New CDC recommendations were issued on March 15, 2020 that gatherings of 50 people or more in the United States be canceled or postponed over the next eight weeks because of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Governor Pete Ricketts has followed this recommendation and implemented this guidance for the state of Nebraska, asking all public events and gatherings be less than 50 people.

The Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department (LLCHD) had previously issued guidance for public gatherings and events to limit the spread of COVID-19 in our community. This local guidance included, the recommendation of limiting the size of events and public gatherings to no more than 50 people once community transmission had begun locally. However, to align with the national CDC recommendations and the Governors announcement for Nebraska, the City of Lincoln is implementing this lower limit sooner to be consistent. This will ensure we are all doing what we can to limit the spread of COVID-19 in our community.

Event planners and organizers should:
- Anticipate that non-essential events may need to be modified (e.g., conducted as a video webinar), canceled, or postponed.

- Cancel non-essential events primarily for or attended by older adults and people with chronic medical conditions at higher risk for severe illness.

- Stay informed about the local COVID-19 situation. Get up-to-date information about COVID-19 activity in Lancaster County on the Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department web page - https://lincoln.ne.gov/city/health/

- Discuss event details with local health officials and prepare to implement an emergency contingency plan based on their specific guidance.

- Collaborate and coordinate with event and community partners including the local public health department, hotels where participants are staying, airlines, the event venue, and other partners.

- Use event messaging and communications to provide COVID-19 updates and to promote everyday preventive health messages to your participants and staff.

If smaller events of 50 or less do take place, in addition to basic prevention messages, event organizers should:

- o Instruct any participants or event staff to not attend if they have any respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, or sore throat regardless of the presumed cause.

- o Remind participants and staff to not attend if they have travelled within the past 14 days to an area identified by the CDC as having a Level 3 Travel Health Notice due to COVID-19. https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices

- o Recommend that participants and staff at higher risk of severe illness not attend.

- o Ensure that event venues are well ventilated and are adequately equipped with facilities for hand washing and supplies including hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, tissues, and trash baskets.

- o Increase the frequency of cleaning commonly used areas with detergent and water followed by a disinfectant that is EPA-approved for emerging viral pathogens.

List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2:

https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/frequently-asked-questions-about-list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2

- o Encourage participants to minimize close contact (e.g., recommend no hand shaking or hugging). Allow for people to keep more than an arm's length away from each other.

- o Maintain a registration list of participants and staff; this will significantly assist local public health in contact tracing in the event a COVID-19 case should later be identified as having attended the event.

- o Promote messages that discourage people who are sick from attending events. Create refund policies that permit participants the flexibility to stay home when they are sick, need to care for sick household members, or are at high risk for complications from COVID-19.

- o Isolate staff or participants in a designated space who become ill with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 at the event and provide a clean disposable procedure facemask to wear for those who may become ill. It is not necessary to distribute masks to healthy participants. Establish procedures to help sick participants or staff leave the event as soon as possible.

- o Provide alternative options for attending the event via phone, video, or web applications.