



March 13, 2020

To all OCTS accredited institutions,

The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) has issued the attached guidance for gatherings with the objective of protecting public health and slowing the rate of transmission of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). ISDH strongly recommends the attached guidance for the next 30 days, unless extended.

If an institution decides to suspend classes or temporarily close, the institution must inform OCTS before the action is taken so that we are aware and can effectively respond to any student inquiries or complaints. OCTS will not consider this action as a voluntary closure that would affect the institution's accreditation status.

All Indiana students, or out-of-state students attending training in Indiana, must sign a revised enrollment agreement identifying a later completion date consistent with the duration of the anticipated closure or suspension of classes (e.g., if the institution closes for two weeks, the completion date on the enrollment agreement is modified to include a completion date two weeks later).

With respect to institutional accreditation, the institution will need to continue accreditation requirements without interruption, including: continuing all quarterly requirements (Career College Student Assurance Fund (CCSAF) form submission, fees and Quarterly Student Data Form submission); and maintaining all other accreditation requirements.

It is understood that temporary closure/suspension of classes may be a burden on the institution, but please heed all recommendations/orders from ISDH and the Governor's Office. OCTS is charged with ensuring that OCTS institutions' "premises and conditions under which the students work and study are sanitary, healthful, and safe according to modern standards (IC 22-4.1-21-23 (6))." We would like to keep Hoosiers as safe and healthy as possible.

Thank you for your continued cooperation in this matter.

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## STATE OF INDIANA GUIDANCE DOCUMENT FOR GATHERINGS

**Objective:** It is the objective of the State of Indiana to protect public health and slow the rate of transmission of the novel coronavirus (“COVID-19”); to protect all Hoosiers including those most likely to experience severe symptoms, such as older Hoosiers and those with underlying chronic conditions; and to minimize the social and economic impacts of COVID-19.

**Recommendation and Guidance:** The Indiana State Department of Health [ISDH] strongly recommends the following for the next 30 days, unless extended:

- Non-essential gatherings of 250 people or more should be postponed or canceled. This includes any event or gathering of people who are in a single room or single space at the same time, such as an auditorium, cafeteria, church, stadium, arena, large conference room, or meeting hall. This would include gatherings such as concerts, conferences, social and community events.
- Smaller, non-essential gatherings held in venues which do not allow social distancing of six (6) feet per person should be postponed or canceled.
- If an event cannot be canceled or postponed, institute the following precautionary measures:
  - Use phones or video conferencing to reduce the number attending and the need for close interactions;
  - Stagger activities or add frequency of an event to spread out attendance;
  - Encourage those in a high-risk group to not attend the event;
  - Recommend that attendees stay home if they have a fever and/or respiratory symptoms;
  - Practice social distancing, such as adding distance between where individuals sit or stand around tables, and also limit the number of people in lines;
  - Avoid direct physical contact with others, such as hand-shaking, holding hands, and hugging.
  - Event organizers should:
    - Explore alternative site design and set-up;
    - Prop doors open to avoid touching;
    - Increase ventilation within the facility;
    - Increase the number of hygiene stations;
    - Clean frequently touched surfaces, such as handrails and countertops, during the event.

- For those who attend the event, recommend they take the following precautions to prevent possible transmission of the COVID-19 before, during, and after the event:
  - Wash hands often with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer;
  - Cough and sneeze into the elbow or into a tissue;
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

Certain activities are essential to the functioning of our state and must continue. The goal of these recommendations is to prevent people from being together unnecessarily where viruses can be easily spread to others. This guidance does not apply to essential activities or services. Hence, this guidance does not apply to the workplace, essential public transportation and travel, or shopping.

**Additional Resources:**

<https://on.in.gov/COVID19>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.