

Taney County Roadmap to Recovery

COVID-19 Response and Recovery Plan

About this roadmap

- Consists of three phases to guide individuals and businesses to relaxing restrictions through a stepped approach
- Establishes Gate Criteria which must be in place before advancing to the next phase
- Guidance for all phases includes practicing good hand hygiene, staying home when sick and practicing social distancing
- This document should be viewed as a “living document”, and as such is subject to change as necessary

Gate Criteria

- De-escalation of cases **OR** no more than 10% of tests resulting positive averaging over the previous 7 days within Taney County and the Taney County Footprint
- Hospital capacity to respond to small case spikes without reaching crisis care standards
- Testing and Contact Tracing Capacity
- Hospital and Healthcare System Capacity
- Plans in place to protect workers in critical industries and high-risk facilities

Phase I – Soft Reopening

- Essential Businesses - Occupant load of 25% allowed if under 10,000 square feet, and an occupant load of 10% allowed if over 10,000 square feet.
- Non-Essential Businesses - Occupant load of 25% allowed if under 10,000 square feet, and an occupant load of 10% allowed if over 10,000 square feet.
- Individuals:
 - Vulnerable and high-risk individuals encouraged to continue to stay home
 - When in public, maximize physical distance from others, wear face coverings, avoid gatherings >10 people and minimize non-essential travel
- Employers:
 - Encourage telework, return to work in phases, employee education to reduce risk of illness, minimize non-essential travel

Phase II – Expanded Reopening

- Occupant load of 50% essential businesses, occupant load of 50% allowed for non-essential businesses
- Individuals:
 - Vulnerable and high-risk individuals resume essential public interactions while maintaining social distancing, encourage face coverings
 - When in public, continue social distancing, encourage face coverings, avoid gatherings of >50 people, non-essential travel may resume
- Employers:

- Continued guidance described in Phase I, unrestricted staffing of worksites may be considered

Phase III – Post Pandemic

- Triggers to move into Phase III include:
 - De-escalation of cases of COVID-19 in Taney County and Taney County Footprint **OR**
 - Administration of an approved, effective vaccine **OR**
 - Effective treatment developed minimizing acute cases and hospitalization of COVID-19 patients
- All businesses open
- Individuals and employers follow current guidance from TCHD, MODHSS, and CDC

When to consider tightening restrictions

- An escalation of positive cases over the previous 7 days in Taney County or Taney County Footprint **OR**
- An escalation of local hospital utilization that taxes the healthcare system resulting in crisis care standards **OR**
- Inability to maintain capacity for positive case contact tracing

Taney County Roadmap to Recovery

COVID-19 Response and Recovery Plan

The Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2 also known as COVID-19) first appeared in Wuhan, China province December 2019, and has since reached worldwide pandemic level. Missouri saw its first case of COVID-19 March 7, 2020, while Taney County's first case of COVID-19 was announced March 23, 2020. As of April 18, 2020, Taney County has had nine confirmed cases in residents and multiple exposure incidents from COVID-19 positive individuals residing in other counties. Preliminary Taney County data suggests cases may be slowing (as of April 23, 2020), spurring the need to prepare for lifting current restrictions and establishing guidelines for local businesses and community members.

Literature review identified two frameworks from which to model a recovery plan. The first framework, *National Coronavirus Response: A road map to reopening* by the American Enterprise Institute, is written at the state level and identifies a four-phase approach and triggers to advance phases. The second, *Opening up America Again, Guidelines from the White House*, also recommends a phased approach and is focused on a national scale. This Taney County roadmap is a hybrid of two plans and addresses both Gate Criteria, items that must be established prior to advancing phases, and three phases guiding individuals and businesses through a stepped approach to relaxing restrictions and reaching a new normal.

Definitions

Essential Business – An essential business is critical to the well-being of citizens' infrastructure of the jurisdiction and is defined specifically as follows: day care facilities which serve employees of essential businesses, health care facilities, grocery stores, convenience food stores, service stations, drug stores, pharmacies, public service or telecommunication facilities, financial institutions, law firms, accounting firms, government offices and facilities, lodging establishments, and restaurants. Pet food stores and building maintenance stores have also been determined to be Essential Businesses.

Non-Essential Business – any business that falls outside of the definition as listed above.

Occupant Load – the occupant load is the total number of persons that might occupy a building or portion thereof at any one time as determined by the occupancy restrictions. Employees count when determining occupant load

Vulnerable and High-Risk Individuals – individuals greater than 60 years of age, those with chronic conditions, immunocompromised persons, or pregnant women

Influenza Like Illness (ILI) – any upper respiratory infection with flu-like symptoms

Taney County Footprint – Based on a 300 mile radius which includes portions of Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, Illinois, and all of Missouri

Roadmap to Recovery Key Objectives:

- Provide sound recommendations to elected officials based in fact and current science, and are grounded in promising practices in a rapidly evolving and challenging pandemic.
- Reopen the community and businesses in a strategic manner that is based in fact and current science in order to minimize the risk of creating a surge COVID-19 cases in our community.
- Ensure appropriate preparations and plans are in place for subsequent waves of Influenza Like Illness (ILI) and COVID-19 cases.
- Utilize the framework presented by the White House for “Opening up America Again,” in a manner that makes sense for our community, and appropriately addresses our local concerns.
- Provide appropriate guidance to the general public and businesses in each phase of reopening, utilizing all means necessary to ensure effective communication and understanding of our goals, strategies, and anticipated end state.

Gate Criteria

This document outlines Gate Criteria, which are a set of triggers that must be reached in order to move into Phase I and subsequent phases. These criteria serve as a checklist to be reached prior to entering additional phases, and are considered to be the cornerstone of community and economic recovery. Meeting Gate Criteria ensures the public health and healthcare systems can successfully manage COVID-19 without resorting to crisis care and also leans heavily upon the ability of strenuous containment measures including widespread testing and aggressive contact tracing.

Gate Criteria (Evaluate and ensure all Gate Criteria are met before moving to each Phase I, II, and III)

Symptoms / Cases

- De-escalation of cases of COVID-19 and ILI to be defined by the Harvard Global Health Institute
 - Immediate goal – test 21 per day
 - Short term goal – test 42 per day
 - Long term goal – test 84 test per day
 - No more than 10% of test resulting in positive averaging over the previous seven days

OR

- No more than 10% of tests resulting in positive averaging over the previous seven days within the Taney County Footprint

Hospitals

- Capacity of the hospital without reaching crisis care standards
- Robust testing program for healthcare workers
- Capability to manage small spikes in cases
- Effective communication of case spikes to enable quick reaction if tighter restrictions are necessary

Testing and Contact Tracing

- Adequate testing capacity
- Safe and efficient screening and testing sites
 - Taney County Mobile Testing Unit
 - Rapid Test sites at TCHD Branson and Forsyth
 - Goal of utilizing state rapid testing for first responders, healthcare workers, long term care facilities, outbreaks, and identified contacts as appropriate and dependent upon supply
- Capacity to contact trace 40 per day with the ability to expand through regional teams
- Disease Surveillance
 - Plan to be developed by the Taney County Health Department as CDC recommends

Healthcare System Capacity

- PPE availability
 - From the pre-hospital care level to hospital care
 - 60 day supply of PPE on hand and recommend considering 60-120 day supply per agency need
- Ability to surge ICU capacity

Plans

- Policies in place to protect workers in critical industries
- Protection in place for high-risk facilities
 - Education and PPE

Guidelines for all Phases

Also of note are the below outlined guidelines for all phases. These guidelines are directed specifically to individuals and employers and identify important recommendations that should be followed at all times for these two groups. In addition to these guidelines, it is also important to continued adherence to local and state specific guidelines, and CDC guidelines.

Guidelines for All Phases: Individuals

Practice Good Hygiene

- Continue messaging regarding hygiene best practices including the use of face coverings while in public
 - Encourage face coverings in public settings, especially when social distancing cannot be followed, or in areas of high transmission
- Continue messaging regarding social distancing
 - Continue requirement of 6' separation
 - Promote current business signage detailing 6' social distancing guidelines throughout the community

Stay home if you are sick

- Continue messaging on staying home when you are sick

Guidelines for All Phases: Employers

- Social Distancing
 - Require training for staff and signage within the business
 - Work with local businesses to determine what makes sense for their business
- Requirement on occupant load depending on business type for each phase
 - Essential Businesses
 - Non-Essential Businesses
- Employee Health
 - Require daily temperature checks of employees
 - Employee's with a fever of 100.4 F or higher should be sent home and encouraged to seek medical attention
 - Require medical clearance to return to work after an employee experiences ILI type symptoms
- Sanitation, cleaning, and disinfection
 - Require training for all employees on appropriate procedures
 - Establish schedules for cleaning high-traffic or high-touch areas
- Encourage face coverings in public settings, especially when social distancing cannot be followed, or in areas of high transmission
- Consider “no-touch” and virtual options where possible

Phases of Recovery

Phase I – Soft Reopening

Phase II – Expanded Reopening

Phase III – Post Pandemic

Currently Taney County has not fully entered Phase I – Soft Reopening, and is currently working to achieve Gate Criteria to fully enter Phase I. Taney County has made significant progress towards meeting these criteria and is partially able to do so. As of the date of this document, Taney County cases appears to be holding fairly stable without large spikes in case increase. There are still new positive cases, however these are spaced out by several days and have recently been occurring as single cases. Also of note, some cases have been linked epidemiologically to prior Taney County cases, and have not been community acquired. Yet to be determined is the regional considerations of case counts. This will be especially important due to the hospitality and tourism industry for which the County is well known.

To date, the hospital systems indicate a level of readiness and preparation without having resorted to crisis care standards and remains at the ready for a surge of cases, either locally or regionally. Such planning has included the establishment of a respiratory triage tent to increase COVID-19 screening prior to hospitalization, and alternate care site planning which would provide an off-campus care site for less acute care of COVID-19 patients. Recently restructured, the Taney County Health Department's disease investigation team now includes twelve team members prepared to contact trace up to forty individuals daily.

Currently, the gate criteria we have not fully achieved is a robust testing program. A partnership of Cox Branson, Mercy, City of Branson, Jordan Valley, and the Taney County Health Department has resulted in a mobile testing unit providing a system to increase testing in Taney County. The mobile testing unit is currently serving ten to twenty individuals daily, with the capacity to serve fifty to sixty. An additional resource, still in resource acquisition phase is the deployment of a rapid testing machine recently provided to the Taney County Health Department by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services. Though a small number of tests have been provided, quantity and frequency of delivery of additional tests remains yet to be determined. To date, 0.5% of Taney County residents of have been tested for COVID-19.

Once these criteria are met, Taney County will fully enter into Phase I – Soft Reopening.

Taney County Roadmap to Recovery

Phase I – Soft Reopening

Essential Businesses – Occupant Load of 25% allowed if under 10,000 square feet, and an occupant load of 10% allowed if over 10,000 square feet.

General Guidelines

- Strict social distancing
 - Require signage and training for employees
- Encourage online shopping and curbside pickup where possible
- Strict cleaning and disinfection guidelines

Specific Information

- Senior living facilities remain closed to visitors

- Strict employee hygiene and screening procedures should be in place
- Hospitals remain closed to visitors
 - Outpatient surgeries resume as clinically appropriate

Non-Essential Businesses – Occupant Load of 25% allowed if under 10,000 square feet, and an occupant load of 10% allowed if over 10,000 square feet.

General Guidelines

- Strict social distancing
 - Require signage and training for employees
- Encourage online shopping and curbside pickup where possible
- Strict cleaning and disinfection guidelines

Business Specific

- Parks may open but playgrounds remain closed
 - Consider methods of securing playgrounds
- Church/Religious Gatherings
 - Continue to encourage online or web based services
 - Encourage vulnerable and high-risk individuals not to attend in person

Individuals

- Vulnerable and High-Risk Individuals
 - Continue to encourage staying home
 - Household members of vulnerable or high-risk individuals who are returning to work should be aware of increased risk of carrying the virus
 - Efforts and precautions should be taken including isolation and attention to disinfection
- When in Public (parks, outdoor recreation areas, shopping/retail areas)
 - Maximize physical distance from others
 - Social distancing is critical
 - Wear face coverings
 - Avoid gatherings of >10 people
 - Maintain social distancing regardless
- Minimize non-essential travel

Employers

- Encourage telework as possible
- Return to work in phases
- Educate employees
 - PPE as appropriate
 - Face coverings
 - Cleaning and disinfecting work spaces
 - Procedures if sick
- Close common areas where personnel are likely to congregate
 - Enforce strict social distancing protocols

- Minimize non-essential travel
- Consider special accommodations for staff who are identified as vulnerable or high-risk
- Consider installation of no-touch options where possible throughout facilities

Phase II – Expanded Reopening

Triggers to move into Phase II

- De-escalation of cases of COVID-19 and ILI to be defined as averaging over the previous seven days, no more than 10% of Taney County or Taney County Footprint tests resulting in positive

Essential Businesses – Occupant Load of 50% Allowed

General Guidelines

- Continue social distancing
 - Require signage and training for employees
- Strict cleaning and disinfection guidelines

Specific Information

- Senior living facilities remain closed to visitors
 - Strict employee hygiene and screening procedures should be in place
- Hospitals remain closed to visitors
 - In-patient and outpatient surgeries resume as clinically appropriate

Non-Essential Businesses – Occupant Load of 50% Allowed

General Guidelines

- Strict social distancing
 - Require signage and training for employees
- Encourage online shopping and curbside pickup where possible
- Strict cleaning and disinfection guidelines

Business Specific

- Parks and playgrounds open
- Church/Religious Gatherings
 - Continue to encourage online or web based services
 - Encourage vulnerable and high-risk individuals not to attend in person

Individuals

- Vulnerable and High-Risk Individuals
 - Resume essential public interactions while maintaining social distancing
 - Avoid situations where social distancing is not practical
 - Encourage face coverings when in public and especially when unable to socially distance or in areas of high transmission

- Household members of vulnerable or high-risk individuals who have returned to work should be aware of increased risk of carrying the virus
 - Continued vigilance in disinfecting and social distancing should be maintained
- When in Public (parks, outdoor recreation areas, shopping/retail areas)
 - Continue social distancing
 - Encourage face coverings when in public and especially when unable to socially distance or in areas of high transmission
 - Avoid gatherings of >50 people
 - Maintain social distancing regardless
- Non-essential travel may resume

Employers

- Unrestricted staffing of worksites may be considered
 - Telework may still be appropriate
 - Return to work in phases if possible
- Educate employees
 - PPE as appropriate
 - Face coverings
 - Cleaning and disinfecting work spaces
 - Procedures if sick
- Closed common areas may be opened
 - Encourage strict social distancing protocols
- Minimize non-essential business travel
- Consider special accommodations for staff who are identified as vulnerable or high-risk
- Consider installation of no-touch options where possible throughout facilities

Phase III – Post Pandemic

Triggers to move into Phase III

De-escalation of cases of COVID-19 and ILI to be defined as averaging over the previous seven days, no more than 10% of Taney County or Taney County Footprint tests resulting in positive

OR

Effective vaccine approved and being administered

OR

Effective treatment developed that minimizes acute cases and hospitalization of COVID-19 patients

All businesses – Open

- Follow current TCHD, MODHSS, and CDC guidance
- Continue enhanced cleaning and disinfection procedures
- Consider no touch options throughout all facilities
- Theaters and Large Venues – Open

- Church/Religious Gatherings – Open

Individuals

- Vulnerable and High-Risk Individuals
 - Follow current TCHD, MODHSS, and CDC guidance

Employers

- Follow current TCHD, MODHSS, and CDC guidance
- Unrestricted staffing
- Continue to educate employees on hygiene
 - PPE as appropriate
 - Cleaning and disinfecting work spaces
 - Procedures if sick
- Consider installation of no-touch options where possible throughout facilities

Triggers to Consider Tightening Restrictions

Escalation of cases of COVID-19 and ILI as evidenced by 10% or more of tests resulting positive over the previous seven days in Taney County or Taney County Footprint

OR

Escalation of local hospitalization that taxes the healthcare system resulting in crisis care standards

OR

Inability to maintain contact tracing at the rate of 200 individuals over a seven day timeframe

Summary

In summary, a few key points revolve around the importance of maintaining progress towards Gate Criteria. First, if at any point in time, the Gate Criteria can no longer be met, consideration must be given to taking appropriate actions to correct the problem, up to and including tightening restrictions in a measured way. As mentioned, these are the cornerstone of success and must be achieved for community recovery. Second, additional recommendations will remain in place for high risk individuals, who are recommended to stay at home through Phase I and II to protect themselves. Third, during Phase III – Post Pandemic, certain items will be recommended as part of normal everyday life until either an effective treatment is established, a vaccine is developed and widely available, or herd immunity exists and the majority of the population is immune from COVID-19. Among these are social distancing, appropriate hand hygiene, and face coverings in public spaces.

Lastly, as the situation surrounding COVID-19 continues to evolve, so must this document. This document should be viewed as a “living document”, and as such is subject to change as necessary.