

A woman with curly hair is talking on a mobile phone. In the foreground, a laptop is open, displaying a collage of various posters and stickers. The posters include titles like 'HIP HOP', 'HOMEBLEED', and 'SLAY HAVES'. The background shows a building with many windows.

# Community Services Action Plan

**If you're feeling overwhelmed and unsure of what actions to take during this time, use this guide to get you started. Here's what we'll cover:**

**Keeping safe**

- Protecting yourself
- Protecting your community

**Assessing and generating solutions**

- Identifying short-term solutions
- Starting to think long term

**Adapting and overcoming**

- Converting to digital solutions
- Putting a plan into action

**Staying in contact**

- Updating your communication channels
- Reaching out to your community

**Marketing during this time**

- Being sensitive and respectful
- Gauging the appropriate path

**Planning for the future**

- Thinking ahead
- Using what you've learned



The COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic is changing the way we all handle our day-to-day operations.

There is much we still don't know about how this situation will play out. As this unprecedented crisis continues to evolve, many nonprofit leaders are wondering how to face the challenges of serving their communities. Many are having to adapt or cancel services, postpone or reconfigure fundraising and community events, and reschedule planned giving days.

Members of the nonprofit community are some of the most resourceful and resilient people we know. And now's the time to lean into that resourcefulness, make a plan, and get to work. If you're feeling overwhelmed and unsure of what actions to take, this guide will serve as a good starting point.

Let's take a look at some ways that you can take stock of the situation, generate solutions, and take action to serve your community.

As you know, things are developing rapidly. Remain flexible to make changes on the fly.

Remember, you've got us and can get [Constant Contact Help and Support](#) when you need it.





# Safety First

Your first priority is to make sure that your family, staff, volunteers, clients, and especially yourself, are safe and safeguarded, to the best of your ability.

Implement [CDC-recommended precautions](#) at your organization as soon as possible. Among the most important recommendations are:



- ☐ **Actively encourage employees and volunteers, especially those who are sick, to stay home.**
- ☐ **Implement systems that allow them to work from home if possible.**
- ☐ **Emphasize the importance of cough and sneeze etiquette as well as hand hygiene within your organization.**
- ☐ **Perform routine, thorough environmental cleaning.**

Once you've done what you can for everyone's health and safety, it's time to figure out how this situation may affect your efforts.

It's likely you're already feeling the impact. In any emergency, large or small, you'll often have to assess and reassess to generate solutions because things are always changing.



**Note:** Since this is a rapidly moving situation the guidelines set forth by your local health officials should take precedent when deciding what precautions to follow. ([Find resources for your state here.](#))

# Assess and generate solutions

Since there are a lot of unknowns, it's important to think about various possibilities and what you can do to adapt to them. The problems you face will vary depending on the nature of your nonprofit, and so your solutions will vary too. It's important to look at the "what ifs" directly and to make a plan based on what you're able to do. Here are some examples of things you may need to consider.



You may want to write things down as you think through these questions and begin to generate answers. It'll help you formulate your action plan.

## What if you end up short on staff or volunteers?

- ☐ Think about reducing your hours or days that you're open or actively providing services.

## What if you have a problem accessing resources?

- ☐ Check your supply channels to find out how long it will take to get new supplies.
- ☐ See if you can find ways to reduce the consumption of these resources (or utilize alternative resources) as you provide services.

## What if you get sick?

- ☐ Designate someone else who will be in charge of the daily operations.

## What can you do to help your staff?

- ☐ Can you continue to pay them if they can't come in?
- ☐ Do you have something you can give them to help them out?

## What can you do to help the people you serve?

- ☐ Are there immediate items they need that you could provide?
- ☐ How can you keep in communication with your community during this crisis?

And at some point you may have to ask the bigger questions:

**What if I have to temporarily close?**

- Is there a way you can bring any of them online?
- Are there alternative solutions you can recommend for clients that you can no longer serve?

**Is the “temporary” plan you put into place sustainable? If so, for how long?**

- If no, are there things you can do to adjust your plan so it will be sustainable?

**What if this lasts several weeks or months?**

- How this would affect your family, your staff and their families, and your community — can you help them in some way?

**Are there any other resources available to you?**

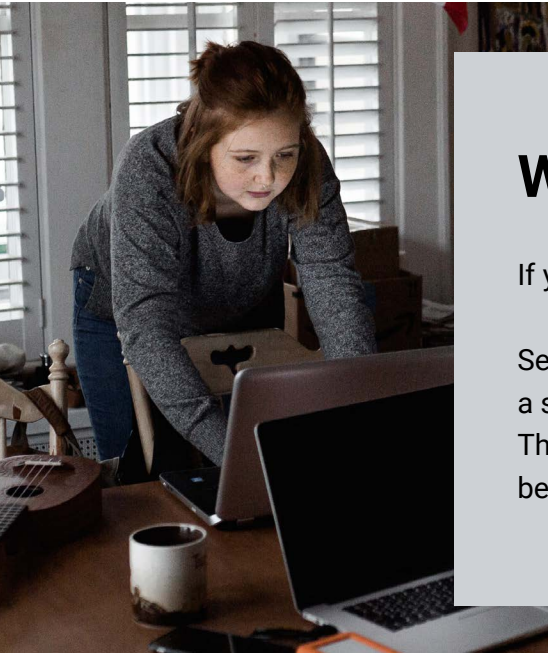
We’ve compiled a list of resources for you.

[Resources for Organizations Impacted by COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\)](#)



# Adapt and overcome

Your “business as usual” may no longer exist. You’ll need to adapt to get through these trying times. Some things to consider:



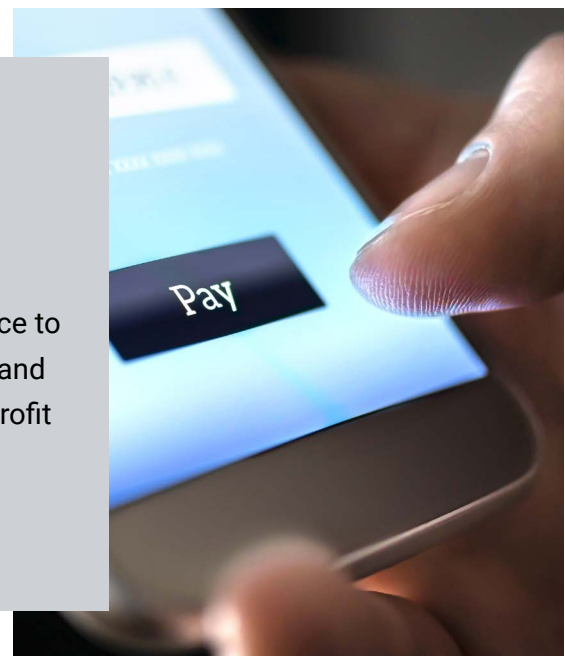
## Working from home

If you can, set up work from home options for yourself and your staff.


Set up a workstation that can stay in place for as long as you need it. Create a space where everyone in the family knows that if you’re in it, you’re working. This can help you to stay focused when you’re working, and set up boundaries between working and hanging out at home.

## Collecting donations online

It’s likely you’re already collecting donations online. If not, now’s your chance to start. Your Constant Contact account comes with tools that make it quick and easy to collect donations. You can even create a full website for your nonprofit to tell people about your organization and why they should donate.







## Moving in-person events and programs online

There are plenty of ways for you to connect with your community via phone or video call. You can also find platforms that allow you to hold virtual events. You may even consider a YouTube channel, video conferencing, or livestreaming.



## Providing no-contact services

Depending on the nature of your nonprofit, you may still be able to provide services to your community. Be sure to think through social distancing and keeping safety in mind. Let people know what measures you're taking to keep them safe.

**Once you have a game plan to adapt your usual operations, you'll need to let people know about it.**



# Stay in contact

When you're constantly having to make changes to adapt to an ever-changing situation, it's imperative to your success that you continue to build strong relationships and keep the lines of communication open with your diverse stakeholders including clients, volunteers, donors, community leaders, and funding agencies.

Keep the members of your community aware of any changes to day-to-day operations and other important updates during this time.

Be sure to include details people should know about, like your hours, program availability, modifications you're making, and any precautions you're taking regarding the virus.

Consider the following tips to communicate the above information:



- ☐ **Update your website.**
- ☐ **Email your stakeholders.**
- ☐ **Post to social channels and pin those posts to the top of your feed if possible.**
- ☐ **Update your details on your Google My Business profile and any other sites where you have a listing.**
- ☐ **If you have a physical location, think about hanging signage in your windows and within the organization.**

It's also a good idea to review any communications you already had scheduled for their appropriateness and relevance based on the current state of affairs.

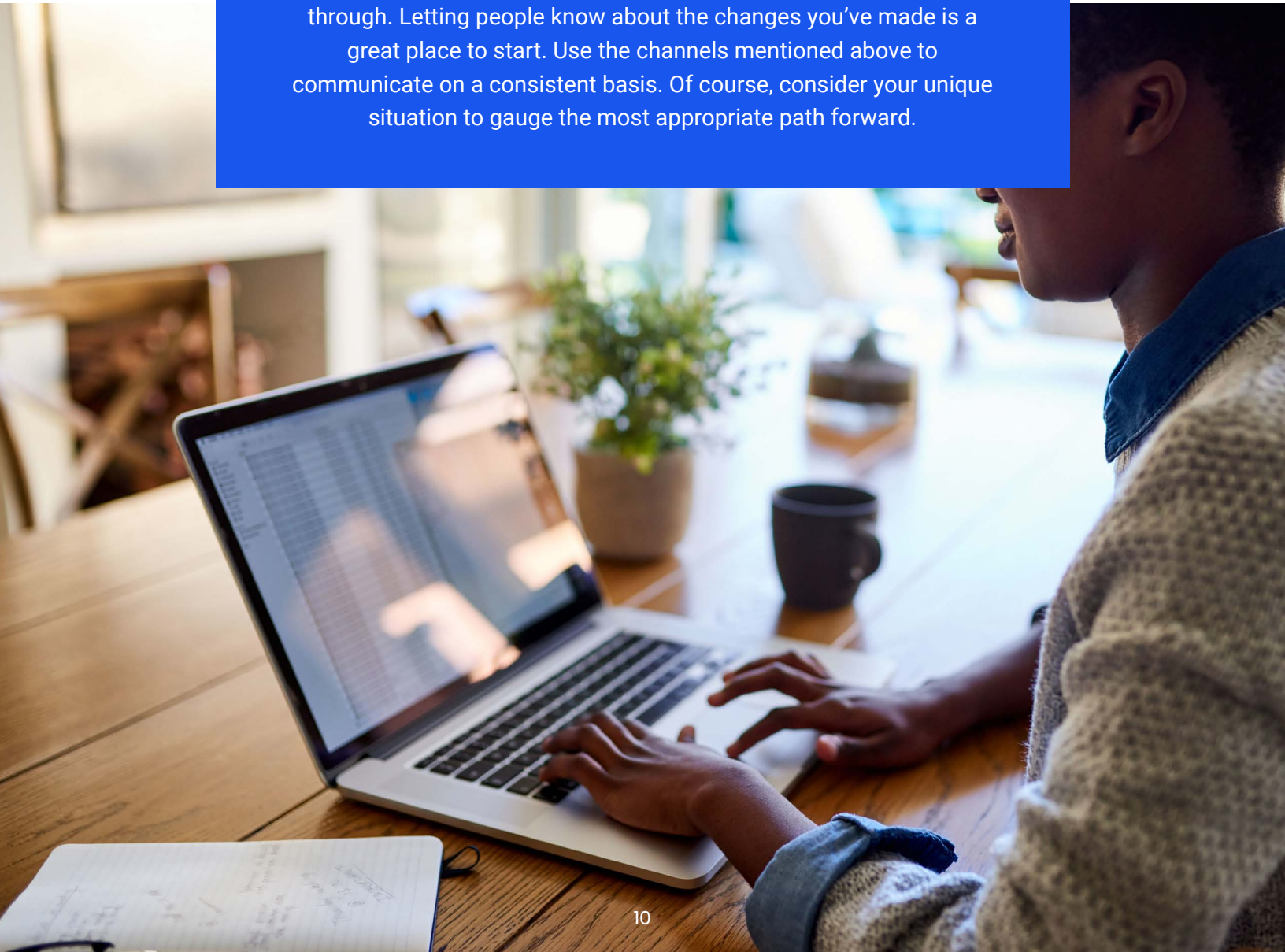
Remember, your Constant Contact account comes with tools to create a website, sell online, collect donations, send email (including templates for you to communicate with your contacts about COVID-19 including tips on what to say), post to social media, and more. Need help? See our other resources for [Constant Contact Help and Support](#).





# Marketing and asking for donations during this time

Yes, it's okay to market your nonprofit and ask for donations during this time. But you must be sensitive to the current situation and respectful of your audience and the situation they are also going through. Letting people know about the changes you've made is a great place to start. Use the channels mentioned above to communicate on a consistent basis. Of course, consider your unique situation to gauge the most appropriate path forward.



# Plan for the future

Eventually, you'll need to transition back to business as usual. It's important to plan ahead. So, start making plans for what comes after the emergency.

Review the changes you've made and what you've learned, then think about how you can use that information to move forward.

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## What can stay?

Look for things worth making a permanent part of your operations.



- ☐ Did your communication cadence generate good will within the community?
- ☐ Did modifications to your day-to-day make anything more efficient?
- ☐ Did virtual events garner more attention that you thought they would?

If so, don't stop just because the emergency is over. Keep them going and see if they're a good addition to your organization long term.

## What comes next?



- ☐ Do you need to reach out to your suppliers and program partners?
- ☐ If you've been closed, what do you need to do to reopen?
- ☐ How will you recall your staff? Will it be in stages or all at once?

These are trying times with many unknowns. By doing your best to stay safe, review your options, and make a plan you'll better position yourself to come out on the other side.





# Remember, you are not alone

Our marketing advisors are here to help.

- Connect with other nonprofits in the [Community](#)
- See our other resources for [Constant Contact Help and Support](#)

**You've got this. You've got us.**

