

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Enhanced Safety Protocols, Virtual Meetings, Rescheduled Events, Telecommuting for Employees Among City's Measures to Limit Local Impact of COVID-19

Bloomington, Ind. – The City of Bloomington is following public health advice to take precautionary and preparatory measures to limit the local impact of COVID-19 (coronavirus).

The City is working closely with the Monroe County Health Department, Indiana University, IU Health, school systems, and local emergency personnel to monitor the situation, protect public health and safety, and coordinate our preventive and mitigating actions.

The City joins with these partners in implementing and strongly recommending social distancing as a key tool to prevent and limit the spread of COVID-19 in our community. The City is developing options both for employees and residents who engage with and attend City events that will minimize opportunities for viral transmission while allowing the City to continue to provide vital services to the community:

The City will significantly reduce large in-person meetings effective March 16, including boards and commissions, special events, cabinet and other large internal meetings, and more. Among significant events to be rescheduled or restructured are the March 25 Women's History Month Luncheon, the March 28 Women's Leadership Summit, and the March 31 Be More Awards. City board and commission meetings will generally be postponed, with exceptions as needed for critical services.

For public meetings that do take place, the City will offer options to make virtual participation possible, including CATS public access television (live and tape-delayed), Facebook Live (facebook.com/citybloomington), or otherwise. Public comments and questions about topics featured at upcoming meetings will be encouraged via bloomington.in.gov.

The City is encouraging telecommuting and implementing a contingency

staffing plan that will include flexible scheduling as well as temporary changes and exceptions to leave policies, in order to allow employees to take care of themselves or family members.

The City will support and protect public health and safety personnel and other critical operations -- including police, fire, emergency dispatch, water, transit, sanitation, and other essential services -- with new protocols and training to reduce the risk of transmission. An Emergency Response Team has been formed to plan for and address possible interruptions to critical City operations in the event of staffing shortages.

The City is encouraging staff to cancel discretionary professional and personal travel at this time. For example, the Bloomington Fire Department's U.S. Department of State-sponsored trip to Sierra Leone has been postponed; attendance at numerous planned conferences has been and will be canceled.

Additional information about City events and meetings will be provided at the City website.

Health and emergency preparedness information is available at the Monroe County Health Department's website. Residents may sign up for regular updates or emergency alerts provided by Monroe County here.

If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop a fever and symptoms of respiratory illness, such as cough or difficulty breathing, the CDC advises you to call your medical provider immediately. IU Health is offering free virtual visits and COVID-19 screenings through their telemedicine app.

As we work together to cope with this public health challenge, the City of Bloomington is grateful for our community partners at the Monroe County Health Department, IU Health, Indiana University, Monroe County Community School Corporation, our many social service agencies, and the many dedicated healthcare workers on the front lines who protect our health and safety every day.

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