

# County Administrator

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**David J. Twa**  
County Administrator

# Contra Costa County



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May 8, 2020

## COVID 19 Update to Union Leadership

The following information is provided as the weekly update between our conference calls of April 30<sup>th</sup> and the next call scheduled for May 14<sup>th</sup>:

1. As requested, on May 1<sup>st</sup>, we sent a reminder out to all employees regarding leave accruals and let them know that the County has established a new intranet page with COVID leave information provided to keep our employees up to date on resources that may be available to them.
2. We received the second shipment of 10,000 cloth masks ordered for our employees and are distributing them. Each employee should now have access to at least two masks each.
3. We have been working with our department heads and expect to have modified working conditions sufficiently to have the vast majority of employees back to work either physically or remotely by Monday, May 11<sup>th</sup>.
4. We have had questions regarding how we plan to manage social distancing as we return our employees to their work locations. The health and safety of the employees are a priority for the County. Upon return to the office, employees who are currently stationed within 6 feet of each other will be relocated to another workspace consistent with social distancing recommendations. This may necessitate movement of staff from their normal workstations. Other protocols including the use of partitions may modify existing arrangements. All employees are required to use a face covering when interacting and have been provided at least two reusable/washable units by the County. Employees are reminded of the policy requiring mandatory use of a face covering and are encouraged to take other precautions including washing their hands often and keeping their workspaces clean. There is an ongoing effort to provide additional supplies such as hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes. The County is also significantly increasing its contact tracer program.
5. We will take an action to the Board on Tuesday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, to establish a Temporary Public Health COVID-19 Unit in Health Services. The unit will initially be staffed with 47 project positions. We will establish two new project classifications, Director/Public Health Laboratory Services and Health Services Planner and Evaluator. The 47 project positions will be in the following classifications: one Medical Director, one Chief Nursing Officer, one Director of Public Health Laboratory Services, six Public Health Nurses, one Registered Nurse, 25 Disease Intervention Technicians, eight Public Health Program Specialists, and four Health Services Planner/Evaluators. These staff, along with Disaster Service Workers, State employees, and volunteers will be used as contact tracers.
6. Due to the necessity for social distancing, all County libraries have been closed since mid-March. Permanent library staff have been redeployed on library projects or as disaster service workers. Although we have been able to continue to pay our hourly employees, the Library closure has impacted our current year revenues. And as we work with our city partners to plan the reopening of our libraries, due to the economic impact of COVID-19, some cities have requested reduced hours for FY 2020-21. In order to address our funding and staffing issues, the Library as a system will discontinue Sunday hours; however, this will not be sufficient to balance the Library budget.

We have identified twenty-four library staff for DSW contact tracers, which will allow the Library to employ workers while we wait for the reopening of the libraries. We are also looking at offering library staff Eligibility Worker positions in the Employment and Human Services Department. Even with these adjustments it is likely that layoffs may be necessary. We are reviewing revenue and staffing proposals and expect to have finalized position numbers for Library lay-offs for the Board of Supervisors on May 26<sup>th</sup>. Layoffs will be effective July 1, with the last day worked being June 30<sup>th</sup>.

7. Although the specifics are unknown at this time, the economic impact of COVID-19 will likely have further impacts on the FY 2020-21 budget. Minimally, we anticipate reducing the number of temporary and permanent intermittent staff.
8. In an effort to reduce the impact on our employees and eliminate the need for significant lay-off, we will shortly declare a targeted hiring freeze. We will impose a freeze on all personnel transactions effective June 1, 2020. This hiring freeze is intended to help create savings that may be used to alleviate loss of revenue, reduce the number of layoffs that may otherwise be necessary, and provide departments an opportunity to review current and budget year staffing needs. A formal letter will shortly be distributed to Department Heads and will include specific classifications that are exempt from the freeze. The freeze will apply to the addition of any position, the upward reclassification or reallocation of positions, and the filling of any vacancy regardless of the funding source. The freeze will not apply to merit step increases, performance step increases or deep class reassignments. Also exempt from the freeze is any change required by the terms of a Memorandum of Understanding with labor representatives. Job offers made in writing prior to June 1, 2020 will not be impacted by this freeze. Testing, including job interviews, may continue in order to develop hiring lists at the discretion of the County Administrator's Office and Human Resources Department. However, any new job offer is contingent on the position meeting the exemption requirements and all other personnel actions are frozen and will require a written freeze exemption request submitted to and approved by the County Administrator's Office. Generally, an exemption may be granted if the position is required to maintain staffing ratios required by law and/or the position is required for documented health and/or safety reasons.
9. The County continues to maintain hotel rooms close to critical County operations responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. This is to provide a safe location for employees that may need lodging following response activities. Access to room blocks can be provided based on need by contacting the Department Operations Centers or individuals listed below. For Contra County Fire employees, if their direct supervisor or Battalion Chief is unavailable, please have them contact (925) 383-5008. If approved, each Department Operating Center will provide hotel access information. Employees will need to present their Contra Costa County Employee ID card at check-in:
  - Sheriff's Office Employees                      Sheriff's Office DOC:     925-313-9638
  - Contra Costa County Fire Employees      ConFire:                      Contact your Supervisor
  - All other Employees                              HSD DOC:                      925-608-5459
10. We will take an action to the Board on Tuesday, May 12<sup>th</sup>, to ratify contracts in an aggregate amount of \$1.1 million in response to our COVID-19 pandemic emergency declaration. This brings the total of the three actions thus far to \$9.3 million.

Our next conference call is scheduled for Thursday, May 14<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 to 11:00. Thank you for all you do, and I look forward to what we can do together for the communities we serve.

Sincerely,



David J. Twa  
County Administrator