

Senior Community Center (SCC) — Reopening Guidance

The Pennsylvania Department of Aging (PDA) recognizes the COVID-19 pandemic may have a long-term impact on the standard operating policies and procedures for SCCs. The following guidance is provided to SCCs and Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) to support those in counties moving to the Green Phase per Governor Wolf’s strategic phased reopening plan. The Green Phase eases most restrictions by lifting stay-at-home and relaxing business closure orders.

NOTE: SCCs may not reopen until their county enters the Green Phase.

The safety of our consumers and staff is the primary concern. Therefore, it will be important to continue to follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC](#)) and Pennsylvania Department of Health ([DOH](#)) guidelines for mitigating the spread of the COVID-19 virus. It is understood that out of an abundance of caution some AAAs and/or SCCs may opt to reopen at a slower pace when a county goes to the Green Phase. Listed below are steps required of AAAs and SCCs before reopening SCCs, along with PDA recommendations:

Step 1 – Prior to a SCC’s county transitioning to the Green Phase, or once in the Green Phase, the AAA shall:

- Identify which SCCs can reopen during the Green Phase at full attendance and adhere to CDC and DOH precautionary and social distancing guidelines
- Determine how many participants the SCC can serve per social distancing guidelines. This number is determined by taking the total square footage of programming space and dividing it by 113. The number 113 is the square footage needed around an individual for six (6) feet of social distancing
- Based on this information, identify which SCCs can reopen, but with reduced attendance to ensure social distancing
- Identify which SCCs, if any, will not reopen immediately and provide the reason for not reopening to PDA (e.g., lack of square footage, lack of volunteers or staff, lack of participation from seniors due to ongoing concerns, concern from landlord, etc.)
- Provide the above information and any additional feedback to PDA

Step 2 – Prior to the SCC reopening, the SCC shall:

- Identify a staff member who will serve as the Pandemic Response Person for the SCC responsible for communicating and implementing mitigation COVID-19 efforts
- Obtain and post the COVID-19 Safety Procedures for Businesses [poster](#) in a public area of the SCC
- Obtain and post other COVID-19 signage and best practices from the CDC and DOH
- Develop new policies on SCC operations due to COVID-19 and communicate those policies to participants prior to reopening. These policies include, but are not limited to:
 - Operational policies to address social distancing, the number of participants attending at any one time, changes in programming, and communicating with participants
 - Meal service policies that allow for social distancing, any changes in meal service such as how meals will be served, use of a reservation system, and how the SCC will manage meal service if it must serve fewer participants due to social distancing



- Sanitation and cleaning policies
- Staff and participant screening policy – Routinely use PDA’s standardized health screening tool
- Masks and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) requirement policies
- The senior center is to provide a copy of these policies to the AAA prior to reopening

NOTE on Meal Service: Those SCCs not able to provide congregate meals to all current participants due to COVID-19 social distancing requirements may continue to provide grab-n-go or take-out meals.

Step 3 – Additional Recommendations on Reopening:

- SCCs post COVID-19 safety reminders throughout the center
- AAAs and SCCs continue to follow CDC and DOH guidance on COVID-19

COVID-19 Reporting Requirements:

- If a SCC participant exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 or is diagnosed with the virus by a positive test result or by a health care practitioner after having attended the SCC, the SCC is to report this information to the AAA on the same day that the SCC receives the information.
- The information to be reported includes:
 - The number of participants showing symptoms of COVID-19, and the number of participants diagnosed with the virus by either a positive test result or a health care practitioner
 - The number of participants, staff and volunteers in attendance who may have been exposed
- The AAA is to notify PDA on the same day that they receive the information

Direct questions to Robert Cherry at (717) 772-2551 or rocherry@pa.gov.

Where can I find more information about COVID-19?

The Pennsylvania Department of Health has a dedicated page for COVID-19 that provides regular updates. Click [here](#) for the most up to date information regarding COVID-19. Additional information is also available on the [CDC](#) website and through the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services ([CMS](#)).