



Community Bankers Association of Illinois

One Mission. Community Banks.®

We want to share the results to date of CBAI's survey regarding community bankers' response to the COVID-19 crisis. Our objective as an association is to provide you with benchmark data from your peers across the state that you can use to evaluate your own best practices. Our immediate goal at CBAI during this crisis is to provide you timely and accurate information that is convenient to digest. We understand that you have a bank to run, while not only focusing on the health and well-being of your employees and community, but assisting and reassuring your customers during these challenging times. These results will be updated as more information is gathered.

[Survey Results »](#)

CBAI is also communicating with Community Bankers Associations in neighboring states sharing recommendations for best practices during the outbreak. Below are some of those suggestions:

[Talking Points »](#)

[Best Practices »](#)

Safety and Soundness

- Keep ATMs and branches well-stocked with cash.
- Maintain extra bank liquidity.
- Contact correspondent banks and Federal Home Loan Banks to ensure all lines of credit are open and active. Additionally, contact the Federal Reserve Banks to determine discount window availability.
- Commercial customers will begin to experience cash-flow difficulties which will result in the need for loan modifications. Prepare yourselves for credit issues.
- Consider temporarily suspending stock buy-back programs.
- Consider delaying Q1 Dividend payments.

Employee/Customer Health

- Cash handlers should consider wearing protective gloves.
- Consider changing the cleaning cycle for your facilities to daily.
- Have employees clean ATMs and commonly touched surfaces frequently.
- Conduct staff meetings by phone.
- Sick employees must stay home when ill.
- Employees caring for sick family members should consider working remotely.
- Employees with serious underlying health conditions, including pregnancy, may need special health precautions.
- Have employees frequently clean lunch and break areas and maintain personal space.
- Clean drive-in pneumatic tubes and drawer extenders regularly, perhaps as often as each transaction.
- Ask employees if they or any family members have recently traveled to high risk countries or areas such as Italy or China and if so, ask them to work remotely.
- Over-communicate with your employees so they understand you have their best interest in mind.
- Ask your employees for their suggestions on the best way to continue to serve your customers while keeping all employees safe.
- Limit non-essential business travel for your employees and ask them to limit non-essential personal travel.
- Keep hand sanitizer and tissues available for employees and customers. Consider card/place cards reminding staff to keep their hands away from their face, wash hands often and frequently sanitize after customer interaction or with money or paperwork customers have touched.
- Ensure all applicable staff is current with training to assist customers with all online banking needs, including expanding online usage for current customers.

- Note that many of these recommendations are best practices for good hygiene for permanent incorporation into office procedures.
- Monitor your email for communications from Federal and State bank regulatory agencies.
- Do your board meetings via conference call rather than in-person meetings.

Customers

- Be sure to communicate frequently with your customers.
- Use all available communication tools such as: social media, email, on-hold messages, lobby posters, electronic billboards, and statement messages.
- Try to keep your lobby open if possible to do so. Opening every other teller station is a way to maintain social distancing. If you feel you need to close your lobby, try to see customers on an appointment-only basis.
- Reach out to key customers and local centers of influence to assure them your bank will be there for them and for the community.
- Open all drive-up windows. Consider additional staffing and additional hours to serve your clients. Opening drive-ups before and after work hours might be a great way to relieve lobby traffic.
- Fully staff your call centers and make sure you keep call hold times to a minimum. Be sure to use message-on-hold communications for those that do need to be placed on hold.
- Think about using courier services and armored car services to conduct business with your commercial clients.
- Consider a "skip a pay" program for consumer loans in April.
- Be sure to warn your customers of potential scams. Thieves will try to capitalize on this situation.

Should you need additional resources on the COVID-19 pandemic, please consider the following web pages:

[FDIC Coronavirus Information »](#)

[ICBA Center for Crisis Response and Preparedness »](#)

[OCC COVID-19 Information Page »](#)

[Centers for Disease Control »](#)

[White House News »](#)

Additionally, **CBAI is offering a FREE webinar to members entitled "Pandemic Preparedness: Managing Coronavirus & Other Epidemics."** Visit the Members Only section of CBAI's website beginning at 10 a.m. on March 20, 2020.

[Pandemic Preparedness Webinar »](#)

A Note from CBAI President, Kraig Lounsberry:

CBAI will continue serving community banks throughout this crisis. Circumstances have shifted our focus from traditional lobbying efforts and in-person educational seminars to helping community bankers weather this storm. We are in discussions daily with state and federal officials and regulators. Please know that our team remains available to assist you during this period. Please don't hesitate to let us know if we can assist you with any individual questions or concerns.

This crisis only intensifies the value the community banking profession provides for our society. We are here to assist you with your important work of supporting your employees, your customers and your community. Please stay healthy and keep up the great work.

Kraig

[Email us](#)