

# **AILEY FORWARD**

**A PLAN FOR REOPENING  
THE JOAN WEILL CENTER FOR DANCE  
DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC FY21  
February 9, 2021**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation, Inc., (Ailey) has developed a comprehensive plan, **Ailey Forward**, for reopening the Joan Weill Center for Dance (The Center) at 405 West 55th Street, New York, New York for the organization's fiscal year 2021. Careful planning to welcome dancers, students, teachers, musicians, and essential staff addresses public health concerns and outlines how the highest percent of Ailey's operations can be returned to The Center while reducing the risk of transmission of the COVID-19 virus. Ailey is committed to continually update and revise Ailey Forward in response to new guidance and regulation from state and federal sources as those should become available.

Ailey has long worked in concert with colleagues and advisors in New York's top health and medical facilities and provided best in class physical therapy and medical referrals for its professional dancers, students, and staff. Building on this history of commitment to health and well-being, Ailey has established methods of screening, contact tracing & isolation, modified operations, enhanced cleaning, and planned an education campaign around safe behaviors that optimize the safety of employees, students, as well as others who are permitted to enter the building (i.e. necessary independent contractors). **Ailey Forward** is fully compliant with the directives of the governor's office, as communicated in [NY Forward](#).

To effectuate the plan, Ailey will:

1. Conform to the critical key metrics for reopening New York City developed by Governor Cuomo and other officials, including the local prevalence criterion, before commencing operations.
2. Maintain close contact with New York City's Department of Health.
3. Work closely with the American Guild of Musician Artists (AGMA).
4. Partner with Fordham University for its program to test and treat students enrolled in the Ailey/Fordham joint BFA Program.
5. Partner with the School of Visual Arts to isolate students as necessary residing at SVA's Ludlow residence hall located at 101 Ludlow Street, New York, New York, 10002.
6. Partner with the Professional Performing Arts School (PPAS) located at 328 W 48th St, New York, NY 10036 to comply with the New York State Department of Education Guidelines for Reopening.
7. Ensure the availability of screening and tracing, as well as recommending testing options in New York City to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 infection, including:
  - a. Require all employees and when possible, students, be tested five (5) days in advance of returning to 405 West 55th Street, NY, NY.
  - b. Put in place a screening program (Healthcheck) that is mandatory for Ailey employees and students. After completing all aspects of the mandatory screening program, a person will gain clearance to access The Center.

- c. Put in place a screening program (Healthcheck or manual) for visitors who are deemed essential by pre-designated staff (i.e. Facilities Director), in order to gain access to The Center.
  - d. Put in place a screening program (Healthcheck) that establishes protocols for tracing in accordance with Government guidelines and requirements.
- 8. Make available sufficient Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- 9. Encourage flu vaccinations to all community members.
- 10. Make its cleaning and disinfecting schedules available.
- 11. Provide access to the safety plans of AGMA, Fordham SVA, and NYDOE.
- 12. Articulate Ailey's plan for social distancing during all activities (conditioning, teaching whether live and/or recorded, office and administrative interactions, physical therapy operations in accordance with government regulations, hydration and nutrition, lavatory use, including facilities modification where appropriate.
- 13. Utilize a flexible hybrid model for instruction containing a mix of synchronous and asynchronous elements, thus allowing Ailey to pivot from partially to fully online learning if circumstances make that necessary.
- 14. Execute a methodical shut-down plan if the decision is made to ramp down activities. Have communication and education plans in place for employees, students, families, along with other community members.
- 15. Establish a non-visitor/no guardian policy with strict exception policy.
- 16. Retain a copy of **Ailey Forward** at Ailey's Front Security Desk and The Facility Manager's Office for a Department of Building's Inspector or New York State Health Official. Signage at The Center's entrance will identify these locations to refer where these copies can be accessed.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

On March 13, 2020, The Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation (Ailey) discontinued activities at The Joan Weill Center for Dance (The Center) as COVID-19 was rapidly spreading throughout the global community, although the Ailey organization pressed forward with its Dancers, The Ailey School, the Ailey Extension, AileyCamp, and so much more online, and thus, worldwide.

After New York successfully flattened the curve through strict social distancing efforts, Governor Cuomo turned his attention to restarting the economy through a phased opening approach. No sooner than these efforts began, so too did Ailey launch its reopening task force that directly involved representation from the entire organization.

Ailey Forward is fully consistent with New York Forward, the governor's plan for reopening the State of New York, and draws from the [Centers for Disease Control](#) guidelines. Ailey has assembled a COVID-19 Medical Task Force under the leadership of Dr. Donald J. Rose, M.D., FAAOS, an orthopedic surgeon and Director of the Harkness Center for Dance Injuries, New York University Langone Health, also including from NYU Langone Health: Elizabeth Barchi, M.D. (pediatric/adult sports/dance medicine and a former dancer), and Vinh Pham, M.D., Ph.D. (Section Chief Infectious Diseases, Associate Director OCC Health Bio Safety), as well as Dr. Shaw Bronner, PT, OCS, Director, Physical Therapy Services Alvin Ailey Dance Foundation, Director ADAM Center, and co-founder Dance USA Medical Task Force, Dr. Sheyi Ojofeitimi, PT, DPT, OCS, CFMT, CIDN, and Dr. Marissa Schaeffer, PT, DPT, CSCS. Also consulting for Ailey is James W. Lytle, Senior Counsel, Gregory Pratt, Advisor, and Laura Manley, Advisor, Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP, specialty practice New York State.

## 2 PLANS FOR REPOPULATING THE CENTER

Ailey will proceed cautiously with repopulating The Center while minimizing risks to the health and well-being of each member of our community. The Center will operate at lower density, institute social distancing standards, undertake enhanced cleaning measures, require the use of appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), and pursue daily health screenings to monitor, trace as necessary, and assure the isolation of potential infections.

Ailey will designate a COVID-19 Coordinator, Marion Koltun, as a single point of contact who will lead policy development, compliance issues, and management of information to external and internal stakeholders and agencies. Marion Koltun works in concert with Ailey's General Counsel, Elena Paul, and Ailey's Chief Financial Officer, Pamela Robinson as well as Ailey's Director of Human Resources, Toronda Miller; Ailey's Director of Facilities, Mike Canarozzi; Director of Studio Operations, Alaric Hahn; Ailey School Representative, Rod Hines; and Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's Company Manager, Gregory Stuart.

## 2.1 Phased Approach to Bringing People Back to The Center

The plan to reopen Ailey has and will continue to follow the governor's four phases of reopening, spanning from a phase where all but essential employees work remotely, to a phase where the institution's standard operations can once again occur at The Center, albeit with social distancing measures in place. It is not possible to predict on what dates Ailey will be authorized by the governor's guidelines to proceed from one phase to the next; nor can Ailey anticipate how those guidelines are modified by the governor's office. However, Ailey stands ready to implement the measures outlined in this plan to successfully reopen the Center in FY21 according to Governor Cuomo's directives.

When authorized by the governor's office to move to the next phase, Ailey will cautiously proceed accordingly. If there is a decline in the health metrics, suggesting that we are reopening too quickly, Ailey may need to pause at the more restrictive phase until we are confident, upon receiving confirmation from the governor's office, that we may once again proceed with our phased plan to reopen Ailey.

Management will provide directives to department leaders that allow employees who, by the nature of their work, can perform their duties remotely to continue to do so. Similarly, employees may be directed to return to work at The Center under different staffing options if and when staff are determined as essential; here are examples that department heads may be directed by Management to deploy:

- Divide employees of a department or departmental area into cohorts.
- Stagger employee arrival and departure times to reduce density at points of entry and egress.
- Create multiple shifts beyond the traditional workday.
- Prepare a "COVID-19 Work-Schedule" i.e. each cohort works at The Center one week, and then works remotely for at least two weeks.

These are examples. See the attached Occupancy Schedule and Floor plan which will change according to government directives.

Similarly, Management will provide directives to The Ailey School to create modified class cohorts to reduce density of class sizes.

Employees permitted to work remotely must continue to perform the essential duties and responsibilities of their jobs, which may be adjusted as the circumstances warrant as per the Addendum to the Ailey Personnel Manual, which will be distributed before employees return to The Center.

## 2.2 High Risk Populations

Employees who self-identify as high-risk pursuant to CDC Guidelines should consult the Personnel Manual. All students have been encouraged to discuss with their doctor the risks and benefits of college life prior to coming to campus. Public School students will follow guidelines as determined by the New York State Department of Education and distributed through PPAS. Professional Division Student requests for accommodations will be evaluated by Fordham Student Affairs and The Ailey School Co-Directors prior to enrollment. Public School students attending PPAS must follow guidelines iterated in the PPAS safety plan.

## 2.3 Screening and contact tracing of Individuals Returning to The Center

Ailey will institute a rigorous screening program, daily symptoms self-monitoring, and guidance for testing of those who are symptomatic or have been exposed to a COVID-positive individual. All information is kept confidential and follows privacy laws. Screening and contact tracing protocol will be made available in multiple educational formats prior to return to The Center.

## 2.4 Hygiene, Cleaning and Disinfection

Each member of the Ailey community is responsible for maintaining safe and hygienic conditions. The New York State Department of Health has issued the following directives:

- Cover your nose and mouth with an acceptable face covering.
- Properly store and, when necessary, discard PPE.
- Adhere to physical distancing instructions.
- Report symptoms of, or exposure to, COVID-19 through the Ailey and Fordham University's screening program.
- Follow hand hygiene and cleaning and disinfection guidelines.
- Follow appropriate respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette.

Ailey will post signage throughout The Center and engage in education/prevention campaigns to remind the Ailey community of these important practices. Cleaning Logs will be kept onsite as per the NYForward Safety Plan (See Appendix F.) in part to track personnel, times, location of all cleaning activity to assist with contact tracing.

- All Employees and students will be required to complete public health training and will be expected to conform to a set of public health measures.
- Ailey will make face coverings available for all employees, students, and essential visitors, and will provide personal protective equipment as needed for specific areas and modes of work.
- Employees and students will be instructed to come to The Center with their own face coverings, but face coverings will be provided as needed.
- Proper hygiene is critical, including cleaning and disinfecting protocols.

- Additional waste baskets and tissues at high-touch areas, like common area doors and elevators will be provided.

Training of staff and students is CRITICAL and will be provided to all employees, students, and independent contractors, with an additional focus on Supervisors/Managers. In order to ensure that all employees have an equal opportunity to access the content, training will be delivered via multiple formats using various learning and collaboration technologies. Training will include the following three categories:

- **Mandatory Training:** Topics will include, but are not limited to, public health, how to wear PPE, washing one's hands, return to The Center orientation for all employees, supervisory and independent contractors
- **Soft Skills Training:** Topics will include, but are not limited to, establishing psychological safety, how to lead during times of uncertainty, how to communicate with each other while working remotely, and mental wellness.
- **Technology Training:** In partnership with the Ailey's IT department, employees will be provided additional resources on how to work remotely (e.g., how to use Teams, Zoom).

When using public transportation, employees, students, and independent contractors should:

- wear a face covering
- avoid touching surfaces with their hands to the maximum extent possible
- stay in a train car or section of a bus with fewer riders as possible
- choose to sit/stand as far as possible from other riders
- upon exiting, wash their hands or use hand sanitizer
- avoid wait times for public transportation by considering using alternate commuting methods, such as biking, rental cars, Zip cars, etc.

As much as possible, individuals must limit in-person gatherings at The Center and use other methods such as video or teleconferencing whenever possible. When videoconferencing or teleconferencing is not possible, meetings should be restricted to open, well-ventilated spaces where individuals can maintain six feet of social distance between one another such as near the elevator lobbies, NOT the open office areas. For example, when an independent contractor meets with the Facilities Director to execute a necessary repair, such a meeting, socially distanced, is acceptable. A meeting between two workers in a department should happen via Ailey's technology "Teams" to conduct business.

Existing custodial support will provide all major sanitizing and cleaning services on a more frequent basis depending on the contact risks associated with the particular area. Ailey's building cleaning schedule will be included on the Ailey Occupancy Schedule.

- Contact surface treating technologies such as electrostatic equipment with CDC approved disinfectants will be deployed throughout The Center.
- Ailey will supply employees and students with disinfecting wipes and access to hand sanitizers at The Center.

## 2.5 Personal Protective Equipment

Ailey will acquire and distribute Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in the following way:

- Material Sourcing and Reordering Procedures will be managed by Facilities for face coverings and hygiene products such as hand sanitizer stations and wipes dispensers, which will be deployed throughout The Center. Soaps and other sanitizing/disinfection materials will be procured by Facilities with quantities as recommended by Management.
- Each employee of the Ailey community will be provided with a reusable face covering by Ailey.
- Ailey will maintain an adequate supply of face coverings, gloves, and hand sanitizer material, as well as CDC-approved PPE should an employee or student need a replacement, or should an essential visitor be in need.
- Every person at The Center is required to wear an acceptable face covering while interacting with anyone else at The Center without exception. The requirement that each individual wear a face covering is for their own personal health and the health of those around them.
- Gloves will be supplied to public safety, custodial services, physical therapy, studio and security operations.
- Gloves must be worn (and properly taken off and disposed of) by public safety, custodial service, studio, physical therapy, and security staff. Glove usage is not required by other employees but recommended for videographers in studios.
- Everyone should properly wash their hands frequently (for at least 20 seconds) and personally wipe off surfaces after touching them.

## 2.6 Modified Use of Conditioning and Learning Spaces (Studios and Classrooms)

The judicious and safe use of learning spaces (classrooms, studios), at a time when the COVID-19 virus is active in our region, requires attention to social distancing standards and other health and safety policies and protocols set forth by the CDC, New York State (including the New York Professional Sports Training Facilities (see resources), City, Ailey, and other regulatory and advisory bodies including Dance USA and the American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA).

Ailey will:

- Establish a minimum of 6-foot social distance standard between all individuals within a studio and/or classroom.
- Reduce seating capacity within each of the above to approximately one-third of original occupancy, as dictated by the 6-foot social distance standard.

- Adjust the quantity and placement of furniture (desks, podia, etc.) to achieve social distancing standard throughout The Center.
- Upgrade technology in learning spaces as needed.
- Assign course sections to individual learning spaces (learning “pods”).
- Limit offices to single occupancy.
- Limit use of Ailey’s physical therapy facility according to New York State regulatory guidelines.
- Analyze and model traffic patterns (e.g., hallways, stairways, elevators) to develop protocols to de-densify buildings around the times when classes/dancers change. Potential mitigation includes:
  - Designating up and down stairways.
  - Ensuring learning space transitions between classes comply with mandated cleaning (30 minutes between classes).
  - Scheduling The Ailey School on lower floors of buildings, when possible, to reduce traffic pattern; restrict other employees to floors to minimize movement patterns while at The Center.
  - Provide appropriate sanitizing wipes and hand sanitizers in all learning spaces.

### 2.6.1 Technology-Enhanced Teaching and Learning

Ailey has chosen to transition to a Flexible Hybrid Learning Environment (FHLE) for instructional delivery in response to the lingering public health challenges and conditions posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, all program divisions of Ailey will enjoy best in class technology support throughout The Center. Ailey’s Floor Plans indicate Studio technology equipment.

### 2.7 Residential Life for students

Please see the attached safety plans for Fordham University and School of Visual Arts

### 2.8 Dining

- Currently, Ailey is closing off the use of most shared spaces and appliances, including kitchens, refrigerators and microwaves. No vending machines or water fountains will be available. Kitchen sinks will remain available for hand washing. Bottled water will be provided, although employees and students will be asked to bring beverages to the building. Employees will be asked to not bring food requiring refrigeration or heating for their meals and to return reusable containers to their homes or to dispose of containers in the trash. Food deliveries will be permitted on a no-touch basis outside of the building with supervisor’s permission. Leaving the Ailey building to acquire food and bring food back into the building is only allowed under essential circumstances and with Supervisors permission.

## 2.9 General Facilities and Operations

Facilities Management and Maintenance will:

- Change foot traffic flows with associated floor markings and directional signage.
- Use of “up” and “down” signage on stairways with schedules to minimize the “face to face” potential for building occupants. Individuals will be required to manage their ability to social distance while they are in the stairways. Building entrances and exits will be marked for normal one-way egress/ingress.
- Reduce elevator loading to 50% full capacity occupants per elevator cab (NYS Guidelines for Commercial Buildings) with the requirement that all wear face coverings. Prohibit elevator use to lower floors except for those with mobility challenges or health issues.
- All building ventilation systems will utilize a minimum Merv 8 or higher filters.
- The maximum capacity in each office space is based on a minimum of a 50% reduction in staffing.
- Measures have been put into place to physically separate and increase distance between employees and independent contractors and other co-workers. Office sharing is prohibited unless the required minimum 6 ft. of distance can be maintained.
- Package and mail distribution have been minimized to electronic management.

## 3 MONITORING STUDENT AND EMPLOYEE HEALTH

The health and safety of Ailey’s employees and students remain the highest priority in developing plans in alignment with NYS guidelines. In reopening The Center, four factors underlie the protocols: Testing; Screening/Monitoring; Contact Tracing; and Isolation/ Quarantine. Each of these factors will ensure that we can closely gauge the health of members of the Ailey community as well as create a safe and immediate response in the event of illness.

### 3.1 Daily Screening

Ailey will use Healthcheck, a digital screening app and coordinate with apps used by partner institutions. All employees and students will be required to be tested five (5) days prior to returning to The Center. In the event a person without access to the HealthCheck app needs access to the Center, a manual entry method (with temperature check) is in place at the building’s entrance.

- Independent contractors will be required to deploy this app prior to entering The Center.
- Fordham students will utilize Vitalcheck, which is managed by Fordham University.
- Ailey School students residing at the School of Visual Arts/Ludlow will utilize AppArmor, which is managed by the School of Visual Arts as well as Healthcheck.
- Ailey will work with PPAS’ safety plan for returning public school students.

All these individuals will deploy screening prior to entering The Center. Once individuals enter The Center, individuals will not be re-admitted to The Center that day without prior permission and these students must receive temperature checks to re-enter The Center.

### 3.2 Contact Tracing

When Ailey is informed that an individual who has been at The Center has tested positive for COVID-19, Ailey will identify anyone who might have been exposed to the infected individual while at The Center for long enough to have put them at risk of infection. In coordination with the NYC and NYS contact tracing programs, Ailey will implement a contact tracing tool via its app deployment and/or through its above mentioned partnerships to assist personnel in the notification of members of the Ailey community who have been exposed to an individual who has tested positive while at The Center. Should an individual feel ill while at The Center, that individual will be isolated until they can be safely exited The Center with compliant instructions for testing; should that individual test positive for COVID-19, the above contact tracing protocol will be deployed.

### 3.3 Quarantine

Ailey's policy is that anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 will be required immediately to self-isolate for the optimum amount of time recommended by the CDC, currently 14 days. Close contacts to the infected individual will be directed to quarantine themselves to prevent further spread. Provisions for self-isolation and quarantine are as follows:

- Employees and Independent contractors will be directed to self-isolate or quarantine at their residences.
- Fordham students will be directed to the Fordham Health Center to follow Fordham University protocol.
- Students residing at SVA will be directed to self-isolate at Ludlow.
- Parents of Junior Division students will have been previously notified and expected to isolate and quarantine at their residences.
- PPAS students will follow the protocol outlined in the PPAS Safety Plan.

### 3.4 Communication of Protocols

Communication is paramount in order to achieve the best results for keeping the Ailey community as safe as possible. Prior to returning to The Center, all students and employees will be provided with appropriate information and guidance as to what to expect prior to and upon their arrival at The Center. This information will include Ailey's expectations, policies, procedures and requirements for sound public health practices. Specific details will be provided about the screening apps (VitalCheck-Fordham, Healthcheck for Ailey employees, AppArmor-Ludlow), contact tracing, social distancing protocols, facial coverings, gloves, health and hygiene best practices, nutrition, and bathroom etiquette.

Additionally, the Ailey community will be kept informed of current and relevant information through message campaigns delivered on various platforms with weekly, or bi-weekly communications that reinforce policy reflect effective results that the plan is working, and/or that course correction is addressed immediately.

## 4 SHUTDOWN OF THE CENTER

### 4.1 Coordination with External Agencies

Ailey will stay in close contact with several offices at the federal, state, and local level to ensure that we have the most up-to-date information on the COVID pandemic, are compliant with all health department directives, and are coordinating closely with partner institutions. Valued sources of information include:

- COVID-related guidelines issued by federal agencies:
  - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
  - National Institutes of Health (NIH)
  - Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
  - U.S. Department of Education (DOE)
  - Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
  - U.S. Department of State
  - Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)
- COVID-related guidelines issued by state and regional agencies:
  - “New York Forward” issued from the governor’s office
  - New York State Department of Health
  - New York City Department of Health
  - New York State Education Department (NYSED)

Additionally, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) has adopted an aggressive operational plan to require face coverings and keep regional trains, subways and stations plus buses cleaned and disinfected every day for our employees and commuter students using public transportation to travel to and from our campuses.

If the decision is made to reduce activities at or close The Center, Ailey will promptly execute any one or all of the following actions:

- Inform Dancers that studio work is suspended effective immediately.
- Inform faculty and students that face-to-face instruction is suspended effective immediately.
- Inform residential students at SVA of any closure of the residence hall rooms.

Work in partnership with Fordham University regarding face-to-face instruction being suspended effective immediately.

- Work in partnership with PPAS regarding in person instruction being suspending effective immediately.
- Inform employees to work from home until further notice.

#### 4.2 Communications

AILEY is committed to communicate frequently with ITS community on all things related to COVID-19. Of great importance, AILEY will promptly inform employees and students of the following:

- Any new actions or policy changes Ailey is introducing to impede transmission of the virus.
- Regular updates on the number of new COVID-positive cases within our community.
- Advance notice of when Ailey is transitioning from one phase to another.
- Specific directions for vacating the premises in the event of a closure.

## 5 CONCLUSION

The **AILEY Forward** plan conforms to the New York Forward Plan.

This plan has been reviewed by Ailey's Board of Trustees, legal counsel, Ailey's COVID-19 Medical Task Force, AGMA, Ailey's Insurance advisors, and other regulatory bodies. The successful execution of the Ailey Forward plan is the responsibility of the administration, led by Executive Director, Bennett Rink. Ailey's COVID-19 Task Force will manage policy development, daily monitoring of health screening information, and compliance with all federal, state, and city regulations/guidelines. Each division of Ailey will work in a coordinated and collaborative fashion to achieve the institution's objectives under this plan.

## 6 LINKS

[NY Forward](#)

[NYS - Mandatory Guidance on Professional Sports Training Facilities](#)

[NY Forward Phase 4 Industries](#)

[MTA Coronavirus Guidelines & Information](#)

[Fordham Forward](#)

[New York State Education Department](#)

[AGMA/SDC Return to Stage Playbook](#)



## **7 APPENDIX**

- A. Ailey Floor Plans
- B. Ailey Studio Plans
- C. Ailey Occupancy Schedule
- D. DanceUSA Return to Dancing & Training
- E. School of Visual Arts Recovery and Reoccupancy Plan
- F. NYS Business Plan Reopening Template
- G. NYC Dept of Education-Considerations for Blended and Remote Learning in Dance

NOTE: In the event of inconsistencies between AileyForward and other safety plans, AileyForward will apply.