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Larimer County “Level-Up” Pilot Program

Introduction

Since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, Larimer County has been a statewide leader in virus management and community compliance with local and statewide public health guidance. As positive cases in Larimer County have ebbed and flowed, Larimer County has been committed to data-informed community-minded solutions that ensure public health and promote economic opportunity. Many of the ideas implemented earlier in the year helped to flatten the curve of cases while affording businesses an ability to remain open in a safe manner. At every step of the way Larimer County has strived to be nimble, and the county continues to look for and implement proven and promising strategies from around the state and the country to curb the spread of Covid-19, while allowing those businesses that are compliant with public health measures to remain safely open. The Level Up Pilot Program represents a creative grass-roots effort to keep Larimer County residents safe and businesses functioning during the ongoing pandemic. This is a collaborative effort that has had robust participation from the business community-spanning a diverse set of industry sectors-the local chambers of commerce, economic development professionals and public health officials. Enlisting the help of the business community creates more cooperation and engagement resulting in a higher level of compliance. Ultimately, the Level-Up Pilot Program is focused on suppressing the virus and mitigating economic damage to the business community.

The Level Up Pilot Program will have participating businesses apply a layered approach of proven strategies to reduce the transmission of Covid-19. Participation will be based on the ability to apply current best practices and to prove compliance with implementing those protocols. This pilot program couples a robust messaging and education campaign to the business community and the general public to increase compliance with current public health guidance, particularly in the importance of limiting gatherings to members of a single household.

In adherence with the core elements of the state framework, the program was developed and will be operated by an Administrative Committee made up of members of the Loveland, Estes Park and Fort Collins Chambers of Commerce, Fort Collins and Larimer County Economic and Workforce Development, Larimer Recovery Collaborative, and the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment.

Current Covid Situation

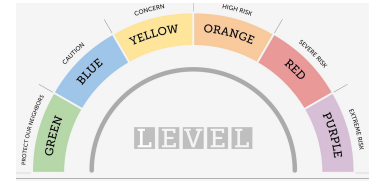
It is estimated that the county is seeing 50% of virus spread through community transmission, making it difficult to identify specific sources where the virus is being contracted. There is strong evidence that gatherings including members of more than one household¹ are playing a key part

¹ Household is defined as where one individual or a group of people live together at one address and share living space.

in the virus spread in our community. Recognizing that regardless of the location of the gatherings, whether at home or at a business, multiple households gathering is of great importance in controlling transmission in Larimer County. This has driven the necessity to have a strong community messaging program about avoiding gatherings among multiple households. This also underscores the possibility that businesses can operate safely and limit the transmission of the virus if measures are implemented to ensure single households or individuals are the primary or exclusive customer base.

Program Overview

The Larimer County Level Up Program allows participating businesses who demonstrate compliance with public health guidelines and safety precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in our community to operate with capacity restrictions one level above Larimer County’s position in the Statewide dial. **As Larimer County’s position moves in the dial, participants in the program will continue to operate at the capacities one level above the overall county position.**



Example: If Larimer County is in Level Red

Business Type	Dial Level Red Capacities	Level Up Capacities
Restaurants	Indoor-Dining Closed Outdoor-Dining with members Household Only	Indoor-25% Capacity, 50 max Outdoor-Open with 6 feet between parties
Gyms	10% Capacity, or 10 per room	25% Capacity, or 25 per room
Indoor Events	Prohibited	25% Capacity, 50 max

Example: If Larimer County is in Level Orange

Business Type	Dial Level Orange Capacities	Level Up Capacities
Restaurants	Indoor-25% Capacity, 50 max Outdoor-Open with 6 feet between parties	Indoor-50% Capacity, 100 max Outdoor-Open with 6 feet between parties
Gyms	25% Capacity, or 25 per room	25% Capacity, or 50 per room
Indoor Events	25% Capacity, 50 max	50% Capacity, 100 max

Businesses who receive this certification have committed to providing their customers or clients a safe experience while in their establishments, and have completed the necessary requirements of the program.

Core elements of the Level Up Program include physical distancing, mask usage by staff and customers, enhanced contact tracing, and limiting groups to those from a single household;

Physical Distancing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity reductions and increase of distancing measures in indoor settings. • Workplace controls to limit close contact among employees.
Contact Tracing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participating businesses will collect contact tracing information from customers and clients in a standard format that will be sent to LCDHE. • This contact information will be compared to positive case data to identify areas where transmission is occurring and used to focus compliance efforts.
Mask Usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strict compliance of mask usage by employees and customers. • Alternatives provided for those who cannot wear a mask inside the establishment. • Policies are communicated to customers and enforced by employees.
Household Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indoor gatherings at restaurants or other group activities will be limited to members of a single household. • Communication efforts will focus on the importance of only gathering with one's own household

The Level Up Program is voluntary and is applicable to all business types. Businesses may choose to participate by completing a request for review of their plans to ensure compliance with public health guidelines. **Any business that has been previously cited for noncompliance with public health orders or not following current state guidance and protocols is ineligible to be certified unless considered and approved by the Administrative Committee.**

Community Outreach, Education and Communication

Larimer County Public Health Officials have identified gatherings that include more than one household as a major contributor to the rise in Covid-19 case numbers. Implementing a single household approach to gatherings relies heavily on the actions of individuals and trust in the general public, as this can be challenging for businesses to enforce. Communications focused on single household gatherings will be promoted as part of the Level Up Program to assist businesses in the successful implementation of this strategy to reduce transmission. Where applicable, businesses will need to inquire if their customers are from the same household, and respond accordingly. Larimer County Department of Health and Environment, the Cities of Loveland and Fort Collins, the Loveland and Fort Collins Area Chambers of Commerce, the Town of Estes Park, and Larimer County Economic and Workforce Development partnered in launching the “Keep NoCO Open” campaign, and this campaign’s success will be leveraged to include messaging for the Level Up Program.

This campaign aligns communication efforts and clearly articulates the actions Larimer County residents can take to support small local businesses, support each other and reduce the spread of COVID-19. Communication will focus on key messages:

- Wear a Mask
- Socially distance
- Single household gatherings
- Wash your hands
- Know before you go (what are the expectations of the business I plan to visit?)
- Be Kind, be patient
- Support local businesses

The “Keep NoCO Open” campaign materials are available to all businesses and organizations in Larimer County so they can easily access and share the messages. The materials are available at <https://nocorecovers.com/keep-noco-open/>

As stated above, clear and coordinated communication with Larimer County residents is a key aspect of containing the spread of COVID-19 and for this purpose the Keep NoCo Open campaign is being expanded in the following ways:

- Produce and distribute business support materials that include floor and window clings, signage, masks, etc.
- Produce additional campaign images and social media posts.
 - For example, “Hang With Only Your Household” messaging was created and distributed.
- Purchase advertisements on television, internet, radio, social media, signs, etc.
- Produce campaign videos.
 - Demonstrate key messages.
 - Recognize the positive efforts of businesses and community members.

Based on recent national research from de Beaumont (<https://www.debeaumont.org/changing-the-covid-conversation/>) and Harvard School of Public Health (<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/ecpe/public-health-communication-strategies-covid-19/>) community communication and education efforts will focus on the following:

- Public health and the economy cannot be separated. Emphasize that doing the right thing now means a faster economic recovery.
 - Example language: “We understand that people are tired, but public health measures are not the enemy — they are the roadmap for a faster and more sustainable recovery.”
- Emphasize that the science of how to reduce the spread of COVID-19 is settled.
 - Example language: “The science is clear. There is no doubt that mask wearing, hand washing, and social distancing reduce the spread of COVID-19 and saves lives.”
- People most trust scientists and public health officials to deliver factual information.
 - Current action: Weekly business question and answer sessions with the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment.
- Focus on what individuals can do to slow the spread of COVID-19.
 - Current action: Keep NoCO Open campaign.

In addition to the steps highlighted above, the Administrative Committee will continue to create and implement a plan for regular updates and educational opportunities to keep the business community informed and arm them with accurate and trustworthy information. Moreover, the

Local Ambassador component, referenced below, focuses on peer to peer education and supporting the business community through their own professional networks.

Additional Support and Engagement Activities

In addition to the Keep NoCo Open Campaign, entities in Larimer County are exploring other ways to support the business community through a comprehensive approach. Activities include:

- Local loan and grant programs
- Cost sharing for 3rd party food delivery services to support local restaurants while encouraging dining at home.
- Messaging that encourages options beyond in-person experiences: delivery, to-go and curbside pickup options
- Bilingual marketing materials
- Business “Pivot Program” and targeted business mentoring
- Workforce training programs
- Larimer County Reservation/Check-in System
- Promotion of “Level-Up” businesses in the community to build consumer confidence

The aforementioned programs and initiatives are part of a holistic approach to business support in Larimer County. The Level Up Program is intended to be part of the suite of offerings that help businesses through these challenging times, knowing that a one-size fits all approach does not work in our current situation.

Local Ambassadors

Peer to peer interaction and support has been a key component of the Keep NoCo Open campaign. The Level Up Pilot Program will rely heavily on peer to peer messaging and education within the business community to enhance compliance and signal to the community that businesses are working together to ensure a safe experience for their patrons. This program will leverage the existing Ambassadors from local chambers of commerce to promote the program within the business community and advocate for strict adherence to the Level-Up framework. This approach is intended to create a network of Level-Up participants, and create an informal accountability structure within the business community- in addition to the formal accountability structure that is required by the Public Health Department. The Ambassador program will be opened up to include a broad range of participants from a diverse set of industries. A training program will be implemented, that includes a focus on education and best practices.

Additionally, businesses have been asked to respond to an online form if they are interested in, have questions or want to express concerns about the proposed Level up Program. Responses to this form will help identify ambassadors as well as guide outreach and education efforts. [Link: https://form.jotform.com/203294354882158?utm_source=Larimer+County+Economic+and+Workforce+Development&utm_campaign=65be7c035f-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_11_25_07_35&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_917fc61a36-65be7c035f-405133346](https://form.jotform.com/203294354882158?utm_source=Larimer+County+Economic+and+Workforce+Development&utm_campaign=65be7c035f-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_11_25_07_35&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_917fc61a36-65be7c035f-405133346)

Program Participation

Businesses applying for the Level Up Program must complete the steps listed below. Once accepted, participants are not required to re-apply each time Larimer County's position on the statewide dial is moved;

1. Eligible Business Submits Plans
2. Plans Reviewed
3. Preliminary Approval
4. Site Inspection
5. Program Acceptance

Plan Review & Preliminary Approval

Businesses must complete a plan submission, proposed form in Appendix D, to begin the process. Representatives from the Administrative Committee will review the plans and upon approval notify the applicant of the allowed preliminary changes to capacities or restrictions while a site visit is being scheduled. A site visit will then be completed within a reasonable timeframe with the establishment to review the submitted plan and evaluate the businesses ability to meet the program goals.

Site Inspection & Program Acceptance

Site inspections will focus on key areas of the current public health guidance; mask usage, physical distancing, contact tracing, and limiting group or gathering sizes. If the site visit is approved a business must agree to the conditions of the program and will receive an acceptance letter and approval to operate at the capacities one level above Larimer County's current status on the dial.

Compliance and Enforcement

Businesses participating in the Level Up Program agree to coordinate with public health staff and the program's Administrative Committee in the event of Covid-19 cases associated with the business, or complaints related to non-compliance. A business may choose to discontinue their participation at any time and return to the capacities for their industry sector based on Larimer County's current position on the statewide dial.

Complaints received related to non-compliance with the current public health orders will be reviewed and investigated by Larimer County Department of Health and Environment (LCDHE). Outreach to the business will be made to review the complaint and whether further follow-up or a site visit is necessary.

Participating businesses found in non-compliance with the requirements of the Level Up Program after investigation by LCDHE will be referred to the Administrative Committee for removal from the program. The Administrative Committee or their designee will make final determination on a business's ability to remain in the program.

The Committee will take an “education first” approach, however, if a business is found in non-compliance with the Level Up protocol, the business will immediately lose their Level Up status. Enforcement, and timeliness of enforcement, is key to the Level-Up program. Businesses will commit to continuous improvements and performance. Businesses that are found in violation will undergo a peer review and education within 7-days of notification.

Administrative Committee

The Administrative Committee is currently made up of 28 members from the community. It includes representatives from:

- Larimer County Department of Health and Environment
- The local business community, representing a diverse set of industries and geographic mix
- Chambers of Commerce
- Local economic development professionals

A sub-committee of the Administrative Committee, with required participation from the LCDHE and the business community, will convene weekly to review case numbers, contact tracing numbers, hospital capacity and other key indicators to ensure that the program is accomplishing the goal of reducing the transmission of Covid-19 while also supporting impacted businesses. Additionally, the subcommittee will endeavor to capture economic data that shows the effectiveness of the program on individual firms and the broader economy.

Timeframe for Level Up Pilot Program

The Level Up Pilot Program proposes a start date as soon as possible and will initially operate for three months while data on the program is being collected and reviewed. If public safety and or economic benefit is not being realized, as determined by the Administrative Committee, the program will be evaluated for continuation.

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APPENDICES:

Appendix A: Level Up Program Acceptance Agreement

Appendix B: Level Up Program Compliance Inspection

Appendix C: Compliance Workflow and Process

Appendix D: Business Plan Submission - Online Form Fields

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Appendix A



Fort Collins
1525 Blue Spruce Dr.
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Loveland
200 Peridot Ave., STE 200
Loveland, CO 80537
(970)619-4580

Estes Park
1601 Brodie Ave.
Estes Park, CO 80517
(970)577-2050

LEVEL UP PROGRAM ACCEPTANCE AGREEMENT

Business Name: _____

Physical Address: _____

The business ("business entity") operating at the address listed above has voluntarily elected to participate in the Larimer County Level Up Program ("Program") offered by the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment ("LCDHE"), and has satisfactorily completed all requirements to be accepted as a participant per the program guidelines.

As a result, the Program's Administrative Committee agrees to allow this business entity to operate at capacity restrictions one level less restrictive than the level Larimer County is currently assigned. In agreeing to participate in this Program the business entity also agrees to the following;

1. The business entity agrees to monitor conditions and Public Health Orders in effect for Larimer County and to meet all requirements in the Dial Level assigned to it by being a participant accepted in the Program. This may mean increased or decreased restrictions depending on Larimer County's status on the Dial, and the business entity agrees to make changes as necessary to adjust to Dial Level changes.
2. Participation in the Program may be suspended or revoked by LCDHE after providing notice of suspension or revocation to the business entity for any of the following;
 - a. The business entity fails to achieve compliance on future inspections made by LCDHE as a result of complaints or to verify continued compliance with requirements of the Program; or
 - b. The business entity fails to cooperate with LCDHE in investigation of possible cases of COVID-19 associated with customers, guests, or employees; or
 - c. LCDHE determines that laws, regulations, or public health orders require termination or modifications to the Program.
3. If acceptance in the Program is revoked, the business entity agrees to comply with the applicable public health orders and restrictions in effect in Larimer County for all businesses not participating in the Program.
4. The Business Entity may voluntarily withdraw their participation in the program upon notifying LCDHE.

The applicant named below for the business entity agrees to the conditions of participation in the Program;

Signature on behalf of Business Entity: _____

Printed Name and Title: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B



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LEVEL UP PROGRAM COMPLIANCE INSPECTION

Business Name	Address	Date

The following items are required to be approved for acceptance or continued participation in the Level Up Program. Any items found out of compliance must be corrected on-site or reevaluated during a follow-up inspection.

Implementation of Current Prevention Guidelines	IN	OUT	Description
Current maximum capacity based on industry type and dial level: _____ Capacity observed: _____			
Previous non-compliance with public health orders? Businesses previously cited with noncompliance are ineligible.			
Written plans are reviewed with the person in charge during inspection, and written plans are approved.			
Mask wearing protocols for staff and customers			
Methods for enforcement of mask wearing & accommodating those not wearing masks			
Daily symptom checks performed for staff, procedures to exclude staff who are ill			
Plans for exposure notifications to staff and customers in event of positive cases			

CDPHE webinar has been completed by person in charge			
Customer name and contact information is recorded for contact tracing in a format that can be used in cross referencing with positive cases			

Industry Specific Requirements

Restaurants	IN	OUT	Description
Tables are spaced a minimum of 10 feet table to table, or in a way that ensures guests are >6 feet apart.			
Improved ventilation through the use of increased outdoor air in mechanical systems and/or opening doors, windows, etc.			
Measures are taken to inform customers that seating is limited to a single household including signage.			
Continue to offer outdoor dining, if available, and take-out or delivery options.			

Gyms	IN	OUT	Description
Reservation systems are used to aid in reducing the number of patrons in the facility at any one time.			
Improved ventilation through the use of increased outdoor air in mechanical systems and/or opening doors, windows, etc.			
Improved cleaning process and protocols, e.g. cleaning teams and timeline for cleaning.			

Personal Services	IN	OUT	Description
Reservation systems are used to aid in reducing the number of patrons in the facility at any one time.			
Improved ventilation through the use of increased outdoor air in mechanical systems and/or opening doors, windows, etc.			

Indoor Events	IN	OUT	Description
Measures are taken to inform customers that seating is limited to a single household			

Reservation systems are used to aid in reducing the number of patrons in the facility at any one time.			
Improved ventilation through the use of increased outdoor air in mechanical systems and/or opening doors, windows, etc.			

Other:	IN	OUT	Description
Current maximum capacity based on industry type and dial level: _____ Capacity observed: _____			
Improved ventilation through the use of increased outdoor air in mechanical systems and/or opening doors, windows, etc.			

Approval Recommendation: Approved Not Approved Needs Follow-Up

Inspected By: _____

Notes/Items Required at Follow-up:

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Appendix C



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Compliance Task Force - Complaint Workflow and Process

A. Prioritization of Complaints

1. Complaints will be prioritized based on the criteria in the following table. The table is intended to provide guidance in how to prioritize complaints, but a complaints priority level is at the discretion of the staff reviewing to upgrade or downgrade as they see necessary.
2. Staff will assign calls or site visits as they are received and according to priority.

Priority Level	Criteria	Follow-Up Actions
High Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaint related to organized group gatherings or businesses with high risk. Event venues, gyms, indoor sports facilities, bars, etc. Businesses actively circumventing or willfully defiant of the local/state orders. 	Compliance Call AND Site Visit within 48 hours
Medium Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 or more unique complaints of staff or 3 or more of customers not wearing masks in a 7 day period in businesses or facilities with moderate risk. Restaurants, large retailers, medical or healthcare based offices 	Compliance Call AND Site Visit within 72 hours
Low Priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complaints in businesses with low risk Small retailers, liquor stores, auto shops, hardware stores, convenience stores 	Compliance Call AND/OR Site Visit within 5 days
No Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mask complaints in non-specific outdoor community spaces (i.e., joggers not wearing a mask on the trail) Small groups (<10) gathered in outdoor community spaces Complaints on private residences 	Document and Monitor for additional related complaints. Action is only necessary if there are repeated complaints and a way to enforce the PHO

B. Site Visits

1. Site visits will be assigned by the compliance team lead or designated staff monitoring the incoming complaints.
2. Compliance team members will complete site visits per the priority listings and per the timetables for each level.

C. Notice of Violation - A Notice of Violation may be issued in any circumstance in consultation with the compliance team lead, however the preferred steps are;

1. Initial Site Visit - Based on priority criteria a site visit may be conducted in response to a complaint. If staff completing the site visit observe violations of the public health orders, the areas in violation should be corrected while on-site if possible (signs not posted on door, tables spaced closer than 6 feet, staff not wearing face coverings, etc) and communicated with the person in charge.
2. Second Site Visit - If additional complaints are received, or if necessary as a follow-up a second site visit may be completed. If the same violations are observed during the second site visit a Notice of Violation should be issued after approval of Compliance Team Lead or other designated staff.
3. The Notice of Violation will be completed in the field and left with the person in charge. Businesses receiving a Notice of Violation will be updated to the LCDHE website weekly.
4. The compliance team lead will be responsible for tracking issued notices of violation and maintaining the [issued notices log](#) that populates the website.

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Appendix D



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Level Up Program - Business Plan Submittal

Businesses must complete a plan submission to begin the process. Representatives from the Administrative Committee will review the plans and upon approval notify the applicant of the allowed preliminary changes to capacities or restrictions while a site visit is being scheduled. A site visit will then be completed with the establishment to review the submitted plan and evaluate the businesses ability to meet the program goals.

General Requirements

1. Current capacity limits and proposed capacity under Level Up Program
2. What other methods to increase physical distancing of customers or clients will be used in the facility?
3. How will the requirements that all people entering the facility wear a face covering be communicated?
4. What methods will be used to ensure compliance with requirements that all customers wear masks while in the facility.
5. What alternative options will customers or clients who cannot wear a mask be offered?
6. Are there any additional measures you have taken that may help reduce the transmission of the virus in your facility?

Employee Health

1. What systems will be used to monitor employee health?
2. How will the workplace be modified to limit close contact among employees?

Contact Tracing

1. A system must be used to collect contact tracing information from customers and clients in a format that can be easily shared with the Larimer County Department of Public Health and Environment. Can the system be implemented in your business?
2. Use of reservations is required for several industry types, what methods do you have available to use reservations to limit gathering of people during busy periods?

Single Household Gatherings

1. What strategies will be used to communicate the requirements that groups be limited to only those members of a single household at tables or activities within the facility?

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