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ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

County Government Workforce Re-entry Guide

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COUNTY RE-OPENING SAFETY PLAN

This document is a county government workforce re-entry plan developed to outline how the County as an employer/workplace will resume full operations and prevent the spread of COVID-19.

This plan has been reviewed by the County's Department of Health and will be retained on the premises of the County's Human Resources/Personnel Department for inspection.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

Action Items Prior to Opening

Department Heads will list here all situations in the workplace where there may not allow for 6 ft. of distance between individuals, along with steps that will be taken to establish appropriate distance or other measures that will be implemented to ensure the safety of employees in these situations.

Minimum Requirements

To ensure that employees comply with social distancing requirements, the County must establish social distancing guidelines which include, at a minimum, the following requirements:

- Ensure 6 ft. distance between personnel, unless safety or core function of the work activity requires a shorter distance.
- Any time personnel are less than 6 ft. apart from one another, personnel must wear acceptable face coverings.
- Small spaces may only be occupied by only one individual at a time, unless all occupants are wearing face coverings.
- Post social distancing markers using tape or signs that denote 6 ft. of spacing in commonly used and other applicable areas on the site, including in all clock in/out stations, health screening stations
- Reduce or limit access to common rooms and spaces.
- Display signage regarding social distancing
- Limit in-person gatherings as much as possible and use tele- or video-conferencing as much as possible to avoid having more than 1 person in a room.
- Essential in-person meetings should be held in open, well-ventilated spaces with appropriate social distancing among participants (6ft. apart from side to side and across).
- Designate areas for pick-ups and deliveries, limiting contact to the extent possible.

- Alternative arrangements for areas with employee congestions, such as, shift change, lunch breaks.
- Place partitions or plastic barriers between receptionists and others that may directly interact with the employees.
- Separate employees who work in adjacent cubicle spaces.
- Removing every other chair in break areas and lunchrooms.
- Require employees to walk in designated one-way lanes in hallways and corridors to avoid traffic.
- Arrange for food delivery services to serve employees outside or separate employees during meal periods.
- If possible, arrange for pick-up and drop-off delivery of packages to be completed outside.
- Close off close quarters and small spaces.
- Create a plan to avoid congregation at entry points, copy rooms, reception areas.
- Post signage regarding social distancing.
- Limit bathroom access. Prepare for bathroom cleaning after each use.

Social Distancing Planning Questions

- Can workspaces be redesigned or rearranged to ensure 6 feet of distance between employees?
- If distancing cannot be created, can the number of employees on-site at any given time be reduced by staggering hours, rotating shifts, rotating days on site or any other mechanism to ensure 6 feet of distance?
- Can a one-way traffic pattern be developed in the building?

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- Departments must create protocols regarding when employees must wear face coverings or other protective equipment. At a minimum, employees in direct contact with members of the public must wear face coverings.
- Provide training to all staff to include when to use PPE, what PPE is necessary, how to properly don, use, and doff PPE, and how to properly dispose of PPE.
- Will the clients, residents, members of the public be required to wear face coverings.
- The Departments must provide employees with an acceptable face covering at no-cost to the employee.
- Departments are responsible to have an adequate supply of PPE.
- Face coverings must be cleaned or replaced after use or when damaged or soiled, may not be shared, and should be properly stored or discarded.
- Determine how will provide the face coverings.
- Prepare a list of Department-specific concerns and determine a PPE safety plan for the concerned areas.

- Department heads should determine the quantity of face coverings needed and any other PPE; determine how the Department will procure to ensure that the Department maintains a sufficient supply of required PPE for employees and others required to use PPE.
- Draft, publish, and train employees regarding a Department-specific PPE policy.

EMPLOYEE PERSONAL HYGIENE

- Post signage regarding proper employee hygiene.
- Provide and maintain hand hygiene stations for personnel, including handwashing with soap, water, and paper towels, or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing 60% or more alcohol for areas where handwashing is not feasible.
- Promote healthy hygiene with employees.
- Make sure that the work environment have sufficient access to running water, soap, paper towels, or hand sanitizer and alcohol wipes available.
- At all work areas, provide employees with access to the appropriate hand hygiene and/or sanitizing products.
- Train employees regularly regarding health and infection control hygiene practices.

PHYSICAL WORKSPACE CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

- Prepare a disinfection plan that creates a procedure for the physical workplace must be regularly disinfected.
- Develop a plan to clean shared workspaces and objects (desk, equipment, supplies, etc.)?
- Adhere to sanitation requirements from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and NYS Department of Health (DOH).
- The CDC issued guidance for cleaning and disinfecting public spaces, workplaces, businesses, schools, and homes. [Link to CDC Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection](#). Departments must review this guidance when implementing cleaning procedures.
- The CDC's guidance provides that for outdoor areas, you should maintain existing cleaning practices because viruses are killed more quickly by warmer temperatures and sunlight.
- For indoor areas, the CDC recommends normal, routine cleaning for areas that have been unoccupied within the last seven days. For indoor areas that have been occupied within the last seven days, the CDC recommends that frequently touched surfaces and objects made of hard and non-porous materials (glass, metal, or plastic) be cleaned and disinfected more frequently.

- Frequently touched surfaces and objects made of soft and porous materials, such as carpet, rugs, or material in seating areas, should be thoroughly cleaned or laundered. If possible, the CDC recommends considering removing soft and porous materials in high-traffic areas. Surfaces and objects that are not frequently touched should be cleaned on a routine basis.
- If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection. Cleaning will remove some germs, but disinfection is also necessary.
- For disinfection, diluted bleach solutions, alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol, and most common EPA-registered disinfectants should be effective.
- Diluted bleach solutions can be used if appropriate for the surface. Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Never mix bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Unexpired bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted.
- Cleaning staff should wear disposable gloves and gowns for all tasks in the cleaning process, including handling trash.
- Gloves and gowns should be compatible with the disinfectant products being used.
- Additional PPE might be required based on the cleaning/disinfectant products.
- Gloves and gowns should be removed carefully to avoid contamination of the wearer and the surrounding area.
- Provide training to all cleaning staff prior to cleaning tasks begin. Training should include when to use PPE, what PPE is necessary, how to properly don, use, and doff PPE, and how to properly dispose of PPE.
- You should maintain routine cleaning and disinfection procedures after reopening to reduce the potential for exposure.
- Determine the cleaning products identified as effective against COVID-19 and how to obtain.
- Limit the sharing of objects and discourage touching of shared surfaces; or, when in contact with shared objects or frequently touched areas, wear gloves or, sanitize or wash hands before and after contact.
- List common objects that are likely to be shared between employees. Maintain a disinfection plan for regular cleaning of these shared objects.
- Ensure that the entire worksite has been disinfected prior to employees returning to the workplace after the shutdown or partial shutdown.
- Conduct regular cleaning and disinfection at the change of every shift, daily, or more frequently as needed.
- Conduct frequent cleaning and disinfection of shared objects (e.g. tools, machinery) and surfaces.
- Conduct regular cleaning of high transit areas, such as restrooms and common areas.

- Make sure that the cleaners are designated and are trained to disinfect and will disinfect common and high-traffic areas with sufficient frequency.
- Are cleaning supplies available for all employees to access?
- Limit sharing of workspaces, equipment and supplies (e.g., phones, computers, time-entry systems, office supplies, tools, etc.)?
- Prepare an enhanced cleaning and disinfection plan for in the event an employee who has been in the workplace tests positive. Will it be done immediately, or can you close off the area before disinfection is performed? Who will perform this enhanced cleaning? Current staff or cleaning contractors? If by contractors, do you have contractual arrangements in place?
- Develop a plan for cleaning an area that is contact traced as relating to a person who is COVID-19 positive.
- Departments are responsible for maintaining a cleaning log, including an enhanced cleaning log. This must be regularly updated.
- Conduct regular cleaning and disinfection at the change of every shift, daily, or more frequently as needed.
- Conduct cleaning and disinfection of shared objects (e.g. tools, machinery) and surfaces, as well as high transit areas, such as restrooms and common areas, must be completed.
- Doors and copy machines must be continuously disinfected.
- Vehicles must be disinfected with every new driver/passenger.
- Converting communal restrooms to single bathrooms.
- Follow all OSHA and PESH rules regarding cleaning and safety.

PHYSICAL WORKSPACE MODIFICATIONS AND CONTROLS

- Limit workplace entry points and reduce cross-traffic.
- Post signage regarding no entry with symptoms.
- Maintain a log of individuals entering the County facilities.
- Eliminate potential congregation at entry points or other common places.
- Assess air flow systems and determine feasibility to make modifications to limit the spread of COVID-19.
- Install physical barriers and plastic screens as needed.
- Develop a controlled traffic pattern in the building?
- Can touchless systems be installed (doors, sinks, hand dryers).
- Close down small spaces that could lead to employees in close quarters.
- Bathroom, elevator, commo area, lunch room, conference room, stairwell, hallway, aisles, passageways, entrances, and exits should be posted for one person at a time only or Departments must prepare a Physical Workplace Risk Assessment and create a plan for precautions for these high risk areas:

- Public spaces must have a physical risk assessment and plans must be put in place for social distancing.
- Areas of interaction with the public should have plastic barriers installed or plastic face shields must be provided.
- Modify all areas in the worksite where employees typically work in close contact.

EMPLOYEE AND VISITOR HEALTH SCREENING

- All Departments must implement mandatory health screening assessments (e.g. questioning and temperature checks) before employees begin work each day and for visitors. The following must be asked: (1) COVID-19 symptoms in past 14 days, (2) positive COVID-19 test in past 14 days, and/or (3) close contact with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case in past 14 days; and (4) travel. Assessment responses must be reviewed every day and such review must be documented. Thermometer checks are required and 100.4 and over not allowed access. A temperature check process be implemented and applied consistently to all employees on a daily basis before entering. In most cases, employers are electing to designate a specific employee or group of employees to conduct temperature checks of everyone before entering the workplace. A few important considerations to keep in mind: 1) all temperature checks should be completed in a way that protects privacy, 2) individuals performing temperature checks should be provided with PPE and training on best practices for conducting such tests, 3) if documentation is created where individuals are excluded from entering based on the result of a temperature check, it is critical to maintain that information as confidential medical information. Additionally, it is important to consider the logistics of this process to ensure social distancing for employees waiting for screening and to minimize the time spent waiting for screening.
- Use County-wide employee certification regarding reporting of COVID-19 test, symptoms, and exposures. Mandatory questions must be reported by employees.
- Determine who will be responsible for performing screenings and develop training programs for those individuals.
- Adhere to County-wide PPE standards for screeners use. If screening onsite, how much PPE will be required for the responsible parties carrying out the screening practices? How will you supply this PPE?
- Departments must establish where screenings will occur (best practice is in an outside tented area)
- Make accommodations for non-exempt employees to report time spent waiting for screening. Limit wait times as much as possible.
- Where will screening take place (outside is preferable or immediately upon entry in area that is shielded off with plastic or rope/tape markers.
- Create plan for social distancing for employees waiting for screening.

- Adhere to County-wide confidentiality protocols for health screenings in accordance with EEOC standards.
- Block employee entrance into buildings from areas other than screening checkpoints.
- Post signage reflecting no entry with symptoms and/or fever.
- Departments must identify the third parties entering workplace or otherwise in contact with employees (vendors, clients, etc.) and develop a plan for screening these individuals.
- Maintain a log of every individual entering your facility.

EMPLOYMENT-BASED CONTACT TRACING

- Create a workplace contact tracing team (WCTT) and coordinate with HR (this is separate from DOH tracing).
- Create an WCTT email team for rapid communication and constant contact.
- Develop and implement policies and procedures for workforce contact tracing following a positive COVID-19 test in the workplace.
- Have a plan for rapid WCTT response in the event of a positive case. Trace workplace contacts.
- Implement plan to clean the applicable contaminated areas that have been detected through the workplace contact tracing (WCT).
- Maintain a continuous electronic log of workplace activity such that there is a running record of every person, including workers and visitors, who have had contact with each other. This log can then be used to facilitate immediate contact tracing information. This may exclude contact that is with appropriate PPE.
- Consider employee contact logs to be electronically uploaded throughout the day.
- WCTT must notify close contacts that they may have been exposed to COVID-19 by an infected employee. [Insert link to draft communications].
- The WCTT should investigate all individuals exposed to an infected employee to identify all individuals who worked in proximity (within six feet) for a prolonged period of time (10 minutes or more). Determine whether shared materials/tools/equipment used. Trace back to those in proximity during the 48-hour period before the onset of symptoms of infected employee.
- Send home all employees who worked closely with the infected employee to ensure the infection does not spread.
- Develop a checklist of questions to ask infected employee regarding date of possible infection and the infected employee's contacts and movements while at work in the 48 hours prior to symptoms.
- Every department should have a liaison with government contract tracers.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Departments must post signage throughout the worksites to remind personnel to adhere to proper hygiene, social distancing rules, appropriate use of PPE, and cleaning and disinfecting protocols.
- Departments must have a regular communication plan for employees e updated information.
- Prepare a communication for employees when a co-worker is COVID-19 positive. [Link to samples].
- Departments should create a communication plan for how to communicate with employees who are diagnosed with COVID-19, exposed to the virus, or suspected of sickness.
- Maintain a continuous electronic log of workplace activity for contact tracing.
- Create a template to communicate with visitors or utilize DOH liaison for this purpose.
- Determine how logs will be maintained and by whom.
- Develop a plan to communicate with state and local health departments if a worker tests positive for COVID-19 and cooperate with DOH contact tracing efforts, including notification of potential contacts, such as workers or visitors who had close contact with the individual, while maintaining confidentiality required by state and federal law and regulations.
- Identify which employee(s) will be responsible for notifying state and local health departments if a worker tests positive for COVID-19.
- Identify any Department specific communication requirements (e.g., County nursing home communications with residents' families).
- **Return to Work Communication:** What information needs to be communicated to employees before they return to work?
- Develop a plan for communicating new protocols and any changes to existing policies to employees returning to work after working post-shutdown.
- Determine method for employee communications (e.g., email, text, etc.). Do these communication methods need to be updated to reach the entire workforce?
- Identify who is responsible for Departmental and County-wide communications?
- Identify who will maintain copies of these communications for the Department.
- Determine where the communications will be maintained and how they will remain accessible for employees.
- Consideration should be given as to how to communicate to customers, clients, vendors and visitors the new rules regarding accessing the worksite and any changes in hours/availability.

PLAN FOR COVID-19 POSITIVE OR POTENTIALLY COVID-19 POSITIVE EMPLOYEE

Steps in the Event of a Positive Employee

- Distribute County-wide policy for how employees must notify Human Resources/Personnel of positive test results for COVID-19.
- Know who is designated as the County point of contact to manage communications with the positive employee.
- Follow communication protocols in place to facilitate communication with local health authorities regarding the positive test.
- Follow any Department-specific notification protocols.
- Coordinate with DOH.
- Utilize template communications for communicating with other employees about the positive test.
- Be sure to comply with applicable state and federal laws regarding required leave for the positive employee.
- Determine whether any other party (other than employees) that should be notified about the positive test. Coordinate communication and contacts with DOH.
- Train employees to gather information from the COVID-19 employee in a confidential manner and so that contacts can be traced.
- Immediately perform any enhanced cleaning and disinfecting where the employee had been.

Steps in the Event an Employee is Symptomatic but Has Not Tested Positive

- Employees with COVID-19 symptoms may not be in the workplace; must be sent home if arriving in the workplace or becoming symptomatic at work; and these employees should not be allowed beyond a screening checkpoint.
- Ensure that managements staff is sufficiently trained to know what symptoms warrant sending the employee home or prohibit an employee from remaining in or entering the workplace.
- Determine, in advance, who is allowed to make these decisions.
- Determine who should be notified about the COVID-19 symptoms.
- Employee should be isolated if there is any delay in removing an employee from the workplace. Have a plan in place for isolation/containment in these circumstances.
- Train employees regarding how information will be safely ascertained from an isolated employee or subsequently from the employee when the employee returns to his/her home.

- Have a pre-screen questionnaire prepared to gather appropriate information from the employee while in isolation.
- Document employee symptoms.
- Coordinate with the local health authority.
- Immediately perform any enhanced cleaning and disinfecting where the employee had been.
- Require employee to be tested and follow protocols for tested employee return to work.

Steps in the Event an Employee is Asymptomatic but Has Been Potentially Exposed

- Require employee to be tested and follow protocols for tested employee return to work; employee remains out of work until negative test result is available.
- Follow communication protocols in place to facilitate communication with local health authorities regarding the potential exposure.
- Follow any Department-specific notification protocols.
- Coordinate with DOH.
- Utilize template communications for communicating with other employees about the potential exposure (if a workplace exposure).
- If a workplace exposure, initiate workplace contact tracing protocols.
- Be sure to comply with applicable state and federal laws regarding required leave for the positive employee.
- Determine whether any other party (other than employees) should be notified about the potential exposure. Coordinate communication and contacts with DOH.
- Train employees to safely gather information from the potentially exposed employee in a confidential manner and so that contacts can be traced.
- Immediately perform any enhanced cleaning and disinfecting where the employee had been.

Return to Work After Exposure

- Employees who test positive may only return to work when no longer symptomatic, have a negative test result, or are cleared by a physician to return to work.
- Employees who are exposed or potentially exposed must be tested and may return to work only with a negative test result.
- Determine what documentation the County will required (e.g., test results, doctor's note).
- Determine PPE standards upon return to work.
- Monitor for discrimination and/or retaliation.

EASY GUIDE—4 STEPS TO TAKE FOR CONFIRMED COVID-19 CASE IN THE WORKPLACE

- Step 1: Isolate and excuse the sick employee from the workplace. The infected employee should remain at home until released by a physician or public health official. If a medical note releasing the employee is unavailable, follow the CDC guidelines on when an employee may discontinue self-isolation.
- Step 2: Begin immediate contact tracing by determining all individuals who worked in close proximity (within six feet) of the sick employee for a prolonged period of time (10 minutes or more). Begin at 48 hours prior to when sick employee had symptoms forward to present day. Send home all employees who worked closely with the infected employee for testing or 14-day quarantine.
- Step 3: Clean and disinfect the workplace.
- Step 4: Notify employees. Following a confirmed COVID-19 case, and as recommended by the CDC, notify all employees who work in the location or area where the sick employee works. Use the model notification to assist with the process. Do not disclose any confidential medical information such as the name of the employee unless the employee has signed an authorization to disclose their diagnosis.

PERSONNEL ISSUES

Plan for Certain Vulnerable Employees

- Know the County position regarding employees in your workforce who are more “vulnerable” to the virus (e.g., age, immune-compromised).
- Will the County accommodate older and immune-compromised employees?
- Understand consequence of telework accommodation in these circumstances.

Remote Work/Telecommuting

- Will telework continue, in whole or in part, for employees? For what purpose?

Training

- Training of employees is required for compliance and enforcement with personal hygiene and infectious disease control measures.
- Managers must be trained to monitor for symptoms and what to do if an employee or third-party is symptomatic or exposed.

- Manager training should include information on new policies and procedures put in place for COVID-19, including leave policies, cleaning, hygiene protocols, screenings/temperature checks, and PPE requirements.
- Develop a plan for communication and training to returning employees concerning current safety procedures and protocols, attendance policies, non-discrimination and anti-harassment policies and other re-orientation/reemployment issues?
- Train managers and supervisors regarding key changes needed for social distancing (e.g., no large meeting or events, spacing out seating, staggering start and stop times; cleaning or restrictions on shared items and spaces).
- In addition to offering training to employees, managers should check in with employees regularly to ensure the employees are comfortable.

Business Travel

- Does the County have a policy in place regarding business travel due to concerns about COVID-19?
- Have you reviewed all scheduled travel/conferences/external meetings to determine what can be postponed, cancelled, or handled virtually?
- Are you limiting access to meetings with third parties?
- Minimize non-essential business travel and adhere to CDC guidelines regarding isolation following travel.

Repopulating the Workforce

- Department Heads must develop a plan for bringing employees back to work. This must include whether employees will be recalled at once or in phases. Will there be changes in location, shift, or duties?
- The plan must address the tasks that must be completed to ensure that employees are recalled in a safe manner, including disinfecting and screening procedures being put in place.
- A Human Resources/Personnel department employee review will be required to determine whether repopulation decisions have a disparate impact on any protected employee groups.
- Effective communications must be prepared, in advance, to notify employees about the return to work.
- The County must have a plan in place regarding employees who are unable or unwilling to return to work (e.g., due to COVID-19 positivity, order of quarantine, caring for a child whose school or childcare provider is closed, or even due to a generalized fear or anxiety relating to COVID-19). Managers must be trained according to the County plan.
- Do managers know how to respond to the circumstance where an employee cannot immediately return for a non-COVID-19 reason, such as an unrelated medical issue or change in personal circumstance?

Managing Higher Incidence of Employee Absence

- Do managers know how to address absences related to COVID-19? What documentation will be required?
- What are staffing options that could make the workforce more flexible in the event of attendance issues? Consider cross-training opportunities.

Reassessing Employment Policies

- Consider whether adjustments to an existing attendance or leave policy are necessary.
- Consider whether the employer is compliant with COVID-19-related legislation. (New York COVID-19 Paid Leave law for employees subject to a mandatory or precautionary order of quarantine or isolation; NYSDOH special guidance for health care employees; and the Families First Coronavirus Response Act for employees who require leave for one of the five qualifying reasons).
- Consider whether job accommodations might be available or necessary to maximize employee productivity and satisfy legal requirements.
- Consider whether adjustments to an existing medical or personal leave of absence policy are necessary.

LEGAL RISK ASSESSMENT

- Every Department Head should appoint their COVID-19 task team for work on this return to work planning, implementation, and enforcement.
- Department Heads should identify government regulations that specifically apply to their department and/or fall under the administrative jurisdiction of their department and actions necessary to comply with the regulations.
- Department Heads should determine which individuals within the operation (employees, vendors, contractors, customers or visitors) are at risk of contracting COVID-19.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

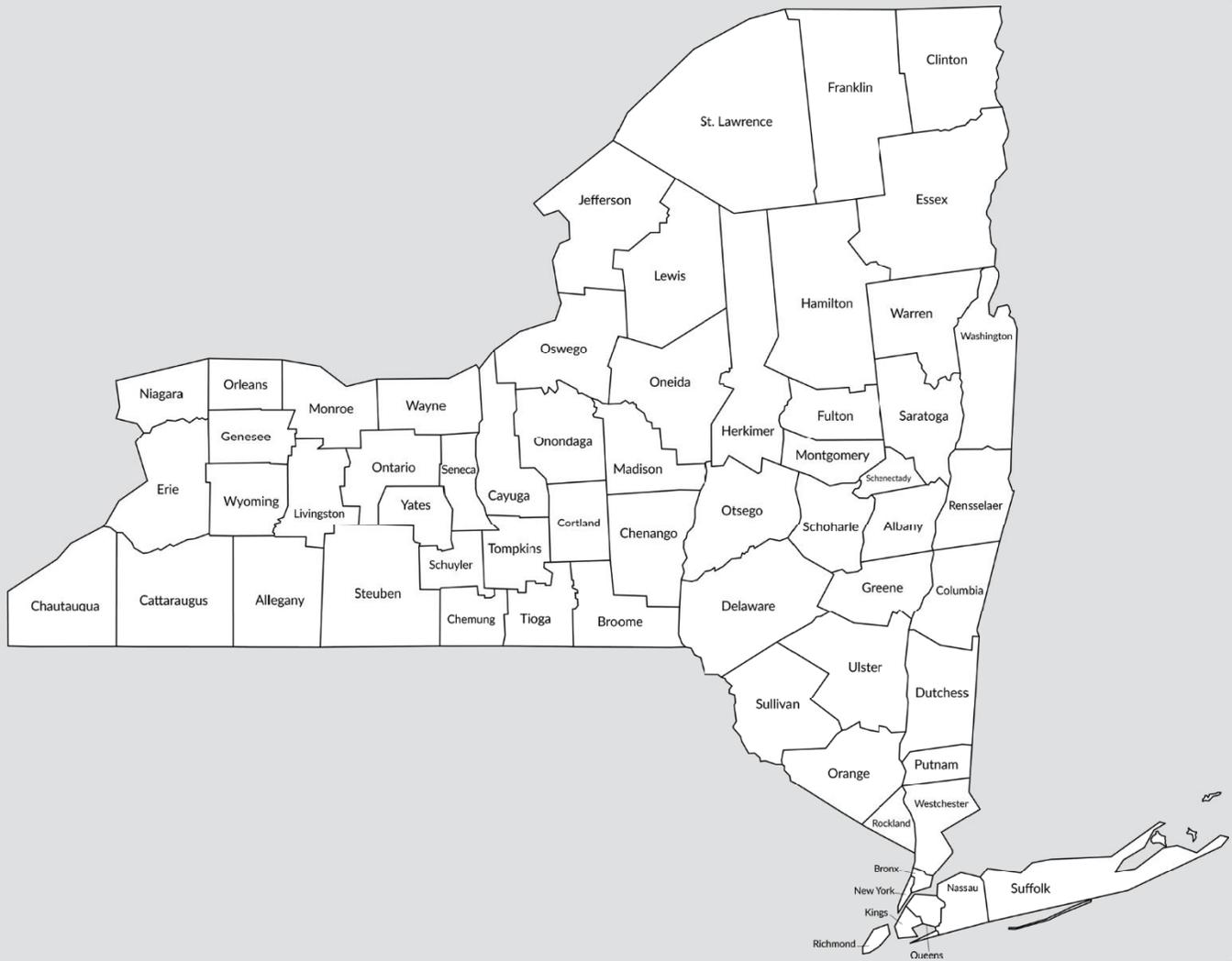
- Department Heads should list what measures its task team will take to stay informed about guidance that is being issued by the State or Federal government or other resources about COVID-19.



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