

Dear POC members,

UPDATED –March 26, 2020

As we go through the COVID-19 pandemic together, the POC Board of Directors hope you and your family stay healthy and safe during this time of uncertainty.

The Ontario government, as well as many other provinces, have mandated that all non-essential businesses close. The same directive has happened across the country by the various provinces.

What is defined as an essential business? The Ontario government has released its list which can be found at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/list-essential-workplaces>. At this time, professional organizing is not listed as an essential service.

If you feel that some of the auxiliary services you offer, for example move management, would qualify as an essential service under the government mandate, we encourage you to call 1-888-444-3659 and seek clarification and to learn the repercussions, including fines, that can occur if a non-essential business continues to operate. If you are a business outside of Ontario, please visit your provincial government website for information and their toll-free number regarding the regulations they are enforcing.

We have been receiving many emails and messages asking for legal and accounting advice, business continuity planning and resources, including insight on the government programs, funding and mandates. We appreciate how incredibly difficult and stressful this situation is – your Board of Directors are volunteers and small business owners that are dealing with the same challenges.

We will continue to help and support each other through this unprecedented time within the scope of our organization and what we can legally provide. Please read the following restrictions carefully.

- **POC does not and cannot set or recommend individual business practices.**
- **POC does not and cannot provide legal or accounting advice nor can we endorse or recommend service providers.**
- **POC does not have access outside of what is being shared with the general public on** any government benefits or funding provincially or federally. We encourage you to visit the CRA for updates on benefits, funding and supports and how to apply as these change daily. <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency.html>

Our members are the strength and foundation of POC. And we are committed to supporting you as we can.

- POC **will** continue to answer your questions regarding your membership needs.

- POC **will** continue to support our Chapters and have provided complimentary access to the POC ZOOM account for online meetings and gatherings. This can include the Chapter AGMs and elections.
- POC **will** be offering discounted rates on some of its courses over the next few weeks to allow members to use their time at home to build their skill sets.
- POC **will** be offering and working with individual members renewing over the next six months around possible fee deferrals.
- POC **will** be revising its social media messaging to include links to online resources or interesting ways for you and your loved ones to stay productive.

We remind all our members to be kind and respectful to each other and the POC volunteers during this trying time. POC prides itself on maintaining its Code of Conduct and this includes treating each other at all times with respect and professional courtesy.

Please keep this in mind when communicating with others or posting on social media so that the comments or the information being shared is not causing anyone further undo stress or anxiety.

As this is a rapidly evolving situation, we will be continuing to look for ways to support our members and will keep you updated as we monitor the situation and roll out any plans in response.

We understand that this is hard for everyone and that it will have a long-lasting impact on our lives, profession, membership, clients and our affiliate partners around the world.

We are strong, we are resilient, and we will get through this together.

Thank you,
Your POC Board of Directors