

**From:** US Office <[usoffice@habitat.org](mailto:usoffice@habitat.org)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, March 18, 2020 10:40 AM

**Subject:** A message from Adrienne Goolsby: New COVID-19 guidance for affiliate operations

Dear Habitat leaders,

With each day that passes, our understanding and appreciation of the seriousness of this global health pandemic increases. Beyond the sober and significant health risks of the novel coronavirus, we are all painfully aware that the long-term economic consequences of COVID-19 will test us all.

To safeguard your volunteers, donors, current and future homeowners and staff members, I know many of you have already taken the bold, difficult steps of closing your offices and Habitat ReStores, and limiting the number of volunteers on your build sites, if not cancelling your builds outright.

Monday's announcements by the [White House and CDC of new guidelines](#) to help protect Americans during the global COVID-19 pandemic included the strong recommendation to "avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10 people." Given that guidance, and following the leadership of the many affiliates who have already made these decisions, we are offering new recommendations:

- Call a short-term stop to all construction and other events.
- Temporarily close Habitat ReStores.
- Close offices to outside visitors, including suspending homeowner education classes. Consider requiring all staff who are able to work remotely from their homes to do so.

We recommend keeping these measures in place, at minimum, for as long as the new federal guidance remains in effect. In some communities where community transmission is extensive, it may be appropriate to maintain these suspensions for longer periods or take further actions. We continue to ask you to heed the advice of your local public health authorities.

We fully recognize that there are consequences to these actions, and that when build sites fall silent and Habitat ReStores are shuttered, the financial impact will be unavoidable and consequential. Balanced against the well-being of those we serve and those who serve our ministry, it is a cost we must bear.

This week, our Government Relations and Advocacy team is hard at work telling our Congressional leaders to keep affordable housing, low-income families and the organizations who work so hard to help them in their thinking and plans. As legislation to help the country and the world recover is crafted, we will do all we can to ensure your good work is top of mind.

I have never visited a Habitat build site where safety was not the priority. This health crisis calls on all of us to make decisions that are not only in the best interest of our ministry, but for the safety of our communities at large. I want to thank each of you for your leadership in making these difficult decisions and for your courage in facing the decisions we know are likely still ahead of us.

In partnership,



Adrienne Goolsby  
Senior Vice President, U.S. and Canada  
Habitat for Humanity International