

## **Subject Line: Extending Our Telework Policies and Caring for Ourselves and Each Other**

Dear City Employees,

We know that King County has been the epicenter of the pandemic in Washington state. Because of the collective efforts of our residents and businesses, we have significantly reduced COVID-19 infections in our region. We know the “Stay Home, Stay Healthy” order has been challenging and the impacts have been disproportionate. We are working hard to mitigate the impacts on our residents with food and rental assistance, grants to small businesses, de-intensified shelters, and more.

As we turn our attention to reopening and recovery, it’s critical that we continue to engage in physical distancing, avoid gathering, practice good hygiene, and wear protective face coverings. In accordance with public health guidance and to help keep our City workforce safe and healthy, we have extended our [telework guidance](#) through September 7, 2020. Over the summer, all employees who are eligible to telework should continue to telework. Some employees will return to their worksite as operational needs require. Managers will continue to be as accommodating as possible in allowing for employees to continue to telework, and employees should consult with their manager if they have concerns continuing to telework. In the coming weeks, we will be working on a survey to help inform how we can best meet your needs while teleworking.

So many of our workers and first responders do not have the option of teleworking, and I am deeply grateful to all those who continue to serve on the frontlines and keep our City running. We will continue to ensure public health requirements are met and provide appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to our frontline workers.

Continuing to stay home, whenever possible, is the right decision to protect the public health and safety of our workforce and the people we serve. Many of lives of our employees, friends and families have been changed over the last few months, and I also think about the many individuals who have not been able to visit loved ones, many of whom are sick and grieving.

I don’t doubt that the last few months have impacted our mental health, and have exacerbated feelings of stress, loneliness, fear, isolation, and anxiety. It’s my priority that the City of Seattle is a place where we care for each other’s mental and physical health. If you need to take a break to care for yourself or your loved ones, please do so in coordination with your manager. We can all continue to show kindness and compassion to one another.

I also want to acknowledge that this uncertain and unprecedented time has been made even more difficult by a number of racist acts, both in our City and across our country. Here at home, we have seen many acts of hate against our Asian community. These are acts of ignorance that have no place in our city. All department directors know we must be extra vigilant.

We also saw the horror in Minneapolis of George Floyd being killed by officers who had a sworn duty to protect him. I have made clear that I believe those officers should be prosecuted. It is just as clear that we as a city and country must acknowledge the reality of structural racism, and the grim reality that has caused distrust and fear of law enforcement in our communities of color, particularly our African American neighbors. We must continue our work to dismantle its insidious impacts. I applaud Chief Carmen Best for her passionate statement on Mr. Floyd’s death and for her work to hold the Seattle

Police Department accountable and ensure it has a culture of continuous improvement and respect for all residents it serves.

These recent acts of racist violence are not new, and they conjure up the darkest periods of our country's history, and we in Seattle still grapple with these realities. These all undoubtedly take an immense toll on our collective mental health, especially for communities of color and those who continue to experience violence caused by white supremacy culture and structural racism. I want the City to be a place where we can acknowledge that historical reality, hold space for people to react and recover, and recognize that as an institution, we must actively combat the ways we perpetuate structural racism ourselves.

To learn more about ways you can combat injustice and fight for equity in Seattle, [please visit the Seattle Office for Civil Rights' website](#).

Remember that the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available to you 24/7 for counseling, health, wellness, and other resources. You can connect with EAP at 1-888-272-7252 or 1-888-879-8274 (TTY), or online at <https://www.resourcesforliving.com/login>. The login for employees is: city of seattle. The password is: city of seattle.

And if you have any questions about this updated telework guidance, or about any of our COVID-19 personnel policies, please don't hesitate to contact your supervisor or department HR business partner. And please regularly check our [COVID-19 SharePoint](#) for regular updates.

Thanks as always for everything you're doing. Please stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

Jenny