



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

2021 FEB -1 AM 11:23

CLERK OF THE BOARD
OF SUPERVISORS

TERRA LAWSON-REMER
SUPERVISOR, THIRD DISTRICT
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: February 9, 2021

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TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

**SUPPORTING COUNTY FRONTLINE AND ESSENTIAL WORKERS BY
ESTABLISHING A COVID-19 COMPENSATION FRAMEWORK (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

OVERVIEW

On February 14, 2020 County of San Diego Public Health Officer Dr. Wilma Wooten declared a public health emergency. On March 19, 2020 the State gave an order directing non-essential employees to stay at home. Since then, around 8,300 San Diego County employees have been deemed to be essential workers, serving the public interest and providing emergency services that are critical to our COVID-19 pandemic response.

Many essential workers interact directly with the public, with COVID-19 positive individuals, or with Persons Under Investigation (PUI) of being COVID-19 positive. A growing body of research shows that despite social distancing protocols, many essential workers are at increased risk of COVID-19 exposure as well as psychological distress. Further, essential workers have not been able to work from home to assist family members with distanced learning and have incurred increased childcare costs during the pandemic. The toll of the COVID-19 pandemic on our County workforce has been severe. 1,259 San Diego County employees have tested positive for COVID since the beginning of the pandemic and tragically, three employees have died from COVID.

The pandemic has also necessitated a large portion of the County workforce to adhere to new social distancing protocols including widespread use of teleworking arrangements. Approximately 9,000 County employees are categorized as non-essential and are teleworking in various capacities, incurring additional costs such as increased internet access, electricity use, office equipment, headsets, and printing.

The County should develop a hazard pay compensation framework and monthly teleworking payment framework that supports our County's workforce. This is timely as the federal

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government is currently negotiating an additional round of federal stimulus appropriations that can assist local governments to meet critical needs.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

SUPERVISOR TERRA LAWSON-REMER

1. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to work in accordance with the County's negotiation process to develop a compensation framework, including retroactive considerations, for providing COVID-19 hazard pay to the categories of County employees as described below:
 - County employees who are working directly with COVID-19 positive individuals and Persons Under Investigation (PUIs) of being COVID-19 positive, including those who work with the deceased, as well as all employees who perform field work that requires them to enter residences or facilities not operated by the County, those who work in locked facilities, residential care, patient care settings, and County employees who work onsite at County work locations during a documented COVID-19 outbreak.
 - County employees who are engaging with the public and/or clients and could be interacting with COVID-19 positive individuals or PUIs. Additionally, all County employees who are being required to report to work onsite on a part-time or full-time basis and are at risk of exposure due to interaction with coworkers.
2. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to work in accordance with the County's negotiation process to develop a monthly teleworking payment framework (including retroactive considerations) to support employees who are teleworking and have incurred work-related expenses such as internet access, printing, equipment, electricity use, and other expenses necessary to fulfill job requirements.
3. Direct the Chief Administration Officer to regularly confer with the Board, starting no later than March 16, 2021, on the status of negotiations with the nine County employee labor unions and associations.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with the actions included in this letter. Since funding for the potential implementation of a COVID-19 hazard pay compensation framework and monthly teleworking payment framework is not included in the Fiscal Year 2020-21 Operational Plan, estimated costs and revenues associated with a recommended framework may require County staff to return to the Board for additional appropriations based on specific funding sources.

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BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

On February 14, 2020 County of San Diego Public Health Officer Dr. Wilma Wooten declared a public health emergency. On March 19, 2020, the State gave an order directing non-essential employees to stay at home. Since then around 8,300 San Diego County employees have been deemed to be essential workers, serving the public interest and providing emergency services that are critical to our COVID-19 pandemic response.

Many essential workers interact directly with the public, with COVID-19 positive individuals, or with Persons Under Investigation (PUI) of being COVID-19 positive. These workers are on the frontlines, including public health nurses, home health workers, behavioral health workers, probation officers, deputy sheriffs, and many others who continue to risk their health and the health of their families to serve the public interest throughout this pandemic. These workers are critical to our emergency response to this global pandemic. The toll of the COVID-19 pandemic on our County workforce has been severe. 1,259 San Diego County employees have tested positive for COVID since the beginning of the pandemic and tragically, three employees have died from COVID.

We are exposing necessary workers to a deadly virus that can potentially also infect their family members. These family members are not disaster workers; we are opening a risk to them they may not otherwise have had.

A growing body of research shows that despite social distancing protocols, many essential workers are at increased risk of COVID-19 exposure as well as psychological distress. Further, essential workers have not been able to work from home to assist family members with distanced learning and have incurred increased childcare costs during the pandemic.

The pandemic has also necessitated a large portion of the County workforce to adhere to new social distancing protocols including widespread use of teleworking arrangements. Approximately 9,000 County employees are teleworking in various capacities, incurring additional costs such as increased internet access, electricity use, office equipment, headsets, and printing.

The County should develop a hazard pay compensation framework and monthly teleworking payment framework that supports our County's workforce. This is timely as the federal government is currently negotiating an additional round of federal stimulus appropriations that can assist local governments to meet critical needs.

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LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

The requested action supports the Live Well San Diego Initiative in the County's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, and its vision for a San Diego that is Building Better Health, Living Safely and Thriving, by supporting County workers fulfilling their duties during a global pandemic through just compensation.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Terra Lawson-Remer', is written over a horizontal line.

TERRA LAWSON-REMER
Supervisor, Third District

ATTACHMENT(S)
N/A

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AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET

REQUIRES FOUR VOTES: Yes No

WRITTEN DISCLOSURE PER COUNTY CHARTER SECTION 1000.1 REQUIRED
 Yes No

PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOARD ACTIONS:
N/A

BOARD POLICIES APPLICABLE:
N/A

BOARD POLICY STATEMENTS:
N/A

MANDATORY COMPLIANCE:
N/A

ORACLE AWARD NUMBER(S) AND CONTRACT AND/OR REQUISITION NUMBER(S):
N/A

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT: District 3, Board of Supervisors

OTHER CONCURRENCE(S): N/A

CONTACT PERSON(S):

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