



COVID - 19 Preparedness Plan

Policy:

Employment Links strives to provide a safe and healthy workplace for all employees and the Individuals who we work with. This document outlines our overall response to the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak and our emergency preparedness and continuity plan. It outlines specific steps we are taking to safeguard employees' and Individual's health and well-being during this time, while ensuring Employment Links' ability to maintain business operations and continue providing services to our Individuals.

The COVID-19 Preparedness Plan is administered by Michelle Schubitzke, who maintains the overall authority and responsibility for the plan. However, all employees and Individuals are responsible for supporting, implementing, complying with, and providing recommendations to improve all aspects of this COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. All Employment Links employees and Individuals have our full support in enforcing the provisions of this plan.

This plan will be monitored, reviewed, and changed as needed. We will train our employees on changes that occur. We will do our best to notify all stakeholders when changes are made.

Procedures:

This COVID-19 Preparedness Plan follows the industry guidance developed by the State of Minnesota, available at the Stay Safe Minnesota website (<https://staysafe.mn.gov>), which is based upon Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) guidelines for COVID-19, Minnesota Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MNOSHA) statutes, rules and standards, St. Louis County Health Department, and Minnesota's relevant and current executive orders.

From May 28, 2021 until the earlier of June 30, 2021 or until 70% of Minnesotans aged 16+ receive at least one dose of a COVID19 vaccine, business and places of public accommodation are subject only to the requirements in the COVID-19 Universal Guidance for All Businesses and Entities (see attached links following this policy and procedures).



- Employment Links will continue to research and comply with local, state, and federal guidelines to ensure that appropriate emergency protocols are in place.
- Employment Links will provide education on pandemic disease including signs and symptoms, preventive measures, and tracking for cases within Employment Links.
- Employment Links will consider all employees, Individuals, and community sites as specific entities to Employment Links.
- Employment Links will take necessary measures to contain infectious disease.
- Employees will notify the leadership team of possible exposure and confirmed cases, and take proactive safety measures.
- Employment Links will require employees with COVID-19 to be screened or tested by a medical professional.
- Employees who test positive for COVID-19 will be removed from programming for a maximum of 14 days after the last shown symptom.
- If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, all Individuals that have had direct contact with this employee will be notified, as well as the Individual's care team and worksites.

General Information:

Symptoms of COVID-19 infection with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, can cause illness ranging from mild to severe, and in some cases can be fatal. Symptoms typically include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Some people infected with the virus have reported experiencing other non-respiratory symptoms. Other people, referred to as asymptomatic cases, have experienced no symptoms at all. According to the CDC, symptoms of COVID-19 may appear in as few as 2 days or as long as 14 days after exposure.

Although the first human cases of COVID-19 likely resulted from exposure to infected



animals, infected people can spread SARS-CoV-2 to other people. The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person, including:

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
- It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has SARS-CoV-2 on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes.

People are thought to be most contagious when they are most symptomatic (for example, experiencing fever, cough, or shortness of breath). Some spread might also be possible before people show symptoms. Although the United States has implemented public health measures to limit the spread of the virus, it is likely that some person-to-person transmission will continue to occur.

Prevention:

Employees will comply with government, worksite, and Employment Links guidelines.

If an Individual or employee is showing symptoms of COVID-19, a member of the leadership team will be notified immediately.

If an Individual or employee displays symptoms, they will be removed from programming until tested for COVID-19 or 14 days after symptoms end.

If an employee or Individual does not meet prescreen requirements by a medical professional for testing, they may return to programming immediately.

Employee Monitoring Checklist:

Prior to attending a scheduled shift, employees are required to fill out an employee monitoring checklist. This checklist is monitored by members of the leadership team.



- If an employee is displaying symptoms that are common with Covid-19, which are outlined in the employee monitoring checklist, they must notify the leadership team immediately in order to get their shifts covered.
- Employees who are displaying symptoms will be pulled from their scheduled shifts for up to 14 days from the last day they displayed symptoms, or follow the guidelines recommended by the St. Louis County Health Department.

Social Distancing:

Employees and Individuals are required to maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet from anyone in the workplace. Individuals will ride in the back seat whenever possible when they are being transported.

Masks:

Employees and Individuals are required to wear a mask during programming. This includes the time spent driving to and from their programming site. Employees will ensure that the Individual has and is wearing their mask. In the event that a mask needs to be taken off to eat or drink, the employee or Individual should wash their hands before removing the mask as well as be at least 6 feet apart from any other people.

Handwashing:

The best way to prevent the spread of illness is by frequent handwashing. If handwashing is not available, hand sanitizer may be substituted. All employees are provided with a bottle of hand sanitizer upon returning to work. It is an employee's responsibility to notify a member of the leadership team when they are running low on hand sanitizer in order for the leadership team to get them a replacement.

Employees and Individuals are expected to wash hands upon arriving at a worksite, several times throughout the shift, after using the restroom, and upon leaving the worksite. Employees and Individuals should wash their hands before consuming any food or beverages and after any coughing or sneezing. Handwashing should be done with soap and water and for at least 20 seconds.



Gloves:

Gloves are to be worn by employees if they are in constant contact with a public area, or if a worksite is requiring it. Employment Links is providing gloves to employees. It is an employee's responsibility to contact a member of the leadership team if they need more gloves. Individuals are to wear gloves if their worksite is requiring it.

General Cleanliness

Employees are required to clean often. This includes their cars between shifts, their hands, and areas that they are in contact with. Employees and Individuals are reminded to cover their mouth and nose with their sleeve or a tissue when coughing or sneezing, avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth, dispose of tissues in a trash receptacle, and wash or sanitize their hands immediately afterward.

During programming, employees are to avoid any pre-work stops such as the gas station, and avoid any large gatherings of people. Employment Links will clean offices daily. When Individuals return to programming onsite, work stations, computers, phones and the general area will be cleaned and disinfected between each session.

Employee Training

Employees will be trained on COVID-19 and will be updated on new findings by state and federal regulations by the leadership team on an ongoing basis. Employees will continue their mandatory annual training. Training will be provided online in written form, training videos, and through virtual meetings. Training will not be held in person at this time.

Current Minnesota Requirements

License modifications have been lifted by the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) effective May 28, 2021 to align with the Governor's Executive Order 21-21.

- Day services facilities are allowed to return to regular days and hours of operation and full capacity as approved by DHS Licensing prior to COVID-19.



- There is no longer a limit on the hours that services may be delivered each day.
- Although the COVID-19 pandemic continues to be an important health concern, participants do not have to be strictly maintained in cohorts.
- Strict social distancing is not required, however, it is also a means of effective disease mitigation and will continue to be encouraged by Employment Links for all Individuals and employees.
- Mandatory quarantines have been eliminated, however in cases of a potential exposure to COVID-19, Employment Links will continue to follow the most current guidance from MDH regarding exposure and quarantines.
- Employment Links, like all businesses within Minnesota, is required to follow requirements within Minnesota's Stay Safe Plan, as outlined in Executive Order 21-21. This includes a requirement to maintain a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan, provide the plan to all employees, ensure that training is provided to employees on the contents of the plan, and make the plan available to regulatory authorities and public safety officers upon request. The plan will continue to be updated to reflect our most current program operation, including updated recommendations from Stay Safe MN and MDH. Our plans will continue to describe how we clean and disinfect our facilities, and practices by which we will screen for and respond to signs and symptoms of COVID-19. Our plan will address how any needed mitigation efforts will be implemented during transportation.
- Employment Links will continue to follow existing licensing standards, including the requirement under Minnesota Statutes, section 245A.04, subdivision 15 to cooperate with state and local government disaster planning agencies working to prepare for or react to emergencies presented by a pandemic outbreak.
- Employment Links will continue to follow and comply with MDH's strong recommendation that when indoors all unvaccinated Individuals and employees wear face masks and, regardless of vaccination status, face masks will be worn at all times by Individuals and employees with compromised immune systems.



- Individuals continue to have a choice about whether they want to receive services from Employment Links. Discussion with the Individual, their legal representative, and case manager could help identify their questions and concerns. Some Individuals may be hesitant to return to a program after an extended absence and with continued concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic. We will share our COVID-19 Preparedness Plan as one way to help them understand the changes in our program that are in place to maintain their health.
- The COVID-19 vaccines continue to be the most effective way to keep people healthy and to bring them closer to full community engagement. We will provide on-going information to Individuals and employees who are hesitant to receive a vaccine.

Employment Links Return to Work Phases:

Earlier in the COVID-19 Pandemic, Employment Links created a three-part plan in order to safely provide services for Individuals. The three phases provide a slow and controlled transition to resume programming for Individuals served. Depending on federal and state requirements, and the status of the Covid-19 pandemic, it may be necessary to move back to a more restrictive phase at some times. Employment Links' first priority is the health and safety of their employees and Individuals served.

Phase 1:

- Communicate with employees on upcoming Return to Work potential
- Communicate with Individuals and their Care Providers to gain knowledge on their new protocols
- Communicate with Individual's worksites to gain knowledge on their new protocols
- Provide a self monitoring checklist for employees to fill out prior to their scheduled shifts
- Provide services to Individuals who are considered essential employees



- Train employees on Covid-19
- Comply with government orders
- Monitor employee health, and pull from field if showing symptoms

Phase 2:

- Provide services for Individuals who are expected or able to return to paid employment
- Virtually complete Job Development and team meetings with Individuals
- Monitor employee health, pull from field if showing symptoms
- Monitor Individual's health, communicate with employers, and cancel shifts if showing symptoms
- Practice social distancing of at least 6 feet at all times possible
- Practice above standard hygiene practices and protection
- Comply with government, care providers, and worksite protocols

Phase 3:

- Provide services for Individuals who are expected or able to return to paid employment, volunteer sites, Job Development, and community integration
- Comply with recommended cleaning guidelines for all locations
- Continue to monitor employee and Individual health
- Comply with government, care providers, and worksite protocols



Employment Links is committed to comply with guidelines of local, state, and federal leaders to ensure health and safety for employees and Individuals receiving services. The precautions followed by Employment Links will continue to be modified as these guidelines are updated.

Program: Employment Links

Program Address: 306 W Superior St, Suite 608 Duluth MN 55802

Date Plan Developed: June 2020 / Revised June 2021

Signature: Michelle Schubitzke **Date:** 06/05/2021_____

Resources:

[COVID-19 Universal Guidance for All Businesses and Entities](#) (Stay Safe Minnesota guidance effective May 28, 2021)

Stay Safe MN Guidance for Behavioral Health and Disability Services:

[BehavioralHealth / StaySafeMN](#)

Minnesota Department of Health:

[Information for Adult Day Centers and Day Service Facilities with a Confirmed Case of COVID-19](#)

CDC guidance: [Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People](#)

MDH face mask guidance: [Face Covering Requirements and Recommendations](#)

DHS informed choice: CBSM – [Guide to encouraging informed choice and discussing risk](#)

DHS assisting in choice making: [Facilitating Choice Making](#)

Vaccines: [Key Things to Know about COVID-19 Vaccines](#) and [Benefits of Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine](#)