

Chaves County CASA COURT

APPOINTED SPECIAL ADVOCATE  
(CASA)  
PANDEMIC

PREPAREDNESS AND  
RESPONSE PLAN

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Board Approved June22, 2020

It is CASA's priority to maintain practices to keep clients, volunteers, staff, community members and the work space safe. The following plan serves to ensure all CASA operations support the health and personal safety of all individuals while remaining in compliance with federal, state, and local orders. CASA administration will monitor public health communications regarding COVID-19 to ensure continued compliance with directives and personal safety.

## Coronavirus (COVID-19) Background and Risk

COVID-19 is an infectious disease and the most common symptoms of Coronavirus are fever, tiredness, dry cough, shortness of breath and difficulty breathing. They may appear 2-14 days after exposure. Some patients may have aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat and/or diarrhea. These symptoms are usually mild and begin gradually. Some people become infected but don't develop any symptoms and don't feel unwell. Most people (about 80%) recover from the disease without needing special treatment. Around 1 of every 6 people who gets COVID-19 becomes seriously ill and develops difficulty breathing. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like high blood pressure, heart problems, diabetes, cancer, or lung disease are more likely to develop serious illness.

People can catch COVID-19 from others who have the virus. The COVID-19 virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets land on objects and surfaces around the person. Other people catch the virus by touching these objects or surfaces, then touching their eyes, nose or mouth. People can also catch the virus if they breathe in droplets from a person with the virus who coughs or exhales droplets.

We recognize that as job duties may change, employees and volunteers may move from one exposure risk level to another. Overall, [YOUR PROGRAM NAME HERE] has identified staff and volunteers as having low to medium exposure risk for COVID-19 based on the following OSHA descriptions.

### **Lower Exposure Risk**

Jobs that do not require contact with people known to be, or suspected of being, infected with SARS-CoV-2. Workers in this category have minimal occupational contact with the public and other coworkers. This means that CASA's activities do not require contact with people known to be, or suspected of being, infected with SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19), and do not have frequent close contact (within 6 feet) with the general public.

### **Medium Exposure Risk**

Jobs that require frequent/close contact with people who may be infected but who are not known to have or Are suspected of having COVID-19.

## High Exposure Risk

Positions with a high potential for exposure to known or suspected sources of COVID-19. Pre-screening questions (see below) should prevent any known contact with COVID-19 infected individuals, alleviating high exposure risk.

## Communication Plan

[YOUR PROGRAM NAME HERE] will stay abreast of updates about COVID-19 by:

- Keeping up with federal, state, and local laws and initiatives for new developments.
- Following industry updates and initiatives from National CASA Association, New Mexico Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), Local Health Department, and the New Mexico Executive Office of the Governor.
- Maintaining local health authority contact information so there is direct contact information available.
- Proactively educating our staff, board and volunteers on what is known about the virus, including its transmission and prevention.

### I. General Provisions

#### A. Work Directives Are In Compliance With:

- Federal Guidelines
- State of New Mexico Governor's Office
- New Mexico Department of Health and Human Services
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)'s Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

#### B. Supply Provisions

- Masks
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved cleaning chemicals/sanitizers
- Hand soap or alcohol-based hand rubs containing at least 60% alcohol
- Disposable towels
- Gloves

#### C. Physical Building Provisions (Office Location):

Building Management will provide information to advise how landlord/owners will address air/ventilation, cleaning regimen, common area practices, etc.

#### D. Federal Provisions for Employees per Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFRA) and Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES Act):

- Eligible employees for Emergency Family Medical Leave under the FFRA and CARES Act include those employed for at least 30 days with a qualifying need below related to a public health emergency.

- An emergency leave request consistent with FFRA and CARES Act will be approved for staff subject to a quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19.
- An emergency leave request consistent with FFRA and CARES Act will be considered to allow an employee to provide care for a family member with COVID-19.
- An emergency leave request consistent FFRA and CARES Act will be considered for an employee unable to work or telework due to the need to provide care for children under 18 years of age related to school and child care pandemic closures.
- Compensation for approved leaves will follow FFRA and CARES Act directives.
- Note: Policies regarding leave requests shall be reviewed to ensure policies are non-punitive and flexible in response to pandemic challenges.

## II. COVID-19 Identification

### A. Self-Monitoring

All staff and volunteers are required to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 to prevent the spread of potential disease.

### B. COVID-19 Notification

- A staff member or volunteer with a COVID-19 diagnosis or one who displays symptoms consistent with COVID-19 is not permitted to perform in-office work or fieldwork and shall notify the Director.
- In response to a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19 symptoms, CASA shall:
  - Keep confidential the identity of the diagnosed/symptomatic individual;
  - Provide person with notification of appropriate employee COVID-19 work provisions;
  - Inform all individuals with and near whom the diagnosed/symptomatic person worked of a potential exposure;
  - Conduct deep cleaning of the diagnosed/symptomatic person's work area and common areas potentially infected by the individual; and
  - Require confirmation of cessation of symptoms and contagiousness, proof of which may be acquired via the test-based strategy for safe return to work.
- All employees or volunteers who worked in close proximity to a diagnosed/symptomatic person will be restricted from in-office and fieldwork for at least 14 days unless the individual can provide confirmation that the diagnosed/symptomatic individual receives a negative COVID-19 test. Employees are provided with notification of relevant COVID work provisions.

## II. Work Location Directives

### A. Remote Work

- ② Staff are required to work remotely until the Governor's orders permit in-office work. Exceptions exist for essential functions that cannot be performed remotely.
- ② Once in-office work is permitted (by both Governor and CASA directives), work shall continue remotely when feasible and appropriate to promote safety.
- ② A new directive will be issued once there is an expectation of in-office work. This decision shall be made with consideration and attention to federal, state, and local directives.

## B. In-Office Work

- ☒ In-Office work is not permitted until otherwise directed by both the Governor and CASA directives. Exceptions exist for essential functions that cannot be performed remotely.
- ☒ When in-office work is allowable, work in office shall be flexible and scheduled to facilitate physical distance among individuals.
- ☒ Meetings with other individuals shall occur via video conference whenever possible.
- ☒ Required Pre-Screening
  1. Sick individuals must stay home from work.
  2. Temperature must be taken prior to coming to the office, and documented on the Pre-Screening Log in the staff member's google folder. In-office work is not permissible for temperatures at or above 100.4. **The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention considers a reading of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit a fever. While an actual temperature reading is the best diagnostic tool for fevers, the CDC also says it considers a fever to be present when a person feels hot to the touch, has previously reported feeling feverish (possibly with chills), or looks flushed or glassy-eyed.**
  3. The following questions must be answered and documented in the Pre-Screening Log. In-office work is not permissible if any answer is affirmative. If an answer is affirmative, the person is advised to self-isolate/self-quarantine at home for 14 days. If an employee has an affirmative answer, he/she must advise the director of their self-quarantine status.
    - Do you currently have any of the following symptoms: fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, new loss of smell or taste, and/or gastrointestinal problems, including nausea, diarrhea and vomiting?
    - Have you lived with or had close contact with someone in the last 14 days diagnosed with or displaying the above symptoms of COVID-19?
  4. Both Pre-Screening items must be completed and documented on the Staff's Screening Log prior to in-office work to minimize safety risks.
- ☒ Masks must be worn in common areas.
- ☒ Masks may be removed if in a personal office alone.
- ☒ Staff shall refrain from the use of other workers' phones, desks, offices and work tools whenever possible. When this is not possible, staff should sanitize any equipment/space before use.
- ☒ Sanitizer is available in every office and in common areas.
- ☒ Surfaces in work area must be sprayed down after use, including common area usage such as copy machines, counters, etc.
- ☒ Common coffee makers and other shared appliances may not be used.
- ☒ Staff must maintain the required social distance of 6 feet from others.
- ☒ Precautionary measures should be exercised such as handwashing, covering cough/sneezes, etc.

## C. Field Work

- ☒ In-person attendance for fieldwork shall be in compliance with the Governor's orders, court directives, DHHS directives, and be respectful of partner agency directives.
- ☒ Pre-Screening
  1. Sick individuals must stay home.

2. Temperature must be taken prior to any fieldwork, and documented on the temperature log in the staff member's google folder. Fieldwork is not permitted for temperatures at or above 100.4.
  3. The following questions must be answered and documented in the Pre-Screening Log. In-office work is not permissible if any answer is affirmative. If an answer is affirmative, the person is advised to self-isolate/self-quarantine at home for 14 days. If an employee has an affirmative answer, he/she must advise the director of their self-quarantine status.
    - Do you currently have any of the following symptoms: fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, new loss of smell or taste, and/or gastrointestinal problems, including nausea, diarrhea and vomiting?
    - Have you lived with or had close contact with someone in the last 14 days diagnosed with or displaying the above symptoms of COVID-19?
  4. Both Pre-Screening items must be completed and documented on the Staff's Screening Log prior to in-office work to minimize safety risks.
- ☒ Most hearings, visits, and family team meetings are now held via video conference. CASA staff and volunteers shall continue to participate via video conference until there are changes to these stipulations. Once in person attendance is planned, consultation shall occur with supervision to ensure there are appropriate provisions to limit numbers of people present to ensure safety of all.
- ☒ Masks must be worn for fieldwork in accordance with state mandates.
- ☒ Staff must maintain a social distance of 6 feet from others.
- ☒ Staff should exercise recommended precautionary measures – handwashing, covering coughs/sneezes, etc.

#### **D. Volunteer-Specific Provisions for In-Person Contacts**

- ☒ In-person contacts are not permitted until otherwise allowed by both the Governor and CASA directives.
- ☒ Volunteers shall continue to maintain monthly contact with children/families via video-conferencing, phone, text, and written correspondence. Contacts/dates shall be documented in the contact log and rationale for face-to-face modifications shall be listed as COVID-19.
- ☒ **The organization cannot assume liability for health risks. Volunteers must make personal decisions regarding concern for risks involved.**
- ☒ Once in-person visits are permitted:
1. Volunteers may choose to continue with alternatives to face-to-face contacts. This plan should be discussed with the Supervisor.
  2. The Supervisor shall contact the placement family to determine their comfort with in-person contact. In-person contact shall not occur if any party expresses concern.
  3. Pre-Screening below must be completed prior to in-person contact.
- ☒ Pre-Screening
1. Temperature must be taken prior to any in-person contact, and documented on the Volunteer's Pre-Screening Log. In-person contact is not permitted for temperatures at or above 100.4.
  2. The following questions must be answered and documented in the Pre-Screening Log. In-person contact is not permissible if any answer is affirmative. If an answer is affirmative, the person is advised to self-isolate/self-quarantine at home for 14 days. If a volunteer has an affirmative answer, he/she must advise the Supervisor of their self-quarantine status.

- Do you currently have any of the following symptoms: fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, new loss of smell or taste, and/or gastrointestinal problems, including nausea, diarrhea and vomiting?
  - Have you lived with or had close contact with someone in the last 14 days diagnosed with or displaying the above symptoms of COVID-19?
  - 3. The above questions shall also be asked of the placement family with answers documented on the Pre-Screening log. If any answer is affirmative, the in-person contact may not occur.
  - 4. All Pre-Screening items must be completed and documented on the Volunteer Pre-Screening Log prior to any in-person contact to minimize safety risks.
- ☐ Contact Directives Follow State Directives
1. Masks must be worn during in-person contacts.
  2. Outdoor visits are encouraged when possible.
  3. Volunteers shall exercise recommended precautionary measures - handwashing, covering of cough/sneezes, etc.

### **III. Casework Provisions**

- New Case Assignment: To facilitate the safe assignment of cases, casefile documents shall be shared electronically (with password encryption to ensure confidentiality). Discussions regarding new assignments shall occur via phone/video-conference.
- New Volunteer Training shall be offered via National CASA online Flex Training Curriculum/Moodle Room or other remote training until in-person trainings can resume.

### **IV. Mental Health**

- Staff and volunteers are encouraged to practice self-care, and they should inform the Supervisor or Director of any challenges so adjustments can be considered to address challenges.
  - Ongoing support:
    - Weekly Staff Meetings via Webex/Zoom/
    - Weekly Volunteer Meetings via Webex
    - Ongoing online training opportunities regarding self-care and other topics as needed.
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# STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick.



Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.



Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.



Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.



Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.



For more information: [www.cdc.gov/COVID19](http://www.cdc.gov/COVID19)

CS14916-A