

touching the exterior, and wash their hands as soon as possible.

### DEALING WITH POTENTIAL COVID-19 EXPOSURE:

If someone coughs on or near you or you believe you may have been exposed to COVID-19 in some way:

- Don't panic.
- Inform another volunteer what occurred and ask for their assistance.
- Dispose of your mask and gloves properly.
- Wash your hands and face thoroughly.
- Flush your eyes if necessary.
- Gargle with salt water or warm water.
- Get tested immediately if you know they have COVID-19.
- Self-quarantine for 14 days regardless of whether you are experiencing symptoms.
- According to CDC guidelines, you may discontinue quarantine after a minimum of 10 days if you do not have any symptoms, or after a minimum of seven days if you have a negative COVID test within 48 hours of when you plan to end quarantine.
- Although the CDC states that those who are fully vaccinated do not need to quarantine, you should refrain from volunteering for 14 days as you may still spread the virus.

Sources: [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/guidance.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/guidance.html)

### RESOURCES & FURTHER READING:

#### Websites:

[www.indigenousmutualaid.org](http://www.indigenousmutualaid.org)  
[www.mutualaid Disasterrelief.org](http://www.mutualaid Disasterrelief.org)  
[www.bigdoorbrigade.com/what-is-mutual-aid/](http://www.bigdoorbrigade.com/what-is-mutual-aid/)  
[www.kinlanimutualaid.org](http://www.kinlanimutualaid.org)  
[www.sproutdistro.com/about/anarchism](http://www.sproutdistro.com/about/anarchism)

#### Books/zines:

Mutual Aid: Building Solidarity  
During This Crisis (and the Next) by Dean Spade  
The Revolution Will Not Be Funded:  
Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex by INCITE!  
"Let's Talk Mutual Aid" by Regan De Loggans

Compiled by [www.IndigenousMutualAid.org](http://www.IndigenousMutualAid.org) & [www.IndigenousAction.org](http://www.IndigenousAction.org)



# INDIGENOUS MUTUAL AID



## HOW TO START AN INDIGENOUS MUTUAL AID COVID-19 RELIEF PROJECT

Compiled by [www.indigenousmutualaid.org](http://www.indigenousmutualaid.org)  
and [www.indigenousaction.org](http://www.indigenousaction.org)

# How to start an Indigenous Mutual Aid COVID-19 Relief Project.

Written Spring 2020, updated Spring 2021

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We decided to create this guide as we found that most resources currently available for COVID-19 Mutual Aid organizing were insufficient compared to discussions with other Mutual Aid projects and our own experiences working with two Indigenous Mutual Aid groups (Kinłani Mutual Aid & Navajo and Hopi Families COVID-19 Relief). Aside from this guide, we highly recommend that you talk directly with other Mutual Aid organizers to get a sense of what organizing frameworks may work best in your area. There is a directory here: [www.mutualaid Disasterrelief.org/collective-care/](http://www.mutualaid Disasterrelief.org/collective-care/) This is a living document. Please email edits or additions to [indigenousmutualaid@protonmail.com](mailto:indigenousmutualaid@protonmail.com).

## Introduction

As our communities have a deep history with organizing to support each other in times of crisis, we already have many existing models of mutual aid organizing to draw from. This has looked like a small crew coordinating their relatives or friends to chop wood and distribute to elders. It has looked like traditional medicine herbal clinics and sexual health supply distribution. It has looked like community water hauling efforts or large scale supply runs to ensure elders have enough to make it through harsh winters. It has looked like unsheltered relative support through distribution of clothing, food, and more. Any time individuals and groups in our communities have taken direct action (not by relying on politicians, non-profit organizations,

touch the inner bag.

9. Back away 6 feet, let them get the items by picking up the inner bag and lifting it out of the outer bag and do not get closer than 6 feet. (Feel free to shout greetings! But don't hug/hand off items in person/etc.)

10. When they have backed off, take the outer bag away with you – it's potentially covered in viruses on the outside.

11. Take your gloves off, without touching the exterior of the glove with your bare skin. This protects you from virus transmission if delivering to an already-infected recipient. Remove gloves first and if possible put on fresh ones, then remove the mask by hooking fingers under the straps at the back. Finally, remove fresh gloves if used. (CDC Guidelines)

12. Leave, after cleaning your hands with hand sanitizer for more than 20 seconds if possible.

13. When you get back, wash your hands and disinfect items you have used.

## How to collect items from someone in self-isolation

1. If someone is self-isolating because they have been exposed to infection, or if it is confirmed that they are infected, the same procedures apply if it is necessary to collect cash or other items from the house. Items must only be removed from a potentially-infected house if there is no alternative.

2. The self-isolating person should clean and disinfect each item, while wearing gloves, according to the protocol for disinfecting things above.

3. Place clean items in a new unused plastic bag, or a bag which has been disinfected inside and out, then place this bag inside another bag.

4. When the person collecting arrives, the self-isolating person should place the double-bagged items on the floor, fold the outer bag down, and back away 6 feet (Feel free to shout greetings! But don't hug/hand off items in person/etc.)

5. The person collecting should put on gloves and pick up the inner bag without touching the outer bag.

6. After leaving, the person collecting should remove gloves without

of the house (on shoes, coats, etc). People receiving deliveries should be aware that anyone who attempts to persuade them into allowing entry is not acting according to protocol.

### **How to deliver items to someone in self-isolation**

1. You should clean and disinfect each item you're going to deliver, and place them all in a sanitized box or plastic bag (carrier, ziploc, etc) cleaned both inside and out (or a new unused bag).
2. Disinfect the inside of another bag (or use a new unused one) and place the first bag inside this bag. This is to protect the disinfected items in the inner bag, so someone immuno-compromised can safely touch it. Close the top of the outer bag as much as you can.
3. Try to travel to see the person without using public transport – so by pavement, a private car in which you've wiped down all the surfaces you'll touch with 1% bleach solution, or a taxi. If you cannot do these, and must use public transport, try not to touch surfaces (like handrails or buttons) with your hands, use hand sanitizer after traveling if available, or wear gloves which you can change. If wearing gloves while traveling, remove these without touching the exterior with your bare skin.
4. As you approach the person's house, call/text/etc them to open the door. Do this before you put on (fresh) gloves, so that you don't risk contaminating the gloves with any virus that may be on your phone. If they live in a block of flats or other building with a communal entrance accessed by a buzzer, call/text and ask them to buzz you in, rather than pressing the button.
5. Wear a mask and put it on before putting on your gloves, to minimize the risk of transferring virus from your face to your gloved hands. (CDC Guidelines)
6. Put on (fresh) gloves, ensuring that you touch only the cuff of the glove with your bare hand. This minimizes the risk of transmitting viruses to the exterior of your gloved hands. If you have hand sanitizer, use it before putting on the gloves, to further reduce this risk.
7. Ask the recipient to back away from the door at least 6 feet, and put your bag on the floor immediately inside the doorway. Do not step through the door.
8. Fold out the outer bag so the recipient doesn't have to touch it. Don't

or other indirect means) and supported others--not for their own self-interests but out of love for their people, the land, and other beings--this is what we call "mutual aid."

Though the term is credited to anarchist Peter Kropotkin — who established the analysis for his book "Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution" in part by observing Indigenous communities — Indigenous Peoples have long established practices of caring for each other for our survival, particularly in times of crisis. Mutual Aid is nothing new to Indigenous communities.

Indigenous Mutual Aid organizing challenges "charity" models of organizing and relief support that historically have treated our communities as "victims" and only furthered dependency and stripped our autonomy from us. We organize counter to non-profit capitalists who maintain neo-colonial institutions and we reject the NGO-ization and non-profit commodification of mutual aid.

We do not ask tribal governments or any other forms of settler governments for permission to advocate for and support our own communities — we do the work because it must be done. This is the very definition of **Direct Action**.

We urge towards an organizing that is based on our cultural knowledge systems, that is anti-colonial, anti-capitalist, anti-heteropatriarchal, that abolishes white supremacy and that extends our ways of mutuality towards a future that honors our ancestors and coming generations. ***This is what "solidarity and ceremony not charity" means.***

We highly recommend that before you start a Mutual Aid effort, research what work has already been done and if there are existing groups, see if there are ways you can join or enhance their efforts.

While this framework is focused on essential supply distribution such as PPE, food, water, etc, it can be easily adapted. Before we start organizing we should ask, "What are the most immediate needs of those most vulnerable in our community during this pandemic?"

Perhaps this is water infrastructure, home repair, feed for livestock, healthy traditional foods, etc. Our efforts should be configured to answer that question. We should review that question as conditions change and extend it beyond the immediate crisis as well.

### **IMPORTANT! Before you begin:**

Due to the serious life-threatening nature of COVID-19 and the possibility to transmit the virus through any organizing efforts, we recommend that you study these resources and commit to maintaining the highest standard of safety in your organizing. We seek to stop the spread of the virus and support those most vulnerable in our communities, this means that every measure must be taken to be responsible to the health and wellbeing of our communities.

**IF AT ANYTIME YOU OR A MEMBER OF YOUR ORGANIZING CREW STARTS TO FEEL SICK (FEVER, COUGH, SHORTNESS OF BREATH) OR HAVE COME INTO CONTACT WITH SOMEONE WHO IS SICK, STOP VOLUNTEERING IMMEDIATELY AND TAKE PROPER SAFETY MEASURES TO ENSURE YOUR WELLBEING.**

We base our current safety practices on the zine, “Safety Practices for Food & Supply Distribution During the Coronavirus Pandemic.” A PDF is available here: [www.mutualaidasterrelief.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/COVID-SupplyDistro-MASafetyPracticesZine-WEB.pdf](http://www.mutualaidasterrelief.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/COVID-SupplyDistro-MASafetyPracticesZine-WEB.pdf)

We’ve also included safety information at the end of this zine, review the protocols and commit to maintaining them before considering initiating any mutual aid organizing.

### **What we know about the virus so far:**

- Symptoms develop 2-14 days after exposure;
- Symptoms develop on average 5.5 days after exposure;
- People are most contagious 2-3 days after exposure; This means when you are most contagious you may not have any symptoms;
- Experience of symptoms varies significantly from person to

the items and opt for paper bags when possible (preliminary studies shows the virus may live longer on plastic compared to cardboard+)

2) DELIVERY: When you drop the delivery off at the community member’s home, please do the following to limit their risk of exposure:

- Leave the items at the front or side door.
- Knock or ring the doorbell to notify the community member that their delivery has arrived.
- Quickly walk away from the home to a safe distance of at least 6 feet to avoid exposing the community member (do NOT enter the person’s home even if invited in, RESIST urge to step closer, shake hands, etc.
- Remind the community member to wash their hands after putting items away
- Wave, smile, greet at a safe distance – take joy in knowing that we all care for each other.

3) AFTERWARDS: Dispose of your gloves.

When you get back home, immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

Warning! If you start to feel sick (fever, cough, shortness of breath) or have come into contact with someone who is sick, please STOP volunteering and stay at home. And we hope you feel better soon!

\*Center for Disease Control. (2020 March 12): Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): If You Are at Higher Risk. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specificgroups/high-risk-complications.html#who-is-higher-risk>  
+N. Van Doremalen et al. (2020). Aerosol and Surface Stability of SARS-COV-2 as Compared with SARS-CoV-1. New England Journal of Medicine.

### **Delivery protocols for Immuno-Compromised and/or Self Isolation**

These protocols are designed so you do not introduce the virus to their home, or take away virus from an already-infected home. They may appear long and thorough, but it is absolutely essential that virus is not introduced into the home of someone especially at risk, who may need an ICU bed if infected. It is also essential that you do not risk spreading the virus further from the home of someone who is already infected. The person delivering should not even enter the recipient’s home at any point during this process in order to prevent the virus from being spread into or out

- scrub all produce then place on clean side.
- Put all supplies on the dirty side then properly dispose of and change your gloves.
- Wipe down boxes, canned food, glass, plastic then transfer to clean side to dry.
- Do not place donations or items for distribution on the ground unless it is also sanitized.
- Designate and label “clean” or “hot” areas to ensure no contamination. Do not place anything that has not been sanitized (hot) in or near a “clean” area. If anything intended for distribution touches the ground, it must be re-sanitized.
- When volunteers are ready to take deliveries, place the boxes or bags in their car or bike without touching anything but the bags. Let them open the doors for you.

### **Holding items for distribution:**

Some groups are making a practice of holding all incoming supplies for a minimum of 72 hours before disinfecting as the virus persists less on surfaces over time. Note, however, that the virus can live on some surface types for longer; disinfection with bleach or soap may still be necessary.

### **How to make safe deliveries for a vulnerable community member during COVID-19**

*Source: Volunteer Guidance on Safe Deliveries (COVID-19)*

In doing deliveries our goals are to limit exposure to the virus for the community member and limit exposure to the virus for yourself

### **Shopping & Delivery Protocols**

1) SHOPPING: When you are at the store, follow these precautions\* to limit your risk of exposure:

- Shop at off hours.
- Wear a mask and gloves at all times.
- Wipe down your cart/basket handles with disinfecting wipes before using (either bring your own or use wipes offered at the store, if available).
- Avoid touching high-touch surfaces (e.g. door handles) and limit touching items on the shelves (first examine the shelf, identify what you want, and then pick up only that item).
- Avoid touching your face, nose, eyes, etc.
- Maintain at least 6 feet from other people.
- Bag the items yourself so that one less person is touching

- person--
- Could last a couple of days or several weeks with varying severity;
- Some people will not develop any symptoms even if infected;
- Most cases will be mild and most people will recover without the need for medical intervention;
- 10-15% of people will require hospitalization to treat pneumonia.
- Spread mostly thru respiratory droplets--i.e. coughing and sneezing;
- Unclear how long it lives on surfaces, current estimates are: 5 days on glass, 24 hours on cardboard, 3 days on stainless-steel and plastic.
- Virus is brand-new so no one has immunity;
- Some populations at high-risk for severe complications:
  - Elderly (over the age of 60);
  - Those with chronic health conditions, including--
  - Diabetes;
  - Heart disease;
  - Lung disease/inflammation (i.e. smokers)
  - Immuno-compromised people, including--
  - Have cancer now or undergone treatment for cancer;
  - Autoimmune disorders
  - Those with multiple risk factors (i.e. age + health condition(s)) are at even greater risk of severe complications requiring medical intervention.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), touching a surface or object contaminated with the virus and then touching one’s own face “is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads”. The CDC has updated its guidance to say that Covid-19 spreads “very easily” from person to person through contaminated droplets produced by others as they talk, cough, sneeze and breath.

**It is important that you and your crew review current research and adjust your protocols accordingly.**

## Organizing Methodology & Framework

While there are a range of mutual aid formations and organizing methodologies out there right now, we have found that this framework, adapted from DC Mutual Aid, has been highly effectively in our organizing with Kinlani/Flagstaff Mutual Aid. The following methodology is shifting as we continue to organize and learn from what other groups are doing throughout *Turtle Island*.

### **Indigenous Mutual Aid Relief organizing methodology:**

Our cultures should be our first frameworks for action, this ensures that we maintain the necessary spiritual grounding that it takes to maintain and sustain this challenging work. This being stated, we encourage Indigenous folk operating as guests on other Indigenous lands to first consult and seek consent from the original inhabitants of those lands.

This organizing framework is adaptable for urban or rural environments, it is also scalable (it can be as small as a 3 person crew or more than 100 people) though we highly recommend that multiple hubs, distribution sites, and delivery systems be established so that efforts can be decentralized and proliferated throughout a region.

We imagine multiple mutual aid efforts sharing supplies and coordinating to support larger regional mobilizations. Mutual Aid organizing should be decentralized, individuals or groups should not be hoarding or gatekeeping essential supplies and resources.

**Collectivize:** Organizing should be horizontal or non-hierarchical. This means all work & responsibilities should be collectively shared and not centralized with one or a few individuals. Maintain good collectivization by rotating roles, tasks, maintain transparency and ensuring you have a process for accountability. Have agreements on how decisions are made up front as well, does it make sense to use consensus or a modified version?

### **A note on managing funds:**

Some groups build relationships with non-profit fiscal sponsors to be able to receive tax-deductible donations. Other groups will

- Disinfect surfaces multiple times per day.
- Make sure that chemicals/cleaning agents are properly labeled and stored.

### **Recommended disinfectants for COVID-19:**

- Soap and water for 20+ secs;
- Bleach--CDC recommendations for diluted formula are 5 TBS (1/3 cup) bleach in 1 gallon of water or 4 tsp bleach in one quart of water;
- Hydrogen peroxide;
- Isopropyl (rubbing) alcohol;
- NO vinegar or vodka.
- IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE DISINFECT ALL ITEMS BEFORE WE HAND THEM OUT TO THE PUBLIC TO AVOID SPREADING THE VIRUS OURSELVES.

Wipe down all items with one of the above disinfectants before distribution.

### **Food Storage/Supply Area Protocols & Process:**

- Supply processing area must be thoroughly wiped with proper disinfectant and a disposable towel at the beginning and end of every shift and once every hour while in continuous use.
- Sanitize all high-touch surfaces such as door knobs (in and out), light switches, handles, tables, faucets etc.
- Wear masks at all times in the supply area, put masks on before entering supply area.
- After putting on mask, wash hands with soap and water immediately before entering supply area.
- Put on fresh, sterile gloves once inside supply area.
- Do not touch anything that could be cross-contaminated by people who have not washed hands with your supply area gloves on, including doors, light switches, fridge/freezer doors, etc. If you touch anything, dispose of gloves, wash hands again, and get a fresh pair of gloves.

### **PROCESS:**

- Use a multiple tables as a sanitizing station. We recommend at least two tables, one for "dirty" or "hot" items and the other for "clean" or sanitized items.
- Set up two wash tubs for fresh fruits and vegetables. One tub will have warm soapy water, the other clean water for rinse. Soak and

## **Volunteer Safety Protocols:**

- Wash hands immediately upon arrival, before volunteering/working. Sanitize or wash hands frequently.
- Wear a well-fitted face mask and nitrile gloves at all times while volunteering.
- Wear nitrile or equivalent gloves while handling any items for distribution.  
Dispose of gloves or use a sanitizing bath (10:1 bleach in water, dip gloves for 10 seconds) if they become contaminated. If you come into contact with contaminated surfaces, or touch your mask, face or hair dispose of gloves or use sanitizing bath.
- Avoid touching your face, especially mouth, eyes, nose;
- Cover any sneezes or coughs in your elbow;
- Maintain physical distancing at 6 feet while not moving/working. Be aware of room sizes and space capacity while volunteering.
- Frequently sanitize your phone, vehicle, etc. with procedures listed below;
- Change/wash clothes as frequently as possible.
- Tie long hair back when volunteering.
- DO NOT EAT OR DRINK in any room intended for storage or processing.

Volunteers showing active signs of infection (dry cough, fever, and/or fatigue) must not directly interact with others, including touching supplies and transit vehicles. If you are experiencing symptoms, PLEASE immediately begin social distancing and prioritize getting tested.

In our organizing we assume we have all been exposed and base our hygiene and disinfecting practices off of that premise. Cleaning surfaces can be very effective against the virus.

## **Sanitizing surfaces:**

- Scrub hard (not lightly wipe or dab; you have to physically wipe away the virus);
- Use enough solution to get surface visibly wet for at least 4 min; and
- Let air dry;

have a couple trusted individuals manage the funds personally with agreements regarding access and transparency. We have found that working outside the non-profit industry is our preferred method along with using digital management tools such as Paypal or Venmo. We have a debit card for both accounts which our supply coordinator manages. We communicate expenses for accounting via text groups and at our meetings.

## **The Hub**

*At least 2-4 people.*

This is the crew that coordinates donations, funds, needs requests, volunteers, and deliveries through a hotline, texts, email, social media, or other channels. Due to the sensitive nature of some of the information from forms, we highly recommend that only trusted community members or organizers have access to this information. Data or any spreadsheets should not be shared with any other organization, law enforcement, or other agency. Every action the Hub is responsible for can be done over the phone or internet, it is not necessary and highly recommended that Hub coordination not be done in-person. The Hub crew should be as decentralized as possible and coordination should be broken into reasonable shifts. As calls, emails, or forms come in and needs are requested, a Hub volunteer will coordinate for supplies and dispatch drivers for deliveries. The Hub should communicate to drivers any further safety protocols to follow, how supplies will be acquired, and how reimbursement will work if needed. The Hub will also communicate with the Supply crew. We recommend to limit numbers to five or less people at a time working with the Hub. Our Hub is currently comprised of an initial group of experienced volunteers who stepped into these roles to help manage a Facebook group, donations, forms/spreadsheet (volunteers, needs requests, supplies, etc), hotline number, and dispatch as well as general communications. We maintain basic sanitizing protocols specific to this operation and it is fairly decentralized (we don't all necessarily work together on site). We recommend establishing a vetting process for volunteers who wish to help organize, take shifts, and stand by as back up so that only trusted people have access to funds and sensitive information.

*The primary point of the Hub is to have a crew coordinating logistics. If your effort has the capacity to organize logistics, supply processing and distribution, then perhaps it makes sense to consolidate the organizing.*

### **Supply Crew & Storage/Assembly Site**

*At least 2-4 people.*

Supply crew volunteers are tasked with coordinating the storage of supplies, supply assembly and sanitizing for delivery. The Supply crew operates from a storage site where donations are dropped off and assembled for delivery as needed. The location for this site should have enough space to manage the processing and storage of large deliveries. We recommend a centralized site to maintain minimal traffic and limit possible contamination in the storage/assembly area. We also recommend having a backup location if one site becomes contaminated (for example if a Supply volunteer has indications of exposure, then the backup site could be activated while the other site is cleaned). Volunteers can be contacted to assist resupply as needed (shopping or donation pickup), this includes lots of loading and unloading especially for large deliveries. The Supply crew must maintain intensive sanitizing protocols at this site. This site can also function as or link to existing farming or food cooperatives.

*Supply sites can also be temporary, consider the amount of space you would need to store, sanitize supplies, and package them. With our protocols, we do not place any items on the ground so we use tables and pallets, but this takes a lot of room. Perhaps there are community spaces, rooms, halls, etc that are shut down during this pandemic, be creative with potential storage/assembly sites!*

### **Delivery**

*At least 2-4 people.*

The Hub reaches out to volunteers who have signed up for deliveries. Delivery drivers must be oriented with proper safe delivery and sanitizing protocols. Delivery volunteers can either pick up items from grocery stores, pharmacies and drop them at

*Indigenous Mutual Aid is not just about redistributing resources, it's about radical redistribution of power to restore our lifeways, heal our communities, and the land.*

### **9. Stabilize and proliferate!**

Mutual aid organizing should spread and be decentralized. We should make every effort to ensure that we educate, empower, and share resources openly so that all our people can grow and build. Non-profit charity-based models in Indigenous communities have trained so many organizers to gatekeep, compete, and over-focus on building hierarchical organizational power. Indigenous Mutual Aid is not just about redistributing resources, it's about radical redistribution of power to restore our lifeways, heal our communities, and the land.

### **Safety Protocols**

We've seen so many photos of relief and mutual aid efforts in our communities with volunteers entering elder's homes, no gloves, not physically distanced, supplies on unsanitized surfaces, and supplies not sanitized at all.

While information on COVID-19 transmission is changing based on new research, anyone considering organizing a mutual aid effort should practice the highest standard of safety to ensure we do not endanger our communities.

Mutual Aid & relief efforts must be transparent with their safety protocols and sanitizing practices in general and especially for vulnerable communities such as elders. It is our responsibility to ensure that our efforts do everything to prevent the spread, this means maintaining the highest standard of protocols for safely supporting our communities. **We cannot risk inadvertently spreading COVID because we want to take a short cut or think sanitizing is excessive.**

Familiarize yourself with these protocols and please help to orient and remind others.



Some groups have created funds to provide supplies for free, others coordinate payment for those delivering via venmo, paypal, or other digital payment system.

- Identify a Supply/Storage site that has good ventilation for the sanitizing process.
- Establish clear physical safety and sanitizing protocols.

## 7. Outreach

While most outreach is centered online, direct outreach and flyering at community spaces may be necessary in communities with limited internet access. We recommend printing materials and leaving them in a ziplocked bag or sealed container for at least 72 hours. These flyers then can be distributed safely with proper hygiene, protective gear, and maintaining social distancing guidelines.

In many Indigenous communities radio is still the best way to do outreach. Contact your local radio station and ask to provide a public service announcement or have an your group's information placed on the community calendar.

Establishing or working with another crew to set up a pirate radio station is another option.

## 8. Follow Through.

We must be able to follow through with commitments and communicate openly if we cannot fulfill requests. We must also be clear on what we can and cannot support through our mutual aid efforts. Consider your capacity and overall ability to be consistent.

**A note about disbanding projects:** If you or your crew realizes they don't have the capacity to continue a project, then perhaps it's time to move on. Sometimes it's good to compost a project (with good communication and transparency as to why and what lessons are learned) so that other things can grow. Many non-Native activists and non-profit groups have a tendency to institutionalize their efforts, this can lead to stagnation, power imbalances, burnout, and other detrimental effects. If your effort disbands, consider redistributing supplies, tools, equipment, contacts, etc to others who may want to step up.

the storage/assembly site for sanitizing, or they can deliver them directly. This will be determined by information for the delivery received by the Hub. The Hub will coordinate reimbursement for delivery drivers if needed.

*If your capacity is limited the Supply crew and Delivery folx may share roles, we've found that to be challenging but definitely possible.*

## Distribution

*2+ people.*

Distribution can be organized in conjunction with or aside from deliveries. Some Mutual Aid groups establish distribution for food supplies (food boxes, meals, etc) at either stationary or mobile sites. The Distribution crew can be comprised of Supply and or Delivery volunteers depending on the scale of your operations. Intensive sanitizing protocols must be maintained by all volunteers at this site.

We recommend onsite sanitizing as opposed to transporting sanitized supplies as the transportation process poses additional risk of contamination.

We also recommend no-contact walk-up pick up or drive up distribution.

## Pods

Pods may not be necessary in some of our communities as our familial and clan relations have already kept us woven together. Originally developed by Mia Mingus for the Bay Area Transformative Justice Collective, **pod mapping** is a tool that was initially created for accountability and dealing with harm in communities. Pods and pod mapping have been adapted by Mutual Aid groups to connect blocks, streets, apartment complexes, neighborhoods, or rural communities to share resources/supplies, information, and support. Pods are then connected through Neighborhood Point People (through social media apps, text or email groups, list-serves, slack channels, and so forth) through mutual aid hubs or their own networks to be able to link up entire areas. In some areas Pods are also being established around affinities. Considering that many of our communities are fractured due to colonial violence, we see

critical importance of establishing Pods that operate by and for LGBTQAI2S folx.

Neighborhood Pods How-To: [https://docs.google.com/document/u/0/d/1j8ADhLEuKNDZ1a\\_opmzudywJPKMXcNKu01V1xY2MiIA/mobilebasic](https://docs.google.com/document/u/0/d/1j8ADhLEuKNDZ1a_opmzudywJPKMXcNKu01V1xY2MiIA/mobilebasic)

Pod Mapping for Mutual Aid: [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-QfMn1DE6ymhKZMpXN1LQvD6Sy\\_HSnnCK6gTO7ZLFrE/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-QfMn1DE6ymhKZMpXN1LQvD6Sy_HSnnCK6gTO7ZLFrE/edit)

## **Organizing an Indigenous Mutual Aid COVID-19 relief project:**

### **1. Crew up.**

While some small scale efforts can be managed by individuals, mutual aid is all about working together.

You may already have an organization or crew of friends you have worked with, if not, we recommend building an affinity group that helps to build the collective Mutual Aid project.

Typically an affinity group is a small group of 5 to 20 people who work together autonomously on direct actions or other projects. Affinity groups generally consists of like minded people who come together to get something done. They collectively establish their own goals, structure and group culture. For a mutual aid relief project utilizing the above organizing methodology, we recommend an affinity group of about 6-16 people. We need to make sure there are enough people involved in critical roles that if one person gets sick another person can immediately fill their role etc.

Everyone in your crew should familiarize themselves and train on the most up-to-date sanitizing/safety processes. Don't take shortcuts!

### **2. Establish agreements.**

Mutual Aid collectives should establish internal organizing agreements, processes for accountability and responsibility, and decision making. Basically you want to be clear on how you work together and how you work with other groups. This can

to effectively provide support to those most in need and most vulnerable in your area of operations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For our strategic framework we outline our Overall Goals, Specific Areas of Operations, Specific Goals, Actions, Timelines, and Scenarios.

*Are you prepared to respond in the event of a City or Region-wide lockdown? What is your plan for supply disruptions and shortages? What if you have a COVID-19 outbreak amongst your volunteers? Are you prepared for utility outages? ICU bed shortages? Etc.*

## **6. Infrastructure**

Infrastructure is the underlying base or foundation especially for an organization or system. What facilities, equipment, tools, resources, etc do we need to communicate, organize, and implement our plans to reach our goals?

Initial infrastructure to prepare:

- Establish your Facebook group, website, or other channel for communicating to those who may have requests, wish to join, or support your effort.
- Consider who you are reaching out to and what access they have to internet, language, etc and choose appropriate channels.
- Create your forms for volunteers and need requests. Though many people use Google Forms, we recommend [Airtable.com](https://airtable.com) or creating your own forms through a website for security purposes. Overall you want a form that can input data directly into a manageable spreadsheet. The spreadsheet should have a section to indicate if a request has been fulfilled.
- Create a hotline. We highly recommend having a phone number available for requests. Google voice is an option some groups use, but you can also get a burner phone as well.
- Provide updated info to local resources available for those in need during this crisis.
- Consider how your delivery system will work for acquiring supplies and build a reimbursement system into the process.

## 5. Develop a plan/strategy.

Your crew should ask and answer: *What are the critical needs in our communities? Who are those most vulnerable? What should our priorities be?*

*(Are there some organizations already doing work but parts of the community falling through gaps?)*

*Whats our capacity?*

*Do we have the time, energy, emotional and spiritual capacity? Do we have enough people to launch and sustain an effort? Do we need to outreach to grow that capacity?*

*What are our short-term, mid-term, and long-term goals in terms of mutual aid?*

*We highly recommend exploring scenarios, making contingency plans, and preparing for escalations for organizing in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.*

*What actions do we need to take to meet those goals?*

*What resources do we have? What resources do we need to achieve our goals?*

*How will we manage resources responsibly? Who are we accountable to and how can we be transparent?*

For example, our vision and goals with Kinlani Mutual Aid are as follows:

**Vision:** *Through culturally-rooted direct action and autonomous organizing, we seek to support, strengthen, and empower our communities so they can be resilient in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.*

**Goals:** *Stop the spread of COVID-19 in our communities by safely providing direct support and essential supplies for those most vulnerable particularly Indigenous, Indigenous healers, immunocompromised, poor, and unsheltered relatives.*

*Promote, build, and support long-term capacity of our communities to be interdependent outside of the state, municipalities, Tribal governments, and corporations.*

Consider creating an **Emergency Strategic Framework**.

The purpose of an Emergency Framework is to outline proactive organizational emergency responses and to focus your capacity

help address issues before they arise, or at least you'll be better equipped to face them when they eventually occur.

Some sample internal agreements for Indigenous Mutual Aid projects could include:

- Indigenous Led. This effort is Indigenous-led by those whose ancestral lands we are on. Respect Indigenous cultural protocols.
- Protect our elders and those most vulnerable in our communities. Our work must not jeopardize their health and wellbeing, their needs come first.
- Spiritually grounded. Begin and close every overall effort/day/meeting/delivery with a culturally appropriate protocols, prayers or offerings.
- Be strategic. Think through your actions so we can be proactive and not reactionary.
- Don't put anyone at risk. Everyone in the group should have informed consent about actions and decisions that have potential to impact them. Understand possible long-term consequences of actions for communities.
- Consensus based. Decisions will be made based without top-down/majority rule upholding cultural frameworks.
- Always keep the communication lines open in order to promote and maintain a safe environment.
- Respect diversity of tactics. We can agree or disagree on what actions are appropriate but do not interfere, distance, or denounce.
- Practice mutual aid all of the time. Support each other. Don't let anyone in this movement stand alone.
- Check oppressive behavior. No space for white supremacy, homophobia, transphobia, neo-colonialism, or hetero-patriarchy.
- No movement policing.
- Accountability and responsibility. We offer no space for sexual violence & hetero-patriarchal behaviors. We will practice survivor centism and fiercely ensure transformative & restorative justice.
- We don't work with cops, military, or government agencies. Doing so could compromise support for undocumented,

- unsheltered, or other relatives.
- Do not financially exploit the struggle for personal or organizational gain. (This extends to non-profit organizing and financial gatekeeping, resource hoarding, etc).
- No drugs, no alcohol.

Further non-Indigenous agreements:

- Not every space, conversation, prayer, role, etc is for you.
- Step up, step back & curb your enthusiasm. Sure, you're awesome at whatever skill you think you are, but we guarantee that there is someone else in our communities with those same skills.
- Read: "Accomplices not Allies" for further info regarding roles.

### 3. Establish roles.

We recommend the roles outlined in the framework above. No one can or should be doing all of these roles at once.

### 4. Establish Security Culture & Digital Security.

Security culture is a culture where people know & assert their "rights," it also establishes "security consciousness" or being aware of and knowing what behavior compromises safety and security. Developing good security culture helps us hold insecure behavior accountable. The practice becomes a culture when group makes security violations socially unacceptable in the group. Oppressive behaviors are violations of security culture.

Avoid:

- Rumors. Always double check info that appears to be a rumor.
- Putting others at risk.
- Turning people and info over to any law enforcement agents.
- Interfering with other groups.
- Denouncing others & their actions.

Security culture is about more than just targeting specific behaviors in individuals such as bragging, gossiping or lying. It is also about checking movement behaviors and practices as a whole to ensure that our own oppressive practices don't feed into

intelligence operations being carried out against our community. For example, racism or sexism in the movement can help to spread division, make some people more open to infiltrators (those who feel marginalized by group practices), and create openings that can be used by state operatives. Obviously, our movements have a lot of work to do before we address the bigger questions – what's important here is to recognize how oppressive behaviors play into bad security culture overall.

**Digital Security:** Considering the threat of state surveillance, doxxing by fascists, and corporate misuse of private information, having good security practices built into your effort from the beginning is necessary. The Electronic "Frontier" Foundation put together a guide on digital security for mutual aid organizing. They state, "overlooked privacy settings and overbroad collection of personal data can lead to the unintended disclosure of private information that can be used to harm the very people seeking help. Though these efforts may seem like they have equal benefit in helping connect people in need to people with resources, the privacy and security implications for these mediums vary widely. You can read the guide here: [www.eff.org/deeplinks/2020/03/keeping-each-other-safe-when-virtually-organizing-mutual-aid](http://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2020/03/keeping-each-other-safe-when-virtually-organizing-mutual-aid)

They recommend to:

- Collect as little data as possible – How much data do you actually need to accomplish your goal, and what is most sensitive to your community?
- Be mindful of permissions, and restrict access where possible – Does your data need to be public? What can you restrict to a smaller subset of your community?
- Use encryption in transit and at rest – What tools are you using, and who can see your data? Is it protected?
- Think about which companies, people and systems you're trusting with this sensitive data – Can you connect participants through end-to-end encrypted platforms?

We recommend protonmail.com for email and Airtable.com for online forms.