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# The Council Connection

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**Mayor Justin M. Wilson**

Alexandria, Virginia

March 20, 2020

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As we conclude the week, I want to provide you with additional updates on the COVID-19 outbreak that is facing our community.

**[This is a dangerous virus, that has already killed at least 8,778 people around the world, including 100 in the United States and 2 in the Commonwealth of Virginia.](#)**

Alexandria currently has 4 cases where residents have received presumptive positive tests. There is every expectation that this number will grow.

This outbreak will have dramatic impacts on the health of our residents, the survival of many businesses that operate in our City, the jobs those businesses create and the finances of your City government. The collateral impacts will create human service challenges that will face our community for months and years to come.

The City has partnered with ACT for Alexandria to raise money for the emergent human service needs facing the residents of our City during this time. **[Please join me in contributing to this COVID-19 Response Fund.](#)**

On Wednesday evening, the City Council held an emergency meeting to discuss the on-going COVID-19 response. We received updates from Inova Alexandria Hospital, the Alexandria City Public Schools, The Alexandria Health Department and The Department of Community and Human Services. **[You can watch the discussion online](#)** and the questions and answers posed



by members of Council.

[Additionally, the Council collaborated to put out a Rescue Plan to address the short and medium term needs of our residents, our small businesses and the City's financial health.](#) As detailed below, some of the items from the plan have already been put in place, with more to come.

This has been a surreal week for us all. I have spoken to residents who have lost their jobs or had their pay reduced. I have spoken to business owners who have had to close their businesses, with little prospect of reopening.

We are a resilient City. We have been through difficult times before and we will get through this. But this will be a prolonged recovery process.

I have also been gratified to see the outpouring of support from the residents of our City. In addition to the significant financial contributions to the ACT COVID-19 Response fund and other organizations, so many have stepped up to volunteer. If you would like to volunteer, please [contact Volunteer Alexandria to see where you can help.](#)

Please look out for your neighbors and particularly for [vulnerable populations](#) during this time.

Below, I have provided updates, resources, and precautions to ensure safety during this challenging situation.

Real-time updates are available from the:

[Virginia Department of Health](#)

[City of Alexandria](#)

To receive text updates from the City, please text "ALEXCOVID19" to 888777.

Let me know how I can help. [Please contact me anytime](#)

## Updates

### COVID-19 in Alexandria

[If you have the symptoms of COVID-19, the Coronavirus,](#) which include coughing, a fever of over 100.4 F and shortness of breath, please contact your primary care physician for information on an exam and testing. If your physician is not available or you do not have a primary care physician, an [urgent care center](#) or [Neighborhood Health](#) can assist.

If you have questions about the outbreak that cannot be answered by your physician, the Alexandria Health Department has set up a hotline staffed during business hours at 703-746-4988. Additionally, the [Virginia Department of Health](#) has a hotline at 877-ASK-VDH3.

The Alexandria Health Department is advising residents to practice social distancing by maintaining 6-feet of separation from any other person and [washing hands frequently with soap or hand sanitizer.](#) This is not only to protect your health, but to protect the health of others.



[On Tuesday, the Governor issued an order declaring a public health emergency](#) and prohibiting restaurants, fitness centers and theaters from operating with more than 10 people. The City is enforcing this order. Please contact the Non-Emergency number at 703-746-444 to report violations.

The City's Medical Reserve Corps is seeking volunteers, both with and without medical training, to assist during this crisis. [You can sign-up on-line.](#)

Last Saturday, the [City Council ratified the City Manager's declaration of a Local Emergency](#). This expands City Government capabilities to respond to this challenge.

[The Alexandria City Public Schools \(ACPS\) are closed](#) and will remain closed through the end of Spring Break (April 13th).

[ACPS has arranged food for ANY child 2-18 and ANY family who needs it.](#) Starting next week food will now be provided at five locations (four fixed and 1 mobile).

[ACPS has set up "ACPS-At-Home" to provide details to students and families during this extended closure.](#)

Earlier this week, [I sent a letter to all of the multi-family landlords in the City and asked that they be lenient on late rent payments and defer evictions during this time.](#)

Additionally, [I joined with my counterparts in other Northern Virginia jurisdictions to ask the Governor to delay evictions and implement flexibility into a variety of human service programs.](#)

The City is working quickly to assist businesses that have been hard hit by this crisis.

[Visit Alexandria launched "ALX At Home" to make it easier for residents to support shopping at Alexandria businesses.](#)

[On Tuesday evening we will be considering a variety of changes to tax collection for our Dining Tax, Business Personal Property Tax and Hotel Tax.](#)

[We have already suspended enforcement of a variety of regulations and laws to facilitate restaurant carry-out, delivery and hours, as well as sidewalk vending for restaurants and retailers.](#)

We worked with businesses across the City to implement new delivery and pick-up parking zones in front of their establishments.



[The Small Business Administration is providing disaster relief loans for small businesses to assist.](#)

Effective Monday, [Comcast is now providing free "Internet Essentials" service to low-income families for 60-days. Sign-up is available online.](#)

All of the utilities serving the City have suspended disconnects due to non-payment, including:

- [Alexandria Renew](#)
- [Dominion Virginia Power](#)
- [Virginia-American Water Company](#)
- [Washington Gas](#)

- [AT&T](#)
- [Verizon](#)
- [Comcast](#)

For those whose jobs have been impacted by the virus outbreak, [details are available from the Virginia Employment Commission](#) .

[Inova Blood Services has significant need for blood donations during this time. Schedule a donation today.](#)

[Beginning today, DASH is running all service for free, with boarding occurring using the rear door.](#)

[Metro has also made significant reductions to service and is reserving the system for "essential trips only."](#)

We [have cancelled many city meetings and events.](#)

All [activities and programs produced by the Alexandria Department of Recreation, Parks & Cultural Activities have been cancelled](#) through April 10th. The Nannie Lee, Patrick Henry and Charles Houston Recreation Centers remain open to support individual use and human service needs.

[The Alexandria Library has closed all of its branches through the end of the month.](#)

[Changes have been to visitation at the Alexandria Jail by the Alexandria Sheriff's Office.](#)

The City has suspended enforcement of the 72-hour parking rule and street sweeping parking regulations.

The City has suspended yard waste collection and bulk waste collection.

With a declared State Emergency declaration in effect, price gouging laws are in force right now across the Commonwealth. [Report suspected violations to the Virginia Attorney General's Office.](#)

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