



Update on the Department on Disability Services Operating Status during COVID-19 Emergency

Phase Two: Developmental Disabilities Administration

Our Operating Status

Mayor Muriel Bowser ordered [Phase Two](#) to begin on June 22, 2020.

- The DDS building remains open and most DDS employees are teleworking.
- Service Coordinators provide virtual services to people.
- DDS carries out virtual quality monitoring.

Who Must Take Universal Safeguards?

Provider staff, approved visitors and all people while in public or engaged in group activities. You must:

- Wear a cloth face covering or face mask, avoid touching your face, and frequently wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or by using an alcohol-based hand rub (ABHR) with at least 60% alcohol.
- Provider staff should follow DC Health guidance and Mayor's Order 2020-063, regarding the use of PPE.
- Maintain physical distancing of at least 6 feet from other people in public.
- Stay home when sick.
- Regularly disinfect surfaces and objects in home, workplace and car.

DDA Providers Take “Universal Safeguards for Employers and Venues” and follow requirements and guidance from DC Health and DDS. See coronavirus.dc.gov/phasetwo.

Am I At “Higher Risk” Of Severe Illness From COVID-19?

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) advises, based on what we know now, those at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 are people:

- Aged 65 years and older.
- Live in an ICF or residential habilitation placement.
- With underlying medical conditions such as chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma; serious heart conditions, or immunocompromised systems.
- With severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher).
- With diabetes; chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis; or liver disease.

Those at higher risk must be vigilant about taking all necessary precautions to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 and should take good care of themselves and be in touch with their primary care physician for their underlying health condition.

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How Does Phase Two Impact People Supported By DDA?

[Mayor's Order 2020-063](#) regarding protocols for all DDA residences and facilities remains in place.

- DDA providers will help people connect virtually with family or friends.
- People may have visitors to Supported Living placements. However, visits conducted outside are still preferred as this reduces the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Also, the number of visitors must be limited to ensure there is appropriate social distancing when visits occur; and for people who live in shared living a designated space within the home should be identified for visitation,
- People in ICFs and residential habilitation placements should schedule visits to occur outside the home while maintaining social distance and wearing a face covering. Invite a family member or friend on a walk in the community or visit with them on the deck or in the yard.
- Non-essential visitors to ICFs and residential habilitation placements should be limited but may be allowed if this is a safer alternative than a community outing. For example, providers may consider whether some non-essential services could be delivered more safely by having a professional visit the placement rather than having a person go into the community (e.g., barber or hairstylist).
- DDS Service Coordination and Quality staff will not be visiting placements in person During Phase Two.
- Consult with your health care provider about whether appointments can be done via telehealth or if they require in-person evaluation or treatment.
- Transportation provider MTM is open and taking precautions to protect people.
- Now that things are opening up in the community, people may go out, using Universal Safeguards. However, people at higher risk should consider remaining at home except for engaging in essential activities.
- DDA providers educate people on Universal Safeguards and supply personal protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies.

DDA Facility-Based Day Programs: May open, with the restriction that there can only be 10 people per room, including people supported and staff, not to exceed 5 people per 1000 square feet. Universal Safeguards are required. All staff and participants in day programs should be screened each day consistent with the screening requirements for residential placements in Mayor's Order 2020-063.

Can I Go Out Into the Community?

- People supported by DDA should work with their support team to complete the Community Participation Assessment and Questionnaire, leading to a plan that addresses the benefits and risks, and develops strategies for engaging safely in community activities. All people should wear a cloth face covering and continue to practice all other universal safeguards, but for people at

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higher risk, the team needs to ensure that all risks are considered and steps are taken to mitigate those risks when engaging in any community outing.

What's Open?

Most places limit the number of people and use Universal Safeguards.

- Groceries, pharmacies, non-essential retail stores. Still some curbside and delivery.
- Barbershops and hair salons by appointment with universal safeguards.
- Parks, and some playgrounds with safeguards.
- Some libraries reopen with expanded services and limits on the number of people.
- Restaurants. Outdoors plus indoor spaces with safeguards, limited number of people.
- Museums and exhibits with limited number of people and physical distancing.
- Entertainment, arena, theatres with up to 50 people with social distancing (waiver required).
- Regional travel is discouraged. Local shared transit is open.

What's Still Closed?

Bars and nightclubs. Pools (for free swim). However, pools will be open for lessons and lane swimming. Consult dpr.dc.gov for information about pools and availability of swim classes or lane swimming.

Can I Go Back to Work?

Generally, if you are teleworking, continue that if possible. Is your job site open? If so, find out:

- Does the employer use Universal Safeguards and supply PPE and alcohol based hand rub?
- Could you walk there or use transportation that protects your health and safety?

If you are at higher risk, you should consider not returning to work at a job site until Phase Four when a vaccine or cure becomes widely available.

- A new Community Participation Assessment and Questionnaire will guide you and your support team to answer this and other questions below about activities.
- A Community Participation Planning Meeting will be held with you to finalize your plan.

Can I Go To My Gym?

- If you live in an ICF or a Residential Habilitation home or at higher risk, you should continue to exercise in our community, practice safe distancing, or use virtual options available from D.C. Parks and Recreation or Special Olympics.

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- Check with your gym, which must limit the number of people and use planned safeguards.

Can I Go To Medical Appointments?

Yes. Virtual or in-person medical appointments are available. Check with your doctor and see the guidance in coronavirus.dc.gov/phasetwo. If you are sick, please be sure to wear a face-covering before going to the doctor to minimize the risk of transmission of COVID-19 or other respiratory pathogens.

Can I Attend A Worship Service?

- Check with your place of worship whether they will begin having services in Phase Two.
- If you are at higher risk, you should consider continuing to participate in virtual worship services.

Who Do I Contact If I Have Questions or Concerns?

- If you receive DDA supports, contact your Service Coordinator, or their supervisor.
- You can contact the DDS Customer Service Line at (202) 442-8686.
- If you disagree with the team's decisions in your Community Participation Planning Meeting, consult your provider or service coordinator about how to file a complaint via the provider or DDS complaint system.
- DDS customer service (202-442-8686) can provide the support of a peer advocate to assist in the complaint process.
- Quality Trust for Individuals with Disabilities (202-448-1450) or Disability Rights DC (202-547-4747) can also provide support and advocacy regarding any complaints.
- DDS Community and Provider Forum. Held on Fridays. Contact Charlisa Payne, Executive Assistant, at charlisa.payne2@dc.gov or (202) 442-8411 for details.

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