



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council Members

FROM: Stephanie Hayden, Director 

DATE: June 2, 2020

SUBJECT: Staff Response to Resolution 20200521-38

On May 21, 2020, Council approved Resolution #20200521-38, directing the City Manager to establish a strategy for high-risk workers to prevent hospitalizations and fatalities related to COVID-19.

Austin Public Health, in collaboration with Homeland Security and Emergency Management, is leading response efforts in Austin and Travis County to achieve the primary incident objective: to ensure continuity of Austin-Travis County community essential functions throughout the incident, mitigating the threat and impacts of COVID-19 on our community in a fiscally responsible manner using conventional and innovative efforts.

The Department seeks to achieve the primary objective by employing the following tactics to control the spread of disease:

- Testing
- Epidemiology and surveillance through case investigation, contact tracing, and data analysis
- Collaboration and strategic alignment with public and private partners
- Community Mitigation Measures, i.e., stay-at-home order
- Healthcare System preparedness and response, i.e., managing hospital bed capacity, standing up alternate care sites
- Communications and Public Outreach – robust website tools and social media presence, engagement with major and community news outlets

Additionally, Austin Public Health recognizes that the social determinants of health will play a critical factor in health outcomes for communities of color related to COVID-19 as with other chronic diseases and illnesses. The following list is reflective of current efforts to protect community health factors and support community resiliency:

- Using an equity lens for planning and implementation



- Standing up the Social Service Branch of the Emergency Operations Center – this includes representation across city departments, governmental agencies, health care providers, social service agencies, and the non-profit community
- Partnering with the local health system to provide community based/mobile testing options to increase access to testing
- Working with the Joint Information System (JIS) to create targeted media campaigns/outreach activities
 - Faith-based- Easter, Mother’s Day, Ramadan
 - Construction Site outreach
 - “Boots on the ground” testing outreach (flyer dissemination/door knocking)
- Support community outreach initiatives with resources and PPE supplies
- Administered RISE Funding to provide direct relief and financial assistance to priority populations
- Services and resources for Unsheltered homeless
- COVID specific language access plan – translation and interpretation services that are culturally nuanced and relevant to Austin community
- Ensure staff and partner agencies are able to assist with basic needs.

Due to the lifting of the Governor’s Stay-at-home order, Austin Public Health has limited authority to mandate particular actions on the part of business and residents. Where we can continue to be effective in addressing the needs of high-risk workers is as follows:

- Continue to collect and track epidemiological data to inform and plan response efforts
- Stand up increased testing options in community settings and encourage businesses to offer testing to their employees through private providers
- Provide guidelines for business and city contractors
- Active in-person outreach/community engagement
- Support media/messaging efforts of the Joint Information System (JIS)
- Continue to partner with community-based organizations and other City departments via the Social Service Branch to elevate the needs of the community and support equitable planning and implementation of response efforts.
- Collaborate with existing social service providers to offer training and support for jobseekers needing telework opportunities
- Collaborate with existed social service providers on the potential to provide expanded services for assistance with unemployment and other available benefits
- Support the efforts of Economic Development or other City Departments to work with local businesses to implement and follow safety guidelines available on the COVID website.

This will be a phased approach that will include community engagement. We will provide a progress report during the council work sessions.



If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact me at (512) 972-5010 or via email at Stephanie.Hayden@austintexas.gov.

Cc: Spencer Cronk, City Manager
Nuria Rivera-Vandermyde, Deputy City Manager
Chris Shorter, Assistant City Manager
Dr. Mark Escott, Interim Health Authority