

COVID-19 Response: Collaborating with your Agency's Board of Directors

Consideration:

The information below can provide guidance to help align the agency's Board of Directors (Board) and Executive Director (ED) on their respective roles and responsibilities as it relates to COVID-19 activities.

What role may the Board of Directors play in response to a COVID-19 outbreak?

The Board's role in crisis management may vary based on the agency's governance model and its working relationship with the Board. Often, the Board's role is to work with the ED to set the expectations/plans of action. The following are examples of common Board responsibilities and how they could apply in response to a COVID-19 case:

Common Board Responsibilities	Potential COVID-19 Activities
Overall oversight and governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check-in meetings with the ED during a COVID-19 outbreak to review actions and risk management activities.• Work with their EDs to establish agency direction and support policy development that is aligned to chosen direction.
Connect with other agencies and/or others in the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leverage relationships with other community agencies / organizations in support of the ED and their successful management of COVID related issues.
Act as the primary authority over major financial expenditures (if necessary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Board may approve or support expenditure, while the ED leads efforts to secure funding.
Help uphold the agency's positive image	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Board may review key media messaging developed by an ED (e.g. after an incident impacting the agency's reputation).

When might an Executive Director reach out to the Agency's Board?

- In most situations, the ED may prefer to adhere to their typical process for updating the Board (e.g. weekly touchpoints).
- If there is a sense of urgency (e.g. this is the Agency's first positive COVID-19 case), it may be helpful to reach out to the Board sooner as part of the Agency's **communication plan** (e.g. during the first 24-48 hours after learning of a positive COVID-19 case).

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In relation to the Board's and ED's work, what are some key decisions that need to be made? What are the communication expectations as the agency navigates through the pandemic?

- ☐ **Agree and confirm the roles the ED and Board will play in response to the situation.** In the interest of the agency, determine how best you can work together (e.g. the ED coordinates the agency's operational response and communicates with impacted stakeholders).
- ☐ **Align on key messages.** Confirm the key messages/speaking points that can be communicated to key stakeholders, and how they can be communicated to ensure privacy guidelines are met (i.e. level of detail).
- ☐ **Review emergency response plan (e.g. next steps).** The Board may have suggestions on immediate priorities and resources you can leverage.
- ☐ **Provide a brief (but clear) description of the situation.**
 - Was it a staff member or a supported individual who tested positive or is presumed positive COVID-19?
 - What is the presumed amount of exposure (e.g. how many others were they in contact with)?
 - Where are they now?
 - What actions have been taken so far (e.g. what is the operational plan)?
- ☐ **Share your Communication Plan.** Make the Board aware of who you plan to contact and when, and how the Board can support the implementation of the communication plan, if appropriate (e.g. reaching out to people in their network).