

Stay Safe, Stay Open: Wisconsin Occupational Health and an Economic Development Organization Partner to Expand COVID-19 Guidance Outreach

The Challenge

As Wisconsin began to emerge from pandemic shutdown, it became clear that many businesses would need guidance to reopen and safely operate – guidance that was tailored to their specific industry, easily accessible, and updated as needed. Both the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (Wisconsin DHS) Occupational Health Program and the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) recognized this need for the most current best practices that could be made readily available to businesses statewide and an informal partnership between the two agencies was formed.

The Response

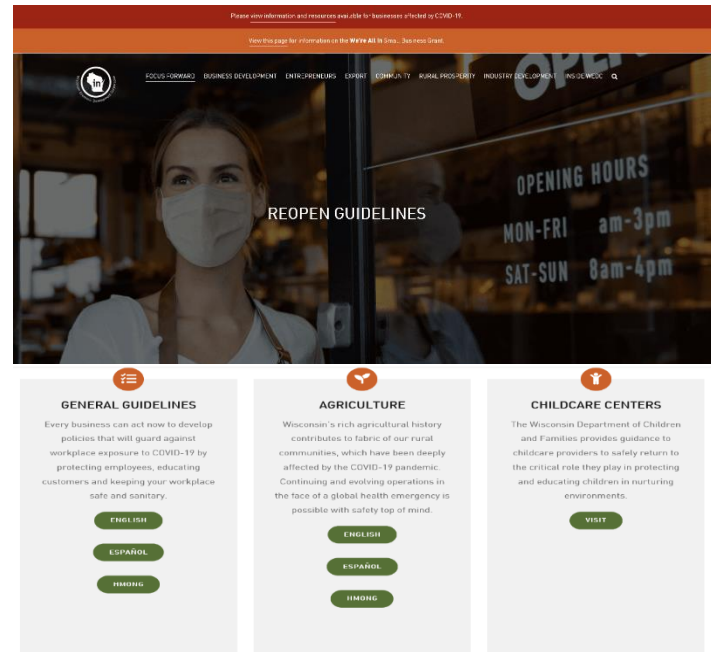
Within a few short weeks, Wisconsin DHS had created general guidelines as well as 17 industry-specific reopening guidance documents. WEDC hosted the guidance on their website, including Spanish and Hmong translations. Open, respectful communication between the organizations and a mutual understanding of the importance of protecting workers' health and safety as well as the public's were cornerstones of the collaboration throughout the process.

The Impact

Within the first two weeks of the reopening guidance being available online, the main page was viewed 692,261 times in 281,294 unique sessions. This website, renamed "Relief and Recovery Resources for Your Business" at <https://wedc.org/reopen-guidelines> continues to be updated and frequently visited. The success of the initial collaboration led to Wisconsin DHS' workplace outbreak guidance for employers being linked to the same WEDC page. This outreach resulted in significantly greater publicity and dissemination than standard Wisconsin DHS distribution for the guidance documents. As concerns about the COVID-19 vaccines have emerged, the two agencies have recently partnered again to survey businesses about vaccination attitudes and needs.

This move toward more unified COVID-19 responses among these two collaborating agencies has continued to benefit Wisconsin workers and businesses.

For more information, visit dhs.wisconsin.gov/occupational-health



WEDC Reopen Guidelines Webpage, May 2020