

5-19-2020 Mass Municipal Association Briefing Responses

Municipal Finance and Operations:

- Has a list of the various funding sources provided under the CARES Act for municipal government, communities, small businesses and other stakeholders addressed in the legislation been established?
 - EOHED has published a comprehensive webpage outlining and linking to all of the various community services and state/municipal supports in the CARES Act. This resource includes information on Economic Development Assistance funds, FEMA reimbursements, the Community Development Block Grant and state and local stimulus funds, among others, may be accessed [here](#).
- Are municipal office spaces/buildings subject to the 25% occupancy limitation imposed on Office Spaces in the Sector Specific Protocols under Phase I of reopening?
 - Yes, however a municipality has considerable flexibility if the municipality determines that a municipal office space is operating an essential service:
 - Generally speaking, municipalities should limit occupancy of municipal office spaces to 25 percent of (a) the maximum occupancy level specified in any certificate of occupancy or similar permit or as provided for under the state building code; or (b) the business organization's typical occupancy as of March 1, 2020.
 - However, if a municipality determines an office as a "COVID-19 Essential Service", which it has discretion to do, then that Office has until July 1, 2020 to comply with the 25% occupancy limitations.
 - Further, a municipality may determine that a municipal office can exceed the maximum occupancy level if the municipality determines that it is in the interest of public health or safety consideration, or where strict compliance may interfere with the continue delivery of a critical service, as determined by the municipality.
 - For more information, the Office Space Workplace Safety Standards is available [here](#).
- Is town meeting subject to the 10-person gathering limitation?
 - No; municipal legislative bodies are exempt from the 10-person gathering limitation, so town meeting is not subject to the limitation.
- Are other municipal government hearings and bodies subject to the 10-person gathering limitation?
 - To the extent that a municipality determines that a municipal body or hearing is critical or provides an essential service, that body is also not subject to the 10-person gathering limitation. If the municipality determines that the body or hearing does not provide a critical service, then it is subject to the 10-person limitation on gatherings.
- What guidance has been issued on high school graduations?
 - DESE released comprehensive guidance addressing high school graduation ceremonies via the "On the Desktop" webpage, which may be accessed [here](#).
- Is there any guidance on the opening of municipal pools? Can pools be maintained while closed?
 - Community and public pools are permitted to reopen under certain safety standards and guidelines in Phase II of reopening.
 - Companies that provide pool sanitation and treatment services necessary for public health may operate.
- What guidance is available for municipalities on how they may appropriately utilize funds provided by the federal Coronavirus Relief Fund, especially in consideration of communities hit particularly hard by COVID-19?

- Secretary Heffernan issued a [memo](#) to municipal chief executive officers outlining the federal Coronavirus Relief Fund, and it includes a comprehensive list of the acceptable uses of said funds as a reference. The Coronavirus Relief Funds being distributed to cities and towns are anticipated to adequately cover the eligible expenditures, but municipalities with FY20 expenditures that may exceed their eligible amount in this round should contact DLS. This funding is in addition to the reimbursement available to municipalities through FEMA. For a complete and extensive review of the state and municipal support offered by the CARES Act, please consult EOHED's page listed at the beginning of this document.
 - In the announced distribution, municipalities have been asked to estimate unbudgeted direct costs of COVID-19, and the state is encouraging municipalities to apply for funds to cover those costs, whether through FEMA, or with the Coronavirus Relief Funds. If the federal rules change to allow Coronavirus Relief Fund money to be used more flexibly, A&F will revisit the current approach and assess whether it should change.
 - Please note that under current federal law, Coronavirus Relief Fund monies included in the CARES Act cannot be used for revenue loss.
- Can municipalities use CARES Act funds to provide deliveries to those in need?
 - Yes, food insecurity is an eligible program. Please refer to Secretary Heffernan's [memo](#) on appropriate municipal uses of Coronavirus Relief Fund monies, as food banks and food pantries, as well as grocery deliveries, are all items addressed.
 - Can Coronavirus Relief Funds be used to fund the 25% match to FEMA reimbursement?
 - Yes; the Executive Office of Administration & Finance received confirmation from the federal government that Coronavirus Relief Funds can be used to fulfill the 25% match to FEMA reimbursement funds.

Reopening:

- Are funeral homes subject to the 10-person gathering limit? How are funerals regulated under the Phase I reopening?
 - Funeral homes are subject to the 10-person gathering limit.
 - Funerals are subject to the 40% occupancy limit issued to houses of worship under phase I reopening.
- As reopening begins, how is childcare being addressed for those permitted to reenter the workforce and without access to childcare, as childcare centers remain closed?
 - Families returning to work that have exhausted their child care options and have no safe alternative to group care may find instructions on how to apply for the emergency child care program [here](#).
- Is there a process in place to determine when historical sites will open?
 - The reopening phase for historical sites is still being determined as part of a comprehensive tourism plan currently being developed. The Reopening Massachusetts website will update this information as available.
- Is there any change to the advisory regarding 14 day self-quarantine after out-of-state travel?
 - No; the advisory is still in place.
- Is there any guidance on indoor entertainment centers?
 - Indoor recreation, including indoor batting cages or go karts, are in Phase III.
 - Indoor entertainment venues such as movie theatres and museums are also in Phase III.
- What is being done to address parking for state beaches? What about guidance on parking for beach managers?

- Effective May 18, the Department of Conservation and Recreation began to reopen public parking at State beaches. However, DCR maintains the ability to manage or restrict public parking at State beaches as necessary to limit beach capacity so as to combat crowd density and accommodate adequate social distancing.
- Guidance on parking and capacity for beach managers may be found [here](#).
- What is the latest guidance on golf?
 - The guidance around golf has been updated to permit the use of golf carts for a single rider or for a group of family members living in the same household.
 - Restaurants located on the premises of golf courses may offer no-contact takeout of food to be consumed off-premises. Like other restaurants, they may not allow any form of dine-in or outdoor, on-premises service.
 - For updates on guidance to golf, please continue to refer back to the EOHEE Essential Services FAQs [page](#).
- Where can municipal officials and the public submit questions on reopening?
 - Please consult the Reopening Massachusetts [website](#) for the most comprehensive, up-to-date, and accurate information on all aspects of the reopening process.
 - Those with questions on reopening may submit their questions to the Reopening Massachusetts portal. The portal is managed by EOHEE and may be accessed [here](#).
- Where can guidance on charter boat fishing be found?
 - The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs has released comprehensive guidance on outdoor recreation activities currently permitted, which may be found [here](#). Guidance specific to charter boats may be accessed [here](#).
- Can yoga classes or fitness classes be taught outside before Phase III?
 - Organized educational programs, activities and outdoor public art installations may occur in outdoor spaces during Phase 1 only if the program does not require individual participants to share equipment or make physical contact in order to engage in the activity and is subject to numerous guidelines, including the 10 person gathering limit. Full guidelines may be found [here](#).
 - Permits for gatherings on athletic fields or courts shall not be issued and organized games are not permitted.

Other:

- What unemployment supports exist for those who are out of work as reopening begins?
 - The Administration announced the implementation of Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) on May 21. Massachusetts residents who are eligible for the federal CARES Act and qualify for having exhausted their regular unemployment compensation may now receive the new PEUC. Details on this benefit may be found [here](#).
 - Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) is available for individuals not eligible for regular or extended unemployment, including the self-employed and independent contractors. Details may be found [here](#).