

CITY OF MADISON

Workforce Pandemic to Endemic Transition Plan

Approved May 8, 2023

BACKGROUND

City of Madison is committed to a safe work environment and to the safety and security of its employees. The COVID pandemic created the need for a series of policies that impacted the work lives of City employees since the beginning of the pandemic.

The Public Health Service Act was used to declare a public health emergency related to COVID beginning on January 31, 2020. This public health emergency officially ended on April 10, 2023. City Human Resources has consistently released new guidance as conditions have changed throughout the pandemic, and this transition plan provides guidance on those policies and practices that will continue, and to provide a timeline for those policies that are terminating.

Where there are conflicts between this transition plan and previous guidance, this transition plan should be considered the guiding document. The following guidance is effective beginning May 14, 2023. Going forward, the City reserves the right to implement necessary measures to provide for the safety of our employees and the public we serve.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND SAFETY PLANNING

Self-screening and ongoing prevention

While requirements for temperature screening or other supervisor required screening for COVID and/or other respiratory illnesses have ended, self-screening continues to be helpful to reduce the spread of respiratory illnesses. Consequently, self-screening for [COVID related symptoms](#) is encouraged.

Long-term management requires we take significant precautions from spreading disease, whether that is COVID related, Influenza, RSV, or other respiratory and communicable diseases. This requires careful attention to the following guidelines and best practices:

- Practice [good respiratory etiquette](#) and [hand hygiene](#).
- Ill staff are encouraged to remain at home.
- Get vaccinations and boosters. Vaccinations and boosters are the most effective protection against COVID and other communicable diseases.
- Get tested if you are sick or exposed.
- If you test positive, [follow CDC guidance](#) on what to do to minimize the spread of disease.

- Mask to provide another layer of protection (especially if sneezing/coughing) and use proper hand sanitizing. The CDC has recommendations for when to mask based on our community's status. Please see those recommendations [here](#).
- If you test positive, inform Public Health [here](#) for tracking purposes.
- For a full list of precautions, please refer to the public health [recommendations and guidance](#).

Masking

Masking is welcome but no longer required. Information on effective mask use can be found on the [CDC website](#). While ongoing masking is not required for City of Madison employees, conditions related to respiratory illness or other public health concerns may create the need to require masks in the workplace at any time. Similarly, while employees are not required to mirror customer use, during respiratory season or upon request we encourage employees to wear masks especially for those who may be immune compromised. Employees are also encouraged to wear masks when experiencing symptoms of respiratory illness to minimize the spread of disease. Ongoing signage in all facilities will indicate that masking is welcome but not required; please be aware signage is subject to change.

Personal Protective Equipment

For now, the City will continue to provide all of the following resources:

- Hand sanitizers will continue to be provided in dispensers at entrance locations
- Masks will be provided by Engineering and will be restocked as needed
- Cleaning supplies –Engineering has provided cleaning kits for buildings it maintains and will restock upon request. Agencies occupying other facilities should contact their Facilities Manager with cleaning supply requests.
- Kleenex, and additional cleaning supplies can be purchased at the agency level through [City purchasing processes](#)

Accommodations

Some respiratory diseases qualify as disabilities and may result in the need for a workplace accommodation. If you are in need of a workplace accommodation for any reason, please reach out to Victoria Larson at vlarson@cityofmadison.com, or 608-267-1156.

RELATED POLICIES

Emergency Paid Leave (EPL)

For permanent and hourly employees who have been with the City since 2022, 40 hours of EPL was made available in early January of 2022. This leave was carried over in 2023, and can continue to be accessed pursuant to City guidelines. New permanent and hourly employees will no longer be granted EPL upon hire effective May 8, 2023. EPL is intended to support employees through the COVID-19 outbreak. EPL will no longer be accessible beginning on December 9, 2023.

EPL may only be used for the following purposes:

- An employee or their immediate family member(s) has a COVID-19 diagnosis or is in quarantine or isolation due to COVID-19.
- An employee or their immediate family member(s) needs to obtain a COVID-19 vaccination, including boosters, and to recover from the effects of a COVID-19 vaccine.
 - While EPL can be used to obtain the COVID-19 vaccination, boosters or to recover in case you are unable to work due to the side-effects of the vaccine or booster, employees are limited to the use of 24 working hours of EPL use to recover from the vaccine or booster. If additional leave is needed, employees will be required to use other accrued leave like sick leave.
- An employee needs to care for their child or another individual who cannot care for themselves due to the closure of their school, childcare facility, or another care program due to COVID-19.
- Either a positive at-home test or a positive PCR test is needed to access EPL except when an employee is getting vaccinated or boosted, then the employee can use EPL with supervisor approval.

Managers and Supervisors must have documentation of the needed reason for leave. Employees must provide documentation of the necessary reason(s) for the leave. Employees who cannot provide documentation must use another leave code – including leave without pay. Such documentation might include proof of positive test results, vaccination or booster shots, daycare/school emails regarding COVID-related closures, etc.

Vaccination and Attestation Forms

COVID vaccination is no longer required of City employees except in specific cases where certain vaccinations are required as a function of individual positions. Employees should continue to prioritize getting vaccinations and updated boosters. Employees who need time away to get vaccinations and boosters need to use accrued leave (EPL, sick leave, vacation, or comp time), in order to do so. Vaccination attestation forms are no longer required for new or existing employees, except in specific cases where certain vaccinations are required as a function of individual positions.

Travel

There are no current travel restrictions. Upon returning from travel, employees are not being asked to quarantine or isolate, we are simply asking employees to continue to self-monitor for COVID-related symptoms and then seek medical attention or quarantine as necessary.

Telework

We have a newfound awareness of the benefits and challenges of remote work, and many staff thrive while working from home and using flexible schedules. Department Heads and Supervisors are empowered to work with their team members to identify the best option for each employee by balancing their responsibilities, performance, and personal preferences for remote or in-office work. Many employees have provided positive feedback on the ability to have the opportunity to telework and have flexible/alternative scheduling.

The decision on whether positions should be eligible to have a flexible schedule or to telework should be made closest to the work, by the individual supervisor. Department Heads may create department-wide expectations related to telework availability. When reviewing scheduling requests, supervisors should get input from staff related to the availability for alternative schedule. Managers and supervisors should also:

- Evaluate how their agency may be able to create a hybrid staffing model for in person services
- Follow Public Health Madison & Dane County Forward Dane health protocols
- Consider position eligibility and rethinking job duties that could be suitable for teleworking
- Identify how flexible schedules or telework could be incorporated into some position descriptions and job postings to improve their ability to recruit and retain talented employees
- Evaluate trainings for staff that would be available via telework
- Identify training and resources support supervisors need to manage hybrid staff. Some City courses that may be of assistance to support supervisors include:
 - [How to Run Inclusive and Effective Meetings](#)
 - [Conflict Management](#)
 - [Values-based Leadership](#)
 - [Trauma Informed Supervision](#)

Each employee must have a valid telework agreement on file to telework. When reviewing each agreement, managers are strongly encouraged to carefully analyze the cost/benefit impacts to both the requesting employee and the department to ensure equitable application of the policy(s). Considered factors may include but are not limited to departmental culture/goals and fiscal impacts, as well as individual employee job satisfaction, retention, productivity, communication, and/or individual responsibilities. Telework and flexible schedule requests should be reviewed every 90 days to ensure they are meeting the expectations of the employee and organization.

Please keep in mind that our policy does require that employees who work from home are capable of returning to the workplace in an emergency within a 2 hour time period and employees are not permitted to work permanently (more than 30 days) in a state other than Wisconsin without explicit authorization from the Department/Division head and Human Resources Director.

Expectations for supervisors and employees related to how to develop these schedules in a way that maximize work/life balance are included in this [addendum](#). More technology related tools and information are available in the City's [telework toolkit](#).

SUPERVISOR GUIDANCE

Supervisors are key to creating and maintaining a healthy and welcoming workplace. Supervisors who receive information about an employee testing positive for COVID, or any other medical information including vaccination status, are strictly cautioned that this information must be kept entirely confidential and such information must only be shared by the employee.

When a Supervisor is informed of a positive COVID test or other serious respiratory illness in the workplace, they should do all of the following:

- Encourage employees to care for themselves, their coworkers, and their families
- Communicate to the employee appropriate steps to follow [CDC guidelines](#) on positive tests
- If EPL is accessible to the employee, ensure EPL guidelines are followed
- Notice employees about potential exposure where appropriate. Contact Employee and Labor Relations with any questions about how to provide notifications (*Example: Employees are encouraged*

to take precautions related to respiratory illnesses in the workplace due to the recent potential for close contact with someone who may have had a transmittable respiratory illness.)

Supervisors should also encourage employees to mask when experiencing symptoms and Supervisors should follow all guidance for employees.

EVALUATION AND COMMUNICATION

City Human Resources, the Mayor's Office, and Public Health will evaluate this guidance quarterly in 2023 and provide any updates, as needed after collaborating with organizational partners. After 2023, guidance will be evaluated and updated on an annual basis by Human Resources staff, in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders. This City's Coronavirus webpage will be the primary means of communicating any changes in policies or expectations.

AFTER ACTION FINDINGS AND BACKGROUND DATA

After Action Survey

In 2022 the City completed an after action survey to identify any necessary changes to practices and policies that would improve outcomes in our response. The [full report](#) is available for review. Significant recommendations for City changes included:

- Provide departments with education and training on the city and county Emergency Operations Center's (EOC) roles.
- Work with departments to identify and train alternate staffing models to support prolonged incidents.
- Better define city department information sharing process.
- Encourage city departments to develop/update Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) based on pandemic outcomes.
- Encourage departments to include staffing and supervision in COOP.
- Re-evaluate and update the Language Access Plan to include lessons learned from the pandemic.
- Define the role of the Mayor's Office and elected officials in an EOC activation

The Mayor's Management Team is working in 2023 to respond to these recommendations and put changes in place to address the issues identified in the after action survey.