RAPID RESPONSE TO RESTORED GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

A Guide for State Chief Administrators

In March 2020, states were catapulted into unprecedented times facing a global health pandemic that upended economic conditions and impacted many, if not all, functions under the purview of State Chief Administrators.

As a leader of state government operations, now is the time to reflect on necessary changes required by quick pivot points and determine long-term outcomes in a changed world. NASCA's Rapid Response Series offers considerations for immediate action as well as more long-term steps to sustainability.

CHIEF ADMINISTRATORS CAN FOCUS ON RAPID RESPONSE PROJECTS AND EMPLOYEE CARE BEFORE DEVELOPING A LONG-TERM STRATEGY:

RAPID RESPONSE

RECOVER
Basic Functions

- Focus on core mission functions
- Get computing devices & products that allow productivity anywhere
- Attend to employee basic social, emotional, and health needs

MAINTAIN
Operations

- Provide rapid training of employees learning new platforms
- Expand focus to lower-level strategy & productivity
- Redeploy workforce

RESTORE
Deeper Productivity

- Design agency functions for higher-level productivity
- Experiment and pilot such as new processes, space options
- Map workforce skills & competencies

LONG TERM

ADVANCE
New Normal & Looking Ahead

- Design future processes, operating models, space options
- Implement strategic workforce planning
- Implement new technologies
- Prepare for future dispersed staff and services

CHIEF ADMINISTRATORS ARE TACKLING THE CRISIS BY FOCUSING ON A VARIETY OF KEY FUNCTIONS:

- LEADERSHIP & STRATEGY
- HUMAN CAPITAL
- PROCUREMENT
- FINANCE & BUDGETING
- FACILITIES MANAGEMENT
- GENERAL SERVICES (fleet, supplies, surplus, print, mail, etc.)
- TECHNOLOGY
- RISK MANAGEMENT

NASCA

National Association of State Chief Administrators

INSIGHTS ON LEADERSHIP & STRATEGY

States are already implementing many new and innovative initiatives to rapidly respond to the COVID-19 impact on government operations. NASCA engaged chief administrators and corporate partners around critical considerations and pointed to guiding principles to be considered when restoring basic functions and maintaining operations.

STATES MAY CONSIDER:

Convene, facilitate, and coordinate

Establish an enterprise-wide, cross-agency operations taskforce targeting processes related to financial reimbursements, supply chain for implementing state phases, space allocations and need, consolidating, and other essential functions..

Allow agency to develop unique solutions

Provide clear center leadership and simple guidance, especially for accounting and tracking for CARES fund reimbursements, while allowing flexibility.

Don't overstep

Trust people in your agencies. Support your leaders with products, support, and resources.

Remain consistent, visible, empathetic, and transparent

Portray consistency and calmness in leadership style and communication, even during difficult times of budget reductions and hiring freezes. Acknowledge emotions and provide compassion in unprecedented times..

Allow space to think and problem solve

Provide a reassuring influence and an empathetic tone that allows various agencies to focus on providing services to citizens.

Increase two-way communication

Provide avenues for agencies to provide insight to Chief Administrator's team such as polls, town halls, all hands meetings to increase the lines of communication. Keep messages short and simple.

Fill in the gaps

Find areas where there was not a solution and create a response. Many of the gaps have been related to purview of the CAO including IT, procurement, human capital, and managing the capitol.

Instill confidence to take risks

Communicate with staff that they may not have the time to vet, research, or engage stakeholders as much as they have in the past while still providing employees security and risk management guidance

Coordinating with the private sector, vendors, and local government

Partnerships are critical in times of crisis to ensure a consistent approach across the state and to those providing services to citizens

For More Information:

COLORADO | Planning for New Normal Operations in State Government Working Draft (NASCA log-in)

KANSAS | Re-opening State Government: Guidance by Phase

MISSOURI | COVID-19 State Team Member Resources

OREGON | Guidance for State Government Operations Phase One (NASCA log-in)

RHODE ISLAND | Digital Toolkit for Employees Who Are Returning to Work