

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Business Continuity Checklist

PLAN AND RESPOND

Adjusting to a new and rapidly changing business environment during COVID-19 is a challenge for many business owners and operators. Below are tips from University of Minnesota Extension on how businesses can respond to these unprecedented changes in a proactive and engaging way—both in their communities and across the state.

REVIEW, UNDERSTAND, AND UPDATE YOUR RISK MANAGEMENT OPTIONS

- **Insurance**—contact your insurance provider(s) to confirm what aid your business is eligible to receive during a pandemic.
- **IT**—check with your broadband and other IT service providers to ensure your operation's online continuity. If you don't already have an online presence, explore web applications that can fit your needs, such as Salesforce, Wix, Facebook, and Shopify.
- **Finances**—review your cash flow, lines of credit, loans, grants, and credit score with your lender or banker. You can leverage these resources with new programs available from the [Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development](#).
- **Network and communication methods**—keep in touch with industry peers, suppliers, and clients as often as possible. Many of these partners are hosting online webinars on topics specific to your industry or community.



CREATE A SAFETY PLAN WITH COLLEAGUES TO ADDRESS LABOR ISSUES

One of the most challenging parts of operating a business is managing your employees. During an emergency, minimizing their financial hardship is possible if you have a plan in place beforehand. This includes developing a comprehensive communication and logistics plan by identifying potential issues related to housing, salaries, staffing expectations, etc.

CONSIDER RETOOLING YOUR BUSINESS TO OFFER A DIFFERENT SERVICE, SPECIAL, OR DISCOUNT TO CUSTOMERS/CLIENTS

Many public health providers desperately need supplies to help mitigate the effects of COVID-19. To learn more about these needs, visit the [US Department of Health's website for grants and contracts](#).

REACH OUT TO YOUR LENDER FOR AN EXTENDED LINE OF CREDIT, FREEZE YOUR LOAN, OR REQUEST A REDUCED RENT

Refer your lender to the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development's [small business loan guarantee program](#) for lenders. Doing so can help finance existing loans for businesses with home offices located in Minnesota.

NEGOTIATE NEW TERMS WITH YOUR SUPPLIERS OR VENDORS AND ALWAYS COMMUNICATE

The U.S. Department of Commerce—through the NIST Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) program and in partnership with 51 MEP centers across the country—has a system to conduct nationwide supplier scouting. In Minnesota, manufacturers can contact [Enterprise Minnesota](#) for more information. For grocers, assistance is available from the [Minnesota Grocers Association](#).

FIND AND EXPERIMENT WITH NEW TECHNOLOGY AND APPLICATIONS

For businesses wishing to go online relatively quickly with top-selling items, consider the following web applications to assist with online customer transactions: [Shopify](#), [Square Accounts](#), [PayPal](#), and [Tillster](#).

NETWORK WITH LOCAL AND STATE GROUPS, CHAMBERS, AND AGENCIES

[Minnesota Department of Health COVID-19 website](#)

[Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development COVID-19 website](#)

[Minnesota Chamber of Commerce COVID-19 website](#)

[Minnesota Retailers Association COVID-19 website](#)

[Minnesota Manufacturers Association COVID-19 website](#)

[Explore Minnesota Tourism COVID-19 website](#)

COMMUNICATE YOUR CONTINUITY STRATEGY TO YOUR LOCAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, CVB, AND CITY

Many community organizations are making an effort to match businesses with financing resources and other tools to help owners and operators transition to an online setting. Contacting these organizations in your community can, in turn, help them inform regional development partners of your community's needs.

GATHER RESOURCES, LINKS, AND INFORMATION TO STAY CURRENT

Make a daily effort to stay updated on available state and local resources, either through industry networks or government authorities. While a flood of information exists, it's important to stay focused on the news relevant to your business and avoid being overwhelmed with resources only applicable to other states.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

You can find additional information on supporting your downtown business community by visiting University of Minnesota Extension's [Downtown Market Analysis Toolbox](#).

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

Contact your [local Extension educator](#).

REFERENCES

Adapted from [Business Survival Strategies Webinar](#) by The Center for Urban Entrepreneurship & Economic Development, Rutgers Business School. Retrieved March, 31, 2020.

[Business Continuity Resource Guide: A Disaster Toolkit](#) of the Galveston Economic Development Partnership. Retrieved March 31, 2020