



Region 4 – COVID-19 – County Response Meeting Minutes King – Kittitas – Pierce – Thurston Counties

Monday, April 27, 2020
3:30 pm – 5:00 pm

FACILITATORS: Jaime Bodden, WSALPHO and Mellani McAleenan, WSAC

ELECTED COUNTY OFFICIALS & STAFF IN ATTENDANCE:

King

Kathy Lambert, Councilmember; Barbara Miner, Director & Superior Court Clerk

Kittitas

Val Barschaw, County Clerk; Amy Cziske, Treasurer; Laura Osiadacz, Commissioner;
Jerry Pettit, Auditor; Cory Wright, Commissioner

Pierce

Julia Anderson, Auditor; Derek Young, Councilmember

Thurston

Ramiro Chavez, Administrator; Mary Hall, Auditor; John Hutchings, Commissioner;
Tye Menser, Commissioner; Emmett O'Connell, Auditor's Office

Legislators:

Sen. Jeannie Darneille, Sen. Sam Hunt, Sen. Karen Keiser, Rep. Tina Orwall, Rep. Gerry Pollet,
Rep. Bill Ramos, Sen. Jesse Salomon, Rep. My-Linh Thai, Rep. Amy Walen

Legislative Staff:

Emilia Barnecut, Kevin Black, Marissa Chavez, James Crandall, Rachelle Harris, Tanya Lavoy, Sarah Myers,
Eileen Swarthout, Liza Weeks

LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSE

Dr. Anthony Chen – Director of Health – Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department

The county already had longstanding public emergency plans, but no one was prepared for COVID 19

CHALLENGES AND LOOKING AHEAD

- With the lifting of “shelter-in-place” will come additional challenges for testing, tracking and isolating with COVID symptoms.
- More staff will be needed for the possible second wave of the pandemic, possibly 100-250 additional staff members.
- People are anxious to get back to “normal” – concerns about lowering the restrictions and seeing an increase of numbers.

IMPACT ON COUNTY FUNCTIONS

King:

\$123 million dollars has already been spent.
The county has seen an increase in domestic violence (child/spousal abuse) and with the mentally ill (depression, etc.).
With the 600 inmates released from jail, some have already returned.

Kittitas:

The county has taken a financial hit for their service/tourism industry – Suncadia Resort is closed.
Concerns and challenges for the upcoming election cycle.
Different payment plans have been implemented for property tax payments.
GOOD NEWS – whiskey making businesses have developed and distributed hand sanitizers to local EMS, as well as the fire departments.

Pierce:

The county will have large budget holes – since the CARE Act funding cannot be used for lost revenues.
With a loss of revenues – budget cuts will be discussed and will have to be implemented.
Currently have a labor shortage for the transit services.
Urban county areas will feel the pain with less services being offered.
Election challenges will be felt for the upcoming elections.

Thurston:

The county has 100 confirmed cases.
County waste was closed, as they have high risk personnel employed.
There will be a 20 percent loss in sales tax revenues, as well significant loss in property taxes.
Looking at a reduction in staff at all levels of services.

ANTICIPATED NEEDS MOVING FORWARD

King:

Additional funding will be needed for public health.
How do we proceed and reopen the economy, especially small businesses?
With anticipated contract tracing – an additional 700 employees will need to be trained.

Kittitas:

Would like some guidance for small business owners on “how to reopen”.
What will the future economy look like with decreased revenues?
Staffing will be a concern...will there be necessary cuts/furloughs?

Pierce:

Increased funding will be needed for public health services.
Pierce County will need a system for testing, tracking and isolating those with coronavirus symptoms.
What will the emergency response look like?

Thurston:

The Auditor’s office will have challenges with the upcoming elections. How do they retain seasonal staff and practice social distancing with voter registrations and other aspects for the election?
What level of staff reduction will there be and still trying to maintain their level of services to the public?