

Chair Kafoury, Mayor Wheeler announce moratorium on residential eviction; steps to protect unhoused residents from COVID-19



The interim guidance we're providing is based on what is currently known about COVID-19. Multnomah County will update this interim guidance as additional information becomes available.

(<http://multco.us/web/20200317200649/https://multco.us/novel-coronavirus-covid-19/notifications/interim-guidance-were-providing-based-what-currently-known>)

March 17, 2020

Multnomah County Chair Deborah Kafoury and Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler on Tuesday announced a moratorium on residential evictions and the expansion of a shelter system to support people experiencing homelessness — while also issuing a warning that hospital systems may be overwhelmed by demand to treat people in serious condition because of COVID-19.



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“COVID-19 continues to pose the greatest challenge to public health and our systems of care, most of us have ever seen,” Kafoury said. “Ultimately, our ability to limit the impact of this virus will come down to individual behavior, clear guidance, and decisive, collective action.”

Many residents, without risking financial distress, can follow public health recommendations to stay home as much as possible and practice good hygiene to slow the spread of this virus. But for many others, who are unable to work or pay rent, following those recommendations can push them to the financial edge.

“For people who are losing wages due to COVID-19, and find themselves unable to pay rent: We want you to be able to stay in your home,” Kafoury said.

[\[Read the full executive rule here](#)

[\[https://web.archive.org/web/20200317200649/https://multco.us/file/86762/download\]](https://web.archive.org/web/20200317200649/https://multco.us/file/86762/download)

Among the orders included in Kafoury’s new executive rule, which builds on her countywide [emergency declaration](#) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20200317200649/https://multco.us/file/86668/download>) signed March 11:

- A temporary moratorium on all residential evictions in Multnomah County for tenants on the basis of nonpayment of rent, due to wage loss resulting from COVID-19.
- No late fee may be charged or collected for rent that is delayed for the reasons stated in the moratorium;
- Court hearings on eviction proceedings will be suspended until April 30, 2020, or later.
- Any place of lodging within Multnomah County, including hotels and motels, must accept and/or retain housing for any individual whose payment is subsidized by the County or a County contractor.

“Nobody in this community is alone,” said Mayor Wheeler. “We’re all in this together, and everybody is being asked to sacrifice so we can get through the situation as quickly as possible and get through it as a community.”

Shelter beds and spacing

Kafoury also laid out additional plans to support unhoused residents. In the past two weeks Multnomah County and the City of Portland, through the Joint Office of Homeless Services, have worked with 14 agencies to bring supplies and basic information to people in camps or people sleeping in their cars.

In the first days of that countywide outreach mission, they reached more than 1,700 people. The Joint Office also approved motel vouchers for some people in our shelters who are most at-risk and has kept open winter shelters that otherwise were scheduled to close.

“Those are the people who do not have the option to simply close the front door,” Kafoury said. “After sharing masks, hygiene products and other supplies, and taking some initial steps to space out our shelters, I’m ready to announce another major step.”

This week the Joint Office, in partnership with Emergency Management, plans to make hundreds of additional shelter beds available in new spaces, allowing the shelter system to maintain its current capacity while spacing beds out to comply with social distancing guidance.

Should the local healthcare system become overwhelmed by people who need care for COVID-19, the new shelter locations and additional beds can also be leveraged to shelter patients with symptoms who may not need hospital care but still need a recuperative setting.

“Crisis exposes the character of a community, and people all across Multnomah County continue to show up to serve their community,” Kafoury said. “We will protect each other. At Multnomah County, we will not stop looking out for each other.”

County services

(<https://web.archive.org/web/20200317200649/https://multco.us/multnomah-county/what%E2%80%99s-closed-%E2%80%94-and-what-open-%E2%80%94-multco-during-covid-19-outbreak>)

What's Closed?

- All County library branches
- Student health centers at Jefferson High School and Cleveland High School
- Division of Assessment, Recording, and Taxation Customer Service (recording functions, marriage licenses, tax payments, passport services and passport photos); [some online services will be available](https://web.archive.org/web/20200317200649/https://multco.us/recording) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20200317200649/https://multco.us/recording>)

What's Open?

- All county primary care and dental clinics remain open
- Clinics plan to consolidate health services over the next week and will reduce dental services to focus resources and supplies for COVID-19 response.
- Student health centers at Centennial, David Douglas, Franklin, Madison, Marshall, Parkrose and Roosevelt schools
- Multnomah County board meetings and briefings will be held virtually, although all non-essential agenda items have been suspended. Public testimony will be accepted in written form on agenda items only and can be sent to our Board Clerk's Office email address, boardclerk@multco.us (<https://web.archive.org/web/20200317200649/mailto:boardclerk@multco.us>).