

NORTH ISLAND EMPLOYMENT FOUNDATIONS SOCIETY, A WORKBC EMPLOYMENT CENTRE

# Pandemic Response Plan

---

North Island Employment Foundations Society –  
Vancouver Island North Catchment

**Valerie Meaney, Executive Director**

**3/12/2020**

**Version 1**

The Pandemic Response documents the North Island Employment Foundations Society's (NIEFS') policy and key information and processes required to prevent or mitigate service interruption to clients during a Pandemic. Regardless of NIEFS' Plan, we will follow all direction given by Health Authorities and/or any level of Government in the event of a Pandemic.

## Contents

PURPOSE .....	2
POLICY.....	2
PROCEDURES .....	2
Pandemic Response Structure.....	3
Phased Response Approach:.....	4
Identification and Probability of Potential Service Interruptions .....	5
Service Recovery Plans for Critical Staff Reduction .....	7
Workforce Considerations .....	8
Service Recovery Plans for Loss of Access to Facility.....	10
Workforce Considerations .....	10
Services Delivered (ranked in order of priority based on client needs).....	11
Community Affected: .....	12
Province affected: .....	12
Country Affected: .....	12
Appendix A Work From Home Procedures .....	13
Appendix B Alternate Sites .....	14

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the Pandemic Response Plan (PRP) is to document key information and processes that will be required to prevent, mitigate, and respond to impacts of a Pandemic that could lead to a degradation of service to clients. This includes a loss of access to equipment or facilities, or a loss of employees.

**NIEFS has a detailed Business Recovery Plan (BRP) that details response to a range of service disruptions. This plan is specific to Pandemic response and will be supported by specific processes in the BRP.**

## POLICY

NIEFS recognizes the potential strategic, operational, financial, and stakeholder support risks associated with service interruptions caused by a Pandemic. We will endeavor to maintain viable capability to continue NIEFS' service delivery processes with minimum impact on WorkBC Employment Services' clients in the event of a Pandemic, recognizing that this may not always be possible during a Pandemic.

## PROCEDURES

### Notification and Activation

Once one of NIEFS' Regional Managers becomes aware of a potential for service disruption due to Pandemic, they will notify NIEFS' Executive Director who will determine if the Pandemic Response Plan should be activated.

During service disruptions, NIEFS is responsible for communicating any changes to clients, including signage at the facility, direct calls to clients, and news and information on Social Media. NIEFS is responsible for redirection of clients to alternate delivery methods or sites, including phone numbers and addresses of alternate sites, or to other Catchment Areas in the event that the closure has a high impact or will disrupt client payments. Redirection to other Catchment areas would occur only under the direction of NIEFS' Senior Management team.

Notifications will be as per the BRP.

## **Pandemic Response Structure**

NIEFS' PRP Manager: Valerie Meaney, Executive Director

PRP Committee:

Valerie Meaney, Executive Director

Chris Callanan, Regional Manager, Employer Services

Shannon Baikie, Regional Manager Community and Labour Market Services

Donna Desmet, Regional Manger Client Services

Jenny Evans, Outreach Coordinator

Twila Adams, Finance and Data Manager

Ross Hammond, IT Support

## **Phased Response Approach:**

### **Phase 1:** Offices open as normal

- Monitoring of information from Provincial/National Authorities
- Staff directed to stay home if feeling sick

### **Phase 2:** Offices open with added precautions

- Daily Managers meeting to determine actions to be taken
- Daily listening to Provincial and Federal Government Press Conferences/Briefings to inform decisions
- Offices open with increased social distancing
- Increased surface cleaning
- Giving clients the option for virtual service vs face to face
- Signage posted regarding new provisions
- Review of all employee travel and cancellation of all non-essential travel
- Review of all meetings and attending virtually if possible or not attending if non-essential
- Work from Home provisions implemented where necessary

### **Phase 3:** Office closed to the public with all services provided virtually

- Daily Managers meeting to determine actions to be taken
- Daily listening to Provincial and Federal Government Press Conferences/Briefings to inform decisions
- Work from home provisions implemented

### **Phase 4:** Offices closed and no services delivered

- All service delivery ceased
- Daily Managers meeting virtually to determine actions to be taken
- Daily listening to Provincial and National Press Conferences/Briefings to inform decisions

## **Identification and Probability of Potential Service Interruptions**

### **Pandemic – high probability, high priority**

#### **Possible Service Disruptions:**

- Staff Affected
- Facility Affected
- Community Affected
- Province Affected
- Country Affected

#### **Staff Affected- high probability, high priority**

- Staff returning from international travel with symptoms
- Staff returning from International travel without symptoms, but from an impacted location
- Staff contacted by Public Health that they have been exposed
- Staff with family members contacted by Public Health that they have been exposed
- Staff exhibiting symptoms
- Staff with family members exhibiting symptoms
- Staff unwilling to come to work due to fear of contagion

#### **Facility Affected: high probability, high priority**

- Contact from Public Health that the facility has been exposed
- Informed by staff or public that facility has been exposed

#### **Community Affected:**

- Cases in the community
- Significant number of cases and there is a community response

**Province Affected:**

- Significant number of cases and there is a Provincial response

**Country Affected:**

- Significant number of cases and there is a National response

## Service Recovery Plans for Critical Staff Reduction

### **Staff Affected:**

Staff will:

- stay at home if they are ill
- increase frequency and thoroughness of handwashing
- avoid shaking hands
- adhere to direction regarding social distancing, gatherings, travel service delivery methods or locations
- follow all direction given by Public Health or medical professionals regarding their activities related to work

A critical loss of staff members could occur due to Pandemic.

The BRP Manager and committee are responsible for obtaining up-to-date, reliable Pandemic information and other public health advisories from the federal, provincial and local levels, emergency management agencies and the BC Center for Disease Control. This information will be shared with staff and clients, including procedures for Pandemic preparedness.

If the BRP Manager determines that the BRP needs to be activated to prevent contagion and to deal with reduced staffing, they will post a sign on the NIEFS facility door requesting people who have symptoms to not come in, but instead to phone NIEFS from home and request service over the telephone or via email. If a person who appears ill is witnessed at the front desk, in a workshop room, in the Resource Area, or in an employment Counselor's office, the staff member will request that they go home and phone 811 for medical advice, and offer service virtually until they are better.

NIEFS will communicate changes directly with clients, through signage at the facility, through direct calls to clients, and news and information on our Social Media.

In the event of multiple staff being off sick at once, the following services will be prioritized:

1. Delivering scheduled appointments and workshops virtually
2. Payroll for staff and participants
3. Payment of priority bills and wage subsidy claims

The following procedures are in place to ensure that critical records are safe, accessible and recoverable in the event of staff reduction due to Pandemic:

- All data stored in a remote server accessible from any computer with access to internet
- All client files in Ministry ICM system
- Key personnel set up to work from home, as needed,
- Staff designated to work from home are apprised of “Work From Home” procedures (Appendix B-4) to ensure security of information when working remotely

## Workforce Considerations

Maintaining a healthy group of trained personnel is a priority during a pandemic. At NIEFS, most staff members are routinely placed in close proximity to a potentially infected public. Therefore, an array of options needs to be considered for supporting staff during a Pandemic.

It may be necessary to protect essential personnel from social contact in order to reduce the likelihood of spreading the disease person to person. Social distancing measures include telework, shift work (weekends, nights, extended shifts), and physically spreading personnel throughout the workplace (i.e., not meeting with clients in enclosed spaces, maintaining at least two meters between people). Employees who are designated to work from home during a Pandemic should telework frequently enough to ensure that all systems are working smoothly.

Depending on the severity of the Pandemic, and the health of key personnel, service may be delivered from the NIEFS facility by a reduced staff, or from home, or a combination of both. For a key staff member, working from home might be the best option in order to protect that person from contagion. Work from Home procedures can be instituted for designated personnel responsible for the critical services that would need to continue in order to fulfill our contractual obligations and to avoid negative impact on our clients. From their home computers, designated staff can access client files via ICM and business files through our remote server. Banking is accessible via the CIBC website, and payments to clients and employers can be done from the home of the personnel responsible or alternates.

Staff members designated to work from home, if necessary:

Valerie Meaney, Donna Desmet, Shannon Baikie, Chris Callanan, Jenny Evans, Twila Adams, Charlotte Culo, Ella Valdez and Heather Gordon.

Other staff may be designated to work from home as required.

Cross training is the best strategy to ensure preparedness and continuation of critical services in situations where many employees are off sick, or need to stay at home to help ill family members.

- All senior managers are fully trained in all aspect of each other's responsibilities and roles,

- Client services staff is led by the Regional Manager, Client Service who is fully trained and has developed the client services. The Regional Manager Community and Labour Market Services or the Regional Manager, Employer Services is able to lead the services if the Regional Manager, Client Service is unavailable.
- The client services team is able to conduct all aspects of client services when there are absences within the team.

## Service Recovery Plans for Loss of Access to Facility

### Facility Affected:

- Contact from Public Health that the facility has been exposed
- Informed by staff that they have been exposed
- Informed by client that they have been exposed

Loss of access to a NIEFS facility could occur as a result of a Pandemic or as a result of travel restrictions due to Pandemic or to prevent contagion during a Pandemic.

In the event that a NIEFS office could not be occupied or we have to vacate the facility, we have designated staff members who can work from home with secure technology provisions established.

In the event of the loss of a sub-contractor facility serving specialized populations or delivering specific services, NIEFS has the capacity to temporarily accommodate either the direct delivery of the sub-contractor services by NIEFS staff or accommodate the client service staff from the sub-contractor facility. During a Pandemic this may not be an option since if an office is closed due to contagion we would not want staff from that office potentially impacting other offices. NIEFS and its sub-contractors will take direction from the Health Authority in this situation.

Critical services involving payments to clients, employers, and training institutions can be conducted by key personnel from any location with a computer and Internet access. As a contingency measure, emergency cheques are stored off site in an accessible location. NIEFS will communicate directly with clients about any changes, through signage at the facility, through direct calls to clients, and news and information on our Social Media.

To ensure that critical records are safe, accessible, and recoverable in the event of loss of access to the facility, the following procedures are in place:

- Remote Server accessible via web based access.
- All client files saved on Ministry ICM system
- Key personnel set up to work from home, as needed,
- Staff designated to work from home are apprised of "Work From Home" procedures to ensure security of information when working remotely

### Workforce Considerations

In the event that access to a NIEFS facility is unavailable, most of the priority services delivered by NIEFS can be carried out temporarily by staff members off site. Work from Home procedures can be instituted for designated staff members responsible for key services that would need to continue in order to fulfill our contractual obligations and to avoid negative impact on our clients.

From their home or other off-site computers, staff members can access client files via ICM. Banking is accessible via the CIBC website, and payments to clients and employers can be done from the home of the personnel responsible or their alternates, or from another site with Internet access. All staff has remote access to their desktop and our server via web access from any computer at any location.

## **Services Delivered (ranked in order of priority based on client needs)**

1. Administration of financial supports and purchased services
  - a. Living allowance
  - b. Training supports
  - c. Employment supports
2. Client Services
3. Payments to Employers
4. Outreach

## **Community Affected:**

- Cases in the community
- Significant number of cases and there is a community response

In the case of local community impact with cases in the community, we will make decisions to ensure safety of staff, clients and the community. Depending on the situation, we will move to subsequent response phases as dictated by severity and direction of local authorities.

## **Province Affected:**

- Significant number of cases and there is a Provincial response

In the case of significant Provincial impact with cases throughout the Province, we will make decisions to ensure safety of staff, clients and the province. Depending on the situation, we will move to subsequent response phases as dictated by severity and direction of Provincial authorities.

## **Country Affected:**

- Significant number of cases and there is a National response

In the case of significant National impact with cases throughout the Country, we will make decisions to ensure safety of staff, clients and the Country. Depending on the situation, we will move to subsequent response phases as dictated by severity and direction of National authorities.

## **Appendix A Work From Home Procedures**

- Employees who are required to work from home will be provided with the equipment appropriate to their work tasks eg a laptop, cell phone, printer to work from home. Only Senior Managers will be authorized to work on their personal computer are responsible for ensuring that their home PCs and laptops have up-to-date and recognized anti-virus programs installed (NIEFS will provide a list of recognized programs).
- Client files will be accessed on the Ministry's internet-based ICM system, using the Province's BCeID user id/password system.
- Wireless Internet may be used if the wireless connection is locked and password protected.
- Password protected screen savers shall be used to lock the home computer to prevent unauthorized persons from viewing or accessing sensitive information if the employee leaves the computer unattended. If the user leaves the computer, they must lock it with Ctrl-Alt-Delete or Windows (Start) key +L. The screen saver should be set to lock the home computer automatically after a period of inactivity (5 minutes).
- Passwords must not be written down and kept in the vicinity of the home computer.
- The employee will not keep work-related files on home computer hard drives or on mobile devices.
- The employee shall avoid transferring electronic files between work and home on a memory device. If it is necessary, the memory devices must be encrypted.
- Client personal information is not to be transmitted to or received on a personal smart phone.
- No employee shall fax confidential information from home except in emergencies or using an encrypted fax machine.
- Care should be taken to protect the privacy of phone or Skype conversations with clients.
- Any suspected breach of security should be reported immediately to the Executive Director.

## **Appendix B Alternate Sites**

**We are aware that during Pandemic we may not have access to alternate sites.**

NIEFS has 3 Alternate Sites available as needed – Robron in Campbell River, North Island College in Port Hardy and Community Futures in Port McNeill.

Greg Johnson Principle responsible for the Robron Centre. Phone #: 250 923-4902 Ext. 2216

Randall Heidt responsible for North Island College, Port Hardy. Phone #: 250-334-5249

David Mitchell responsible for Community Futures, Port McNeill. Phone Number: 250-956-2220

As well, NIEFS has a reciprocal agreement with the members of the CREST group that when, and if needed, we can operate from any of their locations in Courtenay, Parksville, Port Alberni, and Powell River.

