



Westlink Career Institute

Westlink Career Institute Reopening Plan for Continuity During Covid-19

Please find attached the reopening plan for Westlink Career Institute (WCI). This reopening plan is aligned with the guidance of HELC/OSSE, Department of Health (DOH) and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for the safe institutional practices and preventive measures for operations during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Westlink Career Institute upon reopening in the District of Columbia will align its reopening plan to ensure the health and safety of all of its students, faculty and staff during the spread of coronavirus Covid-19.

We also have initiated a Safety Officer - Infection Control, Mr. Gerald Blanks, LPN and 30-year retired DC Fire Captain, who will oversee the daily operations as it relates to safe practices, PPE, social distancing, and prevention for staff, faculty, students and visitors. To remain extra vigilant, and in accordance with DC DOH, we are offering all of our students hybrid classes (on-line classes (50%), and on-site classes 50%). For part-time students (30%) On-line and (70%) On-site. The e-learning platforms have been established.

Once approved, we will publish these guidelines on our WCI website www.westlinkdc.com. Please keep in mind that WCI will continuously update the “WCI Reopening Plan” as needed to align with the mandates of the District of Columbia and HELC.

WCI Safety Officer for Infection Control will regularly check with DC Health and the DC Coronavirus website for current information as related to the Covid-19 pandemic.

It is our understanding that “spikes” in outbreaks increases the likelihood of spread of COVID-19, and WCI has demonstrated in its “WCI Reopening Plan” below, various contingencies for the continuation of safe operations to include re-directing the course entirely to distance learning to safeguard our students, staff, and faculty.

If there are any questions related to “WCI Reopening Plan” policies, please do not hesitate to contact us:

Dr. Dasia Merriweather, CEO

Westlink Career Institute (WCI) – Reopening Plan of Operation with Contingencies

A. Important Contacts & Timeframes

1. WCI has established a Safety Infection Control Officer - Captain Gerald Blanks, LPN, and 30-year DC Fire Department (retiree) to ensure proper protocols for safe reopening of WCI .
2. In the event that WCI identifies a student, faculty or staff member who has tested positive for Covid-19, WCI will notify:
DC Health by emailing coronavirus@dc.gov and HELC/OSSE at osse.elcmail@dc.gov with the following information:
“Covid-19 Consult” and the name and direct phone number of our Safety Infection Control Officer, accompanied by a short summarization of the incident or situation. The e-mail will be sent to both DC Health and OSSE.
3. The timeline for re-opening request is for August 1, 2020 through the mandated timeline initiated by Mayor Muriel Bowser Executive Order for operations for the District of Columbia as it relates to Covid-19 and Post-secondary instruction. During this timeline, to ascertain a “lowest risk” category with respect to Covid-19, WCI requests all courses to be initiated on-line through our already established e-learning platforms and only utilize our re-opening plan for our hands-on skills labs component which will reduce direct contact by 80%. For example: a course that ordinarily requires 240 hours of on-site instruction would require 200 hours of e-learning instruction through our LMS with JBLearning, and American Heart Association (AHA), and the student would only have to attend labs which is comprised of 20% of the curriculum. Our LMS for students has supplemented our curriculum for years, with interactive course rooms, e-simulations, and inter-active videos. We will continue our daily lectures, dialogues, questions, and learning experiences via live lectures (i.e., zoom or gotomeeting on a daily basis.

B. Support Safety of Employees and Students

1. Daily Health Screening
 - a. WCI will perform a daily health screen for all of our students, faculty and staff entering the school building. Anyone entering the building will be required to wear a mask and/or face covering as well as adhere to the social distance guidelines. (There are NO Exceptions). Upon returning to class, all staff, students and faculty will have temperature checks prior to entering the WCI designated area by Security Personnel (provided by the building), and/or our Safety Officer prior to entering the WCI learning area. If the temperature is less than 100.4, the person will be allowed to sign in and proceed to the designated area of the building (i.e., administrative area, classroom area, computer lab area, student lounge area)
 - If the temperature is less than 100.4, the person will be allowed to sign in and proceed to the designated area of the building (i.e., administrative area, classroom area, computer lab area, student lounge area)
 - If the temperature is 100.4 or greater than 100.4, the person will be requested to leave the building and immediately contact their primary care

provider (PCP). The student, staff or faculty will not be allowed back at the school until they have been cleared by their PCP. They are instructed to continue their studies or on-line instruction through our e-learning platform provided they are able. We will re-schedule the student to attend their labs after they have been cleared by their PCP.

- WCI policy has initiated for supporting safe and healthy learning conditions “Student Teams” in laboratory skills and hands-on sessions to prevent the transmission of COVID-19. For example, WCI Students will work in teams of no more than four (4) students per team. With no more than two (2) teams in the learning area at any given time on any given day. Each team will have proximal distance of greater than 6 ft. One instructor will be assigned to each team for the skills lab component. This reduces the proximity and contact of individuals and therefore limits the exposure in the event of an identified positive case.
- b. If a staff, faculty or student becomes symptomatic during the class time, that individual will be asked to leave the school and contact their PCP prior to returning. The individual will also be asked to follow the guidelines in their information packets regarding isolating, social distancing and safe practices to prevent the spread (at home) in the event they are positive for COVID-19. All faculty, staff and students directly exposed to a suspected Covid-19 positive individual (based on personal communication or observed symptoms), will be asked to self-quarantine for the 14-day period and must visit their PCP prior to returning.

If a staff, faculty, or student has been identified as infected with COVID-19 during the course, the individual will adhere to protocol by isolating themselves at home except for when medical treatment is needed and advised by their PCP. The individual will be informed that DOH will be notified and what to expect with respect to contact tracing to lessen the spread. The individual will also be asked to follow the guidelines in their information packets regarding isolating, social distancing, and safe practices to prevent the spread (at home).

In a circumstance where there is a confirmed COVID-19 case that has been on campus, it is critical to maintain confidentiality of the student or staff member as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

The “Student Lab Team” that the student or faculty member was assigned to will immediately be isolated and asked to have COVID-19 testing prior to their return. All communications regarding the infected individual will be held confidentially by WCI with the exception of informing DC local DOH and ensuring the team members

in contact with the infected individual isolate themselves properly according to guidelines and recommendations and acquire the COVID-19 testing for clearance to return.

Medical information related to the COVID-19 Testing and/or positive test will be maintained in a student-centered health file separate from the academic file; however, made available to DC officials as required.

- c. WCI will coordinate with local health officials at Department of Health (DOH) via e-mail. The DOH will advise administrators with the proper course of action to determine if a short-term closure (2-5 days) of all campus buildings and facilities is needed. This timeframe will allow local health officials to make a determination and decide if an extended duration is needed to stop or slow the spread of COVID-19.

Messages regarding the recent “positively identified COVID-19 case” should counter potential stigma and discrimination. All faculty, staff must not divulge the name of the infected student or staff. However, we have no accountability when the student may take it upon themselves to share their status with their classmates. Nevertheless, no faculty or staff will inform students of the identity of the infected individual. All WCI faculty and staff and any students who become informed by the individual must display behaviors that do not stigmatize or show discriminatory behavior regarding the infected individual. Our emergency medical students have chapters associated with ethical behaviors, confidentiality, and hippa and are expected to utilize this training.

2. Encourage Health Practices

- a. WCI policy ensures Adequate Supplies of soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer, wipes and tissue in support of healthy hygiene practices. The Safety Officer will order supplies on a monthly basis to ensure enough supplies for 30 days. The Safety Officer shall not stockpile supplies but secure no more than a 30-day supply. The order should be automated to prevent any lapse in receiving supplies for the school.

WCI policy also ensures that PPE is on-site for use by students, staff and instructors. PPE includes:

- Gowns
- Gloves
- Goggles
- Face shields

Students will be issued their own designated equipment (that is not to be

shared) to include but not limited to

- Stethoscopes
- Gowns
- Hand Sanitizer
- Uniforms

Students, faculty and staff will be made aware of where PPE and cleaning supplies are centrally located within the school. The Safety Officer will ensure that all supplies are ordered and secured prior to student, staff and faculty arrival.

- b. All students will the WCI Prevention Training prior to active on-site learning. Students informational packets for this training discusses the importance of personal practices such as washing hands (20) seconds with warm water and soap. The prevention training gives detailed instructions on personal practices that require the importance of hand washing frequently and/or using hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol...at home, at school, at work or in public spaces:

Personal Practices – Washing or Sanitizing Hands Frequently

- Before eating or preparing food
 - Before touching your face
 - After using restroom
 - After leaving public places
 - After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
 - After handling your face covering
 - After caring for someone sick
 - After touching animals or pets
 - Before hands-on skills sessions begin
 - After hands-on skills session ends
 - After touching equipment, door-knobs, light switches
- c. The WCI Prevention Training and informational packets inform students and staff regarding knowing the various symptoms of COVID-19 and identifying these symptoms in themselves and others:
- Dry, hacking cough
 - Sore throat
 - Shortness of breath
 - Loss of smell
 - General malaise
 - Flu like symptoms
 - Diarrhea
 - Nausea

If any symptoms as described above, the student/staff should self-isolate and

contact their PCP for further assessment and interventions. The student/staff should not return to WCI until medical information is received from the PCP regarding COVID-19 positive or negative status.

- d. WCI “Prevention Education Policy” was initiated regarding COVID-19 pandemic and is established to:
- Raise awareness and knowledge with respect to general safeguarding and hygienic practices for students, staff and faculty;
 - Allow staff, faculty and students to demonstrate this knowledge (by the utilization of preventive behaviors) in the school, workplace and at home with respect to COVID-19;
 - Recommend safer practices through understanding the responsibility of personal and collective behaviors as it relates to a pandemic such as COVID-19.
 - Discuss and distribute to all students, faculty, and staff. The School Administrator will ensure that all faculty, staff and students receive the information packet;
 - Dialogue with students regarding their Prevention Education Packet, the Safety Officer will “in detail” discuss the importance of good hygiene such as frequent handwashing, using hand sanitizer, PPE and understanding personal responsibility and the importance of social distancing in the prevention of transmitting COVID-19;
 - Cover in detail (CDC) recommendations for the following preventive measures:
 - How Corona Virus Spreads (No Vaccine, Droplets, Person to Person, Asymptomatic Individuals who do not show symptoms)
 - How to Protect Yourself and Others (Handwashing, avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth; monitor your daily health)
 - Cloth Face Coverings
 - Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Home, Workplaces and Schools
 - Social Distancing
 - Wearing Gloves
 - PPE – Personal Protective Equipment for EMS professionals
 - How to put on (Don) PPE Gear – identify gear, hand hygiene, mount gown (ensure ties in place), N95 Mask, face shields, goggles, gloves should cover the cuff (wrist) of gown.
 - How to take off (Doff) PPE Gear – remove gloves (glove in glove or bird bread); remove gown gently avoiding forceful movements; rolling gown downward and dispose.

3. High-Risk Individuals

- a. The following considerations will be made for WCI staff that are high-risk and considered vulnerable due to pre-existing health conditions.
 - WCI policy is that if you have pre-existing conditions that would make you more susceptible you will be allowed to work from home
 - Conditions that warrant this must be approved by your PCP prior to transitioning to telework or virtual learning or instruction on our LMS.
- b. Sick Leave - we prefer for administrative and instructional staff to stay home if necessary (especially with pre-existing conditions that warrant susceptibility) as it is safer for you to not be exposed and handle your duties remotely from home.
 - As we know, becoming infected by COVID-19 with existing conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, auto immune deficiencies, etc. increases the likelihood of an infection becoming fatal. This is why we are prepared to transition all of our employees, staff and students in the event it is necessary.
 - WCI sick leave remains the same; in the event an employee cannot work or perform their duties on-line or by telework; due to exposure, infection or inability to work they may contact Department of Employment Services for unemployment compensation or Social Security Administration.
- c. All employees, staff, student and faculty will not lose their positions as a result of a pandemic. Once the employee is cleared via negative COVID-19 testing they are welcome to resume their position. With respect to students, that are confirmed infected, isolating due to contact or self-quarantining due to exposure will not receive a negative grade for the course. They will be allowed to return to the school and complete their studies up to one (1) year.
- d. We do not recommend domestic or international travel for our staff, students or faculty during this pandemic as it increases the likelihood of infection and spread of COVID-19. However; the following guidelines are in place:
 - Discourage visiting among families and friends during a pandemic
 - If you have an individual visiting you from another state or another country; that individual under the directive of the Mayor of DC must self-quarantine for 14 days – prior to visiting the family

4. Social and Mental Health

- a. Unethical Behaviors - WCI staff or students must not demonstrate any unethical behaviors or conduct in relation to an individual testing positive or symptomatic. All messages regarding a “positive COVID-19 case” on campus or “isolating protocols – 14 days” for being exposed or coming in contact should counter potential stigma and discrimination.

All faculty, staff must not divulge the name of the infected student or staff. However, we have no accountability when the student may take it upon themselves to share their status with their classmates.

Nevertheless, no faculty or staff will inform students of the identity of the infected individual. All WCI faculty and staff and any students who become informed by the individual must display behaviors that do not stigmatize or show discriminatory behavior regarding the infected individual. Our emergency services students have chapters associated with ethical behaviors, confidentiality, and hippa. WCI are bound by these as well as FERPA. Students and staff are expected to adhere.

- b. Mental health services – Counseling services will be made available to all students and staff. WCI students will be able to contact “Student Services” Counseling throughout their course; and all faculty, instructors and administrative staff also have access to our counseling services. Counseling services was instrumental in the development of the “Prevention Education Training” information packets that are distributed to staff and students. The WCI counselor will work with the Safety Coordinator to ensure that staff and students issues are addressed as needed. All students and staff have the direct phone number of our WCI Counselor – Ms. Vanessa Stanton, PMC, Adult Ed.

C. Implement Controls to Limit Contact

1. School Location Moved to Accommodate more Square Footage for Distancing
 - WCI has secured a location at 700-12th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 200005, Suite 700 to allow extra square footage for the Laboratory Skills “Hands-on Sessions”. This site will only require 20% of student to staff contact during the course; as the e-learning component is 80% for successful course completion.
2. Social Distancing - Reduction of Classroom Size and Layout
 - WCI policy has been initiated for supporting safe and healthy learning conditions for all students and staff. WCI has designed the laboratory skills and hands-on component to consist of “Student Teams” to ensure physical distancing and limiting contact to prevent the transmission of COVID-19.

- WCI Students will work in teams of no more than four (4) students per team. With no more than two (2) teams in the learning area at any given time on any given day. Each team will have proximal distance of greater than 6 ft. One instructor will be assigned to each team for the skills lab component. This reduces the proximity and contact of individuals and therefore limits the exposure in the event of an identified positive case.
- No person-to-person contact or person to manikin contact is allowed during skills laboratory training without the proper PPE mounted.
- Students or staff are not allowed to sit in close proximity while eating lunch or taking breaks.

3. Ensuring Masks

- All WCI employees, are required to wear cloth face coverings to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Except when eating or drinking. If your PCP has determined that a face mask is not conducive to your health, you are deemed “high risk”, and a candidate for the “high risk” policy which transitions you to e-learning instruction and administrative duties.
- All WCI students are required to wear cloth face coverings to prevent the spread of COVID-19. If your PCP has determined that a face mask is not conducive to your health, you are deemed “high risk” and a candidate for the “high risk” policy which transitions you to e-learning through our Learning Management System (LMS).
- When students or staff arrive to the building; they must be wearing a fitted cloth face covering; bandanas do not qualify as a cloth mask;
- If a student or faculty does not have a face mask, one will be provided for them by WCI and brought to the security desk prior to their entry into the building.
- All students and staff are informed that if they dismount their face mask during skills laboratory training; they will be subject to adverse actions.

D. Cleaning and Disinfecting

WCI will follow all CDC guidance on cleaning and disinfecting the school, sanitizing surfaces and cleaning and sanitizing of equipment at the institution. The WCI policy for guidance for cleaning and disinfecting is in accordance with CDC recommendations for cleaning and disinfecting public spaces, workplaces, schools and homes. This policy will be given to all faculty, staff and students.

The WCI Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting policy was established to inform and/or remind our staff, students and faculty of the importance of maintaining hygienic and disinfecting practices in both public and private spaces to slow the transmission of COVID-19. The policy adheres to the following:

- Daily Cleaning and Disinfecting of Personal and Shared Spaces

(schools, work, home, public spaces) with EPA approved disinfectants to prevent transmission.

- As an added precaution, disinfectant wipes/spray will be provided for use during classes and in offices. Workspaces should be wiped down by individuals upon entering and before leaving a space.
- In offices, staff should clean their personal workspaces throughout the day as needed.
- Two-layered methods will be utilized at WCI, as the building lease secures cleaning and disinfecting on a daily basis with their cleaning crew. In addition, WCI staff and students will clean and disinfect their own personal areas prior to leaving. Disposable gloves and mask will be worn by all staff, students and faculty for skills instruction and daily cleaning practices.
- As a contingency, in the event of short-term or long-term shut down, the learning area will be cleaned before active learning resumes, and at the end of the daily course. Building maintenance ensures upkeep of the building during short-term and long-term shut-downs with respect to water, pipes, plumbing, and proper ventilation.
- Cleaning of Frequently Touched Surfaces – The following surfaces are rendered “frequently touched surfaces” included in the daily cleaning routines at WCI:
 - Tables, Desks, Chairs
 - Computer Keyboards
 - Door knobs
 - Light switches
 - Counter tops
 - Handles
 - Phones (all phones including cell phones)
 - Toilets, faucets and sinks
 - All Laboratory Equipment (including manikins)
- WCI faculty, staff and students will be encouraged to frequently wash hands with soap and water. WCI will utilize contactless hand sanitizers that contain at least 60% alcohol. Hand sanitizer will be placed centrally within the learning, administrative and lounging areas. Pump sanitizers will be utilized for back-up supplies. Currently, hot water with automated temperature faucets are placed in all of the restroom areas.

E. Building Considerations

WCI lease for the 700 – 12th street, NW Washington, DC location delineates all maintenance associated with the occupied and unoccupied space the responsibility of the

owner. WCI has confirmed that during extended shut-downs, the occupied space will continue to be cleaned and maintained in accordance with their building maintenance guidelines which includes maintenance of ventilation systems, water systems such as faucets and plumbing such as toilets.

WCI will coordinate with DOH in the event of a positive case identified at the WCI campus. WCI will adhere to DOH guidelines with respect to short-term, long-term or extended durations for building closures.

WCI does not have campus housing.

F. Shutdown Considerations If Necessitated by Severe Conditions and/or Public Health Guidance

WCI established a “Contingency Plan of Action” to ensure continuity of education during emergency management operations and in the event pandemic such as COVID-19 becomes wider spread:

- If school building is rendered unsafe by local health authorities; all student courses will continue to be held on our existing on-line forum through JB Learning and American Heart Association (AHA) Learning Management Systems (LMS).
- Although, we know hands-on is the best methodology for solidifying training; we must act within the parameters of safety for all students, faculty and staff.
- We will have on-line hands-on skills sessions where student can watch the specified skill being performed through e-simulation, you-tube tutorials and on-line tutorials. Instructors can also assess the knowledge levels of each student in categories by the student video taping themselves performing the required hands-on skills to ensure continuity; however, DC DOH regulations require that the psycho-motor component of skills must be done at WCI or another approved site.
- Administrative staff and registrar will be able to work from home as our website now allows prospective students to request information relevant to WCI, register for new classes, pay for course online, and sign into our student e-portal if you are an existing student.
- Instructors will be able to conduct their courses on-line via zoom, gotomeeting, moodle classroom, mMicrosoft team and videos. Instructors are continuously able to monitor the LMS student activity through individual IP addresses when on the LMS.