



At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in Washington, DC, on March 10, 2020, the Cleveland & Woodley Park Village suspended all in-person gatherings based on information from the Center for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) and DC Health. Our core principle for that decision was the health and safety of our members and volunteers. We also aimed to meet the needs of our members by providing virtual programs (e.g., conference calls and Zoom meetings) and alternative methods for meeting needs during the crisis (e.g., online grocery deliveries.)

Mayor Bowser announced that Washington, DC will reopen under a staged approach. In announcing this plan, she also identified vulnerable populations. “Some residents are considered vulnerable because they are at a higher risk of being infected by COVID-19, experiencing severe illness or death from COVID-19, or having longer-term physical or behavioral health complications indirectly related to COVID-19. They may include individuals who are over 60 and/or have underlying comorbidities...”

In alignment with our core principle for our March 10 policy, the health and safety of our members and volunteers also dictate how the Cleveland & Woodley Park Village will operate under the ReOpen DC Plan. During the staged approach, the plan for the general population of the District of Columbia (marked by a declining virus transmission, but without an effective and available vaccine or cure) includes key low-risk activities with strong safeguards (e.g., parks), limiting the size of gatherings, generally in outdoor settings, with physical distancing and wearing masks. Older adults (generally defined as those 60 and over), those with underlying medical conditions, and those who live with people who are vulnerable, “should make all available efforts to remain home and minimize time in public, wear masks when not at home, and be diligent about hygiene.”

Given this guidance from the mayor and our core principle of protecting the health and safety our members and volunteers, the Cleveland & Woodley Park Village will:

- Facilitate outside groups (e.g., walking, biking, yoga, etc.) limited to 4 people with physical distancing and wearing masks
- Any special events sponsored by the Village will be held outside in spaces large enough to allow for sufficient physical distance, will be limited to 35 people (inclusive of members, volunteers and staff) and will require the use of masks. (Note the size of gatherings is more limited than the requirements of the Mayor’s order due to the vulnerability of our members and the likely difficulty in maintaining physical distance of six feet while trying to communicate with one another.)
- Continue virtual programs (i.e., conference calls and Zoom meetings)

- Continue member “check-in” calls, as desired by members
- Provide essential services as determined by the Executive Director (e.g., rides to non-COVID medical appointments, certain one-on-one visits, or technology assistance when deemed essential) while undertaking all necessary precautions, including wearing masks, allowing only member and volunteer in the car and not sitting next to one another, ventilating the car with open windows, where possible, etc.
- Continue to assist members to determine the best way to get their needs met in a manner that is puts the health and safety of members and volunteers first. (e.g., taking a member’s deposit to the bank or getting cash for the member rather than driving the member to the bank.)
- Keep the physical office space for the Village closed, but staff members will continue to work remotely.

Furthermore, the Village encourages all volunteers to assess their own appropriateness of volunteering. Recent studies have indicated that there is a period between infection and the onset of symptoms (pre-symptomatic period) and that some people who have COVID-19 may not feel sick (asymptomatic). Given these findings about the virus, and because we generally serve a “vulnerable population,” it is important that each volunteer make an assessment of whether or not they are the appropriate individual to undertake a volunteer activity.

The following questions may be used to help gauge the appropriateness of an individual engaging in volunteer activities:

- Am I a member of a “vulnerable population”?
- Am I practicing social distancing and taking precautions in my daily life?
- Has anyone with whom I’ve had close contact recently tested positive for COVID-19?
- Do I have a temperature or have I had a temperature in the last 14 days?
- How do I feel right now?

If for any reason a volunteer feels uncomfortable with undertaking a previously agreed-upon volunteer activity, we encourage that volunteer to know that it is acceptable to contact the office and to not perform the task.

If a volunteer has tested positive for COVID-19, we will not allow that individual to serve in any capacity until they have received a subsequent negative test for COVID-19.

We recognize that these are not ideal conditions under which to operate the Village. We’d all prefer to have gatherings and interact with one another, but the dangers of COVID-19, and particularly to older adults and those with underlying medical conditions, limit our ability to do so, and will likely continue to, until a vaccine or effective treatment exists (stage 4 of the DC ReOpen Plan). In the interim, the Village will continue to look to ways to meet members’ needs and offer engaging, social/educational programs in a manner that puts the health and safety of our vulnerable population at the forefront.

The Village will revisit this policy periodically, as necessary, and keep members, volunteers, and others informed of any changes.