



Restaurants and Food Committee Recommendations to the ReOpen DC Advisory Group Steering Committee



May 21, 2020

For more information, and to see the ReOpen DC Advisory Group Steering Committee's full recommendations, please visit <https://coronavirus.dc.gov/>.

RESTAURANTS & FOOD RETAILERS

COMMITTEE MISSION & FOCUS

The District of Columbia's food economy is diverse, robust, and resilient. In 2019, the DC Food Economy included more than 4,500 licensed businesses and 72,000 workers employed by restaurants, grocery stores, corner stores, farmers markets, urban farms, caterers, manufacturers, and commercial kitchens. Throughout the COVID-19 public health emergency, food service businesses, along with nonprofit and government-led programs, have provided essential food services to residents across the District.

Food establishments and their workers were among the first businesses impacted by the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic closures. Their operations have undergone significant changes in order to open safely and gain the public's confidence. Frontline workers in the food economy, including line cooks, delivery staff, and cashiers, have risked their personal health to provide critical food services to District residents. By all accounts, these people are heroes.

This committee submits the following report, which includes recommended requirements for the safe, staged reopening of the District's food establishments, along with best practices intended to assist businesses and their customers. The report also notes a range of policy considerations aimed at addressing the immediate and long-term needs of some of our city's most vulnerable residents and workers.

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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Fred Moosally

Jacqueline Watson

Andrew Kline

Spike Mendelson

Nicholas Stefanelli

Anwar Saleem

OVERVIEW & STATUS

CURRENT STATUS

The District of Columbia regulates thousands of food establishments that fall into 13 license types (Figure 1). Restaurants have been deemed essential businesses, able to provide takeout and delivery services at present, while closed for in-person dining. In the District, 96% of full-service restaurants are independently operated. These businesses are hurting, especially those set up to primarily service in-person diners. According to our research, 40% of restaurants are temporarily closed, and the remaining 60% are experiencing a decrease in sales of 70% or more. Restaurants are operating with a drastically reduced staff, with approximately 90% of restaurant employees having been laid off or furloughed without pay. For those still working, restaurant employees are required to wear a cloth or non-surgical masks and gloves. Customers picking up food must practice social distancing, and are asked to wear face coverings.

Grocery stores and corner stores are allowed to operate as essential businesses, and are required to follow hygiene and social distancing guidelines as detailed in Mayor's Order 2020-58. This includes requiring customers and workers to wear masks, and only allowing a certain number of customers in at a time to allow for social distancing.

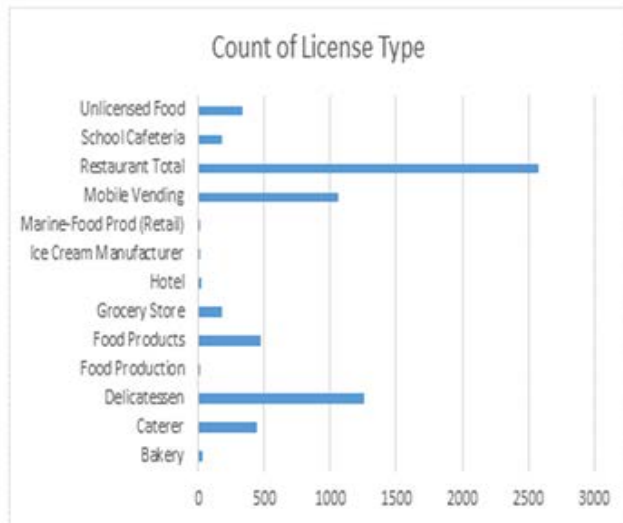
Farmers markets can only operate if they apply for and receive a waiver from the DC Office of Planning. Currently, markets must reapply for the waiver every two to three weeks. Through

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the waiver process, farmers markets are required to maintain social distancing measures, including lines spaced out in six-foot increments, ensuring all tables and tents are at least 10 feet apart, ensuring compliance with all public health requirements, and prohibiting customers from touching products before purchase.

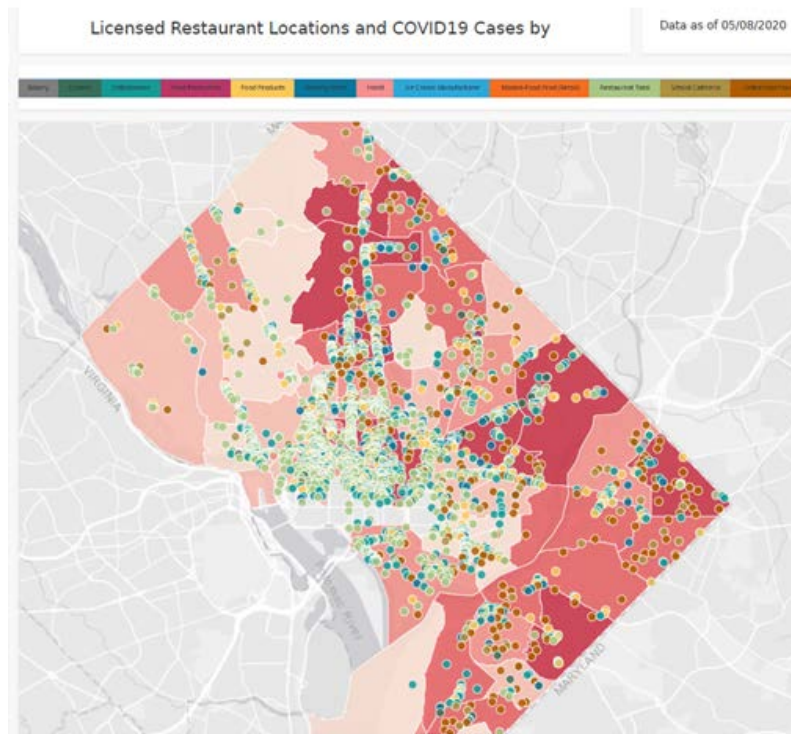
Figure 1. Food Establishment Types

License Type	Count of License Type
Bakery	30
Caterer	445
Delicatessen	1257
Food Production	1
Food Products	476
Grocery Store	178
Hotel	24
Ice Cream Manufacturer	4
Marine-Food Prod (Retail)	12
Mobile Vending	1059
Restaurant Total	2574
School Cafeteria	180
Unlicensed Food	340



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Figure 2. Locations of Food Establishments by Ward, Along with COVID-19 Cases



The map above represents the location of food establishments by ward and the number of COVID-19 cases (darker red represents a higher number of cases). This data is of 5/8/2020.

ASSESSING RISK BY SECTOR

The matrix below (Figure 3), provided by DC Health, provides a risk assessment for each sector by examining contact intensity, number of contacts, and the degree to which activities.

Figure 3. Risk Matrix by Sector

Sectors	Contact Intensity	# of Contacts	Modification Potential
Restaurants	Medium	Medium	Medium
Bars, Taverns, and Clubs	High	High	Medium
Food Retail (Grocery Stores, Convenience Stores, Farmers Markets, and Farms)	High	Medium/High	Low/Medium

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Commercial Kitchens, Catering, Food Trucks, and Manufacturing	Medium	Medium	Low/Medium
Emergency Food Assistance Providers	Low/Medium	Medium	Medium

Assessing risk is a qualitative assessment per the guidelines set forth in the Johns Hopkins Guidance for Governors Report.¹

Restaurants

In the District, restaurants are considered an essential business, and are open for takeout and delivery, but closed for on-premises dining. Employees of restaurants offering takeout and delivery are required to wear cloth or non-surgical face masks and gloves. Social distancing of customers waiting to receive takeout items must be followed.

Restaurants should be allowed to reopen in compliance with the requirements and guidelines set forth in this report.

¹ https://www.centerforhealthsecurity.org/our-work/pubs_archive/pubs-pdfs/2020/200417-reopening-guidance-governors.pdf

Bars, Taverns & Clubs

The Faith, Arts, Culture, Hotels, Entertainment and Sports ReOpen DC Advisory Group Committee has primary responsibility for addressing reopening guidelines for nightclubs and those taverns which primarily function as bars, with little food service. Accordingly, this Committee defers to their recommendations.

Tavern or other alcohol licensees with significant food service should be allowed to reopen in compliance with the requirements and guidelines set forth in this report.

Food Retail (Grocery Stores, Corner Stores, Farmers Markets and Farms)

Mayor Bowser issued a series of Mayor's Orders in March and April 2020 to ensure safe food shopping environments.

On March 24, 2020, Mayor Bowser issued Mayor's Order 2020-053, which designates "food and household products and services" as essential businesses allowed to continue operating. Food and household products and services include "grocery stores, supermarkets, licensed farmers' markets, food banks, convenience stores, liquor stores, and other establishments engaged in the retail sale, wholesale supply or distribution of food products."

Safety Requirements for Grocery Stores

On April 8, 2020, Mayor Bowser issued Mayor's Order 2020-058, which requires indoor food sellers to:

- Post signage at the entrance to instruct customers to practice proper social distancing and wear masks or mouth coverings;
- Limit the number of customers who enter the business at one time;
- Require customers to maintain six-foot distances from one another;
- Where possible, mark paths and make store aisles one-way;
- Provide adequate hand sanitizers and disinfecting wipes at the entry and exits and throughout the store;
- Block use of checkout stations that are next to one another;
- Inform customers to fill their own bags if they brought reusable bags;
- Regularly disinfect high-touch surfaces;
- Cease any food or beverage self-service stations;
- Minimize bare hand contact with any food products and encourage customers to only touch items they plan to purchase;

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- Inform all employees to not come to work if sick and use paid leave provisions;
- Check employees for symptoms before work and send any workers home if they have symptoms before or during their shift;
- Separate employee workstations by at least six feet;
- Install Plexiglas or plastic dividers at registers by April 20, 2020;
- When possible, close aisles being restocked;
- Provide all employees with gloves and masks;
- Require employees to notify if someone in their household is diagnosed with COVID-19;
- Implement a protocol for self-quarantine and sanitization if an employee is diagnosed with COVID-19; and
- Require employees with a confirmed COVID-19 positive test result to provide written documentation from a healthcare professional with approval that they can return to work.

Safety Requirements for Farmers Markets

Mayor's Order 2020-058 also created new requirements for farmers markets and fish markets to operate. It requires that farmers markets submit a plan to the DC Food Policy Council (FPC) within the DC Office of Planning (OP) to receive a waiver to operate. OP has worked diligently with farmers markets to provide the required documents and has been able to approve waivers for every farmers market that has applied thus far. In order to be approved, farmers markets must:

- Limit the number of people in the market at one time and prohibit pets;
- Limit operations to allow only "grab and go" type purchasing including selling pre-bagged items at fixed price points, limiting the number of counters, and creating opportunities for pre-orders;
- Create pre-market telephone or online ordering systems;
- Adjust operations to only sell food items, with the exception of soap, hand sanitizer, and non-medical cloth masks;
- Place all products behind a barrier and prohibit customers from touching products before purchase;
- Provide a clearly-viewable menu to customers; and
- Eliminate all on-site food preparation.

On April 15, 2020, Mayor Bowser issued Mayor's Order 202-063, which clarified that workers and customers at food retail locations are required to wear masks, and employers are required to provide gloves and masks for workers.

Resources

The District has worked closely with its food retailers to promote safe food shopping during the public health emergency. Specific attention has been given to understanding the needs and challenges of both small and large grocery stores and markets, those that accept government food assistance programs, and those operating in communities with few food retail options. DC Health, the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA), OP, the Department of Human Services (DHS), and other partner agencies have provided coordinated guidance and technical assistance on the new requirements. District resources for grocery stores and farmers markets include

- [Quick Reference Guide for Grocery Stores](#);
- Updates to grocery hours for vulnerable populations on coronavirus.dc.gov/food;
- Updated list of farmers markets open for business on coronavirus.dc.gov/farmersmarkets;
- Signage for food retailers regarding new requirements;
- List of expanded WIC Food List in [English](#) and [Spanish](#); and
- [Resources](#) on the expanded WIC Food List for retailers, including signage and training videos for frontline workers.

Expanded Public Benefits

During the public health emergency, the federal and District governments have relaxed certain requirements for several public benefit programs that District residents use to purchase groceries. This includes:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), administered by DHS:
 - **Click and Collect:** DHS is encouraging all food retailers and farmers markets authorized to accept SNAP benefits to consider implementing Click and Collect. Under this system, residents using SNAP benefits can place orders over the phone or online and pay when they pick up their groceries at the retailer. This model allows for curbside pickup and minimizes the amount of time residents are inside grocery stores.
 - **SNAP Online Purchasing:** The District recently received approval from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to implement online purchasing as an option for SNAP customers. This option allows customers to purchase food for delivery online using their SNAP benefits. Currently, there are two USDA-approved SNAP online retailers available in the District, and one of them – Amazon – has committed to supporting SNAP online food purchasing. DHS and FPC are working closely with local retailers and farmers markets interested in becoming USDA-approved online retailers.
 - **Online Applications:** DHS has worked diligently during the public health emergency to enable residents to apply for SNAP online rather than visiting a

DHS office in person. This innovation has expanded access to SNAP and helped vulnerable residents avoid unnecessary trips and exposure. In addition, all current SNAP recipients have been automatically re-certified during the public health emergency, and all in-person interviews for new applicants have been waived.

- Women, Infants, and Children Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (WIC) (administered by DC Health):
 - **Expanded WIC Food List:** During the public health emergency, DC Health has expanded the list of food products that can be redeemed with WIC benefits to include more varieties and brands. This ensures that recipients are able to purchase a wide variety of foods, even when certain products are in short supply.
 - **Phone/Mail Services:** During the public health emergency, WIC sites are providing all services over the phone and all benefits will be mailed to participants.

Commercial Kitchens, Catering, Food Trucks & Manufacturing

The catering sector has been significantly affected by the ban on mass gatherings. Some companies have pivoted toward meal kits and meal delivery, while others are preparing meals for vulnerable residents or first responders. Small-scale manufacturing has been able to continue in the District and sell at retail outlets. Many caterers and manufacturers in the District work out of shared commercial kitchen spaces, some of which are still operating while enforcing social distancing.

Food trucks have been allowed to continue operating, but are expected and required to enforce social distance guidelines. With that said, food trucks primarily serve downtown areas, attracting customers who are office workers and tourists. As these markets have drastically shrunk, along with the private functions and festivals they often serve, many food trucks have pivoted to catering and food delivery models to supplement their lost revenue. Some food trucks have also explored operating outside of downtown to reach some of the mixed-use areas of the District. Food trucks are not currently allowed to operate in residential areas, limiting their options.

Emergency Food Assistance

The District anticipated early that emergency food operations would need to quickly adapt to slow the spread of the coronavirus among participants, volunteers, and staff. Operations targeting extremely vulnerable populations including seniors and immunocompromised individuals were especially concerned with preventing the risk of infection and pivoted quickly

to contactless home delivery. Other organizations that relied on large numbers of volunteers to prepare, pack and distribute their food had to reevaluate their operations, and in some cases scale back or temporarily halt volunteer operations and implement new protocols to ensure volunteer safety. To assist these organizations, DC Health issued “Recommendations for Essential Food Distribution Providers Re: Coronavirus.” The recommendations include guidance for staff and volunteers, hand washing, cleaning and disinfection protocols, and social distancing at distribution sites.

MOVING TOWARD OUR VALUES

COMMITTEE APPROACH & ENGAGEMENT

Throughout this process, the committee proactively sought a wide array of viewpoints and perspectives. This started with the review of guidance provided by a variety of national organizations and public health experts, and a close look at how jurisdictions throughout the region and country are handling similar issues. At the local level, in addition to the industry stakeholders who are part of the committee, we tapped a broader group of restaurant owners, operators and workers to help develop some of the guidelines with a focus on economic and equity considerations. Our committee also consulted with advocates and reviewed letters from multiple advocacy organizations and community leaders, which are included in the report’s appendix. The committee was also greatly aided by the ReOpen DC survey, which yielded more than 130 comments specific to the topics within our purview. And in order to gain insight and perspective from the Council, the committee held a conference call with Chairman Phil Mendelson and Councilmember Kenyan McDuffie.

While everyone is unlikely to agree with every recommendation, or may believe that something has been left out, please know that we did our best to hear from as many people as possible and incorporate as many recommendations as feasible within the timeline given and parameters of our committee’s focus.

REOPENING GUIDANCE & PREPARATION

STAGED REOPENING, MITIGATION & GUIDELINES FOR REOPENING

In this section of the report we provide our recommendations for how each sector should be allowed to safely reopen in Stage 1 and Stage 2. Depending on the evolving nature of the pandemic, Stage 3 would likely be a scaled back version of Stage 2, and Stage 4 would be a return to normal operations.

Restaurants, Bars, Taverns & Clubs

In addition to the requirements below, a full set of best practices is included in the Committee Report's appendix.

Stage 1

- Outdoor service only to seated patrons, with tables at least 6 feet apart. Rooftops and patios with awnings are considered outdoors. Retractable glass walls and other forms of operable walls are considered indoor dining. Businesses with rooftops and patios requiring indoor access shall have parties wait outside at least six feet apart until they are ready to be seated.
- Standing or seating at an outdoor bar is prohibited. Non-bar seating in the outdoor bar area (i.e., tables or counter seats that do not line up to a bar or food service area) may be used for customer seating as long as a minimum of six feet is provided between parties at tables.
- Tables are limited to parties of six or less from the same household. As dining establishments have no way of verifying this, the responsibility is placed on customers to only dine with people with whom they live.
- Buffets, salad bars and other communal serving areas are prohibited.
- BYOB (bring your own alcohol) is prohibited.
- Activities that require patrons to cluster and be in close physical contact are prohibited. Examples include dance floors, darts, billiards, and video games.
- Live music is prohibited.
- All table items must either be single use and disposed of after use or cleaned and sanitized between uses. This includes utensils, dinnerware, drinkware, menus, tablecloths, and condiment containers (any items touched by customers).
- Tables and chairs must be sanitized after each seating.
- Restrooms must be cleaned and sanitized frequently and appropriately marked and monitored to ensure social distancing guidelines are followed.
- Hand sanitizer must be made easily accessible at the entrance of every establishment.
- All food contact surfaces must be cleaned and sanitized at least every two hours. [Cleaning guidelines from the CDC can be found here](#). Cleaning procedures throughout the restaurant must be developed in advance of opening and shared with employees so that they can be properly trained.
- Employees must wear proper face coverings while working, and are required to wash their hands frequently. Employees must wear gloves when handling ready-to-eat foods.
- Where possible, employees must be staggered to prevent them from congregating in the same areas, maintaining six-foot social distancing guidelines.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces (e.g., door handles, work stations, cash registers) at least every four to six hours and shared objects (e.g., payment terminals, tables, countertops/bars, receipt trays) between uses.

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- Screen employees by checking temperatures (or have employees report their temperatures) and assess symptoms of workers with a questionnaire, ideally before entering the facility or operation. Sick employees should not report to work. Examples of screening questions include
 - Since your last day of work have you had any of these symptoms: cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, new loss of taste/smell, muscle pain, sore throat, fever, chills, repeated shaking with chills, or headache?
 - Have you come into contact with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19?
 - Are you ill or caring for someone who is ill?
 - If yes, in the two weeks before becoming ill have you or the person you care for come into contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19?
 - If the answer is YES and a fever is present to any of these screening questions, then employers should implement the procedures recommended by DC Health to protect other employees and customers including restriction from the facility, proper cleaning and sanitization, and informing DC Health and advising employee on where to get medical help.
 - If no fever (>100.4°F) or COVID-19 symptoms are present, workers should self-monitor for onset of symptoms during their shift.
- If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, management should notify DC Health immediately at food.safety@dc.gov. Any employees who have come into contact with a person who tested positive for COVID-19 should consult their healthcare provider about when it is safe to return to work.
- Display signage outlining the restaurants' promise to the customer and the customers' promise to the restaurant. Language is outlined in "Signage Section" and attached in appendix.
- Current social distancing guidelines outlined on coronavirus.dc.gov must be followed.

Stage 2

- Indoor and outdoor dining permitted, as long as tables, booths, and bar stools are spaced at least six feet apart. Floor markings should be used to ensure social distancing guidelines are followed in all situations where guests might be waiting.
- Bar/counter seating is permitted so long as each party is seated six feet apart. Additionally, if the bar is used for seating there shall be no food preparation, food storage or storage of clean utensils at the bar area.
- Standing at an indoor or outdoor bar is prohibited.
- Tables are limited to parties of 10 or less from the same household. As dining establishments have no way of verifying this, the responsibility is placed on customers to only dine with people with whom they live.

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- Occupancy must be limited to 50% of the lowest occupancy load or seating capacity on the certificate of occupancy (employees not included).
- Sit-down dining establishments must use and maintain a reservation/call ahead system to manage guest arrival times and support contact tracing efforts if a need arises.
- Buffets are permitted, but only if an employee serves the food (one table at a time) and serving utensils are cleaned and sanitized every 2 hours.
- BYOB (bring your own alcohol) is prohibited.
- Activities that require patrons to cluster and be in close physical contact are prohibited. Examples include dance floors, darts, and billiards. Video games are allowed, as long as the game player is seated and sanitizing wipes are located next to the console for cleaning between uses.
- All table items must either be single use and disposed of after use or cleaned and sanitized between uses. This includes utensils, dinnerware, drinkware, menus, tablecloths, and condiment containers (any items touched by customers).
- Tables and chairs must be sanitized after each seating.
- Restrooms must be cleaned and sanitized frequently and appropriately marked and monitored to ensure social distancing guidelines are followed.
- Hand sanitizer must be made easily accessible at the entrance of every establishment.
- All food contact surfaces must be cleaned and sanitized at least every two hours. [Cleaning guidelines from the CDC can be found here](#). Cleaning procedures throughout the restaurant must be developed in advance of opening and shared with employees so that they can be properly trained.
- Employees must wear proper face coverings while working, and are required to wash their hands frequently. Employees must wear gloves when handling ready-to-eat foods.
- Where possible, employees must be staggered to prevent them from congregating in the same areas, maintaining six-foot social distancing guidelines.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces (e.g., door handles, work stations, cash registers) at least every four to six hours and shared objects (e.g., payment terminals, tables, countertops/bars, receipt trays) between uses.
- Screen employees by checking temperatures (or have employees report their temperatures) and assess symptoms of workers with a questionnaire, ideally before entering the facility or operation. Sick employees should not report to work. Examples of screening questions include
 - Since your last day of work have you had any of these symptoms: cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, new loss of taste/smell, muscle pain, sore throat, fever, chills, repeated shaking with chills, or headache?
 - Have you come into contact with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19?
 - Are you ill or caring for someone who is ill?

- If yes, in the two weeks before becoming ill have you or the person you care for come into contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19?
- If the answer is YES and a fever is present to any of these screening questions, then employers should implement the procedures recommended by DC Health to protect other employees and customers including restriction from the facility, proper cleaning and sanitization, and informing DC Health and advising employee on where to get medical help.
- If no fever (>100.4°F) or COVID-19 symptoms are present, workers should self-monitor for onset of symptoms during their shift.
- If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, management should notify DC Health immediately at food.safety@dc.gov. Any employees who have come into contact with a person who tested positive for COVID-19 should consult their healthcare provider about when it is safe to return to work.
- Display signage outlining the restaurants' promise to the customer and the customers' promise to the restaurant. Language is outlined in "Signage Section" and attached in appendix.
- Current social distancing guidelines outlined on coronavirus.dc.gov must be followed.

Grocery Stores & Convenience Stores

Stage 1

- Grocery stores and convenience stores should continue to operate while complying with all social distancing and hygiene requirements under Mayor's Order 2020-058.
- Buffets, salad bars and other communal serving areas are prohibited.
- Stores with seating areas for customers to eat on-site must follow all Stage 1 requirements for restaurants.
- Whenever possible, grocery stores should offer curbside pickup and delivery services.
- Store managers should continue to screen staff for symptoms associated with COVID-19, including temperature checks, when they arrive for their shift.

Stage 2

- Grocery stores and convenience stores should continue to operate while complying with all social distancing and hygiene requirements under Mayor's Order 2020-058.
- Buffets, salad bars and other communal serving areas are permitted, but only if an employee serves the food and serving utensils are cleaned and sanitized every two hours.
- Stores with seating areas for customers to eat on-site must follow all Stage 2 requirements for restaurants.
- Store managers should continue to screen staff for symptoms associated with COVID-19, including temperature checks, when they arrive for their shift.

Farmers Markets & Farms

Stage 1

- Extend farmers market waivers through the rest of the season. Farmers markets should be permitted to apply for a one-time waiver through OP's current process that lasts throughout the market season. Markets that have already received a waiver should automatically have their waiver extended for the rest of the season.
- Expand what vendors can sell/offer at markets, including (1) non-food items; (2) food items prepared on site; (3) allowing customers to select their own produce, as in grocery stores; (4) produce in non-pre-bagged quantities; and (5) non-essential information and education (like nutrition).
- Encourage markets to continue to provide/expand options that minimize customers' time at the market, including pickup, home delivery, pre-bagged items at fixed price points, pre-order options, and clearly viewable menus.
- Farmers markets must continue to implement social distancing measures, including establishing a maximum capacity within larger markets, spacing of six feet between people in queues, spacing of 10 feet between vendor tables, and measures to prevent people from zigzagging between vendors.
- Farmers markets must continue to implement other safety protocols, including requiring non-medical cloth masks for consumers, vendors, and market staff, frequent sanitation of surfaces, implementing non-touch forms of payment wherever possible, and requiring vendors and staff to go home if feeling ill.
- Market operators should continue to screen staff and vendors for symptoms associated with COVID-19, including temperature checks, when they arrive at the market.

Stage 2

- Continue requiring a one-time waiver application from OP. OP will continue to communicate with farmers markets on any changes to requirements and act as an intermediary between farmers markets who want to operate and the enforcement agencies who inspect.
- Market operators can reduce spacing between vendors to six feet to allow more vendors to participate in the market, while still ensuring proper social distancing between vendors.
- Markets must continue to provide/expand options that minimize customers' time at the market, including pickup, home delivery, pre-order options, and clearly viewable menus.
- Market operators can relax social distancing requirements to the appropriate requirements recommendations at the time by DC Health. Given that the requirements for social distancing in public space may change, farmers markets should implement social distancing requirements that match the guidance from DC Health, including the requirement for customers to wear non-medical cloth masks.

- Market operators must maintain designated entrances and exits from the market, capacity limits at the market, and queues to enter the market.
- Market operators are permitted to allow for a two-way flow of customers throughout the market and permitted to remove barriers that prevent customers from cutting across the market.
- Entertainment should not be allowed at the market.
- Market operators are permitted to allow customers to bring pets.
- Vendors are permitted to have their products displayed without a rope, table, or other barrier.
- Market operators are permitted to remove hand sanitizer or hand washing stations, although they should be allowed to include them if desired.
- Market operators should continue to screen staff and vendors for symptoms associated with COVID-19, including temperature checks, when they arrive at the market.

Commercial Kitchens, Caterers, Food Trucks & Manufacturers

DC Health social distancing for all businesses should be followed in Stage 1 and Stage 2.

Stages 1 and 2:

- Shared kitchens shall adhere to strict six-foot social distancing guidelines and operators should be scheduled to ensure they do not violate this policy.
- It is the responsibility of the shared kitchen manager to implement and enforce a pre-screening policy and monitor employee health.
- Managers and operators shall adhere to all cleaning and sanitization practices as outlined in Title 25A of the DCMR Food Code Regulations.
- All operators and anyone entering the facility are required to wear masks or appropriate face coverings.
- Shared kitchen managers shall take the temperature of anyone entering the facility prior to entering the facility. Kitchen managers should be aware of COVID-19 symptoms and regularly monitor personnel throughout their time in the facility.

Food Trucks

Stages 1 and 2:

- Encourage customers to pre-order to minimize the risk of long lines and large gatherings.
- All food contact surfaces must be cleaned and sanitized at least every two hours, and shared areas (for example countertops and payment terminals) between uses. [Cleaning guidelines from the CDC can be found here](#). Cleaning procedures must be developed in advance of opening and shared with employees so that they can be properly trained.
- Screen employees by checking temperatures (or have employees report their temperatures) and assess symptoms of workers with a questionnaire, before entering

the truck. Sick employees should not report to work. Examples of screening questions include:

- Since your last day of work have you had any of these symptoms: cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, new loss of taste/smell, muscle pain, sore throat, fever, chills, repeated shaking with chills, or headache?
- Have you come into contact with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19?
- Are you ill or caring for someone who is ill?
- If yes, in the two weeks before becoming ill have you or the person you care for come into contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19?
- If the answer is YES and a fever is present to any of these screening questions, then employers should implement the procedures recommended by DC Health to protect other employees and customers including restriction from the facility, proper cleaning and sanitization, and informing DC Health and advising employee on where to get medical help.
- If no fever (>100.4°F) or COVID-19 symptoms are present, workers should self-monitor for onset of symptoms during their shift.
- If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, management should notify DC Health immediately at food.safety@dc.gov. Any employees who have come into contact with a person who tested positive for COVID-19 should consult their healthcare provider about when it is safe to return to work.

Emergency Food Assistance

DC Health social distancing for all businesses should be followed in Stage 1 and Stage 2. All emergency food providers should continue to follow DC Health's Recommendations for Essential Food Distribution Providers Re: Coronavirus.

Potential Metrics

Given the impact on food services businesses, the factors weighed to determine when the time is right to move from Stage 1 to Stage 2 will be very important. With that said, the establishment of these metrics are best left to public health experts. When possible, these metrics should be shared with the general public so that businesses can plan their reopening strategies.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS FOR CONSIDERATION

The Committee is comprised of a diverse group of business owners and government representatives. As this is the case, there are some additional consideration where the group was unable to reach a consensus, but still felt it valuable and important to include as considerations as the District plans for reopening.

1. As outlined, Stage 1 includes outdoor on-premise dining with tables six feet apart, but prohibits indoor dining. There are stakeholders who strongly recommend that Stage 1 include, in addition to outdoor dining, indoor dining at 25% capacity for guests. The 25% indoor capacity is in line with Texas' Phase One approach, and allows restaurants to institute operational changes in a gradual way. A great deal will go into reopening as restaurants will have to rework, reconfigure and reimagine their operations. This gradual approach allows restaurants to test what works so they can ultimately identify best practices for their restaurant in a measured way focused on rebuilding.
2. It has also been suggested that specific capacity and required distances between tables should not be required, and instead restaurants should not reopen for on premise dining until restaurants are given the autonomy to institute social distancing within their restaurant in a way that works for their operations and business model and not based on occupancy. This could result in continuation of delivery and pick up only, allowances on temporary relief and sale of alcohol, beer and wine, and on-premise dining not being permitted until a later stage, and allowing the restaurant more freedom to adapt social distancing within their establishment in a way that best fits their space and unique operations.
3. Prioritization of continuity with expert public health guidance on phased definitions: The CDC's Phase One is in line with the current operational status of restaurants in the District, and Phase Two allows for limited on premise dining with social distancing. It is suggested that the District's reopening stages align with this for the sake of continuity. If this were the case, then we are currently at the beginning of Phase One.
4. Consider all recommendations of advocacy groups representing food system workers to ensure that workers are protected and supported during the reopening process. In addition, continue dialogue with advocates on issues around health, wages, and wellness, especially among marginalized groups.

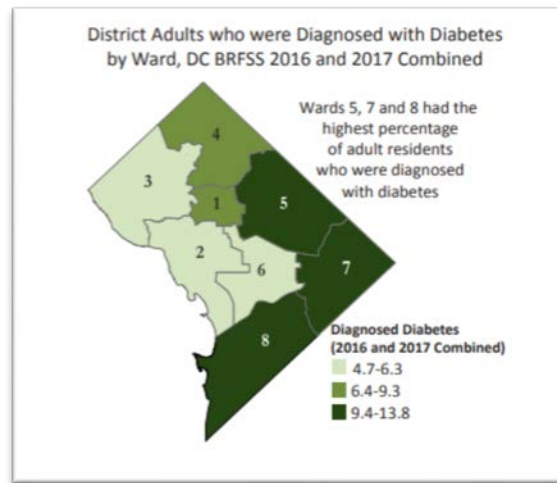
EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS FOR REOPENING

The COVID-19 public health emergency has underscored the severity of the health and social inequities within the District and its food system. Diet-related chronic health conditions such as heart disease and diabetes have left certain populations more vulnerable to serious health consequences and death from the virus. Frontline workers in the food system, including cashiers, line cooks, and food delivery staff, are risking their health to provide essential food services to the District. Food-insecure and low-income households in the District can often not afford home delivery and have had to leave home and congregate at distribution sites to seek out free or affordable food. Lastly, underrepresented entrepreneurs and small businesses have lost access to crucial capital and are more vulnerable to closing and losing these ownership and wealth-generating opportunities. This section considers how the District could address these inequities and build a stronger, more equitable and resilient food system as the District reopens. These considerations are inclusive of the scope of the Restaurant and Food Sellers Committee, and recognize there is a committee specifically tasked with addressing equity.

Addressing Health Inequities

As outlined in DC Health's Health Equity Report (2018), heart disease, diabetes, and other diet-related health conditions disproportionately affect the District's low-income, African-American population and residents living in Wards 5, 7 and 8 (see Figure 4). The lack of healthy food options in these areas of the District has influenced the prevalence of diet-related diseases in these wards and, in turn, contributed to the heightened risk of infection during the public health emergency. Residents of these wards have to travel farther to access healthy food and rely on public transit, which can be time-consuming during normal operations and have been further exasperated during the stay-at-home order. These challenges also contribute to heightened risk of exposure to the virus and exacerbate the risk of illness and death for high-risk residents with diet-related diseases.

Figure 4. District Adults Who Were Diagnosed with Diabetes by Ward



Addressing health inequities through the food system, then, requires the District to tackle disparities in healthy food access among communities with high rates of diet-related diseases and work to create innovative solutions to address barriers to healthy food, including:

- **Protecting/expanding healthy food access in all 8 Wards:** Before the COVID-19 crisis, the District was focused on a multi-pronged strategy to increase healthy food options in neighborhoods with low access to healthy foods. This will be more important than ever both to help businesses in all parts of the city survive and recover and to promote public health and address health inequity in the District. Specifically, the District should prioritize and fast-track the development and opening of grocery stores announced in 2019, including Lidl and Market 7 in Ward 7, and Good Food Market in Ward 8. The District should also target small business assistance to existing food retail businesses in underserved parts of the District that are at a heightened risk of closing as the economy continues to struggle.
- **Improving transportation options for low- food- access neighborhoods:** Access to grocery stores will continue to be a challenge for many vulnerable populations including seniors, and longer travel times on public transit can heighten exposure. In addition to encouraging grocery stores to adopt click and collect and delivery, the District should support and expand transportation programs for low-income residents like the Taxi to Rail and Lyft Grocery pilot program.
- **Prioritizing and protecting funding for federal and local nutrition assistance programs** (including SNAP, WIC, Produce Rx, Produce Plus, Joyful Markets, Senior Farmers Market Incentive Program and WIC Farmers Market Incentive Program). These programs are crucial for low-income residents and must continue through reopening and recovery. DC Health is working closely with retailers and non-profit grantees to streamline and adjust the operation of these programs to minimize safety risks for recipients.

- **Supporting DC Health and DHS in continuing to expand access and flexibility for the federal public benefit programs the agencies administer.** As previously described, DC Health has added new flexibilities for the WIC program, and DHS has been able to expand access to the SNAP program by moving to online applications, implementing online delivery, and promoting click and collect payments.
- **Expanding urban farming in the District** to provide equitable access to fresh food in areas underserved by fresh food retail options. Specifically:
 - **Identifying funding for infrastructure for farmers to expand their operations and meet the needs of vulnerable populations.** Relatively small investments in cold storage, water infrastructure, and greenhouses would greatly increase the amount of fresh produce available year-round to District residents.
 - **Expediting the identification of District Government properties for the Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE)/Department of General Services' (DGS) Urban Land Lease Program.** Under this program, the District provides free leases of government property to farmers. To significantly increase fresh food production in the District, more parcels, particularly in Wards 5, 7, and 8, should quickly be identified and leased to farmers.
 - **Under the leadership of the Urban Agriculture Office within DOEE, the District should create processes that support more farms to open and operate in the District.** Examples include creating an urban agriculture business license category and providing discounts or exemptions for licenses and other fees (including DC Water fees), particularly for farms providing food to vulnerable populations.
- **Prioritizing the Sustainable DC 2.0 Goal of making evidence-based nutrition and cooking education efforts accessible across all populations to help residents make healthier choices (FD2.5).** This public health crisis has underscored the strong connection between health, nutrition, and the immune system. The District should reopen with a strong commitment to providing every child, adult, and senior the comprehensive food and nutrition education they need to develop healthy habits throughout their lifecycle.
 - **The District should partner with local nutrition education organizations to build a digital database of virtual nutrition education courses** focused on eating healthy on a budget and cooking at home with limited supplies. Since in-person nutrition education will likely not resume in Stage 1 or 2, this would enable residents to make healthy choices while staying home.
 - **Protect and expand nutrition education in public schools.** When schools reopen, nutrition education should resume and be expanded to more schools so all children can develop healthy habits that will benefit them through adulthood.

Protecting & Supporting Frontline Workers

Deemed as essential workers, workers at grocery stores, food delivery companies, restaurants providing carry out and delivery, and other food businesses have made sure that residents can access the food they need. In providing this service, these workers have faced great exposure from the general public.

The challenges associated with providing adequate protection to frontline food workers have been evident throughout the public health emergency. Several local media outlets have reported limited personal protective equipment (PPE) among frontline food workers and an increased number of infections at grocery stores. Stores and restaurants have reported difficulty in sourcing enough PPE and sanitation materials to meet the constant cleaning demands. These businesses have also reported some difficulty in enforcing the requirement that customers wear face coverings, per the Mayor's Order 2020-58. For these reasons, frontline food workers are more likely than the general public to be exposed to and infected by the virus.

This increased risk of infection adds to existing challenges faced by many food industry workers. The District's Food Economy Study (2019) found that most frontline food workers are making less than half of the District's median income and face barriers to advancing to higher-paying positions. The District's Make Food Work Strategy (2020) highlighted that low-wage workers in the food system also face environmental barriers such as a lack of transportation, access to healthcare, childcare and eldercare, sick or paid family leave, healthy food, and affordable housing. All of these factors can increase their exposure risk, influence a worker's decision to work while ill, and impact their ability to seek and afford medical care if they are infected.

The following recommendations would help ensure that frontline workers receive the protections and support they need during the reopening process:

- **Ensure affordable or free health insurance for all food system workers.** Food system workers will continue to be at high risk of infection during reopening, and should have access to healthcare in case of illness. The District should explore providing Medicaid or an ACA-linked plan to support food system workers during the pandemic.
- **Strong requirements for PPE, social distancing and hygiene:** As seen in other states that have begun to reopen, some restaurant workers must make the difficult choice between staying home and losing their job or working in unsafe conditions. ReOpen DC should include the strong protections described previously to ensure that workers are able to practice safe social distancing from each other and customers and have adequate access to PPE, hand washing and hand sanitizer resources, and other protective measures. Training on how to use PPE should be available in employees' first language and employees should not be required to pay for their own PPE.

- **Implement [Make Food Work: A Strategy to Strengthen the DC Food Workforce](#)** (published in January 2020 by the DC Workforce Investment Council, Department of Employment Services, and Office of Planning), including:
 - **Providing support to food industry workers to access affordable childcare, reliable transportation, and mental health services.** The District, in partnership with philanthropic and private partners, should prioritize providing these social supports to frontline workers facing common barriers.
 - **On-time implementation of the Universal Paid Family Leave Program and minimum wage increases. Supporting the recovery of local businesses must not come at the expense of vulnerable workers.** The District’s Paid Family Leave Program, scheduled to come online in July 2020, will cover most workers in the food workforce and provide important time to care for sick family members, new family members, or one’s own illness. This law should be implemented on-time, and the District should consider expanding it to allow new employees to take 14 4 -days off when ill (rather than having it accrue). Similarly, the District’s minimum wage laws provide important protections for workers recovering from months out of work, and should not be rolled back or delayed. The District, in partnership with local businesses, should proactively ensure that workers are informed about the paid leave program and how it can be used through the reopening and recovery periods.
- **Prioritize contact tracing for food industry workers when a staff member tests positive for COVID-19.** Ensure that fellow employees are notified promptly, provided testing, and provided paid leave while in quarantine when deemed necessary by a healthcare provider.

Support for Underrepresented Entrepreneurs & Business Owners

Many low-income small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs in the District have viable business plans for expanding healthy food options in their neighborhoods, but need technical assistance, catalytic grants to get investment-ready, and loans to realize their business goals.

Underrepresented food entrepreneurs, including racial minorities and women, face increased barriers to accessing traditional capital and investors, and lack the generational wealth that could help them take on greater business risk or quickly pivot one’s business model. In 2018, the DC Fiscal Policy Institute found that the median white household wealth was 81 times that of black households and 22 times that of Latin households, meaning that business owners of color had significantly lower financial means to support their businesses. In 2019, the DC Policy Center found that only 8% of businesses with five or more employees in the District were owned by women, which was among the lowest share by jurisdictions in the DMV.

Providing wealth-generating ownership opportunities to African-American, Latinx, and female business owners provide pathways to the middle class, which in turn improves health. Many of these businesses will also give back to their communities by providing healthy food and high-quality career opportunities.

As the District reopens, the following recommendations will help create wealth and ownership opportunities for District residents:

- **Develop best practices for institutional food procurement in the District.** Key District agencies, private institutions, and other partners involved in large food procurement contracts should convene and develop strategies to use food procurement to promote health, sustainability, and equity. This could include increasing nutrition standards and adjusting contracts to enable small businesses to apply.
- **Support the development of food incubators across the District, especially in areas currently underserved** (based on 2019 DC Food Economy Study). Food business incubators provide food entrepreneurs with commercial kitchen space, business development assistance, and other resources. Incubators particularly help food businesses that are developing new perishable prepared food products. There are currently no food business incubators in Wards 7 or 8.
- **Expedite and amend District Government processes to increase affordable commercial kitchen space, cold storage, and retail opportunities** for caterers and other District food entrepreneurs (see Legislative, Regulatory & Policy Recommendations section).

PREPARATION & RESOURCES NEEDED FOR REOPENING

The reopening of industries requires a great deal of preparation as operations will be required to change to meet strict health and public safety standards. It is critical that restaurants, bars, taverns, and food retailers have access to resources needed to safely reopen. Resources range from information and guidance to PPE and sanitation products to Plexiglas barriers.

Supporting Independent Operators

In the District, 96% percent of full- service restaurants are independently operated. These independent operators are small businesses and do not have access to the same level of resources that large restaurant chains are able to tap into. Addressing this inequity of businesses is critical in ensuring that the landscape of the restaurant industry does not completely change as a result of COVID-19. The restaurant industry is heavily dependent on cash flow in order to maintain operations, however restaurants are operating with a greater than 70%+ percent decrease in sales, which means they are currently struggling and will struggle to recover. Independent restaurants typically do not have solid cash reserves and are

struggling to pay rent, vendor invoices, utilities, and insurance payments for furloughed employees. Many small restaurants also struggle to apply for available grants or loans, because they do not have the appropriate guidance and support to apply in a timely manner.

A phased-in reopening, while critical for public safety, disproportionately impacts small restaurants that are not equipped to shift layout and operations. Some required changes also impose additional costs for the business such as requiring PPE, hand sanitizer, potential use of Plexiglas and increased use of disinfectants. While completely necessary, acknowledging the disproportional impact this will have on independent operators is important when examining ways to support an industry that has been devastated.

Testing, PPE & Other Supply Recommendations

As restaurants and food sellers reopen there will be required operational changes resulting in an increased need for materials such as face masks, gloves, Plexiglas barriers, hand sanitizer, and disinfectants. Some businesses might also consider pivoting toward single use products to limit the handling of items touched by patrons. There is a worldwide shortage of PPE and certain disinfectant materials, so ensuring operators have proper access to these required products is critical.

It is important to note that all requirements come with an additional expense to the business and in some cases the employee. In order to reopen, additional funds must be spent on these new items that are not typical to a restaurant or food seller's operations. Identifying a way for the government to provide assistance so small businesses can successfully meet the strict requirements of reopening should be explored.

- Requirement: All employees must wear a face covering
Resource: Face masks and gloves
- Requirement: Provide hand sanitizer to customers upon entry
Resource: Hand sanitizer
- Requirement: Disinfect high touch areas regularly, and disinfect tables and chairs between customers
Resource: Increased volume of disinfectant

Transportation Recommendations

Employees of the service industry frequently take public transportation. Employers cannot require employees to not take public transportation or to exhibit specific behavior while on public transportation. To mitigate the spread of germs on public transportation, the Mayor's Order recommending public transportation users wear a face mask should remain in effect.

Employees should also not commute to work in their uniform and instead change into their uniform once they arrive at work. A clean mask should be used at the beginning of each work shift, and the same mask for transportation should not be used for work.

Legislative, Regulatory & Policy Recommendations

We recommend extending the Mayor's Public Health Emergency.

Extending the Public Health Emergency will guarantee important protections are still in place as the stages of reopening are navigated. The protections put in place by the Emergency are critical for the survival of small businesses. Important provisions include eviction protection, rent repayment plans, and third-party delivery fee caps.

It is also critical for restaurants to be permitted to continue takeout and delivery of alcoholic beverages throughout all stages of reopening. As takeout and delivery are still highly encouraged through the stages, this is an important opportunity to make up for lost revenue.

We recommend making it easier for food service establishments to expand their outdoor operations.

District agencies can accommodate the Stage 1 restriction of outdoor dining only with new emergency laws, rules and policies. For example, an accelerated process could be created to identify and approve new public spaces for outdoor restaurant activity and expand existing areas. ABRA could be given emergency authority to allow alcohol license holders to register for the use and expansion of new summer garden and sidewalk café outdoor seating areas.

The District should also simplify and streamline the outdoor seating approval process by creating a single application intake form among the various agencies with oversight authority (e.g., ABRA, DCRA, DDOT, FEMS, OTR and DOH) to make it easier for food establishments to seat customers outside in traditional and more [cutting edge configurations](#).

Finally, the District should expand the open streets program to allow establishments to expand outdoor seating into public and private alleyways, streets and squares. Designated streets and blocks should be closed on a routine schedule (likely on weekends only) to allow neighborhood restaurants and food sellers to expand their operations. The committee received community support for this concept, including a letter from Advisory Neighborhood Commission 1A (see appendix). As part of this process, a system for gathering community input and approval would be required, along with adherence to specified sanitation, noise and social distancing requirements. Food trucks, which are currently not allowed in residential areas, should be

incorporated into these new areas and, where space permits, be allowed to provide seating for customers.

DDOT can explore the opportunity to convert parking lanes to sidewalks, so restaurants can utilize a greater portion of sidewalks for seating, with pedestrian traffic moved to the parking lane.

We recommend authorizing businesses to conduct some or all of their operations at secondary locations.

In order to encourage economic activity and minimize the chance of infection, businesses should be permitted to expand their operations to new locations where appropriate (i.e., “pop ups”).

Emergency legislation, rulemakings and policies could be enacted to temporarily reduce barriers to changing or adding new locations to a business. Furthermore, license requirements could be waived so long as the business has an existing license authorizing the activity, passes an appropriate inspection, and has appropriate insurance.

For example, ABRA could be permitted to authorize licensees to engage in carry-out, curbside pickup, and delivery at other locations between 7 a.m. to midnight with appropriate registration. In that vein, DDOT could also approve new locations in public space authorizing carryout, curbside pickup, and delivery in public areas. Food trucks and commercial kitchens could be permitted to operate in all or some residential zones and provide groceries and other items. Finally, farmers markets could be encouraged to locate in underserved locations, such as Wards 7 and 8.

We recommend food service establishments be permitted to change the type of license they hold within the food service category.

In order to accommodate business changes necessitated by the spread of COVID-19, businesses should be excused from obtaining a new business license so long as the business remains within the food service class of licenses, has roughly equal or less restrictive requirements*, and can pass an inspection. For example, this would allow a restaurant to quickly open a grocery store, allow a deli to convert into a bakery, and other types of changes that may allow businesses to adapt to changing circumstances.

** Businesses with food service licenses in Group 1 would be excused from needing to obtain new licenses for other businesses within Group 1. Businesses in Group 2 would be excused from needing to obtain new licenses for other businesses within Group 2 and Group 1.*

Group 1

- Bakery
- Candy Manufacturer
- Caterer
- Delicatessen
- Food Products
- Grocery Store
- Marine Food Product (Retail)
- Mobile Delicatessen

Group 2

- Ice Cream Manufacturer
- Marine Food Product (Wholesale)
- Restaurant

To lessen the regulatory burden on food service establishments, the Committee also recommends that the District explore allowing businesses to extend their hours of service.

We recommend pursuing federal funding to support the food service industry and incentivizing food donations.

The District should apply for federal FEMA funding to support restaurants providing meals to vulnerable residents. During this public health emergency, many restaurants have stepped up to provide meals to residents facing food insecurity. [California](#) has successfully applied for FEMA to reimburse for the costs of this model, and other U.S. cities like New York City, New Orleans, and Denver have piloted similar models. The District should similarly apply for this funding to support local restaurants addressing the increased food insecurity rates in the District.

The District should also leverage federal workforce dollars to provide free or low-cost ServSafe Food Manager Courses and exams to ensure that businesses are operating with advanced food safety expertise and help improve workers' access to these industry-recognized certificates that could help them advance in their careers.

The District should also consider a tax incentive for restaurants and other food businesses to donate safe, wholesome food; : The [Save Good Food Amendment Act of 2018](#) included such a tax incentive, and if implemented would support restaurants and other food businesses in donating excess food to those most in need.

We recommend expediting and amending District Government processes to increase affordable commercial kitchen space, cold storage, and retail opportunities for caterers and other District food entrepreneurs.

The District should encourage and streamline processes for commercial kitchen subleasing, where a business with excess kitchen capacity can sublease to entrepreneurs without access to kitchen space. The District should support and expand the Department of Small and Local Business Development's (DSLBD) efforts to match entrepreneurs with excess commercial kitchen space.

The District should also relax zoning restrictions on using commercial kitchen spaces in residential neighborhoods. This would allow small food businesses, including caterers, manufacturers, and farmers, to use school and church kitchens in residential areas.

Lastly, the District should make unused public facilities available to emergency food providers that need expanded capacity to serve vulnerable populations. This includes schools closed for the summer, Events DC properties, UDC kitchen facilities, Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) recreation centers, and other public facilities. Many of these organizations have asked for this support during the public health crisis, and this need for additional space will continue during the reopening process as the District continues to experience record rates of food insecurity.

We recommend the DC Office of Planning conduct a food insecurity analysis to understand current and forecasted food insecurity rates in the District over the next 18 months.

Before the COVID-19 crisis, the District had a food insecurity rate of 10.6% . The District has not yet analyzed how the public health emergency has affected food insecurity in the District, but based on national figures, it is likely that food insecurity has at least doubled during the public health emergency and will continue to stay at an increased level over the next few years because of the subsequent economic impact. To respond to this increased need, the public benefits and emergency food assistance programs in the District will have to provide an unprecedented level of support, even as donations and volunteers have declined. This analysis should include recommendations for meeting this increased need by implementing best practices and supporting emergency food providers.

Workforce Changes & Needs

It is unlikely restaurants and food sellers will be able to maintain employee numbers from before the public health emergency. Knowing this, it will be important to provide proper guidance for employees of new protocols regarding sanitation, hand washing, interacting with guests, and common areas such as break rooms.

All employees will be subject to a health screening before each shift to ensure they are healthy and have not been exposed to COVID-19.

COMMUNICATION & SIGNAGE

When the Mayor communicates about the reopening of food service establishments, it will be important to emphasize that this is a community effort. While there are a range of requirements and guidance provided for businesses, customer behavior will also be key. If someone is sick, for example, they shouldn't be dining at a restaurant. If a bar has reached capacity, people shouldn't crowd the entrance while awaiting entry. It's also likely that not everything will run perfectly smoothly at first. Adjusting to new ways of doing things will take a bit of time, and will go a lot smoother if everyone involved approaches things with a healthy dose of patience and kindness.

To help give customers confidence that the food establishments they're visiting are following requirements and guidelines to keep them safe, we suggest the creation of a sign that businesses can display, showcasing their commitment to health safety. The sign would include a brief "pledge" that signifies the business' adherence to health safety and how customers entering the establishment agree to behave. Suggested language for the pledge is included below, and a sample design is included in the appendix.

Restaurant Pledge

To help ensure everyone's safety as we welcome you back for on-premise dining, it is important that we make the following promise and pledge to each other.

Our promise to you:

- Our establishment is committed to following and adhering to all health and operating measures outlined by Mayor Bowser, DC Health, and recommended guidance from the FDA and ServSafe.
- We will continue to lead in safe sanitation practices.
- We will monitor the health of all staff.
- We will maintain strict physical distancing guidelines for all seating.
- We will make hand sanitizer or hand washing stations available at all entrances.
- We will clean and sanitize common areas and all surfaces regularly.
- We will clean and sanitize all tables and chairs after every use.

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- We will sanitize place settings, utensils, menus, and condiments after every use or we will use single-use materials.

We ask that if you dine at our restaurant, you also make a promise to us that is rooted in protecting the health of our employees and guests. If you are unable to adhere to the below promise, we will happily provide your order as takeout.

Your promise to us:

- You will keep everyone safe by staying home if you have recently been exposed to COVID-19, have symptoms of COVID-19 (including a fever, aches, cough, shortness of breath, headache, chills or loss of taste/smell), or are sick in any way.
- You will limit your party size to six or fewer guests who are all from the same household.
- You will practice social distancing in all waiting areas and while seated.
- You will utilize hand sanitizer or a hand washing station upon entry.
- You will consider contactless delivery options, if you have underlying health conditions or are otherwise concerned about contracting COVID-19.

RESEARCH, RESOURCES & REFERENCES

RESEARCH & RESOURCES

[Reopening Guidance: A Guide for the Restaurant Industry, National Restaurant Association & ServSafe](#)

[Public Health Principles for a Phased Reopening During COVID-19: Guidance for Governors, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health](#)

[Interim Guidance for Restaurants and Bars, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

[Best Practices for Retail Food Stores, Restaurants, and Food Pick-Up/Delivery Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic, U.S. Food & Drug Administration](#)

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BEST PRACTICES FOR RESTAURANTS & BARS

- Ensure adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene practices for both employees and customers including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol (perhaps on every table, if supplies allow), and tissues. Post signs on how to stop the spread of COVID-19, properly wash hands, promote everyday protective measures, and properly wear a face covering.
- Train staff on proper cleaning procedures to ensure safe and correct application of disinfectants.
- Train employees on how to communicate with customers in non-confrontational ways to ensure social distancing practices are being followed, and how to engage District agencies for enforcement support. Establishments needing help with social distancing enforcement should call 311.
- Make available individual disinfectant wipes in bathrooms, and post reminders not to flush these wipes but to dispose of them in the trash.
- Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and to ensure that customers remain at least six feet apart in lines or ask customers to wait in their cars or away from the establishment while waiting to pick up food.
- Post signs to inform customers of food pickup protocols.
- Consider installing physical barriers, such as sneeze guards and partitions at cash registers, or other food pickup areas where maintaining physical distance of six feet is difficult.
- Where possible, workstations should be staggered so employees avoid standing directly opposite one another or next to each other. Increase the frequency of surface cleaning and sanitizing.
- Rotate or stagger shifts to limit the number of employees in the workplace at the same time.
- Ask customers to wait in their cars or away from the establishment while waiting to be seated. If possible, use phone app technology to alert patrons when their table is ready to avoid touching and use of “buzzers.”
- Consider options for dine-in customers to order ahead of time to limit the amount of time spent in the establishment.
- Unnecessary tableside services should be eliminated (opening wine bottles, making guacamole, etc.).
- Touchless transactions and prepayments are highly encouraged.
- Curbside pickup and delivery options are encouraged whenever possible.
- Display promise from restaurant and promise from the customer. Detailing what additional safety precautions the business is taking and requesting the diner takes certain outlined precautions.

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- Consider assigning vulnerable workers duties that minimize their contact with customers and other employees (e.g., managing inventory rather than working as a cashier, managing administrative needs through telework).
- Be prepared to close for a few days if there is a case of COVID-19 in the establishment.
- Ensure full understanding of different protocol scenarios if someone tests positive in your restaurant.
- With larger staffs, use communication boards to or digital messaging to convey pre-shift meeting information.
- Take steps to ensure that all water systems and features (for example, drinking fountains, decorative fountains) are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown to minimize the risk of Legionnaires' disease and other diseases associated with water.
- The following are recommended to improve indoor air quality:
 - i. Replace filters in air handling equipment.
 - ii. Filters in central HVAC systems should be MERV-13 (minimum).
 - iii. Open the air dampers in the system each morning to flush fresh air through the space.
 - iv. The relative humidity of the space should be maintained between 40-60%.
 - v. Perform air duct cleaning.
 - vi. Keep bathroom exhaust fans on during operating hours.
 - vii. Open windows where possible to increase fresh air intake.
 - viii. Keep window coverings (blinds, shades, etc.) open to maximize the penetration of direct sunlight into the space.

STATE REOPENING PLANS FOR RESTAURANTS

State	Re-Opening Status in early May	Status of Restaurants
Alabama	Partially Opened	Restaurants may resume dine-in service with limited capacity in Stage 1. ²
Alaska	Partially Opened	For Phase 2, restaurants must limit indoor capacity to 50% of maximum occupancy. Outdoor groups limited to household members only and no more than 20 tables (ten feet apart). ³
Arizona	Partially Opened	For Phase 1, restaurants can operate dine-in service with reduced capacity, social distancing, and limiting parties to no more than 10 people. ⁴
Arkansas	Partially Opened	For Phase 1, restaurants may have dine-in service but must limit customers to one-third of total capacity. ⁵
California	Partially Opened	Delivery and carry-out service only until later in Stage 2. ⁶
Colorado	Partially Opened	Delivery and carryout service only. No information on when dine-in service

² See: <https://governor.alabama.gov/newsroom/2020/05/governor-ivey-issues-amended-safer-at-home-order/>.

³ See: <https://covid19.alaska.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/05072020-Phase-II-016-Attachment-F-Restaurants-Dine-In-Services.pdf>.

⁴ See: <https://secureservercdn.net/50.62.89.138/520.7f7.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Welcome-Back-to-the-Table-Reopening-Guidance-Final-5.4.2020.pdf>.

⁵ See: <https://governor.arkansas.gov/news-media/press-releases/limited-dine-in-restaurant-service-may-resume-may-11-governor-announces>.

⁶ See: <https://covid19.ca.gov/roadmap/>.

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		may resume.
Connecticut	Closed	Delivery and carry-out service only. Outdoor dining will be allowed starting May 20 th . ⁷
Delaware	Partially Opened	Delivery and carry-out service only. No information on when dine-in service may resume.
Florida	Partially Opened	For Phase 1, restaurants may offer outdoor seating and indoor service at 25% capacity. ⁸
Georgia	Partially Opened	Indoor dining service allowed with no more than 10 patrons per 500 square feet of public space. ⁹
Hawaii	Partially Opened	Delivery and carry-out service only during Phase 1. ¹⁰
Idaho	Partially Opened	Delivery and carry-out service only during Phase 1. ¹¹
Illinois	Partially Opened	Restaurants and bars can resume dine-in service in Phase 4. ¹²
Indiana	Partially Opened	Dine in service allowed at 50% capacity

⁷ See: <https://portal.ct.gov/Office-of-the-Governor/News/Press-Releases/2020/04-2020/Governor-Lamont-Coronavirus-Update-April-30>.

⁸ See: https://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/covid19/Safe%20Smart%20Step_Templat4.29%20FINAL.pdf.

⁹ See: <https://gov.georgia.gov/executive-action/executive-orders/2020-executive-orders>.

¹⁰ See: <https://health.hawaii.gov/news/corona-virus/hawaii-covid-19-daily-news-digest-may-5-2020/>.

¹¹ See: <https://rebound.idaho.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/opening-up-guidelines.pdf>.

¹² See: <https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/sfc/servlet.shepherd/document/download/069t000000BadS0AAJ?operationContext=S1>.

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		in Phase 2. No bar seating. ¹³
Kansas	Partially Opened	Dine-in service allowed with social distancing requirements in place in Phase 1. ¹⁴
Kentucky	Partially Opened	Restaurants may offer dine-in service at 33% capacity beginning May 22 nd , in addition to outdoor seating. ¹⁵
Louisiana	Partially Opened	Restaurants can currently allow patrons to sit in outdoor areas with no table service. No information on Phase 1. ¹⁶
Maine	Partially Opened	Restaurants can operate dine-in services with limited capacity in Stage 2. ¹⁷
Maryland	Partially Opened	Restaurants can operate dine-in services in Phase 2. ¹⁸
Michigan	Closed	Restaurants will not be able to do offer dine-in service until Phase 5. ¹⁹
Minnesota	Partially Opened	Delivery and carry-out service only. No information on when dine-in service may resume.

¹³ See: <https://www.backontrack.in.gov/2362.htm>.

¹⁴ See: <https://covid.ks.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Reopen-Kansas-Framework-043020.2.pdf>.

¹⁵ See: <https://govstatus.egov.com/ky-healthy-at-work>.

¹⁶ See: <https://gov.louisiana.gov/home-order-extended-may15/>.

¹⁷ See: <https://www.maine.gov/governor/mills/news/governor-mills-presents-safe-gradual-plan-restart-maines-economy-2020-04-28>.

¹⁸ See: https://governor.maryland.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/MD_Strong.pdf.

¹⁹ See: https://www.michigan.gov/documents/whitmer/MI_SAFE_START_PLAN_689875_7.pdf.

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Mississippi	Partially Opened	Restaurants can currently provide dine-in services at 50% capacity (Phase 2). ²⁰
Missouri	Partially Opened	Dine-in service currently allowed with social distancing measures in place. ²¹
Montana	Partially Opened	Dine-in service allowed at 50% capacity in Phase 1. ²²
Nebraska	Partially Opened	Dine-in service allowed at 50% capacity. ²³
Nevada	Partially Opened	Dine-in service allowed at up to 50% capacity excluding bar seating. ²⁴
New Hampshire	Partially Opened	Outdoor seating only for Phase 1. ²⁵
New Mexico	Partially Opened	Delivery and carryout service only. No information on when dine-in service may resume.
New York	Closed	Restaurants will not be able to do offer dine-in service until Phase 3. ²⁶
North Carolina	Partially Opened	Delivery and carry-out service only

²⁰ See: <https://www.sos.ms.gov/content/executiveorders/ExecutiveOrders/1478.pdf>.

²¹ See: <https://health.mo.gov/living/healthcondiseases/communicable/novel-coronavirus/pdf/economic-reopening.pdf>.

²² See: <https://covid19.mt.gov/Portals/223/Documents/04-22-20%20Directive%20and%20Appx%20-%20Reopening%20Phase%20One.pdf?ver=2020-04-22-124954-977>.

²³ See: <https://governor.nebraska.gov/press/gov-ricketts-announces-upcoming-changes-directed-health-measures-deploys-additional-resources>.

²⁴ See: <https://nvhealthresponse.nv.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Declaration-of-Emergency-Directive-018.Phase-1-Reopening.5-7-20-1.pdf>.

²⁵ See: <https://www.governor.nh.gov/news-media/stay-at-home/documents/20200501-restaurants.pdf>.

²⁶ See: <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2020/05/when-will-new-york-reopen-phases-and-full-plan-explained.html>.

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		during Phase 1. ²⁷
Ohio	Partially Opened	Delivery and carry-out service only. Outdoor dining will be allowed starting May 21 st . ²⁸
Oklahoma	Partially Opened	Limited capacity dine-in service allowed under current phase. ²⁹
Pennsylvania	Partially Opened	Restaurants will not be able to do offer dine-in service until Phase 3. ³⁰
Rhode Island	Partially Opened	Outdoor seating will be allowed at some point in Phase 1. ³¹
South Carolina	Partially Opened	Outdoor dining permitted currently. ³²
Tennessee	Partially Opened	Dine-in service allowed at 50% capacity. ³³
Texas	Partially Opened	Dine-in service allowed at 25% capacity. ³⁴
Utah	Partially Opened	Dine-in service allowed with restricted capacity in Phase 2. ³⁵

²⁷ See: <https://files.nc.gov/governor/documents/files/EO138-Phase-1.pdf>.

²⁸ See: <https://governor.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/governor/media/news-and-media/covid19-update-may-7-2020>.

²⁹ See: <https://www.okcommerce.gov/wp-content/uploads/Full-Service-and-Quick-Service-Restaurant-Guidance.pdf>.

³⁰ See: <https://www.governor.pa.gov/process-to-reopen-pennsylvania/>.

³¹ See: https://www.reopeningri.com/resource_pdfs/REOPENINGRI_Phase-I_Testing_the_Water-05.04.20.pdf.

³² See: <https://governor.sc.gov/news/2020-05/gov-henry-mcmaster-lift-work-or-home-order-may-4th>.

³³ See: <https://www.tn.gov/governor/covid-19/economic-recovery/restaurant-guidelines.html>.

³⁴ See: <https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-issues-executive-order-to-expand-openings-of-certain-businesses-and-activities>.

³⁵ See: <https://coronavirus-download.utah.gov/Health/Phased%20Health%20Guidelines%20V4.0.1.pdf>.

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Vermont	Partially Opened	Delivery and carryout service only. No information on when dine-in service may resume.
Washington	Partially Opened	Dine-in service allowed at 50% capacity at Phase 2. ³⁶
West Virginia	Partially Opened	Outdoor service currently permitted. ³⁷
Wisconsin	Partially Opened	Dine-in service allowed in Phase 1 with social distancing practices. ³⁸

³⁶ See: <https://coronavirus.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2020-05/PhasedReopeningChart.pdf>.

³⁷ See: <https://twitter.com/WVGovernor/status/1255905277993455616/photo/1>.

³⁸ See:
https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/WIGOV/2020/04/20/file_attachments/1431305/Badger%20Bounce%20Back%20PlanFINAL.pdf.