The rapid spread of the COVID-19 virus is challenging governments to act in ways normally reserved for war, depressions, or natural disasters. The pandemic has caused a massive global upheaval that may endure for months—or longer. Governments are taking extreme measures to limit the economic disruption and human costs.

In a fast-moving crisis, as information swarms in from every direction, citizens look to their governments for information, guidance, and leadership. They expect to be kept safe and healthy. Pressure on public officials to act is enormous. How can they hope to gain clarity amid chaos? How can they move from ad hoc solutions to a well-planned path to recovery? And, as we all eventually emerge from the crisis, how can they ensure more resilient, effective responses in the future?

Our response to this crisis must account for the urgency of the situation and consider both short- and long-term perspectives.

*People should come first.*
Contents

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Government’s journey through the crisis
A timeline of government’s actions through the COVID-19 crisis

This figure models the COVID-19 crisis over time across the three overlapping phases governments will pass through: respond, recover, and thrive. Robust data analysis through all the phases will be vital so that officials can properly interpret the signals and act accordingly.

“"You don’t make the timeline; the virus makes the timeline.”"

—Dr. Anthony Fauci

Pre-COVID 19

RESPOND

RECOVER

THRIVE

PHASE

Pre-COVID 19

Level of flexibility and speed in government

Act to promote safety and continuity

• Focus on essentials
• Offer maximum flexibility
• Use maximum speed

~4-6 months

~10-18 months

TIME

New norm is set; improvement from pre-COVID-19 level

Restore and emerge stronger

• Move toward normalcy
• Offer high flexibility
• Use high speed

Prepare for the next normal

• Build long-term enhancements to public sector
• Establish a better foundation for the future
• Create a new level of flexibility

Source: Ian Schwartz, “Dr. Fauci: “You don’t make the timeline, the virus makes the timeline,” RealClear Politics, March 26, 2020.
As of mid-April 2020, most governments are in the respond phase. Governments are moving fast and foregoing typical procedures: ordering business closures, curtailing travel, reallocating industrial capacity to meet urgent medical needs, and providing immediate financial assistance.

As the immediate danger eases, governments will enter the recover phase. Public institutions will begin to return to normal. Government will still move swiftly, shortcutting some bureaucratic procedures, but with fewer unilateral executive actions.

Having survived the crisis, governments will consider long-term improvements to public operations, to ensure they can respond more effectively to future risks. Old rules and regulations will be reevaluated, allowing technologies that were effective during the crisis, such as telework, to become permanent options.

The three phases of government response
The journey through crisis will deal with three challenges:

1. **How do we address the health care crisis?**
   - **RESPOND**
   - **RECOVER**
   - **THRIVE**

2. **How do we address the economic crisis?**
   - **RESPOND**
   - **RECOVER**
   - **THRIVE**

3. **How do we keep “the business” of government operating?**
   - **RESPOND**
   - **RECOVER**
   - **THRIVE**
## Government activities through the phases

How activities on various fronts will change over time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FRONT/PHASE</th>
<th>RESPOND</th>
<th>RECOVER</th>
<th>THRIVE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health care</strong></td>
<td>• Flatten the curve (social distancing, etc.)</td>
<td>• Monitor for “second wave”</td>
<td>• Review and update health regulations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Boost health care system capacity</td>
<td>• Support (with payment policy, review, triage)</td>
<td>• Implement new screening measures, such as smart security at airports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Test and trace</td>
<td>• Administration of vaccines and other treatments</td>
<td>• Put in place data infrastructure to track infectious diseases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Overcome critical shortages (testing kits, masks, respirators, beds)</td>
<td>• Assess financial status of hospitals, health plans, and governments</td>
<td>• Expand usage of behavioral insights to prepare for disasters and pandemics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide information and guidance</td>
<td>to stabilize health system with a view to future cost control</td>
<td>• Support future vaccination efforts</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Relax regulations to increase medical system capacity (tele-health,</td>
<td>• Support health care workforce post-crisis</td>
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<td></td>
<td>drugs, equipment, etc.)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>pandemics</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Economy</strong></td>
<td>• Provide emergency financial support for individuals and businesses</td>
<td>• Continue support for individuals, businesses, and government</td>
<td>• Diversify supply chains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Enhance unemployment benefits</td>
<td>• Bail out or enhance support for particular industries (airlines, etc.)</td>
<td>• Implement new government-business protocols for strategic supply chains</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mandate industrial actions (closures, repurposing, hotels, and airlines)</td>
<td>• Start stimulus spending</td>
<td>• Review strategic national stockpile</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Mandate industrial actions (closures, repurposing, hotels, and airlines)</td>
<td>• Initiate tax changes</td>
<td>• Target economic relief based on economic vulnerability indices</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Business of</strong></td>
<td>• Surge capacity (due to increased demand for unemployment and social</td>
<td>• Track and disburse recovery funds</td>
<td>• Accelerate digital government</td>
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<tr>
<td>government**</td>
<td>assistance)</td>
<td>• Partially restart certain institutions</td>
<td>• Implement universal digital ID</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Close offices/telework</td>
<td>• Address backlogs</td>
<td>• Enhance telework capability and define work rules</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Ensure public workforce safety (first responders, transit, IT,</td>
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<td>• Improve social care</td>
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<td></td>
<td>infrastructure)</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Improve data and anticipatory capabilities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Bolster IT and cybersecurity</td>
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<td>• Design systems for resilience</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Extend deadlines (tax, census, etc.)</td>
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Governments must be adaptable as circumstances evolve, including heeding data signals that indicate a resurgence of the virus.

The range of policy responses over time will depend on *signal* changes—changes in policy tools, such as sustainment/expansion or pivots, that could unfold based on economic, health, or demand shifts.

**Signal:** Detection of new wave of infection
- Mobilize private sector and other partners to increase supply

**Signal:** Supply shortages
- Follow established treatment protocol
- Rely on data from first wave to make decisions

**Signal:** Increase in demand for government benefits
- Increase capacity to meet excess demand
- Accelerate digital services/tech adoption for faster processing

**Signal:** Decrease in unemployment
- Adjust federal benefit extensions

**Signal:** Development of vaccine
- Establish distribution mechanism for vaccine
- Track vaccinations

**Signal:** Development of vaccine
- Mobilize private sector and other partners to increase supply

**Signal:** Increase in demand for government benefits
- Rely on data from first wave to make decisions
- Adjust federal benefit extensions
- Accelerate digital services/tech adoption for faster processing
- Establish distribution mechanism for vaccine
- Track vaccinations
Moving through the phases of the COVID-19 crisis

RESPOND
The COVID-19 response is especially challenging due to three characteristics that set it apart from most disasters:

- First, the crisis will unfold over an extended period—COVID-19 is a slow-motion disaster rolling out over weeks and months.
- Second, this is a global disaster; every region is affected, making it difficult to shift resources from unaffected areas.
- Finally, this novel RNA virus comes with a high degree of uncertainty regarding timing, spread, and ultimate effects.

Some of the ways in which the pandemic has altered various types of activities, from massive surges to near-total shutdowns.
Health care and flattening the curve

The goal of health care is to save lives. One way to do that is to slow the spread of the virus to prevent the pandemic from overwhelming medical capacity, and much has been written about “flattening the curve” through social distancing and other measures. But it may also be possible to increase health care capacity over time, by turning hotels into temporary hospitals, for example, or by shortening the time required for in-hospital treatment.
Health care: How to boost capacity

**REDUCE NON–COVID-19 DEMAND**
- Postpone noncritical medical procedures
- Divert patients to facilities/staff that are less critical (shift non–COVID-19 patients into alternative, lower-intensive-health-care facilities)
- Better triage of noncritical cases to weed out negative cases (aided by technology innovation)
- Take aggressive precautions in institutional settings such as nursing homes to reduce transmission
- Use virtual/telehealth solutions for initial screening

**EXPAND RESOURCES**
- Bring online new manufacturing
- Focus on most-constrained elements: least capacity and/or longest lead times
- Release stores
- Create new beds and spaces

**USE AI AND DATA ANALYTICS**
- Get right people skills to right place
- Make data input and retrieval easier, quicker, and more timely
- Use data to align supply with demand for key resources for a particular community (testing, food)
- Use AI to guide less-skilled people through tasks to free up key professionals (such as diagnosticians)

**INCREASE SPEED**
- Make testing faster to free up capacity
- Make recovery faster to free up beds, doctors, and equipment

**INNOVATE**
- Start new processes (e.g., adaptive manufacturing of medical equipment supplies in Italy)
- Redesign for manufacturability and speed
- Repurpose available materials/equipment (e.g., snorkel masks in Italy)
- Explore effectiveness and safety of COVID-19 treatments with drugs that have proven safe for other conditions

**RESPONSIBLY RELAX CERTAIN REGULATIONS**
- Make surgical ventilators available
- Delay "usual business" requirements
- Give states flexibility to bring more capacity (alternative settings, nonlicensed practitioners, telemedicine both for triage and care of non–COVID-19 patients) online

**MAXIMIZE AVAILABILITY OF EXISTING RESOURCES**
- Shift activities that don’t require a higher skill level to lower skill staff (similarly with equipment)
- Maximize personal protective equipment to prevent losing skilled people to illness
Tools and tips for health care

Social distancing measures
- Nearly all countries have adopted a social distancing policy to reduce the speed of transmission.

Use communication to inform and build trust
- Agencies should use targeted communications to reach various audiences (millennials, vulnerable populations, etc.).
- Use communication to inform and build trust.

Relax certain regulations
- The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services have temporarily waived certain rules to expand patient care sites, and relaxed certain requirements for the supervision of nurses and physician assistants to free up doctors’ time.

Drive and incentivize rapid development of diagnostics, vaccines, therapeutics, medical equipment, and testing
- Government should make it easier for external organizations to accelerate scientific breakthroughs.

Use digital tools and contract tracing
- As countries scale up their testing capabilities, they can also employ social tracing for those who are infected. To speed its recovery from SARS, Singapore used innovative digital technologies, including thermal scanners.

Do mass testing
- Many individuals with COVID-19 are asymptomatic, yet still contagious. This means widespread testing, both for the disease and for immunity, will be essential to controlling the epidemic.

Boost health care system capacity
- There are a number of strategies to boost health care system capacity:
  - Increase the number of health care professionals
  - Use technology to reduce the burden on hospitals and doctors
  - Tap into internal and external networks for solutions

The immediate core challenge is getting cash into the hands of businesses and individuals through direct payments and loans. In the longer term, the challenge is restarting the economy and helping those most affected by the pandemic.

What governments are doing around the world on the economic front

**Canada:** CAD 500 (US$360) a week for up to 16 weeks to individuals eligible for employment insurance.

**US:** Direct deposits of emergency relief checks to the most-affected taxpayers. Unemployment insurance to gig workforce for up to four months, in addition to the weekly US$600 payment.

**UK:** Self-employed workers have been promised a lump-sum grant of up to 80 percent of their average monthly profits.

**Denmark:** The Danish government is covering up to 75 percent of wages for salaried workers.

**South Korea:** Emergency cash payments of up to 1 million won (US$820) for all families except those in the top 30 percent of income earners.

**New Zealand:** One-time subsidy of about NZD 7,000 (US$4,250) to full-time employees.

Tools and tips for the economic front

- **Accelerate the use of digital tools**
  - Quickly develop point solutions or single-purpose, easy-to-use apps that can address surging cash distribution needs and other benefits while eventually integrating with back-end systems.

- **Tap into networks**
  - Expedite payments by asking trade associations, industry groups, community organizations, and social services agencies to identify and help the most vulnerable citizens and small businesses.

- **Adopt a “customer experience” mindset**
  - Consider a three-pronged approach: embedding a deep understanding of business and individual needs and experiences into digital interactions; mapping the end-to-end customer experience to identify customer pain points; and rapidly adapting digital experiences based on user input.

- **Use automation in the intake stage to auto-fill forms**
  - Convert eligibility rules into programming codes, and use intelligent automation tools to determine if applicants are eligible to receive benefits.

The respond phase requires a “two-gear” mindset, as some functions massively surge (emergency response, benefit programs, etc.), while some functions physically close down (licensing, library, etc.).

Core operational and policy challenges

- **Mission review**
- **Finances**
- **Remote everything**
- **Worker safety**
- **IT and cybersecurity**

Determining which functions need to operate, and which continuing operations require new protocols.

The biggest experiment in “remote everything,” as telework, telehealth, and distance learning are adopted at scale, on the fly.

IT is needed to support telework in an environment of increasing cyberattacks.

Officials will, in many cases, have to simultaneously manage precipitous drops in tax revenues with surges in demand and, in some cases, massive infusions of money from central government.

Many parts of government must continue to function in close contact with the public—and hence, with the virus.
Tools and tips for the business of government

- **Adjust rules to meet the mission**
  - In crises, rules may actually work against the ultimate mission. Temporarily modifying rules may be beneficial. Procurement officials, for example, can tap into their toolkit to quickly staff contractors to ensure timely delivery of critical supplies and services.

- **Remote work**
  - Leaders should be considerate to the need for flexibility in work schedules due to disruptions. They should pilot phishing drills to assess the readiness of the workforce against such attacks, and provide the workforce with guidance on cyber hygiene to minimize the probability of insider threats.

- **Virtual social care**
  - Leaders should equip caseworkers with the required devices and virtual tools to process applications, assess eligibility, and deliver services online. On-demand training should be provided to caseworkers so they can provide high-quality social care to beneficiaries.

- **Provide the right information at the right time through the right channels**
  - Leaders at all levels need to communicate as frequently as possible. Emails, chats, and texts can help, but video can help connect emotionally and build trust among a concerned and overwhelmed workforce.

Leadership in the *respond* phase

The current crisis requires leaders to take decisive action based on the best data available, even when incomplete—and be willing to pivot to reflect new realities.

Throughout the response, leaders must communicate clearly, consistently, and *constantly*. Citizens are more cooperative when they understand why they are being asked to take certain steps. Government leaders naturally have differing communication styles, but a “people-first” message, supported by the best data, can foster desired behaviors while discouraging those that will do harm.
Moving through the phases of the COVID-19 crisis

RECOVER
PHASE #2: RECOVER
Restore, learn, and emerge stronger

The recover phase will begin in the midst of economies facing high unemployment, an exhausted and depleted health system, plummeting tax revenues, and mountainous backlogs of demand.

• Governments themselves have been dramatically affected—from tax revenue plunges to significant risk for the public sector workforce.

• Recovery will be patchy. Different countries and regions will adjust their timetables to the virus. A second wave of infections could see countries in recovery forced to revert to respond.

• Different parts of government will restore operations as needed. When they do, many will face daunting backlogs.

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Surge in pent-up demand: elective health care, retail, nonessential government services, etc.

Demand begins to plateau/stabilize: intensive care, government benefits, remote work, distance learning, telehealth

Capacity gradually increased: Restaurants (delivery + takeout), retail (online), government operations, schools

Gradual reopening with restrictions: Airlines, bars, hotels, sports, gyms, elective surgeries, dental care, personal care (e.g., salons), construction
There will be multiple health care challenges during the recover phase. These include monitoring for possible “second-wave” infections, and working with companies to develop, approve, and distribute new tests, treatments, and vaccines for the virus.

**Tools and tips for health care**

- **Scale mass testing for insights into immunity**
  - Widespread testing can help governments identify individuals who are immune. Those who test positive can be quarantined, and appropriate contact monitoring can be enabled. People with immunity and those who test negative for the virus could begin to resume a more normal way of life, including going back to work more rapidly.

- **Scenario planning**
  - Scenario planning can help governments become better prepared for a wide range of potential challenges during the recover phase. Taiwan’s Central Epidemic Command Center, mobilized to address the global outbreak, has a list of more than 124 action items, including identification of cases, quarantine measures, border control, and more.

- **Target the most at-risk health populations**
  - The focus should be on nursing homes and other hard-hit population clusters, and implementing practices to strengthen those health settings using strategies such as quality improvement, community paramedicine, and telehealth. Technology tools can connect friends and family to lessen the mental health consequences of isolation.

- **Determine the next phase of virtual health**
  - Now that many health systems have pivoted to rapidly set up virtual health capabilities, how can government help them scale? What will the new normal look like for payments? Government should review the risks and benefits of the temporarily relaxed regulations to determine which reforms should be made permanent.

Enhance patient engagement for follow-up care

The use of virtual health and the Internet of Things may offer options to increase capacity for the health care system to attend to the long-term recovery of those patients hit hardest by COVID-19, such as those who were dependent on respirators.

Develop sustained health care “extended workforce” strategies

Advanced workforce analytics and scenario planning can improve the ability to deploy and redeploy health professionals based on demand. AI and robotics can ensure routine COVID monitoring can be done by remote sensors or by individuals in their homes.

Develop and scale treatments and a vaccine

Scaling treatments that lessen the disease’s impact and tests for the disease, as well as tests for immunity to the disease, and preventive vaccines will all contribute to recovery. These health tools can allow government to safely restore economic activity.

Data analytics will need to continue throughout recovery to help prevent new outbreaks. Government will need to leverage an array of data tools from a variety of sources, including the private sector, to inform decision-making.

Leverage data from all sectors and sources to support decision-making

Government will need to leverage an array of data tools from a variety of sources, including the private sector, to inform decision-making.

Create a platform to coordinate across government and sectors

A holistic pandemic recovery requires the capability to coordinate across various levels of government, as well as health care providers, insurers, suppliers, industry, and academia.

The economic front

The core challenge here is restarting and rebuilding the economy—helping people who lost their jobs get back to work, helping businesses that were shut down resume operations, and helping governments that have seen demand increase and revenues drop.

- In many countries, the *recover* stage will likely involve stimulus packages funding everything from physical and digital infrastructure to financial assistance for businesses and local governments.

- **Recovery on the health front is intertwined:** Until people can gather in groups to work, travel, and shop, any economic recovery will be limited (see figure). How do we speed recovery while limiting risk? *When* do we relax the rules? What restrictions still should be imposed on businesses and individuals? Should these restrictions differ by area and by industry?

- **Other challenges will involve stimulus projects.** What infrastructure projects will yield the biggest benefits? How can we limit fraud and abuse while getting money out quickly? How can we leverage government dollars with private capital to boost investment?

---

**GRAPHIC:**

- **Pre-COVID 19**
- **RESPOND**
- **RECOVER**
- **THRIVE**

- **Cases**
- **GDP vs. Pre-COVID-19 levels**

- **Health impacts** — over time should continue to go down assuming no 2\(^{nd}\) or 3\(^{rd}\) order (uncertainty)

- **Goal is to restore economic performance while maintaining health improvement**

- **Negative economic impacts** — may continue to rise if measures not properly taken

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Tools and tips for the economy

Use data to identify the hardest-hit areas

Provide clear guidance for reengaging in economic and social activity

Conduct an industry/sector assessment

Engage private sector participation to revive certain sectors

Retrofit infrastructure and civic assets

Virtually everyone has experienced the negative impact of this crisis, but some industries and some regions have been hit especially hard. It will be important to develop fair and transparent aid formulas supported by data.

Many people will retain a fear of engaging in social and economic activity after the first wave of the virus has passed. Their willingness to engage will, in part, set the pace for economic recovery for many sectors. Public health authorities, working with NGOs, will need to break through the fog and provide clear guidance.

By analyzing various sectors of the economy against their level of COVID-19 vulnerability, governments could provide more precise guidance than mere “essential vs. non-essential” designations. Such an assessment could include the likelihood of widespread transmissions, ability to mitigate against such transmissions, and so forth, informing reopening decisions.

In 2004, countries hit hard by SARS collaborated with industry to revive tourism and hospitality. Taiwan’s government collaborated with the private sector to target three primary sources of tourists—Hong Kong, the United States, and Japan—rolling out aggressive marketing campaigns for each. By the end of 2004, tourism numbers were growing at a healthy 8 percent per month.

Airports, transit stations, and other infrastructure that handles large numbers of people may need temporary design changes, such as changes to seating arrangements, modified hours of operation, and enhanced cleaning protocols, to limit the spread of the virus.

Tools and tips for the economy

Use the power of networked government

Prevent fraud by design

Recovery will require a collaborative effort with better integration of processes and data across agencies and departments.

Designing distribution to prevent improper payments and the “pay and chase” cycle can free up resources for those who need truly need it. Fraud can be limited by leveraging digital processes and tools such as AI, data analytics, and nudge thinking.

Evaluate supply chain vulnerability

Evaluate supply chain vulnerability of food, supplies, medicines, and devices for life-saving care to global shocks. Run stress tests for different future scenarios, which could including subsequent waves of the pandemic or other global disruptions.

Provide open data

Agencies should provide data on procurement and financial support for evaluation by researchers and the public to increase transparency and trust. Open data also can improve program integrity and may reveal fraud and abuse.

Plan ahead for a potential second wave

If the virus abates and then returns later in the year in different regions of the world, countries don’t want to have to shut down the economy again. Testing and tracing on a massive scale—along with new therapeutics—could avoid that situation if well-prepared and rapidly and effectively deployed.

The business of government front

Every government agency has a specific and often unique mission. But all deliver value in the same way, which can be expressed in the mantra, “People use tools to serve the public and fulfill the mission.”

A mission-centric look at the next normal

---

**The Enduring Value Chain**
- Fulfill the mission and serve the public.
- Tools are used to serve the public.

**A New Post-COVID-19 Reality**
- Citizens: New expectations.
- Human-centered design: New tools.
- Policy + procedures, IT, digital, data, physical infrastructure, supplies: New challenges.
- Public employees and other productive partners: People.

---

**People:** Management of public employees as well as other partners of government will be irrevocably changed. In the recover phase, the health and safety of public employees is likely be an area of emphasis, as well as remote work.

**Tools:** The COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated clearly that rules and regulations that hinder public service should be altered or removed—quickly. We’ve also seen the importance of data and digital tools to adaptive government.

**Serving the public:** Expectations for service will only grow after the COVID-19 crisis. In the short term, governments must be able to sense and react rapidly to changes in the pandemic.

**Mission:** In many cases, government’s mission in a post–COVID-19 environment will be different.
Reassess the mission in a post-COVID-19 environment

From health to social services, from transportation to IT, we’ll be living in a new world and many parts of government will need to pick up responsibilities related to pandemic monitoring and management.

Communicate

Getting back to normal won’t be easy for anyone, and the public is likely to be confused by changes due to COVID-19. Will there be changes in service offerings or office hours? Transparency can help build understanding while services slowly come back to acceptable levels.

Tools and tips for the business of government

Put people ahead of red tape

During the recovery, mission fulfillment can be enhanced by reexamining and adjusting normal policies, rules, and procedures. In the United States, for instance, states have temporarily waived in-state credentialing requirements for doctors to combat COVID-19.

Agility will be more important than ever

The impact of COVID-19—including stress, fear, and uncertainty — won’t end quickly. This will be a journey, and if/when the virus returns, retrenchments are likely.

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Leadership in the *recover* phase

As the immediate crisis recedes and governments begin returning to normal conditions, our leaders’ jobs will change. They’ll need to focus on communicating across boundaries—between government and industry, between layers of government, and among various agencies. The self-interest of different players may be put aside during the crisis, but during recovery, political considerations and different interests will reemerge.

Government leaders will also play a critical communication role in cutting through the noise of social media, differing rates of recovery, and potential setbacks, to foster citizen confidence and trust that it is safe to reengage with the larger community. This trust will be essential to widespread recovery.

While the focus may shift toward the economy and the business of government, data-driven vigilance must continue to ensure that additional waves of the virus do not catch regions unaware. A dashboard of both medical and economic indicators, for instance, can help track progress throughout recovery.
Moving through the phases of the COVID-19 crisis

THrive
PHASE #3: THRIVE
Toward the “next normal”

• As the pandemic recedes and the economy recovers, the opportunity will arise to go beyond “getting back to normal.” Government can play a key role in moving to the next normal: operations marked by greater preparedness for any future pandemic and greater overall agility in delivering critical services.

• One reasonable expectation is that governments will use digital tools more often and in more comprehensive ways (see figure). Technologies such as AI, blockchain, and the cloud will become integral to government business and the way it interacts with the public. And greater use of certain technologies will make governments more resilient to any future crisis.

• The thrive phase will be much more about how government establishes a platform for future success in three fronts. The thrive phase is aspirational, imagining a future where government builds a platform for the future.

Accelerated demand for certain trends becomes the new normal: remote work, distance learning, telehealth, digital government services, cybersecurity, adaptive regulation, etc.
Five imperatives for resilient government during the *thrive* phase

**Execution by network**
A major calamity requires a network of problem-solvers. Tech companies, universities, research labs, and other experts can contribute to collective intelligence that exponentially increases the government’s ability to mitigate a crisis. Such partnerships can help governments respond better to unfolding catastrophes.

**Agility**
Agility in the *thrive* phase focuses on longer-term flexibility and intentional change-making within government. It’s about building skills that governments can deploy not only in a crisis but at all times.

**Two-gear government**
Governments emerging from COVID-19 will have to divide their resources, managing existing operations on the one hand while also exploring ways to improve future responses.

**Anticipatory government**
Data analytics, AI, scenarios, and simulations allow governments to target likely problems before they erupt and shift the focus from cleaning up problems to preventing them. Forecasting the consequences of “black swan” events such as pandemics will be a top priority for governments in the *thrive* phase.

**Accelerated digital government**
Digital services proved essential in the early stages of the COVID-19 crisis. As governments move into the *thrive* phase, they should focus on longer-term improvements to these services, with special attention to infrastructural gaps exposed during response and recovery.

**Data: The foundation for resilient government**
Without data, signals that lead to responses are never triggered. Without data, there’s no shared understanding to align a network or guide resource allocation. Digital government not only creates rapid response capability but also generates the real-time data needed to enable anticipatory government.
Leadership in the *thrive* phase

The health crisis is over, and the economy is stabilized. What now?

Leaders must embrace the long view and ensure that the opportunity to invest in resiliency and improve the public sector—that is, to better position it to deal with future crises—isn’t wasted. We’ve seen numerous examples of governments using digital technologies to provide human-centered services to ease their path through the crisis.

In short, the more digital and citizen-centric the government, the better for those it serves.
Looking forward

The public sector has been the focal point of the fight against COVID-19: from mandating social distancing to building hospitals, to working with industry to deliver needed medical equipment, to delivering economic relief to impacted individuals. We have seen governments act decisively, belying the stereotype of the slow-moving bureaucracy. Governments have waived regulations and convened a network of scientists, companies, and universities to develop treatments and possible vaccines. We have seen countless examples of how quickly and decisively government can act in a crisis.

The journey ahead will not be easy. The economic downturn has decimated government revenues even as demand for services has soared. It is a triple crisis, targeting our health, our economy, and our governments. But government has the tools to guide the recovery through its inevitable phases: respond, recover, and thrive.
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