



## GRADUATION GUIDELINE CONSIDERATIONS

As the school year comes to an end, many districts are thinking about how to celebrate their graduating classes. There have been creative approaches, such as drive-thru style graduations, lighting ceremonies, virtual ceremonies, and more. A number of districts are also working on in-person graduation ceremonies this year.

In keeping with federal guidance, in-person ceremonies—if they are to occur—should be postponed for as long as possible. On April 16, the White House released [reopening guidelines](#) for state and local officials, created with the advice of public health experts. The guidelines envisioned a three-phase approach. During Phase 3, group gatherings of more than 50 people are permitted. Phase 3 is allowed, however, only if states have met the criteria under Phase 1 and Phase 2, which Arizona has not. Though the state is not following these guidelines explicitly, the Trust believes the advice of federal public health experts is worth considering.

If districts plan to proceed with in-person graduation ceremonies, the following guidelines are strongly recommended for purposes of maximizing health and safety.

### **Waiver**

Stress to all parents and graduates that the graduation ceremony is voluntary. Have parents sign a waiver allowing the graduate to participate. The waiver should contain an acknowledgement or signature signifying that the graduate and attending family members have had no COVID-19 related symptoms for the week preceding the event. A sample waiver can be found [here](#).

### **Venue and Cleaning/Disinfecting**

Select a large and/or open-air venue that can accommodate all attendees consistent with social distancing guidelines. If the ceremony is indoors, make sure there is sufficient ventilation.

Verify that the facility has been cleaned and disinfected, following [CDC guidelines](#), prior to the ceremony.

## **In-Person and Remote Participation for Families and Guests**

If possible, stream and/or record the ceremony to allow an option other than in-person attendance. Then, consider encouraging families and other guests to participate virtually rather than in-person. In particular, encourage individuals at higher risk for severe illness (per [CDC guidelines](#)) to consider participating remotely.

If guests are permitted:

- encourage all in attendance to wear face coverings, and
- limit the number of attendees so that guests can maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from one another.

(Household members may sit together.)

## **Coordination of Graduates**

Consider taking the temperature of all graduates upon arrival. Any graduate that registers a temperature of 100.4 or above should be asked to leave the ceremony.

Encourage all graduates to wear face coverings, and seat graduates at least 6 feet from one another.

Though graduates may be recognized on stage, avoid contact among graduates or between graduates and faculty or others on stage. This means no handshakes, high-fives, or hugs, and maintaining a distance of at least 6 feet at all times. This also means that diplomas/diploma cases will have to be mailed or delivered to graduates before the ceremony or after. If diplomas are provided before the ceremony, students may carry them on stage.

## **Miscellaneous (Security, Event Conclusion)**

Law enforcement officers should be present at any ceremony. Security and district staff should also be present to assist with social distancing guidelines, especially following the ceremony.

Students and families should be encouraged to stay separated from those not in their households. Those who are noncompliant may be removed from the event.

Once the event ends, a staggered dismissal should be conducted. Consider dismissing by family or by last name rather than based on location in the venue.