

1. HELP TO PREVENT THE SPREAD

- Stay aware of federal, provincial, municipal, or industry recommendations on preventing the spread of COVID-19. Stay informed of reopening requirements such as maintaining physical distancing and practicing good hygiene. Additional practices may include displaying informational posters, having personal protective equipment available, limiting capacity or customer traffic, staggering working hours, and working electronically. Review Manitoba's Pandemic and Economic Roadmap for Recovery in the links below and monitor changes in public health recommendations.
- Ensure that additional workplace measures are communicated with employees, customers, suppliers, partners, and community members. This information can be distributed in a variety of communication channels including social media, posters, phone calls, emails, or FAQ documents. It is important to note changes in employee work environments or customer service expectations.
- Seek travel advice prior to leaving on business trips, to meet clients, or make site visits. Determine if a working from home plan is available for your business. Try to utilize technology to encourage physical distancing in meeting with clients, employees, or partners.

2. REVIEW BUSINESS OPERATIONS

- Use this time to reflect on your business vision and strategy. What is working, not working, what changes can you make, how can you shift direction or revamp your strategy?
- Determine your back to work hours of operation. Will you be returning in stages? What additional procedures will need to be in place? How do you plan to communicate these changes?
- Plan for every outcome. Identify potential changes in COVID-19 cases and how that may alter your business. What will you need to change in the event cases are low, moderate, or severe? How does that change the way you do business? Plan to navigate these situations.
- Identify the critical products or services that your business provides and plan for continued functioning. What are those leading products or services that are vital to the business?
- Identify the products or services you can deliver now, what you can deliver at half production capacity, and at full capacity. Consider the demand on these products or services and how that may change over the next few months. Is there a way to diversify your offerings?
- Identify service level requirements, are you in a contract to provide (x) amount of product or services to third party companies? Are you able to meet that demand?
- If you are in an appointment-based business like a salon, start to plan how you will welcome your clients back, what method will you use to determine order of priority for scheduling? How will you prevent customers waiting for appointments to ensure physical distancing?
- Contact suppliers to determine if inventory and supplies are available for reopening. Do you have everything you need to re-open your doors? Will you need to find any alternative suppliers or ration critical supplies? How has service delivery or expectations changed for your suppliers?
- Keep customers apprised of any impacts to product or service delivery. It is important to set the customer's expectations early in your communications.
- How will you respond to a reduction or increase in demand for your goods and services? Are there other revenue streams that can be accessed? E-commerce solutions may help with filling sales gaps.

- Review your businesses security measures and make sure all equipment is being maintained.
- Have a contact list readily available that includes information for security, employees, partners/suppliers, municipal personnel, utility companies, and property owners.
- Review your insurance policy for potential coverage in business interruption, key person protection, or business income insurance.
- Stay up to date with CRA information including filing deadlines and deferred GST/HST payments.
- Identify ways that your organization can utilize technology to limit customer interaction and gain efficiencies. This may include e-commerce solutions for selling products online, video chat and call tools for meeting others virtually, online conferencing programs, email access from home, or cloud-based storage for working on files outside of the business.

3. REVIEW STAFFING

- Develop an emergency preparedness team or key individuals in your business that understand the organizations objectives, risks, challenges, solutions, and decisions.
- Have a plan available on what each employee is responsible for in the event of tightened or loosened measures due to COVID-19. It may be beneficial to assign roles to employees to have the team engaged in assisting with COVID-19 mitigation.
- Review benefits or absence/leave policies to answer questions from employees and make sure they are protected. How will they handle medical situations like quarantine or isolation?
- Set clear expectations on the process if an employee gets sick, has symptoms, or if an exposure is reported at the place of business. Determine an internal procedure for employees to bring forth concerns of health and safety at work.
- Ensure opportunities are available for employees to seek mental health support or services.
- Be prepared to answer questions surrounding job security, workload and tasks, alternative working environments, changes in travel, how to handle client requests, flexible working hours, etc.
- Hold regular team calls or meetings to promote increased moral and connectivity. Make sure to check in with each employee to see how they are doing and if they need additional support or guidance.
- Identify key employees that provide critical services/functions, skillsets, or hold valuable relationships with customers or suppliers. Have a plan in case these employees are unable to return to work or need additional time off. Work out a plan to fill identified gaps and operate at reduced staffing levels.
- Ensure employees understand their responsibilities and decision-making authority. It is important to make sure the communication and reporting lines are clear. Who has authority to make decisions regarding hours of operations, reductions or increases in services provided, or solutions offered?
- Are there opportunities available to cross train employees to cover other areas of the business or take additional training? If it is quieter than usual, it may be a good opportunity for professional growth.

4. REVIEW FINANCES

- Consider the demand for your products/services once you return to work, will you be working with reduced hours or a reduction of employees? Does that change your production capacity?
- Determine if changes in pricing exists on your inputs. Ex) Has the price increased on supplies? Are you paying additional shipping? If so, these changes may alter your bottom line and you may want to review your pricing to make any adjustments if needed.
- Identify ways to scale back and reduce expenses. Review ongoing expenses and identify those that you can eliminate without making drastic changes to your business processes.

- Find new sources of revenue. How can you offer customers products/services in this new normal? Maybe the situation will expose a new market and opportunity for your business.
- Monitor short-term cash flow to assess the financial impact on the business and forecast challenges or opportunities ahead. Proactively managing your cash flow will help to prevent long term financial implications and assist with maximizing opportunities. What does your income currently look like? How will that change once programs like the CERB are discontinued? What volume of sales need to be generated to cover your expenses? What percentage do you expect sales to increase by over the next 12 months? Utilizing a cash flow template will help with forecasting these outcomes.
- Proactively communicate with your team of professionals. It may be beneficial to contact your accountant, financial advisor, lender, or lawyer during this time to help advise you with more complex business decisions. It is important to review contracts, RRSP or TFSA contributions, loan payments, credit card debt, access to line of credits, overdraft protection, and government support programs.
- Keep informed of the provincial and federal government supports that are available for businesses.
- Contact utility providers and local municipal governments to inquire on utility payment programs and/or any municipal programs available in your community.
- At Community Futures Parkland, we provide business advisory services at no cost. Our team can help with business planning, navigating government programs, managing cash flow, and providing many tools, templates, and resources for your business. Additionally, our loan program can assist you with operating cash for equipment, inventory, supplies, protective equipment, training, advertising, and more. For information on these programs, contact Rhianna, Business Account Manager with Community Futures Parkland at (204) 546-5104 or bdc@communityfuturesparkland.ca.

5. ADDITIONAL TIPS

- Let your customers know how they can support your business. Maybe they can leave you a positive review or share a story on social media, purchase gift cards, pre-pay for appointments, subscribe, order delivery, order merchandise online, and shop local in general.
- Utilize social media to keep your customers engaged with your products or services and update them with important communications regarding the reopening of your business. Connect with your customers to continue building relationships.
- It is important to review, test, and update your plans as necessary. Keep them on hand for reference and for future use during emergency situations.
- Consider creating a to-do list and recovery timeline. This can be accomplished by listing your business functions (tasks) and then listing staff requirements, resource requirements, and the order of priority with completing that task. What will you focus on during the 1st or 3rd month of reopening?
- Subscribe to Community Futures Parkland newsletter for business information by emailing info@communityfuturesparkland.ca, follow Community Futures Parkland on Facebook for day to day updates, and contact us our office directly for business assistance.
- Stay connected with your local business community, chamber of commerce, industry experts, and government representatives. Make sure to stay up to date on changing recommendations, regulations, and guidelines for preventing the spread of COVID-19.

6. LINKS & RESOURCES

Community Futures Parkland - Business Services	https://cfmanitoba.ca/parkland-services/parkland-business-services https://www.facebook.com/Community-Futures-Parkland-Inc-135952219815865/
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The Hubs MB – Support services for women in business	https://www.thehubs.ca/ https://www.facebook.com/thehubdauphin/
Government of Manitoba COVID-19 Portal	https://manitoba.ca/covid19/business/index.html https://www.gov.mb.ca/finance/taxation/pubs/bulletins/noticerst2003.pdf
Manitoba's Pandemic and Economic Roadmap for Recovery	https://manitoba.ca/asset_library/en/proactive/2020_2021/restoring-safe-services.pdf
Relief: Manitoba Gap Protection Program	https://www.gov.mb.ca/covid19/business/index.html https://news.gov.mb.ca/news/?archive=&item=47600
Government of Canada COVID-19 Portal	https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html?topic=tilelink
Government of Canada Economic Response Plan	https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/economic-response-plan.html
Canada Emergency Response Benefit	https://www.canada.ca/en/services/benefits/ei/cewb-application.html
Canada Emergency Business Account	https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/news/2020/03/additional-support-for-canadian-businesses-from-the-economic-impact-of-covid-19.html#_New_Loan_Programs
Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy	https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/subsidy/emergency-wage-subsidy.html
Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance	https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/finance-and-investing/covid19-ccra-small-business
Support for Indigenous Businesses	https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2020/04/18/prime-minister-announces-support-indigenous-businesses