, refraining from shaking hands with others, and staying home if sick. Further guidance on how to protect yourself can be found at the [California Department of Public Health](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/ncov2019.aspx) website.

### Q: I have a disability. Am I at greater risk for contracting COVID-19?

A: The risk of contracting COVID-19 remains low at this time for the general public, but some individuals may be at a higher risk depending on their age and health condition. As every individual is different, it is advised that you contact your health care provider with any specific questions. Further guidance can be obtained at the [California Department of Public Health](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/ncov2019.aspx) website and from your local public health department.

### Q: What do I do if I am experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or may have had contact with a person with COVID-19?

A: Call your health care provider or the local public health department for advice. Additional guidance on what to do in this situation may be found at the [California Department of Public Health](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/ncov2019.aspx) website.

## For Grantees:

### Q: Will there be any penalties for cancelling services in group or in person settings to consumers during the COVID-19 event?

A: Grantees are encouraged to monitor state and local public health guidance and the health needs of their staff and community to modify or postpone services accordingly. For example, in-person and group services could be conducted via teleconference or staff could increase their use of telework if feasible. Grantees should communicate with their Grant Administrator if any services are suspended or if hours of operation are reduced, and to discuss alternatives, as appropriate, to continue consumer services

### Q: What should grantees do if they need to close an office to consumers?

A: As with past emergency events, such as wildfires and power shutoffs, prior to closing offices and/or discontinuing services, DOR encourages grantees to explore and use alternative methods (i.e., individual, telephone, or video conference) to provide services while being mindful of the health and safety of both staff and consumers. Grantees must notify their assigned Grant Administrator of office closures.

### Q: Can grantees be reimbursed for providing services by alternative methods such as telephone or video conference?

A: As stated above, grantees are encouraged to explore alternate service delivery means to the extent feasible in lieu of suspending services. Services delivered through alternative methods will be reimbursed provided that the provisions of their grant or the nature of the service do not require in-person interaction. Grantees are encouraged to work with their Grant Administrator for guidance if they are unsure whether a specific service or grant activity can be done through alternative methods.

### Q: What are the best steps grantees can take when serving consumers in an office or group setting to minimize the risk of individuals being exposed to COVID-19?

A: Grantees are advised to visit the [California Department of Public Health](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/ncov2019.aspx) website for guidance on general health and safety best practices to minimize exposure.

### Q: Should grantees provide paid administrative time off (ATO) to employees in response to COVID-19?

A: Grantees should make decisions about ATO based on individual staff needs, in consultation with their internal and board leadership, and per guidance of their local county public health officials.

### Q: May grantees use grant funds to pay for ATO for employees impacted by COVID-19?

A: Generally, grantees may use grant dollars to pay ATO if employee benefits and compensation are an allowable expense for the given grant. Grantees should consult with their Grant Administrator before redirecting funds as a budget revision may be required. Grantees should follow their organization’s internal policies and procedures for making changes or exceptions to employee benefits.

## DOR Service Providers:

### Q: Should we notify DOR of our office closures?

A: Please notify your Community Resources Development (CRD) specialist immediately of any change in business hours and/or change in service delivery impacting DOR consumers. Additionally, all consumers that have been referred for services by DOR should be notified that services will be interrupted due to operational changes and/or site closures. Your CRD specialist will communicate this information to DOR District and Branch offices.

### Q: Can a service provider charge DOR for Administrative Time Off?

A: DOR can only reimburse a service provider for services rendered. If a service provider is closed and their staff are placed on administrative leave, DOR services will cease until staff resume work. In accordance with [federal regulations; (2 CFR 200)](https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/CFR-2014-title2-vol1/CFR-2014-title2-vol1-part200), DOR can only reimburse a service provider for the provision of services.

### Q: In the event we are advised to limit or avoid public contact, or if a consumer is feeling unwell, can services or training to DOR consumers be provided remotely?

A: Some services may lend themselves to be provided remotely while others will not. Your CRD specialist is available to guide you on proposed changes in service delivery methodology. As an example, employment services can conceivably be provided remotely. Services that require face-to-face interaction such as Personal Vocational Social Adjustment, Situational Assessment, and Job Coaching may not be viable as remote services.

Remote service delivery or training may be arranged for a consumer if the provider and consumer have electronic resources to do so, when appropriate. Additionally, a service provider could coordinate with the local DOR offices to meet consumers at DOR.

Please contact your CRD specialist if you need further advice.

### Q: How do we cover the cost of personnel who must take leave?

A: As previously noted, consistent with current [federal regulations, (2 CFR 200)](https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/CFR-2014-title2-vol1/CFR-2014-title2-vol1-part200), DOR cannot compensate our service providers for services not provided.

### Q: If I have a meeting and/ or certification review scheduled this month, will I need to reschedule?

A: Please reach out to your CRD specialist to discuss mutually scheduled meetings and/or certifications. As of March 12, 2020, in-state travel is not restricted. Appreciating that circumstances may change, our CRD specialist is available to help guide you to identify options. Many meetings can be conducted remotely and most DOR offices are equipped with videoconferencing and teleconferencing capabilities.

### Q: I have a Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) review coming up. What happens if the CARF reviewer is unable to complete the review due to COVID-19 travel restrictions?

A: CARF is monitoring the situation and updating the [CARF website](http://www.carf.org/Coronavirus/), if the guidance issued by public health authorities or other known information necessitates any change to CARF’s conduct of surveys or other events.

DOR encourages CRPs to work with their CARF representatives on an extension in such circumstances. DOR will honor any extensions negotiated with CARF. Services will not be stopped or interrupted upon receipt of sufficient evidence of an extension.

## For Cooperative Program Partners:

### Q: Can we charge DOR for ATO due to COVID-19?

A: DOR can only reimburse a cooperative program provider for services rendered. In accordance with [federal regulations, (2 CFR 200)](https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/CFR-2014-title2-vol1/CFR-2014-title2-vol1-part200), our partners will not be able to invoice for ATO.

### Q: Will a contractual agreement’s expectations/goals/outcomes be reconsidered due to possible impacts of COVID-19?

A: Yes. DOR appreciates the collaboration with our cooperative program partners and is mindful of the potential impacts under this unforeseeable circumstance. Current contractual agreement outcomes will be collaboratively considered in the process of evaluation.

### Q: What should we do when the school is closed due to COVID-19?

A: We understand sudden school closures could disrupt work schedules and increase absenteeism. DOR will work in partnership with you to continue supporting cooperative program participants in all possible ways while safeguarding the health and well-being of the public. Please follow thelatest guidance from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) regarding [school closures](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Guidance.aspx) that may be required to protect public health. DOR expects that for many school districts, there may be changes in school calendars.