

COVID-19 Community Innovation Stories, Week of June 1, 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

American Institute of Architects Re-Occupancy Assessment Tool

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) released architectural and engineering guidance for businesses operating in non-medical settings to reduce the risk of exposure and transmission of COVID-19. Important considerations for workplaces include development of infectious disease preparedness and response plans, implementing basic prevention measures, developing procedures for identifying cases and notifying workers. The assessment tool promotes best practices that protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public.²

Alternative Care Sites Preparedness Assessment Tool

The AIA has released an assessment that architects can use to help hospitals and public health agencies identify and adapt alternative care sites, such as convention centers, sports arenas, hotels, and dormitories for occupancy during the pandemic. The Preparedness Assessment tool lists considerations for functional requirements such as mitigating the risk of spreading pathogens within the facility, monitoring and managing sites for 24/7 operations, mechanical and electrical changes, and additional considerations for cultural competency and accessibility of the facility.³

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 AIA, Re-occupancy Assessment Tool, <https://www.aia.org/resources/6292441-re-occupancy-assessment-tool>

³ 2020 AIA, Alternative Care Sites Preparedness, <https://www.aia.org/resources/6283331-alternative-care-sites-preparedness>



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Worker Training Program

The National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) Worker Training Program has been conducting webinars and presentations on technical topics related to COVID-19. These resources include training tools to educate individuals who are at risk for potential COVID-19 exposure on how to protect themselves and their coworkers as they return to the workplace.⁴

Retail Shopping

As malls reopened, some retail stores have closed every other fitting room, installed plexiglass dividers at checkouts, and, during checkout, have customers take receipts from the printer themselves. Some stores set up welcome tables with hand sanitizer, disposable masks, and sticky blue mats that clean the soles of shoes. Clothes are folded in a way that encourages minimal physical handling while browsing. Some stores have instituted temperature checks at entrances and others are requesting that customers make appointments to shop. A jewelry store has moved its jewelry cleaning machines to the front of stores so that employees can sanitize merchandise in plain view after customers try on jewelry.⁵

Hotel Room Dining

In Sweden, an empty hotel opened its rooms as pop-up restaurants. Individuals are able to make reservations for a hotel room to enjoy dishes from the hotel's restaurant. Once seated in the rooms, customers place their orders by phone. There is only one reservation a night allowed for each room, and the rooms are cleaned after customers leave. Pop-up reservations are available for two to twelve people with an option to book the room for the night.⁶

Protect the Sacred Campaign

Navajo Nation youth have launched a social media campaign called "Protect the Sacred". The campaign targets tech-savvy youth, with internet or electricity access, to spread accurate information about COVID-19 to their families and elders. Since March, the campaign has held three livestreams featuring Navajo healthcare providers, politicians, and celebrities.⁷

⁴ 2020 NIEHS, COVID-19, <https://tools.niehs.nih.gov/wetp/covid19worker/>.

⁵ 2020 Washington Post, How the pandemic is changing shopping, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2020/05/21/pandemic-is-changing-every-aspect-shopping-store-layouts-how-jeans-are-folded/?arc404=true>

⁶ 2020 Forbes, The Swedish Hotel That's Turning Its Rooms Into Pop-Up Restaurants, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/annakang/2020/05/18/the-swedish-hotel-thats-turning-its-rooms-into-pop-up-restaurants/#2bf781016875>

⁷ 2020 STAT News, As COVID-19 tears through Navajo Nation, young people step up to protect their elders, <https://www.statnews.com/2020/05/26/navajo-nation-covid-19-youth-response-elders-health/>

Care Home Considerations

Visiting Relatives

In Portugal, a care home set up glass booths that allow families to visit relatives. The air-conditioned glass booth alongside a visiting room is equipped with microphones to allow residents and their families to communicate.⁸

Smart Wristbands

A care home in Texas is using tech wristbands that function as a call button, a digital room key, and a health and activity tracker. The bracelets connect to beacons on a wall in each room using infrared light to record who was in that room and for how long. More than 20 care facilities in the United States have the devices, which cost about \$1 per day per user.⁹

Social Distancing Computer Game

In England, a university professor has launched a computer game for children called "Can You Save the World?" that positively frames social distancing. By virtually avoiding pedestrians and cyclists as well as collecting masks for healthcare workers, players are able to save lives in the game. Bumping into too many people results in the player being "confined" and the game ends.¹⁰

FEMA's Best Practice Initiative

There are extraordinary efforts nationwide 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](#).

FEMA does not endorse any non-government entities, organizations, or services. Claims made by third parties have not been independently verified by FEMA.

⁸ 2020 World Economic Forum, This Portuguese care home is helping families visit relatives during the pandemic, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/05/care-homes-covid19-transmission-safety/>

⁹ 2020 World Economic Forum, This wearable tech is being used by care homes to stem outbreaks of COVID-19, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/05/elderly-home-wearables-contact-tracing-apple-google/>

¹⁰ 2020 World Economic Forum, COVID-19 computer game teaches children importance of social distancing, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/05/coronavirus-computer-game-teaches-children-social-distancing/>