



The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation
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COVID-19 June Operations Update

Most operational closures extended into June; phased reopening of select sites planned; no additional furloughs announced

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. (May 21, 2020) – Colonial Williamsburg will extend most of its operational closures into June, but anticipates portions of the Historic Area and Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg reopening after Virginia moves into phase two of Gov. Ralph Northam administration’s [Forward Virginia](#) plan. Colonial Williamsburg will announce additional reopening details soon, including when it plans to resume limited public programming.

Some Colonial Williamsburg hospitality facilities have resumed limited operations under phase one of the Forward Virginia plan. Beginning on May 23, Chowning’s Tavern will open its outdoor seating area on weekends using safety protocols that align with state and local reopening requirements. Other Hospitality facilities, including hotels, will expand operations as needed to fulfill demand.

The WILLIAMSBURG Craft House, a Colonial Williamsburg retail store in Merchants Square, reopened May 15. All Merchants Square retail stores and restaurants are expected to reopen by June 1.

“We wish we could open all of our doors and welcome everyone to a full Colonial Williamsburg experience but doing so safely requires that we follow a carefully considered plan that includes collaboration with local and regional governments and other key organizations,” said Colonial Williamsburg President and CEO Cliff Fleet. “Over the next month, we plan to take further steps toward reopening our museums and more of our hospitality facilities. Throughout this process, our principal aim is to protect the health and safety of our employees, guests and the broader community.”

Extension of the closure into June will not result in any additional employee furloughs. All employees will remain on their current status pending the organization’s gradual reopening of select sites. Employees who are still actively working, whether remotely or on-site, will continue to do so. On-site employees are subject to mandatory safety precautions, including social distancing and enhanced cleaning and hygiene protocols. Regular hourly staff who are unable to work due to the closure will continue to receive full pay and benefits while on administrative leave. Scaled pay reductions will remain in place for salaried employees, including senior management.

Furloughed employees and those on administrative leave will be called back to work as needed in conjunction with the phased reopening. Colonial Williamsburg will continue to maintain health insurance coverage and other benefits for covered furloughed employees and is waiving

June rent for furloughed employees renting Colonial Williamsburg housing, as was done in April and May.

Prior to starting work on-site, employees will receive training on safety protocols developed to protect them and our guests. The training includes procedures for guest-facing and administrative staff and is based on guidance from government and public health officials.

Colonial Williamsburg's Operations, Architectural Preservation, and Historic Trades teams continue to take advantage of the closure to accelerate maintenance and beautification efforts in the Historic Area and Merchants Square.

Colonial Williamsburg is closely monitoring public-health guidance and will respond immediately if additional government-issued restrictions arise. Resumption of operations is dependent upon continued reduced health risk. Colonial Williamsburg continues to work closely with government agencies, healthcare and private-sector organizations, William & Mary and others, and has aligned its plans and safety protocols with those recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Virginia Department of Health and other agencies.

Current information on Colonial Williamsburg operations is available online at colonialwilliamsburg.org/update and by following [Colonial Williamsburg](#) on Facebook.

Additional information on COVID-19, including additional preventative measures is available from the Virginia Department of Health at vdh.virginia.gov and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at cdc.gov.

COVID-19 Response Timeline

- Jan.-Feb. Colonial Williamsburg Department of Environmental Health and Safety issues all-staff messages to report that the foundation is monitoring public health guidance regarding COVID-19, to share guidance for normal measures to limit transmission risk, and to provide resources for additional information.
- March 2: Colonial Williamsburg participates in regional COVID-19 planning session convened by the City of Williamsburg to fully coordinate emergency response with local, regional, state and federal partners.

March 10: “Hands on” aspects of site interpretation and programming, in which guests and employees touch common objects and surfaces, are suspended.

March 13: Frontline staff are instructed to observe social distancing including courteous refusal of normal physical contact with guests.

Telework instituted for eligible employees.

March 14: To support social distancing, selected interpretive programs are cancelled indefinitely, and Historic Site access is modified to limit group size and proximity.

March 16: Closure of most public sites until March 30:

- Area interpretive sites and programs
- The Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg
- Taverns and other Historic Area food and beverage locations
- The Colonial Williamsburg Regional Visitor Center
- The John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library
- Bassett Hall
- The Custis Square archaeological site
- The Spa of Colonial Williamsburg

Continued pay and benefits for regular hourly staff unable to work due to the suspension of public programming.

Colonial Williamsburg launches the “Explore from Home” page on the foundation’s new website, colonialwilliamsburg.org. The page provides free virtual content ranging from educational programming and resources to how-to craft videos and coloring activities inspired by the foundation’s collections.

March 17: President and CEO Cliff Fleet notifies commercial tenants in Colonial Williamsburg’s Merchants Square that April rent and fees for marketing and common area maintenance are waived.

Colonial Williamsburg begins closure of table-service dining locations in compliance with the state order prohibiting gatherings of 10 or more people.

March 23: Colonial Williamsburg Shuttle bus service reduce daily operating hours from 9 a.m.-10 p.m. to 9 a.m.-6 p.m.

March 25: Colonial Williamsburg announces:

- Expanded operational closures starting March 27 to include hotel properties except a portion of the Williamsburg Lodge and some Colonial Houses
- Extension of all operational closures through April 30
- Continued pay and benefits for regular hourly staff unable to work due to the suspension of public programming
- Most Hospitality and casual staff placed on emergency administrative leave with full pay and benefits through April 11, and then furloughed for the balance of the closure period
- Scaled pay reductions for salaried employees
- Waiver of April rent for furloughed employees who rent Foundation residences
- Governor's Inn repurposed as an emergency housing and care facility to support the community.
- Postponement of Mr. Jefferson's Palace Garden Party, originally scheduled for May 1 and the Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg Community Celebration, originally scheduled for May 9-10.

April 21: Colonial Williamsburg announces:

- Williamsburg Lodge's hotel operations closing May 1. Most Williamsburg Lodge Hospitality employees will receive full pay and benefits through May 9, then join other Hospitality and casual staff furloughed on April 11 for the balance of the closure period.
- All new and current closures extended through May 31.
- Waiver of May rent for furloughed employees who rent foundation residences.

May 21: Colonial Williamsburg announces:

- Extending most operational closures into June, but anticipates portions of the Historic Area and Art Museums of Colonial Williamsburg reopening after Virginia moves into phase two of Gov. Ralph Northam administration's [Forward Virginia](#) plan.
- Reopened select sites based on phase one of the state's Forward Virginia plan
 - Chowning's Tavern reopening its outdoor seating area on weekends starting May 23

- Additional Hospitality facilities, including hotels, will expand operations as needed to fulfill demand.
- WILLIAMSBURG Craft House reopened May 15
- All Merchants Square retail outlets and restaurants opening by June 1.

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The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation preserves, restores and operates Virginia's 18th-century capital of Williamsburg. Innovative and interactive experiences highlight the relevance of the American Revolution to contemporary life and the importance of an informed, active citizenry. The Colonial Williamsburg experience includes more than 600 restored or reconstructed original buildings, renowned museums of decorative arts and folk art, extensive educational outreach programs for students and teachers, lodging, including the Forbes 5-star Williamsburg Inn, culinary options from historic taverns to casual or elegant dining, the Golden Horseshoe Golf Club featuring 45 holes designed by Robert Trent Jones and his son Rees Jones, a full-service spa and fitness center, pools, retail stores and gardens. Philanthropic support and revenue from admissions, products and hospitality operations sustain Colonial Williamsburg's educational programs and preservation initiatives.

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