



PRESS RELEASE

ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY COVID-19 RESPONSE PLAN

May 11, 2020
Felix Rivera, Chair

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Assembly Chair Felix Rivera announces publication of the Assembly's COVID-19 Response Plan – which begins with “together we can” work together with the Mayor, the Administration, and the public to determine how to offset the economic consequences that occurred following the recommendations public health officials to stay home, stay put, or hunker down.

Rivera stated that ,”The Anchorage Assembly has already been hard at work to blunt financial effects of COVID-19 on our community members. We passed property tax deadline extension, pushed for a moratorium on evictions, and encouraged waiving of late feed on utilities, guaranteeing no one would lose serve because of an inability to pay.”

The public is encouraged to review the attached plan, attend the series of committee meetings and worksessions that will help the Assembly better understand the local impacts of COVID-19 on individuals, families, and businesses. The meetings will all be held virtually and members of the public are welcome to attend.

For more information about the meetings or the plan, please go to the Assembly webpage at www.muni.org/assembly.

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ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY

COVID-19 RESPONSE PLAN

MAY 2020

TOGETHER WE CAN

In March 2020, the United States began to prepare for the impact of the novel coronavirus pandemic. With little information about how the virus spread, no known cure, and no known treatment for its deadly symptoms, Anchorage joined cities across the globe in following the recommendations of the world's best scientists and public health professionals. To control the spread, we came together by staying apart. Businesses closed, families stayed home, and the city stayed hunkered down while testing, supplies, and research ramped up. Our efforts were successful- the number of cases never exceeded our medical capacity to treat them.

Now we must work to offset the economic consequences on our city. The Anchorage Assembly has been hard at work. We passed property tax deadline extensions, pushed for a moratorium on evictions, and pushed the administration to waive late fees on utilities, guaranteeing no one would lose service because of an inability to pay. On Tuesday, May 5th the Assembly passed EO 2020-4(S-1), an administration proposal appropriating \$12M for coronavirus response to fund the Municipality's critical efforts to preserve and protect the public safety, health, and welfare. This included a specific allocation of \$2M for pilot rental assistance and small business assistance programs to alleviate the local economic impact.

The Assembly is focused on building upon our successes. Our response to the pandemic mirrors priorities the Assembly adopted in 2019 – including homelessness, public safety, economic development, and quality of life. All parts of our society are feeling the ramifications of COVID-19. The Assembly kicked off this discussion at a Special Rules Committee Meeting on Friday, May 8, where the members held a values-based discussion and brainstorming session on the uses of the proposed \$156M from the CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund. *If you have any ideas or suggestions, please email the Assembly members at wwmas@muni.org.*

The Anchorage Assembly will be hosting a series of committee meetings and worksessions, detailed below, to better understand the local impacts of COVID-19 to individuals, families, and businesses. This will inform the interventions we fund through the CARES Act Coronavirus Relief Fund – the fund which goes directly to cities, from which the Municipality is slated to receive \$156M – or other federal stimulus heading our way. Together we can overcome.

At the link below, you can find meeting information. All these meetings will be held virtually, and members of the public are welcome to call in and listen to these meetings. Recordings and presentations will be made available to the public here:

<http://www.muni.org/Departments/Assembly/Events/Pages/default.aspx>

The Path Forward

The Mayor's plan for the Municipality's response to COVID-19 must be communicated transparently to the community. To assist with this, the Assembly will be hosting a worksession so the administration can detail its efforts and discuss possible extension of the emergency declaration, which is set to end on June 5. **This meeting will be held on Friday, May 15, 2:50pm - 4pm.**

Our Community's Health:

The Health Policy Committee met on Wednesday, May 5. Assembly members were able to listen to an update from the Anchorage Health Department and ask questions of the medical experts helping guide the Municipality's public health response to COVID-19.

The Assembly will be delving deeper into some specific health concerns as a follow up to the Health Policy Committee Meeting. This will be held **Wednesday, May 20, 1 - 2:30pm**, and will cover testing capacity and future use of masks / PPE, among other issues.

Understanding the Economic Impacts:

Our priority as a community was to flatten the curve and slow the spread of this virus. We knew that would come with dire economic impacts. While federal and state governments have stepped in to assist, there are many avenues the Municipality can take to help our businesses. On **Thursday, May 21 from 12:30 - 3:30pm** we will receive updates from the Mayor's Economic Resiliency Task Force and the Alaska Economic Stabilization Team.

Additionally, we will be hosting two roundtables covering business and housing issues. The **Business Roundtable will be held Friday, May 22, 11am-2pm**, and will include first hand perspectives from business owners, AEDC, and cover prepping for the new normal, among other issues. The **Housing Roundtable will follow from 2:30-4:30pm**, and cover affordable housing, landlord/tenant issues, and the real estate market, among other issues.

Watching Out for Each Other:

Groups in our community are impacted in different ways by the coronavirus pandemic. The Assembly seeks to better understand, assist as possible, and prepare for future changes within these groups at the Anchorage Institutions Roundtable, **Wednesday, May 27, 12:30pm - 3:30pm**. We will hear from homelessness shelters, non-profits, UAA and APU. During the Community Impact Roundtable on **Thursday, May 28, 12:30- 4:30pm** we will discuss childcare, disproportionate impacts, and protecting our workers, and assistance to vulnerable communities, among other issues.