



From Crisis, Comes Progress

Reinvent **IDHS**
Restore **Illinois**

Introduction

IDHS swiftly, responsibly, and thoughtfully transformed its service delivery system starting in March 2020 to adapt and respond to COVID-19, following guidelines from Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This transformation occurred in phases informed by data and science, with input from key stakeholders.

The COVID-19 crisis forced us to think harder about who we serve and how we can better serve them. We know the programs and services we provide are valued and necessary to Illinois' social safety net, as more than one in four people in Illinois rely on us every day. We also know that we must continue to evolve to meet the needs of Illinois residents and, during this crisis, we have learned a great deal that will shape our future.

Specifically, we have learned some customers thrive with online services, so IDHS plans to maintain or expand our online offerings where it makes sense. We also affirmed many customers still need in-person help, so we're putting in place safety measures to meet their needs without putting them or our employees at risk.

Finally, we learned that an organization like ours is only as good as our people and our partners. The dedication and determination they have shown to their work is nothing short of heroic. At considerable personal risk they have continued to provide a broad range of critical services to the neediest people in Illinois. As we move forward, we will empower them to help shape the agency's future.

Even before COVID-19 struck, we knew IDHS had to adapt to a changing world with more technology and more challenges, and the pandemic has only accelerated our work. Today, with more people out of work, stress, depression, and related problems – from domestic violence to mental health crises to substance use disorders – are on the rise. In response, IDHS must find new and innovative ways to meet these growing social service needs.

IDHS's framework builds upon Governor Pritzker's Restore Illinois plan. Further, it seeks to inspire new thinking and to retain the "best" lessons and practices from the COVID-19 experience to create a stronger human services system for the future. We acknowledge that our own operations have been forever transformed by our response to this crisis. For some of our employees, remote work may remain the norm. Where in-office services resume, we will focus on developing sustainable safety solutions including staggered start and end times, staff rotations, and office design elements that allow for physical distance. These will not only be a matter of health and public safety, but also a matter of long-term flexibility and productivity.

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the agency's future.**

This framework will unite restoration and re-invention planning efforts across IDHS, governed by consistent principles, metrics, and data to ensure safety, efficiency, evolution, and impact. The scope of this effort includes high-level planning from all IDHS program divisions and operational areas. This framework will serve as the agency-wide macro roadmap for the resumption and/or reinvention of programs over a period of time.

The framework will also be advanced through an equity lens. IDHS decisions regarding activities, investments of resources, policy, and programs will continue to be informed by data and focus on meeting the needs of those most impacted by COVID-19. It will also address racial/geographic/ethnic/disability/residency disproportionate impacts and outcomes. Equity explicitly means equity in outcomes, not equity in resources. The fact is, some communities need more help than others in order to achieve anything close to equitable outcomes, so we will always be asking whether our investments advance or impede our equity goals.

This transformation will require a culture shift across the agency to not only embrace the “new normal” in terms of safety precautions and social distancing guidelines, but also inspire a “can do” attitude about adopting innovative ways of conducting our work and caring for our clients. IDHS has always fostered a culture of human closeness where we extend ourselves to care for those most in need. That spirit will continue even as we maintain and encourage social distancing. At IDHS, we are all in this together and we will conduct our work with empathy and respect for our colleagues’ safety, their unique circumstances, and their ability to contribute to making IDHS a nationally renowned state agency.

Thank you for joining us in this effort to safely meet the challenges of COVID-19 while strategically transforming our work so that we can continue to provide exemplary human services to residents in the State of Illinois.

Framework

GOAL

IDHS will successfully restore suspended, limited, or remote-only services and programs in a way that is responsive to the changed environment, ensures optimal safety of employees and clients, and leverages the opportunity to reinvent program models to reflect client and agency need.

Progress toward restoration will be guided by data and responsive to changing safety needs based on three primary indicators.



IDPH Critical
Regions & Zip Codes



Trends in Client
& Staff Positivity



Client Impact
Indicators

RESTORE ILLINOIS AS IT APPLIES TO IDHS

1 PHASE ONE: RAPID SPREAD

- + Limited office workplace presence
- + In person field services suspended
- + Shift to virtual services
- + Retention payments
- + State operated hospitals and developmental centers open with strict safety precautions

2 PHASE TWO: FLATTENING

- + Limited office workplace presence
- + In person field services suspended
- + Shift to virtual services
- + Retention payments
- + State operated hospitals and developmental centers open with strict safety precautions

3 PHASE THREE: RECOVERY

- + Phase in office workplace presence with strict safety precautions
- + Continued focus on telework, online services, and virtual interactions
- + Maintain virtual field services and limited in-person contact where permitted
- + Retention payments phase down, phase up planning grants
- + State operated hospitals and developmental centers open with strict safety precautions

4 PHASE FOUR: RESTORATION

- + Increase in office workplace presence with strict safety precautions
- + Selective in person meetings allowed (with safety precautions) and virtual interactions remain encouraged
- + Maintain virtual field services where effective and safely resume some in person services where permitted
- + Retention payments phase down, phase up planning grants
- + Initiate temporary bridge grants for shut-downs
- + State operated hospitals and developmental centers open with strict safety precautions; limited visitors based on defined safety criteria; consider resumption of on-site monitoring and investigations

5 PHASE 5: REINVENTION

- + Services restored and reinvented with continued evolution and refinement
- + Continue safety precautions as recommended by IDPH/CDC and support for health system management of health crises

Principles

SAFETY

- + Implement physical changes and sanitary measures to ensure workforce safety.
- + Use of and, as needed, access to PPE.
- + Protect vulnerable staff, clients, residents, and patients.
- + Bolster action with policy, procedure, and training.

SERVICE

- + Continue to provide crucial care through State operated facilities.
- + Address client access barriers.
- + Explore new and innovative delivery models to meet client needs.
- + Advance equity.

EVOLVE

- + Embrace virtual technology and telework.
- + Reimagine work, programs, and services.
- + Develop programs and policies that are responsive to changing client needs.

IMPACT

- + Gradual approach.
- + Transparent communication.
- + Employee feedback and engagement.
- + Monitor safety and impact metrics.

Process

The framework provides an overarching definition of restoration and reinvention objectives and progress and allows for flexibility at the program and operational levels to adapt to changes and to ensure program compliance. This plan is a living document and is subject to change, depending on the progress of the COVID-19 pandemic (including potential regression or a new wave) and the success of service resumption at the division and program level.

Management of this effort will be centralized across IDHS to ensure coordinated planning, implementation, and communication is coordinated across all of our divisions and administration. All IDHS planning efforts are informed by the Governor, IDPH, and Central Management Services Guidance and are committed to ensuring safety, promoting equity, fostering creativity, and assuring transparency.