

March 20, 2020 WSAC COVID Check-in Polling and Chat Comments

Counties in attendance (that self-identified):

Skamania	Benton	Skagit	Spokane	Grays Harbor
Whitman	Island	Kitsap	Clark	
San Juan	Jefferson	Mason	Chelan	
Ferry	Pend Oreille	Lewis	Pierce	
Wahkiakum	Stevens	Douglas	Walla-Walla	

Have you declared a county emergency?

- Total responses: 23 responses. 21 report YES, 2 report IN PROCESS
- Please share your declarations with WSAC for their records. They are tracking local declarations across the state. Declarations can be sent to Eric or Jaime.

Have you reduced or changed county operations because of COVID?

- Total responses: 26 All responses report YES.
- Limiting public access
 - Closed counters, buildings to public
 - Using ballot drop boxes for payments, tax payments, and other services
 - Emphasizing online options for permitting, recording, etc.
- Telework for most staff, limited number of people in office at a given time.
- Using a lot of social media for public information
- Hearings cancelled other than council which will be by computer. Clerk got special permission to serve by email rather than in person.
 - Cancelled non-essential community meetings/planning commission/hearing examiner
 - One council member in hearing room live stream, with skype for other staff and zoom
 - OPMA requires physical location for meetings
 - Opened a meeting room separate from BOCC meeting room for the public to use to view our meetings.
- Reduced county operations:
 - May reduce some solid waste transfer sites
- Additional safety and PPE measures
 - Road crew separate vehicles and work outside
 - Bus drivers and other essential service providers working but with social distancing. We just ordered a few minutes ago that buses are free and all enter and leave from the back of the bus
 - Sneeze guards on areas for public use
- We have a listing of all services that be accessed on line/telephone/regular mail
 - Waived fees for online services and payments
- We are enabling personal computers to access work computers. Additional laptops to distribute not an option.
- Our Assessor is not talking with residents when doing a review leaving a business card instead
- Also, our Health Officer has restricted all park equipment including benches, tables, toys, etc.
- By appointment, Treasurer's office staff will meet them and utilize distancing

- Some smaller offices/departments are doing split teams - one half office away one-week teleworking, other half in office then switch
- Employees not able to do their job or have extra time being assigned to EOC or Health Dept
- We have a new policy Emergency Policy and Procedure - donating leave
- Island County has delegated HR to work with unions to reassign individual staff outside of their regular positions
- County has created a public space in our Large Meeting Room - three cubicles that are separated with plexiglass. There is all plastic chairs and things that can be wiped down for things that are required in person. We have a temporary employee that will be calling departments that are needed for in person meetings or printed and signature items to collect. We are trying to limit the area that public will be and still provide service for permitting and real estate documents. Gloves and sanitation as well as potential screening of people before entering, we are still finishing it up to start Monday.

Are there operating problems going on due to existing rules and laws?

- What economic relief is anyone considering?
- Unclear orders for retail businesses
- Biggest issue yet to be felt will be the economic/budgetary impacts
- Open Public Meetings Act – how can we operate remotely? AG guidance and white paper has helped but still have questions. How does an emergency declaration impact this?
 - We need to get exemption on OPMA during this time as we need better communication between the councilmembers as things are being turned over mostly to the executive branch as we cannot talk among ourselves.
- Lots of tourists still coming to town
 - DFW did shut down clam season but the people had already come to the beach
- Enforcement
 - Issues haven't arisen yet
 - Yes, Island Co are being asked about enforcing the governors rule
- Some new initiatives like homeless funds are not flexible. We are struggling with those on the bubble that can't make rent because they have been laid off from their work.
- Behavioral health and crisis response – this work must be done face to face. Concern about telehealth availability and safety for responders.
- Open Bidding starting, what Counties are doing about that:
 - Just opening them.
 - King - waived as we are under emergency declaration
 - We are delaying for 60 days
 - Still proceeding - if someone is dropping a bid off, they can call to let us know
- King - Too many cases coming too fast. Hard to keep up and getting anxiety waking up to hear what new aspect of their life needs to change.
- Consistent case reporting rules. The way counties are posting information is different across the state.
- Isolation and quarantine:
 - King - Siting isolation sites is important to do well as it can scare people until they know details and reasons and need.
 - Appreciate the state grants for sheltering!!!
- King - Asking media to highlight the good things and kindness and such to uplift rather than sensationalism. As we are not leaving our houses of course there will be economic downturns

and not to panic. Be careful to not have too many sites for people to look to as some as saying it is overwhelming which of the many websites to look at. King - we have not done that yet but the President has and I think we need to reinforce.

What is the most pressing issue you have right now?

- Business impact – we are developing a survey for them throughout the county
 - Small businesses going under
 - Business closures; immediate but concern they will not be able to recover
- Panic from citizens worrying about marshal law
 - Dealing with various employee emotional reactions.
 - Panic from elected officials
- Poor communication from emergency management to public
 - Trying to get relationship/response to state EOC
 - Created PIO to get info out to public, working on website and created a county Facebook page
 - Weekly phone call with city/count government emergency management every Friday
- Lack of PPE for county staff doing their work
 - Shortage of PPE, testing, slow response of tests.
 - Determining where the isolation locations and the supplies are to stock them
 - Addressing homeless issues
- County budget uncertainties due to uncertainty of tax collections
 - How this will impact county revenues
 - How do we pay for property taxes
 - County employee policies for things like administrative leave and sick leave, payroll
- Community mitigation that's needed when limited healthcare capacity and currently no positive cases.
 - Internal operations and maintaining services to community.

Are the WSAC COVID-19 links helpful?

- 13 total responses: 12 answered YES, 1 answered NO

What additional materials should be added?

- HR resources
 - How to do payroll and cover staff salaries if there is a complete shutdown
- Is there a reliable summary – lot of information out there
- Public Messaging/Information:
 - Flow charts to help businesses determine whether they should close or how they should stay open; templates for health departments to get signage to businesses
 - Charts that comfort people that what we are doing is worth it. Compare us to increases in Italy or other so it shows hope and reasons.
 - Simple explanations for shelter-in place orders
- Org charts for different emergency management structures
- Update on each county's testing info, positive cases vs. overall tests
 - Why don't all counties report cases the same way?
- Need consistent guidelines
- Creative examples of how counties are delivering services