

Anson County Board of Elections
Pandemic Continuity of Operations

INTRODUCTION

Organizations across the Nation perform essential functions and services that may be adversely affected in the event of a natural or man-made disaster. In such events, organizations should have continuity plans to assist in the continuance of their essential functions. Continuing to perform essential functions and provide essential services is vital to an organization's ability to remain a viable entity during times of increased threats from all hazards, manmade or natural. Since the threat to an organization's continuity of operations is great during a pandemic outbreak, it is important for the Anson County Board of Elections to have a Pandemic Continuity of Operations plan in place to ensure it can carry out its essential functions and services. While organizations may be forced to suspend some operations due to the severity of a pandemic outbreak, an effective Continuity of Operations Plan can assist an organization in its efforts to remain operational, as well as strengthen the ability to resume operations.

PURPOSE

This plan provides guidance to the Anson County Board of Elections and may serve as the plan for maintaining essential functions and services during a pandemic. This guidance stresses that essential functions can be maintained during a pandemic outbreak through mitigation strategies, such as social distancing, increased hygiene, and similar approaches.

CONTINUITY PLANNING

All organization personnel are to be informed regarding protective actions and/or modifications related to this plan. Messaging and risk communications during an emerging infectious disease or pandemic will be conducted by the Director, Steve Adams. Guidance and instructions on established infection control measures such as social distancing, personnel protective equipment and telework polices are provided by the Director to assist in limiting the spread of infectious disease at the primary worksite.

Within the workplace, social distancing measures could take the form of: modifying the frequency and type of face-to-face employee encounters (e.g., placing moratoriums on hand-shaking, substituting teleconferences for face-to-face meetings, staggering breaks, posting infection control guidelines); establishing flexible work hours or worksite, (e.g., telecommuting); promoting social distancing between employees and customers to maintain six-foot spatial separation between individuals; and implementing strategies that request and enable employees with an illness to stay home at the first sign of symptoms.

ELEMENTS OF A VIABLE PANDEMIC CONTINUITY CAPABILITY

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS

Given the expected duration and potential multiple waves of pandemic outbreaks, organizations must review the process involved in carrying out essential functions and services in order to develop plans that mitigate the effects of the pandemic while simultaneously allowing the continuation of operations which support essential functions. The Anson County Board of Elections has identified essential functions and services needed to sustain its mission and operations during a pandemic. Those essential Functions are placed here.

Anson County Board of Elections
Pandemic Continuity of Operations

1. Voter registration – Forms come in via mail, in person, and via NVRA agencies. Electronic records come from the DMV and other counties.
2. List Maintenance – Reports are provided by the state on a monthly basis.
3. Campaign Finance – there is a mandated reporting schedule for committees to turn in campaign finance reports.
4. Maintaining geocode
5. During an election season, there are additional critical functions:
 - a. Absentee voting
 - b. Poll worker training
 - c. Precinct supply preparation
 - d. Ballot coding
 - e. Election equipment preparation – L&A testing

Processing of Voter Documents

[Numbered Memo 2020-11](#) provides that if our office closes because of a pandemic, we may delay processing voter registration applications and related voter registration documents during the closure. If there are questions with respect to deadlines, you should give the voter the benefit of the doubt in the event the issue was caused by an office closure.

DELEGATIONS OF AUTHORITY

At the height of a pandemic wave, absenteeism may be significant. As such, the Anson County Board of Elections has established delegations of authority that are at least two deep to take into account the expected rate of absenteeism and regional nature of the outbreak to help assure continuity of operations over an extended time period. The Delegations of Authority for the senior leadership are placed here.

1. Director – Assistant Director -

CONTINUITY FACILITIES-SAFE WORK PRACTICES

The traditional use of continuity facilities to maintain essential functions and services may not be a viable option during a pandemic. Rather, safe work practices, which include social distancing and transmission interventions, reduce the likelihood of contacts with other people that could lead to disease transmission. The Anson County Board of Elections has developed preventative practices such as social distancing procedures, hygiene etiquette, and cancellation of organizations non-essential activities to reduce the spread of the pandemic. The Continuity Facilities are placed here.

Preventative Measures

While the office is open to the public, public access should be limited to the lobby area and members of the public should not be permitted into the staff area of the office. A secure drop box outside can be placed in the lobby for visitors to deposit completed forms.

When a registration form is completed in the lobby, in lieu of having a staff member look over the form, the voter will be asked these key questions verbally:

- Did you check the citizenship box?
- Did you provide ID information?
- Did you provide your DOB?
- Did you sign the bottom of the form?

Anson County Board of Elections
Pandemic Continuity of Operations

Routine procedure provides for printing a voter registration card for voter in the lobby after seeing their photo ID to confirm identity. During a pandemic event, voter cards will only be mailed from the office.

Cleaning and Sanitizing

Staff is responsible for using a disinfecting wipe on their work area (computer, phone, keyboard, desk, personal work space) at least once a day.

Once daily, a disinfecting wipe should be used to clean shared spaces including light switches, door handles, the time clock, microwave buttons, refrigerator handles, toaster oven buttons, faucet handles, paper towel dispenser handles, cabinet handles, and xerox. County housekeeping staff will be asked to perform this task.

TELEWORKING

If necessary, employees may telework. Teleworking in elections is limited since no elections employee may remove voter registration documents, official ballots, campaign finance filings, or other original documents or documents with personally identifiable information (PII) from election facilities. Teleworking may only be done using a county provided computer. Teleworking MUST be approved by the Chairman and Board Members. Below is a list of tasks that may be completed remotely.

Staff Development:

Online training classes that would benefit your job.

County Functions:

Budget monitoring

Voicemail and Telephone Functions

Administrative Functions:

Update of election calendar

Preparation of continuity of operations plan as requested by the Board

Close out previous election – document stats, make comparisons to other elections

Voter Registration:

Data entry of scanned forms

Review queue

State reports – can be run but not attached.

Poll Workers/Training:

Work on training manuals for November

Newsletters/"Ted Talks" for poll workers on various topics

Prep post-election surveys for November

Compute staffing requirements, training schedule for November

Review survey responses, respond as necessary

Supplies:

Update lists of supplies, forms

Anson County Board of Elections
Pandemic Continuity of Operations

Polling Places:

Notices of general election

Geocode:

Look at precinct lines

Geopoints, street additions

Campaign finance:

Audit reports – may remove copies of reports from the office

Website:

Update, add information about 2020 general

Move to external location

Time worked should be reported to the director via email on a daily basis. Indicate a start time and end time, including the time taken for a meal period. Also include in the email the tasks that were worked on that day.

Board Meetings

From [Numbered Memo 2020-11](#), “We encourage you to conduct meetings telephonically if possible. The public must be given access to listen to the meeting, which may be accomplished by providing a call-in number. Services such as FreeConferenceCall.com and Zoom have free telephone conference options if your county does not have a service.”

Until guidance is received otherwise from County DHHS or the State Board of Elections, board meetings will be conducted telephonically if approved and adopted by the Chairman and Board Members.

Need for County Board to Adopt Policies

The Board should specifically adopt a policy regarding closure of the elections office if other county offices are closed if such a policy is not already in place.

In the event county offices are not closed, county boards should consider alternative work schedules or arrangements. We encourage county boards to adopt policies for the elections office with this in mind. If the office alters operations or closes, a helpdesk ticket will be submitted to the State Board of Elections. This ticket will be shared with Pat Gannon, SBE Public Information Officer, and the SBE Communications Team, who will in turn post this to the special page on the SBE website regarding coronavirus. The County will also advertise such a closing as part of their media releases.

Long-Term Concerns

The Anson County Board of Elections should take the following into consideration:

- Engage in an unprecedented effort to promote the use of mail ballots for any voters who feel more comfortable voting that way.
- Identify polling places that will be large enough to accommodate voters in November without requiring them to stand in close proximity for long periods of time.
- Recruit more poll workers who are a lower risk for infection.

March 2020