



**Dear Members,**

**Amid the rising concerns over the COVID-19 cases in the United States, Iowa and Johnson County, we can never be too careful regarding our health. As public health officials share updates and precautionary measures to combat the issue, we want to ensure we are responding quickly, responsibly, and according to fact and not fear.**

**We anticipate business operations and day-to-day routines will be increasingly impacted by cancelled in-person classes, events and travel. We need to take collective action to minimize the negative impacts of COVID-ID on our health and our economy. With this in mind, we have assembled the following information to help you prepare and will continue to update this.**

**As always, please let us know if you have any questions or need additional assistance.**

**Kim Casko  
President & CEO  
Iowa City Area Business Partnership**

### **What You Should Know**

- According to the Iowa Department of Health, an outbreak of a new coronavirus disease in 2019 (COVID-19) that began in Wuhan, China has been developing since December 2019. This outbreak now includes tens of thousands of infections in China and thousands of confirmed cases in a number of other countries, including the United States.
- As of March 11th, 2020, Iowa has 14 positive cases, with 13 of those cases in Johnson County.
- COVID-19 symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure and include fever, cough and shortness of breath. Symptoms may be more severe for those with chronic illnesses or other vulnerable populations.
- As news is being updated frequently, look for facts from reputable sources such as the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) or the [Iowa Department of Public Health](#).

Educate yourself on the symptoms and precautionary measures so you can provide your employees and customers with accurate information.

## How the Business Partnership Is Preparing

First and foremost, we are monitoring the situation as closely as we can and sharing relevant information. We are especially following the guidance of [Johnson County Public Health](#) and the [Iowa Department of Public Health](#) as it pertains to public gatherings and making decisions regarding our own events on a case-by-case basis. We are communicating with our event registrants and venue partners on taking the necessary precautions to mitigate risk:

- Posting clear guidance and recommendations on how attendees should interact with one another such as:
  - Avoiding handshakes - greet with smiles instead
  - Washing hands regularly (for at least 20 seconds)
  - Covering nose and mouth when coughing / sneezing
- Increasing availability of preventative measures such as hand sanitizer
- Adjusting event locations to prevent transmission in areas of higher risk (such as senior living communities, health care facilities, schools, etc.)
- Encouraging attendees to stay home if they are showing signs of illness or if they have recently traveled to a high-risk area.

## What You Can Do

- Review your [business continuity plan](#): what will you do if you face a major disruption? Consider leave and teleworking policies and how you will continue essential operations.
- [Post printable resources](#) from the CDC to ensure that employees are aware of Coronavirus symptoms and prevention measures.
- Increase the frequency of cleaning schedules, especially for common areas or other touch points that are used by many people.
- Install handwashing or hand sanitizer stations for employees and customers. [Review best practices](#) regarding handwashing.
- Encourage employees to stay home if they are sick or if they have traveled in the past 14 days to any Warning Level 3 or Alert Level 2 locations per the [CDC Travel Notices web page](#).
- Ensure you are following HR best practices and remaining legally compliant as you strive to keep your employees safe. Local HR expert, Brenda LaMarche of BRL HR Consulting, recommends reading the following [employment and labor law article](#).

**Where to Learn More:**

- [CDC: Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)
- [Iowa Department of Public Health: COVID-19 Resource Page](#)
- [U.S. Chamber of Commerce: Business Resilience Guidance](#)
- [U.S. Chamber of Commerce: Guidance for Employers](#)
- [U.S. Chamber of Commerce: Workplace Tips for Employees](#)
- [U.S. Department of Labor: COVID-19 Guidance](#)