

## MAYORAL DIRECTIVE

DATE: March 1, 2020  
TO: City of Seattle Department Directors  
FROM: Mayor Jenny A. Durkan  
Subject: COVID-19 Preparedness Instructions

### Overview

As City Departments have been planning and preparing to respond to possible COVID-19 cases in Seattle, I further direct City departments to reiterate employee guidance on safety and best practices, prioritize City efforts on behalf of our vulnerable populations including individuals experiencing homelessness, and ensure proper communications to our immigrant communities, including our non-English speaking populations.

### Background

Since January 2020, the City has been working closely with State and County partners to ensure alignment in a coordinated response to the Coronavirus (COVID-19). Since mid-February, city departments have been meeting weekly to update their COVID-19 planning and preparations. With the recent identification of COVID-19 cases in Washington State including one fatality in King County, there is an increased urgency to further focus and commit citywide resources to our response.

On February 29, 2020, Public Health Seattle & King County announced the first death in the United States due to COVID-19. As of March 1, 2020, the State of Washington Department of Health announced that there were three individuals tested positive for COVID-19 in King County.

In order to effectively support Public Health Seattle & King County and coordinate and execute the necessary work to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on the city and region, I am initiating the following actions:

### Actions

#### 1) Activation of the Emergency Operating Center (EOC)

The City of Seattle will activate the EOC to manage the consequences from COVID-19. The EOC will activate Monday thru Friday from 9:00AM – 1:00PM and conduct at least twice weekly Cabinet level conference calls in order to bring together City departments to coordinate on the following issues:

1. Support situational awareness of COVID-19 impacts through tracking employee absenteeism, 9-1-1 call volume, and other activities as determined by the Office of Emergency Management.
2. Coordinate City messaging to employees and the general public.

3. Ensure processes are in place for managing any consequences from an employee who tests positive for the COVID-19 virus.
4. Identify shortfalls in supplies needed by departments to continue essential operations.
5. Promote employee well-being by instituting non-pharmaceutical intervention actions recommended by Public Health Seattle & King County.
6. Promote the safety and security of at-risk populations and communities including elderly and individuals experiencing homelessness.
7. Address and respond to impacts on the delivery of critical public services.
8. Coordinate outreach and engagement to vulnerable populations, immigrant and refugee communities and non-English speaking residents as well as the community organizations that serve and support these populations.
9. Support the needs of the City's first responders.

## **2) Continuity of operations plans**

In 2009, the City utilized the Pandemic Influenza Incident Annex and all departments have continuity of operations plans (COOP) to ensure the continuation of critical city services in the event of an emergency. All departments should have operationalized their Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) for COVID-19 by March 13.

## **3) Prioritization of efforts around vulnerable populations**

The Seattle Human Services Department and Seattle Department of Education and Early Learning will coordinate with providers to ensure identified at risk populations receive information and are connected to available assistance in the event they are impacted by an outbreak of COVID-19.

As the agency leading the countywide King County Caregiver Support Network, the Seattle Human Services Department will serve as the lead agency on distributing guidance to case managers and protocols for Seattle's Senior Centers.

In coordination with State and King County, the Seattle Human Services Department will coordinate the development of a plan for managing COVID-19 impacts to individuals experiencing homelessness. Working with providers and local partners, HSD will increase outreach to individuals and prepare to execute on the City's emergency shelter plan. Should be there a need for additional shelter, housing, health care resources and/or services, the City will request additional resources from the State to assist with its response to help individuals experiencing homelessness.

## **4) Communications**

The Joint Information Center at the Emergency Operations Center in coordination with Public Health Seattle & King County will lead communications to be unified in our public information. Working with community organizations, the Department of Neighborhoods and Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs will lead on outreach and engagement to

vulnerable populations, immigrant and refugee communities and non-English speaking residents.

**5) Travel Guidance for City Business Travel**

At the present time, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) has not issued any domestic travel restrictions. The CDC has put in place restrictions on international travel and recommends that travelers avoid all nonessential travel to the following destinations: China, Iran, South Korea, and Italy. However, out of an abundance of caution, only essential city businesses travel will be authorized – this will allow the City to ensure all resources are available to help support City’s unified effort to respond to COVID-19.

**6) Emergency budget guidance**

City Budget Office will setup a cost charge code for all departments to track COVID-19 expenditures. Additional guidance can be expected on curtailing discretionary spending due to anticipated falling revenues due to COVID-19 impacts.

**7) Reiterate employee guidance on safety, best practices and support from HR**

Through the Emergency Operations Center, Public Health Seattle & King County and the Seattle Department of Human Resources will ensure that all city employees understand and engage in safe practices that will help minimize their exposure to COVID-19. All department directors shall ensure the communication and availability of this guidance to their employees.

**8) Call for deployment of support staff to Office of Emergency Management (OEM)**

Due to the nature of this emergency, and the potential length of response and activation of the Emergency Operations Center, the OEM requests increased staffing assistance due to the current constraints brought about the urgency of the potential outbreak of COVID-19 in the city. There are multiple roles and duties within the EOC management structure that need staffing support including the Joint Information Center.

**Contact For Further Information**

I have assigned Executive level oversight of Citywide COVID-19 response to Senior Deputy Mayor Mike Fong. Laurel Nelson, Acting Director of the Office of Emergency Management, will lead Citywide coordination and planning. In addition, Acting Director Laurel Nelson and Fire Chief Harold Scoggins will co-chair Seattle's Emergency Executive Board to provide me policy recommendations to help guide citywide COVID-19 actions.