

Mass Meetings and Congressional Convention Health Guidance (Updated: 3/17/2020)

We know that this is an uncertain time, and we want you to know that your safety is our number one priority.

Missouri Democratic Party developed a team to meet regularly to assess, address, and adapt to the situation as it evolves. We are working diligently to stay on top of CDC updates, and ensuring appropriate plans are put in place for each upcoming gathering. We will continue to monitor and provide updates as needed. For guidance on local meetings, we encourage you to check with the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services and the CDC, however we are recommending to cancel, postpone, or reschedule virtually all in-person meetings until May 1st. As of March 15th, the CDC and State of Missouri recommend holding no in-person meetings of over 50 people for the next 8 weeks.

Here is what Missouri Democratic Party is doing in its own operations for your consideration:

- Developed our own [FAQ](#) to help answer commonly asked questions. Check back for updates.
- Providing regular updates and guidance to county parties, candidates, and committee members.
- Cancelled non-essential staff travel and deployment.
- Talking frequently to MO Department of Health and Human Services to receive guidance.

What is happening with our mass meetings or congressional conventions?

Mass Meetings originally scheduled April 6th have been cancelled and restructured to take place at the Congressional Conventions. Congressional Conventions have been postponed from April 30th to May 30th. Those wanting to run as state delegates will now attend Congressional Conventions on May 30th and there will be no in-person or other meetings before that point. To read the full changes made, including provisions for potentially having an entirely virtual process, please visit <https://missouridemocrats.org/press-release/committee-approves-emergency-measures-to-protect-against-coronavirus/>

In the meantime, Mass Meeting Ward, Township, and County Chairs should cancel their April 6th meetings and direct their communities to attend (in-person, or potentially virtually) the May 30th congressional conventions. Direct them to www.missouridemocrats.org/2020 for updates, direction, and filing procedures.

What does this mean for the state and national conventions?

Good planning means good contingency planning. The Missouri Democratic Party is evaluating options for ensuring the business of the convention gets done, while prioritizing the safety of the participants. We are in communication with the DNC as they do the same. As of March 15th, there are no plans for national convention to be postponed. State Convention will be held on a Saturday in June (date TBD due to venue availability) in mid-Missouri.

What does this mean for campaigns?

- We recommend our campaigns and local committees to only have meetings held virtually using Google Hangouts, Zoom, and conference calls and we and our partners in the House Caucus will help facilitate the use of online technology for our committees and campaigns to use to organize and carry on. We and our House Caucus partners are developing a series of recommendations on virtual and online organizing tactics for our campaigns to utilize, as well as health, medical, and other guidance.
- In regards to canvassers, the MDP recommends that all canvassing stops until further notice. In order to win majorities in November, we have a lot of persuadable voters we need to connect with. The best way to do that is phones, email, digital apps, and other internet communications. Don't stop campaigning, this election is as critical as any in our lifetimes, but let's begin to change the nature of our campaign efforts to consider the public health reality.

Background**CDC current risk assessment:**

- For most people, the immediate risk of being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to be **low**. This virus is not currently widespread in the United States, but new guidance encourages older adults to stay at home as much as possible.
- [New guidance encourages older adults to 'stay at home as much as possible' due to coronavirus](#) and MDP recommends social distancing for EVERYONE regardless of age.
- People in places where ongoing community spread of the virus that causes COVID-19 has been reported are at elevated risk of exposure, with increase in risk dependent on the location. [You can monitor Missouri cases here.](#)
- Healthcare workers caring for patients with COVID-19 are at elevated risk of exposure.
- Close contacts of persons with COVID-19 are at elevated risk of exposure.

- Travelers returning from affected international locations where community spread is occurring are at elevated risk of exposure, with increase in risk dependent on the location.
- CDC has developed [guidance to help in the risk assessment and management](#) of people with potential exposures to COVID-19.

What is coronavirus?

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses causing illness in both animals and humans ranging from mild illnesses such as the common “cold” to more severe illnesses that caused previous pandemics including SARS and MERS. The current coronavirus outbreak is caused by a “new” coronavirus. The World Health Organization is emphasizing that our ability to prevent, contain and respond to this new outbreak relies on our understanding that this virus has different characteristics than previous coronaviruses, that we do not yet fully understand its behavior, and that we must approach this virus as a new “unknown” coronavirus. The coronavirus (COVID-19) was first reported in Wuhan (pop. 11 M) within the Hubei province of China on Dec. 31, 2019.

Prevention

Promote the daily practice of everyday preventive actions. Use health messages and materials developed by credible public health sources to encourage your event staff and participants to practice good personal health habits. The best thing that you can do right now is be vigilant about washing your hands.

Share [everyday preventive actions with pre-registered attendees to help prevent the spread of COVID-19](#), including:

- Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects daily.
- Try to minimize your contact with frequently touched objects—doorknobs, light switches, railings, etc.
- Hold on shaking hands and reduce unnecessary person to person contact.

Provide additional prevention supplies at your meeting and county convention for attendees, including soap, hand sanitizers, and tissues should your venue not have enough for your anticipated number of attendees.

Identify critical job functions and positions and plan for alternative coverage by cross-training staff (similar to planning for holiday staffing) when possible.

Promote messages that discourage people who are sick from attending events.

This should include messages requesting that people leave events if they begin to have symptoms of COVID-19, which include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. They should seek medical advice promptly by calling ahead to a doctor's office or emergency room to get guidance. [See CDC guidance on what to do when sick with COVID-19.](#)

Limit in-person contact for staff supporting your events. This could include offering staff and your CEC the option to join any county convention planning meetings by phone or video conferencing.

For more information, check out our FAQ and these resources:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/index.html>
- <https://health.mo.gov/living/healthcondiseases/communicable/novel-coronavirus/>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#protect>

Missouri Democrats Convention Links:

- Sign up for your county, ward or township mass meeting:
www.missouridemocrats.org/2020