

March 18, 2020

**FAQ - Human Service Zones
Coronavirus (COVID-19) Frequently Asked Questions**

Can zone employees work from home?

Yes. Zone directors have the full authority to allow employees, who have the necessary technology, to work from home. Zone directors do not need permission from the department to allow zone employees to work from home.

If a zone employee works from home will they be given state VPN to access the systems they need to their job.

The Department is actively working with ND IT to ensure that VPN options are available for zone employees that work from home. We will update the process as we have more information.

Can a zone employee use their personal home computer to VPN and work from home?

No. ND IT does not allow personal home computers to access the state network through VPN. Personal home computers may not meet the necessary security and antivirus requirements necessary to access zone email, the state network and state systems.

What is considered a core or essential service that zones are required to deliver?

50-01.1-05. Duties of human service zone.

The human service zone shall, under the direction and supervision of the Department, unless otherwise directed or determined by the department:

1. Supervise and direct all human services activities conducted by the human service zone, including general assistance or other public assistance.
2. Supervise and administer human services in the human service zone which are financed in whole or in part with funds allocated or distributed by the department.
3. Aid and assist in every reasonable way to efficiently coordinate and conduct human services activities within the human service zone by private as well as public organizations.
4. Subject to subsection 16 of section 50-06-05.1, administer the supplemental nutrition assistance program in the human service zone in conformity with the Food Stamp Act of 1964, and enter an agreement for administering the supplemental nutrition assistance program with the department.
5. Subject to subsection 18 of section 50-06-05.1, administer the home energy assistance program in the human service zone and enter an agreement for administering the home energy assistance program with the department.
6. Charge and collect fees and expenses for services provided by the human service zone's staff in accordance with policies and fee schedules adopted by the department.

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7. Supervise and administer designated child welfare services.
8. Supervise and administer human services.
9. Supervise and administer replacement programs with substantially similar goals, benefits, or objectives.
10. If applicable, supervise and administer experimental, pilot, statewide, regional, or transitional programs under the director of the department and with the goals of enhancing quality, effectiveness, and efficiency of programs and services.
11. Cooperate with the department or other human service zones in revising human service zone operations to reflect department guidelines or best practices that may be based on recommendations from experimental or pilot programs.
12. Cooperate with any other human service zone to assure the conduct of initial and ongoing human services with respect to any applicant or eligible beneficiary who is physically present in a human service zone other than the human service zone of which the applicant or eligible beneficiary is a resident.
13. Employ a human service zone director who shall serve as the presiding officer of the human service zone board.
14. Collaborate with the department and other human service zones to ensure the provision of quality, effective, and efficient human services to the citizens of North Dakota.

Can my zone office choose to close completely and send all staff home?

Yes. Zones can choose to close their offices, however, as noted in the previous questions there are core services zones are required to deliver.

What information do we need to provide to the public if we close our doors?

Zones need to post information on where and how a client can enroll in benefits, drop off verification, or inquire about benefits. In addition, you need to provide information on how the public can report child abuse and neglect and general contact information for the zone.

Can we close our lobby to the public?

Yes. Zones can close their lobbies to the public but need to post processes and contact information for applying for benefits, reporting abuse and neglect and general questions.

If we close our office to the public can we still work in the office?

Yes. Sending zone employees home is a zone decision. The department recommends sending employees home who are already able to work from home or who have identified as high risk. The department is working with IT to expedite the telecommuting process for zones where you don't have the technology.

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