



GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT

March 13, 2020

Dear State Agency Heads:

Please accept my thanks for all you do for Texas. Now more than ever, it is essential that we continue to serve the residents of the state and provide the high level of service that they expect from their state government, and that we expect from ourselves.

I appreciate the proactive way you have addressed the growing concern over COVID-19. Please continue reviewing how your agency can more efficiently deliver services and assist Texans impacted by this virus. The preparation you do today will ensure that Texans can receive necessary assistance and that the essential functions of government can continue.

To that end, as of today, the Office of the Governor is requiring that all state agencies cancel non-essential travel and all international travel. All state agency-related conferences should also be postponed until further notice. Please use your discretion to minimize all non-essential in-person meetings.

I encourage state agency heads to consider how to effectively utilize telecommuting. Please keep in mind any DIR guidance on cybersecurity best practices, including their recent publication regarding risk management for COVID-19. Within the confines of Texas Government Code §658.010, agency heads are empowered to allow their employees to work remotely while ensuring that essential state functions are provided, the agency's continuity of operations plan is fulfilled, state emergency leave policies are followed, and reporting is accomplished in accordance with Texas Government Code §661.902. Additionally, state agency heads should consider appropriate work assignments for high-risk employees.

Please remind your employees to follow best practices from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Texas Department of State Health Services to prevent the spread of illness. If an employee believes they have come into contact with the virus, or is displaying symptoms of the virus, please encourage them to contact a medical provider and limit exposure to others. ERS and TRS have arranged with their health plans to provide no-cost telemedicine and testing related to COVID-19. For information about coverage and how to appropriately access covered health services, please direct employees to their health plan. Also, to the greatest extent possible, please ensure agency spaces are sanitized regularly.

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Officials who have questions concerning the Open Meetings Act should submit them to the Office of Attorney General via email at TOMA@oag.texas.gov, or by leaving a message at (888) 672-6787.

Again, please accept my deep gratitude for all you do for this state. Texans will remember how we responded during this difficult time. If you have specific questions, please contact your advisor in the Governor's Office of Budget & Policy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Abbott". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Greg Abbott
Governor

GA:shk