

COVID-19 Community Innovation Stories, Week of July 20, 2020

In the face of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the country is seeing innovations in communities that highlight the best of human ingenuity. We highlight these stories to show how many are helping those around them, and prompt everyone to think about how they can help others.¹

Airport Precautions

Testing Airport Employees

In New York, John F. Kennedy International Airport has introduced an on-site COVID-19 testing center to screen up to 500 airport employees, including airline employees, contractors, concessionaires, and Transportation Security Administration (TSA) agents, per day in the arrivals hall. This newly constructed site features nine separate testing rooms, and employees can receive both COVID-19 and antibody testing, regardless of their health insurance plan.²

Testing Travelers

In Germany, Frankfurt Airport has opened an on-site COVID-19 testing facility operated by a German biotechnology company. There are eight booths the size of changing rooms located before security at the main terminal, where travelers can receive swab tests for polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests. The samples are then sent to a shipping container laboratory in a nearby parking lot, and the lab returns the results in 6-8 hours. Passengers can pay an additional fee for expedited results within three hours and a health certificate verifying a negative COVID-19 result. Up to 300 samples can be tested within an hour.³

University Dining

Auxiliary services at Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina, will introduce a pop-up restaurant in front of the school's main library and two grab-and-go meal stations for students, staff, and faculty who are unable to visit the

¹ This document contains references and links to non-federal resources and organizations. This information is meant solely for informational purposes and is not intended to be an endorsement of any non-federal entity by FEMA, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, or the U.S. government.

² 2020 Port Authority NY NJ, XpresCheck Pilot Program for Airport Employees Opens at JFK International Airport's Terminal 4; The First In-Airport COVID-19 Testing Location in the U.S., <https://www.panynj.gov/port-authority/en/press-room/press-release-archives/2020-press-releases/xprescheck-pilot-program-for-airport-employees-opens-at-jfk-inte.html>

³ 2020 Fast Company, Airports can be a petri dish for COVID-19. Now you can get a test on-site, <https://www.fastcompany.com/90523613/airports-can-be-a-petri-dish-for-covid-19-now-you-can-get-a-test-on-site>



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main dining hall due to personal health concerns. Students will receive insulated reusable grocery bags to carry their to-go meals, and the school is considering adding picnic tables to expand outdoor dining seating on campus. In addition, George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, plans to expand the number of delivery robots it currently uses to deliver meals and snacks to students who order from a phone application. This will reduce the level of traffic inside the campus food court.⁴

Heat Wave Precautions

Spraygrounds

In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to accommodate the summer closure of public swimming pools and beaches due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the city is opening 91 spraygrounds, 10 of which will be monitored by social distancing ambassadors to encourage residents to observe the 50-person limit at spraygrounds.⁵ The city is also distributing "cooling kits" that consist of umbrellas, tents, cooling rags, and misting fans.⁶ Distribution is prioritized for more severely impacted neighborhoods, as indicated by a heat vulnerability map.⁷

Cooling Centers

In Trenton, Michigan, the lobby of an ice rink that was closed for recreational activities has been designated as a cooling station for its ability to receive large numbers of people while maintaining enough space for social distancing.⁸

Evacuation and Shelter Precautions

Senior Safety During Evacuations

To prepare for potential hurricane evacuations in New Orleans, Louisiana, city officials have designated five of 17 total evacuation pickup locations, called "evacuspots," across the city for seniors only. Evacuees will be given masks before boarding evacuation buses.⁹

Shelter Opening Schedules

⁴ 2020 The New York Times, With Robot Deliveries and Outdoor Tents, Campus Dining Will Be Very Different, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/13/dining/college-food-coronavirus.html>

⁵ 2020 WHYY PBS, Spraygrounds a relatively safe way to cool off, experts say, <https://whyy.org/articles/spraygrounds-a-relatively-safe-way-to-cool-off-experts-say/>

⁶ 2020 WHYY PBS, Philly to open spray grounds as COVID complicates city's response to dangerous heat, <https://whyy.org/articles/philly-to-open-spray-grounds-as-covid-complicates-citys-response-to-dangerous-heat/>

⁷ 2020 WHYY PBS, 100 extremely hot Philly blocks are getting super soakers and other toys to beat the heat, <https://whyy.org/articles/100-extremely-hot-philly-blocks-are-getting-super-soakers-and-other-toys-to-beat-the-heat/>

⁸ 2020 News-Herald, COVID-19 concerns shutter many Downriver cooling centers, but some are open amid current heat wave, https://www.thenewsherald.com/news/covid-19-concerns-shutter-many-downriver-cooling-centers-but-some-are-open-amid-current-heat/article_064e96d2-c126-11ea-9f34-cfcd88decb9a.html

⁹ 2020 Nola, City of New Orleans fine tunes hurricane assisted evacuations during coronavirus pandemic, https://www.nola.com/multimedia/photos/collection_8c194486-c2e0-11ea-a240-7bfec0939b11.html#1

To prepare for severe weather and the hurricane season in South Carolina, Horry County Emergency Management is planning to open shelters one at a time to mitigate potential confusion among evacuating residents and enable efficient allocation of staff and resources. This new procedure will allow residents to know exactly where they need to report for shelter, instead of traveling between shelters to find one with an opening. Once a shelter reaches capacity, officials will open another shelter.¹⁰ To accommodate social distancing, the shelters will follow Red Cross Shelter guidelines to operate with reduced capacity, space out cots, and stagger meal times.¹¹

Medical Evacuation Safety

The United States Air Force has conducted the first aeromedical evacuation using the Negative Pressurized Conex (NPC) to transport 12 COVID-19 patients from the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) area of operations to Ramstein Air Base in Germany. Certified fully operational in June 2020, the NPC is an isolated containment chamber designed specifically in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to allow aircraft to transport patients with infectious diseases to medical facilities to receive treatment without infecting the aircraft or crew. This method of patient transport is an improvement from the previous vehicle, the Transport Isolation System (TIS), which can only carry two to four patients at a time. The NPC can carry a maximum of 28 passengers or 23 ambulatory patients.¹²

Socially Distant Funeral Services

While many funeral homes have been livestreaming or offering reduced-sized funerals, the second largest funeral service company in North America is also broadcasting graveside services on AM/FM transmitters so that mourners can remain in their cars while attending services.¹³ To learn more about funeral service innovations, please see the [Alternate Funeral Arrangements](#) best practice document.

Senior Living Center Isolation

The [Radio Recliner](#) is a retiree-run radio station that aims to help residents who are feeling isolated at senior living centers across the U.S. share memories, favorite songs, and connect with loved ones. Any resident can participate as a DJ, and they can record their introductions and transitions from their phones before sending the audio files to producers who operate the technical aspects of the station. Listeners can send requests for songs to be aired on the daily show at noon, but the station operates 24 hours a day, rotating through previous segments.^{14,15}

FEMA's Best Practice Initiative

¹⁰ 2020 abc 15 News, Hurricane shelter plans in Horry County changing due to COVID-19 pandemic, <https://wpde.com/news/local/hurricane-shelter-plans-changing-due-to-covid-19-pandemic>

¹¹ 2020 NBC Count On News 2, Changes to hurricane shelters amid the coronavirus pandemic, <https://www.counton2.com/news/south-carolina-news/changes-to-hurricane-shelters-amid-the-coronavirus-pandemic/>

¹² 2020 Air Force Times, First aeromedical evacuation conducted with new containment chamber for COVID-19 patients, <https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-air-force/2020/07/05/first-aeromedical-evacuation-conducted-with-new-containment-chamber-for-covid-19-patients/>

¹³ 2020 CNBC, Coronavirus pandemic forces the funeral industry online, <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/05/27/coronavirus-pandemic-forces-the-funeral-industry-online.html>

¹⁴ 2020 New York Post, Radio station features DJs from senior homes across the US, <https://nypost.com/2020/07/03/radio-station-features-djs-from-senior-homes-across-the-us/>

¹⁵ 2020 NBC Miami, Retirees, Isolated by Virus, Become DJs for New Radio Hour, <https://www.nbcmiami.com/news/coronavirus/retirees-become-djs-for-new-radio-recliner-hour/2231744/>

There are extraordinary efforts nationwide, and from partner nations, to support personnel and resource needs to battle the COVID-19 pandemic. FEMA is working to highlight these efforts and encourage everyone to think about what they can do to be a part of providing solutions to help. Visit <https://www.fema.gov/coronavirus/best-practices> for more information.

Topics for the “Best Practices” series are generated from crowd-sourced suggestions. Have an idea? Let us research it! Organizations and individuals can e-mail best practices or lessons learned to fema-cipsupport@fema.dhs.gov.

For more information on how to help during COVID-19, visit [FEMA’s website for information on donations and volunteering](#).

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