



New Workplace Guidance in Response to COVID-19

March 5, 2020

Dear City employees,

I wanted to share some updates regarding novel coronavirus (COVID-19). At the City, we continue to follow guidance from our partners at Public Health – Seattle & King County (PHSKC), Washington State Department of Health (DOH), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Based on new guidance from our public health partners, we have temporarily updated City of Seattle workplace policies to help keep our workforce safe and healthy. Because this is a rapidly developing situation, we have created a centralized COVID-19 InWeb page for City employees. [You can find that page here; please continue to check it for updates.](#)

We encourage City employees to follow the below steps until March 31, 2020. We will continue to reassess the situation and determine whether to extend or change this guidance.

Ongoing Guidance: We all have an important role to play in preventing the spread of COVID-19. Please follow the below recommendations from our public health partners:

- Stay home while you are sick and avoid close contact with others.
- Wash hands often with soap and water. If not available, use hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Avoid contact with people who are sick.
- Cover your mouth/nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.

If you are sick with symptoms of acute respiratory illness, you should stay home and immediately discuss your leave options with your supervisor or your Human Resources representative.

[Click here for more information on COVID-19.](#)

Telework: Effective immediately, City employees are encouraged to telework according to [the City's Alternative Work Arrangements \(AWA\) COVID 19 Guidelines](#). Supervisors are encouraged to approve telework as applicable and to consider other AWA agreements.

Internal Meetings: All non-essential in person meetings should be canceled or convened in alternative ways, whether that be Skype, conference calls, or other digital tools. Whenever possible, all essential meetings should be conducted via Skype, conference calls, or other digital tools. If the meeting must be in person, please try to find ways to create more physical space between meeting attendees. Ultimately, you should plan your meetings based on the operational need, legal obligation and/or regulatory function of the department.

Community Meetings, Events and Programs: A department director, under the guidance of the CDC, DOH, and PHSKC, may cancel a community meeting, event, or program. The director must take the following into consideration when making decisions:

1. Can the meeting, event, or program be rescheduled? If yes, reschedule it.
2. Is the meeting, event, or program designed for a high-risk population (people over 60; people with underlying health conditions including heart disease, lung disease, or diabetes; people who have weakened immune systems; and people who are pregnant)? If yes, it should be canceled.
3. Is the meeting, event, or program likely to have high-risk populations in attendance? If yes, encourage high-risk populations to avoid the meeting, event, or program and work to provide alternative means for participation (e.g., Skype, webinar, online survey, etc.).
4. If the meeting, event, or program takes place, encourage those exhibiting symptoms of acute respiratory illness not to attend, and work to provide alternative means of participation (e.g., Skype, webinar, online survey, etc.).
5. If your meeting, event, or program takes place, find ways to create more physical space and urge attendees to maintain good healthy habits. Program organizers should clean surfaces with standard cleaners.

Employee Assistance Program: We understand this may be a stressful time. The City of Seattle partners with Resources for Living to deliver our Employee Assistance Program (EAP). EAP provides professional counseling and referrals, help with personal problems, and online resources. It's free for you and your household members for up to six counseling visits per issue, per year. For more information, please contact Resources for Living by phone at 1-888-272-7252 or 1-888-879-8274 (TTY). You can also visit their website at <https://www.resourcesforliving.com/login>. The login for employees is: city of seattle. The password is: city of seattle.

Thank you for your important actions to prevent risk and exposure, take care of yourself and your families, and help the City prepare. We are grateful for your work. We will provide you with timely updates and guidance as the situation evolves. Please visit [our COVID-19 InWeb page](#) for more information, including an FAQ, updated public health guidance, and digital workplace tools.

Sincerely,
Bobby Humes
Director
Seattle Department of Human Resources