



Statement from Mayor Carlo DeMaria

COVID-19

March 21, 2020

As a City, as a state, as a nation, and as an international community, we are faced with an unprecedented time. Day-by-day, hour-by-hour, the responses to the COVID-19 pandemic are evolving, which I know is having a tremendous impact on all of you. Understandably, many of you have experiencing feelings of anxiety, confusion, and fear. It is my goal to alleviate those feelings, to provide answers, and to connect you with the necessary local, state, and federal resources to assist you in getting through this difficult period.

In dealing with a global crisis such as this, it is important that we act as a community and adhere to the guidance provided by the professionals in this field. Measures aimed at preventing the continuing spread of the virus will only be effective if *all* of us are on the same page. I am proud to say that Everett was one of the first municipalities in the State to announce closures of our schools and municipal buildings. While it is a certainly a testament to both my Administration and the School Department for being able to band together and continue to provide services to our residents despite the closures of many of our buildings, we will not be able to make significant progress fighting back against the spread of the virus unless we see decisive and timely action from the higher levels of government. My staff and I have been on multiple calls every day with local leaders, Governor Baker, Lt. Governor Polito, Senator Warren, medical experts from the Center for Disease Control and Department of Public Health, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Massachusetts Municipal Association, to seek guidance, to petition for greater resources, to offer our own policies, and to urge our leaders to hand down uniform guidelines so as to best contain the spread and allow us to get back to our normal lives as soon as possible.

The need for prompt, accurate, and accessible communication is more important now than ever before. I pledge to continue keeping you, the residents of Everett, as informed as I can.

A shutdown does not mean a slowdown. City Hall will continue to assist all of its residents through our many available resources. If you have any questions, please direct them to 311 who can either provide answers themselves or direct your call to the appropriate person.

Please remember, the City can be reached via Facebook, by calling 311, or emailing any individual Department. You will find all of the most recently updated and important information available on the first page of City of Everett website, at cityofeverett.com. There are downloadable links to all recent documents and updated lists of all the resources available to you.

Please continue to monitor my Facebook page and the City of Everett Facebook page, for daily updates that will be posted as soon as circumstances dictate.

While this pandemic poses a major test of our collective fortitude, together, as a City and as a people, we will get through this difficult period of time.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carlo De Maria". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Carlo DeMaria, Mayor

EVICCTIONS

My Administration has received several questions regarding eviction proceedings. In an Order from the Chief Justice of the Housing Court, all non-emergency court events, including evictions, are postponed until at least April 21, 2020. That means any pending evictions are on hold, and new evictions will not be heard until the Court reopens. The Chief Justice is encouraging any such parties to eviction “to reach an agreement for judgment outside of court before the first court appearance” when they reopen.

Legislators on Beacon Hill have also proposed a measure to temporarily ban evictions and foreclosures for a period of time due to COVID-19. No ban is in place yet, but we will be monitoring the situation and get out any information as it becomes available.

During this time of crisis and insecurity, I am encouraging all landlords to work with their tenants in any way they reasonably can to assure that we all get through this crisis together. There will be some hard times ahead and sacrifices to be made, but housing insecurity on top of this crisis can be terrifying. Any way our community can compromise and work together will benefit us all.

FORECLOSURES

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) authorized the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) to implement an immediate [foreclosure and eviction moratorium](#) for single family homeowners with FHA-insured mortgages for the next 60 days.

The guidance issued applies to homeowners with FHA-insured Title II Single Family forward and Home Equity Conversion (reverse) mortgages, and directs mortgage servicers to:

- Halt all new foreclosure actions and suspend all foreclosure actions currently in process; and
- Cease all evictions of persons from FHA-insured single-family properties.

FHA continues to encourage servicers to offer its suite of loss mitigation options to distressed borrowers – including those that could be impacted by the Coronavirus – to help prevent them from going into foreclosure. These include short and long-term forbearance options, mortgage modifications, and other mortgage payment relief options available based on the borrower’s individual circumstances.

HEALTH CONCERNS/ISSUES

Older adults and individuals who have underlying medical conditions such as heart disease, lung disease, or diabetes are at higher risk for developing more serious complications from the coronavirus (COVID-19) illness. The best way to prevent getting sick is to avoid being exposed to the virus. The virus is spread from person to person, through respiratory droplets, when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough, and shortness of breath.

It is important to take the necessary steps to protect yourself from COVID -19:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Washing your hands is so important, especially after you have been in a public place, or after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose.
- If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched services such as tables, doorknobs, light switches, counter tops, phones, desks, keyboards, faucets, and sinks.
- Avoid close contact with someone who is sick
- Practice social distancing. Staying at least six (6) feet away from other people.

If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop a fever and symptoms such as cough or shortness of breath, call your health care provider for medical advice. When you call your health care provider tell them about your symptoms and your exposure. Your health care provider will determine if you need to be tested. A person that is mildly ill with COVID-19 is able to stay at home and recover. Taking the following steps can help prevent the spread of COVID-19:

- Stay at home except to get medical care
- Stay in touch with your doctor. Call before going to your doctor's office and be sure to get care if you are feeling worse or you think it is an emergency
- Avoid public transportation
- Stay away from others
- Wear a facemask if you are sick

If you develop emergency warning signs for COVID-19 you should get medical attention immediately. Emergency warning signs include, but not limited to:

- Difficulty breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Bluish lips or face.

If you have a medical emergency and need to call 911, it is very important to notify the operator that you have or think you might have COVID-19. If possible, put a facemask on before medical help arrives.

HELP FOR SMALL BUSINESSES

STATE ORDERS

- **Expanded Small Business Resources:** Earlier this week, the Administration announced a \$10 Million Small business recovery loan Fund to provide financial relief to small businesses and non-profits impacted by COVID-19. Today, the Administration announced that MassDevelopment's Board of Directors will meet next week to vote on a partnership that will make an **additional \$10 million available for the Small Business Recovery Loan Fund.**
- The state-level emergency loan fund is aimed at providing crucial resources for small businesses that will supplement important federal relief. Governor Baker on Tuesday formally request disaster relief from the federal Small Business Administration, Massachusetts businesses impacted by COVID-19 may now apply for low-interest loans.
- **Tax Relief for Businesses:** The Baker-Polito Administration is announcing tax penalty relief to support businesses affected by COVID-19. The Department of Revenue today announced that it will waive any late-file or late-pay penalties for returns and payment due for meals and room occupancy taxes between March 20 and May 31, 2020.

FEDERAL LEGISLATION

- **Federal Financial Stimulus / Pending.** On March 19, the Senate majority proposed its version of the financial stimulus package, entitled the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act). This legislation will likely change significantly between the initial proposal and the final version. However, as proposed, in addition to a number of Medicare and health-related amendments, the Senate version includes provisions providing loans in an aggregate of up to \$208 billion to "severely distressed sectors of the United States economy," funding small business interruption loans,

delaying certain tax deadlines, adjusting certain federal financial aid and student loan statutes, and addressing emergency paid sick leave.

- **CISA Guidance on “Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers.”** On March 19, the U.S. DHS Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) released guidance to assist government agencies at the federal, state, and local levels in identifying “essential critical infrastructure workers” for purposes of COVID-19.
- **U.S. Small Business Administration.** On March 18, the SBA approved the Massachusetts disaster declaration, making small businesses, private non-profit organizations of any size, small agricultural cooperatives and small aquaculture enterprises that have been financially impacted as a direct result of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) since Jan. 31, 2020, eligible for Economic Injury Disaster Loans of up to \$2 million to help meet financial obligations and operating expenses which could have been met had the disaster not occurred. This is in addition to the \$10 million Small Business Recovery Loan Fund established by the Governor on March 16 for business with fewer than 50 employees. Visit for application details: https://www.sba.gov/disaster-assistance/coronavirus-covid-19?fbclid=IwAR0rOzq1OQ_tJNrpELwslC1GxHYMxtPVYiMSUV-hOOetDmk8ZEdgsnHZz8
- **H.R. 6201 – Medical Leave and Food Assistance / Passed.** The second federal bill was signed into law on March 18, the “Families First Coronavirus Response Act,” H.R. 6201. Of potential relevance to state and local agencies, the law amends the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to temporarily require employers to provide FMLA leave of up to 12 weeks through December 31, 2020 to an employee who is “unable to work (or telework) due to a need for leave to care for the son or daughter under 18 years of age of such employee if the school or place of care has been closed, or the child care provider of such son or daughter is unavailable, due to a public health emergency.” The first 10 days of leave can be unpaid, after which leave would be paid, and in an amount not less than 2/3 of the employee’s regular pay rate and not to exceed \$200/day or \$10,000 in aggregate.

Other provisions of H.R. 6201 with potential relevance to state and local agencies allow for certain waivers to requirements for school meals, suspend the work requirements for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and allow states to request waivers to provide certain emergency SNAP benefits.

- **Housing and Urban Development.** On March 18, HUD announced an immediate foreclosure and eviction moratorium for single-family homeowners with FHA insured mortgages for the next 60 days.
- **H.R. 6074 – 8.3 Billion Emergency Funding / Passed.** The first federal bill to address the coronavirus outbreak was H.R. 6074, which was signed into law on March 6 and provided \$8.3 billion in emergency funding to certain federal agencies.

ADDITIONAL SMALL BUSINESS RESOURCES:

- **US Chamber of Commerce:** Created a toolkit to help businesses and citizens alike understand how to navigate the coronavirus. There are guidelines on how small

business owners can ensure they are keeping their customers and employees safe.
<https://www.uschamber.com/co/start/strategy/small-business-resources-for-surviving-coronavirus>

- **Forbes Small Business Relief Tracker:** Is tracking all federal and state-by-state small business assistance. A running list can be found here: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/briannegarrett/2020/03/20/small-business-relief-tracker-funding-grants-and-resources-for-business-owners-grappling-with-coronavirus/#17688d04dd4c>

PHILANTHROPIC/OTHER BUSINESS ASSISTANCE

- **Sam Adams/Greg Gill Foundation: Restaurant Strong Fund:** Provides \$1,000 grants to as many qualifying restaurants as possible. To apply: www.thegreghillfoundation.org/donations/restaurantstrongfund/
- **Philanthropy Massachusetts:** Tracks all philanthropic emergency relief funds that have been established in response to COVID-19. <https://www.philanthropyma.org/grantmakers-philanthropic-advisors/resources/disaster-and-emergency-relief-resources>

UNEMPLOYMENT

If you're out of work and able to work, you may be eligible for temporary income called unemployment insurance (UI). If you qualify, you receive weekly payments to help cover your living expenses while you search for new employment. The amount you receive is based on what you were paid in the last year. The UI program for Massachusetts is managed by the Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA).

To assist individuals who cannot work due to the impact of COVID-19, the Baker-Polito administration filed emergency legislation that will allow new claims to be paid more quickly by waiving the 1-week waiting period for unemployment benefits. This means that DUA would be authorized to pay benefits without delay to persons who become unemployed because of lay-offs or business shutdowns taken in response to the virus, because of quarantine orders or directives or illness that prevents them from leaving their homes, or because they must care for a sick or quarantined family member.

EOLWD and DUA also filed emergency regulations that allow people impacted by COVID-19 to collect unemployment benefits if their workplace is shut down and expects to reopen. This applies to all employees (full and part time) who are impacted by such shutdowns. Claimants are urged to file unemployment claims online at <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-for-unemployment-benefits>.

The following conditions apply to temporary shutdowns:

- Workers must remain in contact with their employers during the shutdown.
- Workers must be available for any work their employer may have for them that they are able to do.
- An employer may request to extend the period of the covered shutdown to 8 weeks, and workers will remain eligible for the longer period under the same conditions described above.
- If necessary, DUA may extend these time periods for workers and employers.

Employers who have been paying into the system for themselves (are receiving a W-2) are able to apply as well.

Self-employed individuals and contract employees

- Currently self-employed individuals and 1099 contract employees are not eligible for unemployment benefits. If the President of the United States makes a disaster unemployment declaration for Massachusetts or nationwide, the self-employed and 1099 contractors would become eligible for unemployment assistance. This is already coded into the DUA system and would be available immediately upon declaration and press release announcement.

Workers' compensation

- If a person contracts the virus for any work-related reason, that person could be eligible for workers' compensation. If you qualify, you can receive payments to partially replace your paycheck and for medical care related to your injury.
- In most cases, a claimant is not eligible for both unemployment benefits and workers' compensation.

Guidelines for Unemployment Benefits:

- All requirements regarding attending seminars at the MassHire career centers have been suspended.
- Missing deadlines due to effects of COVID-19 will be considered good cause, and lateness will be excused.
- All appeal hearings will be held by telephone only.
- The one week waiting period for laid off workers will be waived and claims can be filed immediately
- Claims will be expedited and payments would begin within weeks.
- Benefits are available for short term interruption in employment by temporary shutdown.

UTILITY SHUTOFF MORATORIUM

The Department of Public Utilities has implemented a moratorium on gas/electric utility shutoffs until further notice. Because cable/internet have not been considered, the City of Everett's Administration will be sending a letter to request all providers halt shutting off services until the State of Emergency has been lifted.

FOOD SERVICES AND PANTRIES

- The Everett Public Schools will be providing meals-to-go from the Everett High School lobby. These lunches will be available Monday through Friday, starting Monday, March 16th until Friday April 17th, 2020 from the hours of 11:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m., with the exception of Good Friday, April 10th. Beginning on Monday, March 23rd, these services will also be provided at the Whittier School. Everett families can elect to stay in their cars or walk up to grab the meals. To be eligible, students must be enrolled in the Everett Public Schools or Saint Anthony's School.
- Connolly Center: While the Connolly center will be closed, those who rely on the Connolly Center for daily meals should contact Dale Palma, Program Coordinator at the Connolly Center at Dale.Palma@ci.everett.ma.us 617-394-2323.
- The Council on Aging, Grace Food Pantry, and the Cambridge Health Alliance have teamed up to provide a "Grab and Go" food pantry for Everett Seniors aged 60 and above on Wednesday, March 25th from 10 a.m. until noon. Food will pre-bagged ready for distribution utilizing the driveway at the Connolly Center. Common items, fresh fruit and produce along with some staples will be given to those in need.
- Eliot Family Resource Center: The Food Pantry will be open Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m.- 2:00 p.m. at 584 Broadway Street in Everett. Please check their Facebook page for any updates or call 781-581-4750 with any questions you have.
- Everett Grace Food Pantry: The Food Pantry at 50 Church Street is operating on a Grab & Go Grocery Bag procedure. Please check their Facebook page for hours of operation and bring your own bag.
- Project Bread's Food Source Hotline: Toll-Free hunger help line for Massachusetts residents, 1-800-645-8333.
- Mystic Community Market located at the Malden YMCA at Walnut Street Center, 291 Mystic Avenue Medford MA 02155. Hours of operation:
Monday: 10 a.m.-2p.m.
Tuesday: 10 a.m.- 2p.m./ 4:30 p.m.- 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday: 10 a.m.- 2p.m./ 4:30 p.m.- 7:30 p.m.

Thursday: Closed

Friday: 10 a.m.- 2 p.m.

Saturday 9 a.m.- 1p.m.

*Please use the pedestrian gate and under the blue awning on the right side of the building