

Nevada's Response to COVID-19: Roadmap to Recovery

INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus pandemic has necessitated an entirely different way of life for individuals in the United States and throughout the world. In a state whose economy is largely dependent upon tourism, travel, gaming, sporting events, and 24-hour businesses, the abrupt closure of non-essential businesses followed by long-term social distancing due to the pandemic, is certainly daunting. Although there is still tremendous uncertainty around the long term impacts of the coronavirus and pace of Nevada's recovery, the recent release of Governor Sisolak's [Nevada United: Roadmap to Recovery](#) plan outlines progressive phases of reopening, providing much anticipated guidance to residents. The plan highlights programs that have been created to help small businesses, employees, healthcare workers and facilities effectively prevent spread of this virus. This blog highlights the phases and summarizes Nevada's Road to Recovery plan. It concludes by summarizing some of the economic and public health programs and resources available to workers and households as Nevada begins its economic recovery.

The core principle of Governor Sisolak's Roadmap to Recovery plan is that efforts are "[federally supported, state managed, and locally executed](#)." Under this plan, "county governments will be empowered to tailor specific restrictions on business and public life, as long as those restrictions do not go below the strict standards the state issues in a future emergency directive for Phase 1 and future phases."

PHASES OF REOPENING

Prerequisites

Throughout each phase, it is expected that residents will adhere to social distancing precautionary measures such as wearing face coverings, embracing frequent hand washing hygiene, regularly disinfecting surfaces, and maintaining six feet of distance from others. The following guidelines are encouraged throughout each phase of reopening until Nevada reaches the "new normal."

NEVADA STATEWIDE SOCIAL DISTANCING GUIDELINES

- For communities and individuals:
 - If you must go out, wear a face covering
 - Stay at home and within your county of residence or employment as much as possible
 - Create physical space between yourself and others, and at least six feet whenever possible
 - Work from home, if possible
 - Avoid all nonessential travel
 - Avoid all nonessential social interactions
- For employers/businesses:
 - Encourage telework whenever possible and feasible
 - Return to work in phases
 - Close common areas where personnel are likely to interact or enforce strict social distancing protocols

- Minimize non-essential travel and adhere to CDC guidelines regarding isolation following travel
- Strongly consider special accommodations for personnel who are members of a vulnerable population
- Vulnerable populations (including those with underlying immunocompromising conditions and older residents) should remain home until the outbreak has subsided
- Travel advisories remain in place – Nevadans should avoid non-essential travel during this time, especially to the places where the CDC has issued travel advisories

Nevada United: Roadmap to Recovery

	Stay At Home	Battle Born Beginnings (Phase 1)	Silver State Stabilization (Phase 2)
Restaurants	Curbside/Delivery/Pickup	●	●
Bars, pubs or taverns serving food	Curbside/Delivery/Pickup	●	●
Bars not serving food	●	●	●
Retail	Essential businesses remain open; Limited curbside/Delivery/Pickup	●	●
Barber, nail & hair salons	●	●	●
Aesthetic service establishments	●	●	●
Spas & massage therapy	●	●	●
Body art & piercing establishments	●	●	●
Gyms, fitness facilities	●	●	●
Recreational areas & pools	●	●	●
Movie theaters, bowling centers, arcades etc	●	●	●
Nevada State Parks	●	Limited, day-use only	Limited day-use & overnight stays w/restrictions
Cannabis	Curbside/Delivery/Pickup	●	●
Gaming	●	●	On track for June 4 phased-in reopening
Nightclubs & dayclubs	●	●	●
Adult entertainment establishments	●	●	●
Brothels	●	●	●
Gatherings	10 people or less	10 people or less	50 people or less

For additional guidance and recommendations, visit the Nevada Health Response website at <https://nvhealthresponse.nv.gov/>



● Open/lifted

● Open but with additional restrictions

● Closed

PHASE 1: “BATTLE BORN BEGINNINGS”

Phase 1 of reopening in Nevada began on May 9, 2020 and relaxed “Stay Home for Nevada” orders as the State encouraged residents to be “Safer at Home.”

- Openings of outdoor spaces, small businesses including restaurants, barber shops, nail salons and select retail stores under strict social distancing measures, hygiene and occupancy controls are allowed
- No social events or public gatherings over 10
- Vulnerable populations should remain home until the outbreak has subsided (carries into Phases 2 and 3)
- Strongly encouraged improvised face coverings used by all (carries into Phase 2)
- Duration of 2-3 weeks (May 9 – May 29, 2020)
- State will transition from community mitigation to case-based intervention efforts, which focus on controlling the spread of the virus through testing individuals with symptoms and identifying their close contacts
- Guidance for Phase One Statewide Standards can be found [here](#), as the report includes protocols for both individuals and businesses to follow as the partial reopening of businesses occur. Additionally, this document includes a list of businesses that are to remain closed through Phase One
- Gaming establishments will not reopen in Phase One, along with gyms, nightclubs, bars, and entertainment and recreational activity venues such as cinemas and bowling centers
- Restaurants and retail businesses are strongly encouraged to continue curbside, delivery and pickup options during this phase

PHASE 2: “SILVER STATE STABILIZATION”

Nevada moved forward to Phase 2 on May 29, 2020 after a consistent and sustainable decline in the percentage of positive COVID-19 cases, a decrease in COVID-19 hospitalizations, and a decline in the cumulative test positivity rate (i.e., 12.2 percent on April 24 compared to 6.3 percent on May 27, 2020).

- Broader opening of commerce/retail, services, and public life under extremely strict social distancing measures, hygiene, and occupancy controls
 - Bars, aesthetic service establishments, spas/massage therapy, body art/piercing establishments, gyms, fitness facilities, recreational areas/pools, places of worship, museums, indoor malls, movie theatres, bowling centers, arcades, and Nevada State Parks with limited day-use and overnight stays are all open with additional restrictions such as 50 percent occupancy rules
 - Outdoor venues, including miniature golf facilities, amusement parks, and theme parks may reopen to the public with 50 percent occupancy rules
 - Concerts, musical performances, and sporting events may resume but remain closed for public attendance
- It is anticipated that youth sports and recreation will be able to open in Phase 2
- Businesses are strongly encouraged to promote home delivery, curbside, drive-through and window services whenever possible
- Gaming establishments are on track for a phased-in reopening as of June 4, 2020
- Potential duration of 2-3 weeks but will likely last longer

- Will consist of multiple stages in order for adequate evaluation of data trends to occur, which allows health officials to feel comfortable easing restrictions
- Will be safer for Nevadans to socialize more normally with significant precautions in mind
- Nightclubs, day clubs, brothels, and adult entertainment facilities will remain closed
- Gatherings over 50 people or less are allowed

PHASE 3: “ON THE ROAD TO HOME MEANS NEVADA”

- Eased measures on public and mass gatherings
- Eased measures on non-essential travel with highly modified operations
- Potential duration will be based on the American Enterprise [Institute Roadmap to Reopening](#), which requires “widespread point of care testing, a robust ability to implement tracing, isolation and quarantines, the presence and availability of therapeutics that can help mitigate the risk of spread or reduce serious outcomes in those with infections, or alternatively a vaccine has been developed and tested for safety and efficacy”
- Phase 3 will require sufficient time to evaluate whether Nevada’s response to COVID-19 has stabilized businesses, public life, and the public healthcare system so that the state can move into Phase 4

PHASE 4: “HOME MEANS NEVADA – OUR NEW NORMAL”

- Most/all businesses fully operating, with enhanced hygiene measures to ensure that the virus is prevented from further spreading
- Potential duration is perpetual, unless a second spike in the disease occurs
- The goal is to return to normalcy in daily lives with respect to work, education, and social and public life
- Ease away from social and physical distancing measures



The following section summarizes the economic and public health resources available to families and businesses.

Economic Programs in Response to COVID-19

Social and physical distancing measures have put an enormous financial strain on many businesses and organizations that were required to partially or fully shut down due to COVID-19. In response to the pandemic that is wreaking havoc on Nevada’s economy, Governor Sisolak and his staff have implemented federal programs from the recently passed CARES Act in Congress and have mobilized teams to help aid individuals who are economically impacted by the pandemic. These include the following:

- The creation of the [Nevada COVID-19 Response, Relief and Recovery Private Sector Task Force](#), which launched a COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund that provides assistance and supplies to healthcare workers, aids Nevada nonprofits in addressing COVID-19, and provides funds to Nevada residents that have been greatly impacted by COVID-19.
- An increase in staffing at Nevada Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation (DETR), which is helping thousands of unemployed workers secure assistance.

- Implementation of the [Pandemic Unemployment Assistance \(PUA\)](#) program, which provides unemployment benefits for otherwise ineligible workers, such as self-employed contractors and self-employed workers in the ‘gig’ economy.
- Implementation of the [Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation](#) (PEUC) program, which allows for 13 additional weeks of benefits for unemployment insurance recipients who have exhausted the standard 26 weeks of unemployment benefits, as of May 10, 2020. To file for unemployment insurance, click [here](#).
- Implementation of the [Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation](#) (FPUC) program, which provides an additional \$600 for each week of unemployment insurance for individuals impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, which started April 15, 2020.
- The Governor’s Office of Economic Development (GOED) will work with elected officials, business organizations, employers, and workers to aid in the immediate recovery and long-term resilience of Nevada’s economy.

Public Health Programs in Response to COVID-19

- On April 11, Governor Sisolak created (through [Emergency Directive 011](#)), the [Battle Born Medical Corps](#), which waives licensing requirements and encourages retired providers, student practitioners, and other healthcare workers to volunteer in case they are needed to fight this pandemic. The group currently has over a thousand volunteers. To volunteer or learn more information, click [here](#).

Additional Information about Nevada’s Response

- On April 27, Governor Sisolak announced that Nevada would join the [Western States Pact](#), which coordinates reopening businesses and containing COVID-19. This will create a uniform regional response for businesses in five states (e.g. California, Colorado, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington), protecting the health of Nevada residents, as tourists from nearby states will be held to the same standards of health.
- The [Local Empowerment Advisory Council](#) (LEAP) was created to serve as a resource for counties, who are now responsible for enforcement and aiding businesses with any challenges that may arise when reopening.
- The Nevada Gaming Control Board will determine how gaming establishments reopen in the State of Nevada and will be issuing a policy requiring casinos to submit a reopening plan in accordance with public health and safety guidelines. Gaming establishments began phased-in reopening measures on June 4, 2020.

Conclusion

Although the coronavirus has wreaked financial havoc on businesses and households in Nevada, federal funds and state-issued programs have been made available to help mitigate the economic losses. The transition into Phases 1 and 2 has allowed many businesses to reopen with strict social distancing guidelines, marking Nevada’s cautious transition to the “new normal.” Despite the looming concern and uncertainty that exists, residents may take comfort in knowing Nevada has concrete [Nevada United: Roadmap to Recovery](#).

Author: Kayla Salehian
Summer Policy Intern, Guinn Center