

Resources Available Regarding the Coronavirus Disease

Amid growing concerns about coronavirus (COVID-19) in the U.S., the League is providing resources for member credit unions. Of key concern is the health and wellness of credit union employees and members, and the impact disruption of services may have in communities credit unions serve.

To ensure readiness for all possible scenarios, the League is recommending that credit unions review their Business Continuity Plans, as well as the resources from NCUA and the various health agencies.

Prepare, but don't panic



While the virus remains a public health concern, [infectious disease specialists at the University of Nebraska Medical Center have reported](#) that the common flu is a larger worry at this time. According to the CDC, influenza has sickened 13 million Americans this winter, sending 120,000 to the hospital and killing 6,600. In a bad year, the flu kills up to 61,000 Americans.

Updated details about the 2019 Novel Coronavirus are available from both the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) and [World Health Organization](#). [UNMC has also created a Q&A regarding the virus.](#)

Steps you can take to minimize risk for staff and members

The CDC warned that it expects more confirmed cases of the coronavirus in the U.S. and outlined a set of everyday preventive actions to take to prevent the spread of respiratory viruses:

- Avoid close contact with sick people.
- While sick, limit contact with others as much as possible.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Cover your nose and mouth when you cough or sneeze. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Place hand sanitizer in your branches.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that may be contaminated with germs. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol—based hand rub with at least 60% alcohol.
- Practice greeting people with elbow bumps instead of handshakes.

Serving members should they become impacted

NCUA has provided guidance in the past for credit unions to assist members who are experiencing financial hardships. The [NCUA's Letter to Credit Unions 11-CU-05](#) regarding potential government shutdowns, may be helpful should a population of the members you serve become impacted by the coronavirus. The guidance suggests that credit unions:

- Ensure policies provide flexibility to respond to members' financial needs in the event of a federal government shutdown.
- Prepare for service interruptions if a shutdown affects access to credit union offices and branches located in federal buildings.
- Take steps to prudently work with members affected by a shutdown, including providing advances to individuals receiving direct deposits from the federal government.
- Develop contingency plans for what will happen with respect to participation in government programs in the event of a shutdown. (For example, some credit unions offer loans backed by the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). Individual credit unions will therefore need to decide whether to proceed with scheduled FHA loan closings and whether to hold and guarantee new FHA loans until any impasse on federal spending ends); and
- Communicate your credit union's response plans and efforts before, during, and after any shutdown to keep members, volunteers, and employees informed.

As employers, credit unions may wish to review the latest [Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#) that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has issued.

In addition, the [guidance](#) from the EEOC states that during a pandemic, employers may advise an employee to go home if they become ill with symptoms of influenza-like illness.

Above all, the League encourages all in the credit union community to be mindful of their overall health and wellness.

