# Arts Reopening Guide

For Indiana Arts Venues / Organizations in Response to COVID-19

June 2020

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# Introduction

The arts sector depends on consumption of its product by large groups of people, almost always through large single gatherings. The reality is that normal operations will not be possible in response to COVID-19 under the recommendations of medical professionals and government officials.

Our state and nation depend on the arts sector for quality of life, economic growth, community development, entertainment, and education. Additionally, there are tens of thousands employed in the arts sector. Each of those individuals has been affected by COVID-19's impact on the industry. The best way to get arts employees back to work is for arts venues to reopen - and to reopen safely.

The reopening of arts venues and arts operations must be done at a pace that arts leaders are comfortable with, and safely for both audiences and staff. This Reopening Guide aims to provide a set of guiding questions and best practice examples for the creative sector when considering when to reopen their doors.

Reopening should only be considered when:

1. Federal, State, or Local orders permit reopening.

2. Leadership of a given arts entity determines reopening can occur safely.

Every arts venue is unique in its form, function, and operation. As such, this document does not provide specific and itemized guidance by discipline so that it can be used across the industry more effectively. However, at the end of this document, we have provided a list of additional resources which can help you further identify specific operational adjustments. It is highly recommended that you also read these additional resources for specific recommendations.

# Disclaimer

This document is not meant to imply that all arts venues or programs should be open by a certain time, nor is it intended to require changes in operation. This document should not be misconstrued as legal advice, nor legal justification for reopening.

The reopening of any arts venue, program, experience, office, studio, gallery, or any other facility, program, or product, is ultimately the sole decision, and responsibility, of the leaders of a given arts entity. Adherence to all local, state, or federal laws, orders, guidelines, codes, or other regulation is the responsibility of individual entities and is assumed in this document.

# Section 1: Planning to Reopen

**Safety is paramount and due to the nature of our industry's reliance on gatherings, the arts are particularly prone to being areas where infection can be spread. This means in order to reopen safely, your team should only open when you are prepared to make all necessary adjustments to ensure safety for staff, artists, volunteers, and audiences. The following are questions leadership should consider before announcing or planning any reopening.**

## Questions to Consider

- Have government authorities permitted operations of venues like yours to reopen?
  - If not, is there an idea of when you may be able to open for limited and/or full operation?

- What do COVID-19 infection rates look like in your immediate community?

- Have you surveyed regular patrons and/or community members to gauge their comfort level in returning to your venue?

- Has your board or other governing body met to discuss reopening?

- Have you talked with your team to discuss their ability to return to work?

- Has any of your team been exposed to COVID-19, or even contracted the virus?

- Will your reopening be digital or in-person?

- At what pace do you expect you will reopen?

- Will your employees return all at once, or in waves?

- Do you think reopening will provide satisfactory revenue for the fiscal health of your organization either immediately or in the near future?

- Will you consult local health and safety authorities once you have a plan ready?

- Who will be your designated "point person" for safety decisions and protocols?
  - What authority will they have?

# Section 2: Facility Sanitation

**Your facility is where your staff will interact with one another, where your artists will perform, and where your audience will interact with all of the above, and each other. Preparing your facility for this much interaction during COVID-19 will be one of the most important first steps you can take in the reopening process. This is your opportunity to set a standard of cleanliness, safety, and preparedness for your constituents, and most importantly for your own staff who will have to interact with the facility first, and for the most amount of time.**

## Major Systems

- Are the premises in good order, including fully operational utilities and equipment?
  *(e.g. electrical, lighting, gas services, and proper ventilation; hood systems; garbage and refuse areas; and toilet facilities)*

- Are your technical / backstage systems in good working order?

- Are any areas dedicated to the service or preparation of food, properly cleaned, stocked, sanitized, or disinfected, as appropriate?

- Are the facilities checked for pest infestation or harborage, and are all pest control measures functioning?

- Are ventilation systems including air ducts and vents in the facility clean, free of mold, and operating properly?

- Is there the ability for increased circulation of outdoor air (as much as possible) by, for example, opening windows and doors or using fans?

- Are high touch self-service containers and items requiring frequent hand contact removed from use (e.g. seating covers, table cloths, throw rugs, condiments such as salt/pepper shakers, and reusable paper items)?

- Will you remove or keep in place marketing materials that may be touched by multiple people?

- Will you contract a specialized sanitation service prior to opening, and on a regular basis?

## Routine Cleaning

- What will be the schedule for regular cleaning and disinfection of surface areas? Who will be responsible?

- Do you have a list of surfaces that should be cleaned? *(Some surfaces may get overlooked if they have not been cleaned regularly in the past.)*
  - Does that list include surfaces in all backstage, dressing room, technical, and performance spaces?

- Do you have enough supplies for increased cleaning?
  - What needs to be purchased in advance of opening and/or in advance of events?

- Will this routine cleaning be put into a checklist so that the organization can monitor effectively?

- Will this routine include professional sanitation services?

- If you outsource any cleaning services, what are your vendor's protocols for cleaning and sanitizing surfaces at your facility and in their own facility?

- If you are a renter, are you and facility management in agreement regarding cleaning protocols and major systems?

# Section 3: Food / Beverage Areas

**If your facility serves, prepares, or stocks food and beverages, you will need to pay close attention to the operation of those areas.**

**For this section, we refer you to the guidelines and best practice of the following entities:**

[FDA - Best Practices for Retail Food Establishments](#)
[Hoosier Hospitality Promise](#)
[Coronavirus Response Kit for Restaurants](#)
[Indiana State Department of Health](#)

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# Section 4: Staff Interactions

**Safety for your staff is paramount to your decision to reopen. Your staff is normally in contact with many individuals, so there is a lot to think about. Your goal should be to limit their exposure, ensure a clean and safe workplace, and provide clear guidance for all areas of operation.**

## Before Staff Arrives

- What employees are essential to have in your facility?

- Should you create a staggered schedule for employees, or determine other ways to get staff back to the facility?

- How will your workspaces be physically altered to accommodate proper social distancing guidelines?

- Do you have proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) on hand as appropriate for each department (masks, gloves, etc.)?

- Do you have a fully stocked First Aid Kit easily accessible to all employees?

- How will you monitor employee health on the job?

- Will you screen staff for signs of COVID-19 before each day starts?

- How will you communicate any and all operational changes for staff before they arrive for work?

- How do employees arrive, park, enter, exit, and take breaks in and around your facility?
  - What concerns in those areas can you address and how?

## On the Job

- How are you going to limit in-person interactions between staff members during the work day?

- What are the types of work that require close proximity as a necessity for the job to be done?
  *This is especially important to note for technical roles in venues such as lighting / sound, set construction, installations, etc - instances where more than one person is <u>needed</u> to lift / move / operate equipment.*

- Will you permit work-at-home for employees who are uncomfortable with returning to the office or for those who may be exposed outside of your workplace?

- How will you handle staff meetings?

- Are signs posted around the facility to remind staff of safety procedures they must follow?

- Do all employees have access to soap and water to maintain proper recommended hand washing protocols?

- Do any of your operational adjustments create any accessibility issues for employees who require an accommodation?

- What will your process be for documenting workers who may appear to be symptomatic?

- What will your protocols be for a confirmed case within your staff?
  - What about for confirmed cases in a staff member's immediate family?

- How will volunteers be managed - the same as staff, or differently?

- What measures will you take if staff or volunteers request to not participate in daily activities due to concerns around exposure?

- What measures will you take if staff or volunteers actively refuse to abide by your internal policies during this time (e.g. not wearing a mask or maintaining social distance measures, if in place)?

# Section 5: Artist Interactions

**The safety of artists is paramount, and is in many ways more challenging than any other segment of the creative industry. Especially in the performing arts disciplines, in-person interactions are a necessary part of a successful performance. While this document does not provide directives around programming content, the following questions are meant to help you think about how to make spaces and performances as safe as possible for artists, should performances be held. There are also additional considerations to be weighed based on your specific discipline. This document does not provide that unique guidance for each discipline, but rather is focused on commonalities between disciplines.**

SEE ALSO "SECTION 4: STAFF INTERACTIONS" - MANY OF THOSE CONSIDERATIONS ALSO APPLY HERE

## Rehearsals

- Who will be permitted in the rehearsal space during each rehearsal?

- Will you have rotating shifts for technical staff, artists, and creative staff for access to all needed areas?

- Where will artists wait while they are not actively rehearsing?

- Can you maintain proper social distancing measures throughout the rehearsal process?
  - If social distancing cannot be maintained throughout the entire rehearsal process, how long *can* it be maintained?

- Can masks or other protective equipment be worn during rehearsal?

- Do any of your operational adjustments create any accessibility issues for artists who require an accommodation?

- How are Green Rooms, Rehearsal Halls, or other spaces being routinely cleaned and sanitized before, during, and after rehearsals?

- How will equipment, instruments, props, costumes, set pieces, and other items be cleaned?

- How can you limit the number of "touches" per item in the production?

- Are you going to limit the number of in-person rehearsals?

- If young performers are involved, how are you handling interactions with parents during rehearsals?

- For visual arts - should the artist(s) be present for installations or other planning stages?

- Who will be responsible for ensuring proper cleaning measures are being followed?

## Performances (Not Including Audience Measures)

- How far away should performers be from audience members while on stage or performing?

- Are you eliminating any interaction between performers and audiences?

- What will be your protocol if a member of the artist team becomes ill?

- Are you going to limit the number of performances?

- If a part of your historical routine, will you still be hosting artist talks, talk backs, or other audience engagement activities?

- How long is your performance run-time? Will it require an intermission?

- How can you ensure safety for your artists during intermissions / set breaks?

- For touring groups, what are the protocols requested by the tour and/or artists?
  - How will you ensure those needs are met?

# Section 6: Patron Interactions

**Once you decide to reopen, you will begin interacting with patrons from all over your community. Not only do they expect that you will be operating with proper safety measures in place, but also expect for you to ensure their experience is as safe as possible.**

## Non-Event Interactions

- How are you going to communicate your reopening plan with your patrons?

- How will patrons contact your staff with questions or requests?
  - Should they expect a delayed response?

- Will you restrict, or eliminate, public access to your facility?

- How will waiting areas, if open for use, be set for social distancing and how will they be cleaned?

- Can you eliminate in-person payments (cash/card/check) for services or products?
  - Can you reduce the number of instances in which patrons and staff interact with the same item during payment processing (e.g. cards, touch screens, etc)?

- In what instances will in-person interactions with patrons (outside of events) be necessary and allowed?

- Will you require members of the public to wear any protective equipment for non-event interactions?

- Will you have proper signage regarding safety measures?

- Do you have access to hand washing stations (e.g. bathrooms) and/or hand sanitizer for visitors?

- Will you be allowing audiences to use restroom facilities outside of event hours?

- Do any of your operational adjustments create any accessibility issues for individuals who require an accommodation?

- How will individuals enter and exit the facility safely?
  - Do you have the ability to provide multiple points of ingress and egress?

- Will you require any kind of health monitoring for those entering your facility?

## Event Interactions

- Will you require any kind of health monitoring for those entering an event?

- Are you requiring attendees to wear masks and/or other protective equipment?
  - If yes, are you supplying gear to individuals who do not have access to masks or other items?

- What staff will attendees interact with?
  - How will those staff members be prepared in terms of safety equipment?

- If you have a gallery exhibit inside your facility (and you are not a museum), will you allow public access outside of performance times?

- Will water fountains be available or closed?

- Will you be opening up any concession stands?
  - Are able to meet the guidelines and requirements set by the FDA and the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH)?

- Will you have proper signage regarding safety measures?

- How will you be able to identify "family groups", who may be able to sit closer together?

- What will your cap on attendance be given social distancing?

- Are you going to be issuing refunds to those who are uncomfortable with attending?
  - How about for those who report symptoms prior to showing up?
  - How about those that are symptomatic upon entering?

- How often will high touch surfaces be cleaned while patrons are present?

- How will you handle box office / ticketing or merchandise while limiting physical contact with shared surfaces (e.g. credit cards, touch screens, etc)?

- How will you communicate operational changes to attendees prior to and during the event?

- How will you clean and sanitize between events?

- Will you shift any events to a virtual platform?

- What measures will you take if a patron actively refuses to abide by your internal policies during this time (e.g. not wearing a mask or maintaining social distance measures, if in place)?

- Will you need to bring in additional staff to help monitor operational changes during an event (e.g. social distancing in your seating areas)

# Section 7: Policy/Governance Considerations

**Some of your operational changes may highlight needed adjustments in your organization's policies. Below are a few key areas to consider.**

## Questions to Consider

- Do you have a documented paid leave policy?
  - Does it reflect federal requirements in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act for specific response to COVID-19?

- Do you have a documented work-from-home policy?
  - Has the response to COVID-19 highlighted the ability to have broader work-from-home operations, or a greater demand for it from your staff?

- Do any of your operational adjustments impact accessibility and equity issues?

- How will performance evaluations for employees change?

- How will you onboard new staff members and/or new board members if you are now more virtual?

- Are there any staff roles that need to be adjusted to accommodate an increased workload, diversified portfolio, or other needs?

- Do your contracts with artists, staff, and vendors need to be updated to reflect necessary changes?

- Has the board discussed these policy changes and given them approval?

- Have you contacted your insurer, or risk/safety manager, to discuss your coverage related to COVID-19?

- What kind of data is important to track during this time, and will you need to adjust how that data is captured based on any new measures (e.g. high touch items, such as a sign in sheet to capture zip codes)?

# Section 8: Financial Considerations

**COVID-19 has impacted the arts industry in extremely negative ways. Reopening gives all organizations the opportunity to begin receiving earned revenue again, but also reopening strategies may not allow for full operations, therefore impacting actual revenue expectations. Putting on a performance may not bring in as much revenue as before due to social distancing and public comfort with large gatherings, but the costs of staging a performance or exhibit will still be at levels pre-coronavirus. Here are some guiding questions to consider in this area.**

### Questions to Consider

- What do your cash reserves look like?
  - How long of a "runway" do you have?

- What role will your reserves play into your ability to reopen?

- What are your priorities with any money you are able to collect - staffing, programming, facility, etc?

- What are the personnel costs to reopen?

- What areas are you willing to make cuts in so that you can open with limited operations, staffing, etc?

- Do you have enough funding to maintain a clean and safe facility for staff and patrons?

- What flexibility is provided in vendor and outside contracts?

- Are you anticipating adjustments to the cost of admission, goods and services, and other income-generating areas to the general public?

- What costs will be associated with creating social distancing for your programs?
  - What about the anticipated lost revenue due to capacity?

- Can you build a 3, 6, and 12 month model given reduced capacity and revenue?

- At what point, financially, do you draw the line on various operations?

# Section 9: Recommendations for Community Arts Events

**Key First Steps:**

- Connect with your community's health and safety departments ASAP in your planning process.
    - Do you have the latest policies, procedures and expectations for your community and that you work in tandem with those departments.
    - Do you know what the expectations are if someone exhibits symptoms at your event? What does intervention look like for those who are not observing posted regulations?
    - If possible, ask if a health or safety officer can be present to gently reinforce safe practices and be a visible, accessible resource
    - Every community is different and has different needs and expectations.

- Assess your average annual attendance for your event.
    - As with traditional businesses, it is prudent to reduce your capacity in order to allow for more physical space around people, activities, vendors, and dining.
    - Consider limiting the number of vendors you accept and require advanced registration and/or timed ticketing for participants.
    - Direct traffic flow with safety tape or other markings to keep crowds moving and socially distant.

- Assess your site's layout and identify locations where clearance is narrow or traffic funnels.
    - Note entrances, restrooms, trashcans, dining areas, pay stations, and audience seating.
    - Consider scattering amenities across your footprint: adding entrances, increasing space provided, or directing traffic patterns, etc.

- Expectations for food service are more stringent during this period of time.
    - Consider eliminating food service
    - Eliminate self-service and the use of communal supplies, such as napkin or ketchup dispensers, communal bins for silverware, etc.
    - Make sure that your food vendors are aware of the current restrictions - most will know the expectations very well and should be able to help you plan for safety and comfort!

- Prepare signage to post at entrances and throughout your event. Use the same language in your promotion of the event, including on your website and social media.  Suggestions for messaging include:
    - *Please help us keep our community healthy. If you are sick or have tested positive for COVID-19 in the past two weeks, please DO NOT ENTER.*
    - *Please practice social distancing while attending our event.*
    - *Face coverings are recommended (or mandatory)*
    - *(If applicable) Enter at your own risk.*

- Provide hand sanitizing stations throughout your event or venue.

- Separate pay registers from other interactions, especially food and drink.
  - Consider using no-touch payments
  - Encourage registration online in advance

- Provide PPE and cleaning supplies to staff & volunteers.
  - Indiana not for profit organizations are encouraged to utilize the Market Place for securing PPE for regular operations of their organization. [Indiana Marketplace PPE](#)

- Train staff & volunteers on best practices for maintaining a safe and healthy environment and on recognizing the symptoms of COVID-19.
  - Screen staff and volunteers before the event begins or at the beginning of their shifts. Provide staff with self-screening information before the event and ask them to verbally confirm that they have conducted a self-diagnostic and that they are not exhibiting symptoms.
  - Ensure that your team knows what to do if they see someone exhibiting symptoms, or if they encounter someone who is not following posted regulations.
  - Train your staff on how to provide accommodations for vulnerable populations or other people with special needs, including members of the autistic community.

- Clean frequently-touched surfaces regularly
  - This should be the job of a well-trained group of staff and/or volunteers
  - The exact surfaces, sequence of surfaces, and timing of cleaning should be identified in advance to avoid confusion and oversight
  - Cleaning should occur at a set time, or in conjunction with attendance benchmarks
  - Restrooms and hand sanitizing stations should be a high priority for regular cleaning. This might be an area where you want to engage an expert or company for assistance.

## Best Practice Implementation:

- Survey vendors, performers, and potential participants

- Communicate early & often: Share your expectations for vendors, performers and participants well in advance of the event in appropriate communication channels.
  - Post guidelines & expectations on your website and social media so that guests can self-select.
  - Post guidelines in easy-to-access locations at the event. Be sure to follow recommendations for accessibility.
  - Follow up after the event for community building.

- Track attendance.
  - Try online registration with staggered times to spread crowds over the course of the day - these may not be very enforceable, but if even a portion of your participants follow their recommended times, it will help spread out your crowd.
  - Ticketless entry is encouraged

- Designate specific entrances and exits
    - Use signage to specify entrances, exits, and the direction of traffic flow

- Provide markings that show safe social distances
.
- Discuss feasibility of providing PPE to participants, particularly those in vulnerable populations

- Provide cleaning supplies to vendors, if possible, to encourage them to clean frequently touched surfaces

- Provide 6-10 feet of space between vendor booths & activities

## Inclusivity:

- Invest in a digital presence for advertising expectations, for connecting with those who cannot go out, and for building community.
    - Virtual components are quickly becoming an expectation for community members
    - You likely have potential attendees who currently do not feel that they can participate because they are a caregiver or have other health factors. A virtual component will allow them to continue to be an active community member.

- Consider accommodations for at-risk populations:
    - Can you provide special hours for people in vulnerable populations to participate more safely?
    - Can you provide delivery or pick-up opportunities for products, food, or activities?

## Other Considerations:

- Live Music:
    - The act of singing is a great way to spread COVID-19
    - Most performance groups have to work in close proximity, which defies most social-distancing guidelines
    - Single performers and small groups may be able to perform safely if adequate space is provided between them and the audience and if audience seating is arranged to also observe social distancing guidelines

- Liability:
    - Speak with your insurance provider about your liability for health & safety
    - Some insurance providers have started to offer COVID-19 cancellation plans or policies to address if and when your event might need to be cancelled.

- Misters & fans:
    - Air circulation is a factor in the spread of the disease. While there are recommendations for encouraging air exchange in enclosed spaces, it is important to ensure that fans are not

potentially blowing droplets into crowds or in other ways enhancing the distance of potential spread.
- Mist may increase COVID-19's ability to survive and spread over larger distances - be cautious in considering the use of misters and fans at your event.

# Additional Resources

If viewing on a computer, click the links below for direct access to these resources. You can also search for these by name online.

- CDC Gathering Guidelines
- IN State Department of Health COVID-19 Resources
- Governor Eric Holcomb Executive Orders
- Back on Track Indiana
  - Back on Track Reopening Principles
  - What's Opened What's Closed?
- FDA Restaurant Reopening Best Practices
- Arts Insights - Overcoming a Crisis
- Performing Arts Centers Consortium
- Event Safety Alliance Guide
- American Alliance of Museums
- World Health Organization